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# **Generations and Power Relations as Reflected in Selected Contemporary Amharic Novels**

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**Addis Ababa**

**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**

**Generations and Power Relations as Reflected in Selected  
Contemporary Amharic Novels**

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**Dissertation Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis  
Ababa University in accordance with the requirements for Doctor of  
Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Literature in English.**

**Declaration**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this PhD Dissertation: *Generations and Power Relations as Reflected in Selected Contemporary Amharic Novels* is my original work, and that I have not previously either in its entirety or part submitted to any academic institution for a degree. All sources of materials that have been used in here are duly acknowledged.

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This is to certify that the Dissertation conducted by Andualem Tolessa Bobe entitled “*Generations and power relations as Reflected in Selected Contemporary Amharic novels*”, and submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Literature in English complies with the regulation of the University and meets the accepted standard with respect to originality and quality.

Board of examining committee

External Examiner.....Signature..... Date .....

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Supervisor ..... Signature ..... Date .....

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## **Terms and Acronyms**

### Terms

*Abba* : An old man

*Aleka* : a boss

*Ato* : Mr.

*Beteisrael* : Israelities refugee in Ethiopia

*Emahoy* : an old woman monk

*Emama* : old woman whom everyone sees as his or her mother.

*Esat Wey Abeba*: a collection of poem authored by Laureat Thegaye G/ Medihin

*Gashe* : a middle aged man whom everyone respects.

*Gizufu* : The giant

*Mosad* : Israel spy agency

*Neftegna* : a man with a gun, but in the context of Abrak it refers to the Amhara ethnic group.

*Oromiffa* : the Language that is spoken by the Oromo ethnic group

*Rekiku* : the Master

*Shabiya* : the Ertirean people liberation front

*Weyane* : the other name of TPLF

*W/ro* : Mrs.

### Acronyms

*EPRDF* : Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democracy Front

*TPLF* : Tigray People Liberation Front

## **Abstract**

*Although a considerable number of Amharic novels dealing with critical issues of contemporary Ethiopia have been published, most have rarely been considered for literary study. Generations and power relations, which could be considered as analytical tools for the study of a society, are in the same vein overlooked in these days Ethiopian Literary scholarship. The study, therefore, focuses on the explication of generations and power relations in the selected contemporary Amharic novels. On the basis of purposive merits, four Amharic novels, which were published in the turn of the millennium, were selected. These novels are: Reqik Ashara, Dertogada, Lelasew and Abrak. In light of the imprint theory of generation, the traits that the constituents of each cohort shares in common have been figured out and discussed. The study also made use of a combination of the Marxist and Foucault's theorizations of power as its theoretical blue print.*

*Based on the theoretical framework and the literary hermeneutic triad-reading model of textual analysis, the generations' characteristics, and their power relations are claimed to have a direct relationships. On the other hand, the dominantly displayed mannerism of each generation and their conflicting ideologies imply as there is a trend of declining certain societal values in contemporary Ethiopia. Most notably, individuals in their shared traits as well as in their manner of power exercise, portray contemporary Ethiopia as where there is a persistent generational conflicts. The conflict, most of which are purely ideological, is eventually resulted in a significant generational gap between subsequent generations.*

**To the memory of my beloved mother:**

**አገሮ**

Who taught me all I know about the life I have lived this far. You won't cease amaze me how you were enlightened the value of schooling while being barely writing even your name. I wish I could see you walk up just for a brief moment and see the fruit of what you had sprouted, and then be back to your eternal rest.

And

**To the love of my life, Dr Sonia Kebir, Ha-ni-el & Ha-zi-el**

## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.1. General Background to the Study

Unlike the other Amharic literary genres, the novel is relatively the youngest forms of literary expression. It is thus claimed to have been introduced in the early 20th century. (Aseffa, 1981; Gerard, 1968). They further point out that the publication of *Afework's Tobiya* has given way for the outsets of writing Amharic novel. It is, therefore, a naïve intuition to argue that the publication of *Afework's Tobiya* in 1909 is the milestone for the emergency of today's forms of Amharic novel. Since then, a considerable number of Amharic novels have been written although the early Amharic novels are maintained to be immature, especially when compared to the 1950s and the subsequent decades' novels. (Meseret, 1992; Taye, 1986; Aseffa, 1981). In due course of time, however, the trend has revealed as the tradition has come up with significant development.

The relative step forward in quantities of publication, in fact, has not been extended to the refinement of literary quality. Meseret (1992). Of course, as opposed to the pre and post-revolution novels, most of these days' Amharic novels are criticized in their lack of literary quality in that most have scarcely been composed in a mode of artistry. This is presumably because the novelists often pay attention to the portrayal of the existing situation rather than focusing on the form and the imaginative aspect. As a result, most of them appear to have a thematic similarity. Of course, the attachment of authors to the existing realities was in some way the manifestation of the earlier published Amharic novels as Molvaer (1997) and Gerard (1968), two of the most cited scholars in the Amharic literary studies, claim.

Accordingly, Amharic novels of different periods focus on the social, economic and political situations of the country at the time of its production. (Molvaer, 1997; Gerard, 1968). It is true that the novel as a literary genre is a cultural product, and is often produced based on our everyday experiences and interpersonal relations. This is why literary texts in general and the novel, in particular, are assumed to draw their thematic resources to the society they are born. In this regard, Molvaer, (1997, p. ix) criticizes Ethiopian fictional texts. Consequently, he writes, "*Ethiopian authors of fiction are strongly concerned with the societal and cultural life of their time, and it will not do Amharic literature full justice to evaluate it only on aesthetic grounds.*"

In Molvaer's view, though the essence of a literary text is its aesthetic excellence, in the Ethiopian context where the writers are highly attached to their society, the societal concern is privileged over its aesthetic value. Hence, the writers in other expression focus more on addressing the critical issue of their time.

In the contemporary Ethiopian Amharic novels, the depicted generations are different in various ways. One of the acclaimed foundations of their difference is the characters' view on political ideology. In addition to ideology, socio-economic issues, cultural relations, societal values and are the other major points where their differences lie. In this connection, Demeke, (2014) argues that contemporary Ethiopia is where there are contradictory phenomena. The entire system is therefore paradoxically resulted in hope and despair. Yesmake (2010) as cited in Demeke (2014,p.11), similarly expresses the period as: *“In present-day Ethiopia, it is the best of times, is the worst of times, it is the age of wisdom, it is the age of foolishness, it is the epoch of incredulity, it is the season of light, it is the season of darkness”*

The general image of contemporary Ethiopia in the novels is also the result of the existing realities and its challenges in political, economic and socio-cultural practices. In Politics, for example, while the government claims that an all-inclusive democratic system has been exercised, private presses and other international organizations such as the Human Rights Watches often express their disapproval of its being democratic. Demeke (2014). The same holds true concerning the country's economy. For instance, according to Demeke (2014), though in reality, Ethiopia in the stated period is one of the poorest nations on the globe, the government official reports, on the contrary, show that there is a double-digit figure of economic growth every year. The socio-cultural landscape of contemporary Ethiopia is the other important point in this regard.

More specifically, critical affairs of the contemporary society ranging from social evils such as corruption, prostitution, maladjustment, cultural imperialism and so forth to the political problem, for instance, lack of good governance, ethnic conflicts, are the nucleus of the selected contemporary Amharic novels. Therefore, the selected Amharic novels reveal the specific socio-cultural situations in contemporary Ethiopia, which supposedly resulted from the politics of the country. Cases in points are corruption and ethnic-based conflicts in the post-millennium that have also lingered even nowadays. Thus, based on the premise that the novel tends to reflect on

the socio-political realities of the day, one would be curious to find out the extent to which the selected contemporary Amharic novels have captured the notion of generations and power relations.

Generational relations, as well as conflicts, are manifested in various ways. In whatsoever ways, their occurrences never escape power applications. Power, therefore, remains something that everyone participates in and are all affected by. Consequently, power focuses on the interplay between people and resulting in internal conflicts. (Fairlough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1993). However, as to Foucault (1980), this is not to say that power does not have real, material effects in the world. Power is something that is not obtained by outside forces; it is rather produced as individuals interact with each other. As Wafula (2013) observes, every novel thus anchors on the existence of conflict between individuals and groups. In the same vein, the socio-cultural based interactions among the imaginative figures that inevitably produce power are customarily noted in Amharic novels.

Given this background, the study is confined to the portrayal of generation and power relations. Discourses about generations and their power relations and its means of manifestations discourses such as dominance, resistance, inter-generational relations, and generational gap among others in the selected novels have been examined. Exploring generational conflict and its related issues, though an anthropological and sociological concept as it were, it has been studied from a literary perspective. The focus is hence on how the actions and interactions between characters in the fictional world imitate what goes on in the imagined human societies. It is within the framework of the theory of power and generation that the entire investigation has been undertaken.

## 1.2. Statement of the problem

A change in the lifestyle, mode of socialization and worldviews of a given society are important factors for the formation of generation. Generation is a social construct that relies on a group of people's commonly shared values. Wafula (2013). What a certain group of people shares in common may not necessarily be the same across different periods. Hence, the dynamism of the shared values among the different age groups of people, which might also happen at the individual level, brings about the realization of different generations. In the same vein, this is observed in the context of Ethiopia. Gelawdiwos, (2017, p.1), for example, maintains: ... ” *the present generations of Ethiopians have become less enlightened and more myopic compared to the generation of the 60s and '70s.*” Gelawdiwos's makes such a distinction based on their experience of reading and understanding.

Although generation in critical discourse in contemporary Ethiopia is seemingly overshadowed by ethnicity, gender, and religion, yet it is a critical tool that helps us to have a lucid understanding of societal related complexities. Moreover, generational relations and their power relations that usually happen in conflicts of views and values are observed in our everyday life. The changes in the socio-cultural situations of the country that mostly have resulted from the influence of global situations and the predominance of ethnocentric politics of the country are the most claimed causes for the occurrence of conflicting views and values between the generations or within a generation. Supposedly, for their purpose, such conflicting views are also the bases of contemporary Amharic novels.

The novels in their imaginary figures' acts, interactions and even in the authorial comments raise various issues ranging from politics to societal issues. A considerable number of Amharic novels dealing with contemporary issues have been produced in the turn of the millennium. In Molvaer (1997) view, Amharic novels are usually claimed to represent the actual situations of their time in that they focus on the overall state of affairs of when they are produced. Hence, what actually going on in contemporary Ethiopia is reflected in those Amharic novels that have been produced. The selected novels, however, have scarcely been explored from this perspective.

The researcher's observation so far indicates that there is a paucity of a study in the selected contemporary Amharic novels' to the depiction of different groups of people within contemporary society and their power relations. An attempt has been exerted to explore how

generations and their power relations are portrayed in the selected contemporary Amharic novels. Accordingly, the personal traits of the generations, construction of generational identity and the dominant apparatus of power and its manner of revelation are the center of the investigation. Most importantly, lifestyle, mode of socialization, cultural and moral values, ideological and worldviews, and so forth are the prominent areas of the inquiry. The study, thus, attempts to fill the observed gap in this respect.

### **1.2.1. Research Questions**

As clearly stated above, the study, concentrates on analyzing and interpreting how the generations and power relations are manifested in the selected novels. The following research questions, which have straightforward relevance to the major areas of the study, are posed:

What are the prevailing characteristics of the figured out generations in the selected contemporary Amharic novels?

How do generational relations of power is reflected in the selected novels?

What are the underpinnings of conflicting ideologies that would result in a generational gap in the selected novels?

### **1.3. Objective of the Study**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

The main object of the study is to investigate the portrayal of generations and their power relations in the selected contemporary Amharic novels. Generations and their power relations in the selected novels, therefore, have been explored to let readers see the socio-political relations that actually exist among the contemporary societies at a collective level. According to Greenblatt (2005), a literary text is not a sole record of what the author creates in her or his mind. It is rather a social and cultural construct that is shaped by more than one consciousness. The writer, therefore, is the speaker of his or her society especially of those whose voices are repressed or unheard.

### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

To arrive at the above pointed out the general objective, the study further put down the following specific objectives. Accordingly, the study has been carried out to:

Explore the prevailing characteristics of the figured out generations in the selected contemporary Amharic novels.

Explicate how the generational relations of power is reflected in the selected novels.

Examine the underpinnings of conflicting ideologies that would result in generational gap in the selected novels.

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

Thematic issue, period and genre are the three major considerations in setting the boundary of this study. Accordingly, although the selected novels might entertain different discussable issues, the study exclusively concentrates on the portrayal of generations and power relations. This in the selected novels might be manifested in various forms and techniques. It could be through the interactions of the characters or through the narrator or the authorial comments or any action or discourse, which a reader could be acquainted with.

In terms of genre, the study has been confined to the examination of Amharic novel. None of the other Amharic literary genres has been considered though they might be preoccupied with the subjects to be investigated. In period wise, the study has also been restricted to those selected Amharic novels published in contemporary Ethiopia. The term contemporary in the context of the study generally refers to the turn of the second millennium and since (G.C.)

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

Based on its findings, the study might have various contributions of its own. Students of literature and instructors at AAU or anywhere else who are interested in the thematic concerns of the contemporary Ethiopian novels are the primary beneficiary in this regard. It might also help an institution that is responsible for curriculum designing especially in the incorporation of the recently published novels in Amharic Literature courses at higher institutions.

Most prominently, as there are scanty studies that have been conducted in matters about generation and power relations in contemporary Amharic novels, it could also serve as a springboard for those who are interested to conduct further exploration of the subject or in related areas for whatever purpose they wish. Besides, the study might also help students and instructors as reference material for a literary course they are taking or offering.

Its contribution is not restricted to literary circles. In a wider context, it might even go beyond the literary scholarship. It hence might help those who want to study societal matters in contemporary Ethiopia. As the dominant concern of the study is the portrayal of generations and their power relations, which is an essential aspect of society, it might serve as a stepping-stone to scholars, researchers, academicians or anyone who wants to study the socio-political situations of the country's contemporary societies.

### **1.6. Research Design**

The study falls under the general category of qualitative research. A case study design that involves an in-depth textual analysis is thus adopted. The study further primarily relies on the close reading and in-depth textual analysis of selected contemporary Amharic novels in harmony with the theoretical aspects of generations and power relations.

### **1.7. Method of Data collection**

In addition to some representational based selected novels, relevant documents such as periodicals, archives and previous studies were the main source of information for the study. Technically, literary hermeneutic, particularly the hermeneutic triad-reading model was an apt method of data collection tool for the study. Focusing on revealing the seemingly veiled expressions or discourses, the model facilitates the systematic analysis of a literary text. (Wafula, 2013; Czarniaswaska, 2004; Fyre, 1990).

It recommends three steps in the process of studying a literary text. (Czarniaswaska, 2004; Fyre, 1990). These are explication, explanation, and exploration. The explication step is related to '*what does the text say?*' It focuses on the semantic aspect. Here the researcher focused on what the authors in the selected contemporary Amharic novels address in connection with generation and power relations. It thus helped him answer the research questions that are related to what.

Explanation, on the contrary, concentrates on how the text says what it says. (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). At this stage, the concern of the researcher was on how the subjects are addressed in the novels. Here, particular attention was paid to the usage of the various literary languages in the novels. This is the stage where the researcher was familiar with generational representation and experience of power relations.

The exploration is the stage at which a reader places herself/himself in the position of the writer. (Czarniaswaska, 2004; Frye, 1990). Because of that, using his previous experience in association with what he obtained from his critical reading of the novels, the researcher inferred something else. In other words, it means that in exploring the selected novels, he constructed other views or perspectives, which the novels do not address. However, in the process, the context was worth considered. Additionally meaning, which is open to multiple interpretations, was explored in relating the parts with the whole and vice versa.

### **1.7.1. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Based on the research questions, the novels were analyzed and interpreted in line with the theoretical blueprint of the study. In the course of organizing the data, both relevance and frequencies of their occurrence in the novel were considered as the main requirements. The obtained data were identified, classified, coded and indexed under the relevant categories. The identification and discussions of any idea that capitalizes on the characterized traits of generations were analyzed and interpreted. Matters about the generations' power experience and exercise were also explored. Then, the dominant apparatus of power relation manifestations were analyzed. Subsequently, focusing on ideological and worldviews, the generations' constructions of their identity were also analyzed.

The whole analyses and discussions were carried out based on descriptive and comparative methods of data analysis. Descriptive, comparative and correlative are the main forms of text-based data analysis. (Creswell, 2003; Withen, 2008). Descriptive and comparative, which are mostly applicable in qualitative research, were used in the entire analysis of this study. Both were used to describe, assess, compare and contrast the portrayal of the pointed out generations and their power relations.

Likewise, descriptive analysis was essentially used to generate the dominant impression of the subject that are stated even implicitly using various literary languages such as metaphors, allusions, symbols, etc. comparative form of analysis, on the other hand, in most cases was applied when generations have commonalities or differences with each other on some issues of discussions. In addition to the above-noted point, it was also used for a thematic reason. Moreover, the analysis was carried out using textual shreds of evidence from the selected novels. The extracts have been rendered into English. In some instances, the theoretical issue that would support the posed argument has also been incorporated in the discussion.

### **1.7.2. Basis of Novel Selection**

The selected novels were primarily selected based on purposive sampling technique. In the selection process, date of publication is the most important consideration. Accordingly, most of the selected novels were relatively published recently. In a case where there is overlap on year of publication and similarity in subject matter, a novel that believed to be widely recognized among the literary academics, as well as the general readers, was considered. A similar procedure was applied in the case of age and experience. As generations are mostly concerned with ages, novels by authors who are in different age groups but produced their novels in the stated period were considered.

Frequencies of novels publications, which in other words suggest that the novels are read by many, was also regarded as an indicator of the novel's circulations among the readers. In compliance with these, four contemporary Amharic novels published in the turn of the second Millennium have been selected.

Accordingly: Sisay Nigusu's *Rekik Ashara* (2003), YismakeWorku's *Dertogada* (2009), Mihiret Debebe's *Lelasew* (2015) and Mulugeta Aregawi's *Abrak* (2018) are the selected novels of the study.

### **1.1.2.2. *Rekik Ashara* (2003)**

*Rekik Ashara* is Sisay Nigusus's 6<sup>th</sup> Amharic novel. The story in the novel like most of Sisay's other Amharic novels in almost similar fashion ends predictably with the champion of the good characters over the bad. However, as opposed to many of the recently published Amharic novels, it articulately portrays the problematic issues of contemporary Ethiopia, which for that matter even lingered to this date. In their imaginative world, those characters that their minds are uncorrupted are in conflict with dozens of those corrupted over the widespread of societal moral degeneration. Their confrontation on the claimed issue is, therefore, the overriding concern of the novel.

Concerning the flow of the story, the novel has a double face. While at the beginning until its climax ruthlessness and greediness are in the upper hand, towards the end of the story, the idea of morality and humanness becomes victorious. Thus, the novel in one hand deals with individualistic obsessions; on the other hand, discusses the power of moral value with which many of the characters depicted lacking it.

In either situation, power is scarcely avoided. Hence, there is an obvious struggle among the characters of different age groups to influence one another. Although most of the characters are morally corrupted, which is ultimately to secure material wealth, the story finally ends with the supremacy of virtuousness.

### **1.1.2.3. *Dertogada* (2009)**

Yismake Worku's first novel, *Dertogada*, was published when the tradition of writing the Amharic novel was almost declined. The novel, unlike dozens of contemporary Amharic novels, introduced the unusual subject to Ethiopian literary sphere. In the same vein, its narrative technique is also claimed somehow to deviate from the traditional form of narration in Amharic novels even though its critique argues that it lacks originality. In terms of its genre, it could therefore be kept under the category of scientific fiction. Regardless of this fact, however, it immediately received a huge reception among the public.

*Dertogada* poses various issues. Spaying, conspiracy, patriotism and the journey of nation-building endeavors are well entertained. It thus by far capitalizes on the advancement of Ethiopia in science and innovation. The efficient utilization of Ethiopian scientists in overseas working for other nations is also the other pivotal issue of the novel. Although the major story of the novel centers on the underneath of *Tana* islands, where the giant research center is, it covers what Ethiopian scientists do in the western world. Most of the returnees in their perspective professions strengthen the research center though it is lately destroyed. However, the story ends in their searching for the other one, which they believe indispensable for realizing civilized and well-developed Ethiopia.

#### **1.1.2.4. *Lelasew* (2015)**

Mihiret Debebe's second novel, *Lelasew*, is slightly different from many of the recently published Amharic novels in that it tends more to experimental aspects. For the most part, it deals with the impact of upbringing in the childhood days on the later phase of life. Although the story is presented from the third-person viewpoint, the protagonist is the dominant voice. Of course, the title of the novel itself is taken from him as he too is named *Lelasew*. In consequence, beginning from his high school days to his latter days when he along with the likes of him engages in societal development endeavors, the story revolves around his walks of life.

Personalities and personhood, which are becoming a serious societal problem in contemporary Ethiopia, are the major concern of the novel. Throughout the story, including the protagonist, most characters struggle to balance their comfort and societal contributions. This is where individuals who are in different ages are in conflict with each other. Consequently, the nature of the existing social bond among individuals of different generations, which is the mirror image of the prevailing mentality of contemporary society, is well portrayed in *Lelasew*. Eventually, the story twists in an unexpected way when most young characters in the story march towards achieving their own hidden personal ego, and that their interests become irreconcilable.

#### **1.1.2.5. *Abrak* (2018)**

*Abrak*, Mulugeta Aregawe's second novel, is the most recently published novel than any of the selected novels, and thus dominantly displays the existing situations of these days Ethiopia. Accordingly, the principal setting of the novel is present-day Ethiopia. However, it also takes us

back to the revolution days of Ethiopia when Ethno-nationalist political movement was intensified in the country. Most notably, *Abrek* sees and reflects upon the country's general spirit of the time, especially the trend of ethnocentric politics.

The major story of the novel focuses on the romantic affairs of young intellectual figures whose ethnic background is different. Because the families of these young characters have conceived ethnic oriented feelings of hatred to one another, the whole courses of their lives are exposed to challenges. As a result, most go through sufferings that in its strong term extended to imprisonment and death. The protagonists along with other vibrant young fellow figures, most of whom in a similar vein, are from different ethnic groups, strive massively to overcome ethnic oriented differences for which they are exposed to sufferings.

Thus, for ideological reasons the novel is full of conflicts. This is because as opposed to the young, most of the old characters are infused with a firm ethnic oriented stance. Family affairs, friendship, social values, and serious public politics, none of which is free from ethnic obsessions of the father figures, are the dominant center of their conflicts. Although their conflicts eventually resulted in the loss of lives of many including the tragic death of the protagonists, the story ends with the birth of the protagonists' newborn baby girl, which could symbolize the strength of integration.

## Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

### 2.1. Introduction

The chapter concerns with reviewing related literary studies. Thus, to show both the gap of the study and the nature of the explored subject in the literary arena, the entire review was carried out into two sections. While the first one exclusively concentrates reviewing studies on the selected Amharic novels, the latter is on the subject of generation and power relations in others novels. This is basically because the selected novels and generation and power relations are the indispensable elements of the study. In view of that, those literary studies on the selected novels and on the subject of generation and power relations in other novels were reviewed. On both of which, the reviewed texts are MA thesis and Ph.D. dissertations. On the chronological basis, the review goes beginning with those studies that were conducted in the country followed by those that were conducted in overseas.

With respect to studies on the selected novels, the researcher so far found a few studies. To the researcher's knowledge, while two of the selected novels have been studied, the remaining novels have scarcely been studied at the MA and Ph.D level, even not at article level. As opposed to the earlier days published popular Amharic novels, including the selected novels, most of the recently published Amharic novels, for the reason that might require its own study, have almost not been considered for literary study. Accordingly, *Lelasew* (2015) and *Abrak* (2018), which are relatively recently published novels, have hardly been investigated in AAU or anywhere else. Their being recent could be one of the reasons for their lack of critical attention. On the other hand, *Rekik Ashara* (2003), *Dertogada* (2009) have somehow received relative attention at an advanced level, and were explored. In view of that, three Ph.D. dissertations on *Rekik Ashara* and *Dertogada*, all of which have been studied at AAU, have been reviewed.

Anteneh (2014) in his Ph.D. dissertation, “*The Representation of Ethiopian Politics in Selected Amharic Novels from 1930 to 2010*”, studied sixteen selected novels of which *Yismakes’ Dertogada* (2009) is the one. It is one of the core texts of investigation in the current study as well. Anteneh in his study applies new historicism, Bourdieu’s System theory, and the Critical Discourse Analysis as his perspective of investigation. It is on a comparative basis that Anteneh explores the representation of Ethiopian politics in the novels. In his study, Anteneh examines the political issues of the novel as compared to the others.

His analysis in general shows that different novels represent political events in different manners. While some in their novels are superficial in the portrayal of existing political conditions, others are very critical and ventured enough to confront the situations in their novels to the extent of losing their lives. The representations of the existing situations in different political periods are also both explicit and implicit. However, during the emperor and the Derge regimes, its manner of representation is implicit. Anteneh maintains that it is using certain literary techniques such as symbols, allusions, figures of speech and the like that the novelists strongly criticize the political situations of the regimes.

Moreover, Anteneh's study points out that military confrontations between the Derge government and the different opposition fronts, the airlifting of the beta Israeli, and developing Ethiopia through science and research are the dominant concern of *Dertogada*. The novel is also claimed to have common ground in that it reflects upon contemporary politics in detail. Unlike most of the novels in the previous regimes, *Dertogada* is maintained that it overtly and boldly criticize the politics of the EPRDF and the wrongdoings of its politicians. Despite the novelist being boldly and overtly critical of the political system, he is not subjected to detention. Nor his novel is abolished. His novel has been republished several times instead.

Moreover, in *Dertogada* optimism is declared as the distinctive feature of the Ethiopian contemporary political arena. Anteneh's fundamental argument in this regard is the fact that rather than ethnic-based conflicts, unity, nationalism, and innovation are chiefly advocated. In the selected novels, in general, and *Dertogada* in particular, Anteneh figures out that literature and politics in the context of Ethiopia have a massive influence on one another. In view of that, the study concludes the inextricability of Ethiopian politics and Amharic novel.

Like Anteneh (2014), *Demeke* in his Ph.D. dissertation, (2014), which focuses on the narrative strategies in three Amharic novels, selected *Dertogada* (2009) as one of the sample novels in his study. From the perspective of post-classical narratology, *Demeke* in his entire study examines the relationships that exist among form, content and social milieu. He argues that using form as a narrative strategy, content and social milieu are integrated in the making of the artistic and thematic features of the novels. It is also pointed out that form as a narrative strategy is also able to reinforce meaning. Likewise, *Demeke* notes that in the process of making form in their novels,

the author is influenced by his socio-cultural environment. Thus, the author as a narrative agent influences the construction of narrative form and the meaning it motivates.

Moreover, through the acts of the characters as characterization markers, the personality of the characters are exposed in the novel. Accordingly, *Demeke* regards individualism as a common trait of most characters in *Dertogada*. *Demeke* also figures out that loosed narrators, egoistic characters and socially connected authors are the distinctive features of the selected novels. This is, therefore, asserted that *Demeke's* study is different from mine in that his is almost exclusively concentrates on the tripartite relationship among form, content and social context in the construction of the narrative text, none of which is the concern of this study. It is to claim that while mine focuses on content, his is more on the correlation of form and content.

The other literary study that was conducted on two of the selected novels at an advance level is *Tena's* (2008) Ph.D. dissertation. *Tena* in his study, "*The Changing Face of Moral Vision in Amharic Novel*", including *Rekik Ashsara* (2003), considered eleven Amharic novels that represent the three Ethiopian political regimes. The combinations of moral, sociological, structural and cultural critical approaches of literary criticism are employed as a theoretical framework. His study figures out that the state of morality in Amharic novels of the Feudal Ethiopia is characterized by moral provincialism to the feudal lords. Nevertheless, some novelists like *Hadiss Alemayehu* in their novels strongly suggest the need for the change of the status quo. He further points out that the depiction of morality in the subsequent period's novels is restricted to the underdog mass.

*Tena's* study on *Rekik Ashara* concentrates on the subject matter of morality and how the moral value of the society of Ethiopia in different regimes are depicted. It is also discussed as the novel projects a moral vision of the search for consciousness. The researcher thus understands that because the society is highly obsessed with the adoration of material wealth, moral value, from which spiritual wealth is virtually originated, is less valued.

With respect to *Tena* (2008) and *Anteneh* (2014), as the domain of mine concentrates on the contemporary novels and considers none of the novels of both Feudal Ethiopia and the Derge regime, mine is different from both. Of course, both fundamentally concentrate on showing the trend of the three political regimes. Besides, while *Tena's* major issues of investigation is the

vision of morality, Anteneh's is the inseparability of Ethiopian politics and Amharic novel. None of them explicitly deals with issues of generations. Nor both deal with power relations in the lenses of Foucault's micropower. More to the point, as opposed to them, the current study explores power relations that mainly projects at inter-generation and intra-generation interactions. The societal collective mental consciousness, suppressions, ideological and worldviews in the selected novels published in the stated period from Manihem's theory of generation and Foucault and Marxist theorizations of power.

Having reviewed those related studies on Amharic literature that have been conducted in AAU, let us proceed to see those literary studies on the subject of generation. One of the literary studies that have been conducted in overseas on generation is De Grom's MA thesis at the University of Gent in 2011. From the trauma theory viewpoint, De Grom studies the trauma representation of the first and the second generations of Jewish Americans in Rosenbaum's *second-hand smokes* (1999) and Krauss's *Great house* (2010) novels. Using the two novels as a case study, his exploration extends to the representation of the Holocaust trauma in the novels of the second and the third generations. However, he does not clearly state the parameter in which both authors in their novels claimed to be the representative of the second and the third generations though the main objective of the study is not to address that.

The study thus focuses on the comparative presentations of how the generations deal with the trauma of the Holocaust of their parents. De Grom maintains that while the second generations are closer to hear the misery of the holocaust from the survivors, they are more sensitive to it than the second generation. In the researcher's view, this is why Rosenbaum's fictional characters in *second-hand smoke* are emotionally attached to the trauma resulted from the incident. Its depiction plays a very significant role in the second-generation's novels.

However, it doesn't signify that trauma is not observed in the third generations' fictional texts. There is of course, but he argues that it is not as strong as in the previous. Both generations approach their history in their own peculiar way, but the similarity lies in that they are still very much intrigued by that historical incident, and this is reflected in their fictions. In other words, De Grom in his study points out the fact that the novels are the medium that extends what happened in the past to the next generations.

The other related study worth reviewed is Wafula's Ph.D. dissertation that presented to Bayreuth University, 2013. His study is entitled: "*Narrative voice and focalization in the narration of Generational conflicts in selected Kiswahili novels*". He selected four Kiswahili novels published between 1999 and 2009.

Unlike my study and even the other studies, Waful's study focuses on both content and form. This is the case in that his exclusive area of focus is on both the theme of generational conflicts and the deployment of narrative voice and focalization. Thus, narrative theory, particularly representational narrative theory and speech act theory are used as the theoretical framework of the study. In addition to the novels, biographical and autobiographical data are also obtained using an interview and a focus group discussion data collection tools.

His discussion reveals that racial prejudice, political ideology, professional ethics, harmful traditional practice like circumcision, all of which are caused by the socio-economic and political systems in the depicted communities, are the dominant manifestations of generational conflicts. He further maintains the generational conflicts that are divulged in the novels are the direct reflections of the contemporary situations of both Kenya and Tanzania where the novels set. Based on his findings, Wafula further figures out as the novelists' ideological stances on the conflictual issues are based on the application of the techniques of narrative voice and focalization.

Though Wafula's study and mine share the subject generation in common, both are also different in various aspects. The theoretical base, data collection tools, the socio-cultural backdrop of the novels are where our differences lie. Most notably, while his study is a bit specific because it concentrates on a generational conflict which is, of course, a vital aspect of generation, mine goes beyond. Additionally the current study focuses on the manifestations of power relations from Michael Foucault and Marxist theory of power.

As to my survey so far, the most recent study on power relations at an advanced level is Crandall's Ph.D. dissertation: "*Reading Power: Female Sexuality, Bullying, and Power Relations in Young Adult Literature*", 2016 at the University of Massachusetts. As a logical foundation of her study, she argues that despite scholars and policymakers have exerted efforts to prevent bullying and sexual harassment, novels that are obsessed with bullying become popular

and are also considered for personal reading among the young. Thus, she insists that the consideration of bullying in young adult novels as the focus of their narratives as well as its inclusion in the curricula of English in American schools is the theoretical gap of the study. Taking into consideration the novel-reading preference of grade seven male and female students, the researcher selects seven young adult American novels published from 2002 to 2014. The thematic concern of bullying, harassment, female sexuality, and power relations between female adolescents are also considered in the selection.

Literary discourses on bullying, female sexuality, and power relations in the selected novels are discussed from post-structural feminism and post-structural discourse analysis perspectives. In her study, she finally comes up with the problematic nature of adolescents in general and the female in particular. She further points out as discourses of sexuality and romantic relationships which adhere to a *heteronormative* script are hazardous for young women. Based on her findings, she further outlines that there should be critical interventions to identity and disrupts hegemonic discourses around adolescence, female sexuality, and power.

Crandall's dissertation is essentially different from mine in its application of post-structural feminism as a theoretical framework and the investigation of power relations. Hers is also different from mine in that it is confined to young adult novels. More to the point, her study, in general, explores matters related to the young adults and in particular the young female whereas mine incorporates the rest as well. In other words, unlike mine, hers abandons the other group of society. It is in fact because her objective is to understand power relations in the young adult novels that she doesn't consider the others

## **Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The chapter presents us the theoretical foundation of the study. The imprint theory of Generation, Foucault and Marxist theories of power are the lenses through which the entire explorations of the study were carried out. This is due to the interdisciplinary nature of the areas of investigations. The study thus relies on interrelated theories. Accordingly, the theoretical issues that have straightforward relevance to the study have been framed into two sections. The theory of generation and its tenants has been reviewed in such a way that it would help us investigate the research question. The first section of the chapter thus appears with this theoretical discussions.

After conceptualizing the theory of generation, we then proceed to review the theory of power, which is the other indispensable theoretical base of the study. Though Foucault's view of power relations is different from the Marxists', the entire analysis of the study was carried out on the perspectives of both. The perspectives of both are therefore discussed in the second section of the chapter. Furthermore, because the study also focuses on the explication of the ideological load of the selected texts to unveil the underlying meaning in the texts, issues that are related to this are the concern of the chapter.

### **3.2. Theory of Generation**

#### **3.2.1. The concept of Generation**

Long before Karl Mannheim's seminal work, *'The problem of generations'*, the notion of generation was known in a cadamic circle though it become more popular after him. Including him various theoreticians in their prominent works, theorize generation in slightly different ways. Nevertheless, as to (Heinze, 2013; Alber et al., 2008; Turner, 1998) almost all agree on the idea that it is one of the most powerful analytical tools for studying society and its interactions.

According to Anthony (1992), for example, as discussed in Hoover (2009,p.38), generation refers to: *"a group of people that are born within a given time and are connected with each other on certain shared views such as the vitality of the surrounding culture, collective mental consciousness, emotional and physical development."* On the other hand, Alber et al, (2008, p.1), observe, *"Generation is about connections and contacts across social categories and often*

*conflicts over time.*”In either way, it is a kind of connection through which some sort of social bond and more or less meaningful groups are formed. Its formation might begin from one’s own family, gender, colleagues, and fellow citizens.

Furthermore, Pilcher (1994,p.482) from a demographic perspective defines it as “*the average period, generally considered about 20 to 30 years, during which children are born and grow up, become adults and begin to have children of their own.*” In kinship sense, it thus signifies the structure of a parent-child relationship. For Pilcher it serves as a stage of succession from one stage of human life to the other. This viewpoint relies on the conviction that the produced group in its turn generates of its kind, which might not necessarily be alike of itself. Hence, while generation has been conceived in the passive sense, it has an active connotation too. (Hunt, 2004; Pilcher, 1994).

According to (Heinze, 2013; Biggs, 2007; 1985 Jaeger) two basic hypotheses are the theoretical foundation for the formation of generation. These are *the pulse rate* and *the imprint hypothesis*. Contemporary theoreticians of generation in their exploration of societal issues tend to rely on the latter. So does this study. Although contemporary theoreticians such as Jean Twengle and Jane Pilcher are the giant proponents of the imprint theory of generation, it fundamentally originate from Mannheim's seminal essay, which was published in 1923 that later rendered into English in 1952. Pilcher (1994). For this reason, the theory itself often referred to the Mannehemian tradition. It mainly concentrates on historical events and the perception of the youth. In view of that, Mannheim (1952) as cited in Pilcher (1994, p. 483) writes:

“Generations are only produced by specific historical events that cause young people to perceive the world differently than their elders. Thus, not everyone may be part of a generation; only those who share a unique social and biographical experience of an important historical moment will come part of a generation as an actuality.”

As to Johanna (2015), including Mnneheim many of the imprint proponents, further, contend that one who studies young people's experiences in place contributes to a deeper understanding of the process of individualization, inequality and other societal issues. Thus, for them being able to take a closer look at youth cultures and subcultures in different times and places adds an extra element to understand the everyday lives of the youth.

As discussed in (Twenge, 2010; Pilcher, 1994), Mannheim maintains that the idea of youthful rebellion in opposition to the conventional social order and a persistent social change within a given society are the most likely factors for the formation of generations. Other issues such as formative experiences, formative period and generational style or identity are fundamental elements by which the imprint theory of generation argues generations are formed, and possibly appear unlike to each other. (Twenge, 2010; Pilcher, 1994)

### **3.2.2. Formative experiences and formative period**

Mannheim claims identity, as well as worldviews that well portrays a given generation, is maintained from the lived experiences of its members. Hunt (2004). It means that the collective experiences of the coevals are the outcome of what its representative figures have undergone in their late youth and early adulthood. Pilcher, (1994). This particular stage, which Mannheim calls *formative period*, is where the formative experiences are conceived. Pilcher (1994). Pilcher thus maintains as the formative period is the time when the coevals start sharing what makes them alike. However, the formation of the identity of the generation is not restricted to the formative period; it further extends to the life span of a generation. (Hunt, 2004; Pilcher, 1994).

In Mannheimian's tradition, formative experience is the dominant engagement of individuals at some definite time. (Adriaansen, 2011; Pilcher, 1994). In Pilcher's view, it is also the trace that highlights the trademark of every generation by which one is able to differentiate one generation from the other. In the remark of Pilcher, the tradition points out as generational identity firmly rests on the formative experiences of certain groups of individuals whose ages are similar. Pilcher (1994). In the context of Ethiopia, for example, the laborious efforts of the youth to realize the movement of the land to the tenant is the formative experience of the 1960s generation.

### **3.2.3. Designation of Generations**

In the commonest understanding, generation is mostly named as the young, the older, the new generation, etc. However, its naming often depends on the dominant mannerism that most of its representatives reflect in their routine lives. Very specific rhetoric around a certain group of individuals at some particular time is also the possible source from which the names of generations originate. (Heinze, 2013; Pilcher, 1994). In addition to these, the occurrences of major historical incidents or its aftermath situations are the most likely source from which its

name might be coined. WWI and post-WWII sufferings from which the so-called *Good warriors* and *Lucky few generations* are good examples of the latter. Pilcher (1994).

Although there might be different layers to the study of a certain generation, in the context of this study, the characters' age similarity, their shared views and the collective thinking of the time are the centers of attention. The imprint theory of generation concentrates on the social and cultural dislocation, which resulted from some historical events, and that in its turn let the young to view their world differently. Hunt (2004). Consequently, a group of people's commonly shared values, views, mindsets and even characteristics are worth considered elements. In the case of this study, these are the indispensable issues of concern from which the figured out generations are named.

#### **3.2.4. Generational Conflict**

So long as there is tension, there must be characters and the subject for which the tension is the cause. It is also inevitable that there are differences between generations in various regards. The existing reality at some definite time in general and the psychological and social factors, in particular, are the most important factors that make one generation different from the other. Hence, each generation has its own peculiar features. Of course, what age mates within a given generation most importantly strive to achieve is to display certain mannerisms and attitudes to make themselves the better of the others. (Braunart & Braungart, 1986; O'Donnell, 1985). Such practices usually bring about generational conflicts.

The conflict could be taken place both within a generation and between generations, which both are technically referred to as intra-generational and inter-generational conflicts respectively. (Braunart & Braungart, 1986; O'Donnell, 1985). According to Boulding, (1962) as quoted in Jessop (2014: 42), "*essentially a conflict is a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources value and identity differences.*" Similarly, Jeong, (2008), suggests differences in perceived interests, values and needs are the most basic elements in the motivations behind social conflict.

Moreover, conflicts emerge due to the pursuit of different outcomes or disagreement on the means to attain the same end. Eyerman & Turner (1998). In view of Eyerman & Turner (1998), conflict between generations, in particular, is represented by perceived goal incompatibilities

involving parties from varied generations. Additionally, attempts to control each other's choices are able to construct unsympathetic feelings and behavior to one another. Feelings of injustice emerge from the suppression of inherent social needs and values that have existential meanings and which cannot be compromised often represents different ways of life and ideologies. Slembrockeruck (2003)

Giddens (1990) explains why generational tensions exist. He asserts that generations develop their own linguistic models that contribute to a misunderstanding between age cohorts. He further maintains: "*Different ways of speaking exercised by older and younger people exist, and may be partially explained by social-historical reference points, culturally determined experiences, and individual interpretations*". Giddens (1990, p.28) Hence, in literary texts such as the novel, the various manifestations of conflicts can be inferred in the actions and interactions of characters in their fictional world.

Moreover, Mannheim argues that each generation is defined by certain biological factors and cultural values at a particular point in time and place. Pilcher (1994). Both factors are consequently become a cause for generational change. Concerning generational change, which is an essential aspect of generation, he believes that it is realized by culture rather than nature. Pilcher (1994). In the same vein, Heinze (2013, p.22) suggests: "*rather than biological, the socio-historical factor determines intergenerational bonding, especially when the individuals partake in similar political events.*" Regardless of this viewpoint, nevertheless, it could also be argued as our behavior and attitude are highly influenced by both genealogical and social factors. Both factors have an indispensable role for generational change.

### **2.2.5. Generation and Power**

Generation and power, which are the main subjects of the study, are correlated based on certain theoretical premises. The most important presumption of why both are brought together in the context of this study is that they firmly depend on the notion of connection. In here, connection signifies affiliation through which one sticks to another to make itself a bit stronger than it was actually before. This in its narrower perception leads us to the formation of collective thinking, which is the core element of generation.

Generation itself is a subdivision of society. A society, which in its turn is the outcome of an organized community in a particular place irrespective of age, gender, race, ideological, worldviews, etc. differences, is broader than a generation. (Lukes, 1996; Fairclough, 1995). For that matter, there might be two or more generations in a given society at some particular time. However, its formation is specific in that it is confined to the similarity of age and even sometimes, it might also include the similarity of thought among its members. Although the similarity of age is often considered as the foremost component in the construction of generation, there is also an obvious possibility in that it is built on the ground of commonly shared sentiment or thought.

Like in the formation of generation, a relationship is also the most important factor for power. This is because according to Foucault (1980), power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization; he further maintains that if there is no relation, there is obviously no power. Hence, though its relative severity might vary in the process of forming the affiliation among a certain group of people, it rarely occurs in the absence of relations. Members of a given generation usually make every effort to form their own collective identity that best represents their generation. The struggle could be with the other generation or among themselves. In either way, they could never avoid themselves from using power.

In somehow related ideas with the earlier noted point, integration is also an important technique through which a given generation becomes powerful. It is of course through integrating their shared views, which might be ideological, societal problem, moral value and so forth that a generation becomes strong. The technique works from Marxists' view of power, not from Foucault's perspective. The later almost overlooks the oppressive aspect of power. According to (Fairclough, 1995; Althusser, 1984), who argue that power is a quantum and are possessed, claim that it is concentrated or integrated. It hence flows from more powerful to less powerful individuals or institutions. In due course, it oppresses the less powerful. As it works on integration or a collective basis, the power holder becomes more powerful and the powerless becomes more impotent.

The presence of a social group in a given society is the other worth considered in dealing with generation and power, from which social power is presumably emanated. Social power is a form of power through which the collective identity of a certain group of people in a given society could be constructed. Putting up a collective identity is what a given generation often strives to achieve. (Lukes, 1996; Fairclough, 1995)

Moreover, according to (Lukes, 1996; Fairclough, 1995), social power is obtained in the privileged access to the socially valued recourses such as knowledge, wealth, life experience, marital or position status and the like. The attainment of social power, therefore, depends on individuals or institutions' privileged access to these socially valued resources. Other than the privileged access to the socially valued resources, the interaction that goes on among individuals is also indispensable in the realization of social power. (Lukes, 1996; Koester, 2015)

### **3.3. Theory of Power**

#### **3.3.1. Concept of Power**

It is not eulogized to assert that the exertion of power in human relationships is as old as the evolution of humankind itself. Brannigan (2001). Irrespective of this fact, however, (Clergg, 1989; John, 1986), argue its modern thinking, especially as a critical theory is associated with the publication of Thomas Hobbes's classical thought of politics in the mid-17th c. With slight divergences of thought with one another, various perspectives of power have been evolved since. (Clergg, 1989; John, 1986)

For whatever purpose it might be ranging from gaining reputation and accumulating wealth to have an ordinary conversation, power is used as an inevitable component of every human interaction. It is thus theorized in various ways. This could suggest, as there is no general conformity among scholars over its conception though most of them agree that it ultimately puts an impact on a given entity. (Simpson, 2015; Clergg, 1989; John, 1986).

According to Dahl (1961) as cited in Morgan (1986, p.72) power is "*The production of obedience to the preferences of others, including an expansion of the preferences of those subject to it to include those preferences.*" Thus, for Dahl, it is something that used as the ability to insist someone do something that he or she does not wish to do. Similarly, Lukes (1996, p.12) also observes power as "*the ability to implant in people's minds interests that are contrary to their own good*". With the exception to Foucault's perspective, various contemporary scholars, for example, (Lukes, 1996; Clergg, 1989; Gaventa, 1980), among others share theoretical similarities. Their differences are in some specific matters and their enabling means.

#### **3.3.2. Marxists' Perspective of Power**

Marxists understand power as: "*The capacity of an agent to impose his will over the will of the powerless, or the ability to force them do things they do not wish to do.*" Althusser (1984, p.14). In this sense, power is viewed as possession, as something which is owned by an individual who is presumably in charge of certain position in a given institution. Power to be conceived as possession means to think of it as something that can simply be acquired; or something that is dominantly concentrated in certain institutions or individuals. (Kelly, 2009; Althusser, 1984). For Marxists, this fundamental conception of power in other expression refers to the dominating and imposing its rationality upon the totality of the social body. (Kelly, 2009; Althusser, 1984).

The target subjects, that are supposedly the less powerful individuals, are made to be its point of application. Althusser (1984). Consequently, the target subjects are deemed as the puppet of the ideological and repressive apparatus. Althusser (1984). Althusser, further, notes that power is used oppressively against individuals. In the same vein, (Isaac, 1987; Larsen, 1983) maintain as power is something which is possessed and used oppressively against individuals and groups. Thus, in dealing with power relations, Marxists' principal concern is unveiling how individuals are oppressed by the state institutions and how they build themselves, especially through the mystifying action of the ideology. (Kelly, 2009; Isaac, 1987; Althusser, 1984) For Marxists, power usually goes from top to down. In the course of analyzing power relations in any discourse, Marxists' major concern is the oppressive act of power, which is assumed to be the cause for dominance.

### **3.3.2.1. Power and Dominance**

Dominance essentially implies the presence of a great deal of unbalanced relation of power between individuals or institutions, which is usually unsympathetic for the less powerful entity. It is achieved both covertly and overtly. Because as to Van Dijk (1993), power and dominance are interdependent, the presence of dominance also signifies the presence of power hierarchy. Though Marxists claim that class dominance is the most recurrent, social, political and cultural organization of dominance are also the noted types of dominance. (Van Dijk, 1993; Margolis & Mauser, 1989)

Power and dominance are mostly maintained based on the privileged access to discourse and communication. Van Dijk (1993). Accordingly, an individual or a group that has more access to a given discourse has a high possibility of influencing others. The dominant individual or group, who are usually small in number, have a special role in planning, decision-making and control over the relations and processes of the enactment of power. (Van Dijk, 1993; Margolis and Mauser, 1989). Such people whom Domhoff, (1978) calls them *the power elites* have special access to discourse. In other words, they are the ones who have most to say. Van Dijk, further, points out that the most powerful individual is customarily associated with the chair, who also controls the agenda, speech acts, decision-making, topics and other important and consequential dimensions. Van Dijk, (1993)

Van Dijk, (1993), on the other hand, maintains a lack of power is also measured by its lack of active access to discourse in everyday life. As to Van Dijk', while most ordinary people have active access to conversations with friends, family, colleagues and so forth, they have passive access to professional arenas. (Van Dijk, 1993; Larsen, 1983). Moreover, as power and dominance could also be institutionalized, their effectiveness is dependent on their level of organization. Van Dijk, (1993). The more they are organized, the more they become influential. Hence, the crucial implication of the correlation of control over or access to discourse is not merely that discourse control is a form of social action control, but also it indicates the conditions of control over the minds of others. Van Dijk, (1993)

### **3.3.2.3. Tactics of Power acquisition**

Tactics of power refer to the application of certain specific strategy that disposes and maneuvers forces into action to achieve an intended objective. (Van Dijk, 1993; Foucault, 1982). It is usually practiced in the everyday link-up we experience at an individual level or even beyond; it could be intentional or not. But its ultimate goal is to prompt us into particular action. There are varieties of Power tactics that are commonly used in our everyday relationships. Complaining, bullying, criticizing and the like, which are explicit form and often ended in confrontation, are the commonest examples of power tactics. (Van Dijk, 1993; Foucault, 1982). They also point out as socializing, inspiring, negotiating among others are the other commonly applied tactics of enacting power.

Individuals tend to vary in their usage of power tactics. Of course, it depends on the socio-cultural backdrop as well as the personal upbringing of an individual. Falbo (1977). Power, which in its impact on the target subject, generally catagorised as soft and hard power, could be maintained through the application of various specific strategies. In addition to the possible impact it brings on the target subject, manner of application and the relation of the participants in their discourses are important elements of the strategy. (Van Dijk, 1993; Foucault, 1982).

As a strategy of upholding power, soft power is virtually maintained implicitly. It is often exercised in interpersonal interactions. Thus, in the case of soft power, there should be a close relationship between two or more individuals. The power wielder often uses the advantage of the relationship. Its impact, which could be positive or negative, may not be unveiled immediately; it might take a bit longer. Foucault (1982). Socialization, collaboration, inspiration, and

cooperation that are seemingly constructive are what (Van Dijk, 1993; Foucault, 1982) point out as the frequently applied means of maintaining soft power.

Hard power as the term itself signifies is applied directly and forcefully, and is harsher than soft power. For example, Van Dijk (1993) claims isolation, evading and disengaging as the dominant tactics of hard power. Social exclusion or isolation is the possible outcome of the application of the tactics. Because it depends on the tangible result, its outcome, unlike soft power is immediate. Van Dijk (1993). Irrespective of this, however, Foucault (1982) maintains that hard power might make the mood of the target subject hostile. The mood might further pervade to the entire group as well. Consequently, it might disrupt the established routine life of the individuals or the group.

Rational and non-rational tactics are the other important strategy in which power is applied. Reasoning is the most important component of rational tactics. It means that the logical justification, without which the targeted individual is barely influenced, is the essential component of rational tactic. Foucault (1982). Accordingly, for Foucault, persuading and bargaining, which are chiefly applied in argumentative discourses, are the most recurrent example of rational tactics. In contrast to the rational, non-rational tactic, which is the principal manifestation of hard power, is exposed to emotionality and misinformation. Avoidance, evasion and put-downs are the notable examples of non-rational tactics. Falbo (1977).

### **3.3.3. Foucault's Perspective of Power**

For Foucault (1982), power is a kind of political technology of body dominating. Thus, he does not refer to the one possessed by a class, a group or an individual. He rather refers to the way of how to exert to hold it. Accordingly, he maintains power as: *"It's not a thing, it is a relationship between two individuals, a relationship which one can direct the behavior of another, or determine the behavior of another"*. Foucault (1982, p. 778). In this regard, power is hardly theorized as something which is inherently possessed and used oppressively against the powerless entities.

Foucault claims that power is not an institution or a structure; neither a certain strength people are endowed with. Nor it emanates from a particular site that often ends up in master vs. slave relations. (Foucault, 1980, 1978). Power is rather considered as something which is diffused

throughout all relational structures of a given society. Foucault (1980) Therefore, it is less related to class struggle than mechanics and strategies. According to Kelly (2009), Foucault's conception of power suggests two remarkable features. The most notable one is its being a system i.e. a network of relations encompassing the whole society. The other one is individuals or institutions being not the objects of power, but are the center where power and resistance are exerted upon. (Foucault, 1980, 1978).

Furthermore, according to Gaventa (2003), Foucault recognizes that power is not an inherently negative, coercive or repressive thing that let us do something against our wish. Likewise, it is not an instrument of repression, but an internalized state of being by which we are made to understand that we must conform to or punished by some mechanism. (Gaventa, 2003; Foucault, 1977). Hence, his understanding of power is essentially different from others. It means that all it does is not necessarily enforcing individuals to obey.

It is something that coextensive with resistance instead. Foucault (1982). It is a necessary and productive force in every human relation. As to Foucault, this is because power and resistance are inextricable, and hence, power relations between individuals are not reduced to the oppressor and oppressed dichotomy. Thus, both are productive relations. As a productive factor, it causes positive effects such as an individual's self-making. (Gaventa, 2003; Foucault, 1982)

Moreover, Foucault (1978, p.94) notes: "*Power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations*" In this way, Foucault does not view power relations as a one-way operation; rather it is pointed out that it emerges from "*innumerable points*". Hence, power in Foucault's perspective suggests that it comes from various directions. In this case, power is conceived as being *an ever-changing network of relations*. Foucault 1981 in Gaventa, (2003, p.2). In this connection, Foucault notes, as power is omnipresent in that it is the inevitable component of being relational. In other words, so long as there is a relation, there is power. This view of Foucault is further justified in Gaventa (2003). He thus stresses that it is not because power embraces everything consistently that it is omnipresent; it is rather because it comes from everywhere.

Moreover, Foucault, unlike both Fairclough and the Marxists', claims the omnipresence of power. In somehow related view, Van Dijk (1995) suggests the bidirectional flow of power. In

his view, power could be in the hands of the elite and the lower class in a given society. Van Dijk (1995) accordingly, he maintains that when power is in the hands of the elite, it goes from top to down and is exercised in dominating the lower class. On the contrary, he argues that there is also a relation of power that goes on the reverse. Such relation of power is manifested in reactions, resistance, or compliance. He, further, claims that actual power relations, however, are often subtle and indirect. It does not simply go top downward. Van Dijk (1993).

As hinted earlier, Foucault believes power is not something that rests within an individual. But it circulates among people and through society in complicated ways. Foucault (1978). Besides, for Foucault, the state is not something that wields power, but rather it builds a system between individuals so that the system works. In his examination of power relations, he further classifies power into *macro and micro*. Foucault (1978). Accordingly, while the macro power comprises wider economic, political and social forces, micro includes the relationships that prevail at individuals and local levels. Micro power relation is, therefore, the type of relations that we usually experience in our everyday activities.

Power relations at micro level might occur in various ways. Although not often the case, it occurs on a binary opposition basis. It could be between men and women, white and black, literate and illiterate, teachers and students and the like. Yu (2014). Such kind of relations is manifested between individuals is accepting or rejecting the control of the other side. In fact, one may try to resist such an attempt to control the actions of others in turn. This interaction as to Foucault brings about a complex network of interpersonal power relations. Foucault (1978)

### **3.3.3.1. Discipline Power**

For apparently different reasons, power is usually enforced in several different ways though none of which is claimed to escape being coercive. Wodak and Mayer (2001). For Foucault, however, it is applied somehow in the opposite way. The specific mechanism that Foucault maintains as power enforcement is different from the others. In view of that, discipline, which according to Foucault (1977,p.12), *'is a set of strategy, procedures and behaviors associated with certain institutional context which then pervades the individuals' general thinking and behavior'*, is one of the notable means of Foucault's power enforcement. Foucault's, discipline power in contrast to *the sovereign and episodic* exercise of power, which is used to coerce its subject, subtly regulates individuals' behavior. (1977). It also uses what Foucault calls *tactics*. Although the

purpose of strict adherence of discipline is to produce regularity, Foucault (1977) shows that its effect is the opposite.

Foucault in his renowned work, *discipline and punish*, points out specific ways through which discipline power acts upon. Foucault, (1977). Discipline as power enforcement works through the spatial disposition of an individual. In this method of exercising discipline, it is noted that individuals are supposed to be at a confined place. Accordingly, for Foucault imprisonment is the most noted example in this regard. It also works through strict control of time. For example, by setting the exact time in which one is supposed to be at work or anywhere else. He, further, argues as power is largely exercised through disciplinary practices in various institutions in contemporary society. Foucault (1977)

Most importantly, Foucault's view of how discipline function is well theorized by Jonathan Bantham. Foucault (1977). In Bentham's architectural structure, as discussed in Vodak & Mayer (2001) that he calls it *the panopticon*, the prisoners could be overseen by the guard without the guard being visible to them. It is because the prisoners are forced to develop an internalized form of disciplinary practice that they behave properly even without noticing the observer. Foucault (1977). It means that an individual who is supposed to stick to certain dos and don'ts is made to behave himself as if he is permanently overseen.

### **3.3.3.2. Power-knowledge**

Although power and knowledge are independent concepts, Foucault in *the history of sexuality* (1978) maintains, as both are dependent on each other. In his analysis of power relations, rather than considering both as independent terms, Foucault coined a compound term i.e. *Power-knowledge* to stress that they are integrated and inherently inseparable concepts. It is worth noting here that the hyphenated version of the French is *le savoir-pouvoir*. (1982, p. 98-102). Their being inextricable from each other apparently signifies the fact that the one is indispensable for the proper function of the other. For instance, according to Rainbow (1991), Foucault considers knowledge as the fundamental tool by which one is able to exercise power.

Similarly, Mills (2003, p.75), points out: "*Power is based on knowledge and makes use of knowledge; on the other hand, power reproduces knowledge by shaping it under its anonymous intentions. Power creates or recreates its fields of exercise through knowledge.*" Thus, for

Foucault, power and knowledge is claimed to have a recursive relationship. This happens to be the case in that knowledge is produced based on the existence of unbalanced forms of power relations. (1980). In its turn, upon the acquired knowledge, power is thus claimed. Because power in Foucault's view, emanates from the production, control and dissemination of certain knowledge, and so he contends that knowledge by itself is power. Foucault (1980)

Moreover, the accepted forms of knowledge and scientific understanding of something results in the formation of power. As to Foucault (1980), Knowledge thus bound to power, and maneuvers amidst those that produce and maintain it. Power and knowledge, in our everyday social interaction, institutional practice and cultural representation, are maintained as productive as well as constraining. Foucault (1982). In this regard, he notes, as both do not only hold us back from doing something, but also let us think and do it from different perspectives. Further, Foucault (1981a) as quoted in Rainbow, (1991, p.92) sees power and knowledge as *a decentralized, realistic, ubiquitous, dynamic and systematic phenomenon*.

### **3.3.3.3. Resistance to Power**

There is a strong argument among the giant theoreticians of power whether resistance and power are inextricable or two interdependent entities. While Foucault (1980), and Van Dijk (1995), advocate the former viewpoint, (Clegg, 1989; Kelman, 1988) are some of the chief proponents of the latter. Further, Clegg (1989), in his *circuits of power model*, distinguishes resistance as effective and episodic. He claims that resistance becomes effective in conditions of victory over organizational outflanking. It is usually addressed in an organized way, and hence creates an entirely new field of relations. However, episodic resistance, which according to Clegg (1989) is based on obedience, strengthens the stability of power and confirms its representational character.

Resistance is also put forth to an imposed power in various ways. In this regard, Kelman (1988) identifies three basic steps of resistance. Accordingly, compliance, identification and internalization are the three basic stages through which resistance is exercised from the powerless to the powerful entity. In Kelman's categorization, compliance is the initial stage. This is the stage at which an individual or group members start to comply with the demand of the authority. At this stage, though an individual personally does not agree with the stand of the powerful entity, s/he sticks with the demand of the dominants.

Identification, Kelman's second stage of reaction to coercive power, is usually associated with imitation or mimicry. It often occurs when the influenced individual imitates the influencing individual or authority. Like Kelman, Clegg (1989) is also of the opinion that powerful persons' actions, character, value and so forth are most likely admired and imitated. As a consequence, the influenced individual takes on the behavior of the powerful. Kelman (1988), nevertheless, remarks that if it persists for a bit longer, it might be changed into internalization.

In view of Kelman, internalization is the stage at which the group members rather than performing what a powerful individual whose order is cascaded downward, they instead do what they think right, which apparently stems from their opinion. It is harmonized with the influenced individual's value system. It means that internalization is the stage where strong disobedience is practiced. Regardless of their difference, Kelman (1988) stresses that over time, all are applied to make a hesitant individual turn into Zealous resistant to an imposed influence.

## **Chapter Four: Characteristics of Generations in the Selected Novels**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the characteristics of the figured out generations in the *Rekik Ashara*, *Dertogada*, *Lelasew* and *Abrak*. The investigations of all related issues are based on the theoretical foundations of the study. In most cases, the characteristics of each generation has been analyzed independently. However, in some instances, two or more personal traits of the generations have also been analyzed at a time for comparison's sake. Moreover, using textual evidence from the selected novels, the inherited peculiarity and similarity that most representative figures of a given generation share with each other have also been analyzed and interpreted.

### **4.2. Generations in *Rekik Ashara***

The characters shared views are the mirror image of their own collective identity. Based on the Manneheimian tradition of viewing generation, there are two distinctive generations in *Rekika Ashara*. In terms of age, the generations are referred to as the old and grown-up generations. According to Armstrong (2008) the grown-up, which is also called the midlife, refers to those who are in their early 30s to their mid-40s. It is very important to stress herein that the classification indicates only the age status of the representative figures of the two generations.

Accordingly, while the old generation comprises of those whose ages are supposedly in their early 60s and above, the midlife is the composition of those whose ages are in the range of both early 30s and early 40s. On the other hand, based on the dominant traits most characters of both generations share, the two generations are termed as the altruistic and the corrupted generations respectively. Henceforth, the old generation is synonymous with altruistic or vice versa whereas the midlife is that of the corrupted generation.

#### **4.2.1. The Altruistic Generation**

With the exception of Mekbib, 62, none of the character's age is explicitly mentioned. However, upon some textual clues, those older figures, who supposedly represent the generation, are claimed to be in that category. For example, some characters have the lived experience of the 1970s, which according to the theoreticians of generation, for example Pilcher (1994) calls it formative experience. A case in point is Sharew Habte Silassie's suffer in the early days of the

military regime. Additionally, Mekbib and his friends were the participants in Ethiopian politics during the Zenith of the Ethiopian students' movement days. Above all, Werkitu Belay, General Chokaw, Sharew Habte Silassie among others are parents for those children who themselves are the notable figures in the subsequent generation.

Mekbib Gorfu, one of the major characters as well as the protagonist of the novel, is the most influential figure of the generation. His sphere of influence further goes to the extent of shaping the opinion of his opponents. Other than Mekbib, the rest, display insignificant role in the development of the major story. Concerning shared views within the generation, most have a bold role. Werkitu Belay, Chistaw Feleke's mother and the old Lady whom the prostitutes at Gesho Hotel call '*mother*' are worth mentioned in this aspect. Furthermore, Sharew Habte Silassie, Atnafseged's father and General Chokaw, Genene's father, who appears in just a few instances in the story in a flashback, are the others that fit well in the old category.

As opposed to the corrupted generation, the altruistic generation's representative figures are less in number. Nevertheless, the dominant voices of the generation are oftentimes reflected by the protagonist and the narrator's comment. The generation possesses certain traits, most of which are justified to be constructive. Although there are circumstances in which some characters share one or more personalities, it is not necessarily the case that all appear with shared views. For that matter even having the same personalities, they might be different from one another in manner of revelation.

However, certain personal characters make the altruistic different from its subsequent. For instance, valuing family, being responsible, compassionate, communal values, diligence and persistence are the most recurrently displayed mannerism among the older figures. In the case of their value of family, none of them is mentioned to have distractive thought though their intention might slightly vary among themselves.

Irrespective of their marital status, the characters understand the essence of family, and are careful about it. Probably because the likes of Mekbib, Sharew, Werkitu among others envisage the positive impact of good family on getting on societal development. The characters in their own way try hard for the well-being of one's own family. If one would take a thorough look at what General Chokaw does to his son, he/she can understand how he values his family.

No matter how his partaking in undercover mission might be questionable in some way, his confidence to reveal the secret of the hidden mercury to his son shows his thoughtfulness to his family. Even if he is sentenced to serve years in prison, he never puts aside the affairs of his family. He is so concerned about the future fate of the family he has been looking after. Thinking that his son along with his family would be benefited, he unveils the secret of the mercury to his son. In doing so, the General helps his son and the rest of the family lead a good life. This is well portrayed in his family members' latter life. After the son figure left for the United States, he immediately let the rest of the family follow his footsteps. As a result, General Chokaw's family comfortably resides in the United States though he dies in prison.

In relation to the generation's value of family, Mekbib's great deeds and his philosophical thoughts are worth discussing. Mekbib is not married. He does not even have a biological child of his own. Despite this, he has brought up Hilina with love and paternal care, and considers himself as her father. So she too feels him a father, of course. In fact, he is her uncle, but he does all a father can do to his offspring. Hilina's virtuousness is undoubtedly the outcome of her good upbringing in which Mekbib takes the lion's share. Mekbib's not having a wife and his own biological offspring doesn't shake his responsibility. It is presumably due to his firm conviction that a good family is a foundation for the formation of a virtuous society.

In addition to Hilina, there are also others whom he does not have any kin-based affinity with but have a serious concern about. Dozens of his former students, including Ashebir Mano, are whom Mekbib feels like a father for. Such conception of Mekbib witnesses in his argument with both Atnafseged and Kolte over the issue of making money in a smart way:

"ሞኝ አትሁን እንጂ መምህር" አለ ኮልቴ። አንተ ብትሞት ሀብትን ለልጆችህ ታወርሃለህ። "የወለድኳቸው ልጆች የሉኝም፤ የቀለም አባት ሆኜ ያስተማርኳቸውን ሁሉ እንደ ልጆቼ ነው የማያቸው። የሀገር መሪ ቢሆኑ፤ ባለሀብት ቢሆኑ ፈላጊዎች ቢሆኑ... እነሱ ምን እንደሚሰማቸው አላውቅም። ለኔ ግን ምንጊዜም ልጆቼ ናቸው።" Sisay (2003, p.19)

"Don't be fool teacher" Kolte said, "If you die, your children will inherit your wealth" "I haven't born a child of my own, but as I am a teacher those whom I have taught at school, I consider them all like my children. Whether they become a leader, a business person, philosophers, celebrities - I don't know what they might feel about me, but I always feel them all my children."

In their dialogue, Kolte's standpoint is so clear. As he does not care about the moral issue, he tries to persuade Mekbib to get into grabbing public wealth. His entire obsession is making money in whatever way. He even thinks that being affluent is also very essential for family, especially for children. Mekbib, however, declines Kolte's offer because he feels it is immoral to be engaged in such wrong doings for he considers himself a father for many. It is true that in the process of corruption, the interest of dozens is obviously affected.

Mekbib as a teacher and as an old man not only resists to accept their offer but also forwards that they are doing something wrong to their society, and hence indirectly recommends them to restrain themselves from imoral act. In their interaction, particularly from the perspective of Mekbib, one would understand that he values family as well as society. Most importantly, in his reaction responsibility is also inferred as his distinctive personality. It would not be that difficult to figure out his virtuousness as well. His revelation of his concern to the family of his and others further suggests that the generation is associated with good personality.

The generation shows a serious concern to the wellbeing of once own family. Perhaps, it is one of the good personal traits that its representatives often display in their routine lives. Werkitu Belay, who best represents the mother figures of the generation, could be a good example to have such mentality. Owing to her quite limited appearances in the story, Werkitu's commitment to raise her son shows that she is both responsible and selfless character. Werkitu goes through lots of difficulties in her entire life. No good day she sees in her life mainly because of her impoverishment and her naughty son.

Nevertheless, whatsoever happens on Feleke, usually when he does something wrong, she is on his side to help him. Though she knows the fact, she does not let him overcome his problem by himself. She is thus seen suffers to the margin of sacrificing her own life. Werkitu's life therefore exactly represents many mothers of her age in the contemporary Ethiopia.

እናቱ በፈለቀ ፍዳዎን አይታለች። ተደብድቦ በተፈነከተ ቁጥር እያስታመመች፣ አጥፍቶ ሲታሰወር እየደበቀች፣ ሌባ ተብሎ በታሰረ ቁጥር ሰንቅ እያቀበለች፣ በቸግረኛ አቅማ ብዙ መከራ አሳልፋለች። ከድህነቱ በላይ ሰውነቷን ያገግባልው ለፈለቀ ማሰቧ መጨነቅ እና ጥፋቱን ሁሉ መጋፈጧ ነው። Sisay (2003, p.99)

Because of Feleke, his mother has undergone misery. When he is beaten up and injured, she treats him. When he does wrong and escapes, she hides him. When he is arrested claimed of theft, she provides him food. Being needy, she has gone through a lot. Beyond her being impoverished, it is her contemplation of her son that makes her have an emaciated look.

The excerpt is not confined to signify Werkitu's commitment or being responsible. It further declares that there is a sense of selflessness, compassion and determination. Such positive trait of the character, which in other expression is also of the generation as she is an integral part of the old generation, is further deduced from Werkitu's path of life and how she views the world. The meaning of life for her is to devote herself to make the life of her son good. All her wish and desire is not to see herself to be comfortable; it is rather to see the wish of her son be real. In her own words, she says: "ሰማኝ ፈለቀ!... ልብ ብለህ አድምጠኝ" "እሺ እማዬ" አንተ ሆሃብህ ሞልቶ ልክ አዘኝው ሰፈር ውስጥ ለአንድ ቀን እንኳ ከሰው እኩል ታይቼ በማግስቱ ብሞት ግድ የለኝም።" Sisay (2003, p.99) "*Feleke, listen!... listen to me very carefully!...*" "*Okay Mom*" *I wish your dream would come true so that I gain equal status with others for just a day, I do not mind dying the other day.*

Moreover, the protagonist in various circumstances stresses that he or his generation never engages in the sole benefit of oneself. He instead capitalizes on the notion of moving forward together. Unlike the ensuing generation, he prefers the interest of the society to the plain personal enrichment. He believes that when a society benefits, individuals also benefit. In contrast to Workitu Belay, Sharew Habte Silassie and General Chokaw whose sympathy to others is mostly allied to the circle of their own family, is a bit broader in that it comprises of the public. As opposed to what he observes in the contemporary time, the narrator reminds us how Mekbib's generation used to be the safeguard of his nation back in their golden days. In view of that, the narrator reads what goes in the mind of Mekbib:

መከብብ እንደገና ወደ ኋላ በሆሃብ ሄዶ ለህዝብ ፍቅርና ለሀገር እድገት ወደው ህይወታቸውን ጭምር የሰውትን እያስታወሰ፣ አሁን ተመልሶ በረቀቀ ዘዴ መነጣጠቅ መንገሱ አሳዘነው። ያን ሁሉ እውቀት፣ የፍቅርና የመስዋዕትነት ዘመን አሳልፈን በሙስና መጨማሪያችን የሚያሳዝን ነው። Sisay (2003, p.258)

Mekbib in his thought goes back and reminds of those who sacrificed their precious life for the love of the nation as well as for development's sake. Now he feels sorry that snitching one

another subtly reins. Having passed through those years of knowledge, patriotism and sacrifice, I feel ashamed that we are decayed with corruption.

The narrator comparatively describes two distinctive generations. While the former signifies where selflessness is adhered as the order of the day, the latter is quite the opposite. By implication, those years that gone by were the golden years of the altruistic generation. As to the protagonist, then they used to feel the pain of others, and selflessly devoted themselves to the good of the nation. Other than reminding us how those who were in his age sympathetic to others, which witness the trend of how his generation used to view their country and the people, Mekbib further highlights his own lived experience: "እንደምታውቀው በጉልማላት ስምን የእኔ ህልም ሌላ ነበር። ለግል ጉጅ ቅድሚያ አልሰጠሁም። የህብረተሰቡን ለውጥ አጠብቅ ነበር። ከህብረተሰቡ ጋር መሻሻልን ማደግና መለወጥን አሰብኩ።" Sisay (2003,p.82). As you know, while I was an adult, my vision was different. I did not prioritize my private life. I was expecting for societal change. I used to think to change, grow and transform myself along with the society.

The personal experience of Mekbib and the perception as well as endeavors of people of the time, suggest that the old generation attached themselves to their society. It is because of this adherence that the generation championed the tradition of sensing and reacting to the pain of others as if their own. Regardless of intellectual background or economic status, some characters internalized such practice as the constituent element of their everyday endeavors. For example, the old lady at Gesho Hotel is one of the imaginative figures of the generation that boldly reflects the claimed point. One would notice her concern about the future fate of the prostitutes at the Hotel. She further makes an effort to ease the challenges that they would possibly face.

What is more, the old lady's life itself is attached to the lives of the prostitutes. She thus looks after them as if they are her children. The other point that well dictates her thoughtfulness to them is that she is occupied with their every issue as if she is their mentor. For example, from the perspective of Fantish Achire, one of the prostitutes at the Hotel, the old lady encourages them save money to make their lives more secured. She let them do that because she believes their lives are exposed to risk. Besides, the old lady advises the prostitutes to be curious about their approaches to their customers. What the old lady thinks and does to the prostitutes consequently leads us to claim that communal values in favor of self-aggrandizement are the other giant characterized feature of the generation.

A communal value, according to Howard (1982), as opposed to unhealthy individualism, capitalizes on the notion of accommodativeness. Atnafseged's father whose generosity is narrated by Hilina is the notable figure to signify their interaction with each other on such thinking. Sharew Habte Silassie socializes with his son's school community because during school holydays he never gives presents only to his son. He instead used to do that almost to everyone. Sharew's consideration of others supposedly originates from the collective thinking of the society he is a part of. In addition to the old lady and Sharew, communal values as a personal trait is also pointed out from every activity of Mekbib that has been previously discussed. Thus, despite of gender, class and academic background differences, considerations of others as a way of life is a well-established thought of the generation.

Moreover, diligence and persistence are the elemental traits the generation is associated with. It is so because in one hand the characters' lives are full of challenges; on the other hand, the characters exert their utmost effort to surmount all their challenges in their own ways. In the case of the protagonist, for instance, his life is circled in a burdensome living condition for economic reason. The course of his life is thus very tiresome. Nonetheless, by the time he gets much older in that he is a hard worker and persistent to his conviction, he prevails over all the challenges he has been encountering.

Mekbib brought up Hilina and taught himself as well in a small teacher's salary. He has been leading a sort of impoverished life. Despite this, which would supposedly drive him to get into a perverted way of gaining something good, he prefers putting up with changing his difficult life condition in his own way. Most of the characters' paths of lives including Mekbib's are barely attached to circumvent journey. The situation of Mekbib is somehow peculiar for it is accompanied by temptation. Accordingly, some people make fun of him that he is yet a teacher stressing that dozens are making money and become rich. Others advise him to change his mind, and use the opportunity. However, he never pays attention to what others say. He rather focuses on scaling up his academic career.

Mekbib in Atnafseged's house argues with Atnafseged and his co-worker on the idea of making money in a shortcut way. Mekbib believes that making money in such circumvent way does

affect others. Thus, he never advocates that. His viewpoint obviously suggests that he would rather favor a straight and proper way to lead his life, which without diligence and persistence is hardly achieved. Consequently, he opposes his opponents view stressing on the value of his generation:

"ምናልባት የድሮ ተማሪ ስለሆንኩ ይሆናሉ.... በኛ ዘመን እውቀት እንጂ ብልጠት አይታወቅም። ለሰው እውቀትን ለጦጣ ብልጠትን ነበር የምንለው። ቀደም ብዬ እንደነገርኳችሁ ጥንትም መምህር ነበርኩ። አሁንም እያስተማርኩ ነኝ። ታዲያ ከዘመኑ ተማሪ ብዙውን ስመለከተው ወደ ብልጠቱ ነው የሚያደላው።" ...Sisay (2003, p.19)

It is perhaps because I am from the older day's students. In our days, we sought knowledge, not smartness. We used to say, 'knowledge for human, smartness for monkey'. As I told you earlier, even then, I was a teacher, and so I am now. When I observe students of these days, they incline to smartness.

In the subsequent paragraph, again the generation's diligence to seek knowledge is stressed. In the same way, the protagonist contrastingly expresses his observation of his generation and the ensuing generation. Thus, while the old generation values knowledge and all its means of acquisitions, the subsequent generation disregards it: "*በትምህርት የሚቀና ትውልድ አልፎ በትምህርት ላይ የሚሳለቅ ትውልድ አይቻለሁ። "ከአሰር ዲግሪ አንድ ግሮሰሪ" የሚል መሬክር ለመስማት በቅቻለሁ።* Sisay 2003, p.20) "*Generation envy of education has been replaced by generation mockery of education. I wonder that I hear a motto: "rather than ten degrees, worthy of one grocery"*

In the two extracts above, the path of life of the old generation is detached with a shortcut; it rather firmly relies on hard-working. In addition to Mekbib's view, the difficulties he faces, and how he triumphs them are the other indications that the generation possesses hard-working and persistence as its distinctive feature. As highlighted before, Mekbib is an old man of low economic status who along with his niece resides in government rental house. However, he never despairs pursuing his education. He teaches at public school and studies at University during summer time. Because of his industrious efforts, he finally eases the burden of his life. His long academic journey in which he lately succeeds in teaching at University is a good example that he is so persistent figure.

Diligence and persistence as a personal trait also best describe Werkitu Belay whose living condition is even far behind Mekbib. In addition to her hard up state of living conditions, she

raises and takes care of her son even after he has grown up. Of course, for living, she sells homemade local beer. Had it not been for her diligence and persistence she is endowed with, Chistaw Feleke would have never grown up. Being without a supporter coupled with the bad behavior of her son makes life to her very difficult. Although Sharew died early, his course of life, which we read in the mind of his son, is textual evidence that would further suggest the generation is a hard worker.

According to Atnafseged, Sharew's son, the father figure was a devoted businessman. He mounts up his wealth legally. Nevertheless, due to the political ideology of the time, which discouraged private investment, he was made to lose all his belongings that he had accumulated in year's painstaking efforts. Besides, the military government killed him. Most importantly, the father figure inherited the tradition of hard-working to his son though Atnafseged uses it in the wrong way. One of the most influential characters, Hilina, also witnesses Sharewe's commitment to others. Based on what the characters do, reflect and think of, the altruistic generation is not only associated with hard-working and persistence but also characterized to have a strong sense of determination and a high level of moral value.

#### **4.2.2. The Corrupted Generation**

Those imaginative figures whose ages are in the range of early 30s and early 40s, and have some shared views in common, represent another generation. According to Armstrong (2008), stages of human ages, this range is categorized as the middle life. The characters in a similar understanding are called the middle life generation. Indeed, with the exception of a few characters like Atnafseged, 37, most of the characters' ages are not explicitly mentioned. However, upon certain textual clues the characters are claimed to belong in that range. For instance, some characters are the biological children of the characters of the previous generation. Those characters that directly involved in the conspiracy of the hidden mercury are the grabby figures of the generation.

In particular, Atnafseged, one of the major characters that show contradictory personalities in the course of the major story of the novel, is the prominent figure of the generation. Though he later comes up with change of heart, he is antagonistic with the preceding generation in many ways. His antagonistic views are pronounced in his thought and manner of business engagement. The sudden complete change of heart noticed in him is due to his feeling of affection to Hilina.

Nevertheless, his antagonistic views suggest that the driving force behind his wealth is the core area of our investigation. In addition to Atnafseged, the broker Kolte and Chistaw Feleke, who partake in playmaker role in the conspired crew having different significance of involvement, are the constituents of the generation.

The contractor Atalay and his partner Tafach Alemayehu are the other imaginative figures of the generation. Both characters' degree of attachment in the conspiracy circle is quite significant. Conversely, the characters, who unlike Atanafesege never bring change in their personality throughout the story, have a pretentious sort of platonic relationship.

Furthermore, Gebre an appointed official in a government office and the two other Mercury mafia crew whose role is rescuing the whole team, are also worth noted figures. They are called Rekiku and Gizufu in their secret circle. However, it is disclosed later that their actual names are Ashebir and Germew respectively. Other than the conspiracy architects, there are also other individuals that are preoccupied with corrupted mind set. The prostitute Fantish Achire is a good example of such figures. Although they are individuals from different professions, almost all share certain unsympathetic personal traits.

Upon the shared views and practices, they are therefore termed as the corrupted generation. Because they do nothing in line with the conventional moral standard of a given society, the characters are boldly associated with corruption. As compared to the things the altruistic do or think, corruption is the identity of the generation. Even though there is an obvious variation in degree of engagement among most, none of them refrains from corruption. It is because most think corruption as the only means of being rich that they barely see its immoral aspect. Some of them such as Atnafseged and Rekiku even try to rationalize their involvement as a form of payback to the wrong deeds they used to suffer, and thereby practice it as something normal. The generation and corruption in *Rekik Ashara* are therefore the two sides of a coin.

Corruption as feature of the generation is depicted in various ways. Before dealing with the overriding characteristics of the generation, which in one way or the other suggest the pervasiveness of corruption, let us discuss the degree of the characters' engagement in corruption and its manner of revelation. In view of that, they partake in an act of corruption into two

fundamental forms. In other words, there are two groups of individuals within the generation that are pervaded with the thought of corruption.

Those that have sudden access to wealth and unfairly benefit fall under the first category. Individuals that fall under this category are those who practically involve in an act of robbing public wealth for the mere interest of themselves. Its practitioners, usually rely on their reputation, societal acceptance and institutional decision-making power as undercover to enable them realize their hidden undertakings. Atnafseged, for instance, points out that his reputation in the society is the driving force of his involvement. In his own words, he rightly witnesses, "አውነቱን ለመናገር በገንዘብ እንዳመልክ ያደረገኝ ህዝቡ ነው። ሀብቴን አይቶ ሲያከብረኝ፣ ሲያቆላምጠኝ፣ ሲያደንቀኝ.... ጭራሹንም አሳብደኝ።" Sisay (2003, p.240). *To be honest, people let me worship money. When they see my wealth, they reverend, befriended and admired me; I am then even getting crazy about it.*

Atnafseged, Atalay, Kolte and Gebre are those that are classified under the first category. Due to their practical participation in acts of corruption, these characters become either rich or able to lead a good life. While both Atnafseged and Atalay are in business circles, Gebre is a government officer in the right position for decision-making. The broker Kolte plays a go-between role.

Their being in such positions would thus help them have a strong chain among them in which they exploit the nation's wealth. These individuals, who as a group could also be called the weevils, are a few in number. but massively impinge on the fate of the mass as well as the entire system. Weevil, according to Merriam Webster, is a type of insect that eats the grain as a result of which the grain could be destructed. So do the corrupted generation negatively affect the nation. To substantiate our argument, let us see how the antagonist conspires with officials in which he becomes wealthier, which on the contrary could dwarf the economy of the country:

ብዙዎቻችን በግልፅም ሆነ በስውር ስንነግድ የኖርነው በመንግስት ገንዘብ ነው። በመንግስት ባንኮች የተያዙትን ንብረቶቻችን ቢሸጡም አንዳቸውን አይመልሱም። ሆን ብለን ያደረግነው ነገር ነው። ለገማቾች ጉቦ በመስጠትና ከባለስልጣኖች ጋር ውስጥ ለውስጥ በመስማማት ከንብረቶቻችን በላይ ገንዘብ ስንወስድ ኖረናል። Sisay (2003, p.257)

In public or secretly, many of us used to trade in government finance. If all our properties that the state banks hold as collateral are sold, they would not even pay back one of our loans. We

have done that deliberately. In having an undercover deal with higher officials and bribery appraisals, we have loaned more money than our collaterals.

The quote, which is primarily of how Atnafseged and others of his type corrupt the country and become rich, further suggests that the weevils have a firm chain of connections. Over and above, their engagement is on purpose and in an orchestrated manner; they never consider it immoral or illegal acts. Therefore, the inducement to all wrongs such as bribery, the weevils practice is considered quite normal. For that matter, officials like Gebre justify his involvement as a reward for which he fought in overthrowing the military government.

On the other hand, there are others within the generation that unlike the weevils does not practically participate in an act of corruption; yet they are mentally corrupted. It is not because they are abided by the rule of law nor because they have a good moral value that they never steal the public wealth. It is rather because they have not been accessed the opportunities. Although they never take part in it practically, they are not the forefront figures in being against its practice either. Rather, they are envy of those who both immorally and illegally become rich.

These characters also try to pursue the corrupted footsteps though they are unable to realize it. Such mentality mostly goes in the mind of Tafach Alemayehu, Chistaw Feleke and Fantish Achire. In fact, it is the collective consciousness of the rest as well. Thus, they are categorized as mentally corrupted. It would further imply that those who are in the second category are extremely obsessed with the thought of being rich like their fellow generation. Chistaw Feleke's being in such a state of mind is understood in several occasions.

For instance, in his discussion with Fantish over his meeting with the secret group at Atnafseged's mansion, he reveals his desire to be a well-to-do like Atnafseged: "የሚገርምሽ..... የሜርኩሪ ጌታን አየሁት፣ ጨበጥኩት፣ አነጋገርኩት።" ያው እንደ እኔ እና እንደ አንቺ ሰው ነው። ሀብታም ስንሆን እኔ እና አንቺም እንደሱ እንሆናለን። Sisay (2003, p.173) *"To your surprise... I saw the King of Mercury, I shook hands with, I talked to him. He is just a human like you and me. When we become rich, we will be like him."* Similarly, Tafach Alemayehu recurrently reflects her ambition to be rich. Thus, as opposed to the weevils, these individuals' state of mind represents dozens. It could also be argued that they are the representative figures of those who are mentally corrupted in contemporary Ethiopia.

The generation's strong attachment to corruption is further justified in certain personalities that most are associated with. Material obsessions, self-centeredness, heartlessness among others, are the most recurrently noted ones. These traits are also claimed as the ideological base from which all their thoughts and actions originate. In another expression, there is a fundamental difference of worldview or belief between the two generations as a result. In this regard, Althusser (1984) argues that the ideological difference among certain groups of individuals would result in generational division. So, unlike the old generation's worldview, which centers on being inherently good to others, the Midlife generation is preoccupied with the pursuits of material comfort by which they are able to attain their happiness.

Material obsession is one of the typical features that best describes the general mannerism of the generation. Materialism herein is understood as a sort of having a strong desire to hunt wealth or something that would give someone physical pleasure, but overlooks spiritual values. In that sense, it is not that elusive to figure out those whose mindset is governed by material obsession. This is so mainly because the characters irrespective of the consequences their hustle up might be resulted in, they go through all the possible ways to get rich and fulfill their wishes.

One of the best examples that well dictate the viewpoint in the novel is the setup of the backstairs group in which individuals are collected to robe the expensive treasure hidden somewhere. Most of the members of the group are from the generation. Some of the high-flying imaginative personals in the group are Kolte, Chistaw Feleke, and Tafach Alemayehu. None of them care about what they are actually doing is immoral or illegal. They do not even bother about the possible risks they might face in the due process. Instead, they are most importantly preoccupied with the money they would get from the mission and the well-decorated life they would envisage to live. Chistaw Feleke, one of the participants in the secret group, for instance, promises Fantish to marry her and live a comfortable life in their dividend. Their marriage is thus conditioned on the fact that he is able to secure money from the mission.

The generation's strong desire for material possessions rather than moral values is indicated in their attitude towards Atnafseged. Most of them eulogize whatsoever he does. As a sign of reverence, they even give him a nickname called "The King of Mercury". However, all are well

aware that Atnafseged's path of life is so corrupted; none seems interested to see this part of him. They are rather so enthusiastic to be in the track of him for they firmly believe that he favors the smartest way.

The likes of Chistaw Feleke, Tafach Alemayehu and even Kolte are stunned in all his belongings they see in the party they are invited in his mansion. The foods and drinks they are served and the Luxuriousness of his mansion is what they are most grabbed by. Some of them, for instance, Tafach is even unable to hide her feeling of jealousy of him though she too is well aware of the moral depravity behind his fortune.

The visitors are more inspired to maintain what he has achieved in a way that he does it. This is evidently noted in their passion as well as a strong commitment they show in the mercury circle. The Antagonist's ostentatious displays of his belongings to attract Hilina's attention also shows his too much pride in his wealth. The reason he does that is clear. It is to make her into him. Actually, Atnafseged has a stiff self-assurance that his wealth is too much to help him marry Hilina though she disproves him that his money would never do that. Albeit not as dominantly and persistently as in other characters, materialistic as a personal character is also observed in the prostitute. Other than her seductive and pretentious look, Fantish believes that beauty by itself has no essence without money. She, therefore, claims, as one would never be beautified if he/she were a trapped figure.

Above all, Tafach is possibly an iconic figure to pronounce that the generation is in such state of mind. She has a boundless desire to be a wealthy woman that would help her experience a luxurious life. This thought usually goes into her mind. It is not confined to her thought alone, of course. She does practically perform it since she has been very young. It is often shown in her superficial romantic affairs with Atalay. The manner that she tries to show off herself to Atnafseged while being in a relationship with Atalay is a clear sign of the claimed point. It is not because she is into Atnafseged that she seeks his attention; it is rather because he is a well-to-do man. She does reflect that in his mansion in the party, particularly during the post-party incidents. Tafach further tries hard to change Atnafseged's mind not to be affectionate with Hilina though all her trials remain fruitless.

Furthermore, from its very inception, her romantic affair with Atalay is not inspired by affection. It is conditioned upon Atalay's potential for making money. As he is informed in a clear term, he too knows such a standpoint of her. It is with a rich man that she is interested to have a romantic affairs. In his frequent visits to her office, during the earlier days of their acquaintance, the narrator observes:

"ምነው እግር አበዛህ?" ትለዋለች በቁጣ ፈገግታ። እኔ እንጂ ትናፍቁኛለሽ... ፍቅር ሊይዘኝ ነው መሰል "ይላታል ሲፈራ ሲቸር።" "ገንዘብ አለህ?" ትለዋለች። "እ... አልገባኝም" ይላል አታላይ በድንጋጤ "ፍቅር ብቻውን በቂ አይደለም። መጀመሪያ ገንዘብ ስራ! ምርጫዬ ገንዘብ መስራት የሚችል ወንድ ነው። ፍቅርን ወይም ትዳርን የስቃይ መድረክ አድርጌ በችጋር ተከርምቼ መኖር አልፈልግም። ጥሩ ኑሮ እፈልጋለሁ። የተቀናጣ ኑሮ እየኖረ ሚስቴን ማሞላቀቅ ማቅበጥና ማዝናናት የሚችል ወንድ ነው ፍላጎቴ።" Sisay (2003, p.53)

"You are overdoing your visits?" she says in a wrath smile. I do not know. "Perhaps, I am longing you... in a bit afraid tone, he said. I think I'm about to fall in love with you". "Do you have money?" she said. Stupefying he said, "I don't understand" "love alone is not enough. First, make money! I would rather be with a man who is able to make money. I do not want to make marriage or love a misery circle and lead a miserable life as well. It is my wish to be with a man who could enjoy and overindulge his wife and who himself is able to live a luxurious life".

In the quote as well as in her reaction to Atnafseged, her strong desire to gratify her body pleasure for which it is argued that she overlooks spiritual values is well demonstrated. Her expression, which conveys of how she sees the world, also suggests that her materialistic driven thought is so prevalent in contemporary Ethiopia.

The characters' possessions and their whole life situations is a clear indication as to which class of people they belong. Including the wealthy Atnafseged, most of them possess luxurious goods like cars and houses, which are the clue of their being in the so-called in the better-off Class. As the antagonist's mansion and the superfluous party signify, he is in a state of a well-decorated living condition. If not like Atnafseged, the situation of others such as Tafach and the contractor Atalay also experience a good life. Whilst the former relies on the belongings she inherits from her parents, the later earns a lot in his profession. The case of broker Kolte and the officer Gebre are also not much different.

It would thus mean that with the exception of Chistaw Feleke and Fantish Achire whose life depend on theft and prostitution respectively, the economic status of most goes beyond the middle class. Not considering this fact, they are apparently in a state of being unsatisfied with what they possess. This is why they are obsessed with accumulating wealth. As Tafach in particular stresses, the generation believes in money by which all their material' needs are secured. It is also believed that it is their essential means of having happiness. Their unreserved struggle to have wealth thus emanate from such worldview, which is quite the opposite to that of the Altruistic generation. The corrupted generation's attachment with a material obsession to have body pleasure is viewed in their tendency to worship money.

Their tendency to worship money originates from their materialistic worldview. They all strongly believe that money matters most than any other thing in the journey of human life. It would be a navy argument to state that money is not important in life. However, the point worth claimed problematic is its consideration as most valued of all the other human values. Because they think and believe that money can do them anything, they consider other things less important. They do not care about other social aspects like friendship. If we consider the case of Atalay, for instance, he has no real friends with whom he shares ideas. His business partners whom he superficially befriends with are not his real friends. It is rather to take some advantage that he some times goes with them.

As the generation is in a state of mind that nothing is valuable than money, its giant representatives are obsessed with making money. They are dominated by such thought and reflect it in everything they do. Tafach, for instance, contends that without having money nobody enjoys love and experience happiness. For her, money is the core ingredient of happiness in life. In view of that, she argues with Atalay noting on her personal experience. Tafach maintains people she meets at Hilton Hotel are rich; they all are happy and have good feelings for each other. In her argument, she stresses while rich people are inherently happy, people who are on the other turn are not.

Other than Tafach, the broker Kolte is also crazy about money. In his entire life, he advocates money is the soul of his life without which nothing goes proper. Kolte well pronounces this view almost everywhere. The commonest expressions of his obsession, however, are: "ሁሉን ገንዘብ ይሰራዋል።" (p.14). *Money does everything* "ገንዘብ የሚያሰጥህ ሁሉንም።" (p.47). *Nothing is impossible*

*for money*. The two recurrently uttered expressions of Kolte suggest as he sturdily worship money like divine power for the reason that he believes it helps him do anything. Gebre also uses similar expression: "ወርደትን በገንዘብ ማሸነፍ ይቻላል። (p.282)" *Money could triumph shame*. Again, Gebre's conception of money is as highly valued as by Kolte. For both, it is something they are tremendously attached to. As a result, they are disconnected from aspects of human values. The same sort of mentality is understood in explicit expressions of the antagonist. His is even sounder than the rest in that during his confession he unveils as he explicitly worships money.

The generation is associated with other traits that promote negative feelings, for example, self-centeredness. Unlike the old generation prominent figures, no single character tries to show any concern to others. All run after the sole benefit of themselves. This happens to be the case due to the generation's primary motive is maintaining personal satisfaction. As they are highly driven by materialism, personal pleasure and greed are firmly planted in their inner self. The striking point concerning the issue under consideration is that as opposed to the old generation, the generation being in a good economic status but is scarcely able to suppress their ego.

Self-centeredness pervades them. It is boldly noted in their everyday social interactions, especially in friendship and business engagement. Like in their reaction to their business partners as obviously noted in the case of the mercury circle and Atalay's business partners. In its extreme end, one would see the characters' self-centered minds-set within the context of the family itself. A good example in this regard is how the family members feel each other. The relationship between Feleke and his mother, Kolte and the rest of his family and Gebre and his wife are the families from which unbalanced feeling to each other is inferred. In the relation between the mother and the son figures, the egoistic nature of the son figure is effortlessly pointed out.

The other important point that further illustrates their self-centeredness is the fact that most of them do not form a family. There are of course exceptionals like Kolte and Gebre who form a family and have children. This is one of the reasons for which it is argued that the generation is self-centered. Because they do not want to take responsibility beyond themselves, they are even less interested to get married and lead a marriage life. Marriage is indeed all about sharing responsibility. As they barely care about others, they become less interested to be in the institution of marriage. In other words, it is for the reason that they never let any of their interest to be affected by the interest of their soul mates that they stay late unmarried.

The notion of self-centeredness is not restricted to the personal benefit of the characters. It further goes to the extent of affecting the well-being of others. This leads us to the argument that the generation in its motive to gratify its desires consequently becomes heartless. It means heartlessness, which is correlated with both materialism and self-centeredness, is the other peculiar feature of the generation.

Heartlessness, which is the ugly face of being in an extreme state of self-centeredness in interpersonal relationships, is the other distinguishing feature of the generation. Their loss of sense to others because of their extreme obsession with their feelings is the notable way in which their heartlessness is highlighted. The characters in their ways struggle to realize only their own interest. What makes the generation heartless in the process is that they would realize their desire in the expense of the lives of others. Of course, not all are on the same level in their negative feelings to others or each other. There is an obvious degree of variations among themselves. For example, Atalay, Kolte, Rekiku and Gizufu inhumanly behave, and are more vicious than the rest.

Atalay's being in such a frame of mind is well portrayed in different occasions. Including in his interaction with his business partners, one would also sense it in his other part of life. Above all, his brutality is quite noted in the situation he confides Kolte his plan of murdering colonel Gofu, one of whom he has been conspiring with over the issue of taking out the hidden mercury:

"ማስወገድ ስትል... መግደል ማለትህ ነው እንዴ" አለው ኮልቴ በድንጋጤ እና በፍርሃት ድምፅ ታዲያ ሌላ ምን ማስወገጃያ መንገድ አለ?... አስበው እስቲ ኮልቴ:: እሳቸው ሲወገዱ ብዙ ገንዘብ እናተርፋለን:: የኔና የአንተ ድራሻም በእጥፍ ይጨምራል:: ኮልቴ ገንዘቡን አይጠላም:: ኢታላይ የቀየሰው መንገድ ግን ምን ያህል እንደሚያስኬድ እርግጠኛ አልነበረም::  
Sisay (2003, p.213)

When you say execution ... do you mean murdering?... Kolte said in a shocked and frightened voice. "So, is there any other way to avoid him?"... Kolte just thinks of how greatly we profit when he is executed. My share and yours will also become double. "Kolte doesn't seem unhappy with the possible gain. But he is not sure how far Atalay's plan goes successful".

The excerpt, which is discussed at length between the two egoistic individuals, shows not only Atalay's being a heartless villain but also that of Kolte. The case of Atalay is very evident in that he unveils his intention of murdering the old man in a plainly addressed expression. His evil plan

later extends to the others including Kolte himself. When we come to Kolte, while he should have discouraged Atalay his intention of murdering the Colonel, he instead turns his attention to the suggested profit he might gain, and considers the feasibility of the plan. Here, what Kolte considers most important is the effectiveness of the designed plan that would help them profit substantially, not the death of their partner. As he too is blinded with the suggested increment of his share, which is conditioned on the death of the old man, Kolte himself is a hardhearted figure.

Consequently, it becomes apparent that the two characters' ultimate goal is doing something good to themselves remaining thoughtless to the threatening life condition of others. The incident is not the only instance to signify their thoughtlessness to others. There are various situations in which other prominent figures of the generation are figured out heartless. For instance, Rekiku and Gizufu, the notorious mercury mafia crew who work for Atnafseged, are worth mentioned. Both lead most of their lives on robbery and detaining people.

Heartlessness is even revealed in their romantic affairs. A well-portrayed instance is the problematic as well as the pretentious romantic relation between Atalay and Tafach. The later often acts upon the former. In their relation, the boldly stressed idea is that the woman figure strives to take advantage of the man and make her future life the better off his. In contrast, Tafach shows a devil may care attitude to the future life of Atalay.

Other than, between business partners and friends, feeling of heartlessness is also extended to a family level. A case in point is the relation between Chistaw Feleke and his mother. While the mother figure is almost selfless to her son, Feleke is quite the reverse. The reason he is associated with such personal traits is because he steals his mother's ring and sells and maintain his desier. The point that makes the argument a bit sounder is the fact that he does it knowing the suffer his mother has been through to have the ring.

The characters' personalities that have been explicated so far would collectively give us a clear picture of the overall state of affairs of the generation. Besides, the explored traits, which are argued almost binary opposite to that of the former generation have presumably resulted from certain presupposed factors. Although it could be argued that the noted factors in a broader view are associated with improper early childhood upbringing, in particular, two specific factors are pointed out as the possible causes. While the first one is about the characters' lack of attachment

with their parents during their childhood days, the other is the fact that none value education as core human value.

Concerning parent-child attachment, most characters for various reasons are barely attached to both parents. It means most are not fortunate enough to have received parental care and support from both parents. As a result, the characters are gradually exposed to the practice of socially unacceptable behavior, which in turn negatively affects the lives of them and others as well.

To see the point further, let us see the childhood experience of the antagonist. The antagonist lost his father while he was very young for which he claims to have been enforced to shoulder the burden of his life. The military government for political reasons killed his father. The death of the father ruthlessly affects the upbringing of the child and makes him later behave against the norm of the society. This is because, in one hand, the loss of his father for him would mean the loss of a guardian who let him act properly, on the other hand, his father's murder let him conceive sense of vengeance.

Other characters such as Chistaw Feleke, Fantish Achire and Genene Chokaw have also been brought up without the proper follow up and guidance of parents. Let alone the lack of love and paternal care, some are even do not know their biological father. A case in point is the situation of Fantish and Feleke. Both never know their fathers and were raised by their mothers alone. Besides, Tafach Alemayehu is the one who was brought up without receiving parental care from her biological parents. Because her both parents died early, she was raised by extended kin. Such early childhood impediments of the characters expose them to experience the discussed traits that resulted in bringing a crisis on society.

What is more, in a patriarchal oriented society such as Ethiopia, a father is assumed to have an indispensable role in imposing societal code of conduct on children. The absence of a father in raising children would thus most likely affect the behavior of children. As noted in the iconic figures of the generation, they lack proper conduct and moral value. This point is further portrayed in their profession and in their manner of engagement. For instance, Chistaw Feleke is a theft, Fantish Achire is a prostitute and Kolte is a broker. Of course, both Fantish and Feleke claim to consider such endeavor as a means of survival because they are dependent on their single impoverished parent. Although unlike Feleke and Fantish, Atnafseged and Genene are

from a well-to-do family, yet both are morally corrupted. Again, the reason is their lack of attachment with their fathers.

The deterioration of the value of schooling within their society is the other crucial point that lets the generation in conflict with societal moral values. They perceive that the material values of things are more valued than that of the value of schooling. As Mekbib argues, because the generation believes there are short cut that they are able to lead a comfortable life, they no more consider education as a means for living. In Mekbib's view, it further means that the generation understands, as schooling does not serve beyond. In addition to Mekbib's general observation of their ridiculing attitude towards education, prominent individuals' educational background is poor. For example, Atnafseged, Genene, Feleke and Fantish barely go beyond elementary school.

Furthermore, other than the contractor, none graduates from a higher academic institution, and leads his/her life in a professional career. Education being scorned is further figured out from the state of affairs of both the antagonist and the protagonist. Whilst the antagonist drops out of school from grade seven, the protagonist holds University degree and even later reach to the rank of a University lecturer. However, Mekbib goes through a lot to have his degree and teaches dozens in his whole life; yet he is unable to have a private house of his own.

The Antagonist, on the contrary, is wealthy and hence leads a well-decorated sort of life. Atnafseged secures his affluence in the shortcut immoral ways that the fellow figures favor. This would suggest that schooling among the generation is not regarded as a tool for a life worth living. It further facilitates the occurrence of such a frame of mind that discourages schooling and advocates making money in improper ways. Atnafsged, Kolte and Atalay are even proud of the way they make money. Additionally, Mekbib comments that the generation favors to have a single grocery than having ten bachelor degrees. Being in such a state of mind, the generation strives to secure the former. Consequently, the value of schooling through which moral values could be maintained is inevitably overlooked.

### 4.3. Generations in *Dertogada*

Before dealing with the features that distinguish one generation with another, let us explicate the general setting of the novels. This is because the setting of a given novel possibly gives us a clue as to where the trace that marks the borderline of one generation and the extension of the other. Hence, without a clear discussion of the temporal position of the story in the novels, one would barely identify the clear distinction of one generation with the other in the selected novels.

In the case of *Dertogada*, the story goes on in contemporary Ethiopia and overseas such as in the US and Israel. However, in some instances characters and often the narrator using prolepsis as a narrative technique, take us as far back as to the early decades of the 20th century when fascist Italy invaded Ethiopia for the second time. In a similar technique, the late 1960s and 1970s are also stressed being the storytime.

In view of that, three distinctive generations are figured out in *Dertogada*. These are the old, the intellectuals, and the young generations. The old generation, which henceforth could also be referred to as the first generation, is the constituents of those imaginative figures who were born in the first decade of the 20th century. Abba Didimos or Aleka Ayalew and the likes of Abb Finas, Abba Jenberu, and Emahoy Welete Kiros are some of the prominent figures that belong to this generation. The Italian Mormodino Buski also belongs in here. For example, Abba Didimos, who used to tell his lived experiences in the past to Shagizin Shagiz's childhood days, is claimed to hint that he belongs to the stated generation. This is well articulated in the discussion that goes between Eng. Shagiz and Dr. Miraje:

በልጅነቴ አለቃ አያሌወ ወደዚች ከተማ ሲመጡ አስታውሳለሁ። በጣም ጎበዝ ተረትና ታሪክ አዋቂ ናቸው። እኔ እንደወያዎ አባቴ ካስተማሩኝ ተረት በላይ የነገሩኝ አለቃ አያሌወ ናቸው። በተለይ በጣሊያን ጊዜ የነበረውን የኢትዮጵያን ሁኔታ አብጠርጥረው የሚያውቁ ሰው ናቸው። እሳቸው እንደነገሩኝ ከሆነ ከጣሊያን ጦር ጋር ተደባልቀው የወስጥ አርበኛ ሆነው ተዋግተው ነበር። Yismake (2009, p.26)

"I do remember when Aleka Ayalew first came to the town. He is a good storyteller and knew history well. He told me more tales than my father did. He is well informed of the details of the Italian invasion. As he told me, he fought against the Italians being as an insider within the Italian army."

In addition to Abba Didimos, Abba Jenberu, Abba Finihas and Mormodino Buski all took part in the Ethio-Italian war of the early 1930s. The other textual evidence that suggests they are the imaginative figures of the old generation is the fact that most of these characters' names are preceded by the prefix Abba, Aleka or Emahoy, all of which are the indicators of getting old. Such naming tradition, in most parts of the country, especially in monasteries and rural areas, is given to old age people as a sign of reverence. Besides all of them could also technically be father for those who belong to the subsequent generation. For that matter, Abba Finas and Abba Jenberu are the real fathers of Zipporah and Miraje respectively.

Most notably, Abb Jenberu in his late confession to Dr. Miraje that he is the biological father of Dr. Miraje, literally utters he is ninety-eight. Abb Jenberu says: "እኔ አሁን እድሜዬ ዘጠና ስምንት አመት ደርሷል።" *Yismake, (2009, p.195). I am almost 98.* In a similar expression, which might be for different reason, is also observed in the case of Mormodino Buski's age. The narrator comments: "ዶን ሞርሞዲኖ ቡሰኪ የዘጠና አራት አመት እድሜ ባለጸጋ ቢሆኑም በምድር ላይ ዘጠና አራት ቀናት የቆዩ ያህል አይሰማቸዋል።" *Yismake (2009, P.113) Don Mormodino is 94. Nevertheless, he feels as if he has lived only for 94 days.*

In addition to the earlier noted points, which justifies the existence of a group of people that belong to the so-called the first generation, the quoted expressions further confirm the talking point, particularly it forwards a clue as both are members of the old generation.

#### **4.3.1. The Old Generation**

In *Dertogada*, wisdom is one of the commonest traits that well portrays the old. Aleka Ayalew, Abba Jenberu and Colonel Fiseha among others have such peculiar features in their imaginative world. With the exception to Colonel Fiseha, who had been in the NASA before meeting Abba Jenberu in the research center, most of the characters of the old generation scarcely go to any academic institution; but have accumulated wisdom from their life experiences. They acquire it from their enormous experiences over the years they have lived, particularly from their reading in the monasteries. For example, Abba Jenberu: "እኔም በዚህ ወቅት በገዳሙ ውስጥ በማነበወ መጥሃፍት እየተለወጥኩ መጣሁ። ራእዬን ከግለሰብነት ወደሀገራዊነት ቀየርኩ።... በኋላ ሁሉም ነገር አዕምሮዬ ውስጥ ሲለዋወጥ ታወቀኝ።..." *Yismake (2009, p.193). Upon my reading in the monasteries, I have changed myself. My individualistic vision is changed into nationalism. Then I felt that all have been changed in my mind.*

The expression further suggests as he is not only wise but also selfless. Above all, it could also indicate Abba Jembru's patriotic sentiment, which by implication declares that the generation in the same vain shares patriotism as its notable attribute. They are also moralistic. Again in another instance, Abba Jenberu in his persuasive discourse on the mysterious aspects of the giant book, which is kept in the underground research center, further justify:

... "ይህ መጽሐፍ ስድስት ሜትር ቁመትና አራት ሜትር ስፋት ያለው የምድራችን ግዙፍ መጽሐፍ ነው። ካርታውን በቀይ ቀለም የሳልነው በዚህ መጽሐፍ ፬፻፵፬፻፵፯ ገጽ ላይ ነበር። ... ልጄ ማራጅ መጽሐፉን ለማንበብ አትጨነቅ አይገባህም። የተጻፈው በግእዝ ቋንቋ ቢሆንም ቃላቱ ምልዋጥ በሚል ስልት የተጻፉ ናቸው።" የእጅ መዳፍ የምታህል ሌላ ትንሽ የብራና መጽሐፍ ከተከመሩት መጽሐፍት መዘዉ ይህኛ ትንሽ መጽሐፍት የዚህ ግዙፍ መጽሐፍት መፍቻ ናት። ጠላት ይህንን መጽሐፍት ስርቆ ቢሄድ የህንን መፍቻ ካልያዘ መጽሐፉን አንብቦ ሊረዳ አይችልም።... Yismake, (2009, p. 191)

... "This book is six by four meters size. It is a giant book on earth. We have drawn the map in red on its page 444. ... My son Miraje, you do not have to bother to read the book, you barely understand it. Though it was written in Geez, the style of the words is called Milwate." ... Under piles of books, he has picked and given him a palm-sized book that decrypts the giant book. In case our foes steal the giant book, they will hardly understand it without interpretation from the smaller one...

The discourse in other expression suggests that literature is the basis of their wisdom. Additionally, in the quote, the giant book on which the map was drawn is not understandable to anyone without the reference of the smaller ones. Abba Jenberu, in his explanations, feels that Dr. Mirage whom the old man engages in a lively discourse with would barely understand the secrets of the giant book. On the contrary, Abba Jenberu drew the map along with their fellow individuals most likely with Aba Finahs and Aba Didimos. It means that these individuals are wiser, which they supposedly gain their wisdom from their life experiences. It is not only how they drew the map on the giant book but also of why they set its decrypts that they are asserted to possess wisdom.

Their wisdom is reflected in their thought, activities and even in the inspirational discourse they address to put their influence on others. Using such discourse, in which their being wise is revealed, let others preserve what they consider good for the next generation. We see this point in the discussion Abba Jenberu holds with his son: "የሰው ልጅ ትልቁ ሀብቱ ጭንቅላቱ ነው። የምድራችን

*ትልቁ የሦብት ምንጭ ጭንቅላት ነዉ። ስለዚህ አሁን ወዳለን ነገር ፊታችንን እናዙር። ከሰጠመዉ መርከብ ሦብት ይልቅ ያንተ ጭንቅላት ለሦገር ይጠቅማል።" Yismake (2009, p.198). The mind is the greatest wealth of humankind; it is also the greatest treasure on earth. So, let us focus on what we have in our hands. Rather than the sunken ship, your mind worth benefits the nation.*

Distinctively, the claimed trait is maintained in their efforts of making smooth generational transition. They do that by setting a coded form of communication. Their purpose is to transfer information to the generation to come. Abba Diddimos and Abba Jenberu are so symbolic in orchestrating the system. For instance, Abba Diddimos does that by encrypting the coded words into the poem and tattooed on the back of Shagiz and Miraje while both were very young.

The classified information, which is tattooed on their back, is in fact about the research center in the underground of Lake Tana where Abba Jenberu spends his entire life constricting it. It is also about the sunken ship with the greatest treasures hidden nearby the research center. Their intention in doing it as such is in one hand because some Italian like Mormodino Buski would easily access it as they too know about the sunken ship, on the other hand, to keep it secret until they get old enough and make it benefit the entire nation.

The crucial point that shows the wisdom of the older generation is evidently observed in their code of communication through which generations could be connected. In the case of Dr. Miraje, for example, in the guidance of the coded tattoo he found the research center. The research center is where he finally meets including his father several individuals. In the entire path of their lives, they strive to build the foundation of modern Ethiopia. Besides, in their skillful way of preserving information for longer, their being visionary is also maintained. Of course, it is not only the coded tattooed that makes them wise, but also their intention of easing the life of the next generation.

Colonel Fiseha's Guitar is fundamental in connection to their secret code of communication. The old man, Colonel Fiseha, gives Guitar as a gift to Dr. Miraje while he plays another guitar on the beach of New York City. Nevertheless, after some time when he received a seemingly blank paper in an envelope from Bahirdar, he is enlightened that what he had been given is not a mere gift. He realizes that the Guitar he had been given before is not a gift of appreciation. Instead, it holds classified information in it: "ጽሁፉ የጊታሩን የድምጽ ሳጥን ክፈተዉ" ይላል። ሽማግሌዉ ሰዉይ የሰጡትን

ጌታር አምጥቶ የድምጽ ሳጥኑን ተመለከተው። Yismake (2009, p. 197). The letter says, "Open the box of the Guitar!" He had brought the guitar that the old man has given him, and sees its box. Hence, the way colonel Fiseha communicates his idea with Dr. Miraje in formulating a secret code of communication suggests that he is a wise old man.

Their mode of articulating words is an integral aspect of their wisdom. It could also be their other peculiarity. Most of the old characters are often subtle in their mode of expression. When compared to the subsequent generations, almost the iconic figures of this generation have deeper thought especially in their manner of speech. This is understood from the expressions they often use in their conversations with each other, and from the narrator's comments as well. In most conversational discourses, they forward all they want quite subtly. In some situations, the expressions are also observed incorporating traditional stories or folk-tales. Such manners of expressions are commonly addressed in instances when they want to address a bit serious issues, which might somehow require a sound understanding as well as a curiosity of the addressee.

Alaka Ayalew and Abb Jenberu are the chief practitioners of such a clever, but an indirect way of conveying one's own view. While Alaka Ayalew and Eng. Shagiz discuss over the meaning of Dertogada, which of course we are reminded in a flashback, Aleka Ayalew's subtlety in his dictation, is inferred from the following excerpt:

"ዴርቶጋዳ ምን ማለት ነው?" ብሎ ሲጠይቃቸው ፈገግ ብለው "እንዲያ ነው ልጄ። መጠየቅ ያደርጋል ሊቅ። ጎበዝ ልጅ! ጉንዳኖች ወሃ ሲሻገሩ አይተህ ታወቃለህ? ብለው መልስ ጠየቁና "ጉንዳኖች ወሃ ሲሻገሩ አይተህ ታወቅ ከሆነ በወሃ ላይ ተያይዘው ይቆማሉ። ጉንዳኖች ተያይዘው በወንዝ ላይ በሚሰሩት መንገድ ሌሎች ብዙ ጉንዳኖች ይሻገራሉ። ተያይዘው ይሻገራሉ። ተደጋግፈው አስፈሪውን ወንዝ ይሻገሩታል። ባይያያዙና ባይደጋገፉ ግን አይቻላቸውም። አንዲት ጠብታ ዝናብ ለአንድ ጉንዳን ወቅያኖስ ብትሆንም ብዙ ጉንዳኖች አንድ ላይ ከተያያዙ ግን ወቅያኖስ መሻገር ይችላሉ። በመሆኑም ዴርቶጋዳ ማለት..." Yismake (2009, p.27)

"What does Dertogada mean?" He inquires. Aleka Ayalew smiles and says, "That is good my son. Inquiring makes one wise. Brilliant boy! Have you ever noticed ants crossing a pool of water? If you have observed, they make an ant bridge by chaining themselves with each other on the surface of the water. On the ant bridge they form, they let an army of other ants cross a river. They cross-holding each other. Leaning each other, they even cross the fierce river. However, if, they do not hold and lean to one another, they barely make that happen real. If an army of an ant

be together, they could cross even an ocean despite a drop of rain being an ocean for an ant. Thus, *Dertogada* is...

In the quote, while Aleka Ayalew could have lucidly defined *Dertogada* straightforwardly, he instead goes further to explicate the underlying idea he wants to forward. His basic concern in here is not literally to define the term; he rather stresses on the great mission that *Dertogada* would later accomplish. In fact, the above expression is virtually figurative in that he discusses ants to refer to something else. Most importantly, because Aleka Ayalew might consider that defining *Derogada* plainly would make it less valuable.

In other words, it is not to let Shagiz undermine his idea that he subtly addresses what he is inquired to answer. It could also be maintained that Aleka Ayalew's using folk-tale in his discourse is to bear in the mind of Shagiz what *Derogada* stands for. For whatsoever purpose he might use it as such, the expression, which is claimed as a style of expression of the old generation, implies not only the depth of Aleka Ayale's communicative skills but also the very nature of his being critical, particularly of how he sees things and also reacts to them.

Let us now consider another extract that would suggest the trace of subtle expression. One would notice Alaka Ayalew uses an implicit expression in his compelling argument with his son, Dyola, over the issue of forgiveness, which the argument later resulted in the death of the father figure. In his word, the father says: "ይቅርታ ልብ ላይ እንጂ መሬት ላይ አይወድቅም!" Yismake (2009, p.168). "Forgiveness is on the heart; it does not fall on the ground." In the argument, both characters are from two different generations. Similarly, in another instance, the discussed mode of expression is also well articulated by Abb Jenberu, the other prominent character of the old generation: "ምርኮ ፈጠነ፤ ብዘብዛ ቸኮለ" Yismake (2009, p.195). "Conquer is swift; suppression is in hast." These subtle expressions, which are claimed to be the mode of articulation of the old, by implication, suggest the old generation's insight being profound.

### 4.3.2. The Intellectual Generation

The intellectual generation representatives, who could also be referred to as the children of second generation, are those that most of whom were born in the 1950s. The scientist, Eng. Shagiz, is one of the important figures of the generation though supposedly born in the 1940s. The year that the characters were born is understood from the text in both explicitly and implicitly addressed discourses. For example, Abba Jenberu tells to his son, Dr. Miraje, what happened in the decade he was born: "እኔ በ1959 አንተ ከተወለድክ ሶስት አመት ገደማ ሲሆንህ እንደገና የንጉሱ ወታደሮች ሰላሳደዱኝ ወደዚህ ወደ ዳጋ እስጢፋኖስ ገዳም አንተን ይገዥ መጣሁ። በኋላም ፊንሃስ ሲጰራ የምትባል ህጻን ልጁን ይዞ ወደዚህ ገዳም መጣ።" Yismake (2009, p. 191). *In 1959, three years after you were born, because the king's soldiers came again to capture me, I along with you fled to Daga Istifanos Monastery. After a while, Finhas came to the Monastery with his baby girl named Zipporah.*

The excerpt hence makes firm the idea that both Dr. Miraje and Zipporah were born in the 1950s though the exact year in which Zipporah was born is not clearly stated. Most of the individuals of this generation are academicians and diligent in their professional careers. They are Medical doctors, Engineers, and spy agents for famous spy agencies in overseas such as the CIA and Mossad. Other than being intellectuals, these characters in terms of the role they partake are very important for the development of the entire story. Dr. Miraje, Zipporah, Dr. Xangida and Miroda are the notable ones in this regard. Of course, it is not that difficult to prove their being imperative of the generation.

One of the peculiar features of the individuals in this generation is that life in their youth days was not that good; it used to be smooth almost for none. Almost all of them were forced to go through several vicissitudes, but the scientist, Eng. Shagiz. He left first for Japan and then upon his return for the US. The reason of his departure on both occasions is to pursue his further study in the scholarship he was offered. However, the reasons of the other individuals might be different. They, nevertheless, miserably left their homeland. The best example is the situation of Dr. Xangida and Miraje.

They both were involuntarily made to join the national military service in the earlier days of the Derg regime in northern Ethiopia. In the case of Dr. Miraje, for instance, the narrator witnesses: "ሚራዥር ታፍሶ የሰሜኑን ጦር ከተቀላቀለ በኋላ በሁለት አወደ ወጊያዎች ተሳትፏል።" Yismake (2009, p.68). Miraje were in two battlefields since he forcedly joined the northern front. Dr. Xangida's story is not

that different. In his own word, he says: "በህክምና ተመርቄ ከቤተሰቦቼ ጋር በደስታ የምርቃት በአሌ? ሰናከብር የቀበሌ ሹማምንቶች" ...Yismake (2009, p.68). While I along with my family was celebrating my graduation, subordinate government officials came to our home, and forcedly took me to the army.

The case of the two young women that could represent a few strong women figures of their day is of course quite different. Mirodas's foremost cause of misery is purely economic. Miroda is from a needy family. She is raised by a prostitute mother, and has undergone a destitute life since she was very young. "እናቷ ሴተኛ አዳሪ ሰለሆኑ አባቷን አታውቅም:: ... ሜሮዳ የእናቷን አስከፊና ጎምዛዛ ህይወት በልጅነቷ ጨለጠችዋል::" Yismake (2009, p. 90). Because her mother is a prostitute, she does not even know her father... Meroda had experienced her mother's agonizing life while she was very young.

Moreover, the situation of Zipporah's suffer emanates from her father's strong desire to be back to the Promised Land, Israel. Because Abb Finhas's ancestor is from Jewish origin or as commonly called *Beteisrael*, he takes Zipporah against her will and joins 'operation Mosses', in which dozens of *BeteIsrael*, are transported to Israel. In the incident including Zipporah, plentitude of Ethio-Israelites are undergone sufferings and starvation. It also resulted in the death of some such as Abba Finahas and Abba Matthias.

Those that represent the intellectual generation share in common are the fact that they are sympathetic to each other and even to others. This peculiar feature of the intellectuals is figured out from two basic presupposed thoughts. The first is associated with the individuals' upbringing and the sufferings that they underwent in their youth days. As the situation of all may not necessarily be the same, the degree of their sympathy is different among them. While some are highly sympathetic or sensitive to others, others are less sensitive or less sympathetic. For example, in a relatively speaking Miroda, is less sympathetic of all her alike.

In the novel, especially when Dr. Miraje along with other group members discusses the plan about to return to their homeland, Meroda's being less sympathetic is observed. We notice this view in her argument with the group: "እንዴት እንዳደኩኝ እኔ ነኝ የማውቀው:: የእናቴ ገላ ለርካሽ ሽርሙጥና የተሸጠባት ሀገር ናት ኢትዮጵያ:: አሁን ኢትዮጵያ ምኒ ይወደዳል! ቁንጫዋ! ትሁንዋ! እከከዋ! መሪዎችዎ? እሱቲ ከምኒ ነው ፍቅር የያዘችሁ?" Yismake (2009, p. 246). I know how I grew up. Ethiopia is a country where my

*mother's body was sold for cheap prostitution. Tell me, which aspect of Ethiopia is to be loved!... Her parasites! Her fleas! Her diseases! Her leaders! Tell me, which of its quality makes you fall in love with her?...*

The situation of Miroda is apparent owing to the fact that she has undergone unsympathetic life in her childhood days, which of course extends until her late teenage years. As she explicitly speaks, her mother is a prostitute who without her father takes care of Meroda. The life both used to lead while Miroda was very young is miserable. Hence, her upbringing extremely affects her loss of sympathy for others. As opposed to Miroda, others such as Miraje and Zipporah have a good sense of sympathy.

The monks brought up Miraje and Zipporah in the monasteries as both are initially declared that they had no real parents; both actually do not know who their biological fathers until they have grown up. Regardless of this, however, the Christian teachings that they were taught as a part of their earlier upbringing in the monasteries, while they were very young, most likely influences them in their later days. They are sensitive to others. Accordingly, we note that Miraje is endowed with the claimed personality: "አፈር ብላ! ልቀቃት አሁን" "ኸረባከህ" "ልቀቃት ብዩሃለሁ ጀርባህን በጥይት ሳልበሳው!" Yismake (2009, p. 70). "You beasts! Leave her alone, now." "Please!" I said leave her; otherwise I shoot your back with a bullet.

The incident is observed in a military camp, where soldiers oftentimes commit rape on the innocents as something normal. When need be, they do it being in a group. The woman, who was about to be rapped had it not been for Miraje intervention, was one of the servants in the camp. The woman later becomes an intimate friend of Miraje and Xangida. The rapists even urge him to join them and do it. Miraje, nevertheless, strongly condemns their malevolent act. He further intervenes and helps the woman avoid herself from gang rape, which might have exposed her to physical and psychological trauma. In the same incident, Xangida's inheritance of sympathy is observed. Xangida in his own expression addresses it as follows: "የገበሬ ልጆች እየተደፈሩ ነው። ጨዋዎች እና የዋሆች እናቶቻችን እየተደፈሩ ነው። ወታደሮች እየተፈራረቁባቸው ደም የሚሸኑ ሴቶች ሰፍር ቁጥር የላቸውም። ብዙ የተከበሩ ባለትዳሮች እና ሴቶች አንገታቸውን ደፍተዋል።" Yismake (2009, p. 71). *Daughters and wives of farmers are being raped. So do our innocent Mothers. Because of gang rape, many of them urinate blood. Dozens of reverend married women are ashamed as a result.*

Xangida's being virtuous in which his sympathy to others is presumably originated from two presupposed views. While the first is associated with his academic background, the other is his upbringing. Xangida had graduated with a University degree in Medicine before he forcedly made to join the army, and have been brought up with parental care. In the same way, Zipporah is also portrayed in such a way that she sympathies with others' pain. On her way to Israel, in the middle of the desert, on the Sudanese coastal area, where she lost her father because of starvation, Zipporah is almost exposed to extreme hunger. Under that awful circumstance, where there is barely any food, find a slice of bread by sheer coincidence. Although Zipporah is extremely hungry, she offers Abba Mathews to eat the bread suggesting that she would endure it for a bit longer. Of course, so does the old man in his turn let her to have it.

As he too is one of the monks, who gave her a lesson that would help her behave as such, he prioritizes her to eat in his turn. He further rationalizes that he would add nothing anymore as gets old; he instead wants her to eat for she is young, and must live longer. As a matter of fact, it is not because she is not hungry that she wants Abba Mathews to eat; it is rather because her sense of sympathy suffuses her. If that were not the case, she would not dare to let the old man eat. Because she knows too well as there is barely any food that she could eat. However, while both are selflessly suggesting each other to eat the bread, unfortunately, another starved young man snatches the bread, and eats it immediately. Within just a day or two, the old man dies in the middle of the desert.

With the exception of Miroda, the rest are almost highly sensitive to the pain of others. While she was severely affected by her childhood upbringing, Miraje and Zipporah were positively influenced by the religious teachings and all the good lessons both were inculcated in the past, and react to others in the same way. Although Xangida's upbringing is not associated with a spiritual basis, he too sympathizes with others. His is, however, the outcome of good family background and the academic circle that he has been through. Thus, the generation has a sense of sympathy for others since their youth days.

The second presupposed view has sprung from their exposition to the overall conditions of life in overseas. This is observed in their adulthood time when they almost accomplished all their personal desires. At this phase, one would note them sympathy to the individual suffer as well as to the nation as a whole. Consequently, they collectively engage in developing Ethiopia in

science and technology. Although the major proponent of this notion is Engineer Shasize, all of them subsequently become strong adherent of the notion:

... ይልቅ አንተም እኔም ሞት ሳይቀድመን ወገኖቻችንን ከሞት የምንታገድበት ወቅት ላይ መሆናችንን አስብ። ኢትዮጵያዊያንን አንገታቸውን የደፉበት ወቅት ላይ ነን። በፍርሃት ተሸማቀዋል። አቀርቅረዋል። ሴቶች ለአረብ ነጋዴዎች እየተሸጡ ነው። ወጣቶች በጠረፋማ አካባቢዎች ከሀገር ሲወጡ በጋንጃቸው እየታረዱ ነው። ኢትዮጵያ ተስፋ በቆረጡ ወጣቶች ተሞልታለች።... Yismake (2009, p. 110).

Before we die, we should think that we are on the right time to rescue our people. Ethiopians are in a time of frustration. They are pervaded with fear. They even bow down with shame. While women are sold to Arab merchants, the youths are slaughtered crossing borders. Ethiopia is filled with disillusioned youths.

As time goes, which at the same time they have grown up into adulthood, they advance their positive thought for the good of their homeland. It is to mean that their sympathy in their youth days is advanced to patriotism in their terminal ages of their life. It is not only because their level of intellect is advanced that they turn their concern to their nation, but also because they are exposed to a civilized way of life in the western world. They thus show their love and support to the entire nation as a whole irrespective of ethnicity, class, gender or any other differences.

The idea of Ethiopianism is what the group prioritizes and struggles to make it strong. All they do in their adulthood days, particularly upon their return is to achieve this giant goal, which they virtually realize at the end. It hence becomes the collective identity of the intellectual generation. Other than receiving University degrees from academic institutions, most of them are avid readers. Dr. Xangida and Dr. Mirage, for instance, are the most noticeable to validate the presence of the tradition within the generation. Both are engaged in reading since they were very young.

Dr. Xangida's impression on Miraje's reading is evident in their early days of their acquaintance particularly in their military service time and since. Miraje's spiritual readings as a part of his deaconship in the monasteries is a base of his strong passion of reading. Because he was a deacon, he used to read religious manuscripts. Furthermore, in his entire upbringing, he has never detached from religious teachings as well as spiritual activities.

However, after he befriended with Xangida in the military camp, his degree of engagement is heightened, especially in subject wise: ... *"በዚህ ጦርሰራዊት ውስጥ ዶ/ር ሃንጊዳን በማግኘቱ ከመፅናናቱም በላይ በድብቅ መጽሐፍቱን እያወሳው ማንበብ ጀመረ። የልብመለድ፣ የፍልስፍና፣ የታሪክ የስነልቦና መጽሐፍት ከዶ/ር ሃንጊዳ እየተዋሰ አነበበ።"* Yismake (2009, p. 69). *In addition to feeling sustained in meeting Dr. Xangida in the army, he starts reading books that he lends him secretly. Miraje reads Fiction, philosophy, history and psychology.*

He reads irrespective of subject matter. Miraje's subject preference is extended to Secular issues. Xangida's contribution to Miraje's reading enrichment is not only reflected in lending him the books that he reads, but also the practice of discussing on the books they read. The tradition has a positive impact on Miraje's entire life. In this connection, the narrator says: *"በቤቱ ያሉት መጽሐፍት በማንነቱ ላይ ብዙ ለውጥ አምጥተዋል። ሲያነብ አይመርጥም። የሚያምንበትንም የማያምንበትንም ያነባል። በነዚህ መጽሐፍት ውስጥ ሆኖ ብዙ የማይመሹ ቀኖችና የማይነጉ ለሊቶችን አሳልፏል።"* Yismake (2009, p. 67). *The books in his house have tremendously changed his personality. He does not prefer subjects. He reads any subject whether he believes in or not. Reading these books, he has spent lots of days and nights that could have been monotonous otherwise.*

The excerpt explicitly addresses as reading is barely detached to Miraje's life. It further suggests that reading for Miraje is a means through which he avoids himself from the dark part of his life. Most notably, Books are his closest friends. He thus does that as a part of his routine life. Therefore, in addition to elevating his intellect, he broadens his worldview. His passion of reading also helps him understand the innovative endeavor that the *Dertogada* members carry out. As a result, he enthusiastically joins them in the mission of bringing a change that would virtually change the lives of many in his homeland. This viewpoint is also pointed out from his own expression. His expression of course simultaneously shows that he avidly reads dozens of books, and thereby virtually transforms his outlook in his reading :

*እኔ የሚታየውን እና የሚጨበጠውን አካል ቀድጄ ስሰፋ መፅሐፍት ደግሞ የማይታየውን አካሌን ቀደው ይሰፋልኛል። ሀኪሞች በሽተኞችን ብቻ ሲያከሙ ደራሲያን ደግሞ ሀኪሞችን እና በሽተኞችን ያከማሉ። ደራሲያን እንደ መላዕክት ናቸው። መላዕክት የሰውን ወደ እግዚአብሔር የእግዚአብሔርን ወደ ሰው ሲያደርሱ ደራሲያን ደግሞ የህዝቡን ወደ መንግስት የመንግስትን ወደ ህዝብ ያደርሳሉ።* Yismake (2009, p. 67).

While I operate on the visible and the tangible part of the human body, books operate on the intangible. Physicians treat only patients, but author treats physicians as well as patients. Authors are like Angles. The Angles are messengers between human beings and God; whereas authors are messengers between the people and government, and vice versa.

Dr. Xangida is the other iconic figure of the generation that allied with the vigorous pursuit of reading. He is so fervent in reading. He reads even in the middle of the battlefield. His love of reading is well articulated by the narrator: "ይህ ወታደር ከጀርባው ከተሸከመው ወታደራዊ ትጥቅ በተጨማሪ አንድ ሻንጣ ሙሉ መጽሐፍትም ተሸከሞ ይዋጋ ነበር። ጦርነቱ ጋብ ሲል መጽሐፉን ከሻንጣው አውጥቶ ማንበብ ይጀምራል።" *Yismake (2009, p. 68). In addition to his weapons, this soldier carries a bag full of books on his shoulder, and fights in a battlefield. When the fight gets desist, he starts reading.*

In a seemingly hyperbolic expression, the narrator, in other words, is in a position to forward that he is so passionate about reading. Though it appears somehow unrealistic to read a book in the middle of a battlefield, the narrator witnesses Dr. Xangida is crazy about reading. He is thus credited to influence Miraje. Reading for Dr. Miraje and Dr. Xangiba, who are explicitly depicted as avid readers, is the base of their intellect. Additionally, because reading pervades in the life journey of almost every character, it could be maintained that it is the tradition of the generation. Including Shagize, who has spent his entire life in an academic circle, most of them are portrayed practicing the tradition as their way of life.

There are also other positive personal traits of the generation, of which Determination is the recurrent one. Their Determination is an indispensable element for which the generation is claimed as a collection of organic intellectuals. The paths of their life entail hardship and suffering. As a result, they are exposed to psychological and physical tribulations. The roads they go through are where their misery originates. No matter how difficult the situations they get involved might be, they are hardly held back.

They instead extend themselves to the other part of life. Because of their strong determination on what they think righteous, the symbolic figures of the cohort work their way up from the lowest ring on a life ladder. Hence, their resoluteness most importantly helps them achieve their goal, which one would note them realize it as the story terminates. The intellectuals are scarcely

restrained going into further due to the extent of their determination somehow exceeds that of the difficulties they encounter.

They are further portrayed with the claimed personal traits in the specific missions they are assigned to perform. For example, Zipporah and Meroda, who spy for CIA and Mosad, are mostly characterized in such a way that they are committed to achieve the mission they are given. While the former works for the US, the later works for Mossad. Nevertheless, both remain firm to achieve their mission. They both are given the same mission by different spy agencies. Their mission is inspecting what Engineer Shagiz does.

They further strive to seize and hand over him to the perspective government they work for. These characters make an effort to do that in their own way. In doing so, both are persistently determined. With the exception of in the denouement, where we see them bring a sudden change of heart, both are in a sort of unshakable state of mind whatsoever happens. Zipporah in her struggle to control the Engineer especially in her argument with Dr. Anania says: "ደግሞ ብቻዬን ብሆንም እንደማመጣው ታውቃለህ፡፡ እመነኝ... የከፈልኩትን ያህል መስዋዕት ከፍቼ ኢንጂነር ሻጊዝን አንቁ ለእስራኤል አስረክባታለሁ፡፡" *Yismake (2009, p. 33). You do know that I can bring him back by myself. Trust me... I will sacrifice anything to capture Eng. Shagize and handover him to Israel.*

The extract suggests Zipporah is not only persistently sticks to her mission but also her strong determination. She is confident enough to perform anything by herself. In terms of consistency and determination, there might be a slight difference between characters. Accordingly, Zipporah is a bit stronger than Meroda. Meroda's strong feeling of love for Miraje is one of the possible constraints that hold her back. Her romantic obsession sometimes disrupts her from her mission. However, in most situations she involves in, she tries to let it go side by side. Zipporah, on the contrary, although she too is in love with Miraje, she never overlooks her mission.

Furthermore, at the end of the story, readers realize that the *Dertogada* group is faked out because the real engineer Shasize is no more with them; however, Zipporah does not cease searching for the Engineer: "ኢንጂነሩ የት ነው! ሲጸራ አምባረቀች፡፡ 00 44 ከንፈሯ ተንቀጠቀጠባት፡፡ ኡ... ኢንጂነሩ የት ነው? ሳ... ሳ ሳ ሳ ይንቲሱቱ! ሻ... ሻ... ሻጊዝ" ሁሉም ተደናግጠው ዝም አሉ፡፡" ... *Yismake (2009, p. 250). "Where is the engineer?" Zipporah is yelling... 00:44 her lips are trembling where ...is the engineer? ... The scientist sha...shagiz." All are scared, and quite...*

Of course, their degree of determination differs among themselves. Some are more determined to their endeavor to create technologically advanced Ethiopia. Others are in the specific mission they are given. Still, some others show determination to sustain their romantic relations. Engineer Shagiz is the most determined figure of all, particularly in his vision of realizing the *Dertogada* project.

One of the reasons is that all he thinks and does in his entire professional career is straightforwardly concerned with the realization of the giant national project the generation aspires to set in its homeland. Besides, his resoluteness goes as far as overlooking his health. Even in the middle of being in a difficult condition of his own health due to his critical cardiac problem, for which he has undergone surgery several times, his focus is on changing the lives of the people in his homeland:

"የልቤን ችግር ለመፍታት የቻልኩትን ሁሉም ነገሮች ለማድረግ ነው አሁን። ብንችል አንድ ቀን ሀገራችን ውስጥ እንፈታለን። አለበለዝያ ስለእኔ ለረዥም ጊዜ መኖር አትጨነቅ። እኔ እልፍ ለመኖር ምኞት የለኝም። ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ በየቀኑ በረሃብ ስለሚያልቁ ህፃናት ተጨነቅ።" .. Yismake (2009, p. 110).

You have done all you can to solve my cardiac problem. It has become beyond your ability. If we can, we will solve it someday when we are back to the homeland. Do not bother for me to live longer. I have no wish to live longer. Instead, be concerned with those children who die every day in Ethiopia because of starvation.

Shagiz's determination to keep up with his aspiration is extrapolated owing to his explicit expression of no fear. It happens so irrespective of his critical cardiac problem coupled with his being chased by the detective officials from the prominent spy agencies, both of which exacerbate his threatening life condition. Because his determination is stronger than the possible adverse impact it might causes on him, he venturesomely exposes himself in it. As fear and determination are two mutually exclusive entities, both never go together. It is hence why that Shagize is against the will of the US government. The US government in its turn never let him go beyond their boundary even for a medical reason. This is because the CIA knows that his intention of moving back to his homeland and transform his nation. Thus, his purposefulness to his homeland further goes to the margin of sacrificing himself.

Eng. Shagize's inherent sense of determination, which is believed to have originated from his deep-rooted love of his homeland, is also diffused to others. He does that on various occasions, particularly in his lengthy and the persuasive conversation he holds with Dr. Miraje. It may mean that Eng. Shagize focuses not only on making his intent unbending but also strives to persuade the like of Dr. Miraje. He wants them to be as he actually is. As an aspect of this practice, he insists Dr. Miraje be the member of which he is the one, and thereby resolutely ascertain the vision they aspire to see in their homeland: "ይህን ሚስጥር እንዲቃብልህ አልተፈቀደልኝም። አንድ ምክር ግን ልለግህ እችላለሁ።" Yismake (2009, p. 109).. "I am not allowed to confide it to you. However, I can advise you that you have to make sure that you must keep secret."

More to the point, the protagonist's courage and persistence in his resoluteness is figured out in his strong speech. In the discourse, the latter is persuaded to be involved in the journey to *Dertogada*, which the former firmly propagates. As time goes by, Miraje himself in his turn exerts his influence on others, particularly on Miroda. Shagize in his own expression forwards the following:

"ወደ ተጠራህበት ያለማቅማማት ተጓዝ። ወደ ኢትዮጵያ ሂድ። አታቅማማ። ባቅማማህ ቁጥር መንገድህን ትስታለህ። እስካሁን የተጫወትነው ሀገራዊ ጥያቄ የሚፈታው በያዝከው ኅዳና ነው። በድጋሚ የምነግርህ ባቅማማህ እና ባወላወልክ ቁጥር ተመራጭ ሰው አትሆንም።" Yismake (2009, p. 109).

Go to where you are called with no hesitation. Go to Ethiopia. Do not hesitate. The more you hesitate, the more you miss your track. The nation's issue that we have been discussing so far would be realized when you stick to the path you have already begun. I tell you again that if you are hesitant and be shilly-shally, you cannot be a man worth chosen.

Of course, hesitation and determination barely go together. The one should necessarily dominate the other. In the context of Eng. Shagize's argument, which is clearly addressed, determination is wanted to rein, and is possessed by Dr. Miraje. Because Eng Shagize believes that if Dr. Miraje is hesitant, he never arrives at the final destination of his journey. In the same sense, Shagize in his discussion about Miraje's expedition to *Dertogada* one would easily infer that Shagize's determination is proved over years. He further strives to maintain his aspiration in whatever condition he is: "እኛም በረዥም ጥናት ታማኝነትህን ማረጋገጥ ጀምረናል። Yismake (2009, p. 110) "In due course of time, we have become to confirm your loyalty.

Miraje confirms Shagize that he will not hesitate henceforth. Miraje's determination to achieve his aspiration is what the *Dertogada* group wants to see keep on growing. This avoidance of hesitation that holds back his determination is addressed in a clear term. Because he explicitly says he will not hesitate, we understand that he begins to exercise single-mindedness. Later on, he practically shows us as well. Additionally, the claimed feature of the intellectual is also reflected in their private life. The romantic affairs between Zipporah and Miraje, and how both struggle their fidelity to maintain each other is the notable one.

Zipporah and Miraje have grown up together in the monasteries. They have thus conceived a strong feeling of caring to each other, which as they grow older turns into love. However, they are decoupled forcedly a few days after Zipporah confides to Miraje that she falls in love with. Of course, he too that same night in his turn reveals her how he has been into her. Zipporah is involuntarily taken to somewhere else to join *Muse operation* where dozens of Ethio-Israelites are transported to their homeland. The journey's being painful coupled with losing someone whom she is in love with make life nonsense and miserable to her. Irrespective of these, however, she overcomes the difficulty she faces on her way, especially those that are related to romantic affairs.

Moreover, Zipporah is recurrently insisted to have a romantic relationship with her co-worker, Dr. Anania. Upon the recommendation of Dr. Anania, Zipporah is hired in Mossad for which as a favor he wants her to have a romantic affair with. In the beginning, his approach is not that strong, but when she keeps on declining his requests, he shifts to make it happen coercively. Nevertheless, she doesn't let it happen in either way. She often declines his persistent inquiry stating that she is in love with someone she has grown up with. However, because both as co-workers spend together almost all the time, Dr. Anania strives to use all the opportunities to make her his own.

On the contrary, in all situations, Zippora remains unchanged. Whatsoever happens, she doesn't change her mind. All her thought is with Miraje. Zipporah speaks about her lover with strong determination: "እሱ ነው የልጅነት ፍቅሬት። መቼም ቢሆን የማልረሳው። ሞቼ እንደገና ብፈጠር እንኳ አብሮኝ የማይጠረው። ማራ! ማራዥ።" Yismake (2009, p. 34). *It is him; my girlhood love, whom I shall never forget ever after. If I die and reborn again, he would reborn with me. Mi ra! Miraj.*

On the other turn, the same righteous behavior is noticed in Miraj. Although Miraje and Miroda, unlike Zipporah and Dr. Anania are not co-workers, they oftentimes spend together, and are friends. Of course, their friendship begins in the military camp where she helps him and Xangida gets away from the army. As time goes by, especially after they move to the USA, they become close friends as a result of which Miroda falls in love with Miraje. As opposed to this, Miraje doesn't want their relationship to go beyond. Because Miroda is in love with Miraje, she wants him even to make love with him. Readers would easily notice that she insists him do that often: "ጭኖቼ መካከል የተነሳውን ቃጠሎ እንድታጠፉልኝ አፈልጋለሁ።" "አልችልም። ዝሙት ነው።" "አይደለም። የኔ ቆንጆ ሊሆን አይችልም።" "ጭሮዳ ወዳልሆነ ነገር ውስጥ እየከተትሽኝ ነው።" Yismake (2009, p. 93). "I want you to cool down my libidinous." "I can't; it is fornication." "No! ... that won't happen, my dear" "Miroda you are leading me into something that is not right."

However, Miraje tells her overtly that he has someone he loves, and never change his mind. The more he discourages her not to advance it further, the stronger her love becomes. She never sinks into crushing despond even being told in a clear term. Miraje is still in love with Zipporah and keeps on waiting for her. Miroda even sometimes lures him to enforce him to change his mind. Her trials, however, turn out unsuccessful: "ዛሬ ይለይሉታል" ብላ ሻወር ቤቱን በርግዳ ስትገባ መላመላዋን ነበረች። እሱም መላመላውን እየታጠበ እያለ ተንደርድራ ስትገባ ሀፍረተሰጋውን በሁለት እጁ ደብቆ "አንቺ ምን ነካሽ!" አላት። Yismake (2009, p. 93) "He has to decide today," she said, and barged in through the bathroom stark naked to where he is bathing, being scared, he suddenly covers his private part with his hands. "Hey! What is wrong with you?" "he exclaims! Despite Zipporah and Miraje are in different ways apparently for the same reason, both remain faithful to what they believe in. Thus, there is high fidelity in both characters.

### 4.3.3. The Young Generation

The young generation, which could also be referred to as the third generation, is the last group of imaginative figures with some shared traits. These characters are argued to be the representative of contemporary Ethiopia. Because there is no explicitly stated evidence as to when they were born and grow up, by inference they belong to the young generation.

On one hand, these characters are introduced upon the return of the intellectual generation to their homeland, where half part of the story gone. It means the intellectuals get much older and critically observe the crux issues such as the 2005 national election. On the other hand, the characters themselves and other characters often in their speech, thought and action stresses the expression of youth.

Based on the above-presupposed views, they are pointed out to be the constituents of the young generation. Most of the characters of the young generation could technically be the children of the intellectual generation as so the intellectual is to the old generation. In actual fact, however, none of the representative figures of the intellectual generation bore a child. Their involvement in the story is quite restricted, especially in the major story of the novel. This could also signify that the young generation is not as significantly important as the earlier discussed generations.

As lucidly hinted above, they appear in the middle.

In its strict sense, the characters' appearance in the middle or even beyond the story by itself is not a necessary condition to claim that they are less important characters. Hence, it is not where they appear; rather the issue they appear with and how they address it that determines their importance. Because of this, most of them are less important as compared to the issues the old and the intellectuals come up with. Thus, the young are not characterized to discuss their issues as detailed and critical as others do it elsewhere. For that matter, some are even introduced towards the end of the story with insignificant detail. A case in point is the Bookseller.

The other point that signifies their being less important is that almost all appear with no proper name. With the exception of Mathews Mamo, the only one of the generation with a proper name, none is named by his/her own proper name. It could also be argued that when one is valued, he/she is identified by his/her own name. Calling someone by something else other than his/her proper name may signify disrepute. Most of them are named by their profession or something they do for living. In view of that, they are called: the Minister, the Captain, the Bookseller, the Beggar, and the young man.

When one looks at the composition of the generation, he/she finds that there is a relative heterogeneity among the imaginative figures of the young generation. Its makeup is based on the

similitude or differences of the individuals' engagements. Thus, no two individuals are from the same profession; nor two individuals from the generation have the same childhood upbringing.

Consequently, it comprises of individuals from various social status or class that ranges from Minister to Beggar. The young generation as compared to the other generations has more diversity. While the intellectual generation is a formation of individuals whose profession are almost similar, the situation of the young generation is quite the opposite. This is not with serious disadvantage; it resulted in the loss of patriotic feelings among themselves. In the case of the intellectuals, however, because of the characters similitude in their upbringing and professions, they are able to secure strong patriotic feelings.

Irrespective of the relative diversity in their composition, which inevitably avoids the occurrence of disparity among the iconic representatives in their social status, almost all have some shared personalities. Self-centeredness, unpatriotic, temporariness and circumvent are the commonest features that most share. These traits are reflected in their every walks of life. However, it does not necessarily mean that they reflect them in the same way. There is an obvious variation among them in both manner and degree of exposition. In some, for instance, the minister, Mathews Mamo, the bookseller self-centeredness is boldly reflected. Such manner of revelation could be claimed as an overt or explicit form.

Unhealthy individualism is the prevalent mode of thinking among most imaginative figures that represent the young generation. Their concern is more with securing their entire career; they hardly go beyond the self, and is claimed a self-serving generation. When we compare their thought and deeds with that of the other two generations, their self-centeredness becomes evident.

The young overlooks patriotism, which is the governing idea in every activity of both the intellectual and the older generations, for which they have undergone sufferings. A strong feeling of self-centeredness supersedes that of a patriotic. Therefore, in *Dertogada* while the young generation's passion for self-serving reins, prioritizing the interest of the nation, which is the typical indication of patriotic feeling, is degenerated. Because the characters prefer indulging

themselves in material comfort to that of mental or spiritual, egoistic mentality pervades them exceedingly.

Although the Minister's appointment to his ministerial position is primarily to serve the nation, he puts his core duty of serving the nation aside and concentrates on making his own business. What makes the situation worse is that he surreptitiously works with a vicious foreign gangster. Readers would effortlessly notice that the Minister make a secret deal with the egoistic character such as Mormordino, the Italian old man. The old man has spent his entire life in Ethiopia in searching for the country's treasure, which his countrymen hidden it back in the Italian's second aggression the country. The security guard of Mormordino, Dyola, who viciously murders his own father is also, partakes in the deal.

In the pretext of investment, Mormordino along with his co-worker agrees to work with the Minister. However, their core mission is to robe the country's valuable treasures in the sunken ship, which was hidden underneath Lake Tana during the Ethio-Italian war. On the other hand, the old generation kept it in a secret code believing that the next generation would later use it for nation-building endeavors. When we come to the Minister's involvement in the matter, it is understood that he targets on his personal interest. Knowing that it is the treasure of the nation and therefore should stop them from robbing it, he rather cooperates with them secretly. In relation to this, the narrator says: "ዶን ሞርሞርዲኖ ቡስኪ የጣና ሀይቋን ብጣቂ ደሴት በኢንቨስትመንት ስም ሲሰፍሩባት የሰጠመውን መርከብ ሚሰጢር ለዚህ ሚኒስትር ለመንገርና እገዛ ለማግኘት ለምን እንደፈለጉ ዲዮላ ያውቃል..." *Yismake (2009, p. 241). When Don Mormordino Buski settles on a very small part of an island in the pretext of investment, Dyola knows why he wants to confides the secret of the sunken ship to The Minister and to get his help.*

Additionally, once The Minister is informed the whereabouts of the treasure, which the old generation kept it secret, he should have prioritized the national interest first. Of course, he is one of the policymakers whose major duty is serving the nation. Besides, while he should have exploited the treasure for nation-building endeavor as the old generation had planned, he facilitates the foreign gangster to use it. The Minister does that chiefly to benefit himself. His cooperation extends to the margin of providing guns to the gangsters.

However, as the mission eventually gets unsuccessful, Dyola on the gun he takes from The Minister rifles back against The Minister himself. His involvement with those wicked gang indicates that he is a very egoistic person. In whatsoever way, all his concern is gratifying his ego. It would not be that figurative to associate The Minister's egocentric personality in *Dertogada* with a dozen senior government officials' personalities in contemporary Ethiopia.

Moreover, Mormordino is well aware of the weakest part of The Minister. His greediness is the weak part that Mormordino recognizes. It is because The Minister is egoistic that Mormordino dares to confide the secret to him. If he had a strong determination to protect his nation's interest, Mormordino would never dare to confide him the secret let alone having a further deal with him. From the very beginning, Mormordino knew that The Minister is not a strong and courage's official who does what his position requires from him. Mormordino and Dyola view the Minister as an official whose acts are controlled by someone else, and hence does not do anything by himself. For instance, Mormordino himself says: "ይህን ሚኒስትር አቅመ ቢስ በመሆኑ ብቻም አይደለም ቅንጣት ታህል ሀገራዊ ፍቅር ስላላየሁበት ነው። አቅመ ቢስና ቅንጣት ታህል ሀገራዊ ፍቅር ስላላየሁበት ብቻም ሳይሆን በቀላሉ ሊጠመዘዝ የሚችል ሰው በመሆኑ ነው።" ...Yismake (2009, p. 241). *It is not only because they know that he is weak nor he is unpatriotic nor he is either, but also because I know that he is a type of a man that could easily be wavered that I use this Minister for a cover-up.*

The personality of the Minister most importantly lacks both moral and intellectual foundation, both of which are the fundamental cause for his obsession with his own ego. This is why that being in the apex of official position, he neglects the issue of the nation. Of course, his appointment to the ministerial position by itself is not merit-based. Mermordino in his own words well expresses the incapability of the Minister. He aptly says... "ሚኒስትሩ ጠመንጃ እንጂ ጭንቅላት የለውም። እዚህ አገር ጭንቅላት ያለው ሰው አይኾንምም አላልኩህም?... " Yismake (2009, p. 242) *The Minister has a gun, not an intellect. Didn't I tell you that a man with intellect is not appointed in this country*" From Mormordino's expression, one would further understand that there is a trend of overlooking intellectualism. It is even understood by many as something normal. At the same time, it would be inevitable for egocenteredness to rein where there is no moral and intellectual integration.

The Bookseller is the other one who by far internalize self-centered personality. Of course, unlike most characters, he seldom appears in different parts of the story. We find him in just an

incident where the story of the novel is about to an end. As compared to his limited appearance in the story, which is restricted to a single scene, his self-centeredness is well pronounced.

The noted personal trait is observed in his argument with the other egoistic character, Dyola, over the book called *Esat Wey Abeba*, which Dyola wants to buy it badly. Because the secret code by which Dyola finds the sunken ship is in the book, his desire for buying the book is intensified. Understanding Dyola's urge to have the book, the Bookseller initially pretends he has not the book. Nor the book is elsewhere, he remarks. He intentionally does that to get rise the price of the book from which he greatly profits. His actual motive becomes apparent when he unveils the book is available in his store. When he makes sure Dyola is ready to buy him at a highly rated price, the bookseller declares he has the book:

"ነገርኩህ እኮ! ሎሬቱ መቷል። መጽሐፉም ከታተመ 32 አመታት አልፎታል! የት ታገኘዋለህ ?" "በቃ አላገኘውም?" "ማግኘትህ ታገኘዋለህ ግን በጣም በውድ ዋጋ!" "ስንት ትገዛለህ?" "መጽሐፉን አለህ እንዴ?" መጀመሪያ የጠየኩህን ንገረኝ ስንት ትገዛለህ?" "በፈለከው ዋጋ !" "መቶ ብር ትከፍላለህ?" "ሁለት መቶ አደርግልሃለሁ።" "አይበቃም።" ... "እሺ ሶስት መቶ!" ... ነው።" Yismake (2009, p. 259)

"I told you! ... The laureate was dead. It has been 32 years since the book was published. You find it nowhere" "So, won't I get it?" "Of course, you will, but in a very expensive price!" "How much will you buy it?" "Do you have the book?" "First answer me; how much will you buy?" "Any price you wish!" "Will you pay a hundred birr?" "I will make it two hundred." "No, it is not enough" "Okay, three hundred!" ...

The last sentence of the discourse that capitalizes on the self-centeredness of the Bookseller has a striking relevance with the current debate. Although the suggested price is twice of the price the bookseller himself initially suggested, he declines the offer yet again for his avariciousness. The Bookseller intends to make excessive profit taking the situation as a good advantage. For this reason, the Bookseller in addition to his uncaring nature, he is an opportunistic whose ultimate goal is making money. Consequently, there is a strong sense of greediness in him. Moreover, it might very well be argued that the Bookseller as a fictional character well represents those individuals who sniff advantage of situations to gain something at the expense of others in

contemporary Ethiopia. However, in the end, he lost both the money and his book as Dyola, the other self-loving and wicked character, ran off with the book.

Unpatriotic, which in the context of this study is understood as the compatriot of individualism, is boldly reflected by some of the young generation representatives. The Minister and Mathews Mamo are the notable examples. Both are with no feeling of nationalism. As the case of the Minister has already been discussed in connection with selfishness, we had better see now the case of Mathews in this regard. Mathews Mamo is the one whose ultimate goal never goes beyond the interest of his family. It does not mean that supporting one's own family is problematic. Nevertheless, the situation of his is so problematic. Because in one hand, he prefers the interest of his family to his country, on the other hand, it is at the expense of his country that he helps his family have money.

It further means that the way he gets the money to his family directly affects the interest of his country. To make the argument clear, let us see the path of life that he has been through. Mathews is a young man who like most individuals of his age, has been jobless in Ethiopia for longer. Nonetheless, by sheer coincidence, he has left for the US to make his life better. After some time in the US, he is selected by the CIA and joins them. The CIA selects him for implementing a mission that targets on the detention of Engineer Shagiz in NASA.

The mission also aims at evading the engineer's involvement in his homeland affairs. To execute the mission, Mathews is offered a substantial amount of money, which is transferred to his family. Upon their agreement, Mathews in his turn engages in the mission, and has almost been surgically transformed into the other copy of the engineer, which is intended to deceive those whom the engineer works with, particularly the Ethiopians. The process of making Mathews to look alike the engineer is carried out in cosmetic surgery.

Until he is forced to confess, where readers understand the drama he performs, Mathews has been deceiving those patriotic Ethiopians who work in the underground research center. No one considers him Mathews. He is rather understood as he is the real engineer Shagize. The entire drama is lately unveiled upon his confession: ... *"አሜሪካ ውስጥ በገባው በ5ኛ ዓመት ሲአይኤ መለመለኝ፡፡ ሰፊ ስልጠና ከወሰድኩ በኋላ በሰርጀንት የኢንጅነር ሻጊዝን ፊትና መልክ እንድመስል ተደረገ፡፡ ... ለቤተሰቦቼ ብዙ ገንዘብ*

*በባንክ ወደ ኢትዮጵያ ለመላክ የተሰማማሁት ለመጥፋት ነበር። ... Yismake (2009, p. 234) ... "On the 5th year of my move into the US, the CIA selected me. After I had taken a large-scale training, my face, as well as my appearance, was surgically transformed into engineer Shagize's. I thus looked like him. I agreed that a substantial amount of money has been transferred to my family, and in its turn, I was to die." ...*

The worst thing happens when the explosive material that the CIA kept in Mathew's head explodes and ruins the entire research center. The explosion also resulted in the loss of the lives of dozens. For instance, Abba Jenberu, who has been constructing the research center almost for his whole life, is one of the prominent figures. He loses his life as a result of the explosion. On the contrary, to their vision that ultimately targets on black outing the fundamental problem of the country, Mathews, who is presumably blinded by the offer, becomes a cause of their distraction. From the onset, his concern concentrates on the offer. Hence, he superficially sees the situation. He does not want to care about the possible adverse impact that the deal will later come up with. In either view, he has no sense of national feeling.

As opposed to what Mathews does for making money to benefit his family, intellectual figures like Dr. Xangida, Dr. Miraje and even Colonel Fiseha from the old generation, who are well-paid professionals in the US giant institutions, left for their homeland to partake in an endeavor that would help change the lives of their people. Unlike he, who privileges doing a favor in the expense of the most important person to the country, whose fate directly affects the fate of the country, they prioritize the interest of the nation to their comfort. Therefore, they all are dismayed at him when the actual self of Mathews is lately unveiled.

The other important thing that makes the argument logical is the existing condition in the US, especially as compared to where he has been jobless for years. The US as customarily called is the land of opportunities. So long as one could work, he/she could make money that would help change one's own life and others. So does Mathews. He is not the exceptional individual in any way. But, he seems to see the change happen soon. Most likely this is why he prefers the CIA's offer that helps his family become affluent all of a sudden. Thus, his being the CIA's tool through which they achieve their mission is an apparent result of his being unpatriotic. The situation further suggests that Mathews is also a young man whose personal character is dominated by circumventing.

By contrast, egocentricity in others such as the captain is purely implicit. Even though the captain possesses an individualistic mentality, it is not as daringly reflected as in the other characters. Unlike The Minister and the Bookseller, whose deeds and thought confirm their egocentric nature, the captain's self-centeredness, is indirectly inferred from his thought. The captain reflects it in his conversation with Dr. Miraje while he is taking Dr. Miraje back to the Monasteries on his boat: "አየሃቸው!" አለ ሚራጃ በጣና ሰማይ ላይ የሚንገረበቡትን ክንፋም አሞራዎች አንጋጦ እየተመለከተ። "አሞራዎች መሪዎቻቸውን ያምኑታል።" "እየመራቸው አይደለም እኮ አንደኛው መሪ የራሱን ጉዞ እየተጓዘ ነው። ቀድሞ ለመብላት እየተምዘዘዘገ።" አለ ካፒቴን።... Yismake (2009, p. 139). Look "Miraje said, looking up at the eagle flying in the sky above the Lake Tana." "Eagles trust their leader," the captain said, the eagle at the front is not leading. He is rather flying his own way. He is flying faster to eat first.

The conversation as it appears may not imply the claimed point. However, when it is seriously explicated, it makes the argument sensible. As Vandjike (2002) maintains our thought is the reflection of our worldview. In view of that, the two characters in the above discourse figured out to have two different worldviews. This in essence for the reason that both interpret the way the eagles fly together in two different ways. For Dr. Miraje and the captain, the Eagles manner of flying one being at the front and the rest follow him has contradicting meanings. Both, of course, interpret it from their own lived experiences.

In Dr. Miraje perception of how the eagles fly, implies that there is a trust among them, especially on their leader. Dr. Miraje as opposed to what is observed in contemporary Ethiopia, where a leader barely cares for its followers and is scarcely trusted, there is a clear and firm trust among the eagles' circle. He, hence, feels followers have trust in their leader. This is what Dr. Miraje would probably do if he were one of the followers in the eagles' circle. The understanding of the situation by the captain is completely different. For him, it is neither about trust nor about leadership. It is purely about competition in which one becomes the winner and the others become the loser.

Thus, the captain maintains that the Eagle being at the front is for gratifying his own desire. He further argues the Eagle cares about himself, not about his followers. As his speed suggests, the

Eagle is obsessed to eat first. Therefore, what the captain stresses in his view about the Eagle is what he actually feels and thinks in his daily life. In other words, if the captain were in the place of the Eagle, he would go fast to eat first. He does nothing else. Therefore, the captain indirectly reflects his own ego. Of course, it is based on his own experience that he judges the intention of the Eagle.

#### **4.4. Generations in *Lelasew***

In *Lelasew*, three different generations are figured out. Based on the ages of most important characters, they could be categorized as the old, the middle age and the young generations. But, most importantly, in the dominant mannerism they show, they are called the lost, the reformist and the mysterious generations.

The lost is the composition of those that came of age during the 1970s Ethiopian revolution. It would mean that most of them were supposedly born in the 1940s. Colonel Dinsa, the protagonist's father, in the letter that he writes to his son, gives us a picture of the time. As an indicative point, he further recalls that many were killed due to the political turmoil of the revolution and its aftermath incidents. It is not only the loss of the lives of many that makes the generation to be called as such, but also because the survived are made to dysfunction. The lost is therefore understood as those that are not fortunate enough to accomplish what they are destined for.

The reformist, whose iconic figures' ages are assumed to be in their early 40s in present-day Ethiopia during the major incidents of the story take place, is the subsequent of the old. Most of the stories that they involve in as a result of which dozens are influenced is contemporary Ethiopia. The last generation, who is often in contradiction with the reformist in the novel, is the mysterious. Almost all of the imaginative figures that represent this cohort obviously fall under the young category. The three of them, therefore, appear with their distinctive features. Accordingly, the characteristics of each shall be explicated in the subsequent sections.

##### **4.4.1. The Lost Generation**

The generation is a makeup of imaginative personnel whose ages are similar but possesses almost a binary opposite sort of personal traits. Within the generation itself, contradictory personalities are pointed out. The characters having an oppressive nature are the cause for the

main malfunction of the others. A few characters, who are assumed to hold the upper hand position, receive the lion's share of the blame for the loss of lives of many. Although the extent of severity in both mental and physical might vary among the characters, none is virtually successful in maintaining his/her wishes to accomplish. The likes of colonel Dinssa, Etati and Gash Damte are the prominent personages that belong in the first category. Though some of them namely colonel Dinssa and his wife are kind to their loved ones, they make the lives of many miserable. In the case of the colonel, the narrator says: "ሰው ሁሉ እንዴት ይፈራቸው እንደነበር አሁንም አይኑ ላይ አለ።" *He still contemplates how people used to fear him. Mihiret (2015, p.11)*

Colonel Dinssa is the father of Dr. Lelasew, the man, who in the subsequent generation, appears with profound thought of bringing societal development. The father figure would have been in his seventies if he had not died in prison soon after the overthrow of the Derg regime. For the injustices he committed along with his fellow individuals against his compatriots, which he later confesses to his son, he had been imprisoned and died in prison some time after. For this reason, all we are told about him or what he did is not from the present time perspective. It is of his earlier days during he was in a position to do all his wishes.

The narrator oftentimes using the mind of his only son let's see what he used to do in the pre and post-revolution days. Some of the stories in which he took part are the personal account of him and his friends in the older days. Irrespective of his limited involvement in the major story, he is one of the giant figures who draw the claimed picture of the generation.

Etati is an old woman who is the mother of Lelasew and the wife of the colonel. Unlike her husband, she is less enlightened in politics and had limited participation in the politics in her youth days. However, she latter appears unsympathetic in her socio-cultural interaction with people in her surroundings. The manner she perceives or treats some people, especially the so-called the lower class is so problematic. She is unbending to change her heart towards them even long after a certain incident occurs. Her adamant attitude remains with her even by the time she gets much older. The other notable character who shares a similar outlook with Etati is Gash Damte. Gash Damte is the uncle of Dr. Neway. Although his age is not explicitly stated, by inference, he is in the same age with Etati. The other uncle of Dr. Neway, whose name is not mentioned, is the other character to represent the lost generation.

On the other hand, W/or Eden, W/roTewabech, Gash Bedilu and Ato Geberemedihin are the notable figures to represent the lost generation. Unlike the above mentioned characters, they are assumed to have different position. This is due to the fact that these characters shoulder the burden of the older days throughout their lives. W/ro Eden, who until towards the end of the story, is understood as the biological mother of Mistir, is an old woman that massively suffers from mental anguish. She met Ato Mezgebu in Asmara and married him immediately after the revolution, and is presumed to be in her late 60s or early 70s.

The other female character that represents the generation is W/roTewabech. As W/roTewabech gets older, most of her neighbors rather call her *Emama* Tewabu, which is a commonly Ethiopian naming tradition when someone gets older as a sign of reverence. The woman, whom Lelasew has been looking for his whole life, is her daughter. W/ro Tewabech's being a victim of leprosy coupled with her cluelessness of the whereabouts of her only daughter, Genet, makes her appear much older than she actually is. Besides, as she becomes grandmother, *Emama* Tewabu is most likely in her late 70s. Gash Bedilu also belongs here. Like W/ro Tewabech, he is a victim of leprosy and is imposed to face a heavy social stigma. Again, as he is a grandfather to Zinash's children, he is in a similar age with *Emama* Tewabu.

The life journey of the old figures is well expressed if puts as rough and tumble. Nothing goes smooth with them. They thus bound to suffer and misery that would let most if not all dysfunction. Nevertheless, all are not on the same level or status. While some hold the upper hand position, the others, who also represent the dominant, are voiceless. However, in either position, none is able to avoid herself/himself from being a loser. It is not because of something that happened somewhere else that they are made to suffer. It is rather by themselves, which mainly comes from the lopsided worldview of a few but dominant.

#### **4.4.1.1. Antipodal Traits**

Due to certain constructed norms of the time or even that of the contemporary days, there is a clear distinction among the old figures of how they behave or interact with each other. Though there might be various types of personalities, all fall under two general categories. In other words, because of the pervasive mode of thinking that privileges the dominant, the generation is

constituted by two classes of individuals whose recurrent traits never be the same. Accordingly, colonel Dinssa, Etati and Gash Damte are the leading figures that are associated with the privileged once whose impact directly affects the disadvantaged individuals.

Suspicion, unbending, conservativeness among others are the commonest traits that well describe the privileged. The socio-political atmosphere of the time that favors the elites is the possible factor for the privileged to be associated with the pointed out characteristics. On the other hand, those who escape death, but are still vulnerable to physical and psychological trauma are what the other sub-group of the generation is allied with.

The political ideology during the post-revolution time greatly affected the lives of many at the time and even in the subsequent decades. *W/ro* Eden and her family, who are tortured for their ideological stance, are good examples. If we see the case of *W/ro* Eden in particular, she was imprisoned without doing any wrong while she was young. She suffered a violent physical attack and a gang rape in prison. As a result, she is exposed to a serious mental illness in her later days.

Other than the reigning political ideology of the time, the dominant culture is the possible reason that would let others feel marginalized. For instance, *W/ro* Tewabech, who badly suffers from leprosy, feels neglected throughout her life. Like *W/ro* Tewabech, Gash Bedilu, is also in a similar state of mind for the same reason. Because the people they live with lack of awareness about the disease, they are forced to feel like they are not like them and are greatly suppressed.

Supercilious, unbending and resistant as a personal trait are often portrayed by those who think themselves important than others. Etati is one of the forefront figures in this regard. She is highly indulged in such outlook than any of them, and is preoccupied with it on a daily basis. In fact, in her feelings for her son as well as for the rest of her family, she appears a caring mother. However, in her interactions with the destitute individuals, she appears quite the opposite; she is held back by the status quo. Etati could therefore be a symbolic figure to represent people who look down the value of others in the older days.

One of the shreds of evidence that would support our argument is what she used to do to disrupt the romantic affairs of her son and his girlfriend while both were very young. Etati conspiring with her elder sister, who shares similar thoughts with, split her son from his boyhood girlfriend

and sent him to the US. The reason is that his girlfriend, Genet, is from an impoverished family whose mother is a victim of leprosy.

The two impoverished figures also lead destitute lives. Etati thus conspired on them so that their relations never go any further. Genet's mother not being in the same economic status with her is also why Etati badly urges the move on of her son to overseas where he is unable to meet his lover. On the other end, her disrespect to them contrastingly shows her highly rated view of herself, which most likely originates from the tradition she has been experiencing for years. Moreover, her superciliousness becomes apparent when she argues with her son over her husband's status. She stresses that her husband is from an esteemed family. With a pride tone, she further adds that he is an enlightened self-pride man: "የት ወዴት...አባትህን ከማንም ቆማጣ ጋር አታወዳድረውም... እሱ ከድሃ ይወለድ እንጂ ኩሩ ቆፍጣና ምሁር ነው" Mihiret (2015, p.394). *How would you dare.... You never compare your father with a leper....he is a scholar who fends off his dignity and personal integrity even though he was born to poor parents.*

The argument that goes on between Etati and her son also confirms that she is unbending. In their argument, which is initially calm, but immediately turns to a serious confrontation, she is unable to change her detest feelings to them. Besides, she neither seems happy in his concern to W/ro Tewabech, nor to her daughter, Genet. Her arrogance is also evident in her angry disagreement, which is again the outcome of the dominant worldview of her older days. In her own words, she utters "እና እኔ አታቴ ልጄን አባልጣልኝ እንድላት ፈለግህ? ... በገዛ ቤቴ ከማንም ቆማጣ ጋር ስትንዘላዘል ዝም ብዬ ላይህ ነበር? አዝነን ብናስጠጋት ቤት መጥታ ልጄን ስታባልግ አባጃሽ እንድላት ፈልገህ ኖሯል!" Mihiret (2015, p. 394) *So, do you want me to implore her engagement in a promiscuous act with my child? ... Did you expect me to remain silent while you were acting licentiously with a leper in my house? Did you want me to up laud her for enticing my son when we pitied and offered her to live with us!*

Etati's view of herself and her family seems overemphasized for she puts herself or her husband beyond the reach. She explicitly uses derogatory expressions as an offense against W/ro Tewabech and Genet, one of which is the deliberately repeated word like *a leper* to cast them off; it offends her son as well.

The other interesting point of discussion that justifies the correspondence of unbending with her is that she still sticks to her older day's views. Although the incident for which her son wants her to say sorry for those wrongs she committed long ago, she never seems still detaches from her older obsession. This is why she is unable to change her mind, and say sorry for something that she did. She never shows any sign of restoring good relations. Rather than feeling sorry, she offensively utterly shows her disrespect to them noting that she instead did him a favor. Even after she restores peace with her son, it takes her a bit longer to socialize with Emama Tewabech. This would mean that she is strongly obsessed with the tradition of her older days. Besides, her loss of interest to feel regret and say sorry is the other indication of how strongly she is attached to the tradition. Etati is thus a typical character that boldly reflects self-pride and unbending personal traits.

Aristocratic as a personal trait is further observed beyond their everyday socio-cultural interactions. Of course, the fundamental downfall of the entire system of governance in their youth days in which dozens lost their lives is the aristocratic obsessions of a few. Colonel Dinssa in his late confession to his son highlights that their aristocratic mentality is the elemental cause for the death of many innocents of his generation. Presumably, due to their aristocratic upbringing, which is assumed as the dominant thinking of those who had a good affiliation with the rulers, they behave in the same way even long after the system had gone. For example, Etati, in view of colonel Dinssa, is from the most revered and feared landlord family: "በወቅቱ አገር የተንቀጠቀጠላቸውን የደጃዝማች መከቲ ብቸኛ ልጅ የነበረችውን ያንተን እናት ያገባኋት ያለምንም እርዳታ፤ ያለምንም ልመናና አቤቱታ ነበር።" Mihiret (2015,p.12) "I married your mom who was the only child of Dejazmach Mekite. By then, her father was the man whom everyone fears most. I married her without the help of anyone, and without making any solemn request."

The extract shows the aristocratic personality of colonel Dinassa. This is because he feels that he had been better off than others and was able to marry the daughter of the most respected and highly regarded landlord. He is not basically speaking about the status of his wife's background. He rather implies the status of himself. The feeling of colonel Dinssa thus clearly shows he has an exaggerated self-pride. He married his wife without receiving any support or persuading her family. This is how the thinking of their time defines the quality of being revered.

As they have grown up and later live in aristocratic oriented society, Etati, Gash Damte, and colonel Dinssa among others have almost unconsciously practiced an act of aristocracy as something normal in overlooking the possible harm it might cause on others. There are a number of instances that indicate they do not even aware that others are disappointed in their improper manner. For example, Etati in her conversation with Dr. Lelasew describes his girlfriend disdainfully. Gash Damte in other context, but in similar sense uses derogatory expressions to Zinash's Children. It is not only the disapproval nature of the words they utter, but also their manner of recitations, as well as their intention, capitalizes as they never detach themselves from the tradition they have been living with.

In addition to their lack of interest to show change of heart and accepts others' decision, there is an obvious manifestation of unbending. There is also a sense of resistance in them, which is, in fact, its cousin in essence. Resistance is, therefore, their other personal traits. Resistance thus refers to being in a state of unwillingness to get adopted with something that one has never been familiar with. While their being unbending is almost entirely sprung from their socio-cultural backdrop, their being resistant is inclined to lack of awareness of what is going on globally. It, however, does not mean that their socio-culture background does not affect them. It does, of course. The point is that it is not as strong as their lack of awareness of the overall atmosphere of things in contemporary Ethiopia.

The claimed trait is boldly noted in the old figures firm stand over the issue of adoption. They all do not consider adoption as a possible option for those who are unable to be biological parents. *Gash Damte*, Etati and Dr. Neway's other uncle are worth mentioned figures in this connection. Dr. Neway's interest to raise Zinash's children in adoption, which initially proposed by Lelasew, is where they show resistance to something they have never been familiar with. Including Gash Damte, Neway's uncles and the elder figures who are gathered in the family meeting at Neway's family house, are not happy over the proposed idea.

It is not in a sort of a happy mood that the matter is entertained over their diner. For that matter, none of them is happy that their children are adopted. All in their own ways indulged in hair-splitting arguments over the matter. Though none is successful in rejecting it, they intend to discourage Dr. Neway and his wife. *Gash Damte*, the conservative and the most feared man in the family, accordingly argues:

"እንዴት!...እንዴት ነው ነገሩ!?...እንደ ዱብዳ እኮ ነው ያወረዳችሁብን.... ተማክሮ ማድረግ አይሻልም ነበር? ጉዲፈቻ እኮ ስንት ጣጣ አለው:: ለመሆኑ እድሜያቸው ስንት ነው? ደግሞስ የጤናቸው ነገር ተጣርቷል? እንዴት ነው የልጅ ነገር እኮ አደረጋችሁት!" አሉ::... እናቲቱስ ኤድስ ተመርምራ ነበር? ደግሞ ቁምጥናውም እኮ በዘር የሚሄድ ነገር ነው:: ልጆቹስ ቁምጥና እንደሌለባቸው አስመርምራቸዋል?... Mihiret (2015, p.212)

"How!... how could this be!?... You took us by surprise.....wouldn't it be good if it were discussed before decision? Adoption has serious complications of its own. By the way, how old are they? How about their medical condition ... have they been examined? ... How on earth, you have made it all kids' stuff!" Said {*Gash Damte*}... did the Mom have HIV test? ..., leprosy itself is hereditary. Have the children been proven by medical examination free from leprosy?

*Gash Damte's* argument shows that he is not ready to accept adoption. Other than suggesting some possible solutions that would ease the expected challenges in the due process of adoption, he simply poses multiple questions to frustrate the would be parents of the children. It seems that he misunderstands the transmission of leprosy. His being resistant is probably comes from his lack of awareness about the disease. Including *Lelasew's* mother, most of the old people in the house are in complete support of *Gash Damte's* view. *Lelasew's* mother, for example, comments:

"ልጅ ማሳደግ ጥሩ ነገር ነው:: ነገር ግን ሳይጣደፉ ተጠንቅቆ አይሻልም? ልጅ ቀላል ነገር አይደለም:: ስንት የጉዲፈቻ ድርጅቶች አይደሉ እንዴ ከተማውን ያጣበቡት:: እኔም በጋሼ ዳምጤ ሀሳብ ነው የምስማማው" አሉ ወደ ንዋይ አጎት አየት እያደረጉና ነገሩ እንዳልተዋጠላቸው በሚያሳይ ፊት:: Mihiret (2015, p.213)

"Child-rearing is virtuous; however, wouldn't it be better if done steadily and cautiously?... a child is not that ordinary. Isn't the city overcrowded by numerous organizations that work on adoption? I agree with *Gash Damte's* idea." *Lelasew's* mother said, casting a glance at *Neway's* uncle in a way that would show her objection over the matter.

Apparently, for the same purpose, *Neway's* other uncle challenges *Dr. Neway* and his wife. His uncle again stresses on the unfavorable part of raising other offspring. He capitalizes on the idea that no matter how hard one does good to raise other children, they would never feel him/her a real parent. He suggests them to take and raise their relative children instead. The most likely reason for which he reacts in such manner is that he is subdued by the dominant thought of his day, which advocates that parent-child relation should necessarily be kin-based. It is not for anything else other than mere opposition that the uncle figure reacts with a feeling of anger:

"ማን አትርድዎቸው አላችሁ?... ልጅ ወስዶ ማሳደግ ግን ሌላ ጉዳይ ነው:: ደግሞ እያደር ይገባችኋል... የሰው ልጅ እንደው የሰው ነው:: ስንት የተቸገረ የዘመድ ልጅ በየገጠሩ ሞልቶ የለም እንዴ? ሶስት አይደለም ሰላሳ ወስዳችሁ ማሳደግ ትችላላችሁ" አሉ ሌላኛው አገብቶ በቁጣ ድምፅ:: Mehert (2015, p.214)

"Who told you not to help?... nonetheless taking a child and bringing it up is another issue. You will understand it as days roll by...someone else's child is just other's. Are not there several of our relatives' needy children in the countryside? Let alone three, you can adopt thirty and up bring them," retorted his other uncle.

On the other hand, unresponsiveness, bear up sufferings, stoic, being considerate, most of which are the immediate outcome of the dark part of their lives in the past, are the commonest features of the lost generation. These are often displayed by the so-called the disadvantaged group of the generation. *W/ro* Eden, *Gash* Bedlu, *W/ro* Tewabech and *Ato* Gebremedihin often reflect such personal traits. These characters and even others of their alike, who are usually forced to sense feelings of unwanted, are highly affected by the socio-cultural practices of the time. The tradition, which is claimed to be internalized by most often privileges the elites, is the underpinning factor for the masses to behave as to the wish of a few. Consequently, they are made to disregard the value of themselves within the circle they dwell.

*W/ro* Tewabech for an obvious reason leads an absurd life. On one hand, because she is an old impoverished woman and is despised mainly for her leper. On the other hand, she seems uninterested to react whatsoever happens as she is lonely. Let alone her loss of interaction, she seldom responds to something that would even affect her. Her being a victim of leprosy coupled with her destitute life, exposes her to undergo social stigma. Besides, she is clueless about the whereabouts of her only daughter and is haunted. However, the social stigma she experiences is very high; she rather remains unresponsive even to the more explicit insult she receives from Lelasew's family maid.

The maid in Lelasew's family despises *W/ro* Tewabu accompanied by bare and taboo expressions. The maid does that so often for she deems the old impoverished woman inferior being. In contrast, *W/ro* Tewabu never tends to respond to her in a reversal way. She instead prefers to endure all her harsh treatments; she never utters even a word in reacting to it. However, her problem is lately unveiled when Lelasew unexpectedly hears the maid insulting

W/ro Tewabech. She then speaks of the issue that would suggest the depth of her sufferings. Her being so reserved, which is implied in her response, is rather striking in that it reflects the vicissitudes she has been through.

Her experience further suggests as she is so considerate and thoughtful. Rather than remaining silent in order that the maid gets the payback for what she does, the old woman appears to have a concern to the fate of the maid's children. She is well aware as the maid's being fired would directly affect her children, which the maid is unable to think of. Sense of forgiveness is, of course, the other eye-catching point about the old woman we see in their relations. Elsewhere in connection to something else, W/ro Tewabech's kindness is indicated. The narrator thus reads what goes in the mind of Mistir: "መጀመሪያ ላይ ያስፈራት የነበረው በህመም የተጎዳ ፊታቸውን አሁን ለምዳው አይረብሻትም። ከውስጣቸው የተደበቀውን ደግና በሀዘን የሰበረውን ማንነታቸውን ማየት ጀምራለች።" Mihiret (2015, p. 444). "Her face that has been disfigured by a disease no longer distresses her since she gets adapted to it now. She has started viewing her hidden kindness and her identity that grief debilitates it."

All the positive traits of the old woman are inferred from her acts for the good of others. Had she revealed it to Dr. Lelasew, she knows what would have happened on the maid and her children. Thus, though Lelasew would like to know the truth, she doesn't want to disclose it; she would rather prefer enduring the pain by herself.

Unresponsiveness and enduring sufferings also describe the life of Gash Bedilu. Like W/ro Tewabech, Gash Bedilu also badly suffered from the social stigma that resulted from leprosy and poverty. Those who share a similar status, therefore, remain unresponsive to the thing that could even matter their lives. In addition to W/ro Tewabech whose life is full of miseries, W/ro Eden and Gash Bedilu are the iconic figures to witness that the cohort has undergone psychological and physical tribulations.

As stressed in the above quote, both characters like W/ro Tewabech possess a sense of empathy. No matter how in difficult situations they are, they try to feel others' pain. The case of Gash Bedilu and W/ro Tewabech is the same in that their sufferings are mainly from the social stigma which is due to leprosy. Additionally, Gash Bedilu, takes care of his psychotic daughter and raises her children on the begging he earns. In all these and most importantly in his whole life,

*Gash* Bedilu scarcely complains. He simply lives his life with no complain; he shoulders the full burden of his and his extended family. This, in particular, is where *Gash* Bedilu shares the dominant mindset of individuals of his age.

The state of affairs of his is further justified in the observation of characters of the subsequent generation. Accordingly, Lelasew, for instance, views *Gash* Bedilu: "ግን ከዚህ የስቃይና የልመና አመታት በኋላ በስብዕናቸው ላይ የፈጠረውን ጠባሳና ጥልቅ ጉዳት ማዳን የሚቻል አይመስለኝም።" (2015, p. 444). *I don't think it is possible to heal the scar he contracted and massive damage to his personality after all these years of agony and beggary.*

Dr. Lelasew stresses that it would be difficult for *Gash* Bedilu to heal himself from the scar of his sufferings. This by implication would mean that the generation is strong enough to bear up sufferings though none is virtually walk over it at the end. Although *W/ro* Tewabech is not fortunate enough to have extended family as *Gash* Bedilu does, for the same reason her path of life likewise never been worth living. It has been bounded with full of ups and downs. She has thus been struggling to bear it up her whole life. The other figure who has a similar experience is *W/ro* Eden. Unlike *W/ro* Tewabech and *Gash* Bedilu, *W/ro* Eden's is, however, a bit different because hers is purely political.

*W/ro* Eden's life experience, particularly her suffering represents individuals of her age whose lives are made to dysfunction for their ideological position. She had been with her pain until her last breath. Probably, in order not to complicate the life of her daughter, *Mistir*, she doesn't confide her affliction to anyone. She thus never extends her agonies to her daughter, nor to anybody else. This is why the life she lived in her youth days was distressing. This would further affect her latter days.

Moreover, the disadvantaged group of the lost generation in all their socialization are barely show any sign of effusive reaction in favor or being against. Including *W/ro* Eden, who is relatively in a good economic status, the needy characters such as *W/ro* Tewabech, *Gash* Bedilu in their neighborhood relationship are often dispassionate. Their being in such a state of mind is, in fact, the consequence of the socio-political atmosphere they experienced in the past.

#### 4.4.2. The Reformist Generation

In age wise, the reformist appears after the lost generation. The generation is associated with a transformative idea. It ultimately targets to bring a change that would help many lead a good life. Its iconic members are therefore concerned with cutting off the society from its traditional mentality, which in the context of this study, is the fountainhead of the core impediments in present-day Ethiopia.

Technically, most of the prominent individuals of this generation are the children of the precedent generation. But for various reasons, they are loosely connected with their elders when they were supposed to have active generational dialogue in a form of direct interactions as we see them have it with their subsequent. The noted idea of the generation is often well portrayed by those that are exposed to the western world. Of course, there are also others whose ages and shared views are the same as the so-called Diaspora. These characters without having overseas experiences have a great deal of passion to ease the burden of their society.

Including the protagonist, whose name is the title of the novel and who is also the dominant voice of his generation, some of its prominent figures have studied and lived in the United States, and are Diasporas. They all come back to their homeland intending to improve the life of their society even though their return is not complete.

In addition to Dr. Lelasew, who is a psychiatrist by profession, Dr. Neway, a cardiologist and a longtime friend of Dr. Lelasew since their med-school days, is the symbolic constituents of this sub-group. The wives of both, Nitush and Arsema respectively, are the others that form the cohort. Initially, both have no sense of engagement with the views of their husbands but later appeared being on their side and help them achieve their aspiration. The Diasporas appear with a strong passion for serving their nation.

Furthermore, they are passionate to inculcate the tradition of serving people in their homeland in coming back with their intellect and wealth as elsewhere on the globe other Diasporas do. The protagonist, for instance, argues: "መሬት ውስጥ ካለው ሀብት ይልቅ በሰው ውስጥ ተደብቆ ያለው መልካም እሴቶች ይበልጣሉ ባይ ነኝ።" Mihiret (2015, p.109) *I suppose the virtues hidden in humans are more valuable than the treasures in the earth.* For him, pure mindset is what he observes missed in

contemporary Ethiopia and thus he along with his fellow figures of the generation is interested to work on with great enthusiasm.

On the other hand, the generation consists of those that have never been to overseas but have similar constructive thoughts with them. To the margin of practical engagement, they have become equal with the Diasporas. Their years of academic and life experiences are the basis of their good thoughts and deeds. Dr. Meron, a senior gynecologist at St. Paul hospital, is one of the forefront figures in this regard. The entrepreneur *Ato* Siraje also belongs here. Other than the protagonist, he is probably one of the giant figures of all in initiating the idea of reform. The other worth mentioned character is sister Zebiba. She is a senior nurse who has spent almost her entire life helping people with compassion. *W/ro* Zemzem is also the other constituents of this sub-group.

Regarding their age, except for sister Zebiba, who is explicitly mentioned to be in her late 50s, most of them are either in their late 40s or early 50s. In view of that, they were supposedly born in the mid-60s when uprisings against the emperor regime were trending across the country.

Irrespective of the academic, professional and cultural differences among the imaginative figures of both groups, all are almost the same in sharing sense of optimism and empathy, which are the indispensable element in the due process of realizing what the generation consider good for its society. Regardless of the socio-cultural and political background they have been through, both groups virtually hold similar positions concerning the issue that capitalizes on attitudinal reform. As their integral element, they engage themselves in activities that would realize an optimistic attitude. The reformists are thus aspired to erase the heavy encumber the former left and clear the confusion their children would face.

Although there is an obvious disparity in manner of expressions and frequencies of appearances among the characters, almost all appear vitreous at the end. Dr. Lelasew is one of the most highly involved participants in the major storyline whereas *W/ro* Zemzem is the least participant. Putting aside their degree of involvement, both inherently march towards virtuousness. This is to mean that the characters in their way endeavor to achieve something positive that consequently benefit others beyond themselves. Because the reformists perceive contemporary Ethiopia pervaded with a disputable mode of thinking, all they think and do is to slip the people away

from it. Dr. Lelasew, for instance, plans to use a certain platform or channel and gets himself ready to forward what he deems essential to overcome the problem:

የብዙ ሰዎችን ችግሮች በሚወክሉና የህዝቡን ስነልቦናዊ እንቅስቃሴ ለመረዳት ቁልፍ በሆኑ የተወሰኑ ኬዞች ላይ ብዙ ጊዜ ለማጥፋት አስባለሁ። ከዚያ በተጨማሪ ደግሞ፣ ማጻፍና ምናልባትም ሚዲያ ውስጥ ገብቶ የሰውን ስነ-ልቦናዊ ንቃት መኮርኮርና ማሳደግ ይመስለኛል ዋናው የትኩረት አቅጣጫዬ። Mihiret (2015, p.105)

I am thinking of spending much of my time on the cases of the majority's concerns that would help to understand the publics' psychological puzzles. Besides, I think, writing and perhaps joining the media to raise the public's psychological consciousness is the other direction I opt for.

In his opinion, as well articulated in the quote, the society's consciousness is lagging behind, and plans as a lot has to be done. He, however, is in a firm conviction that making it happen in a good way needs a painstaking effort. Other than Dr. Lelasew, Sister Zebiba, and Dr. Meron have a similar stand.

The concern for the wellbeing of their society, which according to Dr. Meron once been in a good form, is getting decline years after years and is now in the threshold of danger. It could be said it is where people could easily be vicious to each other. The striking point that supports the argument is where we find Dr. Meron's furious reaction in the hospital. Dr. Meron is like the protagonist and sister Zebiba seriously concerned about the status quo. Nevertheless, she devotes herself to her patients. She is in the hospital almost from dawn to dusk treating her patients. She is, therefore, a typical woman figure who is true to her profession.

On the other hand, she has a serious concern as to why things are not often going correctly in the hospital and even elsewhere. She does reflect it as well, particularly when something goes wrong. In her view, as she often shares an idea with colleagues, the entire system in contemporary Ethiopia is getting dysfunction mainly because it has been built on a degenerated mindset. In connection to the incident, she found young negligent practitioners committed medical errors as a result of which a young psychotic pregnant woman lost her life while giving birth, she says: “ፍርድ ቤቱም ያው ነው። የት ሄደህ አቤት ትላለህ!.. ማንስ ምስክር ሆኖ ይቆምልሃል። የምትተናነቀው ከሰው ጋር እንዳይመስልህ... ከህግ ጋርም አይደለም። ህሊናው ከጠፋበት፣ የሰው ዋጋ ከተሰወረበት የታመመ ጥቅል አስተሳሰብ ጋር ነው። Mihiret (2015, p.171). *The court doesn't serve justice. Where would you go, and make an arraign! ... Who would testify in your favor? Don't think that you wrestling with a human*

*being...nor with the law. It is with a sick gross mindset figure that lost conscience as well as human values.*

Here the last sentence is eye-catching. It does opine where the fundamental problem lies. Dr. Moron is well informed as the pervasive thought in contemporary Ethiopia is sick. She hence holds a clear thought that such mode of thinking gives way to the existing reality. It is also hinted that the blame goes to the youth. The thing that has to be underlined here, especially in connection to the major concern of the generation, is that she never confines herself to the mere blame alone. She goes a bit further in doing what would ease the situation. Had it not been so, she would have rather termed as a pessimist.

Additionally, in the subsequent paragraph, in the same situation, she makes her position stiff in that she would never despair to challenge the wrongdoers and bring justice to the victims. ..."*ግን ደግሞ እንደዚህ ሰልጠኛዎች የምል እንዳይመስሉ... እስከ መጨረሻው ድረስ ለዚህች ልጅ ሞት ቢያንስ በህክምናው በኩል ያጠፉ ልጆች የጥፋታቸውን ዋጋ ይከፍላሉ።"* Mihiret (2015, p.171) *Nonetheless, I don't mean that I will sit hands folded ... at least I will fight to the last gasp until those whose medical mistake caused the death of this girl pay for it.*

Her strong determination to figure out the wrongdoers and to follow up the case until justice is served shows that she is a kind of light enveloped in a dark. It also shows that she is a figure of principle, which is an indispensable aspect of reform without which a change would never be realized. Dr. Lelasew shares her idea. His is somehow broader, of course. Every endeavor of his centers on the alteration of the existing mindset, which is believed to be problematic. Like most of the fellow generation, he argues as such mindset is the aggregate outcome of the socio-political sufferings the country has been forced to bear since long time ago:

*የሀብሻ ነፍስና ስነ-ልቦና ለረጅም ዘመናት ከምናስበው በላይ የቆሰለና መከራ የተሸከመ ነው። ያለፈውን አርባ እና ሀምሳ አመት እንኳ ብታስበው ይዘገንገሃል። ያሁሉ ያልታከመ ህመም ያልተከፈለ የስነ-ልቦና እዳ ነው ማለት ይቻላል። ነገሩ የአንድ ቀን አይደለም በእርግጥ።* Mihiret (2015, p. 105)

The Habesha soul and psyche have been wounded more than what one can imagine for ages and bore the unbearable suffering. Even if you reckon the past forty and fifty years, you would understand how nerve-wracking it was. It could be said that it's all untreated pain and unpaid psychological debt. In fact, it's not a day's matter.

Similarly, in the next page, Dr. Lela Sew Says:

"ሌላው የማደርገው ደግሞ ከወጣት የስነ-ልቦና ባለሙያዎችና ተማሪዎች ጋር የቻልኩትን ያህል ጊዜ ማጥፋት ነው። ምክንያቱም አሁን የምናወራውን ነገር እኛ ብንጀምረው የሚሰሩት እነሱ ናቸው ብዬ ከልቤ ስለማምን ነው።" Mihiret (2015, p.106).

The other thing is that I am interested to spend as much time as I can with young psychologists and students because I wholeheartedly believe if we begin doing what we are talking about, they are the ones who implement it.

In both excerpts, the very nature of the problem, its causes and how it should be solved is underscored. He thus boldly addresses that the ill mentality he hints to exist these days originate from the psychosocial problems evolved in the country. Because the problem is deep-rooted, he insists, as industrious effort is required from everyone. In his opinion, working with young psychologists is one part of the solution. Above all, the trace of willingness to serve others and optimism, are the recurrently viewed peculiarities of the reformists.

Like Dr. Meron, Dr. Lelasew makes himself part of the solution, in addition to showing where the observable gap is. Besides, he intends to subvert the existing mentality. Elsewhere in the novel, it is also indicated that he is aspired to bring a change at the expense of his matrimony. In practice, he does all that of course for obvious reason. Dr. Lelasew is married and a father of two whose wife and children live in the US. While he is supposed to reside along with them, and lead a pretty good life, which his wife urges him to be, he rather spends most of his time in Ethiopia for the lives of dozens. His life philosophy is that a life worth living is the one that goes beyond the self. One has to serve the society to whom he/she belongs. To realize his long time aspiration, he goes to the margin of splitting with his wife though we see them reunite as she understands him eventually.

The generation is good at being cooperative and having a dialogue, both of which are what the characters endeavor to practice among other things as a culture. This is probably because some, for example, the protagonist thinks that such good tradition is the thing that contemporary Ethiopia lacks. The reformists, however, ranging from their social life to their routine office works are observed to be cooperative with each other. They further believe in having a dialogue even when there is disagreement. Dr. Lelasew, Sister Zebiba and Dr. Meron are the characters

that mostly demonstrate these personal traits than the rest. These characters are hard workers in all their engagements. In all their endeavors, they smoothly interact with anyone for the benefit of their society.

Other than the above-mentioned individuals *Ato Siraj* in his display of such traits is a worthwhile figure. He advocates others to work together. He is also a man with innovative ideas. We see these in him over the party his wife prepares for her colleagues. Moreover, the manner of how Dr. Lelasew befriended with Seido, who once been a street boy, but later becomes one of the hard workers in the psychiatry center, is the other textual evidence. He has a good social interaction with people of his age, the young or the older. He sometimes resolves certain inconvenience that a naughty client like Masresha creates in a very smooth way. He chiefly does that using discussion. Dr, Meron's good affiliation with non-staffs and clients could also dictate as the reformists are nurtured with sense of cooperativeness.

Moreover, most of the characters if not all, are associated with positivity. They never tend to appear with no interest in the discussion they partake in. They appear rather energetic to engage themselves to which they have never been familiar with before. A case in point is the enthusiasm concern and extended dialogue Dr. Neway and Arsema as well as people in their circle hold to advocate adoption as a possible option. In view of that, Nitsuh breaks the silence:

ያው ያልተለመደ ስለሆነ ሊያስደነግጣችሁና ግራ ሊያጋባችሁ እንደሚችል ገምተናል። ሁላችንም ወላጅ አልባ ልጆችን ወስዶ ማሳደግ የፈረንጅና የጉዲፈቻ ድርጅቶች ስራ እንጂ የኛ ኃላፊነት አድርገን እንደማናስብ የታወቀነው።... ግን ነገሩን ከናንተ ጋር ልንወያይና ልናከፍላችሁ የፈለግንበት ምክንያት ደግሞ አለ። የመጀመሪያው የናንተን ሀሳብና ምክር ለመስማት ሲሆን፣ ጥያቄ ካላችሁም ለመመለስ ነው። በተለይ ግን ልጆቹ በህግ ተፈቀደልን የኛ ከሆኑ በኋላ ልጆቻችን ስለሆኑ እናንተም በሙሉ ልብ እንደወለድናቸው ልጆቻችን እንድትቀበሏቸው ለመጠየቅ ነው። Mihiret (2015, p. 212)

Since it is an unusual thing, we think you may find it shocking and confusing. Of course, we all think that adopting orphans is only a job of adoption agencies and foreigners, not of our responsibility. ... There is a reason why we want to share the issue and discuss it with you. The first is to hear your opinion and advices, and to answer any question you may have. Most notably, we are here today so as to request you to wholeheartedly accept the adopted kids as our own biological children as they will be ours once the legal process is over.

Arsema's idea is clear. One would infer multiple constructive thoughts from it. In our case, it signifies as the couple is willing to be at the forefront to bring something untouchable. Yet again, there is a clear intention in them that they want to ...inculcate the tradition of discussion on others notwithstanding their standpoint. Including Dr. Neway, the exemplary character in putting adoption into practice, the protagonist and Nitsuh from the very conception of the idea to its materialization are actively involved. Adoption is a new experience for Dr. Neway and his wife who are unable to have their own biological child. As if both have been in such practice, they reveal their interest to accept the offer they are recommended.

In addition to the couple, Dr. Lelasew and Nitsuh have played important role to ease the process, especially in convincing Dr. Neway's family. This idea would be sounder if we discuss it contrastingly to the reaction of the elders. Dr. Neway's family and relatives, who are gathered over the dinner the couple host, oppose their proposed idea that the wife unveils. Most of the elders seem to be in not an easily moved thought. They rather advocate that one is supposed to take care of his/her kin child because they think that raising children beyond the kin is problematic.

For the old, kin-based affiliation is the most important and are determined to it. For the reformists, however, it is not necessarily the case. There is a time when they would go for others as well. We see them practically engaged. They are open to new experiences and are easy-going to adapt something new. Specifically, Dr. Neway and Arsema break the tradition their family has been stick with for ages. Both happily take care of Zinash's three helpless children who have not any kinship affinity with. These characters are presumably influenced to have attached to this way of life because of the cultural practice in the country they have lived most of their lives. It is so evident that all of the characters, who favor adoption, have lived in overseas, where adoption is a common practice. Such an extreme stand between the two generations is, therefore, the direct consequence of the norm or the tradition they have been through.

No matter how their elders try hard to halt them from getting the children, they are champion in adopting the children. The couple take the three destitute children of Zinash to the United States and give them all parental care and support like they would do to their offspring: “አርሴማና ንዋይም የዘናሽን ልጆች የጉዲፈቻ ሂደት ጨርሰው ወደ አሜሪካ ከገቡ ሶስት ወራት አለፈ። ልጆቹ በአጭር ጊዜ ፈፅመው አፈልውጥ አሜሪካዊ ሆነዋል።” Mihiret (2015, p. 239) *Three months have gone after Arsema and Neway went*

*back to US completing Zinash's children adoption process. The children are completely changed in a short time and become typical Americans.*

The couple's conception of adoption as opposed to the popular apprehension across the country as well as their practical engagement do not only confer the idea of framing themselves to a new experience but in a broader understanding also shows their good-hearted nature. So do Dr. Lelasew and his wife. In a similar vein, both put forth substantial effort in the due process of the adoption. Since Dr. Lelasew knows that the three children's grandfather is living in terrible conditions, and he cannot even feed himself properly, he suggests Dr. Neway to adopt the children. Moreover, despite the harsh criticism, they receive from family and relatives over the adoption, Dr. Neway and his wife stick to their decision and thereby change the life of the children.

Unlike the prevailing view of life in the contemporary days, theirs is quite the contrary. They are not obsessed with the gratification of the self. This worldview of the reformist is traced in both their thought and deeds. Dr. Lelasew, for example, as *Rekik Ashara's* Mekbib accentuates that one ought to ease the burden of the society to which he/she was born. This philosophical thought of the reformist is well propagated by the protagonist oftentimes. For instance, in his argument with his wife over the issue of coming back to their homeland and serve his country, he points out: "አገርም እኮ ቤተሰብ ነው። አሜሪካ ብንኖር ምቹቱ ጥሩ ነው... ግን ጥሩ ቤት ኑሮ.... ልጅ ወልዶ አሳድጎ ጠረታ ወጥቶ በምቹት ከመኖር ያለፈ ማሰብስ አያሰፈልግም?... ከራሳችን ህይወት የበለጠና ያለፈ ኑሮ የምንኖርለት አገርስ አያሰፈልገንም?" Mihiret (2015, p. 157) "Even a country is a family. If we live in the United States, it is good ... But is that not necessary to think of life beyond having children, retire and live a comfortable life? Do we not need a country where we can live beyond our daily subsistence?"

Dr. Lelasew prioritizes society to the comfort of family, which initially seems unrealistic for his wife. The most important thing for him is serving his nation, particularly those that need his support badly. *Gash* Bedilu and *Emama* Tewabu are among those. It means unlike many of the subsequent generation figures, personal comfort is not what he ultimately aspires to achieve.

As he clearly puts, there has to be a country, which one has to take care of. This is because he feels that a country is more important than the comfort of an individual. This idea of the protagonist, which is seemingly neglected as if an old-fashioned thought, is also advocated by

*Ato Siraje*. All of his thoughts target helping others live a better life. *Ato Siraj*, in one of the dinners his wife prepares for her colleagues remarks:

ቆይ እኔ የምለው ታዲያ ለምን አንድ ነገር አትጀምሩም? ... አብራችሁ ዶክተሮች አላችሁ ... ነርስ አለ ... ሳይኮሎጂስቶች፣ ሶሻልወርከር ... መድሃኒትና የህክምና መገልገያ አስመጪ ከተፈለገ እኔ አለሁ። ምን ያህል ሰው እኮ በናንተ ሙያ የሚረዳ አጥቶ እየተቸገረ እንዳለ ብታውቁ። Mihiret (2015, p.129)

What I am saying is why don't you start something together? doctors are here ... there is a nurse ... psychologists, social workers ... If you need a drug and medical importer, I am here for you. If you must know, dozens are suffering just for the inaccessibility of help in your profession.

In his very note, as well-articulated above, he inspires them to work together and help the lives of those who are in need of them. He understands that the individuals gathered in the house are professionals in different areas, but none is working in such a way he thinks that dozens are benefited. He, therefore, encourages them to do it, and contributes his part to make happen what he considers important for the society.

#### **4.4.3. The Mysterious Generation**

As to the other selected novels explored so far, in Mihiret's *Lelasew*, the last cohort consists of those whose ages are in the young category. Including Dr. Sirak, one of the most important individuals of his generation to display the typical mannerism of the cohort, Mistire, Masresha, Widase, Sabela, Marta and so forth, are all in their twenties. Besides, technically, most of them are the children of the precedent generation. Of course, some of them have a real child-parent relationship with the reformists. For instance, Mistire and Dr. Lelasew, whom readers are lately informed that the former is the daughter of the latter, and have such affinity with each other. They could thus be referred to as the young generation. However, in their shared traits, they are rather termed as the mysterious.

Unlike the reformist, who has the experience of then and now, their involvement in the entire story is confined to the present time. Their dominantly displayed features are therefore claimed as the reflection of people in a similar age in contemporary Ethiopia. All we read about these characters, particularly, what they think and do as sometimes commented by the narrator or other characters seem rarely standing apart from the existing realities in the stated time. Their diction

in their communication as well as their style of utterance, each of which is an obvious marker of a given generation, is where the claimed point is so common.

Accordingly, Nuredine, Sabela and Mistir use certain expressions: ረሰ ነው፣ are you fine ቆሽጉ ገርል ነው ያፈሰከው፣ you have grabbed a pretty girl! ፈዜ እየከተተሽ (p. 257) ... It is time to tear it out ... (p. 146) እስከሱታ እንበልላቸው (p.235). Let's dance for them ..." These expressions are barely understood by the older individuals in the psychiatry center. Accordingly, Nuredine's father, Dr. Lelasew and other old people, get perplexed with the issue Nuredine talks about because of his phrasings, which are commonly use among his peers.

On the other hand, the generation is a composition of those whose socio-economic status and professional career are heterogeneous. In their professional engagement, they are psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists, lawyers and the like. Yet, we find a prostitute. In whatever status they might be, they share certain traits. The same is observed in their economic status. Accordingly, while Mistir, Masresha, Nuredine are relatively from a well to do family, Zinash, Seido and Dr. Sirak are from quite the opposite. For this reason, the early days of the latter were full of misery.

Irrespective of their differences, most if not all, share certain characteristics by which they are able to form their own identity. Almost all had access to pursue their study to the tertiary level. These imaginative figures are, therefore, fortunate enough to have the opportunity of studying at University though the likes of Nuredine and Tsigereda drop it out for different reasons. As a result, they are able to have at least their first degree. Dr. Sirak and Mistir are in fact go beyond. While the later holds her master's degree, the former studies his specialty in psychiatry.

The naughty Masresha got his first degree in psychology long before all. So do Seido and Widassie in sociology and law respectively. Regardless of this fact, almost all lack the ability to apply their intellect as a tool to transform themselves and others. The revelation of this pervasive traits, as a result of which most are not viewed serving beyond themselves, indicates that their level of intellect is not as organic as the previous generation. Their lack of such virtues is probably one of the striking issues of discussion that keep them different from their elders.

The very reserved nature of those iconic figures is the one that best describes the generation. Often times they appear unwilling to confide their feelings even to their intimate. Consequently,

lately, it is unveiled as most, if not all, have at least a single untold story of their lives. This is displayed in everything they get involved, particularly in their socialization. No matter how one is strongly attached to someone else, he/she does not disclose his/her inner thought. There is a time when this occurs in a family circle as well. The presence of such reservation would later affect their relationship as well as the way they resolve the problems they face.

Mistir's situation is quite relevant here. Her name itself, which literally mean *Mystery in Amharic*, is a good indication that there is something remain with herself. Dr. Sirak is the most elusive individual of all. Including the girls he often dates, most of his staff barely define him. Moreover, except for just a few incidents where some try hard to come up with constructive thoughts, what we see in most would back up the cohort's being elusive.

The likes of Sabela, Dr. Sirak, Wudasse among others are pointed out to have a revenge sentiment. The target subject to which the revenge is directed is not the same for each, but their cause is almost the same. The walk of life each has been through is the possible cause for most to appear with the claimed mannerism in their later lives.

#### **4.4.3.1. Indisposition Mindset**

The young conceive an unhealthy attitude towards others mainly because most of them were not raised having both emotional and psychological attachment of their parents. It is for various reasons that they experience the detachment. While for Sabela, the detachment has resulted from her parents' divorce, for others it is purely economic status of their families. Sabela was born to a well to do family. However, as her parents' marriage end up in a divorce, her fate turned bad. This consequently changed her path of life. After the divorce, her mother moved to the US and her father marries another. Her parents' decision to go in their ways made her feel neglected. It as well forces her to lead her life in prostitution.

In contrast, Zinash was born to destitute parents who are even unable to feed themselves. Her detachment from her parents is obviously her parents' impoverished condition. She is thus urged to go to the Arab world for economic reasons as many young women these days do. What awaits her there is completely different. She is raped and bears a child of a man whom she hates, and views any wealthy man a monster. She has also no positive attitude towards the male as a whole. Her being psychosis is also the result of all her encounters.

Like Sabela, Mistir for the same reason is exposed to have a hatred feeling for males. She sees all like the other copy of her father. Because she receives a rape from the man whom she has been raised by, She sees all male almost the same. The incident happened while she was very young. It was when her both parents had been experiencing unhealthy relation. Since then, she never considers her father like a rational being nor any male figure. Though her childhood experience was so painful, her view of the male figure seems unjustifiable.

Furthermore, the generation's indisposition mindset is observed in both Masresha and Dr. Sirak. Both are University graduates. While the former holds his first degree, the latter is on the way to hold his second as well. Irrespective of their having high academic status by which they could have brought a societal change, they are in a state of being quiet in the reverse. In here, in addition to their upbringing, the academic institution is in question for their lack of constructive thought. Again, both share sameness in the way they have grown up, which is one of the root causes of how they view their world. They never grew up having both paternal care and maternal love; they are barely attached to their parents. Masreha is made not to know his real father until he gets much older.

Besides, he has been disoriented of how to form a relationship with the opposite sex. His mother used to tell him that women love a man who possesses a physical power and uses it in order to make the one he loves his own. Such disorientation is reflected in his affairs with Mistir. Masrsha's uncle who is eventually unveiled to be his real father, married the wife of his brother and born Masresha. The father figure does that using his position. Masresha's being shaped as such and his obsession in his thought and practice finally let him take his own life in his own gun.

Their indisposition mindset further highlighted in every incident they partake. The most striking one, however, is the one that often goes in the mind of Dr. Sirak. The narrator accordingly reads the mind of Dr. Lalasew: *"ከሁሉ በላይ የኔ ሰኬት በሌላ ሰው ውድቀት ላይ ይወሰናል ብሎ ደመደመ። "ሰው ሳይወድቅ ሌላ ሰው እንደማይነሳ ሰማይና ምድርም.... ትናትም ዛሬም .... ህይወትም ሞትም ከጥንት ጀምሮ ምስክሮች ናቸው"* Mihiret (2015, p .336) Above all, he concludes as his success depends on others failure.

*"One does not succeed unless the other fails - the Heaven and the Earth, yesterday and tomorrow ... death and life – have been witnessing this fact ever since ancient time.*

For Dr. Sirak, success necessarily depends on others failure. His success is achieved at the expense of someone else. This would further lead us to claim as he is obsessed with unhealthy individualism like most youths of his ages. What goes in his mind appears to be problematic. It is not necessarily the case that for someone to be successful, others should fail. It is also possible that all can be successful at a time.

Dr. Sirak, in all his ups and downs, strives to maintain his ego; he does not care whatsoever happens on others. A good textual evidence in this regard is what Dr. Sirak conspires with Masresh against Dr. Lelasaw and Mistir. Without the knowledge of Dr. Lelasew, he often calls and writes to Dr. Lelasew's wife, and misinformed her. He even stresses as if she is betrayed. Nonetheless, his real intention in doing so is to build his reputation at the expense of Dr. Lelasew's split with his wife. He has a hidden motive i.e. taking Dr. Lelasew's position at the psychiatry center mainly by damaging the reputation that Dr. Lelasew has built over years.

The idea that makes our argument sounder is that most of them namely Dr. Sirak, Masresha, Mistir, Martha among others feel themselves that they know all, and consider others less important. Of course, they are experts in their profession. Their fundamental problem is that they think that they are all knowers. To substantiate our argument, let us see how Masresha sees himself, and responds to his contenders. As elsewhere noted, he is a psychologist by profession. Because he is a psychologist, he thinks that he can solve his problem by himself. This is why he often sarcastically reacts to Dr. Lelasew's therapy.

Most importantly, he does not value the effort as well as the expertise of others at the psychiatry center. It is because he feels that he knows all well that he disregard others' efforts. The state of mind in which Dr. Sirak is placed is also not that different. He too feels almost the same. Their difference is while the case of Masresha often applies force, Dr. Sirak's is so subtle. It is because of its subtlety that his viciousness remains unobserved until the climax of the story.

Although none is illiterate, they dispossess the quality of organic intellectuals. As hinted earlier, most of them have at least a University degree by which they are expected to feel the burden of their society. However, including Dr. Sirak, who specializes in psychiatry none seem concerned

to ease others' pain. They rather preoccupied with the gratification of personal desire. Dr. Sirak's egoistic personality, which pervades every thought of his, well portrays this viewpoint. Other than what they themselves do or think, Dr. Lelasew and Dr. Meron, both of whom are the icon of the reformist generation, view the young as careless and uncaring for patients. One of the incidents where their being careless is boldly stressed is the mistreatment of the young psychotic pregnant woman at St. Paul Hospital. The case of the young psychotic pregnant woman seems a bit painful. While they could still do something to save her life, we see the young physicians ignore her and let her die.

Again, their lack of interest to serve society is well pronounced in Dr. Sirak's usual discourse. In his discussion with Dr. Lelasew, for instance, he says: "ሳስበው እኔ ውጪ የምኖር ብሆን እዚህ አገር መጥቼ የምኖር አይመስለኝም።" Mihiret (2015, p .105) *I think, if I were living abroad, I don't think, I would come and live in this country.* Unlike Dr. Lelasew whose mentality centers on changing the lives of others, Dr. Sirak's attached to his own alone. Doing something for the good of his society, in the opinion of Dr. Sirak, is a sheer wastage of time. For him, it has no further essence. Hence, he considers Dr. Lelasew's deeds as a fruitless effort. This might also mean that the likes of Dr. Sirak are not aspired to realize something good for everyone that in its turn serve for generations to come. They instead focus on a mere temporary personal gain. As a result, the the worldview of Dr. Sirak, Masresha and other representative individuals of the generation is rather put as parochial.

The other lopsided mindset of the generation is highlighted in the character's conception of womanhood and manhood. Both men and women figures of the generation engage in hair-splitting criticism to each other as if the one is not the supplement of the other. Instead of figuring out their problem and suggesting the possible solution, which would narrow their differences, they merely blame each other. Nobody wants to take responsibility to overcome the existing problem. For example, the prostitute Sabela views men as: "ያው ወንዶች እኮ ያው ናቸው... ምን የተለየ ነገር አላቸው" Mihiret (2015, p. 141). *All men are the same ... they have nothing different. On the other end, Dr. Sirak has a similar attitude to women. "ሴቱ ሁሉ እኮ የሚይጨበጥ ጉም ሆነብን። ትንሽ ደህና ናቸው ያልካቸው፣ ጥቂት አብረሃቸው እንደቆየህ የሚፈልጉትን የሚያውቁ አይመስሉም።" Mihiret (2015, p. 342)* *All women become vague fog. The ones you thought were a bit better, they didn't seem to know what they wanted if you stayed with them for a while.*

For Sabela, all men possess nothing worthwhile; ... so do all women for Dr. Sirak. Both views are problematic mainly because there are dozens of good men as well as women. It means that the sample size becomes quite insignificant to represent all men and all women.

#### **4.4.3.2. Material vs. Spiritual Values**

As to the young in the other novels, in *Lelasew*, the mysterious is rather inclined to pull off their material needs. This viewpoint, which makes it quite different from the precedent generations, is understood in the collective mentality of what most shares in common. The gratification of material desire like a norm is practiced by most. In other expressions, for them, material value is much more important than that of spiritual. It would be a naive argument to assert that all are completely surrendered. Mistir and Seido, whom we see late in the story follow the footsteps of the reformists; they could be the exception to have some sort of spiritual value. Because they have a close attachment with the influential figures of the reformists, almost an evolutionary change is maintained in their mannerisms.

However, even theirs is not complete and inherent, especially when compared to their elders. To get their core intention, especially as to why they lack something in this regard, let us see the material value of Mistir. From the very beginning of her involvement in many incidents of the story, she spends much of her time to make herself appear gorgeous. She further enjoys going to dinners. In much of her outings, she impresses the audience in her style of dress; she does that seemingly to grab the attention of everyone. For whatever purpose she might do that, she has a strong obsession with fashionable clothes without which she feels she would not take others' attention. Though the case of Martha is not as bold as her friend, Mistire, she too appears in a similar fashion.

As highlighted earlier in connection to their mindset, its forefront figures are observed to have indulged in self-satisfaction. The likes of Dr. Sirak, Masresha, Martha and Sabela barely see what goes beyond the self. When someone does something good for others, he/she maintains spiritual satisfaction. Their ultimate goal is however not to obtain happiness in making others pleased. The worst circumstance is where some characters, for example, Dr. Sirak goes to the extent of being immoral that the obsession of his self is figured out. Thus, on a general basis, the generation focuses on maintaining self-desire in everything they do. In fact, the degree of their addiction varies among themselves. While some are addicted to a drug and commit himself/

herself to it, others used it to ease the intensity of their libido. As a result, most are busy with gaining a brief satisfaction, and therefore overlook serving the society.

The addiction of some in its turn massively affects the lives of families. By the time the children figures are supposed to give a hand to their parents, they helplessly fall in the hands of their parents. A case in point is the situation of Zinash whose mental illness is exacerbated by her addiction to chat and alcohol. In addition to Zinash, Nuredin's addiction to a drug as a result of which he drops out his University study is the other witness.

On the other hand, Dr. Sirak's promiscuous acts as well as Sabela's prostitute strengthen the notion that they disregard spiritual values. Dr. Sirak is a physician; he further pursues his specialty which by implication means that he is in the apex of an academic status. Regardless of his being a presumably revered position, he is unable to detach himself from doing unrighteous deeds. He deliberately involves himself in it because he believes that it is the only way to avoid his stress. He sometimes sees doing that as a complement to what he lacks in life. In either way, however, he never regards the values of doing something good for people he lives with.

Most importantly, the disassociation of the generation with the essence of spiritual values is hinted on the morally depraved deeds some partake. In such engagement as the likes of Dr. Sirak and Sabella gain their temporary pleasure, others on the contrary are devastated. The two contradictory incidents that involve the generation seemingly reflect the general atmosphere of contemporary Ethiopia. The two young Ladies, who study at Dire Dawa University who are also raped in a gang, are the most notable figures in the novel to go through in the bad experience. Both are unable to get back to their real self since. Nevertheless, those who do the evil thing on them are not shown feel sense of regret. It might mean that these young individuals lack moral value. As a result, spiritual values are rarely privileged by the young.

Moreover, the disintegration of spiritual values among the young is understood from the perspective of others, particularly of how the older view the young. Dr. Lelasew, Dr. Meron and Sister Zebiba are the prominent figures who often explicitly comment on the generation in this regard. As the protagonist comment on the overall state affairs of contemporary Ethiopia, where the young take the lion share participation, suggest that they still stick to their both personal and material desire. In their view, spiritual values in which core human value inevitably privileged

than anything, is not valued. Similarly, the protagonist's serious comments on Zinash's lack of attention from the young health practitioners would also suggest as they lack spiritual value.

#### **4.5. Generations in *Abrak***

As been considered in the other novels, age and shared views in the same vain are the centers of attention in *Abrak*. That is mainly to figure out individuals of some particular time and their collective identity. However, when characters' age is not mentioned clearly, the storytime is considered as a possible clue to point out as to which age group certain characters belong. The consideration of this is important not only to have a clue of the characters' age but also to have a lucid understanding about the general spirits of the time of when the major incident of the story occurs. This is also where the their worldview is supposedly drawn.

In the novel, one could easily find a number of historical incidents that some have a strong connection with. The historical incidents would thus give us a clue about their supposed age and the fundamental point of the mentality that they display latter. Besides, according to the Mannehemian tradition, which they call it *the formative period*, is an important element for the formation of a given generation.

Accordingly, the TPLF movement that hinted to have begun in the Ethiopian post-revolution days is the one that recurrently noted. For example, Tsige, the oldest of the survivors from those TPLF co-founders, in a flash back takes us to the early days of the TPLF movement. Other than narrating how and when she along with her fellow friends joined the front, she focuses on some major occurrences by then.

Apart from historical incidents, most of the stories in the novel take place in contemporary Ethiopia. The novel thus by far portrays the life of the society of present-day Ethiopia than any of the other selected novels. It further means that there is a generation that appears to exist in contradict with the fundamental belief of the earlier. It is not that elusive to maintain as the novel entertains the ideological views of two different generations.

In terms of age, most of its members belong to the old and the new generations. However, in their dominantly displayed personal traits, they could also referred to as the secessionist and the unionist respectively. Based on the earlier considerations, the secessionists were therefore born in the 1950s while the unionists were born in the 1980s.

#### **4.5.1. The secessionist**

In *Abrak*, the secessionist is composed of individuals who are sensitive to the affairs of their ethnic groups. In dealing with this generation, the researcher, in particular, refers to two groups of individuals whose socio-cultural backdrops originate from two different ethnic groups. Regardless of some differences among individuals in either group, most of them share certain features in common. This is probably because, in one way, they share similitude in age and mentality, which as Manheim theorizes, is the indispensable element for the formation of a given generation, it is influenced by the trend of the time on the other way.

Some of the prominent figures in both groups are mentioned hereunder. Thus, Taye Biru, Gash Megerssa, Chala Biru, Tesfaye Tamene, Arari and Lenssa are the giants of the first sub-group. Taye Biru, who is presumably in his late 50s or early 60s, is the father of two. He attaches himself to the regimes of the country in the past. His elder brother, Chala Biru, 65, is the father of Arkani and Daba, who latter appeared opposing his years' conviction. He is the only one of this sub-group whose age is explicitly mentioned.

Megerssa, the old security guard at Walta's house, is the other prominent figure in here. His prominence is not relied upon his appearance, as his involvement in the major storyline is quite limited. In spite of this, however, he possesses the sentiment of most. Tesfaye Tamene, a longtime friend of Taye, belongs here mainly in what he stands for. In the finger counted scenes he appears in the story, he draws attention to the belief that the Oromo people are yet unable to maintain their freedom. Arari and Lenssa, the wives of Chala and Taye respectively, are the less heard feminine figures of the sub-group.

On the other hand, the secessionist is the constituents of those who attach themselves to the exclusive concern of the Tigreans. Under this sub-category, we find Tekeste Nebrom, Tsige, Solomon, Hadas, Commander Balcha and some unnamed influential characters. Like individuals in the other sub-group, these are also in their 60s. In addition to the historical incident that they were the participant, which we are told in a flashback, Tsige's being the mother of three children of whom the one is the giant of the next generation, is where they are inferred to be in their 60s. Most of them, in this case, are therefore either the co-founder of the TPLF or those who joined it early. Of course, there also the likes of Commander Balch who is from a non-Tigre ethnic group

but shares their sentiment. The likes of commander Balch are therefore joined this sub group a short while after the EPRDF was formed.

Though the revelation of their concern to their ethnic group is different, both in their own perspectives claim as their people are the principal victim of the statuesque. Accordingly, Taye Biru, Chala Biru, Tesfaye Tamene and Gash Megerssa are the most important individuals whose entire claim center on the notion that the Oromo have been, and are subjugated. Their concern is noted to reach the margin of conceiving strong hatred to one another. These individuals, who could also referred to as the Oromo nationalist pressure group, are highly obsessed with their ethnic group and reflects it directly while individuals in the other group mostly reflect it quite the opposite.

In their every affair, the old figures are therefore hardly cut off themselves from ethnocentric fixation. Both group are therefore associated with being sensitive only to the people they claim to stand for. There is nowhere in the text that they speak up for any mistreatment that goes against other ethnic groups. It could, therefore, be argued that it is the foundation of the generation's worldview. Furthermore, the extent of their attachment for which we claim that almost all are haunted by it is not only understood from their positive feelings to their ethnic group but also in their hostile reactions against the ethnic group they consider rival.

In most of their interactions, there is an ethnic-based confrontation among most. Some thus try hard to subvert what they used to experience. For example, Taye Biru and his older brother, Chala Biru, strive to subvert the tradition; both note as their ethnic group underwent sufferings. Most of the time, the confrontation is presented contrastingly in order that it shows as the one is marginalized by the other. As a consequence, those who claim to represent the Oromo, especially, Taye and Chala in their discourse stress that the Oromo have been subjugated for years just because the Amhara and Tigre were in the upper hand.

The former, in one of his discussions, elucidates the following: "እስከ አሁን አማራውና ትግሬው እየተፈራረቁ በጉልበት በመደፍጠጥ አገራችንና ህዝባችንን በመቆጣጠር ሀብታችንን በመዘረፍ ህዝባችንን የነሱ አገልጋይ በማድረግ፤ አረመኔያዊ ስርአታቸውን ላያችን ላይ ገንብተው፤ ቋንቋችንና በባህላችን እስከናፍር ድረስ ማንነታችንን ሲያወድሙት ቆይተዋል፡፡" Mulugeta (2018, p. 374.) So far, the Amhara and the Tigrean have alternatively subjugated our country and our people; robbed our resources; made our people

*their slave; build their ruthless regimes upon us, and have been destroying our identity to the extent that we are ashamed of our language and culture.*

As to Taye, the Oromo people have been dehumanized by the regimes that the Amhara and the Tigri have alternatively reined since distant past. However, as the country seldom sees a regime that concentrates on suppressing the Oromo alone or any specific ethnic group, his blaming the other rather seems a mere accusation in which his bias to his people is inferred. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the regimes that he rather called essentially totalitarian are not free from any act of maltreatment.

However, as Taye claims, it is not justifiable to conclude that they specifically target the Oromo as others have also been the victim. Thus, his accusation seems where his bias is traced. This is again because while there are dozens who, irrespective of their ethnic background have been suffered, Taye, in particular, underlines the situations of his people as if only the Oromo have gone through a miserable condition. This would further lead us to have a critical observation whether there is a trace of ethnic oriented prejudice within the generation or not.

Thus, we find some textual evidences that would bring to light as the likes of Taye being prejudiced in both ways. As already hinted, one of the commonest forms in which the older are viewed prejudiced is in their sensitivity to the pain of their ethnic group. They even reflect it in favor of them as opposed to the facts. In other words, rather than witnessing the incident or any occurrence as it actually happens, they instead report them in a manner that seems hyperbolized. The intention behind such presentation of certain happenings are to have support from the populace who are supposedly bounded with a similar sentiment. If we take a critical look at Chala's comments on the instability in the country as a result of which many are arrested, his blind attachment to the Oromo is overemphasized.

In the case of the unrest in Oromia, for instance, the narrator observes: "*አሮሚያ ውስጥ የተቃዋሞ ረብሻ ወይም ግርግር በተነሳ ቁጥር በዚህም ምክንያት አሮሞዎች ሲታሰሩ ሲቆሰሉና ሲሞቱ አሮሞዎች በመሆናችን ነው ይህ ሁሉ በደል የደረሰብን ብለው ያምናሉ።"* Mulugeta (2018, p. 102) *Whenever there is unrest or opposition rally in Oromia, and as a result, people are wounded, arrested and killed, {Chala} concludes that all these sufferings are because we are Oromo.*

Instead of considering the specific details like for example why people are arrested, he merely concludes that they are arrested just because they are Oromo. There might be other reasons why they are arrested. There might also be individuals who are non-Oromo among the arrestees. The discourse would further suggest that Chala is influenced by his preconceived view of his ethnic group, which is seemingly quite lopsided.

Ethnic oriented prejudice is neither confined to a single ethnic group, nor to certain specific individuals. Like the order of the day, it is viewed being adhered by most. Although their intention and their style of presentation might slightly vary with those who claim to represent the voice of the Oromo, those who speak up for the Tigreans are also prejudiced to their people. Tsige, one of the retired TPLF members, remarks "*የወገኖቼን መብትና ክብር በትግል ማስከበር የሚቻል መስሎኝ ያለኝን ሁሉ እንደሰጠሁ ታውቃላችሁ። ወገኖቼ ግን ከትግሉ ያገኙት ነገር መብትና ክብር ሳይሆን አንድን ጨቋኝ በሌላ መቀየር ነው።"* Mulugeta (2018, p. 99) *Thinking that I could realize my fellow people's right and dignity in the struggle, I have committed a lot. You are well aware of that. However, what my people get from the struggle is not their right and dignity; rather the replacement of one oppressor by another.*

In her comment, elsewhere in the text, Tsige repeats the phrase *my people* to show her serious concern to the Tigreans. She further notes in a clear term that she joined the TPLF to ease the burden of the Tigri people. This might give us a suspicion about her being sensational to the issue of ethnicity in general and to her ethnic group in particular. The one that proves the argument is that she appears to deny the existing reality noting that the Tigri people for whom she fought most of her life is under a state of subjugation. However, from the perspective of what is going on, the intention of Tsige rather appears a false accusation. She is therefore prejudiced in favor of the Tigri.

Additionally, since including Tsige, the vanguard of this sub-group in essence set up to liberate the Tigri people, they less likely avoid themselves from ethnocentric bias. At the same time, they are dissatisfied with the system of governance they have built. For instance, Tsige claims as their intended plan misses its right pathway. Similarly, Solomon and Hadas, who are also the old TPLF members, argue that the fundamental inquiry of the Tigri people is shrouded; so does Tsige. They often complain that the masses are not benefited; a few abuses what dozens have been sacrificed for.

Ethnocentric prejudice in the above excerpts in which the mentality of individuals from either ethnic groups is highlighted in favor of one's own ethnic group. Chala and Tsige are not directly referring to those that are responsible for the blame. Besides, their intention is not causing any harm to others; they rather seem to be in need of getting others sympathy. Of course, there are circumstances that they directly practice it focusing on other ethnic groups.

Upon their previous knowledge of some ethnic groups, the secessionists often intimidate those that belong to other ethnic groups. Taye Biru, who is sturdily intolerant against the Tigreans and sometimes against the Amharas, is the forefront figure in such practice. Gash Megerssa and Tekeste, are also the most recurrently noted figures. One of the repeatedly occurred incidents in the novel that has high relevance with our argument is Taye's strong disapproval of his nieces having romantic affairs with Walta. His resentment, on their affairs, goes to the extent of splitting both though all his attempts are unsuccessful. Having a superficial understanding of Walta's personality and his feelings for Arkani, he urges the family members to halt their affairs not to proceed any further. He does all that just because Walta is Tigre. He strongly hates the Tigreans and does reflect it even in a public. Not once or twice that he does reflect his abhorrence to Walta or the Tigreans as a whole; he does that almost always.

In his comment on Arkani, for instance, he says: "ይህችን የመሰለች ሊቅ የኦሮሞ ልጅ በአንድ አረመኔ ወያኔ አፍዝ አደንግዝ ስር ወደቀች።" Mulugeta (2018, p.266). *Such an ingenious Oromo girl falls under the control of a ruthless Weyane guy.* His brother also views the Tigreans in the same way. Chala in his discussion with Obsse over his daughter's arrest, he insults them: "እነዚህ ዘረኞች ፍትህ ያውቃሉ ብለሽ ነው። አረሞነቷ አይቀር ነገር። ድርምጃ የጠመዷት በአረሞነቷ ነው። አሁን ሲያገኙዋት ሲጋዋን ዘልዝለው ነው የሚበሉት።" Mulugeta (2018, p.311) *Do you think these racists know justice? Her being Oromo is not avoidable. Of course, it is because of her identity that they are against her. When they get her now, they tear her flesh apart and swallow her.*

Taye's abusive and offensive expression directly addresses Walta as the context hints. However, Chala's aggressive expression even stronger than the former is indirectly forwarded to the people. In either way, what they are associated with and how they are viewed is very unsympathetic. The speakers who belong to the Oromo in such strong disapproval expression depict the Tigreans as a whole so vicious.

Moreover, the cohort obsession with their ethnic group goes to the margin of sprouting animosity to one another. The manner of its revelation by some even seems that they have nurtured such identity targeting hatred to each other. The members in the two-sub groups of the generation have hatred feelings to one another and express it differently. Taye, Chala and Gash Megerssa strongly detest Tigre and the Amhara, and openly express it even in front of them. The latter is even synonymously called *Neftegna*. From most of their discourses, their strong feelings of detest to these ethnic groups are presumed to have originated from the regimes in which Tigre and Amhara are asserted to have been privileged.

They never seem to be concerned to the psychological impact of their manner of interaction. The revelation of Gash Megerssa's repressed feelings is quite relevant to this point. He is a security guard at Walta's house. Although he appears to have a good relation with Walta as Walta claims, Gash Megerssa's actual feeling to his employer is unfavorable. In a broad daylight, he reveals his abhorrence to the Tigri people. In his backbiting Walta to his fiancée, one could sense how far his hatred feeling is strong. He, unreservedly, remarks the following:

"ህዝባችን ላይ የታወጀው ዘመቻ ገና አለብቃም። ዘራችንን በመንቀል ህዝባችንን እንዲጠፋ፣ ደግሞ የአጥንታችን ክፍይ የሆነ ሰው እዚህ አካባቢ እንዳይበቅል ለማድረግ ከቀያችን ፈንቅለው ያባረሩን ትግሬዎች ናቸው። ግፉ ላንቺም እንደሚተርፍ አስቢው። እና ማንንም አትመኝ" አሉ። Mulugeta (2018, p. 367)

"The campaign that has been declared against our people is not over. The Tigreans destruct our lineage and destroy our people. Besides, in order that our offspring will not be born here, they have displaced us. Its atrocity might extend to you, and hence do not trust anyone." He said.

As stressed in the quote, the old man explicitly describes the Tigri so outrageous. He generalizes that the people are behind all the miseries of his people { the Oromo}. Moreover, the woman he is talking to is the future wife of the man he indirectly blames. Arkani's being a soul mate of Walta doesn't even restrain the old man from expressing his anger against Walta and the Tigreans. The old man fails to notice the virtuous elements in Walta, and judge him on his biased opinion. He thus senses him that Walta is inherently vicious just because he is from Tigri. This is why he urges her to be curious about him.

The entire expression of the old man clearly reveals his malicious feelings for his master. As opposed to this, Walta treats the old man like his father. Of course, the old man could technically be his father. He thus approaches him with a revered look. There might be some who intentionally do wrongs against his people but neither all nor Walta. There is no incident in the story that would trace Walta does any wrong on Gash Megerssa. He is, therefore, blinded with an unjustified feeling of hate, targeting the Tigreans as a whole.

Likewise, Taye and Chala are filled with hatred, and are prejudiced against the Tigreans. Their hatred and prejudice correspondingly resulted from their ethnic obsessions. Taye's feeling is even harsher as revealed in his distasteful expressions. He believes the Oromo people have been suppressed because the Tigri are essentially villains to the Oromo. Taye further argues that the TPLF and the Tigri people are the same and both did no good to his people. However, in the case of his imprisonment, Walta is the one who does him a favor in the process of his release.

The reaction of Taye is quite the opposite. Rather than appreciating Walta for the good thing he does him, Taye instead keeps on viewing him so vicious even than before. He thus considers him as the most ruthless figure that subjugates his people. Soon after Taye is released, the narrator views him: "የታዩ ልብ ዋለታን አልተቀበለውም። እንዳለው መፈታቱ ቢያስደስተውም በዋለታ ተሳታፊነት መከናወኑ በጭራሽ አልተቀጠለትም።" Mulugeta (2018, p.144). *Taye never accepts Walta sincerely. Thought he is happy that he is released, he is dismayed over the involvement of Walta in the process.* In the same scene, the narrator further sees what goes in the mind of Taye as well as his brother's similar reaction to Wata:

ዋለታን የመሰለ ጭራቅ መሃላችን አስቀምጠው እንዴት መረጋጋት እንዳሰቡ ግራ የሚገባ ነው። ብሎ ተማረረ በሀሳቡ። ቢሆንም ራሱን እንደምንም ተቆጣጥሮ "ስለ ወያኔ እስር ቤት ምን ይወራል ብለህ ነው።" አለና አቀረቀረ። ጫላ የወንድማቸውን ስሜት ስላነበቡና ስለተጋሩት ሊከላከሉለት ፈለጉ። Mulugeta (2018, p. 146)

It is so confusing that they think of stability while the monster like Walta is among us." He complains in his thought. However, restraining himself, he said, "there is nothing that we talk about Weyane's Prison", and sees the ground. As Chala shares the feeling of his brother, he wants to back him.

In Abrak, ethnocentric extremism, which is the gloomy side of ethnicity, is not curbed to the above-discussed characters' thoughts. With a slight difference in its mode of revelation and the impact it might come up with, individuals from other ethnic groups are also in a similar state of mind. Those that claim to stand and struggle for the freedom of the Tigri people perceive others, especially the Oromo as unsympathetic. However, their feelings are often implied; not as explicit as they are expressed. Most of their feelings are also assumed to have been sprung from the assumption that the Oromo is their potential adversaries. Most of them seldom express their real feeling overtly. Their ethnocentric mania is therefore figured out from their actions.

Several of the secrete gatherings organized by the old TPLF members and their allies such as Tekeste and Commander Demelash is a good example. In their usual meetings, they conspire on destructing any organized movement of the Oromo as a result of which the likes of Tamene lost his life, and dozens are vulnerable to sufferings. In addition to this, they spy on them in undercover, and put them into jail. They often do that almost institutionally. Of course, Tekeste along with his compatriots contribute a lot in the realization of the ethnic oriented regime. Tekeste in his private discussion with Walta over his unyielding concern to Tigreans, he stresses:

እናም የህዝብህ መሰረት የሆነው ማንነትህ ወይም ትግራይዋነትህ በአሁኑ ሰአት ከተለያዩ ወገኖች ጥቃት እየደረሰበት ነው። አንተም እንደማትዘነጋ እምነታችን የፀና ነው። ይህንኑ የተቃጣብንን ጥቃት ለመመከት በምናደርገው የተደራጀ ትግል አንተም እንድትሳተፍና ለተሳትፎህም ዳግሎ ያለ ክፍያ እንድታገኝ ለመጋበዝ ነው ዛሬ እዚህ ድረስ እንድትመጣ የፈለኩት።  
Mulugeta (2018, p. 9)

So the very base of your people, which is your identity or your being Tigrean, has now received an attack from different groups. It is our conviction that you don't overlook it. In our effort of defending this attack, we want you to join us, and do your part, and for your participation to pay you a lot that I have invited you to come here today.

As it appears, the message in the quote specifically does not target the Oromo; it possibly targets any other ethnic group as well. Nevertheless, contextually those whom Tekeste sees as a foe of his people are the Oromo people. More to the point, the TPLF leadership is strongly resisted by them. The nationwide rallies in opposition to the government being aggravated in Oromia than elsewhere also suggest that the Oromo is understood as so antagonistic to Tekste's ethnic group.

#### 4.5.1.1. The Siege Mentality

The other related peculiar facet of the generation is the old figures framing themselves in ways that cause unsympathetic feelings towards the outsiders. Other than the offensive words some advocate severance. Ethnocentrism by itself is indeed exposed to exclusivity in which a sort of binary opposite manner of interaction is inevitable. In *Abrak*, the vulnerability of ethnocentrism to inimitability is more illustrated in the circles the prominent figures of the generation create and put themselves in order that the one differs from the other. Consequently, individuals draw a red line that defines themselves as '*We and They*'.

The intention behind the adherence of such a category is to underscore the fundamental differences among ethnic groups for which some such as Chala, Taye, the old security Guard and Taye's Friends urge scission. Their basic argument is that the pain of their ethnic group has resulted from the villain deeds of the others, which they claim, embedded in the history of the country. They thus finger the Tigri and the Amhara for their sufferings in the past, which they even claim that linger in the present days. They are therefore bounded with a siege mentality. Correspondingly, the likes of Tsige, Hadas and Tekeste, whose ultimate goal exclusively centers on benefiting the Tigireans, are also in a similar way of thought. Theirs, however, target against those who are in the decision making posts.

The categorical presentation of "*We*" and "*they*" on the other hand, is applied to inculcate a strong social bond among members of one's group. This bond would thus produce positive feeling towards members of the group though in its turn might cause hostility towards the outsiders. It is in light of this that the two sub-group of the generation for seemingly similar reason endeavor to persuade their addresses. In its strongest term, especially in the opinion of the youth, grouping themselves in that way ultimately targets on disestablishing the socio-cultural bond within which people live in the country for decades.

The Oromo nationalist advocate personages go to the extent of realizing sovereign state of themselves. Rather than integration, they emphasize on issues that would realize the opposite. Their basic claim is that others are essentially hostile to the Oromo. For instance, Chala Biru in his strong argument with his daughter over nationhood and Ethiopianism unveils what goes in his mind for years:

"ዳዲ ኦሮሚያ ከኢትዮጵያ መገንጠል ይፈልጋል እያልከኝ ነው?" "አሳምሮ ልጄ!" "እንዴት አወክ አለኝ አርካኒ።" "ይህማ ፀሀይ የመታው እውነታ አይደል እንዴ!" አሉና እጃቸውን ወደ ላይና ወደታች ከፍ አድርገው ጀርባቸውን ግርግዳው ላይ አስጠግተው ከርቀት አትኩረው አዩዋት። "ብዙ አበሣ ካሳየን አቢሲኒያ ጋር አብረን መቀጠል አንችልም ልጄ። ስቃይ አሁንም ይሰማናል። ከብራችንና ከራታችንን ክፉኛ አቁስለውታል። ማህበራዊ ትስስራችንን ሰብረውታል። ዘራችንን ጨፍጭፈውታል። ሀብታችንን ዘርፈው መተንፈሻ መላወሻ አሳጥተውናል። አሁንም መድልዎ አለ። በነፃነት መሰባሰብና መደራጀት አልቻልንም። አሮሚኛ የሚናገሩ ገዢዎች ስላሉን ብዙ የአሮሞ ህዝብ መብት ተረጋገጠ ማለት አይደለም፤ እነሱ የአቢሲኒያ ጉዳይ አስፈፃሚዎች ናቸው። በመሆኑም አብረን ብንቀጥል ፖለቲካዊ ብቻ ሳይሆን ኢኮኖሚያዊ እድገታችን ይቀጭጫል። ይህ የሰቆቃ ታሪክ ስሜታችንና ስነ ልቦናችንን አንድ አድርጎታል እና የግድ ለብቻችን መሆን አለብን።" ...  
Mulugeta (2018, p. 275)

"Dadi, do you mean Oromia wants to secede from Ethiopia?" "Definitely, my darling!" "How do you know?", Arkani said. "This is a broad daylight truth!", he said moving his hands up and downs ... then offsets his back to the wall and stares at her from distance. "We cannot proceed with Abisinia who has suffered us massively. We still feel the pain. They have damaged our pride and dignity. They have broken down out social-integrity. They have destroyed our lineage. In robbing our resources, they make us feel homelessness. Still, there is impartiality. We are unable to assemble and organize ourselves freely. Our having Oromiffa speaker officials does not mean that many Oromo people maintain their rights. They are minions of Abisinia. Thus, if we proceed together, not only our politics but also our economy will be dwindled. Because this miserable history makes our feeling and psychology one and the same, we must be independent."

In the dialogue of the father and his daughter, the former's strong desire for separation is so obvious. To arrive at his firm conviction in which scission for the Oromo people is hinted as a kind of make or break option, he presents his premises on the basis of "We" and "They" distinction. Accordingly, his "We" are the Oromo people whom he claims dispossessed all their belongings and are exposed to both physical and psychological woes. In the belief of Chala Biru, since his people are dehumanized, the Oromo would no more favor proceeding with them.

On the contrary, his "They" are those whom in a clear term he asserts as the enemy of his people. He collectively refers those people as the Abyssinia. In similar Vein, Gash Megerssa, Tamene Desta, Taye Biru and his friends share the idea of Chala Biru and partake to provide their contribution to realize their long time aspiration. Not only those who speak up for the Oromo that activate the notion of self-determination, but also that of the Tigrean prominent figures such

as Tsige and Tekeste. Nevertheless, the activism of the latter is less severe as compared to the former. Of course, including Tsige, many of her old friends from the very inception of the TPLF, are strongly engaged to realize the sovereignty of Tigri people. Besides, Tsige in her latter days feels disappointed that her people are yet not free, and therefore accuses the government noting that the Tigreans are hardly enjoying their civil and political liberty.

Tekeste is also infused with a similar attitude. As quoted in the earlier section in which he converses with Walta, and of course, in a number of his meetings with individuals from his ethnic group, he underscores that others are their enemy, and urges them to organize and protect themselves. So as to smoothen the progress of his aspiration of secession, he brainwashes people in his circle and has a hostile attitude towards others, particularly the Oromo. Above all, the trace of siege mode of thinking is noted on them because the giants of either group are unobserved on the subject of tolerance and co-existence, which is so vital for building a strong social bond among themselves.

Aside from their noted peculiarity so far, other related specific traits would give us their clear picture. Accordingly, unbending is the dominantly observed characteristics in most of them. Unbending, which in general purports negativity, is the mannerism that they sometimes even unconsciously display in their ordinary interactions. Irrespective of their ethnic background, almost all are inherently determined not to alter their thought even if they might sense that others thought is sounder than theirs. Tsige, Taye, Solomon, and Tamene, who significantly represent the voice of the cohort, are so symbolic to possess it. Rather than changing their mind regarding their stiff ethnic stance, they prefer to suffer the consequences of their acts. For this reason, Tsige and Taje are imprisoned whilst Solomon is dispossessed his position in the office. Most notably, Tamene, an intimate friend of Taye, who strongly advocates the notion of Oromo first, lost his life.

No matter how the young try to back their argument with sound justifications, their elders never tend to show any sign of flexibility to change their preconceived thought. In the case of Taye and Arkani, for instance, the latter even uses *a Socratic method of debating* and disproves Taye's firm stand on the idea that the TPLF and the Tigri people are not essentially the same. Though the attendants in their debate find the idea of Arkani interesting and change their opinion, he remains as firm as he had been before.

Of course, the above incident is not the only instance that supports our argument. The manner Taye views and interacts with Walta is probably the most important one that suggests Taye's being unbending. In addition to Arkani and Walta's effort to subvert Taye's ruthless outlook to the Tigri people, Taye remains as bad as he viewed Walta when he first listens him on the radio. Taye like his older brother, in most of his serious discussions with his family members as well as his old friends, remain undending; both often share similar standpoint. For instance, Taye and Chala are inflexible in most of the conversation they hold with Arkani, Daba, Walta and Moti.

Moreover, the claimed mindset is resulted from the dominant mode of thinking of the society of the older days where all of the old characters were its children. As they grew up in the tradition that advocate whatever elders say is right and should not be challenged, they feel their children's reaction unrighteous and unable stick to no matter how sounder their thought is. The same mentality is traced in Tsige, Solomon and Hadas. Despite the strong pressure they receive from opponents, they never change their minds. This, in essence, leads us to say that the secessionists confine themselves to the ideological stance they believe in. As this affects them not to see the reality beyond their world, they seldom consider something else to let integrate with theirs.

#### **4.5.2. The New Generation**

In *Abrak*, the young often times challenge the ideological stance of the secessionists. Including the two protagonists, Walta and Arkani on whom the major story of the novel revolves around, most of them are in their late 20s and early 30s. They are thus in the early days of their adulthood stage of life. Except Walta, 32, whose age is clearly mentioned, others are understood to be in that category from the setting and the general spirit of the stories in which they play a pivotal part.

The setting of the major story is apparently thesedays Ethiopia. Besides, among other things, these characters in most of their routine communications use the language that portrays the young. ማጥመድ፣ ፣መጥበሰ both stand for: dating፣ ማካበድ exaggerating፣ ፉገራህን አቁም stop mockery ፣የፋራ ስታይል half-wit style are some of the words or phrasings that the characters often use in their everyday communication.

According to Pilcher (1994), the character, as well as the average age of a given cohort, is possibly derived from the way individuals in the cohort use the language resources. As the mentioned expressions are used in contemporary Ethiopia by the youth than the old, most of the characters in the cohort belong to the noted category. Above all, most of them are the children of the older characters at least in technical term. Of course, some characters are the real children of the iconic figures of the previous generation. For example, Arkani, Daba and Walta are the children of Chala and Tsige both of whom have already been hinted that they are in their 60s.

Their being in their early adulthood stage coupled with their intelligence, which for the most part is obtained from schooling, are endowed with an ideological stance of their own. Accordingly, almost all appear having done at least their first degree and serve in various institutions. For instance, Walta and Arkani, who graduated from Addis Ababa University in law, have been lecturers in law school in the same University. Both latter become attorneys in the private legal firm of their own. Daba, Arkani's elder brother, graduated in civil engineering, and is a contractor. Like his sister, he further pursued his postgraduate studies in overseas. Bekele, Obsse and Moti also graduated in law, accounting and journalism respectively. They serve in private and governmental institutions for more years than the rest.

Because of their fundamental belief, their entire walks of life are not that smooth; it is rather rough and tough. They thus meet massive pressure. Ranging from their family to their office circle, they often encounter challenges. However, probably the most challenging one for which they have gone through sufferings is the one that they receive from institutions. They are therefore pressurized in a well-organized manner that seems to have an institutional base. In spite of the challenge they face daily, they persist in subverting the traditional thinking of their precedents. They further engage in disproving the validity of the assumption on which their ideology is based.

Walta, Arkani, Moti among others, intend to infuse passion of unity on whomsoever they interact with. In fact, it is their fundamental point of departure from their precedent. As opposed to their fathers, who are aspired to split and form sovereign nation of their own, they strive to maintain unity among the different nations and nationalities. They thus advocate Ethiopianism sentiment, and are also referred to as the Unionists.

There are socio-cultural and ethnic backdrop differences among them. Irrespective of their differences, all share similar standpoint on the notion of integration that they believe would facilitate their aspiration. For this reason, none is held back from socializing themselves with each other and is able to have a strong social bond among the cohort. For example, the two protagonists are from different ethnic groups. While Walta is from Tigrean parents, Arkani is from Oromo. Her both parents are Oromo. They were also born and grown up in different places. The later was born and grown up in Addis Ababa whereas the former was born somewhere in Tigri.

A similar difference is observed between Bekele and Obsse who like the two protagonists affectionate each other. Obsse was born to *Gurage* parents in *Gindeberet* while Bekele is originally from *Debremarkos* and is inferred to be Amhara. Of course, in some incidents, he is described that he is Amhara. The circumstance of Moti, Dabi, and Mohammed is not that different. Moti and his nephew, Dabi are Oromo, but Mohammed, an intimate of walta, is Amhara.

One of the practical examples that witnesses their strong relationship is their consideration to form a marriage. For them, sameness in ethnic background is deemed as an old-fashioned criterion to form a marriage, friendship or any societal affiliation. Unlike the old generation's spouses such as Chala and Arari, Taye and Lenssa, Tsige and Hagos, Solomon and Gergis whose marriage are confined to their tribes, none tends to wedlock himself or herself on the ethnic ground. They instead give primacy to romantic sentiment and positive outlook. The romantic affairs of both Walta and Arkani and Bekele and Obsse are worth noted in this connection. Similar consideration is observed while others link up with one another for whatever purposes it might be. In addition to the two couples, Moti, Maryamawit, Obsse, Daba, just to mention a few, violate the established tradition.

Difference is mostly assumed as a possible cause for disputes between individuals or groups as evidently seen in the case of the previous cohort. Upon the situation of the new generation, one may argue that it is not always true that differences are a reason for the presence of loosed interpersonal relationships. Notwithstanding certain observable differences, there might be a

strong social bond by which the characters maintain their relation to be strong. Yet, its applicability depends on some shared values. So long as there is something else that the individuals consider more worthwhile than their differences, their differences may become even unrecognized.

For them, most of the virtues traits such as impartiality, patience and integrity are most valued. These shared values among them thus help them overlook their ethnic differences. These traits are supposedly possessed from schooling, extensive reading and life experience. These are often displayed in the routine lives of Walt, Arkani, Moti, Daba, Bekele and Obsse. Most importantly, these influential figures, most of whom are different in their ethnic background, entertain ideas that would avoid any differences that lead to disputes. They thus concentrate on the issues that would facilitate conformity among the group at least on what they think common to most.

Daba in his discussion with his family over Walta's mistreatment reflects an idea that would support the claimed point. He is even critical of his uncle and father's being prejudiced against Walta, and recommends what he supposes would avoid such unpleasant feelings on individuals in their family:

የዛሬ ውይይቶችን ዋና ቁም ነገር አንዱ ልክ ሌላው ስህተት የሚሆንበትና አንዱ የሌላውን እምነት የሚያስቀይርበት አይደለም። ችግራችን ሁላችንም እንደ ማንም ሠው የየራሳችን እምነትና አመለካከት ባለቤት በመሆናችንም አይደለም። ችግራችን የመቻቻል አቅማችን ውስን መሆን ነው። በመሆኑም ምንም እንኳ አስቸጋሪና ከባድ ቢሆንም የኛ ሥራ የእምነት እና የአመለካከት ልዩነቶችን አቻችላን አንዱ የአንዱን አክብሮ የሚጓዝበትን የሰለጠነ የቤተሰብ ግንኙነት እንዲኖረን ማድረግ ነው። Mulugeta (2018, p. 175)

Our today's main point of discussion is not on the notion of proving or disproving that one is right and the other is wrong and changes his/ her mind. Our problem is not because each of us has our own beliefs and attitude. Our problem is our ability of co-existence being inadequate. And so, no matter how difficult it might be, in compromising our differences, our responsibility is to maintain a civilized sort of inter-family relation in which everyone respects each other.

Including Daba, the youth well aware that they are the constituents of various ethnic groups. This would mean that the existence of differences among the group at least on something is inevitable. Most of them therefore seemingly reach on a consensus that their differences are not strong enough to spoil their shared good personal qualities. For this reason, they focus on the thing that

helps them overlook those that exacerbate the idea of divisibility. Their strong culture of reading among other things is the most likely reason for their possession of positive mentality..

Of course, the likes of Moti, Walta, Arkani and Daba spend almost their entire lives reading for both academic and non-academic reasons. For living, Moti writes for private newspapers. He thus reads, mostly irrespective of subject preferences. His reading is the fountainhead of his life philosophy, which is embedded in his writings. Besides, his avid interest of reading that positively affects him, he values discussing with anyone on any subject. He neither restricts himself, nor others on the subjects of his discussion. Notwithstanding gender, age and ethnic background differences, he discusses and even debates with anyone, and endeavors to forward something that he believes would change the life others.

Moreover, he is critical of those whose socio-political makeup barely is detached from ethnocentrism. He consequently contends that the relationship of whatever kind or any societal interaction should never be conditioned on ethnic identity. This stand of his is not only suggested in many of his serious conversations for which he faces sufferings including imprisonment, but also in what he practically adheres as his lifestyle. Moti is a close friend of Walta and Bekele. Because his friendship relies on shared views, we see him appreciating Walta's understanding of things and how he substantiates his argument with pieces of evidence.

In the opinion of Daba, Walta is a rational being. Most of his arguments rest on disproving the invalidity of the ethnocentric thought for the formation of a strong nation. In the scene where Arkani is in need of Moti's brotherly advise over her romantic affairs with Walta, his value of friendship, as well as his worldview, is inferred. He hence reacts: "አሁን እኔ ጋር ለምክክር የመጣሽው አሮሞ ነው ብለሽ ከሆነ በጣም ነው የማዘነው። ካንቺ ጋር ያለኝ ግንኙነት እና ቅርበት የወንድሜ ልጅ በመሆንሽ እንዳልሆነ ታውቂያለሽ፣ ስብዕናሽንና አካሄድሽን በመውደዴ እንጂ።" Mulugeta (2018, p. 220). *If you come to me to discuss just because I am Oromo, I am so disappointed. You are well aware that my relationship with you is not because you are my niece. It is rather because I like your personality and attitude.*"

In his persuasive discourse, he stresses as friendship or any relationship should never relay on sharing the same ethnic background; or any kin-based affinity. It should rather be on a good personality as well as on some commonly shared ideas. His view on the matter that even

recurrently stressed elsewhere in the text suggests as he boldly scorns the old figures attachment with their tribe's concern. Likewise, the other important characters of the generation, especially Walta and Arkani hold similar standpoint. Obsse, the other symbolic figure to represent the generation, is in a similar state of mind. She possesses the core values of most by which she would ease the adverse impact of their difference.

Like Moti, Arkani and Walta, Obsse also feels friendship, relationship or any form of socialization should not necessarily be ethnic-based. Other than her romantic affairs with a man from other ethnic groups, which according to their elders' tradition is something unacceptable, she questions the essence of intimacy itself. Consequently, Obsse proves that the common understanding of most regarding intimacy is so problematic. It seems narrow mainly because it is confined to kin or family members. She underscores that closeness should also be maintained on shared feelings and values. In her argument of how closeness is defined, one would note a trace of virtuousness in her. This view of her is principally addressed in where we see her challenge the senior police officer over Moti's mistreatment in the prison:

"ማንን ነው መጠየቅ የፈለጋችሁት?" "ሞቲ ብሩ" አለች ኡብሴ። "አቶ ሞቲ መጠየቅ የሚችለው በቅርብ ዘመድ ብቻ ነው።" "ለምን በቅርብ ዘመድ ብቻ" አለቃው ያልጠበቀው ጥያቄ ስለሆነ የሚለው ነገር አጥቶ ኡብሴ ላይ አፈጠጠ። ኡብሴ ባገኘችው ቀዳዳ "ቅርብ ምንድን ነው?!" አለች ከረር ባለ ድምፅ አለቃውን ትክ ብላ እያየች "ቅርብ ማለት ትውልድ ወይም ደም ወይም ስጋ ነው?... ቅርብ የሚለካው በምንድን ነው?... " ትኩር ብሎ ሲያያት የቆየው አለቃ "እስር ቤቱ በርካታ ጠያቂዎች የማስተናገድ አቅም ስለሌለው ነው።" "አባባልዎ ቢገባኝም ተገቢ ውሳኔ አይመስለኝም። ለምሳሌ ሞቲ የቅርብ ዘመድ ባይኖረው በጓደኞቹ ላይጠየቅ ነው?... ሞቲ በቅርብ ዘመዶቹ መጎብኘት ባይፈልግስ?... ለምንድን ነው ሁሌ ዝምድና ከጓደኝነት በላይ አድርገን የምናየው? ... በእውነት ከልከላው ትክክል አይደለም!" አለች። Mulugeta (2018, p. 262)

"Whom do you want to visit?" "Moti Biru", Obsse said. "Only close kin is allowed to visit Mr. Moti" "why only close kin?" the security officer confused what to respond as he never expects the question, and outfaces on her. Obsse uses it as a good opportunity, and asks, "What does closeness mean?" said Obsse with stiff tone staring at the security. Does closeness mean inheritance or blood relation? What is the parameter of closeness in essence? The security officer turns from gazing at her and said, "The prison cannot entertain many visitors." "I understand what you mean, but I don't think the decision is right." For instance, what if Moti has no close kin ... does it mean he is not visited by his friends? ... What if he doesn't want to be visited by

his close kin? ... Why do we often privilege kinship over friendship? Truly, the restriction is not right." She said.

There seems a visible difference of mentality between both, who supposedly represent the two generations. Her question, which is so philosophical as it critically sees the assumption on which the traditional practices are based. It could also signify some talking points. The value of friendship is dropped to the periphery. From her comment, one would further point out that the tradition narrows the circle of relationship. On the contrary, she views that friendship could be worthier than even close kinship. For her and even for her compatriots, any socialization that relay on shared values should be previlaged. This is their most insightful value that enable them to have good interpersonal relations among themselves. It consequently helps them to prove as tribal obsession impedes the process of realizing well-integrated nationhood.

In wider context, most are viewed stretching their vision, and hence prefer nationalism to parochialism. Walta, Moti and Arkani view Ethiopianism in contrast to ethnocentrism. These characters are fundamentally against their fathers' firm conviction claiming that ethnicity does not serve beyond its divisive role. Arkani, for example, claims:

ኢትዮጵያዊነት ማለት አንድ ቋንቋ ወይም አለባበስ አይደለም። ኢትዮጵያዊነት እትዮጵያ ውስጥ አብረው የሚኖሩ የተለያዩ ማህበረሰባዊ ስብስቦች፣ እርስ በእርስ የሚያደርጉት መስተጋብር ሳያውቁ የሚያተርፉት የመስተጻምር እና የመስተዋድድ ነፀብራቅ ነው። ስለ ቋንቋ ስናወራ ስለአንድ ቋንቋ ማለታችን አይደለም። ወይም ስለአንድ አለባበስ ስናወራ ስለተለየ አንድ አለባበስ እያወራን አይመስለኝም። የኢትዮጵያ ቋንቋ ወይም አለባበስ ስንል አለ አይደል፣ አንዱን ቋንቋ ካንዱ ቋንቋ ሳንለይ ነው። Mulugeta (2018, p. 270)

Ethiopianism is not about one language or one dressing style. Ethiopianism is the composition and reflections of the harmonious interactions of different societies in the country from which all instinctively benefits. When we talk about language, we are not, in particular, referring to one language. Or when we talk about dressing style, we are not talking in particular about one peculiar dressing style. When we say Ethiopian language or dressing, we mean without privileging one language over the other.

According to Arkani, Ethiopianism is the composition of various ethnic groups who have their own distinctive disclosure entities. Thus, the harmony resulted from the interaction of each in a

way that the values of all are incorporated. Moti shares Arkani's idea. He similarly views it in contrast to the old figures being infused with parochial thought. As commented by Moti, those that claim to speak up for Tigri are viewed:

"ኢትዮጵያዊነት ትግሬነትን ተከትሎ የሚመጣ ነገር ነው ብለው በቅደም ተከተል የሚያምኑ ናቸው። ትግሬነት ማንነት ነው። ኢትዮጵያዊነት ዜግነት ነው የሚሉሽ። እና በነሱቤት ኢትዮጵያዊ ብሎ ማንነት የለም ባዮች ናቸው። በአንዴ ትግሬም ኢትዮጵያዊ እንድትሆኑ አይፈቅድልሽም።" Mulugeta (2018, p. 217).

They believe as Ethiopianism comes next to being Tgrean. They say, being a Tigre is my identity while Ethiopian is my citizen. In their way, there is no Ethiopianism identity. They do not allow you to be an Ethiopian and a Tigrean altogether.

In Moti's fierce criticism above, his thought rivals percipience of being Tigri is valued as primary but being an Ethiopian is valued as secondary. On the contrary, Ethiopia or Ethiopianism is understood as something that has nothing to do with their identity, which they are more concerned with, rather with a mere acquisition of citizenship. It is thus dropped in the subordinate position. However, in the opinion of Moti, Walta disrupts this predominant thinking and gives the pride of place to Ethiopianism noting that it essentially entertains the voice of its constituents while the scenarios of the reverse is less likely happen.

Correspondingly, Moti contends that without the prioritization of Ethiopianism, unity among the different ethnic groups becomes doubtful. He thus maintains in the course of nation building endeavor, the whole should be privileged over its parts. Accordingly, unlike Taye, Chala, Tsige, he supports Ethiopianism claiming that all are entertained in the due process. The others do have similar concern. For almost similar reason, they all diffuse Ethiopianism sentiment in their circle.

Walta's position seems a bit stronger than others as he finds the trend so problematic. His basic argument rests on the possible consequence of the process. He argues that when one focuses on his or her ethnic group, s/he inevitably overlooks the endeavor that would help him/her have some common values with the others. It is also remarked that the obsession of each ethnic group to its own interest might be resulted in balkanization because none of them is concerned about something that goes beyond the self. This would mean that the umbrella under which its constituents' dwell would be lost. On this ground, he likewise pleads people to focus on the idea

that would facilitate integration; he is against the sessionists stance on realizing sovereignty of nations and nationalities.

With particular reference to the adverse impact of ethnocentrism where disintegration would be susceptible, he comments: *"ከሚያመሳሰሉን ይልቅ የሚለያዩን ላይ ይበልጥ ስንሰራ በመካከላችን በብሔር ላይ የተመሰረተ ክፍፍልና ጥርጣሬ እየጎላ ይሄድና አብሮ የመቀጠል እድላችን አደጋ ላይ ለመውደቅ እንገደዳለን።"* Mulugeta (2018, p.272). *When we focus on our disparities rather than our similitude, we would intensify the ethnic oriented suspensions and differences among us, and make our unity in danger.*

Moreover, like Moti Walta himself feels that Ethiopianism is not something that only associated with just citizenship. The feeling goes beyond. They are not in a position to deny their differences. However, their argument foregrounds on the fact that Ethiopianism is the feeling that accommodates the various socio-cultural values of the different ethnic groups in such a way that all ultimately targets on realizing one strong nation.

Their strong attachment with refashioning integration is further highlighted in the humanitarian services some provide to those in need. For example, Arkani, Walta, and even Obsse are well devoted to voluntary activities. They are interested in supporting their community in their perspective profession. A case in point is the provision of legal service for the University community by the two law school staffs. These young staffs, Walta and Arkani, as opposed to many of the senior staffs who were their teachers, organize students that partake in what they call a legal clinic and provide a legal consultancy service for the University community. They also help students build their legal skills in facilitating jury competition among students. The other important character among the new generation figures to participate in voluntary activities is Obsse. Obsse is an accountant by profession and works in a private company, but she enjoys tutoring fresh students in her spare time. She also inspires her friends to join her.

However, their humanitarian activities encountered some challenges, particularly from the politicians via the University. In spite of the challenge, they keep on doing what they think is important to the public; they are not despaired. For instance, when Walta and Arkani are fired

from their lecturer position at the University, they started serving the community in the private legal firm, which they established.

The seemingly rational thoughts that are often displayed in the writings of Moti is where one could see the artifact of the discussed point. In addition to his articles for which he is sentenced to serve terms in prison, his serious and argumentative dialogues with his friends and family members shows that he is the man who wants to have affiliation with others on justifiable ground. In the opinion of the narrator, Moti is depicted as:

"ሞቲ በሀሳብ ከሚጨቃጨቀው ጋር መገጫነትን የሚወድና ሳይታከት የሚከራከር፣ የራሱን እና የጓደኞቹን ሀሳብ መጠየቅና መሞገት የሚያረካው፣ በግል ህይወቱ ከእውነታው አለም ይልቅ በሀሳባዊውና በምናባዊው አለም መኖርን ይበልጥ የሚማርከው ሰው እንደሆነ መስከረዋል።" Mulugeta (2018, p. 254)

Moti likes to be friend with someone who argues on ideas, and enjoy arguing restlessly; he likes questioning the views of his friends and challenges them. Rather than the real world of his private like, he is much more interested in living in the imaginary world in romanticizing things.

Because of his life philosophy, he is often in conflict with the old members of his family. As opposed to theirs, he keens on questioning and sees everything in light of reason. Besides, in his own way, especially in his writings and brotherly advice, he tries to shape the opinion dozens'. In the case of Arkani, her expression confirms that Moti changes her mind towards her fiancé. Before meeting and having a serious discussion with Moti, she seems to doubt the fate of their relationship but soon after she meets him and discusses everything in detail, she completely changes her mind and avoids her doubt.

Other than the prominent figures' thought and practices discussed so far, some unnamed young characters question the prevailing tradition, which for the most part advocate separatism. These young characters, in the rally they partake in, strongly oppose the TPLF regime. They claim that the system barely recognize sense of unity. In the public rally, which is held in Tigri Towns, the participants stress: ...*"የከፋፍለህ ግዛ ፖሊሲያችሁን እንቃወማለን፤ የመናገርና የመጻፍ መብታችን ይከበር፤ የመሰብሰብና የመደራጀት ነጻነታችን ይከበር"* Mulugeta (2018, p. 373). *We oppose your divide and rule policy; respect our freedom speech and freedom press; respect our freedom of assembly and organization.*

Upon the overriding features explicated so far, the new generation is associated with positivism. It would mean that including the forefront figures, several young characters have constructive personal traits that often displayed in their thought and deeds. Due to their exemplary practices, they are thus justified to possess certain virtues traits such as inclusivism, optimism and so forth. On the other hand, most of their elders are detached from what they regard as a virtues traits.

One of the illustrious incidents that dictate their inclusiveness is the portrayal of women characters and how they are viewed among themselves. Their possession of venerated status in their society, which is implied in the role they play, is where the generation is hinted to possess inclusiveness. Like the iconic male figures namely Walta, Moti and Bekele, Arkani and Obsse question and challenge the established tradition, which they consider as old-fashioned. They thus unlike the old female characters such as Lenssa, Taye's Wife and Arari, Chala's wife, whose voice seem repressed because of the tradition, Arkani and Obsse are critical to the institutionalized forms of the prevailing mode of thinking. They often reflect their subversive thought in a public. It is with the intention of protecting the voiceless that they resist the political system. Several of the serious debates that Arkani and Obsse hold with anyone is where they are viewed concerned for the burden of others.

Furthermore, concerning gender issue, none of them appears with the intention of discrimination. Ranging from their academic qualification to their professional career, both women and men are in similar status, and are not neglected. Their challenging the government in a public like their male compatriots is where inclusiveness is indicated. Most notably, these characters, unlike the women figures of the previous generation, are both intellectually and emotionally strong enough to defend the social system that decanter the place of women.

They challenge the entire system by placing themselves where their elders were not supposed to be. Arkani' and Obsse's such virtues personalities subvert the tradition that the women have been in the periphery. What is more, the women like the men fellow figures in such endeavor, experience confrontation with their elders. This would further suggest that there is a clear marker for the occurrence of generational conflict between the generations.

## **Chapter Five: Power Relations in the Selected Novels**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of power relations in *Rekik Ashara*, *Dertogada*, *Lelasew* and *Abrak*. Generational relations of power, its manner of revelations as well as the instrument of power manifestations are the core concern of the chapter. Upon the extracted text from the novels, Foucault and Marxists' theorization of power relations have thus been experimented. In specific terms, the entire analysis in every section of the novels focuses on the actions, thoughts and perceptions of the giants of each cohort. Accordingly, the manner of interpersonal interactions within a generation and between generations as well as the general spirit of the story time that often commented by the narrator and characters matters most in the chapter.

### **5.2. Power Relations in Rekik Ashara**

#### **5.2.1. Intra-generational Relation of Power**

In the course of explicating the intra-generational relations of power, the study focuses on the corrupted generation alone. The reason is that the novel foregrounds the interaction that goes between the representative figures of the corrupted generation. In other words, as the novel barely entertains characters' interaction in the case of the altruistic generation, it has not been considered as an issue of inquiry in this sub-section.

Power within the corrupted generation is dominantly exercised or acquired having a unidirectional flow. By a unidirectional flow of power, Van Dijk (1993) asserts that power goes up-down direction in which the powerful figure suppresses the powerless. The prostitutes at Gesho Hotel in their routine lives, especially in their relations with the owner of the Hotel, undergo such power relations. It is so because the owner of the hotel enforces them to do the will

of his, not that of theirs. Thus, the prostitutes are under pressure to materialize the interest of the owner. Consequently, they all are expected to obey the dressing code the owner sets. For instance, Fantish, keeps the dressing code though unhappily. She grows feeling of dissatisfaction in the dressing code of the owner because she lately affectionate Feleke.

As the owner never allows them even to choose the type of clothe they wear, he is the decision-maker as to which type of clothe they must wear. Thus, there is unbalanced interpersonal relation of power between the prostitutes and the owner. While the owner is the one from whom the decision originates, the prostitutes are the subjects that the decision is acted upon. Such a relation between the owner and the prostitute is also the materialization of Luke's conceptualization of power. Luke (1974), argues that power is measured by its ability to implant in people's mind interests that are against their own good. In the same manner, the owner establishes what he wants to inculcate in the minds of the prostitutes. Based on his understanding of the owner obsession to make money, the narrator reveals the prostitutes' cover-up feelings:

የትኛዋ ሴት ላይ ምን አይነት አለባበስ እንደሚያምርባትና ገበያ እንደሚሰብ በቂ ጥናት ስላደረገ ሴቶችን አግባብቶም ሆነ አስገድዶ የሚፈልገውን ያለብሳቸዋል። አንዳንድ ሴቶች "ዛሬስ ራሱ ሊያደርገኝ ነው መሰለኝ?... ሚስቱ መሰልኩት ወይስ ውሽግው ልብስ የሚመርጥልኝ" እያሉ ቢያገራመርሙም የእንጀራ ጉዳይ ነውና ከትዕዛዙ አይወጡም። Sisay (2003,p.313)

As he has surveyed as to which type of dressing style goes well with the women and attract more customers, he lobbies or enforces them to put on the type of dress he wants them to wear. However, some women keep on murmuring ... " it does seem that he too wants to sleep with me? ... as if I'm his wife or his mistress, he chooses the type of clothe I should wear" Yet, for it is their means of survival, no one fails to keep the command of the owner.

The presence of unsympathetic relations between the owner and the prostitutes, in which the prostitutes are dissatisfied, is the focal point of the excerpt. What goes on the mind of the prostitutes would let us further inquire another interesting point related to the claimed context. The way the prostitutes reflect their suppressed interest, therefore, leads us to see husband and wife relations in contemporary Ethiopia. According to the prostitutes, as highlighted in the quote, yet the interest of the wife figures are overlooked. The prostitutes, in other words, believe that

there is unconsciously accepted norm among the corrupted generation that women as a wife is not free even to decide on how to dress. From the complaints of the prostitutes, one would additionally recognize that the decisive figure to do that is the husband.

Similar relations of power between other characters, which as Althouser (1984) argues individuals, are just the puppets of the ideological and repressive apparatus is maintained. Except for the later days of Atnafseged, where he completely changes his mind, the characters experience binary opposite based personal relationships with one another. In the characters' states of affairs ranging from their business deals to their romantic affairs, the pointed out interpersonal relations is well pronounced.

The broker Kolte's manner of interaction with Atnafseged could be the other indication for the pervasiveness of unbalanced relations among the generation. Although Kolte in his age, marital status and economic condition is a man, who is old enough to lead his own life independently with a great deal of self-reliance, he submissively approaches Atnafseged. His comportment of relation with Atnafseged also suggests that his thought, as well as his worldview, is suppressed. As if the life of Kolte without Atnafseged ceases to exist, he attaches himself to Atnafseged and glorifies him as well; consequently, Kolte willfully recognizes that there is apparently a lord slave relationship between them.

The way Kolte speaks of Atnafseged or calls him in a venerated expression even in where he is not around is clear evidence he is pervaded with a firm conviction over Atnafseged's supremacy. This viewpoint is well dictated persistently. From the perspective of Kolte, for instance, there are certain explicit phrasings that deliberately and recurrently utters. His expressions at the same time give us a clue as the antagonist is perceived powerful. Atnafseged's exaggeratedly expressed thought conversely shows that Kolte is a subservient figure. Some of such phrasings Kolte mostly uses are: "የጌታዬ ፍቃድ ከሆነ" (p.10) *If it is the will of my lord....* "ከጌታዬ ጋር" (p.15) *along with my lord...* "ይህ እንግዲህ በሜሪኩሪ ጌታ በኩል የተያዘ ሚስጥር ነው። እኛ የግድ ማወቅ የለብንም" (p.65) "የጌታዬ ውሳኔ ትክክል መሆኑን ተረዳሁ።" (p.68) *"I am aware that my lord made the right decision. The lord of Mercury keeps it secret; we do not have to know.*

The phrasings especially the word 'Lord' as oftentimes uttered by Kolte are the obvious trace for the occurrence of lord-slave relation of power between Atnafseged and Kolte. Atnafseged's

domination by which he imposes his will on others is not only restricted to his relation with Kote; it is also shown in the undercover relations he forms with the two mafia figures whom he calls them '*Rekiku*' and '*Gizufu*'. Both for economic reason are dependent on him. Thus, including murder, they execute whatever mission they are given. Their way of power application to execute the plan Atnaseged sets is explicit in that it is so coercive. However, as they wait for the final decision from their boss, they are not decisive and therefore as opposed to Atnafseged, they are made impotent figures.

Although Kolte is viewed subordinate in all his dealings with Atnafseged, in his turn he becomes a powerful figure in his acting upon with others. In his turn, especially, with those whose economic status is low is so suppressive. Kolt's degree of influence relies on context and situations. He is a type of figure that takes advantage of his position. Unlike his relation with Atnafseged, he assumes the opposite in his relations with the likes of Feleke and Fantish. In both circumstances in which he holds contradictory positions, economic status is the fountainhead for his possessing power or to loss. Kolte in his economic status is far better than the likes of Feleke and less than the affluent Atnafseged.

Likewise, he holds a similar position in his power relation with them. As he believes that the wealthy Atnafseged is the influential figure in the Mercury business, which he considers the only way to get rich, he strictly adheres to his words. On the contrary, because Feleke for economic reason relies on him, Kolte covertly suppresses Feleke's views. The manner of how Kolte calls Feleke is where a reader often notes Kolte's inconsiderateness to Feleke. Although Kolte is well aware that calling someone by name is a sign of reverence for he does that to Atnafseged, he never calls Feleke by his actual name. He rather calls him 'Chistaw' that literally means broke. Chistew is the name some call him when they want to mock him. But, Kolte uses it regularly, and sometimes he calls him in that nickname with the intention of an apparent disrespect: "*አንተ ቸስታው ወደኔ ጠጋ በል አሰብኩ*" (p.115) *you broke, {Chistaw} come on!*

Using a sensational proposed offer as a driving force, Kolte quite often manipulates Feleke's mind. Although Kolte's offers are seemingly unrealistic, Feleke does whatever Kolte orders him. ; Feleke does nothing of his own. What he is rather infatuated with is realizing the interest of Kolte. He further beliefs that as long as Feleke is paid, he should do whatsoever he is ordered. Not even considering the possible harm that might cause on him, Kolte enforces him put into

practice his plan. Their relationship from the perspective of Feleke is therefore quite unsympathetic.

In such a mode of interactions, either of the participants is certainly made voiceless. For instance, Atnafseged, who prioritizes his domination on others, is the forefront figure in maintaining and exercising power in the claimed sense. Of course, it is not only his own effort that helps him realize that but also that of others being so submissive to him. Despite his wrongdoings, he is unquestioned. As he later confesses, nobody is reactive to his evil deeds. Some even praise him instead.

Besides, there is an incident in the story where Feleke is deemed almost as a moving body, not as a rational being. In this particular situation, Kolte influences Feleke to get ready himself to undergo a surgery through which he is supposed to transport the Mercury in his body to overseas. There is nowhere in their relations that we find Feleke is reactive; he is instead so submissive. His manner of conversation with Kolte well demonstrates his acceptance of the domination. For instance, the narrator's comments: "*ኛሱታው ፈለቀም ራሱን እያከከ ፊቱን በሀዘን ተነስቶ እንዳጨማደደ ተከተለው*" Sisay (2003, p.207) *Chistaw Feleke scratching his hair; frowned his face in sadness, and follows him.*

The romantic affairs of some characters also show the revelation of power as a Marxist's theorization of power relations. A case in point is the romantic relationship between Atalay and Tafach. The later does not respond as the former would want her into him. As a result, a voiced and voiceless sense of relation between the two characters is maintained. As (Davison, 1988; Althouser, 1984) argue, including romantic affairs any human relations barely avoids the relative supremacy of one over the other. Consequently, the dichotomy of dominant and dominated relationships is inevitable between the two characters. Thus, the romantic affair of Atalay and Tafach, which is presumably compassionless, is not the exception. Atalay is in love with Tafach and therefore wants her to be with him despite her selfish life indulgence. Knowing his strong desire to reside in the same roof with her, she abuses the relationship and imposes her will on him

There are also incidents where she shows him disrespect in explicit term: "በናትህ ከአጠገቤ ዘወር በልልኝ! .... (p.162) please, stay away from me. ቢቃ ሂድልኝ (p.162). Just get out of here! The most striking expression that makes her domination over him clearer is the fact that she utters strong disapproval expression in the same paragraph: "ምን አይነት ደደብ ነህ!" (p.162) How idiot you are! Not only her offensive expressions show her domineering nature, but also his being subservient to her. There is also a time when he begs for a pardon for which he does no wrong: "ምን ልታደርግ መጣህ?" አለችው ከአጠገቡ ፈንጠር ብላ እየተቀመጠች:: ትናንት ማታ አስቀይሜሽ ከሆነ ይቅርታ ልጠይቅሽ ነው:: ሰከረህ ነበር እኮ!... ሰካራም:: Sisay (2003, p.54) "Why are you here?", she says seating a bit away from him, to ask you an excuse in case I did disappoint you last night. You were drunk; boozier."

Moreover, as Tafach wants to take advantage of being wanted, she tries to hold on having an absolute say over every move of Atalay, particularly in issues of making money. In consequence, she is the driving force in his business engagement.

Accordingly, in their early days of their acquaintance, she let him know in a clear term that he should necessarily make money to date her. To pull off the obligation she sets, Atalay strives to get rich in all possible ways, though most of which are unrighteous.

In other situations, however, Atalay is in the reversal position particularly in the dreadful thought he intends to apply on his colleagues whom he has been working with for years. His intention of imposing a coercive power is indicated in his evil thought to the secretly organized Mercury team. He plans to execute some of the potential contenders he thinks from the members. He further undertakes to avoid individuals from decision-making process and obtain their passive agreement. Hence, unlike his relation with Tafach where he assumes the subordinate position, he is influential in all his dealings with Kolte and his friends.

### **5.2.2. Inter-generational Relations of Power**

In contrast to the exercise of power among the corrupted generation, which is revealed quite explicitly, its enforcement between the two generations is so contradictory. Both in their own ways try to impose what they want to achieve on each other. Accordingly, while the altruistic never tend to impose their interest on the corrupted figures with the intention of suppressing others' will, the case of the corrupted characters is quite the reverse. The circumstances of the former are in harmony with what Foucault maintains that power is not necessarily manifested

negatively. In view of that, the altruistic in their socio-cultural interactions with the corrupted generation maintains or exercises power so subtly.

Its subtlety makes the acquisition of power so plodding. It means that the characters are not as abruptly as the corrupted figures intend to subvert the view of others. It is due to power shift between the characters is not realized immediately that the generation imposes its will on the fellow generation on a gradual basis. Thus, towards the end of the story, the altruistic become powerful. Of course, it is embedded in the socio-cultural relations the likes of the protagonist, the old lady, etc partake with the representative figures of the corrupted generation. This is mainly for the reason that the idea of maintaining virtuousness within the society, which is chiefly propagated by Mekbib and his niece, Hilina, is well inculcated on Atanfseged, Kolte and the other characters of the generation.

Mekbib, who initially seems powerless because of the pressure he receives from the prominent figures of the altruistic generation, later becomes the champion in influencing them to change their mind. For example, Atnafseged, Kolte and the Mercury squad figures are the notable characters that are lately influenced by the older generation. In this case, one might argue that the credit in doing so should rather go to Hilina noting that she changes their mind. However, the important thing is that as Hilina has brought up by Mekbib, she too is greatly shaped by Mekbib's worldview.

In other expressions, long before Atnafseged, Mekbib had positively influenced Hilina. By implication, it is all the constructive views of Mekbib that one would later see in Atnafseged. Additionally, the positive influence of Mekbib on Atnafseged is recognized in that he makes an effort to imitate the lifestyle of Mekbib. Atnafseged being in such state of mind grabs the attention of the readers in the later phase of his life. The narrator, for example, comments:

የመከብብ ወንድማዊ ምክር ብርታትንና መፅናናትን ሰጠው። በቀን አንድ ጊዜ ሣይተያዩ አይውሉም። ቤታቸውም ወስደውት ቤተሰባዊ ግብዣ አድርገውለታል። ከዚህም በተጨማሪ አጥናፍሰንድ መጽሃፍ ቅዱስ ማንበብ መጀመሩ መንፈሱን እያደሰለት ጀመር። መከብብ ቢቃሉ የሚያነበንባቸውን አንዳንድ ጥቅሶች መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ውስጥ ሲያገኛቸው እሱም ደስ ይለውና ለብቻው ያነባል። Sisay (2003, p.212)

Mekbib's brotherly advice gives him strength and console. They never spend a day without seeing each other. They even took Atnafseged to their home and did him a family feast. Besides,

his starting to read the Bible helps himself to makeover his spirit. When he finds out some verses in the bible that Mekbib utters orally, he feels happy and reads privately.

The narrator's comment indicates that there is a subtly produced power in the course of the two characters' relations. Nevertheless, the produced power is not coercive nor explicit, which is why including Foucault most contemporary power theoreticians argue that power is not all the time produced or applied to have a destructive impact on others. There might be a time when one is influenced or influences others as Mekbib softly exhorts his interest in Atnafseged. Although the impact that Mekbib puts on Atnafseged becomes apparent towards the end of the story, none is aware that the generation is under the influence of the previous generation.

Furthermore, it is possible to claim that the antagonist is able to have double identities in his interaction with his elders. Accordingly, in the good days of Atnafseged, where he believes that he can do anything in his money, he makes an effort to impose his money-centered worldview on Mekbib and Hilina. His complete reliance on money as a means of suppressing others' interest is suggested in that he mockingly rejects the protagonist's thought-provoking idea, especially his good moral values.

Above all, Atnafseged persists on persuading Mekbib to walk on the road that he has been through to make his life the better off. The interaction between the two characters shows that Atnafseged is the decisive figure. The source of Atnafseged's decisiveness originates from his wealth. This means that money is the power base of Atnafseged for which he regards himself the better of Mekbib. Although Atnafseged, Kolte, Atalay and others believe that money is the most important thing that would help them impose their will on others, Atnafseged later deviates from his earlier attitude and sticks to that of the one Mekbib advocates. It is not that easy for the antagonist to change his attitude, especially because it let him lose his prestigious position in the socio-cultural circles he leads.

Mekbib along with Hilina does a painstaking effort to make Atnafseged avoid the mentality that he has been with for ages, and follows Mekbib's life philosophy. As a result, Mekbib extends his impact on Atnafseged. Mekbib does that in applying certain power acquisition tactics, but most importantly using his knowledge, which is obtained from his extensive readings and his life experiences. For instance, Mekbib is compassionate to Atnafseged's mental anguish.

Besides, as stressed in the above extract, he advises and takes care of him when Atnafseged is badly in need of someone who does that to him. Atnafseged is therefore made to see the thoughtfulness of Mekbib, which he had been blinded to see it before. Consequently, Atnafseged conforms to the virtuousness he notices in Mekbib and his family. Furthermore, money and knowledge, which are the two mutually exclusive entities, are pointed out as the base from which the generations possibly obtain and exercise their power.

Accordingly, while the corrupted generation is highly dependent on money, the altruistic is obviously on their knowledge. The corrupted believe that money is the most important and the only thing that would let others do their wishes. Including the antagonist, the characters from the corrupted generation never make an effort to wield power using knowledge. Other than those who in their economic status belong to the well-to-do class, the needy individuals such as Feleke, Rekiku and the prostitutes Fantish are also in such mentality.

At the outset, Atnafseged, Feleke and the prostitutes, in their everyday interactions with the likes of Mekbib, the old lady and Workitu respectively are dominant. However, towards the end of the story, they conform to the views of the older generation. This leads us to the argument that power that originates from money never lasts long. It appears to decline when strongly resisted. For example, Hilina vigorously resists the wealthy Atnafseged, and let him grow a sense of impotent. In addition to this, Atnafseged later becomes submissive for he realizes that his wealth is no more helps him have a romantic affair with Hilina.

Quite the reverse, the one that originates from knowledge lasts long though its revelation stays late. The altruistic figures ranging from the academician Mekbib to the housewife Workitu try to use their intellect to put their influence on others. As none of the representative figures of the generation is from the upper class, no one is able to possess power in his /her money.

Mekbib, the old lady and Feleke's mother, for instance, using their knowledge, which they acquire from their lived experience, subtly and without causing any discomfort on the target subject influence Atnafseged, Kolte and Feleke. Therefore, the corrupted towards the offset of the story appears to be impotent to the extent of being unable to see their elders in the eyes.

Kolte's firm conviction on money to realize his supremacy declines and he too is subservient to Mekbib and Hilina's ideology. The situation of Kolte results from the mission of the Mercury,

which is believed by most as the get way to change their lives, becomes unsuccessful. Like Atnafseged, Kolte too becomes submissive character even in his communication with Mekbib and Hilina. The manner of power exercise by both generations so far remarks that due to the altruistic generation acquires and exercises power using their knowledge, which according to Foucault power and knowledge are inextricable entities, they are able to make their influence last long. This is why their virtuousness reins its counterpart as the story comes to its turning point.

### **5.3. Power Relations in Dertogada**

#### **5.3.1. Generational Relations of Power**

##### **5.3.1.1. The Older vs. the Intellectual**

In Dertogada, the unveiling of power between the generations is highlighted in various ways. However, as opposed to its customarily thought of being inherently repressive, power is revealed having a positive impact on others. Of course, when we think of power relation what immediately comes to our thought is its suppressive nature. It does not mean that such a suppressive aspect of power is not entertained in the novel. There is obviously, but the point is that it is also exercised without having a negative as well as the suppressive impact on the less powerful figure. A case in point is the power relation between the older and the intellectual generations.

Most representative figures of the older generation in their every interaction with the intellectuals, which ranges from social life to nation-building endeavor, are understood to be scarcely repressive. It does not mean that the older never hold power. It is because they forward or obtains it implicitly that this happens to be the case. The intellectuals without feeling suppression implement what the older wants them to put their plan into action.

For example, Eng. Shagize and Dr. Miraje, the two prominent figures of the intellectual generation, strive to realize the project the older sets. Eng. Shagize and Dr. Miraje often listen and do what the older want them to do. Here as the will of the older is addressed, power is not put into effect having an adversarial outcome. Consequently, while the older figures become powerful, the intellectual is the less powerful. Its occurrence is even barely noticed by the intellectuals. The characters never show signs of disobedience nor any feeling of being enforced in doing what they are ordered.

The intellectual instead strives to realize the missions they are given as one of their everyday endeavors. Since they internalize the influence positively, one would also be clueless in the text whether they are insisted to do the wish of the older. The characters rather regard what they do as they are keeping the vow of their elders. It happens as such supposedly due to good father-child sort of relationships between the characters of both generations. If we take Abba Jenberu, for instance, he is the father of Dr. Miraje. So is Abba Finas to Zipporah. Aleka Ayalew, who thought and greatly influences Shagize in his earlier days, is also a father like to Shagize.

Other characters in the monasteries such as Emahoy Welete, Abba Mathews among others are also whom Miraje and Zipporah consider as their parents, and are massively influenced by them in many ways though none of which is sympathetic. Further, it is not only because of the very existence of such a relationship between them but also because of their intimacy in which the older impart their wisdom to the intellectuals that they are interested to execute the will of the older. However, there is an unsympathetic relationship between Alexa Ayalew and Dyola. As the power relation between Aleka Ayalew and Dyola is purely coercive, it finally ends up with the death of the father figure. Such form of power relation is also discussed in its own right elsewhere.

In dealing with power relations between both generations, it is worth considering what Foucault (1991) calls discipline power. Aleka Ayalew and Abba Jenberu forward their influence on Eng. Shagize and Dr. Miraje respectively. In the case of Aleka Ayalew and Eng. Shagize, for example, the latter tries hard to keep the words of the former. He does that even in his absence. For Foucault, discipline power signifies that someone, who is a relatively less powerful individual, strictly adheres to do the will of someone else as if being viewed by the power wielder.

One of the major incidents that we find the exercise of discipline power in Dertogada is where Shagize is having a discussion with Miraje over the issue of the future fate of their homeland. In their discussion, Miraje asks Shagize the same question now and then for his curiosity. Yet, Eng. Shagize does not unveil the secret to his close friend despite repeatedly inquired. Shagize instead willingly answers and urges him to go and serve his homeland: "ይሄንን ሚስጢር እንዲቃብልህ አልተፈቀደልኝም።" *I am not allowed to confide to you.* Yismake, (2009, p. 101).

*In the same sense, in the subsequent page for a similar purpose, Eng. Shagize recites the expression: "እሱን ማሰጠር እንድንገርህ አልተፈቀደልኝም።" ብዮሃላሁ አይደል? Yismake, (2009, p. 101)." I told you that I'm not allowed to confide the secret to you. In Eng. Shagize's responses, power-related point is identified. The presence of do's and don'ts, well suggests that power is exercised between individuals. The incidence of the permittee and permitted sense of relation is inferred from the discourse. While the permitted is obviously the speaker i.e Shagize, the permittee is by inference understood to be Aleka Ayalew.*

The narrator and even Shagize himself inform us as Aleka Ayalew and Shagize have a strong relationship, as a result, the former confides the secret to the latter. Thus, Aleka Ayalew, the source of the secret and is the permittee, is the power holder figure.

On the contrary, Shagize, the permitted holds the reverse position. The influence of Aleka Ayalew on Eng. Shagize is out there even in his absence. Again, as the extortion is understood to be positive, Eng. Shagize even does not feel that he is under the older influence. However, so long as his ultimate goal is to realize what Aleka Ayalew initiated and Abba Jenberu structures it, he inevitably becomes under their influence.

The other important point that additionally illustrates discipline power in between the two generations is the fact that the intellectual such as Dr. Miraje, Dr, Xandidga, and Miroda among others are not cut-off from doing the order of the older even in the ruins of the first project; they never cease keeping the vow. Towards the end of the story, most of the intellectual figures seek to search for the second project by which they would transform their homeland.

The positive influence of the older generation on the intellectual is deep-rooted, and thus it lasts longer. Their intimacy as pointed out earlier is one of the obvious reasons why its extortion in duration and extent becomes a bit stronger. However, with the exception to the Italian, Mormordino Buski, none of the older generation figures exercises their power negatively on the subsequent generation. For example, Aleka Ayalew, Abba Jenberu and Colonel Fiseha in their interactions with the intellectual figures exercise power though not as explicit and coercive as their fellow compatriot, Mormordino Buski does.

Moreover, the presence of a firm tradition of revering each other among the older generation that lingers in the intellectual days could also be the other possible factor for which the intellectuals

stick to the order of the older. The tradition is well portrayed in the socio-cultural interaction that goes between Aleka Ayalew and Eng. Shagize. Reverence by itself could also be a sign for the presence of hierarchy-based relation between individuals as one of the participants is expected to show a bow down to the other.

As Aleka Ayalew is older than Eng. Shagize, he is the reverend figure in their relation. Aleka Ayalew's being older coupled with the tradition, which urges the young to respect the older, helps him Shagize accepts his view.

Eng. Shagiz does what Aleka Ayalew wants him to do without any reservation. Besides, he appreciates the greatness in Aleka Ayalew, especially his life philosophy and knowledge that extraordinarily affects his own life. Eng. Shagize in his own words speaks about Aleka Ayalew: "የቤተክህነት ትምህርት ያውቁ ነበር። እንዲያውም የቤተክህነት ትምህርት እንደማር ይገፋፋኝ ነበር። መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ እንዳነበና ከእያንዳንዱ ሰራዩ በፊት እግዚአብሔርን እንዳስቀድም በሩን የከፈቱልኝ እርሣቸው ናቸው።" {አለቃአያሌው} *emphasis added, Yismake, (2009, p.27). He was Knowledgeable in Christian liturgy; he even urged me to study it. He also paved the way for me to read the Bible and prioritize God in everything I do.*

The excerpt is not obscured to signify that there is a strong attachment between both characters as a result of which Shagize is exposed to be influenced. Besides, as Shagiz confirms that Aleka Ayalew is almost his role model in that he taught him what the old man thinks important, Shagize barely escapes being under the shadow of Alaka Ayalew. There is also trace of reverence to Aleka Ayalew in Shagize's speech in the discourse.

A similar trend of power relations between the other representative figures of both generations is also noted. These are Abba Jenberu and Dr. Miraje whom we are lately informed that they are closer kin. The relation of both as a father and son has begun in the monasteries since Mirage was very young though the father figure unveils being his real father lately. It nevertheless, merely affects their intimacy until death takes them apart. Dr. Miraje in his later days, particularly, in his revisits of his homeland feels that he is yet under the guidance of Abba Jenberu. It is for two possible presuppositions that Dr. Miraje is pervaded with such mentality.

Firstly, Abba Jenberu is one of the monks whose contributions are quite immense in the course of Miraje's upbringing, especially in his spiritual knowledge and moral values. As all his good

memories of the past are associated with Abba Jenberu, he considers himself that he is in the circle of the old man where the old man is the power elite figure in the territory. The second one is related to Abba Jenberu's endowment with wisdom. Dr. Miraje regards Abba Jenberu as a man with great wisdom. The spiritual lesson that Abba Jenberu taught him while he was in the Monasteries, on the islands of Lake Tana, which is reflected in his entire life, let him remain under the shadow of the old man. His enthusiasm to engage in the nation-building endeavor that Abba Jenberu impels him emanates from the extortion of the old man.

Yet again, the giant project that Miraje is motivated to partake in is also the aspiration of Abba Jenberu. The project is initiated by the older generation figures such as Aleka Ayalew, Abba Jenberu and Colonel Fiseha. As these characters take the initiative, they are the founder of the project. Including Dr. Miraje, the intellectual generation is not credited to have initiated the idea of transforming their homeland. They are rather credited to implement what was proposed by the older. Because the older in a subtle way impels and let the intellectual realizes it, the older generation is the power wielder. For this reason, Dr. Miraje like Eng. Shagize, Dr. Xangida, Zipporah and Miroda as compared to the older is understood to be less powerful. However, here as well as elsewhere in between both generations, the portrayal of power is not coercive.

For example, both Abba Jenberu and Miraje interact in the novel in different occasions, none of which is sympathetic. Abba Jenberu in one of his extended discourses with Dr. Miraje over the fate of their homeland notes: "ከኔ የሚጠበቀው ምንድን ነው?" አለ ሚራጃ። "ሁለት ነገር ይጠበቅብሃል። አንዱ ቀሪ ህይወትህን በዚህ ድርጅት ውስጥ በማገልገል ሀገርህን ከጥፋት ማዳን ነው።" Yismake, (2009, p. 193)... *"What is expected from me?" Dr. Miraj enquired. "Two things are expected from you. The first is providing service under this project to the rest of your life, you must save your homeland from havoc. ...*

In their discourse, the influence of Abba Jenberu on Dr. Miraje is evident. While Abba Jenberu is the one that gives the order, Dr. Miraje becomes the receiver. Apparently, Abba Jenberu's persuasive discourse let him be under his sphere of influence. This is exactly what Lukes, (1996) points out power is tactically maintained implicitly. For Lukes, when persuasive discourse is accompanied by a subtly addressed order, the addresser wields power.

In their discussion, the purpose Abba Jenberu wants to achieve is to convince Dr. Miraje that he immediately becomes an integral part of the Dertogada members. Abba Jenberu is successful in doing it so in that Dr. Miraje hastily responds stressing what is expected from him. As discussed so far, the older generation iconic figures such as Aleka Ayalew, Abba Jenberu and Colonel Fiseha maintain power subtly. What makes it subtle is the fact that it is both unobserved and constructive. In addition to this, the intellectuals never resist or react to the older indifferently. It would have brought certain inconveniences among the characters had it been reversely and unwisely exercised. The intended plan would have also been holdback.

Thus, wisdom is the base of the older generation's power, which is why they are able to influence the intellectuals positively. The older figures' wisdom is further reflected in the text as a means of power acquisition in various situations in which both generations partake. For example, the tattooed code that Aleka Ayalew paints on the back of Shagize and Miraje is the major one. The persuasive discourse Abba Jenberu holds with Dr. Miraje is also the other one. The intention of the older in their interaction with the older is apparently to make them have a strong sense of belongingness to their homeland and thereby let them adhere to what they have envisaged. In doing it so, they make the intellectual have a good attachment with them. The older, therefore in such a wise way, without causing any inconvenience, extends their positive influence.

#### **5.3.1.2. The Intellectual vs. the Young Generations**

As opposed to the older and the intellectuals, the revelation of power in here is attested in two ways. In addition to the commonest flow of power, it flows in reversal direction usually in the form of resistance, reaction, complains and so forth. This would suggest that power is held and exercised by everyone irrespective of having some privileged status as the older are exposed. Thus, any interaction that is made with each other or with anyone else reminds us what Vindijk (2003) calls the bidirectional flow of power. In a similar view with Foucault, Vandijk also points out that power is possibly applied by the so-called the disadvantaged individuals.

The seemingly less powerful characters that belong to the young generation also exercise power. Thus, unlike the older put their positive influence on the intellectual, the young are virtually in confrontation with the intellectual. In other words, the intellectuals are not fortunate enough to exhort their constructive impact on the young as the older does on them. Of course, in either situation, the application of power by both groups is inevitable though the intention and manner

of revelation are different. The bond that has been strong between the older and the intellectual becomes fragile in between the subsequent generations. This, however, does not mean that there is no relation between the intellectual and the young generations.

With respect to the manner and its possible impact, power is not exercised and maintained as covertly as in between the older and the intellectual. There are some possible justifications why that is so. One of which is the lack of a good personal relationship between them. With the exception of a few characters such as Gera, who after some time attaches himself to the intellectuals and is able to transform himself, there is almost no intimacy between both generations.

This is due to the young generation violates the tradition of pursuing the footsteps of their elders as a result of which they are in contradiction with them.

The presence of loosed relations between the generations is pointed out from their outlook towards the intellectual. They indirectly blame the intellectual for the existing socio-political situations, which in view of some, for instance, the young man and the captain, is not all-inclusive. The other young generation representative figures such as the Captain, the Beggar and the Minister oftentimes in their resistance, complain, blame and even in an explicit confrontation with the intellectual and even in some instance with the older, where the Minister gets himself in direct confrontation with Mormordino Buski, maintain and exercise power so covertly.

Unlike the older, the young characters are not persistent in their power relationships with others. Accordingly, those who represent the so-called disadvantaged group, for instance, the Beggar is resistant to the normative practice of the society in which they refuse to accept the realization of others' will. It is one of the indications that the periphery also possesses the power. In contrast, some others exercise it as to most Marxist theorization of power, which goes downward, and is virtually coercive. Thus, there is a slight variation among the characters of how they hold it and its possible impact on the participants. Despite the slight differences among the characters in this regard, however, in their power relation within the generation itself, three fundamental groups of characters are figured out.

The Young man, the Captain and the Beggar, who are the representative figures of both the mass and the lower class of people in contemporary Ethiopia, fall under the first category. It is in a

reaction that these characters maintain and exercise power. Unsympathetic feeling, which supposedly originates from the conviction that the young generation is not fairly treated, and is marginalized, is the root cause of their reaction. Their resentment is, in fact, directed to the corrupted socio-political system of the country. In some instances, it is implicitly hinted that the intellectual generation is resisted.

The Youngman, who also called Gera later in the story, is a character with two seemingly contradictory personalities. During his earlier appearance, he is complainer and resistant, and is a pessimist.

However, later he reappears being optimistic. Some personalities of his, in the same way, show his power relation with the intellectual character like Dr, Miraje and Miroda. His interaction with both characters is in different situations though in both situations he is barely powerless.

The footprint of resistance in the Youngman through which he possesses power is reflected in his discussion with Dr, Miraje at the outskirts of Bahir Dar. The Youngman argues with Dr. Miraje over the socio-political existing situations in contemporary Ethiopia. He then addresses his complaint against the preceding generation whom he thinks to disregard the value of the young:

"ይህቺ ችግራም ሀገር ችግራም ያደረገችኝ ሳይሆን ግጥሜን አታዳምጠኝም? "ሀገሪቷ ችጋራም አይደለችም።" ሚራጃ አቋረጠው "ናት እንጂ!... ሀገሪቷ የምልህ እኮ ህዝቦቿን ነው። አዲስ ፊት አዲስ ሰው ማየት አይፈልጉም። ሁልጊዜ የአንድ ሰው ሰም ያወድሳሉ። አንድ ሎሬትና ባለቅኔ አላቸው።..." Yismake, (2009, p. 126)

"While it should have been enough that she made me impoverished, how this impoverished country doesn't read my poem?" "The country is not impoverished." Miraje intervened. "Of course, she is. By the country, I mean the people. They do not want to see a new face. They always praise one man. They have a Laureate and a poet"...

In the discourse, the Youngman's being resistant becomes bold. He complains that the young generation is not recognized by the generation of Dr, Miraje and even beyond. In other words, his criticism targets on the established norm that he assumes marginalize the young. Of course, his strong criticism focuses in essence on the intellectual generation. The textual evidence that specifies his complaint directed on the intellectual is the expression "they have a Laureate." The Laureate himself indeed is one of the prominent figures of the intellectual generation. Besides, in

the expression, the pronoun they; which repeatedly used in the discourse presumably represent those people who belong to the generation of the Laurent. Because it is a common knowledge that people customarily, eulogize the good quality of their own.

In his argument with Dr, Miraje, the young are unhappy with how they are viewed by the intellectual. For the Young man sturdily believes that his generation is disregarded, he confronts Dr, Miraje. The discourse suggests that the Young man acquires power, which is exercised in his reaction. In his later appearance with the name Gera, he extends his impact on the other intellectual character. His interaction with the intellectuals, particularly with Miroda is quite the opposite of how he does it with Dr. Miraje.

It is probably owing to his strong attachment with the intellectual generation that he becomes optimistic and influences Miroda. The influence essentially emanates from her affection to Gera that later grows into love. On the other hand, Gera along with his co-workers want Miroda's cooperation in the operation of rescuing Eng. Shagize.

No matter how Miroda has been serving the CIA with all her heart and devotion since her youth days, her romantic feeling to Gera let her change her mind. As the story approaches its denouement, especially soon after he understands her feeling to him and began to sprout similar sentiment, she sticks with serving the wish of his than hers. Indeed, she does that because she wants to be with him as a tool of clearing up her romantic trouble with Dr. Miraje. Miroda feels that she has been wounded in loving Miraje as he has never been into her in the same way. She believes that the only way to heal her wound is to have a romantic feeling with Gera.

Such relationship between the two characters in its turn resulted in unbalanced relation of power, which turns out in favor of Gera. In other words, it signifies that her position in her interaction with him in contrast to his is on the periphery: "አሁን ሙሉ ለሙሉ አብሬአችሁ ለመሥራት ዝግጁ ነኝ። ምክንያቱም ... "ጌራን በፍቅር አይን ተመለከተችው። አርሱም ፈገግ ብሎ በፍቅር ተመለከቷት። ነው።" *Yismake, (2009, p. 270) "Now, I'm ready to work with you. Because..." she looks at Gera with a romantic look. He smiles and reacts in the same way.*

The Captain is the other character of the young generation whose interaction with the intellectual suggests that power, which according to Vandijk (1995), is possibly exercised as so does the Young man. However, unlike the Young man, the Captain's concern concentrates on the mode of

thinking that reins the trend. The captain as a way of exercising power is well articulated in the following quote: "የዛሬ መቶ አመት ተመልሰህ ብትመጣ ያውነን። እንደዚሁ ታገኘናለህ። ጣናም እነዚያም የምታያቸው በፀደይ አበባ የተንቆጠቆጡ የኢትዮጵያ ተራሮችም ያው ናቸው።" (Yismake, 2009:140) *If you come after a century, we will be the same. You will see us as we are now. Lake Tana, as well as that beholder spring blossom flowers on Ethiopian mountain, shall also remain unchanged.*

The Captain in his confabulation with Dr. Miraje, stresses that there will be no change in the country. The captain chiefly complains about the inefficiency of the system. As his view highlights, there will be no glimpse of hope in years to come in the country; pessimism he is pervaded with pessimistic thought.

The character thus reacts in that manner mainly to reflect his resistance to the general trend of things of contemporary Ethiopia.

The Beggar further applies resistance as a means of power acquisition and its enforcement. The Beggar in his economic status could be categorized under the so-called lower class. However, he never reflects a sense of powerlessness in his interaction with others. Notwithstanding his being needy for which he begs to lead his life, he is rather vigorously resistant. The Beggar is like the young man though he is a bit unbending as opposed to the young man. The way the beggar forwards his compliance is even a bit stronger than his fellow generation.

The scene that dictates the beggar stance is the one that he venturesomely responds to the crowd: "ሰለጠቅላይ ሚኒስትሩ በለኝና መቶ ብር ልሰጥህ? አለው። አንድ ነገረኛ የሚመስል ሲጋራ የሚያጤስ ሰውዬ ደምፁን ከፍ አድርጎ ከህዝቡ መሀል ዘልቆ።" "ቂጥህን ጥረግብት አለው ገለምጦ።" Yismake (2009, p. 125). *"A seemingly an instigator man smoking a cigar in the crowd addresses the beggar in a louder voice, "ask me in the name of the prime minister and I will give you a hundred birr." The beggar replied with an indecency look, "Rub your ass on it." In the same passage, another eye-catching expression further suggests that the beggar is unbending: "ሰለ እየሱስ በለኝና ሃምሳ ብር ..." አለው ሌላው ወጣት እየሳቀ። "ያለሥራ መቆም ክልክል ነው።" አለው ለማቸ። Yismake (2009, p. 125). "Another young man inquires the beggar laughing, ask me in the name of Jesus Christ, and I will give you fifty birr" It is forbidden to stand here," the beggar replied."*

Although the beggar in the conversation does not directly address the intellectual, the notion of resistance as a means of power exercise is boldly noted. In both excerpts, the expressions, "rub

your ass on it" and "It is forbidden to stand here." declares not only command but also an offense thus because the beggar uses such disapproval expressions, he becomes in the apex of relations of the ladder as compared to his opponents. However, those whom the Beggar interact with want him to beg them in the name of the mentioned figures, he rather unbendingly keeps on begging in the name of Ethiopian giants of history. Since he declines their offers, the beggar is not under their influence. It means that the beggar is not under the control of those who give him the money. Because he is unwilling to act as others impel him to act, the will of his, not theirs that eventually wins.

The Minister is different from the characters of his generation in both power acquisition and its exercise. Unlike the others, he bangs away to hold power and exercise it explicitly. He has no mental intelligence and hence relays on coercion to actualize his goal. One would understand this view in the text in Mormordino and Dyola's argument over their mission of digging out the sunken ship. As a consequence, Mormordino, says: "ሚኒስትሩ ጠመንጃ አንጂ ጭንቅላት የለውም." *Yismake (2009, p. 142). The Minister has a weapon, not an intellect.* It is not surprising to see the Minister be like that for his base of power is neither his wisdom nor his knowledge. As he makes every effort to achieve own his goal often by using force, he negatively affects the lives of others. All he does is to bring coerce obedience.

The explicit exertion of power on someone else to maintain once own will is a typical example of a Marxist view of power revelation. The Minister understands power as a means of suppressing the impotent. His power, in fact, originates from his position gained through a political appointment. According to Bryan (1998), a power that is often obtained in that way does not last long. When the position goes, it also goes along with it. Accordingly, the Minister at the end of the day is deprived of his earlier grace because of his vicious deed on the island.

The introduction of Mathews in the story makes the presence of intergenerational relations of power between the two generations more visible. Mathews appears in the story in quite limited scenes. His appearance is the turning point of the story though it is late that we understand his involvement in his confession in a flashback. However, like the other characters of his generation, he is not a prominent figure for the development of the whole story. Regardless of this, the crucial point related to his introduction particularly with respect to power is that he is the immediate cause for the explosion of the research center. It is neither the explosion nor his

cooperation in the due process of the explosion that is claimed to be relevant in our argument; it is rather the mental state of Mathews in the aftermath.

Let us have a look at what the incident is about for it would give us a clear picture of the issue we are dealing with. Unfortunately, the man whom the medical team helps solve his health problem is turned out to be Mathews, not Eng. Shagize. It happens so because Mathews had been transformed into Eng. Shagize. His most part is changed into the engineer's face. It has been a long time since Mathew changed into the defective copy of the engineer.

When the story of his is lastly unveiled, Mathew's position in his relation to the intellectual becomes clear. While he holds the periphery position, they hold the opposite. This leads to the formation of a binary form of power relations between both parties. He befalls impotent because he has gone against the interest of the intellectuals, in which he benefits his family in the homeland, Mathews hence becomes not only ashamed but also submissive.

Soon after the revelation, Mathews is unable to have mutual based interpersonal relations with the likes of Dr. Miraje, Miroda, and Dr. Xangida. In his confession to the Dertogada team, Dr. Miraje, in the most important part of the story, Mathews pronounces:

እኔም እንደናንተ ሀገሬን እወዳታለሁ። ግን ድህነቷ ራሴን ለሞት አሳልፌ እንድሰጥ አደረግኝ። አሁን ግን አዳናችሁኝ። ባትፈርዱብኝ የምለምናችሁ አንድ ነገር ብቻ ነዉ። ሀገሬን እንድረዳት እድል ሰጡኝ። ከናንተ ጋር ለለዉጥ ሳልደክም እሰራለሁ። ተራራም ቢሆን ለመናድ ዝግጁ ነኝ። Yismake (2009, p. 235).

I love my country as you do. But, her impoverishment has inflicted sacrifice upon me. Irrespective of this, however, you have saved me now. I beg you to let me help my country. I restlessly work with you to change my homeland. I am ready even to move a mountain.

Quite the opposite to the other characters of his generations, Mathews never be in the upper hand in his relationship with the intellectuals. He is neither resistant nor suppressive, which are the two commonest means of exercising power. On the contrary, one would understand that he is quite submissive. Furthermore, Mathews' error is the foundation for his being powerless.

#### **5.4. Power Relations in *Lelasew***

With reference to power relations, seemingly two contrasting ideas are entertained in the novel. The first one is its being a pure apparatus of repression where the so called the privileged group of individuals is so bold. Accordingly, the intention of the power wielder is to extend the tradition that they have been through in all possible means. Whatsoever happens in expense of what they have obtained would be none of their business. As a result, oppressed and oppressors sense of inter-personal relation is occurred, which is the core element of the Marxists understanding of power relation.

In contrast, the second one is much more concerned with its manner of acquisition, which is quite implicit. As Foucault argues such technique of power acquisition and exercise may not necessarily requires the presences of both parties at a time. In other words, without suppressing the supposedly less powerful individual, one may put others under his or her influence. Such means of power holding is almost the tradition of the reformist generation. This tradition, which we shall explore henceforth in connection to mental power, is the direct outcome of the reformists' intellect and sound communication skill that have built it over years.

##### **5.4.1. Power as a Repressive apparatus**

A number of evidences would suggest that the socialization among the lost generation's imaginative figures is awkward. Its very being of problematic is indicated in the presence of two extreme ends in the interpersonal relations of the characters, which is supposedly originated from the traditional practices of the older days.

Within the cohort itself, two groups of characters that represent the privileged and the marginalized class of the society exist. Those who possess more power as so called the power elite put forth their influence on those who are on the other extreme end. Probably because of the cultural hegemony of the older days, where sense of oppressed relation was rarely confronted, the suppressed figures conform themselves to their being voiceless. They, thus, never show any sign of discomfort to anything that goes in contrary to their will; they rather prefer to get adopted with it.

The power elite individuals such as colonel Dinssa, Etati, Gash Damte and Mezgebu rarely engaged in endeavors would help the deprived class of the society. With the exception of Colonel Dinssa, who lately confesses that all they did in the past is wrong, none feels, as there is no wrong in their interaction with such people; they even sense it as something normal. The mentality is apparently brought from the traditional practice of their fathers or fore fathers' days, during slave lord relation was so pervasive. This is why it is deeply rooted in the iconic figures of the lost generation.

In some circumstances, they reflect it in their interactions with the reformists though they are unable to succeed in maintaining their wish. Some of the older figures, who have the affiliation with the then landlords either by birth or by marriage, are infused with lord-slave relations of power. Besides, economic status and military rank are claimed where their power originate from. Accordingly, Etati, Gash Damte, Colonel Dinssa and Ato Mezgebu are the symbolic figures in this regard. These characters, technically called the power elites, persistently pressurized their compatriots. They are pervaded with lord-slave relation sentiment. This commonly practiced tradition, which is the obvious cause for the occurrence of the lopsided relationship between individuals, is the baseline of the power elite's worldview.

Etati, who was born to a conservative landlord parents, is the one who essentially claim the lord status, and does reflect it in a manner that would marginalize her neighbors. Her husband too is in similar state of mind though he is not originally from the elite. Colonel Dinssa, in his letter to his son highlights the atmosphere of the older days, where the suppressive nature of both is inferred. The husband figure accordingly writes: “በወቅቱ አገር የተንቀጠቀላቸውን የደጃዝማች መከቱ ብቸኛ ልጅ የነበራቸውን ያንተን እናት ያገባችሁት ያለምንም ልመና ያለምንም አቤቱታ ነበር።” Mihiret (2015, p 12) *I had married your mother who is a daughter of Dejazmach Mekte whom everybody used to tremble in front of him at that time.*

In his comment, two clear points that would suggest their mannerism is underscored. The first is obviously the fact that Etati is from an autocratic family who represses dozens. She is thus assumed to have inherited this trait of her father. The second one is that there is a true artifact of unbending in him. In either ways, the two characters' strong desire to be in the upper hand

position make the others voiceless. Consequently, both in their every engagement concentrate on the imposition of their view on others. Including people in their neighborhood, several other individuals have been the victim.

In some instances, we see them be hazardous to the life situation of innocents. Their massive impact goes to the margin of being the cause for the loss of lives of many. Accordingly, colonel Dinssa along with the key military officers ruthlessly reacts to the iconic figures of his generation. As a result, dozens are exposed to lose their lives. He does that just for his opponents be in different with him in the political ideology he advocates. In his own words, he lately confesses: “ከግራ ከቀኝ ሲያጣድፉን የማያባራ ወታደራዊና አብዮታዊ ቁጣ በውስጤ ተቀሰቀሰ። አየህ! ... ቁጣ ደግሞ ጨካኝ እና አብድ ያደርግሃል። የአብዮቱን ጠላቶች የደመሰሰን መስሎን የሀገራችንን ምርጥ ልጆች ጨረሰናቸው።” Mihiret (2015, p. 13) *constant military and revolutionary anger engulfed me from right-left hand sides. You see! ... Anger makes you cruel. As if we were wiping out enemies of the revolution, we have instead killed the vibrant children of our country.*

No matter how further he goes to rationalize as to why he and his fellow autocrat officials did such vicious action in their golden days, their hidden motive is to show that they are the better. Because their opponents advocate a different political ideology, Colonel Dinssa and his partners get mad at the young, and eliminate them. This would further suggest that power as a repressive apparatus is usually applied when the power wielder is not strong enough to surpass its opponent on ideological struggle.

Although Etati like her husband is not responsible for the death of innocents back in their youth days, she seems to have a motive for the tradition to proceed as it used to be. The reason behind she is still in that belief is because she is in need of her high-status position to remain intact. Her so oppressive in her entire interactions has begun at home; she openly offends whom she thinks despised. We see the occurrence of this in the incident where Etati along with her sister conspires on her own son and splits him off from his boyhood girlfriend. The pits one that confirms her being a typical figure of oppression is well addressed in her odious interaction with Emama Tewabu.

Emama Tewabu is an old destitute woman who suffers from leprosy. She is therefore despised by the like of Etati. Etati in her face-to-face interaction with the old women, deliberately offends

her oftentimes in derogatory words. Because she thinks Emama Tewabu is inherently inferior being, she never cares about the psychological impact of her virulent phrasings. Furthermore, she never feels sorry for all she did wrong though she is suggested to say so. Most importantly, she never shows any sign of regret and therefore appears completely unbending. Her unwilling to beg a pardon for the obvious wrong she did in the past apparently shows her strong attachment with the feudal mentality, which is virtually bounded with the typical slave-lord relations of power:

ትስማኛለህ የኔ ልጅ ይቺ ሴትየ ቤቴ አይደለም እዚህ ደጃፍ ድርሽ ትበልና በፖሊስ ነው... ሆሆሆ... ይቅርታ ጠይቁያት አልክ? ... ለምኑ ነው ልጄ ይቅርታ የምጠይቀው? ... ብታውቀው ከማንም ቆማጣ ጋር ስትማጣጥ ህይወትህን አትርፌ ሰው ያደረሰህ እኔ ነኝ። Mihiret (2015, p. 395)

Do you hear me son? ... Let alone into my house, if this woman sets her feet into the threshold, I will call the police... Did you say that I should ask her an apology? Why do I do that, my son? ... If you must know, it is me who saved you from being fornicated with a leper, and changed your life.

In the quote, in addition to her declining to beg a pardon, she uses strongly disapproval expressions. The phrases: *ከማንም ቆማጣ* and *ስትማጣጥ* “*With any leper and fornicated*” are so disrespectful not only for Emama Tewabu whose daughter was Lelasew’s boyhood girlfriend, which Etati distaste their relation, but also for her own son.

Power as a suppressive apparatus is even exercised at a family level. A case in point is the voiced and voiceless nature of the relationship between the members of Ato Mezgebu’s family. Ato Mezgebu, who once been a well to do businessperson, is the recurrently denounced. His oppressive reaction to his wife and daughter, for which he is blamed is not something that he deeply ingrained with. It is rather occurred to him just after he is deprived of his fortune that makes him desperate in life. He is dispossessed all his belongings for his ideological position. As a result, he sometimes gets angry so aggressively. His disappointment further extended to get drunk and behave badly to his family. He often does reflect his resentment on his wife and his daughter in offensive expressions that even sometimes accompanied by physical abuse. For which both did not wrong in the course of ill fate, they have been treated inhumanly and are lately exposed to psychological problem.

The worst comes in where the daughter figure is raped. This incident, which she confides to the protagonist in her latter days, reveals how the women figures are exposed to suppression. The victims, W/ro Eden and Mistire witness that Ato Mezgebu in his vicious act messed up their whole lives, particularly Mistire's. Thus, W/ro Eden views her husband as the man who makes the life of his daughter so miserable. In her own words, she blames him publicly: “*በዙ ሲቃይና ጠገሳ በህይወቷ ላይ አኑሯል።*” Mihret, (2015, p.81) *He has brought massive sufferings and scar into her life.*

Moreover, among the third generation figures, power as a repressive tool is more common and more coercively applied than in any of the other generations. Including romantic affairs, any of their socialization is hardly entertained without affecting each other. It, however, goes in favor of the privileged individuals. The so called the advantaged group of individuals in their access of decision making power deliberately strives to suppress the voice of the voiceless. Accordingly, Masresha, Dr. Sirak Wudassie and some other unnamed characters well represent the former group.

Although these characters in their own way try hard to hustle up inflicting others, their negative influence never lasts long. It even became the cause for their own destruction. For example, Masresha and Dr. Sirak's obsession of suppressing others eventually turn out to be their own ruination. Unlike the reformists, hard work and lived experience is not the base of power for most of the mysterious representative figures. For instance, Masresha, whose interactions often bound to acting up, lean on his uncle's status. Of course, he is not intellectual nor a businessperson nor a man of wisdom. We never see him influencing Mistire to have a romantic affair with him.

All he thinks and does almost his whole life is convicting her be into him by all possible means, and strains to persuade or threaten her. There are even situations in which she receives a death threats from him. As a result, the power relation of both is argued to be a kind of the one that exists between a cat and a rat. In addition to the binary opposite sense of power relation between Masresha and Mistire, which the former is evidently oppressor and the later is the oppressed, the

recurrence of rape is the other indication for the pervasiveness of power as a repressive tool among the characters within the generation.

There are also incidents where women received gang rap as a result of which they are lately vulnerable to mental trauma. The lives of Psychotic Zinash, Mistire, Tsigereda and her friend are badly affected because of rape. Vengeance sentiment as well discussed in the earlier section in connection to the characteristics of the mysterious generation, is why most intended to hurt others. In view of that, Dr.Sirak, Masrehsa and Wudassie, consider vengeance as a tool to maintain their feeling of superiority over others. There are some unexpressed thoughts in the mind of these characters that their compatriots or other individuals have brought both physical and emotional inflict on them. They are therefore preoccupied with its retaliation. Though the allegation of some might rather appear a more pretext, the case of Wudassie on Dr. Sirak has a logical ground.

Although it is not literally as offensive and repressive as the one the women figures experience, all Dr. Sirak does on his girlfriends and colleagues suggest that the young engages on repressive acts. One of which being the fact that he has multiple sexual partners and his looking down up on his girlfriends. Though dating different women would be problematic, for him it is a sign of superiority. This is so evident as we see him feel no shame while being caught with prostitute cheating on one of his girlfriends into two different occasions.

Dr. Sirak, who specializes in psychiatry, does not care anything about Hilina nor about Widase. He has broken up with both leaving the bad feeling on them. This would evoke the later for vengeance. She does that because her being abandoned let her sprout feeling of despised. Her intention becomes clear when she starts going against his private matters in the pretext of serving justice, and drag him to the ground from where he once been in a respected position.

Although hers is successful in bringing what had been planned, Dr. Sirak against Dr. Lelasew and Masresha against Mistire, however, is a short-lived triumph. What is more, both are not happy over the societal acceptance of their friends or colleagues. They thus try hard to damage their reputation in all their reaches. Dr. Sirak, for example, conspires on Dr. Lelasew mainly in his false allegation that targets on damaging the good image he has built over years. He further

make every effort to mess up Dr. Lelasew's marriage. Dr. Sirsk thinks that he would scale up his reputation and secure Dr Lelasew's managerial position. Nevertheless, his conspiracy does not last long; so is his influence on individuals in his circle. Including sister Zebiba, colleagues who assume subordinate positions are highly affected in his leadership though after the return of the protagonist his influence falls down.

#### **5.4.2. Power as Source of Social Discipline and Conformity**

As discussed in the previous section, power among the individuals of the figured out generation is exercised with their direct involvement. Contrastingly, in here, as Foucault argues, it is also exercised without the direct interaction of the powerful and the powerless individuals. Within the lost generation, certain group of individuals like Gash Bedilu, Emama Tewabu and W/ro Eden without experiencing explicit confrontation are made to feel submissiveness.

It could be argued that their feeling also suggest as dozens in the same way experience the same thing in the real situation of the country during the time they are assumed to have been in their zenith. The established culture of the time that indirectly privileges the values of some over the others is the fundamental source by which some are made to feel inherently less important. As they do feel so, they rarely interact with whom they deem influential even to the things that matters them.

For instance, Emama Tewabu and Gash Bedilu, who are assumed as the disadvantaged group of the cohort, never react in a matter that put their life endanger. These characters, thus rather than questioning and reacting upon the problem they encounter, they would rather get adopted themselves with it. Even in the absence of their oppressors, they strictly abide by their dos and don'ts. This further shows as the tradition has strong base. Emama Tewabu, who almost utter nothing over her ill-treatment, eventually comments: “ሰንቱ ተነግሮ ይቻላል” “*How can we talk about all things at once!*” Her response exactly shows the discussed point so far. The situation of W/ro Eden and Gash Bedilu, who for different reasons have gone through similar experience for almost their entire life, is not that different.

W/ro Eden, whose earlier days are stressed to be ugly due to the political system of the previous regime, is pervaded with impotent sentiment and adheres the dominants' set rule. Those ugly

days of W/ro Eden is one of presupposed factors that enforces her follow the shadow of others. Consequently, W/ro Eden tells Dr. Lelasew all her sufferings:

አባቴና ወንድሜን አይኔ እያየ ነው የገደሏቸው። ሻእቢያ ናቸው ብለው ደጃፋችን ላይ ደፋተዋቸው ሄዱ። እኔ ያኔ ወጣት የኮሌጅ ተማሪ ነበርኩ ። ታናሽ ወንድሜ ብቻ ሸሽቶ ወደ ጫካ ገባ። እኔም ብዙም ሳልቆይ እስር ቤት ተወሰድኩ። “ወንድምሽ የት እንዳለ ምሪ፣ የከተማ ሳላይ ነሽ” ተብሎ የደረሰብኝን ግፍና ስቃይ ቢቃላት ልነግርህ አልችልም። Mihiret (2015, p. 83)

They killed my father and my brother in front of me. Claimed of being Shabiya, both were killed in our own doorsteps. Then, I was a young college student. It is only my youngest brother who breaks away from them and disappears. I was soon imprisoned. “Guide us where your brother is; you are an urban spy.” they inquired me. Because of my brother, I was made to bear sufferings that words barely express.

Her miserable life situation in her youth days, during most youths for political reasons lost their lives, haunts her mind and makes her quite subservient. As W/ro Eden barely avoids herself from the ghost, she is later exposed to post traumatic stress disorder. This consequently affects the way she sees things and responds. Rather than involving in interaction, she conforms to the established norm even in a matter that apparently dysfunction her life. W/ro Eden is therefore a typical woman figure who represents those women of her generation that often bear burden and accept complete domination. Her conformity with the system supposedly resulted from her previous anguish. Therefore, let alone having direct confrontation with them, she is not strong enough to have a word with her family on what often goes in her mind.

Moreover, their economic status, the existing socio-cultural condition and the reigning mindset of the society are the worth noted factors that influence them to accept their subordinate position and conform to the dominants. In the case of Emama Tewabu and Gash Bedilu, socio-economic status is the principal cause. Because in one hand, both lead a destitute life for purely economic reason, and on the other hand, they are the victim of leprosy, both are marginalized. Because they suffer a great deal of social stigma almost on a daily basis, they detach themselves from societal interactions. This further expose them to experience unpleasant relationships with others.

As a result, they are barely observed to have a confident look conversation with those who possess what they are dispossessed. For instance, during her meeting with Dr. Lelasew and his colleagues, W/ro Tewabu never sees them in the eyes and speaks like they do. The narrator, accordingly views the old woman: “ወ/ሮ ተዋበች ደግሞ ሚስጥርን አልፎ አልፎ ሰረቅ አድርገው ሲያዩ ነበር።” *Mihiret (2015, p. 389) page. Mrs. Tewabech had a stolen glance at Mistre.* The narrator also views the situation of the old man: “ምን እንደሚሉ ጭንቅ ብሏቸው መሬት መሬት እያዩ ብትራቸውን እንደተደገፉ ፀጥ አሉ።” *Mihiret (2015, p.111) “Being trebled with what to say, he leans on his stick and intently looks the ground.*

Their rare involvement in speech or any conversation is also the most important factor that indicates where they place themselves. Accordingly, these characters commonly share as none of them is courageous to speak on the problem they encounter. Instead, they keep it in their mind, and are puzzled with it. For example, W/ro Eden’s lack of courage to unveil the biological parents of the young lady she has raised. Emama Tewabu also does the same thing. Furthermore, their feeling of being inferior and conform to the statuesque as if inherently normal is well dictated in Gash Bedilu’s description of the place where he along with his extended family dwells. In a very restricted low tone, he remarks “ግን ምን ይደረግ እንግዲህ ህያዋን ቲሽሹን ጊዜ ከሙታን ተጠግተን እንኖራለን።” *Mihiret (2015, p.193) “What shall we do then?... When the livings are running away from us, we are living with the dead.”*

### **5.4.3. Mental Power**

The reformists in their entire journey of lives rely on their intellect and lived experiences. These are the indispensable elements to realize their aspiration. In most of their engagement, they never enforce people to accept what they say. They rather focus on establishing strong social bond. In due process, there are even conditions when the influenced individuals hardly aware that they are under others influence. In all their interactions, their intention is imposing something constructive implicitly.

However, the specific approach each character adheres is not necessarily the same. As to their context, their approach also varies. Some prefer socialization as a means of imposing their interest upon others, while some other use persuasion in their discourses. Yet, other members of the cohort advocate and practically engage themselves in hardworking endeavors for influencing

others. There are also characters who apply two or more tactics as a possible way of having more followers in his circle and even beyond.

Socialization as a get way to secure the status of being valued by others is often practiced by the giants of the generation. Socialization in this sense would refer to the presence of good interpersonal relationship between individuals irrespective of some observable differences. The reformists chiefly Dr. Lelasew, Sister Zebiba, Ato Siraj and Arsema upon the strong social bond they form over years with people in their virtuous circle are able to shape the opinion of many. There is nowhere in the story where these characters go against the interest of those whom they are attached with in a manner they are dismayed.

They all are technically skilled, especially in understanding the psychosocial aspect of their society. For this reason, they concentrate on issue of cooperation that builds on their good image. What they initially carryout is on activities that capitalize on giving rather than taking. They even care and support people who are badly in need of their help. This is because they believe that when someone feels cared and valued, his/her mind is opened to see the good side of others. It is on this presupposed assumption that Dr. Lelasew, Sister Zebia, Ato Siraja and the like strive to extend their sphere of influence. More often than not, they extend their influence in socializing themselves with people who are on the other extreme end.

Although most of the reformist imaginative figures in both their academic and economic status could be placed in a relatively higher position, they never tend to show any sign of looking down on others. They do not even feel sense of pride that they have such status. This, however, does not necessarily signify that there is no trace of power relation in their socio-cultural attachments. There is, of course, but in a subtle as well as in a virtually constructive way. Their constructive thought that intends to change the lives of many in somehow an important way is where they are traced to possess power. Accordingly, rather than imposing what they want others do as explicitly and outrageously as most of their elders do, they focus on matter that would inspire fellow citizen.

Most importantly, including the protagonist most of them try to create sense of belongingness in people they work with and even with anyone, especially in those who strongly in need of their

support. Dr. Lelasew, Sister Zebiba and Arsema are worth mentioned figures in this regard. These individuals in particular could therefore be considered as true figures to their. While Dr. Lelasew appears so in most of his attachment with the destitute figures like Gash Bedilu and Emama Tewabu, Sister Zebiba particularly depicted being careful to her patients. Besides, we see her so concerned even to the future lives of Dr. Sirak, Mistir and to most of the young colleagues she works with.

Dr. Lelasew in his such smooth relation succeeds in letting others accept his idea of societal reform as if the idea of themselves. In fact, his manner of approach to different people well dictates the claimed viewpoint. In all his meetings with the poor or the rich, the young or the old, the literate or illiterate, he never causes any discomfort on them. For example, he enjoys doing physical exercise at Meskel square with those who belong to the lower class of the society.

In addition to his usual exercise with Seido and his friends, he attaches himself with them in most of their social affairs participations. This would let them that they are valued. Consequently, because they sense that, they feel happy with him, and conform to his constructive thoughts. As a result, later in the story, he becomes the man whose voice is viewed as a pioneer figure of change. In other words, because of the strong social bond he forms, he is able to influence the mentality of dozens. Mistires, Seido, Nitsuh, W/ro Eden are among those who eventually change their mind. What is more, is the fact that all are made to follow his shadow in a way that none recognize as they are influenced.

Arsema, a strong woman figure of the generation, also positively affects others in having strong attachment with people she interacts with. Dr. Niway, Arsema's husband, who studies and resides in overseas, is also credited to bring the same impact in pursuing the same way. The spouse in their being good to others, especially in their social and moral responsibility, is able to make himself or herself the center of attention. The path both have been through, however, is not that easy. It has initially been somehow complicated because of family interferences. Their families are not happy with their proposed view of adopting children. Because the couple have no their own children, they consider adopting as a good option.

However, the couple's parents as well as their extended families have a reservation over the adoption. Some of them are even adamant resistant to their proposed view. Although Neway and

Arsema are well aware that the decision is theirs, they never tend to do that without hearing the idea of others. The way both handle the situation is where mental power is exercised. As Arsema manages the conflict wisely, she and her husband are able to maintain their will without losing their family as well: .... “ጭቅጭቅ እየተካረረ ሲሄድ አርሴማ ተነስታ፣ እስኪ ልጆቿንም ቤተሰቦቻቸውንም ስለሚያውቃቸው ሌላሰው ትንሽ ታሪካቸውን ይንገረን። ከዛ ደግሞ የምትሉትን እንሰማለን።” Mihiret (2015, p 214). *As the dispute intensifies, Arsema stands up and says, let us hear the stories of the children from Lelasew, who knows them and their parents. Then, we shall hear your opinion.*

Even at this stage, rather than rejecting their objection straightforward, she instead gives them a room for discussion in which everyone reflects his/her views. She intentionally does that to make her parents listen her. In doing so, she thus finally succeeds in becoming a woman whose voice is most heard in the house. In the family discussion, the reformists’ reasoning skill outshines that of the old figures in the house. In addition to this, Dr Lelasew’s recurrent discussions with his wife over their dilemma of serving homeland or prioritizing family is where they are claimed to have sound reasoning skill. In the arguments of the spouse, the persuasiveness of the husband figure helps him gain her wife’s sympathy:

ቆይ እስኪ አስቢው ... በእርግጥ አይመችም ልክ ነሽ። ግን ልናመጣ የምንችለውን ልዩነትና ሰው ያለበትን የኑሮ ሁኔታ አስቢው። አለ አይደል ምችት ጥሩ ነው፤ ግን እኛ ካልሆንን ይህ ድሃ ህዝብስ ማን አለው? ... ለምሳሌ፣ እንደ ዝናሽና አባቷ አይነት ስንት ሰው አለ መሰለሽ። ደግሞ ደስታ ሁሌም እኮ ከምችት አይደለም የሚገኘው... መስጠትና ለሌላው መኖር የሚሰጠው እርካታ የሚበልጥ አይመስልሽም። Mihiret (2015, p 154)

Wait and just think of ... of course, you are right that life is not that comfortable here. But, think of the differences we can make on the living conditions of the people. You know ... comfort is good for anyone, but who else do this needy people have if not us? ... You do know that the likes of Zinash and her father are dozens ... for that matter, happiness is not always obtained from comfort. Don’t you think, as happiness that maintained in giving and living for is much worthier?

His argument is well structured. His understanding of his wife’s weakest part is also boldly noted in that he poses the issue that she is sensitive about. Sometime after this discussion, she appears with a sudden change of heart and agrees with his proposed idea of coming back to their homeland. Furthermore, Dr Lelasew is claimed to have a serious concern not only in his

personal affairs that one would see him argue with his wife and his mother but also in his other aspects of life that he argues with his colleagues.

In view of that, on issue of change and societal development, he usually has a serious discussion with Dr. Sirak, Mistire, Seido, Masrash among others. The discussions that he holds with Dr. Sirak and Masresha after sometime are in fact go beyond a discussion. Thus, in all the entertained discussions, the idea he poses outdoes that of others and influences his colleagues at psychiatry center.

In addition to their exemplary tradition of resolving conflicts through dialogue, where most of its prominent figures are able to influence their circle, their tradition of hardworking is also implied to be a covert form of power acquisition. Most of its representative figures in their perspective professions are hard workers. Dr. Meron, Dr. Lelasew, Sister Zebiba, are associated with hardworking, and are considered as role model by their colleagues. The characters having this kind of perception would help them have those who follow them. The thing that grabs the attention of the people in their circle is their courage and persistent diligence, not what their engagement is resulted in afterwards.

The tradition is commonly practiced by Dr. Meron. She is an expert gynecologist who thoroughly serves the society for years. As opposed to young physicians, who are rarely seen in the hospital even during office hour, she spends in the hospital from dawn to dusk taking care of her patients. As a result, she is the most respected physicians among her colleagues. Besides, she is the one whose order is put into action. It is so not because she assumes a sort of managerial position; rather because of her diligence and professional commitment to the well-being of her patients. As the narrator witnesses, she is the one whom young physicians in the hospital most fear and try hard to do all she wants:

“አጠገብህ ያለ ሀኪም አለ?” ስትለው፣ ስልኩን ለኢንተርኑ አቀበለው። ሲፈራ ሲቸር “ሃሎ...” ሲል እሷው ሆና ተገኘች። ዶ/ር ሜሮንን ሁሉም እንደጦር ነው የሚፈራረቱት። ትንሽ አውርታው። “በል እዛው ጠብቀኝ!” ብላ ስልኩን ጀርባ ላይ ዘጋችሁ። ... ካጠገቧ ተፍ ተፍ የሚለውን ኢንተርን ቆጣ ብላ “ማነው ለመሆኑ ተረኛ ሬዚደንት” ስትል አንገቱን ደፋ አድርገው፣ ዶ/ር ሳባና ዶ/ር ገነነ ናቸው” አለ ጣቱን እያፍተለተለ። እንደዚህ ኩምሽሽ ብሎ ሲያየው ያናደደውን ያልህ መልሶ አሳዘነው። Mihiret (2015, p.168)

“Is there a doctor with you?” she inquired him, and he passes over his phone to the intern. With a sigh of nervousness, “Hello ...” she said. ... as he expects, it is she. They all fear Dr. Meron like a spear. After just a while, she exclaims ... “wait me there” and turns off the phone. ... “Whose turn is it today?”, she inquired the intern with angry tone ... “Dr. Saba and Dr. Genene” he said rubbing his finger. When he sees him shrinking like what he looks like now, he feels pity for him on the contrary to his earlier feeling.

### **5.5. Power Relations in *Abrak***

Power, which for both Foucault and Marxists ultimately target on maintaining one’s own will upon others, is the most notable issue of concern among the figures of the two generations in *Abrak* than any of the individuals in the generations explored in the other novels. Most of them are preoccupied with their own ego of influencing each other though the extent and manner of its revelation varies even within a family. The recurrences of issues pertaining to the struggle to hold and exercise power as well as its manner of revelation among individuals are where their obsession is highlighted.

With respect to the frequencies of incidents in relation to power, no one from the old generation comes into sight with the intention of maintaining mutual sort of relations. In other words, there is almost no incident where the representatives of the either sub-groups of the cohort interact with one another with no intention of imposing each other. Some of them often do that in the expense of suppressing even the voice of their intimates. In both inter-generational and intra-generational interactions, without which generational conflict never occurs, the individuals’ motives would mainly be imposing their ideological stance on each other. Consequently, they struggle to mold others opinion in accordance with theirs.

With the exception of some major characters that represent the new generation, the interaction of most imply as there is a clear feeling of imposing one’s own wish and desire upon others albeit its consequences. One would see this in a family discussion that often begins in trivial affairs but eventually ends in serious political debate. Of course, this is the everyday experience of both Chala and Tsige’s families. However, the most notable one is the one that maintained from the ideological confrontations among the public figures. Nonetheless, the specific tactic individuals use in the process of power acquisition is different. So are the presupposed assumptions on which the individuals of both cohorts are able to extend their sphere of influence.

Accordingly, individuals in either sub-groups of the old generation are viewed to impose their will upon others quite overtly. It is to bring an immediate impact that they interact in such manner. Every aspect of their lives is, therefore, pervaded with the thought and practice of intimidating whomsoever they deem threats to their aspiration. In its sever end, they go to the margin of exposing their opponents to physical and mental sufferings.

On the other turn, individuals of the subsequent generation, most of whom are their children, interact with them or with each other quite covertly. Their intention unlike their elders is to realize long-term impact and is less noticed that power is gained and exercised. In both what goes in their mind and what they put into actions, both of which dictate as their core intention is inculcating positive attitude on anyone, particularly, on those whom they regard as the architect of ethnocentrism. This is to mean that power relations in essence has two folds in *Abrak*. These are explicated in the subsequent sections.

### **5.5.1. Ethnocentrism as a means of protection and suppression**

The fundamental distinction that lies between both generations is further extended in their power relations. The entity on which each individual depends on to manipulate others and how that is rendered into practice is where one would sense their difference. As explored previously, the secessionists are pervaded with ethnic driven sentiment. In the argument of the iconic figures of the subsequent generation, ethnocentrism is the powerhouse of the older generation. This is supposedly because individuals in the cohort rather than seeing and acting up on things from their own viewpoint, they are made to see it in the lenses of their own ethnicity. They are therefore circumscribed with the mentality of a few who strongly affect dozens. Of course, for most, being in similar state of mind with the rest is to mean to secure themselves from some possible threats they might face from their opponents, usually from other ethnic group.

How those who claim to speak up for the Oromo and the Tigri depicted well dictate the claimed viewpoint. The elite of both groups namely Taye and Tekeste strongly advocate, as the one is the foe of the other, and urge their followers to propagate it. Consequently, this let them to be obsessed with ethnic sentiment, and consider it as the only possible way they are able to be a head of their opponents. This is the most likely reason for which it is argued that power and

ethnicity are inseparable entities in the portrayal of the older figures. So is power with knowledge in the case of their children.

On the other related issue of argument with the inseparability of power and ethnocentrism in the case of the older generation, there seems a high tendency of relying on coercive power. All they want and struggle to realize is to see others accept their ideological stance, and be its adamant adherent. Tekeste, Kibret and commander Balcha, senior officials in the political system, enforce people to agree with what they think important, usually with intimidation. Those who feel sense of dispossessed like Taye and Chala are also in similar state of mind. The two sub-group of the cohort in their own ways are quite oppressors. Moti, who often seriously criticize that the entire system being repressive, confirm us that suppression is the trait that best describes the cohort as a whole. In his argument with Taye and Chala over his imprisonment, for instance, he remarks:

“እናንተም ያው ከወያኔዎቹ ጋር አንድ ናችሁ። ወያኔዎቹ ለምን እንዳሰሩኝ ታውቃላችሁ?” አለና ሁለቱንም ቆም ብሎ ተመለከታቸው። “ልክ እናንተ እንድሆን የፈለጋችሁትን መሆን ባለመቻሌ ቅር የተሰኛችሁትን ያህል ወያኔዎቹም እነሱ እንድሆን የሚፈልጉትን ስላልሆንኩኝ ቅር ስለተሰኙ ነው ያሰሩኝ። እና ሁለታችሁም አንድ ናችሁ። Mulugeta (2018, p. 261)

“You are the same with *Weyanes*. ... Do you know why they put me into prison?”, he said, and looks at both. “Because I refused to act as to their wish, as you too in the same vain want me to do your wishes, they are disappointed and imprisoned me. You both are thus the same.”

Because he writes his opinion on the newspaper, Moti is sentenced to serve terms in prison. In the opinion of Moti, his imprisonment is not only because he writes his views but also because he does not conform to anything they say. He likewise finds the manifestation of oppressiveness in his relatives, Taye and Chala. He criticizes both for urging him to take on an Oromo lawyer to handle his case in the court while he is interested in Walta. They decline Walta just because he is Tigrie and strongly enforce him to work with the Oromo lawyer they have selected.

Similarly, Walta recurrently comments on those who are giants in the political circle almost the same thing. In one of the confrontations he takes part with Kibret, for instance, he stresses as they strongly enforce people to follow them and see nothing else “አገርን በዘፈቀደ መግዛታቸው አንሶ ሰው ሁሉ እንደናንተ መሆን ባለመቻሉ የምትቃጠሉ።” አለ ዋልታ። Mulugeta (2018, p.274) *Overlooking your*

*reckless and repressive leadership, you are dismayed in that everybody is unable to act like you.”, Walta Said.*

Within the generation itself, including the forefront figures many are practically imposed affliction. For instance, Tsige and Taye are imprisoned; Gash Megerssa is deprived of his farm land, and made to lead a destitute life. It is not because they do wrong that they are exposed to such sufferings; it is rather because they never tend to show any sign of conformity to the power holders dos and don'ts. However, these characters strongly react to what they are enforced to accept probably because they feel that they have the support of many who are bounded with similar sentiment. In various situations, where Taye and his elder brother, Chala, get involve in, it is hinted that Dozens, who shares their feelings, are behind them. Their strong resistance in which they persistently confront the government is assumed to have conceived from this.

Of course, Taye speaks even in a public that he along with his people is strong enough to overthrow the TPLF. So does Chala. Both usually stress this view in a number of their debates with Arkani and Daba. In one of the extended argument, Taye holds with Daba, he says: “አስቲ አስበው ዳባ፣ ህዝባችንና ወያኔ የመጨረሻውን ውሳኔ ፍልጫ ሲያደርጉ የዋልታዋ አርካኒ ከማን ጋር ልትቆም ነው። ከእኛ ጋር ሆና ዋልታን ትዋጋለች ወይስ ከዋልታ ጋር ሆና እኛ ላይ ትተኩሳለች?” Mulugeta (2018, p.387) “Please, Daba just think of Walta’s Arkani position when our people begin the last fight against the Weyane. Will she stand by us and fight Walta or will she be with Walta and shoots against us?”

His nephew, is rather critical of his pre-conceived notion for which it is argued that his generation appears to be different from the previous. However, in this connection, Daba stresses that all his obsession is just a nightmare of his own, not something that would happen real. Accordingly, Daba claims: ... “አሁን ያልከው የአንተ አለም የወለደው ምናብ ነው። የአንተ አለም ደግሞ በእኛ እና በእነሱ የተከፈለ፤ የጥላቻ እና የጦርነት አለም ነው። እኛ እና እነሱ የምትላቸው አንድ ሊሆኑ የሚችሉበት አለም አንተ አይታይም።” Mulugeta (2018, p.387) ...What you say now is the conception of your imagination. And your world is restricted with we and they; it is the world of hatred and war. The never see a world in which those whom you call we and they could be the same.

Taye keeps on reflecting his conviction and poses something quite relevant to our argument, which could also be argued as the fountainheads of his worldview: “እና እንዴት ከወያኔዎች ጋር አንድ

*አለም እንጋራለን ብለህ ታሰባለህ? ” “እኔ ማን ናችሁ እናንተ?” “ሰፊው የአሮሞ ህዝብ!” አለ ታዩ በኩራት። Mulugeta (2018, p.387) “How do you think that we share the same world with Weyanes?” “Who are you?” “The Oromo people.” Taye Said with pride tone.*

In the dialogue, especially in the expression that Taye forwards with pride, one would understand that he is preoccupied with mob mentality, and considers it as a sort of weapon whereby those whom he categorizes as foe of his ethnic group are possible destroyed. On the other hand, his refusal to share the same world with his opponents further suggest that he has no room for discussion that would help him resolve difference with his opponents.

The customary practice of relying on ethnicity to hold power and put others under one’s own influence is also quite common among those who are claimed to set the entire system of governance. Including Tekeste, the co-founder of the TPLF and the conductor of the system, commander Balcha, Kibret and some unnamed characters, who are often engaged in undercover activities, are the worth mentioned individuals in this regard. These characters have massive contribution to set the tradition as well.

The tradition is boldly noted in wherever individuals are gathered for official meetings. Such meetings, in which individuals are enforced to avail themselves, are intentionally held to frustrate those whom they think their potential opponents. The power elite figures accordingly use some derogatory expressions that are commonly associated with certain ethnic groups. Besides, they urge their fellow compatriots to use it for similar purpose.

Moreover, the prominent figures of the new generation figures assert that ethnocentrism is an indispensable entity of power acquisition for their elders. They challenge them noting that the elders use ethnicity as a tool of extending their position of decision making whereby the voice of many are suppressed. Arkani, Moti, Walta and Daba, express in a clear term that the hidden motives of the older characters is to hold power. For this reason, as to the young figures, they appear with ethnic issue. Other than having the backing of many, they have no real concern for the freedom of their people as they usually claim. Over his being bullied in a number of occasions, Walta, for example, witness the following:

ብሔር ብሔር እያላችሁ የምታላዝኑት ስለገባችሁ ሳይሆን ለምትፈፀሙት ግፍ ሁነኛ መሣሪያ ስለሆናችሁ ነው። ባይሆንም ለብሔር ነፃነት ከሚደረግ ጥረት ይልቅ ለፍትህ መስፈን የሚደረግ ትግል የላቀ ክብር መሆኑን ታስታውሱ ነበር። ነገር ግን እኔ በበኩሌ አልቀየማችሁም። እንደ ጣላቶቼም አላያችሁም። ይህን ሁሉ በደል የምትፈፀሙት መጥፎ ሰዎች ስለሆናችሁም አይደለም። እናንተ ልክ እንደ እኛ የስርአቱ ሰላባዎች ስለሆናችሁ ነው። ልዩነታችን እኛ ምንም በማናውቀውና ባልዋልንበት ስንቀጠቀጥ እናንተ ግን ራሳችሁ ታግላችሁ ያደራጃችሁት ስርአት ተጠቂ መሆናችሁ ነው። Mulugeta (2018, p.1 33)

It is not because you understand the essence of ethnicity that you recurrently utter about it; rather because it is your main apparatus of subjugation. If that were not the case, you would have reverend the efforts that have been rendered to bring justice rather than to that of the freedom of nationalities. However, I am not disappointed on you. I never even see you like a foe. It is not because you are bad people that you do all these crimes. Instead, it is because you like us are the victim of the regime. Our difference is that while you are afflicted by the regime you have established, we are receiving the affliction for doing no wrong.

Had they not had any hidden motives other than serving their people as Tekeste and his co-workers propagates in public gatherings, they would have proved individuals rights. Walta's position is clear. He maintains that if individuals' rights are proved irrespective of their ethnic background, the right of a group or a nation as a whole is also proved. In addition to Walta, most of his fellow generation figures are so critical of why the TPLF giants are the adamant adherents of ethnocentric politics. Walta underscores that it is a means of extending their regime.

In addition, in the argument of Walta, their obsession with ethnicity of their own that gives way for the occurrence of ethnocentric system of governance consequently resulted in an oppressed and oppressor relationship among fellow citizens. Obviously, the likes of Tekeste, Solomon, Kibret and their minions belong to the latter category while the rest belongs to the former. Thus, for the oppressors their engagement in ethnic oriented discourse is a cover up by which they enforce those who appear in different with them impotent. This would further imply that for the older figures being obsessed with their ethnicity, they are not fortunate enough to have a healthy interpersonal relation with each other and with the subsequent generation.

Moreover, within the generation, ethnocentrism is understood as a source of power both as a repressive apparatus and as a means of resistance to suppression. A case in point is the recurrent and strong resistance the Oromo nationalist pressure group, which is organized by Taye and his old friends, displays the coercive reaction they receive in response.

### **5.5.2. Epistemic Domination**

In most circumstances, the relationship of the young with most of their elders argued to be rather less severe. Most of them tend to have similar experience with their peers though some of their peers do not possess the mannerism they want in them. These individuals have strong social bond with those senior officials, who are in higher positions, and act as to the wish of the officials. Nevertheless, most of the younger characters, who are the major characters of the novel at the same time, appear quite differently.

The way they manage and respond to all their encounters grab the focus of our discussion. Accordingly, their socio-cultural world is bounded with full of impediments and are made to go through many vicissitudes just for their political views. In addition to the protagonists, who are at the forefront in all societal matters, many of their friends are chased to the extent of being disposed their fundamental human rights.

For example, Walta, Arkani and Moti ranging from verbal intimidation to imprisonment, face sufferings in different forms. For the same reason, both Arkani and Walta whose affection turns into love, as the pressure on them is intensified, are ousted from their professional engagements. Irrespective of all these, however, they never seem to consider similar reaction as a possible solution. They barely respond coercively even to the life threatening afflictions they are made to receive.

They rather focus on the thing that would change the mind of the oppressors into something constructive. Probably because they believe that coercive reactions to coercive actions, as hinted in many of their discourses less likely bring a long-term impact that they concentrate on playing on the mind game. Again, this supposedly originates from the firm conviction that most of them shares in common.

Their belief is that the existing problem is solved if and only if attention is given to deconstruct the mentality that had set that value system. Walta, Arkani, Moti, Bekele and Obsse in various

incidents argue that all are enforced to have unhealthy interpersonal relations because of the problematic nature of the ethnocentric value system. They are thus viewed to have unreserved engagement in the process of deconstructing the tradition and try to construct their own value system. One of their chiefly used tools whereby they erase the prevalent tradition is through a dialogue. As discussed in the previous section, they enjoy having a discussion of any kind with anyone. Any of their discussion, eventually ends in dropping something positive on their compatriot.

Because of their academic background and professional career, both of which have massively influenced them to have the claimed mannerism, most are enthusiastic conversants on whatever subject. They have an avid interest in resolving inconveniences, which could be a family affairs or serious political problem. This is why they often debate with their elders and with each other. The trace of mental power being in favor of them is noted in the justifications they pose in most of their arguments. In view of that, in the debate Moti holds with the old figures, his idea supersedes theirs. They are even viewed having a serious argument with those who regards them as their potential hostiles.

The situations of Walta and Taye, Arkani and Kibret are the notable ones. Knowing that their opponents feel something bad to them, they keep on having words with and doing what they think is good to them. In the case of Walta and Taye, for example, Taye has a hatred feeling to Walta, which is often reflected explicitly. The way Walta manages his relation with him is quite the reverse. He never hates him back. He instead does him a favor; Walta helped Taye released from prison. In the interaction of both, the influence of Taye day by day gets decline while Walta's assumes quite the opposite. He keeps on doing the same thing in his relation with Tekeste and Kibret. So do the other individuals of his cohort. This form of handling relation, which is seemingly applied intentionally, helps them bring a long-term impact. That is mainly because their potential antagonists are not urged to recognize their intention nor to feel unsympathy. As a result, the young succeeds in maintaining their constructive impact on their elders though the father figures barely understand that way.

Including Foucault, most power theoretician technically calls it soft power. It is often applied in order to change and influence social and public opinion through a relatively unnoticed channels, of which lobbying as the giants of the new generation master it, is the commonest one.

Accordingly, for the likes of Walta and his compatriots, discussion is a mechanism through which they use their mental power. The thing that makes the possessed power peculiar in the process is the fact that it is less recognized and its supposed impact is often being positive.

Their being enlightened helps them extend their influence not only on their elders but also on each other. Almost all are good at socializing themselves. Discourse is one of their tools that they mostly use as a hidden weapon to shape the opinion of many. They thus actively engage in societal dialogue. Most of them are therefore able to maintain what power theoreticians often call soft power in the due process. Of course, all are not in the same level in terms of their skill of expression to maintain the desired outcome. For example, Walta, famous for his critical articles and exclusive interviews both of which target the wrong doings of the government, is more expressive and more influential than the rest. The depth of his intellect is imbedded in many of his discourses.

Moti is also the other important figure that softly influences anyone he come across. His case seems more striking because he is even able to change the mind of fellow influential figures. In a serious dialogue that goes between Arkani and Moti, the narrator reads what goes in the mind of Arkani: “በጉዳዩ ከሞቲ ጋር በመወያየቱ ተገቢ መሆኑን ብታምንም የሞቲ ትንተና ራሷ ዉስጥ ትንሽነት እንድትታይ ያስገደዳት ስለመሰላት መንፈሷ ተረበሸ። “ያን ሁሉ ትምህርትና ልፋት አፈር አበላሁት አይደል!” አለች ባዘነ ድምጽ።” Mulugeta (2018, p.220). She finds discussing the matter with Moti proper. However, because of his detailed analysis, she feels that she is enforced to be viewed as a small-minded, and is frustrated. “Those years that I have spent in studying are all in vain!” She says in a gloomy tone.

It is to ease her burden that Arkani confides her feelings to Moti, but the manner he explicates the matter is where the trace of power is pointed out. In his argument, as he disproves her preconceived thought completely wrong, she senses herself inferior. Her feelings of frustration further imply, as mental power could severely distress our emotion than coercive power does.

Other than implicit forms of power acquisition that chiefly relies on persuasive discourse, the new generation also maintain power quite overtly. In relatively a few incidents, the young is also viewed resisting the political system. This validates Foucault’s argument of the bi-directional flow of power. One would see this in public rallies that are organized by the youth in opposition

to the entire political system. In the one that goes in Tigri towns, where most of the participants are the young, it is proved that the less powerful figures could also maintain power. To substantiate our argument, let' quote what the narrator observes towards the end of the story, when the TPLF system begins to go to wrack and ruin:

የባለስልጣኑ ወሳኔ ሲታወቅ የመቀሌዉ ሰልፍ ወደ ሌሎች የክልልሉ ከተሞች ተዛመተ። የአንዱ ከተማ ሰልፍ ሌላዉ ሲቀበለዉና ሲያስተጋባዉ ጥያቄዎቹም እየበዙ ሄዱ። መልካም አስተዳደር አሁኑ፤ የዉሃ የመብራትና የስልክ አገልግሎቶች ይሟሉልን። የከፋፍለህ ግዛ ፖሊሲያችሁን እንቃወማለን፤ የመናገርና የመጻፍ መብታችን ይከበር፤ የመሰብሰብና የመደራጀት ነጻነታችን ይከበር። የሚሉ ጥያቄዎች መቅረብ ጀመሩ። *Mulugeta (2018, p.389)*

When the decision of the official is unveiled, the rally in Mekele is widespread to the other towns of the region. As the rally in one town is extended to the other, so their questions are escalated. Accordingly, the followings are posed in the rallies: Good governance right now; proper infrastructure services - water, electric and telephone; stop your divide and rule policy; protect our freedom of speech and freedom of press; freedom of assembly and organization.

In the same way, in Oromia and Tigri towns, a substantial number of young figures partake in public rallies that are usually held against the TPLF regime. Due to the well organized resistance of the young, the system cracks up as the story approaches to an end. Thus their aspiration to overthrow the TPLF government is virtually maintained.

On the other hand, most of the iconic figures of the new generation have developed almost similar intellect, so they have a smooth interpersonal relation. This means that as compared to the interpersonal relation of the elders, there is a mutual sort of relations of power among themselves. The portrayal of women figures and their interactions with their fellow male figures is the one that has a high relevance to claim that there appears a new trend of power relations among the young. The two female major characters in both their academic and professional career are in a relatively a higher standard, and are often seen as the most heard figures like their male compatriots.

Ranging from alleviating the life status of their society to challenging the patriarchy-oriented frame of mind, they play an indispensable contribution. Not only do they question some traditional practices but also practically disprove the inherent invalidity of some customary

belief. Hence, they feel themselves and act as the men figures do. Their self-belief, which is evidently resulted from their intellect, would impinge people in their surroundings to see their ability. In the same way, their friends seemingly give recognition that they are able to perform what they do, and therefore interact with them on mutual basis. Consequently, in both their private and public lives, they value and respect each other.

If we take the private lives of Arkani and Obsi, for example, they are not restricted to the traditional role of women in the past. The traditional gender role that confines women to the house and privileges men to act as to their wish is deconstructed. In the case of Arkani and her fiancé, Walta, there are no set activities that each performs separately because both engage in every activity in the house irrespective of set boundary. Similar experience is observed in Obsse and Bekele. Although the couple are experts in different companies, they share mutual responsibly in the domestic activities like Cooking, cleaning etc irrespective of gender. For instance, the narrator observes Bekele: “በቀለ ኩሽና ገብቶ ቡና በማፍላት ላይ ከነበረበት ወደ ሳሎን በመራመድ ለብሲን አቅፎ አጸናናት።” *Mulugeta (2018, p. 310) From the Kitchen, where he was making coffee to Obsee, Bekele steps into the salon and solaces her with embrace.*

As opposed to the husband and wife figures of the previous generation, there are relatively balanced relations of power in the romantic lives of the new generation. In addition to their private lives, they appear the same in the public as well. Besides, the depiction of both couples having similar status is a good example. Arkani and Walta are in the same academic rank, and thus often focus on complementing each other; none feels sense of experiansing rule and ruled relations. Other young lawyers who work with the couple are portrayed with the same manner. Their relation in their office being a typical manifestation of mutual relation is indicated in the comment of the narrator: “ቢሮ ውስጥ ተከባብሮና ተግባብቶ ከመስራት ያለፈ አንዱ አንዱን አያዘም።” *Mulugeta (2018, p. 371) Other than working with respecting and understanding each other, in office nobody orders the other.*

In the incidents of these quotes, the presence of balanced relations of power among the iconic figures of the generation is underscored. At the same time, the characters’ being in similar level in their academic and professional status is the most likely reason why they tend to feel and react to each other in such reverent manner. This could further justify Foucault’s fundamental argument on the inextricability of power and knowledge.

## **Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion**

### **6.1. Summary**

In *Rekik Ashara* two distinctive generations, which are termed as the altruistic and the corrupted generations, are figured out. The altruistic generation in most circumstances is associated with virtuousness such as selflessness, diligence, compassion, sympathy, etc. Their value of family and society are also their other peculiar and worthy noted features that describe them well. These traits being constructive are nevertheless often unveiled covertly. Owing to differences in academic, economic and marital status, the notable figures within the generation struggle to realize virtuous society. Relying on their strong moral values that privilege the interest of the society over the self, the altruistic figures at the end of the day drop something positive beyond themselves.

Resembling to the altruistic, the corrupted generation is a makeup of individuals whose socio-cultural and economic backdrop is so heterogeneous. In their dominant traits, however, the corrupted figures are quite the reverse. Self-centeredness, temporality, heartlessness and material obsessions are their common identity. Ranging from those who assume the apex position in their economic status, decision-making position and intellect to the needy subordinate figures are susceptible to depravity. Hence, the generation is composed of individuals who are practically engaged in corruptions or those that are mentally corrupted. For this reason, none escapes from being the apparatus of social evils. Moral deterioration, which is resulted from a lack of spiritual and intellectual integration, becomes their typical identity.

The characteristics of both generations are almost mutually exclusive in that while the former is positive, the latter is negative. Parental care and upbringing are where the elemental causes of their differences lie. Both are thus fundamentally different in how they view their world and act upon it. Accordingly, the altruistic is in state of mind that the essence of life itself is to be considerate to others. Their endeavor is to maintain it and have a spiritual satisfaction as a result.

In contrast, the corrupted generation is in battle with achieving material desire in which they attain their own utmost pleasure.

Unlike *Rekik Ashara*, in *Dertogada* there are three different generations. These are the old, the intellectual and the young. Although the last two generations are strongly connected, they symbolize generational extensions in the pattern of grandfather, father and children sort of ladder. While the old and the intellectual shares certain commonalities, the young is quite different from both. The old were patriots in their youth days, hard workers in their high days and thoughtful in the terminal face of their lives. Hence, patriotism, diligence, and thoughtfulness are their prevalent features. Although unlike their children are not accessed to formal schooling, they are inherently enlightened. Life experience and the monasteries are from where they possess their wisdom. Upon their wisdom, they clear the road for the subsequent generation, which would help them build a strong and prosperous nation.

As opposed to the old and the intellectual, the young is pervaded with the tradition of self-serving mannerism. Like that of the corrupted generation in *Rekik Ashara*, egoistic, circumvent and heartlessness is the dominant characteristics of the young in *Dertogada*. The reason is the generation's high obsessions to attain material comfort. Most young figures therefore never pursue the tradition of seeking knowledge and wisdom. As a result, regardless of position, economic status and academic background, they lose core societal values, and are exposed to moral degeneration.

Like in Yismake's *Dertogada*, in Mihiret's *Lelasew* three different generations that appeared in a sort of grandfather, father and child relation sequences are pointed out. They referred to as the lost, the reformist and the mysterious generations. The lost generation is the composition of individuals whose worldviews are virtually affected by some traditionally practiced norms of the old days. However, the tradition does not affect all in the same way. While some, who are relatively a few in number, are fevered, some others are negatively affected, and are enforced to lead destitute lives. The iconic figures in the former sub-group have either affiliations with the landlords or have some ranks in the military, and often inclined to take advantage of being in that position.

Consequently, they often appear with self-pride, resistance, unbending and aristocratic sort of personality. The elite's such mannerism coupled with the traditional mode of thinking of the older days is resulted in affecting the mentality as well as the entire lives of those who are marginalized. Accordingly, the destitute old figures are exposed to psychological sufferings that eventually make them conceive a sense of unworthiness. However, most individuals in either class of the cohort never attained what they had aspired. While dozens for their ideological position lost their lives, others for the prevailing mode of thinking of the earlier time are made to dysfunction in their later days.

Although most reformists are the children of the lost generation, they are loosely connected with their fathers. They are rather shaped by what they have studied in school as well as in their overseas experiences. Of course, almost all are studied in the country and abroad. They thus come up with a transformative idea of their own aiming to reform the mentality of their society and realize societal development. Similar to the intellectual generation in *Rekik Ashara*, the constituents of the generation are therefore claimed organic intellectuals in that they devoted themselves to their society.

Other than being virtuous, which is the typical identity of most, the reformists are symbolic in experimenting something unfamiliar to their society for which they encounter harsh criticism from the old figures. Besides, they committed themselves to cut-off the society from the degenerated mindset that they believe the fountainheads of contemporary Ethiopia's problem. For this reason, among other things, the practice of having a dialogue to resolve inconveniences and socializing oneself with anyone irrespective of any observable differences is the tradition they indoctrinate on dozens. Optimism, hard-working and cooperativeness are also their worth mentioned traits that well describe them. Above all, the reformists are aspired to erase the burden their fathers left and the confusion their children would face. The cohort is thus mainly targets to fill the observable generational gap.

The third generation in *Lelasew*, as so-called the mysterious, is composed of young imaginative figures whose socio-economic and professional status is heterogeneous. Nevertheless, each individual has some unenthusiastic feelings in common. Besides, most have at least some untold stories even to their intimate that lately unveiled. The academic profile of most, as the reformists are, is also very high for most hold at least their first degree. Regardless of this fact, however,

they mostly never tend to apply their intellect for the good of their society. They instead use it to gratify their own ego.

Consequently, as opposed to the reformists, the mysterious is associated with degenerated moral values. These are supposedly because most of them like the corrupted generation in *Rekik Ashara* lack physical and emotional attachment of their parents in their childhood days that negatively affects their entire life. Accordingly, they appear with a serious psychological problem that would intensify social chaos. On a collective basis, the generation also possesses an indisposition mindset, and has unhealthy relations with others. Vengeance, self-centeredness and despise are some of the overriding personal traits that are drawn from their interpersonal relations.

Like in Sisay's *Rekik Ashara*, in Mulugeta's *Abrak* generations that possess a mutually exclusive sort of ideological stances are maintained. The novel, thus, entertains strong generational conflict than any of the other novels. In their ideological stands that often displayed in their prevailing traits, both respectively termed as the secessionist and the unionist generations. The secessionist is comprised of old figures whose socio-cultural backdrop is mostly from both the Oromo and Tigri Ethnic groups. Both are bounded with nationalistic sentiment and, are aspired to realize secession. The two sub-groups of the cohort accordingly draw a red line to define themselves as *We and They*. Based on these distinctions, which is exclusively ethno-centered, both are in conflict with each other as well as with the subsequent generation.

The Oromo nationalist group blames the Tigreans and the Amhara claiming that the Oromo have been subjugated by their regimes since distant past, and urges the session. As a form of reaction, they often display their hostile attitude to them overtly, and strongly resist their leadership. The Tigri ethnic figures, most of whom are either the co-founder of the TPLF or higher officials in contemporary politics, on the contrary, view the Oromo as their potential enemy and suppress them quite covertly. Nonetheless, both are highly sensitive and biased to the ethnic groups of their own. The secessionist is virtually associated with an extreme obsession of ethnocentrism that would most likely result in marginalizing others.

The new generation is the constituents of young and vibrant individuals whose ethnic backgrounds are different. Irrespective of this difference, most share Ethiopianism sentiment, and strongly question and disprove the ideological view of their fathers. As a result, including imprisonment, they encounter serious challenges. Nevertheless, they persist in subverting the ethnocentrism mentality of the secessionist. In light of their rational arguments, where their intellect and shared moral values are noted, they strive to refashion integration. The introduction of women public intellectual figures, who question and challenge the assumption on which some dogmatic beliefs lie, is also the other pillar values of the new generation.

Like in *Lelasews's* the intellectual generation, the prominent figures of the generation are enthusiastic in having a dialogue and debate notwithstanding subject matter and personal background differences, and consider shared ideas as their instrument of socialization. Moreover, inclusiveness, optimism, voluntarism are their dominant shared traits. Therefore, as opposed to the individuals in their ages in *Rekik Ashara, Dertogada, and Lelasew*, the lion's share of their displayed personal characters target to maintain positivism.

In *Rekic Ashara*, the portrayals of power in the interactions of the two generations by which the one inevitably falls under the influences of the other are not the same. Their supposed base, means and intention of maintaining power is also somehow different from each other. The altruistic consequently obtains and subtly applies power to bring a positive impact on the mass. Their intention thus targets on benefiting their society. As they acquire power gradually and exercise it sympathetically, the altruistic never cause any embarrassment on the subsequent generation.

The corrupted generation barely noticed being influenced. The altruistic is initially destabilized for they are encouraged to adhere the unrighteous way of life, and are made voiceless. However, they gradually avoid themselves from the massive pressure they receive. The generation further intelligently extends its constructive impact on the corrupted. Subsequently, especially towards the end of the story, the altruistic succeeds in persuading the corrupted and let them conform to their view. The corrupted cohort, on the contrary, using its money-centered worldview suppresses its precedent. The generation therefore exercises its power explicitly in a manner that negatively affects the other chiefly using hard power. As opposed to their initial suppressive nature that they think they can do anything, they lately feel impotent. Besides, within the

corrupted generation itself, power overtly goes up downward direction. The exercise of power by the power holders intended to suppress the view of the lower class.

Quite contrary to the altruistic, the corrupted generation's acquisition of power mainly depends on its representatives economic status. While the well-to-do are the power wielder, the needy ones are the subject where the power is put into effect. Material good is, therefore, the main source of power to the corrupted generation. There is a slave-lord sense of power relations between them. Other than the higher-class intention of holding more power and suppressing others, the lower class feeling of submissiveness also pronounces the dichotomy of the traditional dominant and dominated relations of power within the corrupted generation. The generation is thus enforced to experience such manner of interactions. Therefore, at the same time as the altruistic subtly exercise its influence as a tool to realize its mission of building a virtuous society, the corrupted uses power to satisfy its own ego. The novel exactly depicts contemporary society's vulnerability to the domination of self-centeredness.

With a slight difference among the generations, there is a similar trend of power relations in *Dertogada* as well. As the altruistic in *Rekik Ashara* positively influences its subsequent, so does the old affect the intellectual. Because there is a firm tradition of reverence between the old and the intellectual generations, the intellectuals unreservedly do what they are expected to do. The realization of the project mainly by the intellectual is due to the old massively exerts their positive influence on the intellectual. Of course, their wisdom is what helps the old to affect the fellow generation constructively. As wisdom is the instrument by which they can possess their charisma, their influence on the intellectual is not only subtle but also soreness, and hence it lasts long.

In addition to the wisdom of the old figures, the intellectual's firm conviction to keep the vows of the old is the trace of power relation between both. As the intellectual figures keep the words of their elders to the extreme of feeling as if being viewed, what *Foucault calls discipline power*, they are implicitly influenced by their fathers. The dogmas in the monasteries coupled with the manner of how they have been brought up are the main reasons that expose the second generation to fall under the influence of the first.

The second and the third generations are quite different in that power flows in bi-direction for an obvious but contradictory purpose. Its exercise is also not as subtle and smooth as in between the older and the intellectual. In *Dertogada*, the young rather interacts with the intellectual overtly often in being resistant and compliant, which are the two chiefly used tactics of acquiring the upper hand status. The young generation's intention in contrast to the intellectual's is imposing something negative. Their application of hard power, which destructs the giant national project, is the nucleus of where the adversarial impact the young drop on the intellectual. The young being both inhuman and unconcerned about something beyond the self is why they subvert others. It is resulted from the disintegrations of the strong moral value and overlooking the tradition of holding in the highest regard their elders. The intellectual, however, without causing any discomfort on the young, strives to construct another project in which they would regain their revered position.

In *Lelasew*, intergenerational relations of power are somehow different from that of the generations in *Dertogada*'s. In *Lelasew*, the lost generation is not in a position to have a strong influence on their children as the first generation does on their children in the case of *Dertogada*. However, the lost within itself exercise a slave and lord relations in which oppressor and oppressed is inevitable. Due to cultural hegemony in the older days, class-based subjugation is deemed as something normal. The power elite figures therefore explicitly marginalize and suppress whom they regard their subordinates. The subordinates themselves accept the complete domination of the privileged class, and become submissive.

On the other hand, the iconic figures of the lost are unable to maintain the momentum in their power relations with the subsequent. This is because their children appear with something that their compatriots have not been with. The reformists inculcate what they think important for the society in a manner that does not cause any harm or any inconveniences on others. Most of its prominent figures extend their sphere of influence quite implicitly. Unlike both the lost and the mysterious generations, the reformists rely on soft power that usually applied in persuasive discourse. Their intellect and lived experience are thus the sources of their mental power.

Though the reformists initially encounter serious confrontations in their interpersonal relations, they eventually change not only the mind of their fathers but also their children, and hence become influential. The mysterious like most young figures in *Rekik Ashara and*

*Dertogada*, rely on cohesive power to maintain their wish and desires. Rape, sexual assault, bullying are where the commonest artifacts of their subjugation. As the forefront figures of the generation impose their will upon others so overtly usually coercively, none is able to widen their circle of influence as the reformists do. The fates of most rather turn bad. Consequently, they lose not only their revered status but also their lives.

In *Abtrak*, the two generations are engaged in a persistent struggle to hold the decision making position almost differently. The struggle goes both within and between generations. The secessionists are viewed to have a strong desire to make themselves on the higher ladder of power at the expense of other subjugations. For this reason, the secessionists chiefly use physical power to maintain what they want. They often apply it quite overtly usually with no consideration of consequences. The giant figures of the two sub-group of the generation obsession of cohesive power are associated with their mob sentiment in that they claim as their ethnicity is their base of power. In some way, their suppression of the new generation figures, for which the young is exposed to physical and psychological sufferings, is institutionalized. Hence, although the sub-groups of the generations are powerful in the most of the story, towards the end of the story, they are dispossessed their prestigious positions; their system is also disintegrated.

On the contrary, the new generation representatives, who for the most part of the story, are in the state of suppression, are able to maintain their positive influence. Like many of the old figures in *Rekik Ashara*, *Dertogada* and *Lelasew* they rather focus on exercising soft power. Accordingly, they engage in shaping the mentality of the old figures. In contrast to their fathers, because their intellect is the source of their power, they seldom impose their will upon others intended to bring immediate outcomes. Its manner of revelation is therefore rather overt; so does its process being passive. However, as the idea of integration in the due process outshines that of secession, the new generation figures succeed in becoming those whose ideological view is adhered to by many.

## 6.2. Conclusion

In light of theories of power and generation, intra-generation and inter-generations relations in four selected contemporary Amharic novels were explored. The explication mainly based on the characters' ages and the dominantly shared personal traits; the designation of the generations relay on both. Accordingly, while in *Dertogada* and *Lelasew* three different generations, in *Rekik Ashara and Abrak* two generations are pointed out. Each appears with its own distinctive characteristics and power relations.

There are certain similitude and differences of displayed traits and manner of power relations between the generations in a similar category in the novels. In view of that, the altruistic generation in *Rekik Ashara* and the old generation in *Dertogada*, both of which represent the old age category, are associated with virtuous traits. A similar tradition is noted in their power relations in that both wisely extend their constructive impacts.

On the contrary, the corrupted generation in *Rekik Ashara*, the young generation in *Dertogada* and the Mysterious generation in *Lelasew*, which represents the young, displays quite the opposite. So do they maintain and apply power differently. As a result, unlike the former, these generations seldom extend their circle of influence. On the other hand, the intellectual generation in *Dertogada* and the reformist in *Lelasew*, which represent the middle age category, are associated with the notion of change and innovation. Using their knowledge and overseas experiences, as most studied in overseas, they are at the forefront to change the lives of many.

While wisdom and spiritualism are the identities of the altruistic and the old generations, reform and modernity are the distinctiveness of the intellectual in *Dertogada* and the reformist in *Lelasew*. Most young representative generations in the novels such as the corrupted generation, the young generation and the mysterious generation are virtually bounded with vicious thought and practice. Thus, the prevailing characteristics of each generation in the novels imply as there is a trend of declining certain societal values in contemporary Ethiopia. The trend

of mannerism in each novel also goes in binary opposite sense; it turns destructive in the case of young generations in the novels.

The principal reason for their contradictions, which exacerbate generational conflicts between two subsequent generations in the novels, is the ideological views they propagate. Accordingly, Altruism vs. Egoism, Intellectualism vs. Materialism, and Ethiopianism vs. Ethnocentrism are the commonest ideological stances of the figured out generations. Except for the new generation in *Abrak*, which depicts the political arena of these days Ethiopia than any of the selected novels, the ideological views of the latter generations are problematic. This is due to their base of core societal shared values are superficial.

The dilapidated trend of moral, intellectual and other elemental societal values among the young is occurred due to various reasons. The loosed connection between children and parents, for which the former are exposed to a serious psychological problem in their latter days, is the foremost one. The disintegration of the social bond, which is relatively strong among most of the old figures, is the other reason. Most notably, the academic institutions being in a state of losing their essence is the most likely reason for the deterioration of moral and intellectual values among the young. Therefore, the indecent function of these three social institutions, which are so fundamental to shape the mentality of the young, are in a serious problem.

The displayed traits of the generations and their power relations have a direct correlation relationship. Those generations that possess virtues traits, most of which are the old and the middle age representative generations, are inclined to use soft power. Accordingly, to inculcate their own constructive thoughts on their opponents, they often use their wisdom and intellect, and eventually mold at least the opinion of some. In contrast, most young generations in the novels are associated with hard power. Because of their decision-making Position and economic status, they are privileged to exercise hard power so overtly.

However, although they assume the upper hand position, and suppress their opponents so adversely, they never keep the momentum. Their impact remains temporal. They subsequently are virtually turned impotent when the story in each novel reaches its denouement. Contrastingly, the influence of the old figures unveiled lately. Since they exercise mental power intending to

bring long-term impact, their influences last long, and are more influential than their fellow individuals.

The identities of the pointed out generations, which are construed from their shared traits as well as their manner of power exercise, portray contemporary Ethiopia as where there is a persistent generational conflict. The conflict, which is the collective outcome of the ideological altercation among dozens since distant past, is further resulted in a significant generational gap between subsequent generations.

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