

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE IDEA OF UNIVERSITY: A
PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY (WITH A REFLECTION ON
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY)

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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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Declaration

I, hereby, declare that this thesis entitled “Academic Freedom and the Idea of University: A Philosophical Inquiry (With a Reflection on Addis Ababa University)” is original work of my own, and has not been presented by anyone for any degree in any other university. And all the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name (Candidate)

Signature

Date

This thesis certifies that the above declaration made by the candidate is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Name (Advisor)

Signature

Date

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAU	Addis Ababa University
AAUP	American Association of University Professors
AAUTA	Addis Ababa University Teachers Association
BPR	Business Process Re-Engineering
BSC	Balanced Score Card
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
EBC	Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
EOC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
EUTA	Ethiopian University Teachers Association
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICCPR	International Covenant on Cultural and Political Rights
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NUES	National Union of Ethiopian Students
PSCB	Public Sector Capacity Building Programme

UCAA	University College of Addis Ababa
UCU	University College Union
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States
USC	United States Constitution
USSC	United States Supreme Court
USUAA	Union of all University Students of Addis Ababa
UTF	University Teachers Forum
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Academic freedom is quintessential in order to ensure the ideals of universities in general and the corresponding traditional roles of university education- the quest for truth - in particular. This implies that the history and philosophy of academic freedom is inseparable from the history of university education. Accordingly, it is worth mentioning the definition and aims (or purposes) of education in philosophy. Defining education, however, is inseparable from defining its aims or purposes in that, most of the time, something (such as education) is defined in relation to its *telos* or essential role that it plays. However, we cannot find a single and universal definition for education since “education has been defined in many ways, with each author stressing some or the other important dimension of education” (Monteiro, n. d., p. 7). This multiplicity of definitions for education, therefore, entails that there are different aims or purposes of education which are emphasized by different scholars and philosophers of education.

Accordingly, for González (2011), in the words of Kant, “*the ultimate goal of education is to attain man’s destiny*, which is no other than achieving full humanity” (p. 434). In other words, for Kant, in the words of Dewey (2004), education is “the process by which man becomes man the proper end of education: the promotion of the best possible realization of humanity as humanity” (p. 102). For Kant, this realization of humanity is a transition from a state of immaturity to the mature use of one’s freedom. For Rousseau, on the other hand, “education is nothing but a means to equip the person to face life and to grow into worthy citizens” (quoted in

Monteiro, n. d., p. 10) since “education”, according to him, “is meant to fit a person for a changing environment and a changing fortune” (Monteiro, n. d., p. 16).

The purpose of education, according to Krishnamurti, is for “*the cultivation of the total human being*’ and ‘the flowering’ he frequently spoke of required what he called ‘the awakening of intelligence;’ that is, *a capacity to discover truth*, find meaning and values, and live with a certain ‘goodness’” (Forbes, 1999, p. 5-6; emphasis added). Here is Newman: “Education is a high word; it is the preparation for knowledge, and it is the imparting of knowledge in proportion to that preparation” (Newman, 1852, p. 172). Or, according to the Socratic understanding of the term, “education is a midwifery in which the student is helped to give birth to his abilities and powers” (Jaspers, 1959, p. 50).

According to *Daqiqa Estefanos*, the purpose of education is for acquisition of knowledge – *ewqet* (the knowledge of *ewnet* - the truth about the right order or working of nature) and *tibeb* (the surplus meanings of *moya* that transforms the knowledge of how things work in to *ewqet*) which could only be attained through *miremera* (inquiry or research). *Miremera* is the only way of acquiring knowledge. The knowledge (*ewqet* and *tibeb*) which is attained via *miremera* is considered as “the sun that sweeps away the night of ignorance and exposes the true nature of reality” (Maimire, 2010, p. 82). The purpose of knowledge which is *ewqet*, *tibeb* and the corresponding method, *miremera*, is aimed at transcending what is given for achieving intellectual and moral sovereignty. All the definitions about education that are noted heretofore imply that education is mainly targeted at developing and enriching humanity (or developing the intellectual aspects of an individual) since it mainly involves, in one way or another, in the production and dissemination of knowledge.

This ideal for education might be rooted in Ceciro's saying (in fact, this is a derivative of Aristotle's understanding of man in relation to knowledge) that "knowledge is a fundamental human need. All people desire knowledge and understanding. To make mistakes and to be deceived is seen as 'an evil and a disgrace'" (quoted in Marginson, 2008, p. 2). Here, it is preferable, after giving the general notion of the term [education], to limit the scope of education in relation to the university context, since, in the words of Emmanuel Levinas, "*reality has weight when one discovers its contexts*" (quoted in Pendley, 2008, p. 132; emphasis added).

The main purpose, Botsford (1998) argues, in the introduction of the notion of university education is the assumption that we don't have a complete knowledge of this world, and there are certain scholarly methods which can be used to increase that knowledge (p. 5). Or, to put it the other way around, the core assumption behind the introduction of university education is because "the world wants to be understood" (Jaspers, 1959, p. 53), analyzed, and interpreted. Therefore, University, according to Jaspers, "is the corporate realization of man's basic determination to know" (Jaspers, 1959, p. 2). This quest for knowledge is a unique feature of human beings since "man alone among all other beings considers himself human only so long as he involves himself in the process of knowledge" (Jaspers, 1959, p. 15).

There have been competing arguments regarding the distinct feature or rationale that made a university a university. However, Setargew Kenaw (2003) posits that "despite the contending conceptions that emanate from diverse assumptions about what university education ought to be, there is a widespread agreement that there should be certain features that should be there if a university should maintain itself as a university" (p. 35). The rush for establishing certain ideals for a university is based on the rationale that "an institution", such as a university, "*remains functional only so long as it vitally embodies its inherent idea. Should its spirit*

evaporate, an institution will petrify into something merely mechanical, like a soulless organism reduced to dead matter” (Habermas & Blazek, 1987; emphasis added). For this reason, William Bostock has introduced the notion of ‘parameters of academic acceptability’ which is conceptually similar, if not identical, with the notion of the ideals of a university when he argued that “for a university to maintain its standing as a university, it must operate within certain parameters of academic acceptability; just as a ship must remain within certain hydrodynamic parameters to stay afloat” (Bostock, 2002, p. 19).

When we are talking about university ideals we are concerned with the missions that an institution, such as a university, claims to fulfill and function accordingly. It is argued that “the life force of any enterprise”, such as a university, “is its mission, either stated or assumed” (Scott, 2006, p. 1-2). However, university missions are not fixed rather they “are dynamic and fluid; they reflect the ever-changing philosophical ideals, educational policies, and cultures of particular societies or learned institutions” (Scott, 2006, p. 3).

For instance, for Newman, the goal of university education is to attain “liberal” or “philosophical” knowledge. This knowledge, which is pursued for its own sake, according to him, is very much vital for the “cultivation of the intellect” (Ker, 2011, p. 22). William Bostock has presented an ideal which, more or less, resembles with Newmansqean understanding when he argues that ‘the ideal parameter of academic acceptability’, or ‘popular ideal’ of a university could be understood as: “*the pursuit of truth and the provision of intellectual and moral leadership* while avoiding the extremes of physical violence” (Bostock, 2002, p. 22; emphasis added). Wilhelm von Humboldt’s ‘neo-humanistic University of Berlin’ has also established an ideal of teaching and scholarship based on the doctrine that, “to appoint the best intellects

available, and to give them the freedom to carry on their research wherever it leads” (quoted in Scott, 2006, p. 20).

According to Clark Kerr, however, the ‘multiversity’ generally pursues the threefold mission of teaching, research, and public service” (ibid). The idea of a university is also succinctly stated by Karl Jaspers (1959) when he noted that

To be permeated by the idea of the university is part of a way of life. *It is the will to search and seek without limitation, to allow reason to develop unrestrictedly, to have an open mind, to leave nothing unquestioned, to maintain truth unconditionally*, yet recognizing the danger of *sapere aude* (dare to know) (p. 68; emphasis added).

Generally speaking, the ideals of universities, according to Scott (2006), can be teaching and scholasticism - characterizing European medieval universities; nationalization (service to the government of the nation-state) – characterizing early modern university of Europe and Latin America; democratization (service to the individual of the nation-state)- characterizing the U.S. universities of the 19th century; research and academic freedom- characterizing the 19th-century Humboldtian university; public service (service to the public of the nation-state) – featuring the 20th century modern American university; and even internationalization (service to the body of nation-states) – featuring the current globalized universities (p. 5-6).

Despite the variations and plurality of the missions that universities are aimed at attaining, there is an underpinning, as it is noted above, that there should be at least one key feature that uniquely defines universities irrespective of their context. Setargew (2003) relates that

... because of the external and internal challenges, various educators believe (and rightly so) that *there should be certain key and resilient features that a university should always demonstrate irrespective of its setting*. Among these, the fact that university education should aim at *knowledge for its own sake*, to put it in a very concise and telling manner, that *a university should be a center of excellence* must be the quintessential feature that makes a university a university (p. 36-37; emphasis added).

Albeit the missions or ideals of universities has been interpreted differently, there is at least one common variable which all universities need - a common ground (a situation or requirement) for these ideals to be realized in higher education institutions – all universities need academic freedom - an ambiance that allow universities to function according to certain accepted academic standards. The idea of academic freedom, which is mainly anchored in intellectual freedom, is introduced in order to properly defend and realize the essential roles which are played by universities- to realize the ideals of university, specifically the unrestricted freedom of a quest for truth.

Universities are permeated with the privilege¹ of academic freedom based on the rationale that knowledge and truth are pursued and/or discovered only when there is an environment that allows the individual to think and act freely. This rationale is precisely asserted by Forbes (1999) when he argues that:

As truth can only be discovered, and knowing what is right and good can only be discovered, and as such discovery requires freedom, then freedom is not some pleasant extra. Freedom is indispensable, and it is necessary at the beginning of the learning process, not just when everything is in order and running smoothly (p. 10).

Fundamentally, “academic freedom is that freedom of members of the academic community, assembled in colleges and universities, which underlies the effective performance of their functions of teaching, learning, practice of the arts, and research” (Fuchs, 1963, p. 431). In other words, “universities, as non-profit organizations with guarantees of academic freedom, are uniquely suited to provide the autonomy for both individuals and groups to engage in intellectual creativity, dialogue and analysis” (Altbach, 2008, p. 7). It is in this situation, Shaffer noted, that

¹ However, academic freedom is not only a privilege but it also encompasses certain academic responsibilities or duties to be performed by the academic: academic freedom always involves a corresponding onus.

“academic freedom can serve the public good”; and this is only possible “if universities as institutions are free from outside pressures in the realm of their academic mission and individual faculty members are free to pursue their research and teaching subject only to the academic judgment of their peers” (Shaffer, n. d., p. 9).

A closer look and investigation of academic freedom and its corresponding essential foundation, intellectual freedom, is essential for one cannot expect the proper realization of university ideals in the absence of this freedom. According to Nelson (2010), it is assumed that the history of academic freedom in some respects predates the introduction and the use of the term; and the need for the concept has originated from the long history of universities and their continuous struggle for freedom from the state and church (p. 1). Yet, Post (2003) argues, academic freedom as a concept has begun in Germany in the 19th Century (p. 1).

The basic philosophy behind academic freedom, according to Byrne, is closely related, mainly, to the idea of ‘intellectual freedom’ which is understood as “the freedom to think one’s thought, conceive one’s ideas, formulate views and express them freely” (quoted in Arko-Cobbah, n. d., p. 2). Historically, it has been commonly assumed that the basic idea of intellectual freedom was originated with the philosophical teachings of ancient Athens in the fourth century B.C. Specifically, this teaching, which was primarily advocated by Socrates, is “devoted to *pursuing the truth without regard for conformity and social pressure*”; and as a result of his teaching, Socrates “chose to die by taking hemlock rather than cease “corrupting” youth by teaching philosophic thought” (Downs, 2009, p. 6, emphasis added). Allan Bloom also wrote, “one cannot imagine Socrates as a professor, for reasons that are worthy of our attention. But Socrates is of the essence of the university. It exists to preserve and further what he represents” (Bloom, n. d., p. 272).

For Botsford (1998), the civilization of Ancient Greece was the pioneer in developing the concept of freedom (p. 5). This is precisely manifested when we are “looking back at this civilization from our distance, one of its most remarkable features is the Greek capacity for free, general speculation, uninhibited by myth or authority²...” (ibid). In other words, Botsford added, “in ancient Greece, what we would today call “universities” developed as educational free markets” (ibid).

Later on , the “view of intellectual freedom was shaped during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe as a means to protect the corporate interests of the rising universities from undue governmental interference” (Downs, 2009, p. 7). Accordingly, “the medieval Church became the context in which scholarship and culture made enormous strides forward” (Botsford, 1998, p. 5). Gradually, “the universities, at such centers as Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Prague, Heidelberg and elsewhere became more formalized institutions, and were granted charters and privileges by popes and princes on their road to self-government” (Botsford, 1998, p. 7). It follows, Botsford argues, that medieval universities were familiar with a relative intellectual freedom at a time long years before the concept had become latter accepted (ibid).

² However, since it is worth noting all sides of the debate, it is advisable to say something regarding Karl Popper’s understanding of “Open Society”, contrary to “Closed Society”, and its trio archenemies: Plato, Hegel and Marx. For Popper, “closed societies” are collectivist, whose laws including customs are thought to be unchanging and are totalitarian; while “Open Societies” are liberal and anti-totalitarian in the sense that they are tolerant of critics and it is possible for those in power to be replaced by others without violence or bloodshed. Plato’s totalitarian or despotic way of teaching is manifested when there is no way to restrain the arbitrary use of power by the Philosopher Kings or rulers who may be corrupt or incompetent. Also, once the paradigm is set by dividing the three classes, Popper added, there is no way to anticipate any political change.

At the beginning of the modern age, “it took cultural changes—from developments in science and philosophy, to increased exposure to national differences, to wider commercial contacts—to prepare the ground for the modern university and its essential freedoms” (Nelson, 2010, p. 1). In this regard, “although universities go back very far, the university as we know it, in its content and its aim, is the product of the Enlightenment” (Bloom, n. d., p. 256). It follows, Nelson (2010) asserts, that academic freedom involves Enlightenment commitments to the quest of knowledge and their adaptation to different social and political realities (p. 1).

It is not uncommon, however, to experience that the practice of academic freedom to be constantly perverted and handicapped by a number of intricately interrelated factors that had created a formidable challenge in ensuring the very reason (or commonly dubbed as ideals) that universities are founded. These challenges include, among others, the negative influence of globalization, neoliberalism and its advocacy of free competition and free trade, the philosophy of instrumentalism, an erroneous political interference by governments, the gradual erosion of an emphasis for liberal education by focusing, instead, on narrow vocationalism, and the emphasis on commoditization of knowledge of the current computer age. All these existential problems are intricately interrelated in that the activities of one necessarily trigger (or exacerbate), in one way or another, the effects of the other. This entails that the issue of academic freedom is inevitably and intricately linked with the administrative issues, legal issues, and economic issues, beyond the philosophical ones.

This paper mainly focuses on catering a clear exposition of how academic freedom is perceived and used vis-a-vis the ideals of university from a variety of perspectives or parameters, and, then to implement these perspectives to critically evaluate and analyze the Ethiopian context, specifically the post 1991 AAU. In the Ethiopian context, the aforementioned intricately

linked challenges are deeply entrenched, when, in fact, one of these challenges – governmental interference in the internal affairs of university activities- took the lion’s share since it has been widely argued that “in Ethiopia, as in many other countries, governmental power has been used to turn the educational institutions into a system that largely serves the interests of state power-holders” (Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2003, p. 5).

In Ethiopian universities, these days, academic freedom has been perverted and constantly challenged by policy makers and political leaders with an intention of interpreting and using academic freedom for a narrow and sole utilitarian purpose, for gratifying their political whim, which is antithetical to and incompatible with the ideal of the university education. The political culture, therefore, which is characterized by ‘command and control’, is the predominant challenge facing higher education institutions in particular and the Ethiopian government in general. Such a political culture negates the autonomy of universities there by hindering the free exercise of academic activities by universities in general and faculties in particular.

Unlike the popular ideals of universities- the quest for truth irrespective of where it leads – the main mission of Ethiopian universities specifically the current AAU, albeit not explicit, is “nationalization”³ (service to the government of Ethiopia). At this point, it is worth mentioning the questions raised by Girma Amare, as it is quoted by Setargew (2003), which has clearly

³ In this context, I mean ‘nationalization’ to refer simply how the Ethiopian government used universities for a mere instrumentalist purpose: preserving state power by circumventing the traditional roles of universities (teaching, research and community service) into what the government deem important. Nationalization, in this context, does not mean changing privately owned universities into the public for Ethiopian universities are always national universities. Thus, ‘nationalization’ simply refers giving service to the government of one’s nation state –the Ethiopian state in this case. Such a university mission was first applied during early modern eras in Western European universities such as England, Spain, and France – they retained direct government supervision of their universities. See John C. Scott’s article entitled *The Mission of the University: Medieval to Postmodern Transformations* (2006).

uncovered the deleterious ramification of limiting the goals of universities to a narrow utilitarian purpose of ‘service’ giving:

Is our university’s academic image comparable to that of the established universities? *Is our haste to meet the nation’s manpower needs reducing our university to what Flexner called “a service station” and as a result jeopardizing the standards of excellence which a university, as the highest institution of learning, should maintain?* (p. 44; emphasis added).

My argument is that unlike the conspicuous rhetoric of the current government which repeatedly claims that the missions of university education is to produce knowledgeable, competent, and skilled graduates who are energetic and capable of contributing for the progress of their country, the actual practice is that graduates are only expected to be ideologically submissive and conformists irrespective of the knowledge and the skill they are expected to have. To put the matter more clearly, university graduates in Ethiopia are expected to be in accord with the pre-established implicit ‘standard’, which is anchored in the ideology of Revolutionary Democracy, readiness to accept whatever the government says, that has been propagated at the expense of liberal education thereby negating critical thinking and independent judgment thereof.

To achieve this goal, the government has designed a ‘standard of educational programs’ with the implication that these standards are the only frameworks for the university there by stifling the minds of the young generation. In order to elaborate this, let me borrow Lyotard’s understanding of ‘ideal or speculative knowledge’ (or ‘positivist knowledge’) unlike the ‘critical and reflective’ one. Here, I primarily prefer the analysis of knowledge, by borrowing Lyotard’s idea as an epistemological weapon, in the application of controlling and silencing society in general and stifling academic freedom in particular for, as it is cited by Hufford (2008):

Epistemology is political . . . The conditions for the production of epistemologies are political in the sense that these conditions reflect social hierarchies of power and privilege to determine who can participate in epistemological discussions and

whose views or epistemology have the potential to gain influence . . . It could be argued that epistemologies have political effects insofar as they are discursive interventions in specific discursive and political spaces” (p. 84; emphasis added).

Accordingly, for Lyotard, the ‘ideal or speculative knowledge’, unlike the ‘critical and reflective’ one, is mainly used to control and silence citizens in a way by undermining other alternatives but the pre-established ones. Such type of knowledge contains a false dichotomy in the sense that it presents only two options: the one favored and the other not favored. The idea is that one should either accept or follow the first path and be part of the benefit thereof or negate this path and face dire consequences. The purpose is straightforward in that positivist establishes conformity, unanimity and collective thinking by relegating other alternative ways of approaching phenomenon and discarding dissenting views. Such an argument regarding ‘positivist knowledge’ is succinctly noted by Bevel (2008), by echoing Lyotard as:

This type of knowledge inducts people into a system that directly links man to technology and materials. *The government uses positivist knowledge to capture and control its citizenry in the name of progress, and to create standards in education programs. In this process, the ideal narrative of knowledge, which has many possibilities, is changed into a new type of narrative with only two possibilities: either yes or no, played in a denotative language game* (p. 11; emphasis added).

The point is that in a situation when there are “only two options”, when, in fact, there are many others, one cannot think freely and act differently. This, in turn, is against the principles of academic freedom that makes the diversification and proliferation of knowledge and truth difficult. Yet, the ideal narrative, in the words of Jiddu Krishnamurti, is that “discontent is the way of inquiry . . . Discontent is a movement to go beyond the limitations of what is” (quoted in Hufford, 2008, p. 86); and also “knowledge is without limit, constructed in the individual by the individual and simultaneously connected to all other things in the universe. True knowledge and learning cannot be standardized or controlled. Rather, knowledge opens many doors with endless possibilities” (Bevel, 2008, p. 11).

Hufford (2008), speaking from the U.S. perspective, presents the callous ramification of a tight griping of a standardized ‘positivist knowledge’ by the government:

When we behaviorally condition someone to be a standardized cog in an instrumentally-driven educational machine, we *stifle curiosity, imagination, and risk taking*. We fail to challenge that person to ask why? And to demand thoughtful answers. We fail to inspire him/her to search for in depth answers to the educationally and existentially vital questions “who am I?” ... And, in this failure, we also fail to provide the kind of inspiration that leads to the possibility of inner-directed, continual becoming (p. 87; emphasis added).

This is the extreme situation of the effects of ‘standardization’ which transfers a clear message, for our universities, that “do our bidding, reach our standards, meet our goals or cease to exist” (Bevel, 2008, p. 12) – a clear violation of institutional autonomy – one of the most fundamental indicators of academic freedom.

Moreover, “public higher education institutions in Ethiopia are solely dependent on the government budget” (Teshome, 2003, p. 11). This entails that in a situation when the government is the sole financier of universities and in a situation when there is a pre-established ‘standard’ for ‘guiding’ the activities of universities, exercising academic freedom and university autonomy is highly questionable. Thus, it is inevitable for the government to be interested in introducing educational policies and practices and using universities for a narrow utilitarian purpose - preserving state power at the expense of the golden roles that academic freedom can play. As a result, in Ethiopian public universities, academic freedom has often become “one of the first casualties of government repression” (HRW, 2003, p. 49).

The quest for academic freedom, therefore, becomes legitimate in a situation when “being educated can be a risky business in Ethiopia” (HRW, 2003, p. 4). and also when “students and teachers, often among the most politically active elements of society, are frequent victims of human rights violations including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, and denial of freedom of association and expression” (ibid). This entrenched problem of Ethiopian Universities in general

and the post 1991 AAU in particular, pertinent to academic freedom, is precisely stated by interviewing Fasil Eshetu, a former teacher, as

Teachers are expected to applaud . . . everything the EPRDF says in meetings, follow the EPRDF line, or else they will be blacklisted”; and “to be blacklisted includes not getting promoted, not getting a salary increase, being transferred to remote areas, being transferred away from your family, having your salary docked, losing your housing, getting fired, and even being excluded from social events like weddings” (quoted in HRW, 2003, P. 34; emphasis added).

This argument precisely shows that those who are not willing to abide by and conform to the government’s ‘standard’ (the function of Lyotord’s notion of ‘positivist knowledge’) become victims of different types.

Thus, this paper is concerned with one of the most sensitive and debatable issues for contemporary academicians and scholars of philosophy of education- the issue of academic freedom- in relation to the ideals of universities. The aims of this paper is to unearth how the commitment to the ideals of universities in general and broad liberal education in particular can play a paramount significance in defending and paving the way for the proper exercise and realization of academic freedom. Also, the paper aims at uncovering the main shackles that challenge, pervert, and hinder the true essence and proper exercise of academic freedom in our contemporary universities specifically in Ethiopian universities. The paper has a task to critically investigate how the true essence of academic freedom can be reclaimed- an urgent task in the quest for academic freedom. Undertaking this task, in one way or another, involves highlighting the theoretical, philosophical, and historical analysis of the true rationale (or philosophy) of university education, i.e., the ideals of university; and, this in turn, enables us to overview how the notion of academic freedom has been understood and interpreted, even protected. Accordingly, in this paper, the proper nexus between (or among) the main challenges facing academic freedom and how academic freedom can be reclaimed is clearly navigated.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this paper is a critical reaction against the formidable challenges facing the road to the realization of academic freedom (such as the negative influence of globalization, neoliberalism and its advocacy of free competition and free trade, the philosophy of instrumentalism, an erroneous political interference by governments, a gradual erosion of an emphasis for liberal education by focusing, instead, on narrow vocationalism, and the emphasis on commoditization of knowledge of the current computer age) by giving a special emphasis and priority on the training of liberal education which enables universities to exercise and fulfill the ideals they already established since this type of training is mainly focused on the cultivation of full humanity. This is to say, the quest for academic freedom in our universities, by overcoming the main problems (or challenges) facing it, is a *sine quo non* for the missions of universities to be fulfilled. This involves a clear understanding of the existential problems and, then, to be engaged critically against these problems.

Regarding the deleterious effects of globalization, its process is “changing the ways in which knowledge is produced, applied and disseminated” (Aarts & Greijn, 2010). This can be facilitated by the use of modern technology (such as the computer) in which this has turned the roles of teachers and other stakeholders as primary stakeholders in producing and distributing knowledge. This entails, according to the South African National Commission for Higher Education (1996), that “higher education institutions will no longer have a monopoly on the transmission of knowledge” rather it has developed an image that higher education institutions as “being only one of many organizations competing for the education/training market” (quoted in Chachage, 2006, p. 54). In such a scenario, Chachage went on to argue, “if higher education institutions are not to be marginalized, they are going to have to develop partnerships with both

private and public-sector organizations” (ibid). The immediate result of universities partnership with corporations is the loss of the ideals of the former, the intrinsic pursuit of truth and knowledge, for the purpose of the later, profit maximization.

Regarding knowledge, one can at least confidently speak that the main roles of universities is to be a repository of knowledge production and transmission– they are places where knowledge and truth is pursued for its own sake. However, these days, “the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the post-industrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age” (Lyotard, 1984, p. 3). Accordingly, Lyotard argues, the modern and computerized society has developed a new view of ‘knowledge as a commodity’ – “knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange. *Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself, it loses its “use-value” ...*” (quoted in Chachage, 2006, p. 52; emphasis added).

In other words, currently, we are experiencing a new era - a ‘knowledge economy’ - which focuses on knowledge as “key engine of economic growth” (Oyewole, 2010, p. 20) and since universities are the main centers of specialized knowledge, they should therefore play a lion’s share. Such a *commercialization* and *commoditization* of knowledge, therefore, is inevitably linked with narrow utilitarianism and the turning of the university *telos* in to a business center. Moreover, we started to view progress, in the words of Eric Schlosser, as “the ruthless efficiency of the market;’ a market which has engaged in economic Darwinism against homegrown businesses” (quoted in Pendley, 2008, p. 133). The logical outcome, for Pendley, is that “in a progress-as-production society, a hard and unsentimental worldview exerts unbounded sway over business practices, it severs individuals from the values of their communities, and it fractures the work environment through manic specialization” (ibid).

We can also see the present challenges of capitalism, the results of a neoliberal philosophy, by echoing the words of Kenaw (2003), in relation with our universities:

Since it is the very workings of the capitalist system that pushes the universities to succumb to consumerism, it has been assumed, but wrongly, that freedom is a phenomenon that goes hand in hand with free market. When this is applied to the education sector, there came a tendency which defined education as something tradeable. As a result, what matters most is *the tradeability and competitiveness of education* (p. 50).

In the current modern world, “more and more, economic rationales and benefits are driving a large part of the international or cross border supply of education... the business or commercial side of education is growing” (Knight, 2002, p. 2). In other words, an emphasis towards the market has engulfed virtually every aspects of public higher education – education has become instrumental for maximizing revenue. It implies that education which is primarily targeted for the full development of humanity that can be realized when there is “a freedom to investigate the “truth”, no matter where it may take an individual”, which is by itself “an essential component of academic life” (Tierney & Lechuga, 2005), has started to be used as a means that gives precedence for “the sanctity of profit” over “the sanctity of human life” (Pendley, 2008, p. 133) – a clear departure from the ideals of university. The current emphasis for market at the expense of the development of full humanity is also expressed by Levine (2006) as:

It does appear that academic sentiment has lost touch with a pervasive and persuasive sense of broader purpose. Narrow vocationalism, mindless consumerism, grade inflation, and curricular fragmentation have led to demoralized campus milieus (p. 2).

He went on further that “modern society has come to rely on occupations requiring a range of specialized skills, and the modern university has come increasingly to serve as a training ground for such skills” (ibid). Yet, “*job markets and markets in general are a constraint on creativity, scientific inquiry, fidelity to the pursuit of truth and intellectual freedom in general*”

(Chachage, 2006, p. 63; emphasis added). The pursuit of employment, the most important aspect of student consumerism, at the expense of intellectual excellence, has become the primary focus of universities so that narrow vocationalism has been given priority; and “this was an expression in a subtle way of the view that *universities should be turned into vocational schools in all but name!*” (Chachage, 2006, p. 56; emphasis added).

Regarding the problem of political or governmental interference, it is worth mentioning William Bostock (2002) who argued, by quoting Aristotle’s understanding of the nature of man, that “humans are political animals”; and “in a more recent discussion”, Bostock goes on, “politics was defined as “who gets what, when, how,” and if we apply this proposition to higher education, it is clear that higher education is highly political” (p. 19). This entails that the day-to-day activities of universities are not absolutely free from the influence of government authorities for “notables, those sitting in the seats of educational and political power, are not immune from inserting hidden agendas into educational policies and procedures” (Hufford, 2008, p. 85). However, the ideal of university prescribes that the “role of universities has always been to challenge the status quo”; and “the nature of their work is to inquire, to question, and to seek better understanding. In the process, they may also annoy or provoke, but this has always been a recognized risk for any nation that chooses to establish its own university” (WB, 1997, p. 14).

This paper mainly focuses on catering a clear exposition of how academic freedom is perceived and used vis-a-vis the ideals of university from a variety of perspectives or parameters, and, then to implement these perspectives to critically evaluate and analyze the Ethiopian context, specifically the post 1991 AAU. In the Ethiopian context, the aforementioned intricately linked challenges are deeply entrenched, when, in fact, one of these challenges – governmental interference in the internal affairs of university activities- took the lion’s share since it has been

widely argued that “in Ethiopia, as in many other countries, governmental power has been used to turn the educational institutions into a system that largely serves the interests of state power-holders” (HRW, 2003, p. 5).

In AAU, these days, academic freedom has been perverted and constantly challenged by policy makers and political leaders with an intention of interpreting and using academic freedom for a narrow, and sole utilitarian purpose, for gratifying their political whim, which is antithetical to and incompatible with the ideal of the university education. The quest for academic freedom, therefore, becomes legitimate in a situation when “being educated can be a risky business in Ethiopia” (HRW, 2003, p. 4); and also when “students and teachers, often among the most politically active elements of society, are frequent victims of human rights violations including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, and denial of freedom of association and expression” (ibid).

The major skepticism of this study, therefore, is best encapsulated by being sympathetic with William Saint’s question, based on the reports of HRW (2003), that he raised after a closer and critical examination of the overarching problems of academic freedom characterizing the post 1991 AAU:

Will new courses in civics prepare students for democratic practice when student government is suspended, when the student newspaper is banned, when security forces are stationed on campus, when student admissions and placement are directed by the Ministry of Education, when union organizing among staff is prohibited and when freedom of the press is circumscribed?(quoted in Saint, 2004, p. 109).

Also, Saint went on and interrogates:

Will effective institutional autonomy be possible in an environment where the government has sought to inject political criteria into the academic staff evaluation process and directly appointed a new president, academic vice president and administrative vice president for Addis Ababa University when the previous incumbents resigned in protest over this violation of academic freedom? (ibid; emphasis added).

The main purpose of this study, therefore, is to address these and other related problems which pervert and obscure the roads in the quest for academic freedom by employing a critical approach to these problems. This task, the quest for academic freedom, becomes legitimate since realizing the mission of universities is hardly possible without guaranteeing academic freedom which is the very lifeblood of institutions of higher education.

1.3 Methodology of the Study

The main methodological instrument that is used in this study is a discursive interpretation of significant episodes and instruments or parameters. The major episodes include political and ideological changes and experiences and their impact on academic freedom. The main instruments that can be used in order to analyze the extent and practice of academic freedom in AAU under the three successive regimes in general and under the EPRDF government in particular are institutional autonomy (to what extent AAU is acting and undertaking its academic activities free from governmental or any other outside influence); freedom of expression and freedom of thought (to what extent the academic community, especially teachers and students, are free to hold and express their opinions in their day-to-day activities of teaching and research); freedom of association (to what extent students and teachers are free to organize or form a union of their own choice and defend their interest); to what extent teachers are tenure secured; and interrogating to what extent the practice of academic freedom in AAU is compatible with its definition, especially with one of the most comprehensive definition given by the 1997 United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Recommendation. In order to undertake and substantiate this task, the different literatures largely drawn from library texts, journal articles, internet and other media sources are used. Also, the method includes personal communication, via interview, with a very few selected senior

professors who have been working in AAU. Because of ethical reasons, the name of interviewees is supplanted by pseudo names.

1.4 Organization of the Study

This study is organized in to five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the study. Chapter two focuses on a vivid exposition of the philosophical roots and historical development of the notion of academic freedom and the idea of university. Chapter three deals with giving a bird's eye view of the major issues which are frequently mentioned vis-à-vis academic freedom, such as its foundation, contexts, purpose, and the corresponding responsibility attached to it. Chapter four deals with a general overview of the nature of academic freedom in AAU. This chapter intends, with keen interest, to unearth the current extent of academic freedom in AAU by focusing mainly on the major issues or indicators that are frequently used in connexion with academic freedom that can assist in measuring (or evaluating) academic freedom and the main formidable challenges facing it. Chapter five provides the conclusion of the paper. Thus, under this chapter, the last four chapters are revisited and concluded.

CHAPTER TWO

The History and Development of Academic Freedom and the Idea of University: A Theoretical Overview

2.1 The History of Academic Freedom

2.1.1 Academic Freedom in the Ancient Greece

Historically, we are told, the struggle for preserving the traditional and popular ideal of university education in general and academic freedom in particular goes as far back as the history of Ancient Greece, specifically it is closely connected with the history and teachings of ancient Greek philosophers such as Socrates and his disciple Plato. To put it differently, the basic philosophy behind academic freedom, which is mainly rooted in the idea of intellectual freedom, was originated with the philosophical teachings of ancient Athens in the fourth century B.C. This teaching, which was primarily advocated by Socrates, is “devoted to *pursuing the truth without regard for conformity and social pressure*”; and as a result of his teaching, Socrates “chose to die by taking hemlock rather than cease “corrupting” youth by teaching philosophic thought” (Downs, 2009, p. 6, emphasis added).

The Academy of ancient Athens, including the main actors of the era (such as Socrates) were primarily aimed at and dedicated to the intrinsic pursuit of truth for, according to Russel Kirk, they “were not primarily engaged in teaching in service the community but were rather engaged in it *solely for its own sake, for their own personal pleasure and the pursuit of truth*” (quoted in Masingi, n. d., p. 9; emphasis added). This entails that the popular ideal of university education, *the intrinsic quest for truth*, is not a new and modern phenomenon for this

ideal had also been the primary focus of the teachings of members of the ancient Athenian Academy. To be precise, though the teachers of members of the Athenian Academy are not familiar with the modern notion of university and its ideals, they were able to provoke, interrogate, debate regarding the true rationales/or ideals of teaching (or on what ought to the teaching at the Academy be); and then be committed to defend this rationale, no matter how expensive it is - committed to pay any cost- to the extent of sacrificing one's life. Obviously, the essence of the modern university is the disinterested quest for truth and knowledge and this quest was part and parcel of the teachings of Socrates and his disciples.

According to Botsford (1998), the civilization of Ancient Greece was the pioneer in developing the concept of freedom (p. 5) and this freedom has played a significant role in pursuing the truth free from any kind of conformity and social pressure. This truth is succinctly manifested in Antony Andrews' conclusion which is drawn from his study of ancient Greek society, as it is quoted by Botsford:

If a Greek were asked what distinguished his own nation from the rest, one likely reply would be that Greeks were free and barbarians were slaves. ... Looking back at this civilization from our distance, *one of its most remarkable features is the Greek capacity for free, general speculation, uninhibited by myth or authority. ... The openness of mind and readiness to discuss ... must take pride of place among the claims which the Greeks have on our attention, along with the clear vision of their artists and the vigorous beauty of their poetry and the best of their prose. ...* (ibid; emphasis added).

In other words, Botsford added, "in ancient Greece, what we would today call universities developed as educational free markets" (ibid) for teachers were allowed to question, scrutinize and interrogate the status quo, among other things, "Socrates was permitted to engage in his criticism of the state and its prominent citizens for a long time" though, Noddings (1998) upholds, "in a time of great political unrest, he was charged with not believing in the state's gods and with corrupting the youth of Athens" (p. 12).

All told, one can, therefore, conclude that the Athenian Academy – with its relative freedom to pursue the truth - is the best and primordial model for different scholars and philosophers of education who are primarily preoccupied in studying the true ideals of university education- the unrestricted freedom to pursue truth and knowledge for its own sake. The unrestricted freedom to pursue the truth, in turn, is the underlying principle and an integral part of intellectual freedom - part and parcel of academic freedom and is the essence of today's modern universities.

2.1.2 Academic Freedom in the Medieval European Universities

The notion of university in the history of Europe, however, originated in the middle ages. The *universitas* “was a corporation or guild of masters (professors) and scholars (students)” (Scott, 2006, p. 6). These medieval universities which are thought to be, in the words of Charles Homer Haskins, “the school of the modern spirit” (quoted in Scott, 2006, p. 9), and also are thought to be an “entirely voluntary and spontaneous gatherings of scholars at centers of learning under the auspices of the Church” (Botsford, 1998, p. 8), first arose in Italy (Bologna) and France (Paris)⁴. These early universities, Altbach (2001) upholds, precede not only universities in North America and Europe but also in Asia including Africa (p. 13). According to Masingi, there were two traditions of university formation as it is typified by the oldest universities of Paris and Bologna. Accordingly, in the words of Richard Hofstadter, “the universities emerging

⁴ There is, however, a claim that the first university with a precise founding date was the Alazhar University of Cairo which was established in 970 A.D., and it was hereafter that universities such as Bologna, Paris, Oxford and Cambridge were founded in the 1000s. See William Bostock's article entitled *To the limits of acceptability: political control of higher education* (2002).

from the Bologna tradition were established by students who employed their teachers. On the other hand, the universities emerging from the Paris tradition were established by teachers who were mostly clerics” (quoted in Masingi, n. d., p. 10).

The medieval universities were perceived as a ‘peculiar kind of guild’ in the sense that “a community of *magistres* and *scholares* -- i.e. masters and students-- involved in the elaboration and transmission of a peculiar good: *knowledge*” (Geuna, 1996, p. 18). They are institutions which were primarily preoccupied with the training of the educational, ecclesiastical, governmental and professional career (Geuna, 1996, p. 18-19). In other words, medieval universities which are originally established as religious institutions were used in order to train men for the legal (like lawyers), medical (such as physicians), and religious (such as priests) professions. Although medieval universities were primarily engaged in intellectual and religious sphere, they, according to Harold Perkin, were sometimes also involved in the political affairs, among others, “the University of Paris helped to settle a *schism* in the Catholic Church in 1409” (quoted in Altbach, 2008, p. 8).

Medieval universities, which were mainly teaching institutions where Scholastic philosophy as a method was considered to be the ‘state-of the-art’, uses “Aristotelian logic (philosophy) and dialectic (debate) to Christian doctrine” (Scott, 2006, p. 8-9). Accordingly, the “undergraduate students were taught to systematically organize and harmonize the established tradition of biblical truth through Scholastic method” (Scott, 2006, p. 9). Scholasticism, which was mainly advocated by St. Thomas Aquinas, is aimed at reconciling Christian religion with reason “provided not only a state-of-the-art teaching method but also a rational method of inquiry or research into the whole range of knowledge, including the flood of new information from the Islamic world” (ibid). Undergraduates also study the Seven Liberal Arts which are

commonly called the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy) (ibid).

Medieval universities, we are told, are perceived to be repositories where a relatively better circumstance for exercising academic freedom was apparent. The presence of, at least, a relatively better, if not an absolute, situation to exercise academic freedom in the medieval universities, by using a scholastic method, is best summarized by Botsford (1998), by adopting the words of Wieruszowski, as:

It had become the ambition of a scholar to test the truth of *a metaphysical proposition or a theological doctrine by putting reason to work*, and by using the dialectical method of syllogism for the analysis of the difficulties inherent in a problem. It is because of the masterly application of this method that Abélard's classrooms were overflowing with enthusiastic students, and that, even today, he is still hailed as the "*herald of free thought.*" Instead of taking recourse to authorities, he approached each problem by inquiring into the contradictions it might contain. Thus *he encouraged free inquiry and self-reliance among his students* (p. 7; emphasis added).

It is widely argued that "the oldest form of academic freedom is institutional academic freedom, which has its roots in the autonomy of the medieval European university" and this freedom is the product of "the conflict between church and state" to assume the jurisdiction over the newly established medieval institutions (or universities) which "often created niches of institutional independence for medieval universities, which were commonly self-governing guilds of masters with sufficient autonomy to appoint professors, teach, and grant degrees" (Keith, 1997, p. 3).

Medieval universities, posits Geuna (1996), were "a moral and legal entity enjoying a degree of independence from external powers --i.e. Pope, Emperor, Princes, towns' rulers, etc. -- and able of continuity through time" (p. 18). According to Bostock (2002), they [medieval universities] "were allowed freedom to govern themselves providing they did not teach atheism or heresy and the European ones were granted the right to elect their own rectors and raise their

own finances” (p. 20). For instance, “in the Northern European universities”, Scott (2006) argues, faculties of arts and the higher disciplines were allowed considerable freedom, even when they challenged the church or state in their teaching and scholarship” (p. 8).

However, medieval scholars who were also members of the church “did not think they had the right to teach the truth as they saw it, since the truth was already revealed by faith and the church” (Keith, 1997, p. 3). For instance, “humanistic thought, with the revival of classical literature and philosophy --e.g. Cicero and Plato-- was considered dangerous for religion, thus was opposed by religious establishment” since “the university aligned itself to the church and tended to resist⁵ the new learning” and it was “only in the course of the sixteenth century did Humanism become accepted within the universities” (Geuna, 1996, p. 22-23).

Moreover, since “most medieval universities were legally chartered by the Roman church, and many also received royal charters”, and since “these semi-autonomous institutions were subject to the authority of popes, monarchs, local bishops, dukes, or municipalities, depending upon the country and century” (Scott, 2006, p. 7), medieval universities are not absolutely free from outside pressure. Rather, one can, at least, conclude that these universities, according to Botsford (1998), were “*centers of comparative intellectual freedom* at a time centuries before the concept [academic freedom] had become generally accepted” (p. 7, emphasis added). Generally speaking, medieval universities were primarily preoccupied with

⁵ Resistance, in this context, does not entail that all medieval universities had resisted everything which is new, rather it is to mean that although most medieval universities were resistant to new ideas, there are some other universities where new ideas develop faster; See Aldo Geuna’s article entitled *European Universities: An Interpretive History*(1996).

the freedom to pursue the truth since the main philosophical end of these universities, states Chaplin (1977), was “the pursuit of [divine] truth and learning” (quoted in Scott, 2006, p. 6-7).

In conclusion, the state of academic freedom in the medieval European universities, therefore, is expressed as it was relatively suitable though this freedom is by far much narrower and it is not comparable to countries with a modern democracy.

2.1.3 Academic Freedom and the Germanic Experience

According to Genua (1996), the 17th and 18th century universities did not play a significant role in the advancement of knowledge and they were not responsive to the new idea of the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment since they retained ‘narrow and antiquated curriculum and methodologies’- hence ‘they resisted change’ (p. 24). It was during the 19th century that universities resurge and develop afresh by incorporating some of the features of medieval universities, as it is clearly noted by Genua:

In the early nineteenth century, due to the pressing needs of society, new universities were founded and the old ones underwent a process of complete renewal. In particular, in Germany, England and France new models of teaching and research institutions were developed (p. 27).

It was during this time, Paletschek (2001) asserts, that idealist philosophers such as Wilhelm von Humboldt together with Johann Fichte and Friedrich Schleiermacher facilitated university reform to establish “the modern German university with the new humanistic university idea which was developed in 1810 with the name of University of Berlin (p. 37). This reform, Fallon argues, was motivated because of two main reasons:

First, Prussian intellectuals and aristocrats of the Enlightenment put forth the idea of a *vibrant, new university in reaction to the perceived academic stagnation* at existing German universities. The other reason was *Napoleon’s defeat of the Prussian army* and his subsequent closure of the Universities of Jena and Halle (quoted in Scott, 2006, p. 20).

This is a truism in the sense that in a situation when “the German state saw the university not only as the source of knowledge and then of future welfare, but also as the way to strengthen the national and cultural identity” (Geuna, 1996, p. 31) for there was a conviction that “by building a strong military as well as a university-trained civil service, Prussia would lead the unification of Germany as a nation-state during the later 1800s” (Scott, 2006, p.20). Moreover, there was a strong conviction that, according to Dewey (2004), “the German states felt that systematic attention to education was the best means of recovering and maintaining their political integrity and power” (p. 100-101).

Accordingly, academic freedom together with other two principles that emanated from Humboldt’s doctrine at the University of Berlin, which later became the guiding principles for most of the German speaking universities and the rest of the continents, according to Fallon, is summed up:

First, the principle of the unity of the research and teaching missions confirmed the importance of original scholarship. Second, the principle of academic freedom developed. Consisting of *Lernfreiheit* (the concept of “freedom to learn”), which allowed students to pursue any course of study, and *Lehrfreiheit* (the concept of “freedom to teach”), which allowed professors free inquiry regarding their lines of research and teaching, this principle was protected by the state. Third, the principle of the centrality of the arts and sciences ... (ibid; emphasis added).

This passage vividly unearths the modern notion of academic freedom that has begun for the first time in the 19th century by focusing mainly on the unity of teaching and scholarship (or research). The rationale behind this unity, according to Habermas & Blazek (1987), is that:

Teaching and learning would only be conducted in a manner necessary for the innovative process of scientific progress. Science should be able to reproduce itself in the sense that the professors would train their own successors. The future researcher is the sole goal for which the University of researching scholars assumes the task of training (P. 11).

For Humboldt, “knowledge should be cultivated for its own sake and not its uses” (quoted in Marginson, 2008, p. 3), and this golden university ideal is ensured only when

“freedom of teaching and research”, which is regarded as the “German university's special feature and its recipe for success” (Paletschek, 2001, p. 38), is properly maintained. This is due to an implicit rationale that universities “conceive of science and scholarship as dealing with ultimately inexhaustible tasks: this means they are engaged in an unceasing process of inquiry” (quoted in Marginson, 2008, p. 3). We can thus assert that Humboldt is “especially interested in the conditions necessary for science and scholarship” which are themselves based on “independent thought and stimulation” (ibid). For Humboldt, “the dominant principles of universities” thus “must be freedom and the absence of distraction” (ibid).

The type of freedom that the 19th century Germans are concerned with, however, is limited to giving privileges only to the students and academics within the university context, hence it does not protect both the academics and students from pressures coming from outside the university - during extramural speech and action. Generally speaking, it is widely argued that

German education was a primary concern of the state and thus universities were state institutions. The academic at a German university was therefore a public servant whose terms and conditions of service were however more than those of the ordinary public servant in that they were akin to those of a judge in a democratic state. *Thus in as much as the judge was subject only to the law so was the academic subject only to the truth* (Masingi, n. d., p. 12; emphasis added).

Despite the presence of a considerable emphasis which was given for academic freedom during teaching and scholarship, one cannot underestimate and deny the presence of circumstances when violations of the rights to academic freedom have been widely prevailed for it has been widely argued that “although German professors were effectively state employees” and “German universities were essentially self-governing” (Nelson, 2010, p. 1), “it would be an error to assume that nineteenth-century German faculty members had full academic freedom as we understand it today” (ibid).

For instance, when the National Socialist and totalitarian regime under the Nazi came to power in 1933, Ashe argues “the self-administration of the university was replaced by the *Fiihrerprinzip* (the leadership principle). Jewish staff members and those who were members of left-wing parties were dismissed” (quoted in Paletschek, 2001, p. 44). Due to this measure, “in total about 1,100 to 1,500 persons, that is approximately 15 per cent of the professors and lecturers at German universities were affected by these measures” (ibid). Moreover, for Adam, the regime has “intervened in cases of new appointments to professorships and sought to appoint professors who were convinced National Socialists” (quoted in Paletschek, 2001, p. 44-45). The National Socialists relegated university professors who are primarily concerned with the training of the humanistic university ideals by claiming that “they were remote from real life and were the representatives of a despised liberal science” (ibid).

Lastly, one can confidently claim that despite the considerable role that the 19th century German universities played for the whole world by introducing the modern concept of academic freedom, as it is rooted in the concept of *Lernfreiheit* and *Lehrfreiheit*, one cannot underestimate the presence of circumstances when violations of this freedom has prevailed. This scenario becomes inevitable in a situation when German universities are primarily motivated with a mission of ‘nationalization,’ giving service to the government of the nation state, which inevitably compromises the popular mission of university – the disinterested quest for truth and knowledge.

Having thus clearly described the distinct features that make up the notion of academic freedom in Germany, I shall now turn in to looking at its development from the context of the US.

2.1.4 Academic Freedom in the United States

Since it is widely argued that the modern notion of academic freedom which has been introduced in the late 19th century and, afterwards, spread to America only in the early 20th Century, it is with in this framework that the history of academic freedom in the United States is to be dealt with. For Altbach (2001), “the early American colleges” which includes Harvard, Yale, Chicago, Georgetown, and others, “were religiously oriented for the most part and aimed at training a small elite” (p. 13). These colleges are not only religiously affiliated, but they are also private institutions which are influenced by the American tradition of private initiative. “All university systems, Altbach opines, are a combination of national and international traditions” (ibid). This entails that “the American system”, he continues, “is the creation of a number of foreign influences that melded together in the American context over a period of time” (Altbach, 2001, p. 15). For instance, “the earliest models, such as Harvard and Yale, were English and patterned after Oxford and Cambridge as these universities were when they were concerned with the education of Protestant clergymen” (Altbach, 2001, p. 13).

When we come to the history and development of academic freedom, it is argued that there was not much concern until the American war of independence. The reason, according to Russel Kirk, is that

Before the war, most institutions, were linked to and had been established by particular church organizations. Thus most teachers seeking to teach at such institutions were attracted to a particular institution and joined it primarily because they shared in the faith espoused by that institution. This left *little room for breaches upon the freedom of the teacher*. This thus explains the dearth of cases and concern over the issue of academic freedom before the war (quoted in Misingi, n. d., p. 14)

There, according to Altbach (2001), are three major factors influencing and shaping the contemporary American university that is thought to manifest a remarkable adaptability. These are the English liberal arts tradition, the German research concept together with the notion of

academic freedom, and the idea of service to the state (p. 15). Keith (1997), by adopting the words of Hofstadter & Metzger, noted that more than 9,000 Americans studied at German universities during the 19th century (p. 6); and, according to Geiger, these “Americans returned from their academic “Mecca” in Germany ... fired with enthusiasm for the academic traditions and ideas they experienced during their formative student days” (quoted in Altbach, 2001, p. 14-15). Among other things, “they brought back to America the idea that academic freedom was essential to the definition of a university. American colleges had sought to pass on accepted truths; now, *universities were needed to discover new truths*” (Keith, 1997, p. 6; emphasis added). This entails that, in the United States, the idea of academic freedom together with the concept of research as an integral part of a university education, are borrowed from the German experience.

The early republican colleges, Scott (2006) notes, were known in offering “a liberal arts curriculum in the European tradition” (p. 16) believing that a liberal education enlists a well-rounded training for the individual learner in a democracy as well as a “primary means of fulfilling the democratization goal for individuals” (ibid) albeit this mission was later [19th century] changed in to giving public service (“making available to the citizenry *useful knowledge* and academic research” (Scott, 2006, p. 23); emphasis added)) by specializing certain skills—technical education in the agricultural and mechanical science- as it was typified by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890.

In fact, according to Scott, democratization, service to the individual of the nation-state, was first promoted as a mission in the formative U.S. colleges (1800s), such as Jefferson’s University of Virginia. Such a mission, Scott added, “was later to be embodied in the formal public service mission of the 20th and 21st centuries” (Scott, 2006, p.15). The mission of direct

service to the larger society as a whole was a logical outcome of the establishment of the 19th century state universities⁶. Henceforth, motivated by the “Wisconsin Idea” (1904) – “the commitment of the University of Wisconsin to serve the entire population of that rural state” (Scott, 2006, p.25), many state universities have elevated the direct service to the society as a core mission equivalent to teaching and research.

However, to be filled with the primary task of giving service, critics argues, stands in a stark contrast to the popular ideals of university education- the quest for truth where ever it leads. This, however, does not mean that giving service to the society is not the purpose of universities; rather it is to mean that, in the words of Newman, usefulness resulted, indirectly, from an intrinsic quest for knowledge. After all, “*universities are not ivory towers*” since “they function as integral parts of society and have responsibilities for teaching, research, and service to agencies that provide their financial sustenance” (Altbach, 2001, p. 28; emphasis added). Moreover, emphasizing solely on public service, critics added, is not only contrary to the popular ideals of university, but also is a real “submission to business power or the industrial status quo” (Scott, 2006, p.24).

The US universities emphasis on service giving, at the expense of pushing the frontiers of knowledge through teaching and scholarship, further proliferated after the Second World War when “governments began to think that a massive expansion of university education and the production of huge armies of graduates was the key to national economic success” (Botsford, 1998, p. 12). After Soviet’s successful launching of Sputnik in 1957, Botsford argues, many Americans wrongly believe that this technological development resulted due to a vast expansion

⁶ It is argued that the idea of state university was developed during the early years of the US, and the person who is known in establishing the world’s first state university, the University of Virginia, was Thomas Jefferson.

of intervention by the government in the field of universities (ibid). In this regard, Botsford notes that

The American university, since Sputnik, *has been trying to catch up with the body count of Soviet graduates*. Now the Germans are *abandoning their academic traditions* and are building ‘campuses’ in order to catch up with the Americans. ... *Students see their studies as the investment with the highest monetary return, and nations see them as a key factor in development* (Botsford, 1998, p. 13; emphasis added).

Despite, we are told, the fact that America is thought to be the first democratic state of the modern world, America is not tolerant of dissent especially in the intellectual sphere. Violations of the rights to academic freedom begun from 1830s to 1880s when “there were many cases of breaches upon academic freedom in that many academics were dismissed from academic institutions for holding unpopular views on such issues as slavery, secession and Darwinism” (Misingi, n. d. p. 14). Such gross violation of the right to academic freedom has continued through the 19th and 20th centuries. For instance, during the Cold War period, many University professors were harassed and even dismissed due to their sympathy and adherence to Communism. Surprisingly enough there were professors who were dismissed due to a mere absence of an interest on the part of professors to speak up their ideological position.

A violation of the rights to academic freedom, in the state controlled universities of the US, is best exemplified when a venerated professor, Bertrand Russell, was prohibited from teaching at the City College of New York. This occurs when Bishop Manning of the Protestant Episcopal Church wrote a letter to all New York newspapers denouncing Russell forthwith after the announcement of the appointment of Russell. Against Russell’s appointment, the Bishop wrote:

What is to be said of colleges and universities which hold up before our youth as a responsible teacher of philosophy ... a man who is a recognized propagandist against both religion and morality, and who specifically defends adultery. ... Can anyone who cares for the welfare of our country be willing to see such teaching

disseminated with the countenance of our colleges and universities? (quoted in Botsford, 1998, p. 8-9).

He continued that “there are those who are so confused morally and mentally that they see nothing wrong in the appointment ... of one who in his published writings said ‘outside of human desires there is no moral standard’” (quoted in Botsford, 1998, p. 9). The only implicit reason for preventing Russell from lecturing at City College of New York is the fact that Russell is a renowned and outspoken advocate of free thought, and also wrote passages in his book by espousing sexual freedom. This story obviously uncovers the real problems of exercising academic freedom in state controlled universities specifically the United States.

It is believed that “because of concern among professors over dismissals that had taken place coupled with the belief that it would be desirable to have a national organization of college and university teachers similar to the associations of physicians and lawyers,” Fuchs (1963) argues, “the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) was formed in 1915 by a group of prominent faculty members in leading institutions. ...” (p. 438). Accordingly, in the history of the US, we are told, the first and the modern statement on academic freedom was made in 1915 which is clearly stated in the AAUP’S General Report of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure. The root of academic freedom in the context of the US, Post (2003) asserts, is based on:

The relationship between University trustees and members of the University faculties is not in any sense that of an employer and an employee. For once appointed, the scholar has professional functions to perform in which the appointing authorities have neither competency nor moral right to intervene. The responsibility of the University teacher is primarily to the public itself and to the judgment of his own profession. And ... his duty is to the wider public to which the institution itself is morally amenable (p. 2).

Post continue to argue that

The professoriate is a profession that in the conduct of its professional obligations is answerable primarily to itself. Neither the owners of proprietary universities nor the public, who owned state universities, could presume to judge the professional

work of professors. It follows popularity or unpopularity is an irrelevant and pernicious criterion for the judgment of professional work. *Academic freedom is thus a claim to professional self-regulation* (ibid; emphasis added).

Despite the fact that the US has borrowed the notion of academic freedom from the Germans they did not implement the principle as it is. Rather, it has been modified to fit the contexts of US by dropping “*lernfreiheit*, the academic freedom of students”, but preserving “*lehrfreiheit*, the academic freedom of faculty to teach and research; and added the extramural speech and action of faculty” (Keith, 1997, p. 9). Accordingly, there are three elements which are included to define academic freedom: (1) freedom in the classroom to teach one’s subject; (2) freedom to conduct research and publish the results; and (3) extramural actions and speech.

It is argued that the AAUP has played an indirect role in inculcating a culture of respecting academic freedom, and this is precisely stated, for instance, in the US Supreme Court in *Sweezy versus New Hampshire* (1957) arguing that “*to impose any strait jacket upon the intellectual leaders in our colleges and universities would imperil the future of the nation*” (Robinson & Moulton, 2002; emphasis added). All told, one can sum up the development and history of academic freedom in the United States as:

With the USSC recognizing protection of academic freedom as a human right enshrined within the first amendment of the USC, the struggle for the protection of academic freedom in the US had traversed from the adoption of the Germanic conception of academic freedom, its remodeling to fit American circumstances, the non-legal regulation of academic freedom by the AAUP and finally leading to the legal recognition of academic freedom as a human right deserving protection of the USC (Misingi, n. d., p. 18)

Having clearly explored the development of academic freedom in the United States, now, it is time to explore, with keen interest, the main focus of this paper- the development of academic freedom in Ethiopia.

2.1.5 Academic Freedom in Ethiopia

The history of higher education in Ethiopia, when we compare with the long history of universities since the medieval era, is relatively young. Saint (2004) argues that despite Ethiopia has, at least, a 1,700 years tradition of elite education which is connected to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC), secular higher education was began with the founding of the University College of Addis Ababa in 1950 (p. 84), which was later named as Haile Sellasie I University by the imperial charter in 1961, at the request of Emperor Haile Sellassie, by Dr Lucien Matte - a Canadian Jesuit. Wuhibegezer (2013), by echoing the words of Balsvik (2007) and Killion Tom (1998), argues that

In 1960s there were only four institutions of higher education in Ethiopia: Haile Sellasie I University in Addis Ababa which is founded by the imperial charter in 1961, the Agricultural College of Haromaya, Public Health College of Gondar (Balsvik, 2007) established in 1954 and the Private University of Asmara originally founded in 1958 as the Catholic College of Santa Famiglia (Killion Tom, 1998) by a Roman Catholic Religious order based in Italy (p. 45).

Accordingly, we can posit the history of higher education in Ethiopia as it has passed through three major phases since the early 1950s. The first phase characterizes the education system designed by Emperor Hile Sellasie, the second phase was when the country fell under the military where the Marxist-Leninist ideology has penetrated the educational system. The third phase is the current experience of ethno-federalist Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) where the educational system is designed and regimented in a way solely to serve the system albeit the country is experiencing a spectacular expansion of higher education in number (or quantity) by compromising its quality. The history of academic freedom in Ethiopia, thus, is analyzed with in these three typical epochs.

2.1.5.1 Academic Freedom in the Imperial Regime

The first regime to be considered vis- a-vis exploring the history of academic freedom in Ethiopia is the imperial regime when a highly centralized autocratic government with all power reside in the hands of one person, the emperor, “whose person was declared as sacred, his power inviolable and his judgment supreme as it was claimed to be guided by a divine power, according to Article four of the revised constitution of 1955” (Baye, 2008, p. 25). The emperor, however, no matter how despotic he was, is still credited not only for introducing higher education to his country by his direct personal involvement in establishing a pioneering institution – University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) in 1950, which was, later [1961], to be changed in to a university by bearing his [Haile Sellassie] own name and by allowing his own palace as its administrative center, but also for granting a relatively better autonomy.

Although the donation of his [Haile Sellassie] own palace can be taken as a drastic measure in the road to exercising academic freedom, such a measure alone does not guarantee the effective use and exercise of this freedom. Among other things, there were restrictions, (for instance, no one was allowed to interfere in areas such as politics, religion and tribe- termed as a ‘trio anathema’), which were imposed up on the academics to be observed and carefully protected. It is worth noting the argument made by one of the students, Gebeyehu Ferrisa,⁷ of the time who decried the gross violations of freedom of expression in banning student papers, one of the most fundamental manifestations of the violation of the right to academic freedom, as:

⁷ A student by the name Gebeyehu Ferrisa who was sent to Norway to study how the Norwegian students ran their affairs came back with a reach experience on how to exercise their [students] academic freedom and, then, resisted the administration’s refusal of banning student papers.

Nothing original comes through the mind of a man who is never given a chance to express himself weighs his ideas against those of others. Historians claim that 'Ethiopia slept over a thousand years forgetful of the world by whom it was forgotten' and our college, through banning the student paper is consciously or unconsciously prolonged this period of mental sleep (quoted in Baye, 2008p. 26).

This entails that pursuing the ideals of the university, the disinterested quest for truth, by freely exercising one's academic privilege, academic freedom, was limited during the imperial regime. However, this does not mean that there was no room for the academic community to exercise and use their freedom within the university setting for it was during the imperial regime that universities served as incubators of different associations and activist groups, many of them were run by students. After all, it is widely argued that the "Haile Sellassie government was more tolerant than its successors in terms of the level of killings, arrests, and number of associations, degree of student activism and publications" (Baye, 2008, p. 56) except, according to HRW (2003), the first horrifying incident which took place in 1969 when Tilahun Gizaw who is a member of Ethiopian University Students Association was reportedly killed by government forces (p. 12). Therefore, exercising the rights of academic freedom was not absolute during the imperial regime although, relatively speaking, this regime is better than its successors in allowing the stake holders [both students and teachers] use and exercise their privilege of academic freedom.

2.1.5.2 Academic Freedom in the Military Regime

The second phase in the history of academic freedom in Ethiopia occurs when a socialist military regime known as '*Derg*' (or *committee*) came to power in 1974 and established an oppressive system by overthrowing the monarchy of Emperor Haile Selassie. By expunging the religious aspects of the previous education system which emphasizes on 'divine wisdom', Messay (2002) argues, the Marxist regime "aimed to define reality in a more materialistic term"

and then “the regime as well as the young and educated laid out the quest of ‘new religion’ in the form of Marxism-Leninism” (quoted in Mohammed, 2012, p. 118). In clarifying the nature of the Marxist regime, Mohammed noted that

In a stark contrast to the previous system which emphasized ‘divine wisdom’ over against the scientific one, the *Dergue* (committee constituting the Marxist regime) came up with *new adage* – ‘*putting the [sic] nature under control*’. The tool to do so was considered to be *science and reason*. However, what the *Dergue* did not put into consideration was that *science and reason require freedom to think, create and express* (ibid; emphasis added).

The military regime, which came to power by abrogating the imperial constitution and then subsequently introducing a series of proclamations, was not willing to introduce a substitute constitution until 1987. Under all these circumstances, Baye (2008) argues, “freedom would be a luxury that only those in power would enjoy” (p. 39). Among other things, the administration of higher education institutions, as it was stated in the Negarit Gazeta No. 1099 of 1977, under Article 1, declares that the objective of higher education is “to *teach, expound and publicize socialism* and formulate methods to carry out these functions” (Baye, 2008, p. 40).

During the Marxist regime, Saint (2004) argues, “*government intervention in university affairs expanded, including security surveillance, repression of dissent, mandated courses on Marxism, prohibition of student organizations, appointment of senior university officers and control of academic promotions*” (p. 84; emphasis added). Due to such an oppressive nature of this regime, Wubhegzer (2013) argues, “intellectual life”, which was the essence of university education since the time of Socrates, “atrophied on campuses” and hence “academic brain drain⁸ soared and the country’s education system became largely isolated from the western world” (p.

⁸ For instance, Ethiopia had lost a total of 33, 868 people to the united states by 1990. Among these, 29% of them were first degree holders, and compared to other emigrants to the United States, these emigrants account as one of the largest; See Baye Yimam’s Article entitled *Academic freedom at Addis Ababa University: an overview of its past and current experiences* (2008), p. 43-44.

48). Speaking from the context of AAU, Baye (2008) upholds, vis-a-vis the academic freedom of the academics, that:

The only spell of a relative freedom of expression in the university was during the days of Endalkachew's brief premiership. A group of university teachers organized themselves under what they called University Teachers Forum (UTF). They tried to organize one or two panel discussions on the prevailing political situation distributed a manifesto about the way forward, started a publication called *Tayyik* and later published a dictionary of Marxist terms (p. 39).

Regarding the absence of exercising the academic rights of students, Baye continues to argue that "the only public demonstration Addis Ababa University (AAU) students staged in the entire period of *Derg* rule was in 1990, when the army generals involved in the aborted coup were summarily killed" (Baye, 2008, p. 43). Generally, the foregoing dire ramifications that have occurred in AAU are due to the fact that the *Dergue* was:

Uncomfortable with the university, *for it knew only too well that it would always a thorn in its flesh if left unchecked. So it had to be watched carefully and be silenced indefinitely until it proved itself loyal*, which, one would say, it never did. Instead, it just kept quiet (Baye, 2008, p. 42; emphasis added).

In a situation where there is a need on the part of the regime to give primacy on expanding the Marxist-Leninist ideology, one cannot be blamed for arguing that the *Dergue* regime has played nothing positive in relation to academic freedom, but had started to stifle and dismantle it – a watershed in an extensive refusal against the free exercise of academic freedom, and, then, transferred this legacy to the EPRDF government which is responsible for the total extermination and burying of this freedom.

Having briefly introduced the nature of academic freedom during the imperial and military regime respectively, now, I turn to my keen and specific interest of exploring the nature and development of academic freedom in the current EPRDF system though its detail is to be dealt under chapter four.

2.1.5.3 Academic Freedom in the EPRDF Regime

The third phase in the development and history of academic freedom in Ethiopia, as it is mentioned above, is the current experience of ethno-federalist EPRDF where the educational system is designed and regimented in a way solely to serve its system albeit the country has been experiencing a spectacular expansion of higher education in number (or quantity) by compromising its quality. With the coming to power in 1991, the government has identified itself as a “liberator” by “guaranteeing” the basic rights of the people such as the right to free speech, movement, association, etc. At its inception, this seems convincing and promising, since the cores of the EPRDF regime struggled for these rationales which were not attained before.

Regarding its policy of education, the current government in its seemingly colorful constitution declares that “higher education is free of any interference from political and religious ideology, thus, making the curricular to be secular” (International Bureau of Education, 2001, p. 4). This principle is promising in that it seems to avoid the influence of political and religious ideology from the affairs of education in general and the university education in particular. The idea is that if universities are free from any kind of political or religious interference, then it is possible to ensure the ideals of university education, the disinterested quest for knowledge and truth, by using its weapon, academic freedom.

Yet, contrary to its promise “shortly after coming to power, the government demonstrated that, like its predecessors albeit the degree varies, it would not tolerate dissent in the academic community” (HRW, 2003, p. 12). Since, pragmatically speaking, practice is not as simple as speech, the government is unable to fulfill the promises that it made for it has openly interfered in the affairs of universities forthwith after its rise to power.

The extent of academic freedom at universities, very often, could be measured in relation to the right to freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of movement, the right of tenure security, etc. despite the fact that there are always limitations to these parameters. The EPRDF government, we are told, stands as the one scoring the largest number of records in violations of these rights although no one would have expected such an excessive breach of rights to academic freedom in the 21st century.

2.2 The Idea of a University: An Overview

Before I directly delve in to discussing the ideal of university, it is worth noting the definition of a university though this definition is closely tied to the aims (or missions) of its establishment. Etymologically, according to William Bostock (2002), the English term *university* is derived from the two Latin words *unus* which means “one”, and *vertere* means “to turn”, or “the totality of all things that exist” (p. 20).

Defining university, directly or indirectly, involves dealing with the missions that a university claims to fulfill and function accordingly. In this regard, it is worth noting Aristotle’s, in his discussion of *Nicomachean Ethics*, understanding of the notion of *telos* or purpose when he argues that “every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and choice, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be at which all things aim” (quoted in Qing, 2008, p. 13). For him, the good is something in which everything else is done for the sake of attaining it.

Thus, the activity of mankind is guided by and is aimed at attaining a certain implicit or explicit *telos*. Accordingly, it is logical to argue that a university exists for the sake of undertaking certain noble functions (or ideals). However, “notwithstanding the various historical developments that, directly or indirectly, affect the nature of university education or educational

advancement in general”, Setargew (2003) argues, “there have been heated discussions on what the philosophy of university education ought to be” (p. 36). Despite the presence of this debate on what the philosophy of a university education ought to be, there is at least a consensus that “an institution” such as a university “*remains functional only so long as it vitally embodies its inherent idea*” (Habermas & Blazek, 1987; emphasis added) – an intrinsic pursuit of knowledge and truth. Accordingly, as it is stated by Post (2003):

The University exists for the sake of carrying out certain functions... It follows that the individual members of the faculty and the individual departments of the university are the servants of those ideal ends for the sake of which the university exists, such as the advancement of learning, the spread of knowledge, and the cultivation of capacities for intelligent and significant living (p. 3; emphasis added).

Since the idea of university changes with the passage of time reflecting the dynamic changes in philosophical ideas, social, cultural and political circumstances, there are prominent scholars and philosophers of education who are widely known in their emphasis and exposition of the ideals of university education. It includes, among others, John Henry Newman, Wilhelm Von Humboldt, Karl Jaspers, José Ortega y Gasset, Allan Bloom, William Bostock, and Clark Kerr.

Newman (1852), who is thought to be the first person to analyze and clarify the ideals of university in a modern and sophisticated way, argues that:

I am asked what is the end of University Education, and of the Liberal or Philosophical Knowledge which I conceive it to impart: I answer, that what I have already said has been sufficient to show that it has a very tangible, real, and sufficient end, though the end cannot be divided from that knowledge itself. *Knowledge is capable of being its own end. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that any kind of knowledge, if it be really such, is its own reward (p. 128; emphasis added).*

For him, university education is primarily aimed at the training of liberal education; and liberal education, in turn, involves at cultivating or disciplining of the mind. To quote Newman in relation to his elaboration of the purpose of liberal education: “Surely it is very intelligible to

say, and that is what I say here, that Liberal Education, viewed in itself, is simply *the cultivation of the intellect*, as such, and its object is nothing more or less than *intellectual excellence*” (Newman, 1852, p. 147; emphasis added). When clarifying the *objects of the intellect*, Newman added that “*truth of whatever kind is the proper object of the intellect; its cultivation then lies in fitting it to apprehend and contemplate truth*” (Newman, 1852, p. 180; emphasis added).

For Jaspers, “university is the place where man has the freedom to search for truth and to teach truth in defiance of anyone who wishes to curtail this freedom” (Jaspers, 1959, p. xvii). Like Newman, Jaspers argues that “we crave knowledge for its own sake, a passion whose self-affirmation remains the permanent premise of all science” (Jaspers, 1959, p. 18). Also, like Newman, Jaspers argues in a stark negation to the mere utilitarian understanding of the role of university education when he asserts that “all the university recognizes is *responsibility to truth*. *This struggle for truth must not be confused with a struggle for economic existence. It occurs on the level of disinterested investigation*” (Jaspers, 1959, p. 63; emphasis added). Accordingly, “intellectual exchange makes the university the place where people meet who have committed their lives to the search for truth” (ibid).

Allan Bloom has also dealt with the ideals of university education when he asserted that reason is the best, perchance the only instrument (or weapon) that is used in the process of a disinterested quest for truth. He upholds that “the most important function of the university in an age of reason is to protect reason from itself, by being the model of true openness” (Bloom, n. d., p. 253). For him, like Newman and Jaspers, the university is not an institution that can be used for a rudimentary and utilitarian purpose of gratifying economic needs; rather its mission transcends this narrow utility to the extent of satisfying a *telos* which is something higher.

According to Bloom, “universities came to be where men were inspired by the philosophers' teachings and examples” (Bloom, n. d., p. 272) for “the philosopher wants to know things as they are. He loves the truth. That is an intellectual virtue” (Bloom, n. d., p. 279). This entails that the ideals of university education, as it is noted above, is nothing other than a disinterested quest for truth.

The other scholar and philosopher who is known in his exposition of the idea of university is Wilhelm Von Humboldt. For him, the idea of university was “a teaching/research institution in which each function informed the other, professors were free to teach and inquire as they wished, students were mature self-motivated persons, and received authority was open to question” (quoted in Marginson, 2008, p. 3). Humboldt strongly argues in favor of the significance of academic freedom in undertaking teaching and research for “science and scholarship do not consist of closed bodies of permanently settled truths” (ibid). Rather, universities “conceive of science and scholarship as dealing with ultimately inexhaustible tasks: it means they are engaged in an *unceasing process of inquiry*”- dubbed by Humboldt as a “unique feature of higher education institutions” (ibid; emphasis added).

Humboldt, who was thought to be the one who had instigated university reform in Germany by establishing the University of Berlin, “sought to combine received wisdom, and the formation of the individual intellect, with objective scientific and scholarly knowledge, including scientific inquiry designed to push forward the frontiers of knowledge” (ibid). For him, like Newman and others, “*knowledge should be cultivated for its own sake and not its uses*” (ibid; emphasis added) and it is the task of universities to be engaged in this rationale.

William Bostock (2002) has introduced the notion of ‘parameters of academic acceptability’ which is conceptually similar, if not identical, with the notion of the ideals of

university when he argues that “for a university to maintain its standing as a university, it must operate within certain parameters of academic acceptability; just as a ship must remain within certain hydrodynamic parameters to stay afloat” (p. 19). Accordingly, “the ideal parameter of academic acceptability can be stated as: *the pursuit of truth* and the *provision of intellectual and moral leadership* while avoiding the extremes of physical violence” (Bostock, 2002, p. 22; emphasis added).

Ortega, in his article entitled *Missions of the Universities*, has also dealt about the *telos* or ideals that universities are primarily aimed at and claim to fulfill. Accordingly, Sánchez (2000) interrogates and, then answers that “what is the university’s mission in our time? Ortega answers: to transmit culture; to train for professional works; scientific research; and the education of new researchers (p. 9).

Clark Kerr has also introduced the notion of “multiversity” and he asserted that the multiversity, which is presumed to pursue multiple roles, is primarily aimed at addressing the threefold missions of teaching, research, including public service. The multiple roles to be played by “multiversities” is succinctly summed up by Bernstein (2012) as:

By using the *neologism* multiversity, Kerr wished to draw attention both to the multiple roles the university had come to play - in research, in education, in professional and community service - and to the multiple constituencies it had come to serve: faculty, trustees and administrators (and, in the public context, regents and legislators), students, alumni, community groups, professional societies, nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations, and private enterprise (p. 475).

For Kerr, knowledge function, like Newman and others, is central to higher education: it is “the prime material around which activity is organized ...Knowledge materials, and advanced ones at that, are at the core of any higher education system’s purposes and essence” (Gumpert, 2000, p. 81-82).

Jaroslav Pelikan, in his book entitled *The Idea of the University: A Reexamination*, has also tried to assess the changes that has occurred since Newman and then argues that there are at least four types of roles that universities are destined to fulfill:

... speaking in one place of the four legs of the academic table being: (1) *the advancement of knowledge through research*, (2) *the transmission of knowledge through teaching* [undergraduates, graduates and professionals], (3) *the preservation of knowledge* through scholarly collections [libraries, museums, galleries] and (4) *the diffusion of knowledge through publishing* (quoted in Sullivan, 2006, P. 5; emphasis added).

Generally speaking, the ideals of universities, according to Scott (2006), can be teaching and scholasticism -characterizing European medieval universities; nationalization (service to the government of the nation-state) – characterizing early modern university of Europe and Latin America; democratization (service to the individual of the nation-state)- characterizing the U.S. universities of the 19th century; research and academic freedom- characterizing the 19th-century Humboldtian university; public service (service to the public of the nation-state) – featuring the 20th century modern American university; and even internationalization (service to the body of nation-states) – featuring the current globalized universities (p. 5-6).

Despite the variations and diversifications of the missions that universities aim to actualize, there is an understanding that there should be at least one key feature that uniquely defines universities irrespective of their context. In this regard, Setargew (2003) relates that

Because of the external and internal challenges, various educators believe (and rightly so) that *there should be certain key and resilient features that a university should always demonstrate irrespective of its setting*. Among these, the fact that university education should aim at *knowledge for its own sake*, to put it in a very concise and telling manner, that *a university should be a center of excellence* must be the quintessential feature that makes a university a university (p. 36-37; emphasis added).

Thus, the foregoing discussions and clarifications, which I made vis-a-vis the ideals of a university education, genuinely justifies the conclusion, which commonly characterizes all universities, that universities are institutions where knowledge and truth is pursued for its own

sake – hence they are centers of intellectual excellence. Here, I need to be precise and concede the practical benefits (or utility) of university education by echoing the ideas of Newman:

A great good will impart great good. If then the intellect is so excellent a portion of us, and its cultivation so excellent, it is not only beautiful, perfect, admirable, and noble in itself, but in a true and high sense *it must be useful to the possessor and to all around him*; not useful in any low, mechanical, mercantile sense, but as diffusing good, or as a blessing, or a gift, or power, or a treasure, first to the owner, then through him to the world. *I say then, if a liberal education be good, it must necessarily be useful too* (quoted in Setargew, 2003, p. 40; Newman, 1852, p. 193; emphasis added).

The idea, according to Newman, is that one cannot deny the practical benefits of higher education but such utilitarian role of universities is derived indirectly from the direct pursuit of knowledge irrespective of its use value for “*intellectual culture is its[university] own end*; for what has its end in itself, has its use in itself also...” (quoted in Marginson, 2008, p. 2). It follows that “universities combine utilitarian and non-utilitarian outcomes. It is not either/or” (Marginson, 2008, p. 3).

CHAPTER THREE

Major Issues in Academic Freedom: An Overview

3.1 Definition of Academic Freedom

Academic freedom, which is mainly rooted in intellectual freedom, is introduced in order to properly defend and realize the essential roles which are to be played by universities (or to defend and ensure the *raison d'être* of universities) – the unrestricted freedom of a liberal quest for truth and knowledge. Despite the presence of a consensus that there has to be some kind of freedom, academic freedom, that eases the way for pursuing the truth and discovering knowledge (for “*truth can only be discovered*, and knowing what is right and good can only be discovered, and as *such discovery requires freedom*” (Forbes, 1999, p. 10; emphasis added)) there is no a universal accord between/among scholars and philosophers of education regarding its definition.

As a result, “today’s university campuses are rife with confusion and competing claims over academic freedom” (Downs, 2009, p. 4) for there, Nelson (2010) argues, are “so many different registers and contexts for defining academic freedom” (p. 27). This entails that the definition of academic freedom is and will continue to be debatable in the future; and it is inevitable to experience a ‘paradigm shift’ in defining academic freedom since there are quite a number of social and political contexts to talk about it. Nonetheless, academic freedom “reflects a rough, if contested, social consensus that higher education and the society it serves benefit from a high degree of protection for both the professional and the extracurricular speech of faculty members” (Nelson, 2010, p. 6).

Defining academic freedom, however, cannot be viewed separately from teaching and research (focusing mainly on the university academics), learning (focusing mainly on students),

and sometimes the presence of certain extramural activities and speech. In fact, this understanding is part and parcel of the definition which was given by AAUP's in the 1915 *Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure*: "academic freedom in this sense comprises three elements: freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within the university or college; and freedom of extramural utterance and action" (p. 292). However, this definition excludes the academic freedom of students (*Lernfreiheit*) which was included in the Germanic understanding of the notion [academic freedom]. Since students are one of the main actors in playing the role of the quest for truth and knowledge, and, hence, are part and parcel of the university, it is hardly possible to exclude those [students] from defining academic freedom to protect students. Thus, university professors are not the sole, although they are the main, actors to partake in the role of pursuing the truth since students can also be part of this golden role. It follows that the definition of academic freedom should/ or must be provided or defined in a way that protects, like the academics, the rights of students, as the definition which is given as follows:

Academic freedom is that freedom of members of the academic community, assembled in colleges and universities, which underlies the effective performance of their functions of teaching, learning, practice of the arts, and research. *The right to academic freedom is recognized in order to enable faculty members and students to carry on their roles* (Fuchs, 1963, p. 431; emphasis added).

Most of the definitions, I must concede, which are given for academic freedom are exclusionary in the sense that they simply overlook the functions of students as a 'critic and conscience of society' and the corresponding freedom [academic freedom] that protects them. This exclusionary way of defining academic freedom, however, is not targeted to undermine the role which is played by students as a 'critic and conscience of society' rather it is due to the long established tradition of the teacher-centered method of instruction that place teachers' role at the top of the hierarchy in the production and transmission of knowledge - by considering students

as passive receivers (consumers) of the knowledge produced by and delivered from the teachers. For instance, Robinson and Moulton (2002) define academic freedom in a different way that slightly disregards the role of this freedom in protecting students:

Academic freedom is the freedom to teach and do research in any area without constraint, to discover and promulgate new ideas no matter how controversial. Like other accepted freedoms, academic freedom requires individuals, authorities, and governments not only *to allow scholars to work without restraint* but also to prevent any interference with this freedom (p. 1; emphasis added).

In fact, it is obvious that academics can play and are playing the lion's share in the production and transmission of knowledge via teaching, research, writing, documentation, lectures, etc. but, still, students could also play a significant role in the production and transmission of knowledge through research and discussion with their colleagues and teachers – if the approach is more of student-centered. By recognizing the roles of academic freedom in protecting both students and teachers, Arko-Cobbah, by borrowing the words of Yankah (2010), has defined academic freedom as:

Academic freedom enjoins scholars to teach, learn and communicate ideas without censor, harassment, or persecution, points out that it is based on the conviction that *scholarship attains its ultimate fulfillment if scholars and students have unrestricted liberty to question received wisdom, and also advance controversial and even unpopular opinions, without fear of censure*. In addition to this, academic institutions do not have the right to curb the exercise of this freedom by students and staff, or use it as grounds for disciplinary action. Academic freedom is, therefore, based on the assumption that it will *promote intellectual diversity*, and help in the achievement of *the university's primary goal of pursuing the truth* (quoted in Arko-Cobbah, n. d., P. 2; emphasis added).

This definition, however, does not explicitly clarify the main parameters or manifestations of academic freedom which are included and vividly defined by some known international documents such as the 1997 UNESCO Declaration. This implies that there are also international documents (or declarations) which are widely known in defining and clarifying the notion of academic freedom thereby serving as a framework or standard for evaluating the extent of this

freedom. Among others, four of them are very much vogue and frequently mentioned by different writers and commentators in philosophy of education.

These are the UN Lima Declaration on Academic Freedom and Autonomy of Institutions (1988), Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics (1990), Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility (1990), and UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education teaching Personnel (1997). It is worth mentioning, at least, the definitions given by the Dar es Salaam Declaration and the UNESCO Declaration for the reason that they are more comprehensive than the remaining two though the 1997 UNESCO Declaration is still by far more comprehensive than all others.

The Dar es Salaam Declaration which was thought to be inspired by the Lima Declaration and produced by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) defines academic Freedom as “the freedom of members of the academic community, individually or collectively, in the pursuit, development and transmission of knowledge, through research, study, discussion, documentation, production, creation, teaching, lecturing and writing” (quoted in Arko-Cobbah, n .d., p. 1-2; quoted in Taye, 2008, p. 3).

However, the most comprehensive international document, UNESCO Declaration (1997), recognizes that education and research are integral instruments in the pursuit, advancement and transfer of knowledge. This recommendation defines academic freedom as

Higher- education teaching personnel are entitled to the maintaining of academic freedom, that is to say, the right without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to *freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom of carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom to express freely their opinion* about the institution or system in which they work, *freedom from institutional censorship*, and *freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies*. All higher-education teaching personnel should have the right to fulfill their functions without discrimination of any kind and

without fear of repression by the state and any other source (quoted in Taye, 2008, p. 4; emphasis added).

This recommendation, however, is exclusionary in defining academic freedom in the sense that it excludes the privileges to be enjoyed by students as a result of granting this freedom despite it includes almost all of the privileges to be enjoyed by the academics.

Lastly, what I need to underscore is to interrogate the very reason for the lack of consensus and multiplicity of definitions given for academic freedom. This problem might arise due to the problem of vagueness with in the terminology [academic freedom] itself that can result in multiple interpretations. This variety of interpretations “has been used at times to support conflict causes and positions” (Al Shamsi & Hamada 2006). This implies that its interpretation is susceptible to be circumvented and bent to justify and preserve a certain narrow political and ideological purpose. In addition to this, it is commonly argued that “academic freedom does not exist in a vacuum but depends, to a large extent, on the existence of other social freedoms such as freedom of expression, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom to form unions and so on” (Bubtana, 2006, p. 7). What follows is that the understanding and interpretation of academic freedom becomes more complicated since the clear boundary and limitation of these interrelated freedoms, by themselves, are controversial involving disagreements in identifying their exact scope or limitation.

To sum, we cannot have a single and universal definition for academic freedom since its definition rests on the presence of different social and political contexts. Irrespective of its plurality in defining academic freedom, the definition is designed to protect both students and academics from both an internal and external interference that hinders the proper exercise and realization of the ideals of university education.

3.2 Foundations of Academic Freedom

There are different perspectives in basing the roots of academic freedom. The first is to connect and trace academic freedom to the notion of intellectual freedom – it is the widely used understanding as it has been done since the time of ancient Greece scholars. The second is attaching academic freedom to the natural law theory – as it is propounded mainly by Russell Kirk. In both cases, despite their variation in basing it [academic freedom], there is a consensus that this freedom is quintessential in the discovery of truth and knowledge by a certain individual.

Academic freedom, according to the first understanding, which is deeply rooted in the concept of intellectual freedom, was first practiced by the ancient Greece, specifically by Socrates. Formally, intellectual freedom is defined as “*the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction*. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored” (Arko-Cobbah, n. d., p. 5; emphasis added). Intellectual freedom as a philosophy which “originated in Greece, arose again in Europe, especially under the impact of the Renaissance, and came to maturity in the Age of Reason” (Fuchs, 1963, p. 431). In ancient Greece, according to Russel Kirk, “the Academy and those who constituted it were not primarily engaged in teaching to service [*sic*] the community but were rather engaged in it solely for its own sake, for their own personal pleasure and the pursuit of truth” (quoted in Masingi, n. d., p. 9; emphasis added).

This teaching, which was primarily advocated by Socrates, is “devoted to *pursuing the truth without regard for conformity and social pressure*” (Downs, 2009, p. 6, emphasis added). Thus, the Academy – with its freedom to pursue the truth - is the best model for different

scholars and philosophers of education in basing academic freedom vis-à-vis intellectual freedom. The freedom to pursue the truth is the very principle of intellectual freedom and this freedom, in turn, is part and parcel of academic freedom – the essence of today’s modern universities and the best weapon that can help universities to realize their ideals.

Here, it is worth mentioning the relation, if there is, including the difference between intellectual freedom and academic freedom. According to Buschman (2009), “academic and intellectual freedom is closely allied, if not entirely equivalent” (quoted in Arko-Cobbah, n. d., p. 5). But, according to Byrne (1999), though he agrees with a definition given by Buschman, goes further and says that “intellectual freedom encompasses academic freedom but extends beyond the academy to the essential principles of freedom of thought, freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression” (ibid). No matter how much difficult to clarify, demarcate, and clearly state the distinction between the two, it is possible, at least, to argue that academic freedom can be viewed as “an application of intellectual freedom in the university setting” (ibid).

Unlike those who base the roots of academic freedom within the concept of intellectual freedom, there are also other scholars who base the root of academic freedom within the natural law theory. Russell Kirk, the main proponent of this idea, strongly argues that academic freedom is part and parcel of natural law, and, as a result, it is logically true to argue that denying the reality of natural law also involves denying the reality of academic freedom. Russell Kirk’s understanding of this notion is stated as follows:

Society is composed of groups of people with specialized jobs to do, and each group has certain rights and responsibilities arising from and appropriate to the nature of its job. Academic freedom is the name for the rights appropriate to that group in society who devote their lives to study and teaching. *Since it is the responsibility of the scholar to discover the truth, and of the teacher to instruct others in it, he must have the freedom to fulfill his responsibility*”(<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/>; emphasis added).

To sum, intellectual freedom is needed in order to ensure the ‘academic callings’ of faculties within a university setting. The academic callings of faculties is nothing other than a *disinterested quest for knowledge* through research and instruction (or teaching) – the essential and primary functions of universities. For this ideal to be ensured, a freedom derived from intellectual freedom and natural law theory, an academic freedom, that can help both academics and students to exercise their respective task free from external pressure, is needed.

3.3. The Scope of Academic Freedom

It is widely argued that academic freedom as a privilege is limited in scope to protect academics and students in the free pursuit of the truth during teaching, research including the closely related issues such as publication and funding, and extramural speech and action. Thus, teaching, scholarship and extramural speech and action are the three main contexts in understanding academic freedom.

3.3.1 Academic Freedom and Teaching

The transmission of knowledge via teaching, which has been practiced since the time of university of Bologna and Paris, is an integral part of universities and this activity is intricately related to the notion of academic freedom. Teaching, as the noblest activities of university, can be defined in various ways. It can be defined, for instance, as “the passing on of information, ideas and concepts, plus *the ability to critique existing ideas and concepts and construct new ones*” (Jones, et al., 1999; emphasis added). Or, for José Ortega y Gasset, “teaching is primarily and fundamentally nothing *but enabling students to feel the need of a science*, and not teaching them a science for which they cannot be made to feel any need” (Sánchez, 2000, p. 9; emphasis

added). Thus, understanding the real needs of the learner germane to teaching and the corresponding roles of the teacher is clearly stated as follows:

The teacher, particularly the teacher dedicated to liberal education, must constantly try to look toward *the goal of human completeness* and back at *the natures of his students here and now*, ever seeking to understand the former and to assess the capacities of the latter to approach it. *Attention to the young, knowing what their hungers are and what they can digest, is the essence of the craft. One must spy out and elicit those hungers. For there is no real education that does not respond to felt need; anything else acquired is trifling display* (Bloom, n. d., p. 19; emphasis added).

From this, we can infer that teaching is not a mere transferring of information from one source to another; rather it requires the educator or, to use Kantian terminology, ‘enlightened experts’, individuals with ‘broader views’, to undertake a number of other activities, such as critical engagement and the construction of new ideas and the modification of the old ones. In order to critically approach the received wisdom or status quo and then to construct new ones, a freedom, academic freedom, that protects teachers from the influence of both internal and external authority, entrusted to the teachers, is needed. After all, it is not uncommon to hear the admonition that “faculty members in colleges and universities are usually not employed to follow orders but to render instruction and to pursue inquiries in their fields of competence, largely free of supervision and direction, even though there still are exceptions in some small institutions” (Fuchs, 1963, p. 445). In other words, teaching which is usually undertaken by teachers is closely related with academic freedom in the sense that teaching, as an academic activity, needs a full exercise of academic freedom to be enjoyed by the teachers.

In teaching, what is primarily expected from the teachers, Albert O. Hirschman argues, is to be “intellectually honest —being honest and forthright about one’s intellectual position— should be valued at all times” (quoted in Downs, 2009, p. 12) despite, sometimes, there is a possibility for such honesty to offend those who disagree with the teachers. The idea is that once

we accept the intellectual integrity of teachers, then “we should not discourage professors from seeking truth and being honest about their thoughts in class” for “there is nothing inherently wrong with a professor taking a position in class, so long as he or she avoids falling into the trap of dogma⁹” (Downs, 2009, p. 11). In other words, according to Friedrich Paulsen, this is due to the fact that

It is no longer ... the function of the university teacher to hand down a body of truth established by authorities, but to search after scientific knowledge by investigation, and to teach his hearers to do the same. . . . For the academic teacher and his hearers there can be no prescribed and no proscribed thoughts. There is only one rule for instruction: to justify the truth of one's teaching by reason and the facts (quoted in Fuchs, 1963, p. 435; emphasis added).

The idea is that since universities are primarily aimed at pushing the frontiers of knowledge mainly through research and teaching, then faculties must teach free from any ideological or political fetter. One has to acknowledge the common adage regarding university professors which says that they are “educational prophets who ask the challenging questions” (Hufford, 2008, p. 85) regarding the policies and procedure germane to education, politics, etc. Professors should be free from their opinions and ideas being censored for censorship has a pernicious consequence vis-à-vis the development of humanity; and because, according to Botsford (1998), “as soon as a censorship is imposed upon the opinions which teachers may avow, education ceases to serve this [the power of weighting arguments and being open minded and discovering the truth] purpose and *tends to produce, instead of a nation of men, a herd of fanatical bigots*” (p. 11; emphasis added).

⁹ A teacher is dogmatic when he teaches contested and controversial issues as absolute truths, and then try to make his students conform, instead of teaching both –sides of the truth, to his prescribed viewpoint – moral or political.

To sum, teaching, like research and public service, is one of the functions of university education; and the main actors in undertaking this task are the faculty. Teaching, like research, is aimed at ensuring the ideals of university education –pushing the frontiers of knowledge – by questioning the received wisdom and, if possible, creates new ones. For this golden quest for truth and knowledge to be ensured, academics need a full exercise of their liberty without being prescribed by a certain authority.

3.3.2 Academic Freedom and Research

Research, like teaching, we are told, is one of the integral parts of universities' functions in pushing the frontiers of knowledge since it is via research that new ideas, discoveries, hopes, problems including the corresponding solutions are to be investigated. All these things are only possible when there is a freedom to pursue the truth - based on, according to Jonathan Rauch, the rationale that “there should be no formal sanctions for ideas, however offensive” (quoted in Downs, 2009, p. 12). In other words, the proper nexus between research and academic freedom is such that “research is an integral part of the academic activities and commitments of universities, leading to knowledge aimed at enhancing the common good” (Jones, et al, 1999); and pushing and enhancing the frontiers of knowledge require freedom. This has to be the main reason for experiencing the common claim that “*universities without research activities run the risk of becoming glorified secondary schools*” since “they are unable to generate new knowledge for themselves, academia, and the country” (WB, 1997, p. 17; emphasis added), rather they become only consumers of knowledge.

Historically, the idea of research within a university setting first began at the University of Berlin in the early 19th century where research and classroom teaching were given together - commonly called ‘mission interplay’” (Scott, 2006, p. 4). The WB (1997) has defined research as

“the use of reason for problem analysis based on the rules of scientific method and available evidence” (p. 15).

The point is that once universities are established as the critic and conscience of society by focusing mainly on the quest for truth thereby pushing the frontiers of knowledge, there is a wider possibility to offend or please an individual, governmental authority, or the community at large. Accordingly, since research, one of the major functions of university, is primarily interested in pushing the frontiers of knowledge by critically questioning the existing status quo, it is inevitable for this task to irritate or please a certain group (political, cultural, social, religious, etc.) or an individual, while the activities of scholars are usually guided by the admonition propounded Jonathan Rauch:

There should be no formal sanctions for ideas, however offensive. The doctrine of evolution deeply offends some religious sensibilities, for example, and discussions of the law and morality of abortion ruffle many feathers—but such discussions should never be off limits. The right to offend is an essential, indispensable ingredient of intellectual freedom (quoted in Downs, 2009, p. 12; emphasis added).

Closely related to research vis-à-vis academic freedom are publication and funding. Research is inseparably linked to publication of the finding in the sense that “without which research becomes little more than an interesting and diverting hobby” (Jones, et al, 1999). Research and publication do not only go hand in hand, but also they are dependent on the existence of academic freedom in the sense that researchers have the right to choose their area of study with a corresponding privilege to publish the finding without any kind of outside influence. The rationale behind publication is that since the products of a certain scholarship need an outlet to reach the wider public:

If there is an indisputable line of evidence to support a theory, no matter how controversial that theory may be, publication is probably warranted, no matter what the consequences. By doing so, the research is revealed for all to see, to

weigh up the evidence, and judge its merit for themselves (Jones, et al, 1999, p. 16).

Regarding funding, it is widely assumed that since research needs resource for its undertaking, then it is imperative to support a research either by private or governmental bodies. However, it is not uncommon to experience for funding to be influenced by the funding body (private or governmental) for they, sometimes, expect that the products of the research be in accord with their preconceived idea.

Thus, we can certainly assert that there is nothing wrong with receiving money from anywhere except mustering an interest to expect that publication is possible only when the finding is compatible with the preconceived idea of the fund giver. Generally, research is one of the core functions of universities in pushing the frontiers of knowledge via the unrestricted freedom of pursuing the truth no matter irritating and controversial their finding is – hence it needs protection via academic freedom.

3.3.3 Academic Freedom and Extramural Speech

Extramural speech is one of the main functions, next to teaching and research, of university education. The 1915 AAUP's *Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure* defines extramural speech as “*the expression of judgments and opinions outside of the classroom* – and political activities, even when they pertain to questions falling outside the academic specialty of the faculty member” (quoted in Shaffer, n. d., p. 3; emphasis added). Of the three main components of academic freedom, “the freedom of extramural utterance and action” is surely the most problematic” for “unlike freedom in research and teaching, it has no special connection to the university and no justification based on the special expertise of faculty members to judge the quality of the work of their peers based on academic standards” (Shaffer, n. d., p. 11).

No matter how controversial it is, there is a consensus that extramural speech and action is based on the rationale that the knowledge of academics is not only limited to the university but also extends to reaching the outside community, hence their speech and action is also not limited to the purview of university. In other words, since, according to Altbach (2008), academics are experts on a wide variety of fields, they can play a paramount role in interpreting science and scholarship to the community (p. 7).

If we concede, in fact we do, that universities are not ‘ivory towers’ since they are part and parcel of the society in addressing their [society’s] problems, then it is inevitable for the academics to be engaged in delivering their knowledge to the society - hence involves undertaking different types of speech and action. However, according to the 1915 AAUP’s *Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure*, academics are not given an absolute freedom in making their speech and the corresponding action outside the classroom environment since “academic teachers are under a peculiar obligation to avoid hasty or unverified or exaggerated statements and to refrain from intemperate or sensational modes of expression” (quoted in Shaffer, n. d., p. 3). This assertion is closely related to a famous Russian motto in the area of diplomacy that was thought to be frequently quoted by President Ronald Reagan: “*Trust (the professor’s academic judgment), but verify it*” (Downs, 2009, p. 14; emphasis added).

Since, it has been widely argued, university professors are thought to be ‘voices for the voiceless’ and since they have a responsibility to respond how the political, social, economic, and cultural forces affects the lives of the voiceless, then one can confidently argue that [academics] base, in the words of W.E.B. Du Bois, their utterance on the rationale that “*to be silent when injustices call out for redress, to fail to speak out when poverty and ignorance keep*

some in social bondage, to muffle the sounds of indignation and righteous anger is to fail the teacher's calling” (quoted in Hufford, 2008, p. 88; emphasis added).

Thus, what is expected from academics is to be committed enough in grappling with and, then, solve the different problems facing their community by applying their respective area of knowledge and specialization; and such role of academics is actualized only when there is recognition for the rights of extramural speech and action as part of academic freedom.

3.4 The Purposes of Academic Freedom

3.4.1 The Rights of Tenure

One of the most important aspects of academic freedom is the granting of tenure and most universities do so for it encourages the freedom to develop and teach new ideas on the rationale, according to Arko-Cobbah, that the tenured professor is freer in conducting research on controversial areas and teach disputed discourses without fear of punishment (p. 2) and since, according to Shaffer, there is an assumption that teachers and scholars feel more independence of thought in case they can be fired only for convincing justification (p. 16).

Etymologically, the term tenure is derived from the French word *tenir* which means ‘to hold’- meaning “the legal right to hold a piece of property or office” – as a practice is thought as having a long history, both in and out of the academia and, Bostock (2002) argues, caused a quandary continued to do in (p. 24).

This is to say, tenure, in the words of Danner and Bintliff (2006), is “a condition of employment, granted by the university to an individual faculty member that is used both to protect and promote academic freedom and to provide enough economic security to make university teaching attractive as a profession” (quoted in Arko-Cobbah, n. d, p. 2).

From its definition, one can easily understand that tenure plays a significant role in building the confidence of professors for they know well the fact that they cannot be fired anytime unless there is a good evidence to do so. In other words, tenure ensures the academic freedoms of scholars in expanding the frontiers of knowledge since it guarantees faculty members the freedom to pursue the truth, including the freedom to express opinions and ideas free from both internal and external pressures. Since academic freedom and tenure go hand in hand and are intimately related, there is, sometimes, a tendency to equate tenure with academic freedom. That has to be the reason for claiming, by giving a due emphasis and value for tenure, that “the continuity of employment of individual staff and groups of staff is a most important aspect of the ideal of a university” (Bostock, 2002, p. 24).

This does not, however, mean that there is a universal consensus regarding the value of granting tenure. There are, of course, critiques who argue that this right could easily be abused and twisted to serve certain interest groups (Robinson & Moulton, 2002), and there, Bostock (2002) opines, are controversies regarding tenure especially when it is wrongly interpreted as a life time comfort, irrespective of one’s performance or conduct (p. 33). These critiques argue that interpreting tenure as a life time comfort is erroneous in the sense that this understanding is the result of lack of awareness on the part of the community, in and out of the academia, the fact that “tenure was never intended to guarantee unconditional or lifetime job security to faculty” (Shaffer, n. d., p.16) since there is a possibility for a tenured faculty to be dismissed ‘for adequate cause’ and under “extraordinary circumstances such as severe financial distress” (Downs, 2009, p. 5).

The first objection forwarded against tenure is that tenure is not sufficient in ascertaining the academic performance of the academics over time since there is a wider possibility for

“people with tenure can hold their positions and do very little work” and even “they cannot be fired for being lazy teachers, poor researchers or uncooperative employees...” (Robinson & Moulton, 2002). The immediate result, often closely related to the above one, of this tendency is that it [tenure] “hampers the flexibility of universities to shift staffing patterns to meet new priorities or changing economic circumstances” (Altbach, 2001, p. 23) for it proceeds in a stark contrast to the rationale that “the more untenured scholars an institution has, the more easily it can replace them with people who have new ideas” (Robinson & Moulton, 2002). However, the bad news connected with this view is that it “offers no protection to untenured scholars who have new ideas that displease senior colleagues or that fall outside established paradigms” (ibid).

The second objection against tenure is the assertion that its “protection of academic freedom is withheld from the people who may need it the most—younger scholars who are more likely to innovate and to challenge established paradigms...” (ibid). The idea is that young scholars who are innovative and able to develop new ideas are in need of more protection than “those who are finally granted tenure after this long period” and who “have learned to avoid daring or controversial research and teaching” (ibid). Antithetical to this argument, there is a claim that emphasizes the importance of granting tenure for senior scholars because, Keith (1997) argues, there is a possibility for the tenured faculty to form a body which is capable of taking an action in protecting the rights of their non-tenured colleagues: the tenured faculty indirectly defends the academic freedoms of the non-tenured ones (p. 14).

Yet, it is still obvious that the tenured faculty have more academic freedom than the non-tenured ones for there is, in the words of Van Alstyne (1971), at least, a truth that “the anxiety of prospective nonrenewal may be seen to chill the appointee’s academic freedom in a manner unequalled for those members of the faculty with tenure” (quoted in Keith, 1997, 15). Regarding

the tenured versus non-tenured nexus, there is also some justification that there is a possibility for the tenure system to diminish the academic freedoms of the non-tenured (or tenure-track faculty) since, most of the time, there is a possibility for the junior faculty who needs tenure to be pressurized to conform with the norms and values of the senior faculty in order to get an acceptance or recommendation from them (ibid).

Generally, despite the presence of controversies over the significance of tenure, history has revealed, to us, pragmatically speaking, and justified that granting tenure for the faculty is a *sine quo non* for faculties to be secured in their job – so long as they act and conduct in a professionally acceptable way. If scholars are ready to act in this way, tenure gives, for the academics, a freedom to question and challenge the status quo without fear of any external and internal pressure – hence creates a conducive environment for ensuring the *raison d'être* of university education - the unrestricted freedom of a liberal quest for truth.

3.4.2 Institutional Autonomy

Ensuring the ideals of university, as it's repeatedly mentioned, needs some kind of institutional autonomy in the making of decisions regarding “*the four essential freedoms of a university*”- “*who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study*” (Keith, 1997, p. 5; emphasis added). Generally speaking, the infringements of academic freedom can arise from two sources: internal and external. Internally, the academic freedoms of faculties can be affected by ideologically motivated bodies such as trustees and administrators which, Nelson (2010) notes, occurs mainly due to an erroneous belief that “*faculty are not full partners in the educational enterprise but rather resources to be controlled and managed*” (p. 56; emphasis added) and since, in the words of Marc Bousquet, *the administrative class increasingly conceives of itself as higher education's true vanguard*” (ibid; emphasis

added). And, externally, government's intrusion with in the internal affairs of universities is the main factor in affecting the free exercising of academics. It is in the second context that we can talk about institutional (or university) autonomy for it is institutional academic freedom that can protect universities from undue governmental intrusion. Institutional autonomy, according to Arko-Cobbah, is the institution's freedom in appointing its administrators and where the laws of a given state protects these institutions against an improper meddling in the internal affairs of research, teaching and governance (p. 2).

Ensuring institutional academic freedom, in the words of Downs (2009), is based on the assumption that giving the major decisions about education to professionals chosen by their institutions is the best means for realizing the academic objectives to the society's interests (p. 7). This has to be the main justification when Kant gives the privilege of managing schools by "enlightened experts" for "he holds that enlightened experts should be in charge of leading the educational process because they are people of broader views, able to build the educational process for the improvement of humanity as a whole" (González, 2011, p. 437). The rationale for this independence is that

The university demands a ruthless will to know. Since learning and personal initiative go hand in hand, the university aims for the broadest possible development of independence and personal responsibility. *Within its sphere, it respects no authority other than truth in its infinite variety, the truth which all are seeking and yet no one can claim to possess in final and complete form* (ibid; emphasis added).

Historically, it has been argued that "the oldest form of academic freedom is institutional academic freedom, which has its roots in the autonomy of the medieval European university" (Keith, 1997, p. 3), and this freedom is designed to protect the interests of the emerging universities from undue governmental intrusion. Institutional autonomy, however, does not mean that institutions such as universities are absolutely free to operate and perform their task as they

please. Rather, there is, among others, the state, which, most of the time, is the main actor in the founding of universities which had an interest on universities. Also, since most universities are funded by the national government, the state has the power to check the proper financial flow and its implementation: a proper balance between autonomy and accountability has to be maintained.

Thus, there has to be a favorable link between the state and universities in the sense that one should avoid an improper intrusion up on the realms and functions of the other. After all, the university's "independent existence reflects the express wish or continuing toleration on the part of the founder" (Jaspers, 1959, p. 1). Pragmatically speaking, however, "in various countries government involvement in university affairs has surpassed the bounds of appropriate government responsibility for steering institutions toward public policy objectives and ensuring accountability in the use of public funds" (WB, 1997, p. 14).

Generally, if we are saying that it is a university ideal to question and challenge the received wisdom and if we are claiming that the preservation of institutional academic freedom demands the presence of bodies of people who are free from state interference, then an excessive and improper intrusion of a state in the affairs of universities is both logically and functionally void and it hampers the task of ensuring the ideals of university.

Much of the history of modern Ethiopia has been attested by the notion of *tabula rasa* in the sense that we don't want to begin everything as it has already anchored in our history. Rather, we prefer, first of all, to convince ourselves, however erroneously, of the absence of any indigenous foundation in different areas such as military technology, education policy, etc.; and secondly, we decide to import something, at the expense of our indigenous knowledge, from outside and apply it as it is. Such an erroneous thinking is true of and best characterize our

educational policies. As a consequence, much of the educational curricula has been imported from the West or somewhere else and then applied to our domestic context. In this situation, it will not be difficult to imagine the overall ramification, upon the Ethiopian society, of such thinking and its practice.

In this regard, it is my opinion and as it has been shared by many commentators regarding the nature and characteristic feature of Ethiopian modern education, the trend has been dominated by relegating the indigenous knowledge and characterizing as “traditional” and supplants it by, what is commonly called, “modern”, mainly imported from the West, ones. The result is producing an educational system which is homeless, properly so-called. Also, it produces students which are homeless, very much alienated from their traditional values and history. Education, by its nature, needs some kind of autonomy or liberty from so-called stakeholders in order to truly attain, grasp, and actualize its proper *telos*, just to use the Aristotelian notion. Likewise, the production and dissemination of knowledge in a university setting necessitates some kind of autonomy, both individual and institutional. However, the question that needs worth noting, here, is the context, meaning and sources (from the West or within Ethiopia) of the notion [autonomy].

Analyzing the issue of context, meaning, and its very foundation or source is vital not for establishing ownership or possession, rather it is based on the idea that excavating its root contains within itself values, norms, cultural practices and the history in a nutshell. And also I am not of the opinion that using something borrowed from outside is always bad, instead what I am espousing is that gambling a certain terminology or philosophy from the West or somewhere else at the expense of the homegrown ones is not a wise choice.

The very source of the history and idea of both individual and institutional autonomy is mostly attributed to the medieval European universities. This has been used as the hegemonic discourse regarding autonomy and its corresponding vitality. Without undermining this paradigm, it is also possible to excavate a homegrown or indigenous understanding and practice of autonomy regarding education in Ethiopia by tracing to the ancient Ethiopian Orthodox Church and its traditional teaching. In order to illustrate this point, I will largely depend on Maimire Mennasemay's article entitled *Towards a Critical Ethiopian Theory of Education*. Traditional education in Ethiopia includes, for Maimire (2010), and it is an important aspect of the cultures of Ethiopia. It involves the social practices containing the values, subject matter, pedagogy and institutions which were preoccupied in the transmission of inherited knowledge and the general ways of life (p. 74).

A hermeneutical understanding of Ethiopian traditional education involves that there are two types of meanings: “manifest meanings” and “surplus meanings”.¹⁰ The first meaning is hegemonic and it has got wider acceptance while the latter is the one which is suppressed by the first but it has a kind of “emancipatory power” within it. So, traditional education, as a historical process, is full of tensions and contradictions between these two types of meanings. The idea of autonomy within traditional education is therefore rooted by unearthing the “surplus meanings” that are dominated by the “manifest meanings.”

To return to the point that I raised earlier, a movement of reformist monks, which was founded by Aba Estefanos, known as *Daqiqa Estefanos* arose from within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church around the 15th century [1406]. This movement, although it seems a

¹⁰ “Surplus meaning” is a meaning which has been suppressed by the manifest meaning – a meaning which is commonly propounded by the wider community. Hermeneutically speaking, manifest meaning is the Wax or *sam* of a thing; while surplus meaning is the Gold or *Worq*.

theological movement at the first glance, transcends the religious aspects to include other new ideas of contemporary issues such as justice, law, equality, power, including a different conception of knowledge and education. Here lies the core of the issue: the *Daqiqa Estefanos*, Maimire contends, understand knowledge as *ewqet*¹¹ and *tibeb*¹²; and they consider *miremera*¹³ as way to traverse and to reach at *ewqet* or truth (ibid). The goal of *ewqet*, *tibeb* and *miremera* “is to go beyond the given in order to achieve intellectual and moral sovereignty” (Maimire, 2010, p. 80).

If knowledge is interpreted as such by the *Daqiqa Estefanos*, the discovery of such knowledge via *miremera* necessitates freedom from the domination and directive of an authority. In order to achieve this goal, the first step taken by the members of *Daqiqa Estefanos* is to challenge the already established and taken for granted ideas of the existing order - a step in the quest for autonomy. The best manifestations of this act are their refusal to prostrate in front of the Emperor, their primacy to the law (*heg*), their advocacy for gender equality, emphasis on public reasoning and debate which involves critics, etc. For them, imitating the established order is not the end of education, rather the end is *ewqet* (truth of the order of the world) and this could only be attained through *miremera* which involves curiosity, questioning or research, just to use the modern understanding.

The *Daqiqa Estefanos* emphasize on the right to express their feelings and opinions without the meddling of an authority. Generally, the teachings of this movement are against

¹¹ For Maimire, *ewqet* is interpreted as the knowledge of *ewnet* or the truth about the right order of things which attempts to gain a deeper understanding about the world.

¹² *Tibeb*, the surplus meanings of *moya*, transforms the knowledge of how things work in to *ewqet* - the truth of the workings of nature.

¹³ *Miremera* is the process of questioning or researching something which has been given.

being subservient to the Emperor in particular and the established order in general for being subservient is against creativity and the development of new ideas through their method of *miremera* - “a practice that creates a critical space that allows independent reflection and right action, endows one with the discernment and courage to recognize injustice and reject it publicly, even if the price incurred by such defiance is very high” (Maimire, 2010, p. 83). Obviously, such a challenge and negation of the established order is an indication of the fact that there are different ways of doing things or other alternatives ways of approaching nature and its constituents: an important step in the discovery and production of knowledge. Wondering such an indigenous development of the notion of autonomy and independent thinking which is mainly rooted in the “surplus meanings” of Ethiopian traditional education, Maimire notes the following:

One wonders how a system decried as conservative, authoritarian and non-creative could produce such persons with ideas centuries a head of their times, unless there are emancipatory ideas and values existing as surplus meanings within traditional education that make such radical outcomes possible (ibid).

The biggest paradox that needs to be mentioned here is that how such a philosophy which is profound in its originality and managed to develop long years ago has remained relegated, untouched and unexplored by the current generation. Generally, the teaching of *Daqiqa Estefanos* attests that accepting, imitating and echoing the knowledge which is given and acknowledged by the existing order is not the way of *ewqet* or truth; rather grasping the truth needs not only transcending what has already been given but also involves questioning and researching through *miremera* – all is anchored within a hermeneutical understanding of our own history.

3.4.3 Freedom of Expression and Thought

One cannot confidently speak regarding academic freedom without invoking the idea of freedom of expression and thought. Freedom of expression and thought are closely interrelated in such a way that since education involves not only the receiving (or acquisition) of knowledge from different sources but also the development of ideas of a different kind. The rationale behind the significance of freedom of opinion in academic freedom is that the individual would not merely produce information without the involvement of conceptual analysis or interpretation which is the crucial elements of education. It is commonly argued that “freedom of opinion is the first building block of academic freedom” (HRW, 2005, p. 11) for it is a *sine qua non* to have or develop an idea that could be expressed, analyzed or interpreted in a different way. When speaking the significance of freedom of thinking, it is argued that “it is not feelings or commitments that will render a man free, but thoughts, reasoned thoughts” (Bloom, n. d., p. 249). On the other hand, freedom of expression is one of the crucial parts of academic freedom for it makes possible the exchange of ideas and knowledge.

There are three types of reasoning that can justify the protection of freedom of expression. The first justification was developed by John Milton vis-a-vis his critics of a system of censorship which was introduced in England. Milton’s defense of freedom of expression, Gedion (2010) noted, is based on the rationale that this freedom is “a prerequisite for the already discovered truth to thrive and for undiscovered truth to be discovered” and he asserted that “censorship will be primely to the discouragement of all learning, and the stop of truth, not only by the disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindering and cropping the discovery that might be yet further made both in religious and civil wisdom” (p. 202).

After Milton, this role of freedom of expression as a necessary precondition in the search for truth, we are told, has been further elaborated by J.S. Mill and, then by Bertrand Russell. For Mill, we cannot learn and discover the truth without freedom of expression:

If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.... the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error (quoted in Irvine, 1996, P. 27).

In the same vein, Russell states the following:

No man can pass as educated who has heard only one side on questions as to which the public is divided.... *As soon as a censorship is imposed up on the opinions which teachers may avow, education ceases to serve this purpose and tends to produce, instead of a nation of men, a herd of fanatical bigots....* All those who oppose free discussion and who seek to impose a censorship up on the opinions to which the young are to be exposed are doing their share in increasing this bigotry and in plunging the world further into the abyss of strife and intolerance from which Locke and his coadjutors gradually rescued it (ibid; emphasis added).

The idea is that it is necessary to mankind to have new ideas, new hopes, and new thoughts, and all these are hardly possible to arise out of conformity or uniformity.

The second rationale regarding defending freedom of expression is based on the assumption that “the protection of free speech is justified since it is a prerequisite for self-governance” (Gedion, 2010, p. 203). In other words, freedom of expression facilitates democratic governance since it involves the free flow of information, ideas and opinions to all citizens.

The third rationale for defending freedom of expression and opinion is based on the argument that this freedom involves “human autonomy, personal development and fulfillment contingent on a person’s freedom to express one’s self as well as make independent choices of

what is right and wrong, what is in good taste or bad taste” (Gedion, 2010, p. 204). The idea is that freedom of expression is a necessary condition for mankind to fully develop their personality and be autonomous moral agents with a corresponding self-respect.

Generally, university professors and students should be free in expressing their opinions and thoughts for the progress of intellectual and social aspects of an individual. On the contrary, the repression of academic activities often leads both instructors and students to censor themselves thereby deterring creativity and knowledge; hence they should exercise these rights without being repressed or frightened, for it is a common truism that:

Academics who observe the intimidation or punishment of their colleagues may choose not to test the system because of either fear or desire to avoid the bureaucratic hassle. Such a chilling effect on freedom of opinion and expression can be as great a threat to academic freedom as direct repression (HRW, 2005, p. 15).

After all, since universities are places where open debate and free discussion reign and since it is widely apparent that holding a certain opinion requires an implicit recognition of the presence of opposite opinions with an equal weight, and since an opinion to be justified, it must be tested vis-à-vis or against contrary opinions for it is the best method in increasing the degree of truth in our beliefs which involves considering all sides of the debate, trying to evaluate all the relevant facts, avoiding our own prejudice via discussion with people who have opposite opinion, then exercising censorship up on university instructors and students is tantamount to negating the true essence of higher education – the unrestricted pursuit and discovery of truth and knowledge.

3.4.4 Freedom of Association

Freedom of association, like freedom of expression and opinion, is another component of academic freedom that plays a significant role for undertaking academic tasks by the members of

the academic community. This freedom is commonly viewed as the ability of individuals to join and form an association of a certain kind which is aimed at attaining a certain end without the meddling of the state, as it is vividly stipulated by the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: “the right of persons, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels” (quoted in International Federation for Human Rights [FIDH], 2009, p. 6).

The granting of the freedom to associate is based on the claim that the activity of the university is not limited to the classroom: it also involves both the formal and/or informal gatherings by members of the academic community. It follows that this freedom endows protection and security not only for associations formed by university professors, such as the well-known Association of American University Professors (AAUP) which was established in 1915, an instance of trade unions, but also extends to unions or associations which are established by students.

There are social scientists who argue that the need to form an association is a natural phenomenon. This thinking seems rooted in the truism that individuals always live in groups or communities. Freedom of association is also enshrined in the principles of international law such as Article 22 of the International Covenant on Cultural and Political Rights (ICCPR) which states that “everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests” (quoted in HRW, 2005, p. 13). This freedom is not only enshrined in the principles of international law, but also is closely related to

other freedoms, such as freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of movement and freedom of peaceful protest.

One thing that needs worth noting vis-à-vis freedom of association is the degree that this freedom is protected. Accordingly, it is, according to FIDH (2009), widely stated that freedom of expression is not a privilege that is absolute and that can be enjoyed without any limitation. Rather, it is legitimate to limit and suspend this freedom, at least, in times of public emergency that endangers national security and public safety (p. 8).

To sum up, freedom of association is one of the components of academic freedom that is intricately linked with other freedoms, such as freedom of expression and opinion. At the university setting, university professors and students can form a union that plays a paramount role in critiquing the received wisdom, norms, and systems and there by developing and pushing the frontiers of knowledge. In other words, one cannot speak about the full exercise of academic freedom unless there is a freedom that allows the coming together and formation of a union between/and members of the academic community (students and teachers) that can advocate and defend their interest that is, directly or indirectly, related to the true ideals of university – the quest for truth and pushing the frontiers of knowledge.

3.5 Academic Freedom and Responsibility

As it has been mentioned in the foregoing discussions, academic freedom is the best weapon in allowing members of the academic community to share and expand their knowledge and seek truth of whatever kind. This freedom, however, “is not a divine right bestowed upon academics, which can then use it (or even abuse it) in whatever way they like” (Jones, et al, 1999). Rather, academic freedom “comes with a price tag, namely, a range of expectations, responsibilities, and accountability” (Jones, et al, 1999, p 19). In other words, since it is

unrealistic to expect rights without corresponding duties, then academic freedom involves a corresponding responsibility, academic responsibility, to be observed in the process of conducting ones academic task. Universities, we are told, are repositories where knowledge is pursued for its own sake and “the pursuit of truth in universities”, in turn, Downs (2009) argues, “requires adherence to fundamental principles of intellectual integrity and responsibility— obligations that are not enforceable in the general marketplace of ideas” (p. 5). Hence, academic freedom and academic responsibility are two faces of a single coin.

It is widely argued that “academic freedom and responsibility have long been topics for public concern and debate” (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2006, P. 1). Despite its debatable nature, “academic responsibility implies the faithful performance of professional duties and obligations, the recognition of the demands of the scholarly enterprise, and the candor to make it clear that, when one is speaking on matters of public interest, one is not speaking for the institution” (Nelson, 2010, p. 49). There are three main circumstances (or cases) where exercising academic freedom requires a corresponding academic responsibility in areas such as teaching, research and extramural activities.

Regarding scholarship, scholars argue that academic responsibility which obliges a researcher to adhere to the principle of intellectual integrity forestalls academics from any kind of academic misconduct specifically plagiarism – a scientific misconduct which involves “fabrication or deliberate falsification of data, research procedures, or data analysis, willful error, and unwarranted use or interpretation of data” (Jones, et al., 1999) – all of which are a clear manifestations of negating the principles of academic freedom since “*academic freedom does not extend to passing off the work of others as one’s own*” (Downs, 2009, p. 16; emphasis added). In other words, anyone who claims to have done a certain research is claiming honesty or

trust. In contrast, if he/she simply lifts the finding of a research from someone else, it is not only an abuse of a trust, but also an injury to a third person: it is s theft but not an academic work.

Regarding teaching, it is widely stated that “we should not discourage professors from seeking truth and being honest about their thoughts in class” and “there is nothing inherently wrong with a professor taking a position (or holding private views) in class” (Downs, 2009, p. 11). However, professors are not allowed to present fraudulent material as truthful and indoctrinate (or coerce students to accept his private views). Thus, academic freedom involves “high ethical standards of behavior”, and “without this, academic standards are placed in peril, and academic freedom is called into question. Implicit in this is the responsibility to profess what one knows to be true, and the converse, to refrain from professing what one knows to be false” (Jones, et al., 1999, p. 19).

Most of the time, it is not uncommon to experience controversial and debatable issues; and at this time it is preferable to “teach all sides of the debate” (AAC&U, 2006, P.2) and the failure to do so is to stand in a stark contrast to the principles of academic freedom. Teaching all sides of the debate, in turn, helps students to develop the habits of good thinking and, unlike indoctrination, develop in their mind to critically engage the different perspectives and then reach at a decision on what is best for themselves.

The third main case (or context) in relation to academic responsibility is extramural speech and action. In this regard, the 1915 AAUP’s *Declaration on the Principles of Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure* defines extramural speech as “the expression of judgments and opinions outside of the classroom – and political activities, even when they pertain to questions falling outside the academic specialty of the faculty member” (quoted in Shaffer, n. d., p. 3). If we argue that universities are not ‘ivory towers’ since they are part and parcel of society in

grappling with their problems and since it, according to Perkin Harold, is argued that “when universities cease to be engaged with society and with the emerging scientific and political developments of an era, they tend to be moribund” (quoted in Altbach, 2008, p. 8), then it is inevitable for the academics to be engaged in applying their knowledge to solve societal problems- hence involves undertaking different types of speech and action. However, academics are not given an absolute freedom in making their speech and the corresponding action outside the classroom environment since they are, at least, under an obligation to avoid hasty or exaggerated expressions and to refrain from illogical and sensational modes of statements.

To sum up, the foregoing discussed academic responsibilities are not the sole responsibilities¹⁴ of the academics in the university; rather it is to mean that these are the core duties of academics which needs a due respect and recognition for they largely determine the proper implementation and exercise of academic freedom.

¹⁴ In addition to the responsibilities of the academics in scholarship, teaching, and in extramural activities, there is, among others, a responsibility to the society as a whole for universities, most of the time, are founded and funded by the society - hence, universities should strive to the betterment of societal life.

CHAPTER FOUR

Academic Freedom in Addis Ababa University

4.1 The Status of Academic Freedom in Addis Ababa University

Addis Ababa University, since its commencement as a university college in the early 1950s, has traversed through a long journey of ups-and-downs pertinent to its history of academic freedom. As it is indicated in chapter two of this paper, the exercise and defense of academic freedom in AAU was relatively better during the Imperial regime although the deterioration of this freedom had started when the Military regime came to power. Under the current regime, such a beginning in stifling and undermining of academic freedom has reached at a stage when this privilege is almost absent. The main parameters which are used in order to measure such a total absence of the privilege of academic freedom, under the current regime, includes, among others, the nature of tenure security, freedom of research and teaching, institutional autonomy, freedom of association, freedom of expression and thought, including the main contemporary challenges facing academic freedom such as political or ideological interference, the influence of globalization and neoliberalism.

4.1.1 Academic Freedom in Teaching and Tenure Security

Universities as institutions primarily aiming at pushing the frontiers of knowledge need teachers who are capable of delivering the knowledge that they had and facilitate the overall teaching –learning process. In order to do so, faculties (or teachers), the main actors of the overall teaching-learning process in general and actors of knowledge production in particular, need to be free from both internal (such as administrators) and external (governmental)

interference. However, AAU, under the current ethno-federalist government, does not have a good recorded history pertinent to guaranteeing and protecting the academic freedom of university professors –many of the professors are either fired, or left the country due to political marginalization and lack of security. This history is closely related to the incompatible nature of two contradictory interests: on the one hand, professors’ bold critics of the different policies and actions of the government, an important university ideal, and, on the other hand, the government’s intolerant nature of entertaining critics of whatever kind.

The government has been deliberately interfering and acting against the activities of teachers’ by sanctioning and stifling dissenting opinions– hence behaving in a stark contrast to the idea of university for, according to Hufford (2008), “a teacher should be encouraged to doubt, to recognize and build upon discontent, and to actively question, rather than passively accept, officially-sanctioned, transmitted knowledge” (p. 86). The government has started its measure against dissenting faculties by committing one of the most callous incident in the history of AAU: it wrote and sent a letter to more than 40 professors who are known not only in their strong academic caliber but also known in their bold dissenting voices against government policies and actions, stating that their contract agreement will not be renewed – just two years after it came to power – in 1993. This measure is one of the most egregious actions taken by the government against AAU teachers for not only it has scored the highest record in summarily firing a large number of professors, but also in its subsequent chilling effect – it inculcated a fear that it is better to keep quiet for survival – a fear which says “tomorrow is my fate” (Z. Tsegaye, personal communication, May 20, 2015).

According to Baye (2008), there had been no contract renewal for a national staff for about two decades since the fall of the monarchy – those with a PhD had tenure automatically (p.

47-48). Currently, however, “all faculties have to submit themselves every two years for renewal of appointment” (Lemlem, 2010, p. 62). In the opinion of many writers, the introduction of a two-year contract agreement is not only against tenure security and the negation of academic freedom thereof, but it also had an implicit purpose of trapping those who act against the political interest of the government. The implicit and clear message from the government vis-à-vis the introduction of the contract agreement is that the government could fire and dismiss those who are thought to be “detrimental” to the system. Such a chilling effect has created a challenge against debating on issues which are controversial – an action which relegates the proper exercise of the ideals of university education that requires debate and discussion.

Also, the overall frightening nature of the academic environment has resulted in what scholars called an ‘intellectual opportunism’ – supporting the current line of thinking or pretending to embrace the prevailing line of thinking without critically scrutinizing it. It also involves hiding or suppressing the true feelings of individuals based on calculation. The immediate consequence of such thinking affects academic freedom in the sense that “opportunists are not free”, and “one who is not able to liberate himself can’t help others to liberate” (G. Dessalegn, personal communication, June 5, 2015). As a result, it is not uncommon to see professors who are ‘intellectual opportunists’ and are inclined to swallow the ideology of the government uncritically – bigots who are preoccupied in producing other bigots who are ready to consume without questioning and critical scrutiny. However, “the role of intelligentsia,” in the words of Chomsky, “is not to accept everything for granted and support the status quo but to critically support the status quo” (ibid).

The root of such a measure lies in the implicit motto of the government which, usually, presents only two options - one to favor and the other not to favor - either to applaud to whatever

the government says in meetings and trainings and follow the EPRDF's path (a telling term in its own right) or line, or they will be blacklisted or branded. Naturally, such a motive on the part of the government is deeply rooted in the ideology of Revolutionary Democracy¹⁵ which has an ambition to control everything and create a hegemonic system thereof. Revolutionary Democracy, which is intended at collectivizing all groups or citizens to follow the dictates of the regime, commits a false dichotomy in the sense that those who remain outside its dictate or those who fail to be abided by the dictate are considered to be "detrimental" to the system. Even, middle settlers or those who are indifferent (those who are interested neither to abhor nor to negate their ideology) are not allowed to exist.

Since to be branded includes a number of dire consequences to the teachers, such as not getting promoted, not getting research grants, losing housing (if there is), not getting travel grants, being excluded from collegial interaction and to be fired, etc., many of the teachers prefer to submit to what the government needs. After all, since intellectuals are perceived to be "vacillating group that could align itself with enemy forces" (Vestal, 1999, P. 68-69), the best strategy of persuading the intellectuals and making them submissive to the ideology of Revolutionary Democracy is "by filling their bellies and pockets" (quoted in Vestal, 1999, P. 74). In contrast to this, if intellectuals oppose this ideology and criticize government policies and actions, "the party should make empty their 'belly and pocket'" (Vestal, 1999, P. 74-75) and, even, fire them permanently.

¹⁵ The ideology of Revolutionary Democracy is primarily preoccupied at polarizing societies such as oppressed (the mass of the people) and oppressors (enemies or ruling classes). The implicit motive of this polarization is that those who are not submissive to the principles of Revolutionary Democracy are simply branded as enemies and detrimental to the system; and those who are ready to accept government's ideology without questioning and critical scrutiny are friends.

The best example, in this regard, that substantiates this argument is the recent measure taken by the politically agitated university administrators together with the implicit decision of higher government politicians in firing the two well-known vociferous and forthright university professors, Merara Gudina and Dagnachew Assefa. Currently, AAU becomes an institution where, in the word of Rhoades (1998), “faculties have become ‘managed professionals,’ while middle-level administrators have become ‘managerial professionals’” (quoted in Gumport, 2000, p. 78).

This is due to the fact that higher administrators of the university, such as the President who are appointed by the government, are accountable not to the university community but to the agent who appointed them – the government. As a result, their primary purpose is to execute the political whims of the government, however contrary to the ideals of university. Moreover, there is an erroneous and implicit contempt and suspicion on the part of the government that university professors are not true friends and full partners in the university setting, and the administrators conceive of themselves as the ‘true vanguard’ of the university (hence dubbed as ‘managerial professionals’). The logical conclusion is the assumption that faculties are simply resources that need to be gripped and managed (‘managed professionals’).

Let me sum up this section by raising questions which I hope can pinpoint the extent that academic freedom has been undermined in AAU by the current Ethiopian government: Is it not surprising for a university professor to be interrogated and be threatened by government security agents? Is it not surprising when the contents of class lectures are reviewed by external individuals? Is it not puzzling when university professors are not ready to be interviewed regarding issues which are politically sensitive such as academic freedom?

4.1.2 Research and Academic Freedom

The ideal of university mandates that universities are repositories where knowledge is not only created but also disseminated. Knowledge production, in turn, is possible via research – the main instrument of pushing the frontiers of knowledge. In other words, because research becomes valuable only when the finding is disseminated to the target population, the main mechanisms that help to distribute the produced knowledge are teaching, publication and applying the finding to serve the community.

The other issue that needs worth considering vis-a-vis the idea of scholarship is the idea of funding that can be done either by a private or public sector. However, it is not uncommon to experience for funding, including publication to be influenced, contrary to the ideal of unbiased search for knowledge, by the funding authority for, they, sometimes, expect that the products of research be concomitant with their preconceived idea. This conflict of interest usually occurs between the business persons and politicians on the one hand, and academicians on the other. The conflict between the two sectors mainly arises from the incompatible nature, motive, and calling of these sectors. The primary calling and nature of politicians and business persons is immediate use value – either sustaining political power or seeking more profit respectively. On the other hand, the characteristic feature or callings of academicians is not for immediate utility rather it is for the production and advancement of knowledge irrespective of its use value.

In AAU, there are many factors which curtail the production and dissemination of knowledge especially in the faculty of social sciences and humanities. According to Baye (2008), in the three successive regimes the contribution of research in knowledge production was not significant for “research in the Humanities and Social Sciences has always been prescribed and often under-funded and/or indirectly discouraged with stringent financial rules and inefficient

financial administration” (p. 57). As a consequence, AAU has become the disseminator and consumer of knowledge at the expense of one of the fundamental missions of a university: center for the cradle or discovery of knowledge. Also, during the Military regime, there was much emphasis given for science and technology compared to the social sciences and humanities.

The current government’s mission of ‘nationalization’, which aims at establishing a hegemonic system, prescribes that research has to be conducted only in areas which are thought to be “problem solving” thereby contribute for development. The same principle applies to funding. This problem, however, has become more serious and pervasive in the current EPRDF regime. The problem is anchored in the recently introduced policy of student admission of 70:30% - 70% new entrants in to universities are forced to join in the fields of science, engineering and technology, and the remaining 30% of new entrants join the faculties of social sciences and humanities. The assumption, however erroneously, is that social sciences and humanities are not as significant as the natural sciences and engineering for development. Such thinking also goes to the issue of research funding, i.e., the social sciences and humanities are underfunded. Also, such a policy discriminates knowledge for it discourages the exploration of knowledge in the faculty of social sciences and humanities.

The idea of university, however, prescribe that university, as the name implies, is the center of a holistic type of knowledge and broad liberal education. This action not only seriously impedes the production and dissemination of knowledge in social sciences and humanities but also infringe on the academic freedom of professors who are specialized in these disciplines. After all, it is the privilege for academics to be funded while they are undertaking research – irrespective of the finding of the research: valuable for development or not. Also, “human life cannot be fulfilled by developing science and technology alone and building roads and houses or

producing abundant food” (G. Birhanu, Personal communication, June 5, 2015). Even, Birhanu added, it is not convincing to discriminate the social sciences and humanities for, at least, they are the ones “to help to define the purpose of science and technology” (ibid).

My argument in defense of the social sciences and humanities is not by discarding the fact that most of the research findings in the area of applied sciences, such as science and technology, are more vital in solving short term problems than the findings which are produced in the social sciences and humanities. Rather, it is based on the idea that the primary mission of universities is not to produce immediately salable goods and services, but to produce knowledge of whatever kind in different fields of study. Since, university education is holistic, it is logically contradictory to undermine and discriminate the production and dissemination of knowledge in the fields of social sciences and humanities during research.

4.1.3 Freedom of Expression and Thought

Freedom of thought and freedom of expression vis-à-vis academic freedom are necessary conditions for the discovery of truth, personal development, and self-governance which are themselves the fruits of broad liberal learning. Since universities are repositories where open debate and free discussion, which are the main instruments in the creation of knowledge and creativity, are primarily sought, it is a necessary condition, both in principle and practice, for universities to allow the main actors, especially students and teachers, use and express their thought free from interference, both outside and inside the university. Since freedom of expression and freedom of thought are the bases for other freedoms such freedom of association, rights of tenure, freedom of peaceful demonstration, etc., a very critical and special emphasis has to be given for these freedoms.

In line with this understanding, let me, with a keen interest, present a bird's eye view of the situation and extent of these freedoms [freedom of thought and expression] in the post 1991 AAU. To do so, let me begin by quoting Bertrand Russell's idea, pertinent to freedom of opinion and expression, as follows:

Let it be remembered that what is at stake, in the greatest issues as well as in those that seem smaller, is *the freedom of the individual human spirit to express its beliefs and hopes for mankind, whether they be shared by many or by few or none. New hopes, new beliefs, and new thoughts are at all times necessary to mankind, and it is not out of a dead uniformity that they can be expected to arise*" (quoted in Irvine, 1996, P. 27; emphasis added).

This entails that since universities are places where university ideals such as the creation of new ideas, new hopes, new knowledge, creativity and truth are pursued indefinitely, free speech and opinion buttressed by academic freedom are a *sine qua non* for the realization of these ideals. Also, for these university ideals to be ensured properly, what is needed is not unanimity or conformity but dissent (or discontent), for, Jiddu Krishnamurti argues, "*discontent is the way of inquiry . . . Discontent is a movement to go beyond the limitations of what is*" (quoted in Hufford, 2008, p. 86; emphasis added), and subversiveness, for "*to be subversive is to be an agent of change; to be, in the words of Abraham Heschel, a prophet, one who "feels fiercely . . . who asks the challenging questions"* (ibid; emphasis added).

In stressing the significance of dissenting and subversive opinions and the absence of conformity in the pursuit and discovery of new ideas and knowledge, Russell remarks that "*the only point on which the university should require unanimity of opinion is on the matter of the university's purpose, which is to foster knowledge. Short of this, and on every other subject, each instructor should be free to hold his own opinion*" (Irvine, 1996, P. 2; emphasis added). The idea is that establishing a university's purpose, the production of new knowledge, is incompatible

with restricting the freedom to hold and express one's opinions for it is hardly possible to produce knowledge without an effective use of these freedoms.

Historically, in Ethiopia, freedom of expression and opinion, at least on paper, has been given recognition for more than a century – it started since the time of the Imperial regime. However, in Ethiopian constitutional history, freedom of expression was stipulated in the most elaborative way in the 1995 FDRE constitution albeit the practice is not far from its lip service for there has been a constant violation and deterioration of this freedom. The dominant political culture, which is characterized by command and control, is known in its intolerance of any kind of dissent and public critics. This political orientation reads that any kind of challenge or criticism of the different policies, decisions, and actions made and espoused by the government, including questioning those in power had been considered as a rebellion or treason. Such a political orientation encourages passive acceptance and the corresponding acceptance of whatever limitation imposed on freedom of expression: an overarching problem in the production of new ideas and knowledge.

This orientation has also engulfed the current ethno-federalist government of Ethiopia and its constituents. The root of the problem regarding freedom of expression and freedom of thought, the basis for all other freedoms at a university level, under the current EPRDF government, I strongly argue, is derived from the very nature, interpretation and practice of the ideology of Revolutionary Democracy with its implicit motive of creating a hegemonic system by controlling everything and putting it under its own mandate. Revolutionary Democracy which has a feature of Marxist lineage, Abbink (2006) opines, *aims at the collective mobilization of the Ethiopian people which is led by the party from above* (p. 195). As a result, “it envisages the

party as a vanguard political force, which is not inclined to compromise with opposition forces because it is convinced that *it has the solution for everything*” (ibid; emphasis added).

What I want to underscore, here, is that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for the party to allow the presence of dissenting opinions and critics of any kind, for the ruling elites have mustered an erroneous “political confidence” to believe that they had “*the solution for everything*”, as it is mentioned above. As a consequence, there are two options to be presented: either to accord with the idea of Revolutionary Democracy and its teachings and be part of the “benefit” which is acquired from accepting this ideology or face a misery of different types. In order to substantiate my argument, let me borrow the definition and role of Revolutionary Democracy which was given by the Late Prime Minister Meles:

When Revolutionary Democracy permeates the entire society, *individuals will start to think alike and all persons will cease having their own independent outlook*. In this order, *individual thinking becomes simply part of collective thinking* because the individual will not be in a position to reflect on concepts that have not been prescribed by Revolutionary Democracy (quoted in HRW, 2010, p. 14).

This understanding has to be analyzed critically in the sense that the foundation of such a pervasive problem of academic freedom is anchored in such an interpretation. Under such a scenario, it is hardly possible to anticipate dissenting opinions and critical thinking because the government has established, albeit implicitly, a standard that entails all individuals to act and follow, irrespective of the interest, idiosyncrasy, and beliefs of an individual, that standard. This is tantamount to establishing a path, under the rubric of Revolutionary Democracy, so that all individuals are expected and forced to follow that single tunnel or path. The principles of Revolutionary Democracy do not allow the presence of not only dissenting opinions and critics, but also do not allow the presence of independent thinking and personal judgment. What is needed is only collective thinking or conformity, a thinking which is dangerous for creativity and

development, and individuals are not allowed to develop their own conceptual framework and then be guided by it. Rather, they have to develop a certain collective conceptual framework and be guided by that framework.

To put it simply, the ideology of Revolutionary Democracy is the “only dominant standard” or paradigm to be followed but not to be questioned and debated – the “only best alternative” for all Ethiopian people. In other words, Revolutionary Democracy is not only the sole option for improving the living standards of the Ethiopian people, but also the only best way for the “survival of Ethiopia as a nation” (Vestal, 1999, P. 68). This is the extreme situation of the effects of ‘standardization’ which transfers a clear message, for our universities, that “do our bidding, reach our standards, meet our goals or cease to exist” (Bevel, 2008, p. 12). In this situation, it is hardly possible to have a dissenting opinion even at times when this ideology is found to be wrong – the principle of conformity or standardization at its zenith.

The logical outcome of such thinking nullifies other alternative ways of approaching issues or problems other than the pre-established standard – a disastrous implication upon the notion of knowledge and education (such as university education). Thus, only the knowledge which is espoused by the government is not only the “sole” true knowledge but also is the only “valuable” ones; and the same principle holds to the standards of education in general and university education in particular. After all, it is a truism to anticipate and argue that universities are centers of intellectual debate and discussion on controversial issues so long as the debate and discussion is based on logic. When, contrary to this ideal, universities are subjected to such standardization, they cannot be used as places where challenging and controversial issues are raised and debated safely – hence intellectual life suffers most – a typical problem of the current AAU.

In order to substantiate my argument, let me use Lyotard's underpinning of the "positivist knowledge" unlike the "critical and reflective" ones. For him, the "critical or reflective knowledge" is full of values and ethical principles which can be expressed in different language games, hence it cannot be standardized. Such type of knowledge allows the free flow of ideas, the presence of dialectics and conversation between the society and the government. Accordingly, "the people and the government are equals, giving and receiving their power from one another. Here knowledge serves humanity not itself" (Bevel, 2008, p. 11). This entails that there should not be a motive on the part of government to control and manipulate its people because the presence of the dialect and conversation between the people and the government inevitably produces a number of possibilities in approaching and dealing with problems.

Unlike this type of knowledge, the "positivist knowledge" negates the presence of dialogue and conversation between the people and the government since it presents narratives containing only two alternatives: either *yes* or *no* – committing a false dichotomy. The implicit intention of such knowledge is designed not only to present these "two alternatives", but it also forces its people to accept the first [*yes*] and relegating the second [*no*] one. The purpose is straightforward: "The government uses 'positivist knowledge' to capture and control its citizenry in the name of progress, and to create standards in education programs" (Bevel, 2008, p. 11). In this way, the government uses such a conception of knowledge in order to command and control its citizens thereby stifling the freedom to hold and express one's opinion, undermine creativity, dissent and critical thinking. This is how the government standardizes knowledge and then certifies individuals who had this type of knowledge which is stipulated by the government. The consequence of such standardization is that only a knowledge which is stipulated and espoused

by the government is considered as knowledge and valuable and the remaining discourse is negated and discarded as worthless.

The main reason in dealing and using such an epistemological weapon, as it is best interpreted by Lyotard, is based on the cardinal idea that such an understanding of ‘positivist knowledge’ is best exercised in AAU, by the current ethno-federalist EPRDF government. Moreover, the kind of government standardization based on Lyotard’s interpretation of a ‘positivist knowledge’ affects not only the freedom to hold and express one’s opinion but it also permeates the overall activities of AAU pertinent to academic freedom, such as its autonomy, freedom of association, the rights of tenure, and the overall academic freedoms of students. How?

As noted, the ideology of Revolutionary Democracy is interpreted and applied by the government as it encompasses only two options: either to be in accord with this philosophy or to reject it. Moreover, this option implicitly entails that those individuals who accept and act in line with this principle are privileged, right, and worthy to their country; while those who act contrary to the first option (those who fail to accord with the principles of Revolutionary Democracy) will face a “disastrous” outcome. The principles of academic freedom, however, presupposes that *“freedom of the mind requires not only, or not even especially, the absence of legal constraints but the presence of alternative thoughts”* (Bloom, n. d., p. 249; emphasis added).

Trying to pretend and convince an individual of the presence of “only two options”, by undermining other alternatives, is tantamount to arguing that there are only two ways of approaching every phenomenon in this world including problems - a true authoritarian¹⁶ dictate –

¹⁶ In such a system, the only means of generating power is by creating a repressive system and excluding potential challengers or enemies that exists in the form of political parties or mass unions. Thus, since

a powerful system that is capable of dominating and stifling reality that lies beyond its own setting or purview. The claim that there are only two ways of approaching nature or phenomenon is self-refuting in the sense that even in order to prove and justify the fact that the two options are the “only options” at hand, we need to have another parameter or approach to stand and rely on.

Antithetical to the dictates of Revolutionary Democracy and its false dichotomy, the idea of university in general and knowledge production in particular prescribes that “knowledge is without limit, constructed in the individual by the individual and simultaneously connected to all other things in the universe. True knowledge and learning cannot be standardized or controlled. Rather, knowledge opens many doors with endless possibilities” (Bevel, 2008, p. 11). In AAU, contrary to this cardinal insight, what is needed is only conformity, collective thinking and to applaud whatever the government says. Since “obedience to party dogma is mandatory” (Vestal, 1999, P. 185), what is expected from the academic community is simply to accept passively whatever the government utters to them. To use the words of Lyotard, “everyone learns the same content, everyone thinks alike with no questions asked and everyone is accessed with the same tools” (Bevel, 2008, p. 12).

Simply put, the students and teachers of AAU are expected to be in accord with the implicit ‘standard’ – to follow the EPRDF’s line and readiness to accept whatever it says. Both students and teachers are not allowed to hold and express their own feelings there by hampering the skills of creativity, critical thinking, independent judgment, and the development of new

there is an attempt to impose controls on almost all elements of society, it is impossible to anticipate freedoms. There are always orders coming from the top.

knowledge in particular and the free exercise of academic freedom in general. In this manner, AAU has been controlled and manipulated to serve the instrumentalist purpose of maintaining the existing status quo.

The overall dictating nature of the collectivizing Revolutionary Democracy has been vividly used in the education sector including university education in such a way that the mission of universities is designed to be ‘nationalization’ (or service to the government of Ethiopia), just to use the words of Scott. Accordingly, the overall academic activities of teaching, research, including public service have to be instrumentally used in areas that the government deem essential at the expense of the cardinal rationale of university education – the quest for truth. Obviously, the traditional missions of universities, such as teaching, research, and community service, are still apparent. What is missing and relegated, however, is the proper exercise of the traditional missions since these missions have been supplanted by the general mission of ‘nationalization’ which exactly fit the instrumentalist purpose of preserving state power.

Thus, the overall activities of teaching, research and community service have been trapped and used to fit this standardization principle that is implicitly anchored within the principle of Revolutionary Democracy and its corresponding role of creating a hegemonic system by controlling every section of the university community. Accomplishing this task on the part of government is straightforward. First, the government, as it has been done in the past two decades, appointed presidents who are politically loyal and ready to execute the political program of the government. The appointed president is answerable not to the university community but to the Board which is itself dominated by top government individuals. Second, there is no such a smooth and favorable communication between the president and the university community because the president is not elected and be answerable to the faculty and students:

such a governmental management nullifies collegial governance. Thus, the only task of such a government appointed president is to execute and dictate, without scrutiny, the policy of the government via a top-down approach.

In such a way, the university is instrumentally used in order to achieve the rudimentary missions of nationalization –for ends that best fits, contrary to the popular ideal of university, the interest of politicians and their corresponding system (or state power). The logical outcome of such a practice hampers the production of a young generation who is capable of raising questions that best cater critical thinking, such as the *why*, and *how* of something, it kills the curiosity, critical thinking and imagination of both students and teachers, even resulted in the cultivation of individuals who are unable to question their self (who am I?) and unable to understand their existential situation.

In order to assist and implement the philosophy of controlling everything, via its mission of ‘nationalization’, the government has introduced three types of proclamations since 2008. These are the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, the Charities and Societies Proclamation and the Mass Media Proclamation. In the opinions of many commentators and writers, it has been repeatedly argued that these proclamations significantly hinder the rights of the academic community pertinent to freedom of expression including their ability to interrogate and criticize the government.

The new Anti-terrorism proclamation of 2009, for instance, “contains an overly broad definition of terrorism which can encompass even peaceful expressions of dissent and political protest” (HRW, 2010, p. 50). In other words, this law, critics argued, has been systematically used, in the pretext of counter- terrorism, to muffle and silence those individuals, especially the educated ones, who openly criticize and question the practice of government policies and actions by

negating the Madisonian principle which holds that “citizens have an absolute right to criticize, without fear, government officials whom they have designated to temporarily rule in their behalf” (Vestal, 1999, P. 14-15). As a result, freedom of expression has become an easy prey for it is being criminalized – the actions of those who oppose the government peacefully are interpreted as an act of terrorism.

During the Imperial regime there were relatively vivid manifestations of the prevalence of the freedom to hold and express one’s opinion, both by teachers and students. There were a number of student publications, among others, *UC Calls*, *Campus Star*, *News and views*, *Struggle*, *Message*, *Voice of Ethiopia*, *University Reporter*, etc., which, many of them, were run and administered by the students via their unions (NUES, UCU, and USUAA); there was a program called *Debating Society*; there were College Day Poems¹⁷; and there was a relatively better environment for teachers to express their ideas via their association. All these forums were outlets where the ideas and feelings of both students and teachers were circulated freely. This does not mean that students were absolutely free to write and express their feelings for, among other things, there were restrictions in areas such as politics, religion and tribe. The issues to be included within these publications and programs are of various types – centers of debate on

¹⁷ The College Day Poems were started around 1959 and they were, even, financed by the Ministry of Education and by the will and direct order of the Emperor. What was interesting and unique was that these poems (the three winning poems of the year) were read in front of his Imperial Majesty. Among the most popular poems which were presented during the College Day were Yohaness Admassu’s “*Please, Be Asked*” (or *Please, Let Me Ask You*); Yilma Kebede’s “*Life*”; Tegene Yeteshawork’s “*Man Is A Riddle*”; and Tamiru Feyessa’s “*The Poor Man Speaks*”, to mention a few. See Balsivik’s book entitled *Haile Selassie’s Students: the Intellectual and Social Background to the revolution, 1952-1974*, (2005).

social, political and economic problems, as it is indicated in the purposes of *Struggle* - one of the Newspapers during that time. It was to go on:

condemning injustice, oppression, feudalism, semi-colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism and all the rest of the social evils wherever and whenever they exist... we cannot afford to be indifferent in such a society as ours which is engulfed by all social problems of a stagnant society (quoted in Balsivik, 2005, p. 168).

However, during the Military regime such profound forums to hold and express opinions have started to be hindered and muffled. Virtually all publications together with their unions had started to be vanished leaving only few forums such as UTF with its publication called *Tayyik*, and ETA with a forum called *dialogue*.

After reviewing the three successive governments of “Emperor Haile Selassie I, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam and ex-guerrilla Meles Zenawi, Balsvik, according to Gebru (2009), concluded that all these regimes were characterized by repression of dissent except the Emperor have been thought to be more tolerant than successors (p. 1). Most writers and researchers such as Balsivik, Gebru Tareke, Baye Yimam, and many others argue that the Emperor was more tolerant of dissent than its immediate successors although these writers were unable to clearly compare and contrast the extent of this freedom from the perspective of the Military regime and that of the EPRDF. Here lies my difference. Although quite a number of attempts were made to stifle and muffle the freedom to hold and express opinions, of both students and teachers, there were also circumstances when/where the academic community could express what they feel, during the Military regime.

In fact, the overall political turmoil of the time was frustrating and there were professors who fled out of their country as a consequence. Since the country’s political system of that time was such that taking a political stand of a certain type and being a member of a certain factional or ideological group was fashionable, educators fled out of their country not because of a direct

influence of the government with in the day-to-day activities of the university teachers and students rather due to a fear of being branded and harassed or, sometimes, being killed. During this time, there was no a heavy handed attempt to control the university albeit there were certain symptoms, such as curricular revisions in the social sciences and humanities, in doing so (T. Girum, personal communication, May 25, 2015). Also, during the Military regime, there were few, if not all, university professors whom they boldly criticize government policies and actions at the classroom level. Also, according to Dessalegn, “there were debating programs and there were professors who are free in speaking during conferences.” Similarly, for Vestal (1999), “Addis Ababa University, which had maintained a remarkable degree of academic freedom even under the Derg, was a hotbed of democratic, anti-authoritarian ideas, and outspoken critics of the TGE (P. 56). However, there are others, like Tekalegn, who argue that during the Military regime, there was a total restriction of dissenting opinions and he dubbed the time as the “dark age.”

The current EPRDF government, I argue, is more intolerant of dissent and critics than the Military regime for, among other things, it has closed the forum of the chapter of the former ETA, the Addis Ababa University Teachers Association, *dialogue*, that had been tolerated and operational even by the time of the Military regime. The EPRDF government has also banned the only student newspaper, *Hilina*. Today, there is no way to dissent and hold an independent position within a university setting. This can be exemplified by the recently introduced policy of 1:5 arrangements within a university. Such a policy, as it is repeatedly shared by many commentators, has nothing to do with university missions. It is a policy that has been imposed on the academic community, without the consent of both teachers and students, for the purpose of controlling the academic community via continuous political indoctrination. This, however, does

not mean that such a policy is peacefully accepted and exercised by the academic community since there, except deans and very few department heads, are quite a significant number of professors who still oppose this policy.

Antithetical to such an arrangement, Girum opines that “I have the right not to be organized. Being paid by the government is not a necessary condition to be organized. If it becomes mandatory, then it is not only against my academic freedom, but it also negates my personal freedom.” Such a policy, in the opinion of many, may not be intrinsically bad. The mess comes when it is practically applied. It is used in order to check and know each other’s feelings and attitudes vis-à-vis the policies and practices of the government. It has been used in order to know whether an individual is a sympathizer or an opponent to the system.

The extent of stifling freedom of expression in AAU has reached at its zenith when individuals started to think that they even do not trust their close friends and families for they believe that there are eyes and ears everywhere searching and listening the thinking and uttering of individuals. Also, such a restriction of freedom has reached at its zenith when it is perceived that the government is ready to implement whatever means or strategy, no matter poignant and debilitating it is, so long as it results in defending and preserving the political system or state power by circumventing the traditional missions of universities in to ‘nationalization’ – a purely Machiavellian strategy.

At this point, it is worth noting interrogate, by borrowing the expression of Gebru (2009), and then provide an answer for this question, regarding the EPRDF government’s intolerant nature of freedom of expression and opinion:

How is it that the current leaders, who were active participants in the student protests of the 1960's and 1970s, and who have established a federal system with a relatively boisterous press, are less permissive of free expression and

assemblage within the premise of the academic world than the autocracy they helped destroy? (p. 1).

As it is noted above, the answer for this interrogation lies, I argue, that since the core of the EPRDF government were themselves members of the students' movement of the 1960s and 1970s, they are well conscious of how much the educated sections of Ethiopian people, such as students and teachers, are powerful enough not only in interrogating and criticizing the different policy issues including the inefficiency of those in power, but also in overthrowing the regime altogether. From its attempt of controlling everything by stifling dissent and critics of whatever kind, the EPRDF government is consciously or unconsciously reflecting and sharing a feature which is vividly included in a statement made by Churchill against/about Hitler:

You see these dictators on their pedestals, surrounded by the bayonets of their soldiers and the truncheons of their police. Yet in their hearts there is unspoken-unspeakable!-Fear. They are afraid of words and thoughts! Words spoken abroad, thoughts stirring at home, all the more powerful because they are forbidden. These terrify them. A little mouse - a little tiny mouse! – of thought appears in the room, and even the mightiest potentates are thrown in to panic (quoted in Baye, 2008, p. 39).

Lastly, let me conclude my discussion and analysis of the extent and feature of freedom of expression and opinion under the current EPRDF regime by borrowing an admonition which says that “silence, I would say, is more painful than the bullets of occupation” (Barghouti, & Murray, 2006). Hence, the government, which has been primarily preoccupied in silencing and muzzling the educated sections of its own people in general and the academic community of AAU in particular, is acting contrary to the principles of academic freedom in particular and the idea of university education at large. In its attempt to inculcate a uniform thinking system or conceptual framework, the government is negating the very principle of nature and its diversity: Mankind is not one and the same.

4.1.4 Freedom of Association

Freedom of association is based on the assumption that the life of a university is not restricted to the classroom setting, rather it transcends to include the different forms of gatherings, which can be formal or informal, of members of the academic community such as students and teachers. Thus, one cannot speak about the full exercise of academic freedom, with in a university context, unless there is a liberty that allows the coming together and unionization between/among members of the academic community (students and teachers) to advocate and defend their interest.

In AAU, the history of the freedom to unionize and form an association has been limited significantly albeit the degree of such control varies. Relatively speaking, there were independent associations created by both the students and teachers during the monarchy. The prominent students associations¹⁸ during this period include the National Union of Ethiopian Students (NUES) with a membership from Alemaya, Gonder and AAU with a corresponding publication named *Message*; University College Union (UCU) with a membership including only the students of AAU, and the union of all university students in Addis Ababa (USUAA) with its publication *Struggle*. These student associations were powerful and bold in their critics of the social, cultural, economic and political aspects of their country, and they played as a stepping

¹⁸ However, there were also small scale department-wise associations such as the Sociology Students' Association, the Political Science Students' Association, the Education Students' Association, the Business Students' Association, Law Students' Association, with their corresponding publications such as *Voice of SOSTA*, *Political Science Review*, *The Torch*, *strike*, and *The Balance and the Sword* respectively. See Haile Selassie's *Students: the Intellectual and Social Background to the revolution, 1952-1974*, 2005.

stone in the emergence of activism of various types and for the formation of the different political parties of the 1970s which could be able, finally, to overthrow the age old monarchy. In one of the congresses (the Sixth Congress) of NUES, it was stated that

‘It is our firm and unshakable belief that a university is a community of scholars living in the midst of the people ... carrying the cause of the people by whom it is supported...one actively engaged in all social transformations.’ The university’s task was to contribute to a deeper understanding of Ethiopia’s “objective reality” (quoted in Balsivik, 2005, p. 177).

This passage is an excellent indication of the fact that students of AAU have played a paramount role in inculcating the missions to be played by universities - the task of transforming the wider society and clarifying the corresponding roles of university students in realizing this task.

Like the associations which were established by the students, there were also independent associations that were formed by teachers, such as the popular and the oldest one- the Ethiopian University Teachers Association (EUTA) with a membership from all corners of the country, including from AAU, and AAUTA. These associations, although not as significant as the associations established by the students, played their own role in instilling the consciousness of their society including its method of transformation. In this regard, it is worth quoting a passage from a paper presented, by Mesfin Wolde Mariam, at the EUTA:

Universities in backward countries had to participate in public life and be concerned with exposing human suffering. As intellectual powers, they had to make it difficult to lie in the affairs of the states or to exploit the ignorance of the masses. *The main function of the universities will be to speak the truth fearlessly there by giving politics a rational basis and checking excesses* (ibid; emphasis added).

This passage is an indication of the role which had been played by these associations in clarifying and boldly speaking the primary missions of universities - speaking the truth. At this point, it is better to be clear and concede the fact that AAU, during the imperial regime, was not absolutely free from challenges in forming and running associations. Rather, there were

protracted challenges facing in running these associations: there were arrests, killings, being fired from the university, etc. For instance, one of the most debilitating actions taken against the students was the killings of the president of USUAA, Tilahun Gizaw, in December 1969, by the government security force.

When we see the extent of the freedom to form an association during the Military period, in the opinion of many, there was a formidable challenge in doing so. This freedom had started to be curtailed significantly for, among other things, the overall political turmoil of the period had resulted in a chilling effect in the minds of both students and teachers. However, there were, at least, two known associations during this period: EUTA, and UTF although these institutions were considered to be the political wings of the socialist regime. The freedom to form an independent and viable association which had started to be severely limited by the Military regime is fully curtailed by the current regime.

The EPRDF government, which is paranoid of everything coming from outside its own purview and interest, has never allowed not only the freedom of expression and thought but also the unionization, in defense of their interest, of teachers and students. The best strategy that has been used by the government vis-à-vis organizations is this: “The ruling party encouraged people to join associations carefully vetted by the EPRDF. At the same time, the Front made life miserable for other organizations that lacked enthusiasm for the new regime” (Vestal, 1999, P. 48). This entails that although the government has enshrined, in its rhetorically colorful constitution of 1995, the right to form an association, on the ground, however, this freedom has been only reserved for those, as noted, who are ready to be abided by the pre- established “standard” which is stipulated by the ideology of Revolutionary Democracy. Thus, the freedom

to form an independent association is only limited to those who are politically loyal and are ready to execute the political programs of the government.

From the very beginning, teachers were well aware of the rhetoric of the government and they were critical of its development, education, and other related policies. The government which has been xenophobic of critics (when in fact “for the thinking man, for the scientist and philosopher, in particular, criticism is a necessary condition of life” and “*he who avoids being criticized essentially does not want to know*” (Jaspers, 1959, p. 24; emphasis added)) and any type of dissent preferring, instead, conformity, (when the fact remains, Bertrand Russell argues, that “new hopes, new beliefs, and new thoughts are at all times necessary to mankind, and it is not out of a dead uniformity that they can be expected to arise” (quoted in Botsford, 1998, p. 12)), decided to silence every criticism by closing teachers’ unions.

In AAU, there have been a number of instances where/when students and teachers are denied the freedom to associate and form a union since the 1991. The government, let alone to allow the formation and functioning of new associations formed by the academic community, is not, even, willing the already established ones, such as the EUTA including its branch, AAUTA, to function freely. The EUTA, a kind of trade union having members from all over the country, which was established in 1949, was one of the country’s oldest and independent associations. This association together with its branch, the AAUTA, was known in its challenging and bold critic of government policies, such as educational policies, and actions. In response to this, the critic xenophobic EPRDF government soon started ruthlessly suppressing the organization, including the confiscation of its property and bank accounts, refused to re-register the organization, and transfer its name to the newly established pro-government organization.

The government has also continuously pressured teachers to participate in the “new” EUTA by abandoning the old one, arrested leaders and members of the EUTA such as the then Acting Secretary General Shimelis Zewdie, including Dr. Taye Woldesmayet, the president of the association, in 1996. A member, such as Assefa Maru, acting director of EUTA after Taye’s imprisonment, was assassinated in 1997. Although the old members of the EUTA managed to establish a new association, soon after the closure of the old one, under the name of the National Teachers’ Association and applied for registration, the government, via its Ministry of Justice, denied the application.

Therefore, these days, in AAU, we cannot find even a single association of teachers that could function independently of the government and advocate the interest of teachers’ – their collective voices to be heard and their rights and privileges protected. Having been irritated about the total absence of associations formed by teachers, a teacher interviewed by HRW responded that “*there is no advocate for our interests. All we have is a credit and saving association*” (quoted in HRW, 2003, p. 37; emphasis added).

In the same vein, AAU students have been unable to form an association that uniquely serves their interest. What they had is a pro-government student union, which is predominantly controlled and administered by students who are ready to obey and execute whatever and whenever the government needs – they are forums for indoctrinating the political program of the government.

Generally, freedom of association, one of the fundamental manifestations of academic freedom has been seriously overlooked and ignored by the three successive governments. But, comparatively speaking, the Imperial regime has to be credited in that it has allowed certain associations, of both students and teachers, to be formed and function properly. But this relative

freedom has started to be eroded during the Military regime – eventually reached at a stage where the liberty to associate is totally forbidden and crippled.

4.1.5 Academic Freedom and the Rights of Student

Let me begin my discussion regarding the academic freedom of students by citing a passage that deals with the role that the educated young generation [students] can play for their country: “*The fate and destiny of our country depends on what we do for the young.* Our world is a horrible spectacle of undeveloped and misapplied possibilities ... How many mute and glorious Miltons have died in silence, how many potential Newtons never learned to read? (Lemlem, 2010, p. 55; emphasis added). This entails that because students are the matured and self-responsible individuals to be, there should be a favorable environment that enables them to use their full potential. One, probably the main, of the conditions which need to be fulfilled in the path to realizing the full potential of students is the granting of freedom within in their schools, such as universities. To put it otherwise, the full development of humanity, within a university setting, necessitates the granting of academic freedom not only for the educators, but also for the learners. In history, however, there were definitions given for academic freedom that exclude the freedom to be enjoyed by university students. Among other things, the 1915 Association of American University Professors (AAUP) has excluded the Germanic understanding of students’ right to learn (*Lernfreiheit*) albeit the academic freedom of students is, later [1967], incorporated in the AAUP’s Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students.

Irrespective of such a controversy and disagreement that exists regarding this issue, no one denies the fact that students are integral parts of the academic community, hence, one can confidently argue that they “have a slightly but complementary definition of academic freedom which include freedom from the imposed restrictions of secondary school life” (Ya’u, 2006, p.

43). After all, ideally, Jasper (1959) opines that “*within the life of the university teachers and students are driven by a single motive, man's basic quest for knowledge*” (p. 41; emphasis added). If this is really true, it is logically valid to assert that if teaching, which is performed by teachers, is primarily aimed at the quest for knowledge and if this quest needs freedom, then one cannot be justified in excluding the freedom to be enjoyed by students who, like educators (teachers), are primarily motivated by the quest for knowledge. Or, we can argue, according to Jaspers, that the freedom of learning arises from the freedom of teaching (Jaspers, 1959, p. 54).

Since the establishment of AAU, students have traversed through a long journey of ups-and-downs pertinent to the quest for the protection of their academic freedom, such as freedom of expression and freedom of opinion, freedom of association, etc. During the Imperial regime, for instance, there was a period when students were suppressed, harassed and even arrested although there were still quite a number of publications (one manifestation of the existence of freedom of expression and freedom of opinion) run by the students' association. In the same vein, the associations had also created forums for discussing and debating on a number of controversial issues, both national and international. Relatively speaking, therefore, the Imperial regime which was thought to be tolerant of dissent and critics has become incubators of the different forms of activism, mainly created by students.

During the Military regime, however, these relative freedoms, such as freedom of expression and opinion, including freedom of association, had started to be challenged constantly – a watershed that paves the way for the then EPRDF government's an outright curtailment. Under this government, students have been facing one of the most notorious violations of the rights to academic freedom and such an excessive violation of this freedom has started shortly after the Party came to power. Students were active and vocal critics of government policies and

actions such as changes in education policy, denial of academic freedom, denial of publishing their newspaper, including the negative impact of economic policies, and “they have paid a heavy price for their dissent” (HRW, 2003, p. 13) although their questions were quite legitimate.

For instance, on January 4, 1993, in order to express their refusal against the planned referendum on Eritrean independence, a large number of AAU students marched to the hotel where Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of U.N., was staying. The immediate response of the government was mind boggling when security forces intervene, in the name of dispersing the protest, and fired live ammunition into the crowd of unarmed students, and then beat and arrested a large number of students. In another occasion, early months of 2001, AAU students waged a demonstration to request threefold principal questions: “they wanted to publish a student newspaper¹⁹ that the administration had blocked; they wanted freedom to organize a student union without university interference; and they wanted armed uniformed police” (HRW, 2003, p. 18) which had been stationed since the 1993 crackdown, removed from the campus or replaced by a body of civil guards. The response of security forces to this peaceful protest, like the previous one, was extremely brutal, “killing more than thirty people, wounding some four hundred, and arresting thousands” (ibid).

The greatest *paradox* lies in a question raised by an individual interviewed by HRW: “how government officials, having been victims of human rights violations when they themselves were students, could repeat the mistakes of their predecessors and continue to suppress student activism?” (HRW, 2003, p. 12) though the answer for this question seems that “the government

¹⁹ The only student’s newspaper, *Hilina*, was published in 2000 in Amharic, and from that time onwards, students were unable to publish for the administration has blocked the fund they collected by selling different advertisements.

is living proof of how powerful student movements can be” (ibid), or, according to Vestal (1999), “TPLF leaders, who first became political activists while students in the 1970s, did not want similar seeds of discontent nurtured in a latter-day garden of learning” (P. 56).

The right of academic freedom which, as it has been noted, includes a freedom to associate, to express ones opinion by using different mechanisms, such as publications, etc. All these freedoms, which were denied to AAU students, serve, directly or indirectly, to fulfill the golden missions of universities such as the unrestricted freedom to pursue the truth and knowledge.

One can, thus, infer that, from its inception, the government was intolerant of dissent coming from the students since the present rulers of Ethiopia are the integral parts of the Ethiopian student movement which was kindled in 1970s, they are well aware of the fact that students account [ed] the most vibrant sections of the Ethiopian society for they are capable of creating whatever political consciousness exists and they had significantly contributed in doing so. For instance, in the period between 1974 and 1991, Gebru (2009) argues, Ethiopia has traversed through two revolutions, and students have played ‘uncommon role’ (p. 1) in the sense that, on the one hand, the movement led by students, according to Balsivik (2009), “became a dominant factor in the fall of Haile Selassie’s regime in 1974” (p. 259); and students were:

Revolutionary vanguard in a just struggle for social change – an enraged but highly conscious generation that channeled its bitterness and estrangement into positive energy to challenge a decaying but obdurate autocratic regime that futilely tried to suppress them. They catalysed a revolution that brought about its doom (Gebru, 2009, p. 2).

On the other hand, students were also a ‘revolutionary vanguard’ in the sense that their movement has led the demise of the Military regime. To put it simply, “what happened in Ethiopia since the early 1970s is largely the handiwork of Ethiopians educated in modern schools” (Messay, 2006, p. 5).

As it has been repeatedly stated in the forgoing discussions, controlling every sections of the university community, including students, involves the presenting of an “either ... or....” options and then pressurize and terrorize students, to follow the first option, in a variety of ways. Let me cite at least one example. In Ethiopia, the economy of the private sector is not as such powerful for it has been dominated by the public sector. Also, students need to be employed after their graduation. The obvious implication is that the public is the only dominant sector in employing university graduates. The corresponding false dichotomy is that either students should be members of the EPRDF and then be employed or they will not get jobs. The criterion of employment is clear: it is not merit, not competence or qualification, rather to be a member and sympathizer of the Party. The favorable option for students is clear: readiness to be conformists and best replicators of what has been propagated from the government via a top-down approach by simply accepting membership without questioning.

Today, it is not a taboo to be politically affiliated than the academic one. As a result, students are forced to be members of the EPRDF - starting from the lower grades, especially in the high schools. University students are not only expected to be members but also shoulder and exercise the political programs of the government. Even, their association, “students union”, is solely used in order to reach at students easily for indoctrinating the government’s political program. This is how the government’s policy of ‘nationalization’, via its false dichotomy, has become effective in controlling and trapping the minds of students there by stifling their creativity, critical thinking, imagination and independent judgment – all are contrary to the missions of university education.

All told, because students are integral parts of the academic community and because students, like teachers, are primarily preoccupied in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake,

the popular ideals of universities, and because “*the student thinks independently, listens critically and is responsible to himself*” (Jaspers, 1959, p. 1; emphasis added), then they have the freedom to learn. After all, Jaspers argues “no authority, no rules and regulations, no supervision of studies such as are found in high schools must be allowed to hamper the university student. He is free to ‘go to the dogs’” (Jaspers, 1959, p. 54).

After all, it is not uncommon to hear the adage, as it is stated above, that says; “*you have to risk your young men if you want to get a generation of men*” (Jaspers, 1959, p. 54; emphasis added). Unlike this cardinal insight that needs to be properly followed, the government has been acting erroneously thereby dehumanizing a young generation and is responsible for stifling the mind of the young generation for it is a truism, to use Jaspers once again, that “as you stifle the student's freedom to learn as he sees fit you stifle the life of the mind” (Jaspers, 1959, p. 61). Therefore, the government is accused of and is responsible for committing a crime of an incontrovertible type - controlling and dehumanizing the essence of mankind, thinking, by using a variety of ways, such as the policy of 1 to 5 arrangement.

4.1.6 Institutional Autonomy

Universities are places where the production and dissemination of knowledge be possible in a situation when they are free from governmental or any other external meddling in their internal affairs of teaching, scholarship, especially regarding decisions of appointment, curricular activities, whom to teach, what to teach, its method of delivery (how to teach), etc., and other academic related activities. In other words, since, in the opinion of many, universities are thought to be places or stations of an intellectual experiment and intellectual debate thereby facilitate the creation of new ideas and readjust (or modify) the old ones, they should function in an environment free from a deliberate governmental or any other external meddling.

In the opinions of many commentators and reports²⁰, the current Ethiopian government has a considerable power and motivation to maneuver and influence what takes place in universities for, on the one hand, public universities are mainly dependent on government finance, and on the other hand, these universities are viewed by the government as the main places of national policy indoctrination – the principle of “nationalization.” Most of the time, in an environment where universities are solely dependent on government finance and in a situation when universities are used for realizing the “nationalization” mission whereby they became places of national policy indoctrination, it is highly questionable to anticipate the autonomy of universities. The mission of ‘nationalization’ is undertaken based on the standardization of knowledge and education – as it is anchored in the interpretation of the ideology of Revolutionary Democracy. Basically, there is no an inherent mistake with financial dependence from the public, rather the mess occurs when “financial dependence is changed in to political dependence”, Girum opines. Such a perception is the characteristic features of the current AAU.

As a result of these two factors [financial dependence and the ‘nationalization’ mission], all the internal university activities such as teaching, scholarship, including decisions regarding appointments, students admission, curricular activities, what to teach and how to teach are, directly or indirectly, put in the hands of the government– a dangerous step in undermining university autonomy. Under this scenario, the overall missions and activities of universities is solely used for a narrow, short term and instrumentalist purpose of preserving state power at the expense of the long term mission of producing a society which is not only knowledgeable and

²⁰ Among others, one can refer a report by Human Rights Watch in an article entitled *Ethiopia lessons in repression: Violations of academic freedom in Ethiopia (2003)*.

skilled but also producing a generation who are responsible, moral, self-reflective, independent decision makers and risk takers.

The freedom to hold and express opinions and feelings has been strongly curtailed for it has thought to be a challenge to inculcate the culture of conformity and collective thinking. Such a strategy negates, as it is noted, the development of independent thought, personal development, critical thinking and dissent – all are against the principles of autonomy. The logical outcome of this practice in turn negates the presence of independent and strong associations which are capable of defending the rights of both teachers and students. Since the effective use of Revolutionary Democracy, unlike Liberal Democracy, stifles the presence of independent thought, it is very difficult, if not hardly possible, to anticipate critical voices from the university. In case critical and dissenting voices arise within the university, such as by teachers and students, the outcome is clear: there are hundred ways of stifling these voices.

One way to stifle independent and critical voices is to appoint handpicked administrators, who are loyal and ready to conform to the political program of the government and, then, to implement these programs. Such loyalty goes to the extent of firing those who are critical of the government policies and actions. In this regard, Baye (2008) has put such a practice of the government, after more than 40 high ranking professors had been fired in 1993, that “since then all positions higher than and in some cases including deanship are assumed *by handpicked individuals some of whom are not well known to the general academic staff, or when known only for their lack of good caliber and/or sense of good collegiality*” (p. 54; emphasis added). As a consequence of this measure, Teshome Wagaw (2001) argues, “the government abolished what was left of the university system's autonomy and academic freedom” (quoted in Lemlem, 2010, p. 62).

Since higher university appointments, including recruitments are made by the government based on political expediency such as loyalty, acquaintance, and submissiveness rather than merit or qualification, there is no a clear distinction between academic and political activities – sometimes there is an overlapping between these two. In this way, the government has controlled the university in order to ease its purpose for, in the words of F. Egbokhare:

Government's interference with the appointment of vice-chancellors is motivated by political expediency and the need to exercise control over the academic community. Vice-chancellors appointed by the government do not feel accountable to their constituents. They are often dictatorial, corrupt and misappropriate scarce resources. Because they lack popular support, they introduce ethnic and religious politics into the university administration (quoted in Bekele, n. d, unpublished article).

The overall effect of such a practice has strongly damaged the primary missions of the university, teaching and research, which have been used for the sole instrumental purpose of ensuring political expediency, opposite to their true ideals. After all, one cannot anticipate the autonomous functioning of AAU when there is, although it has been repeatedly asked, no an independent charter to guarantee this freedom.

The 42 AAU professors were not fired due to cases related with academic inefficiency or lack of proper professional discipline, rather it was a political action, a departure from the ideal of university, taken by the behest of government officials not by the university higher administrative officials – a clear indication of the fact that AAU has never been autonomous and the government, from the very beginning, is not interested to guarantee its autonomy. The very reason for this action of the current government is emanated from the government's motive to create a hegemonic system by controlling everything, including universities.

Since some time, the government's political rhetoric has revolved around the aims of "poverty reduction" and bringing "development." In order to do so, universities should be the main places of "knowledge production" via research and teaching. Such a lip service has a

“manifest meaning”, to use Maimire’s terminology, that has hegemonically dominated the “surplus meanings” of gripping universities and, then, to use them for the sole instrumentalist purpose of ‘nationalization’ – using the overall missions of teaching and research for preserving state power in the name of “poverty reduction.” Obviously, no one negates poverty reduction at its outset; rather the amiss comes when the government tries to impose the mission of ‘nationalization’, a narrow instrumentalist purpose of sustaining state power, in order to propagate its ideology in the name of development and poverty reduction.

Such an instrumentalization of university’s mission is a vivid indication of the restriction of the principles of institutional autonomy – an important aspect of academic freedom. Here, what is overlooked is the fact that the absence of academic freedom, as it is shared, among others, by Teshome Wagaw (2001), and Hassan Ahmed (2007), both quoted in Lemelem (2010), is one of the factors contributing for the underdevelopment and backwardness of countries, including for Ethiopia. Also, it is the opinion of business leaders, including human rights organizations that "economic development—particularly the alleviation of poverty—is best served when people are free to band together and speak out about threats to their well-being" (quoted in Vestal, 1999, P. 196). Accordingly, it is paradoxical to pursue poverty reduction and bringing development, on the one hand, and to restrict the exercise of academic freedom, on the other. According to Dessalegn, “development without freedom is hardly possible.”

At this point, it is justifiable to pose a legitimate question saying: how can we anticipate the autonomy of AAU in a situation when the highest position in a university setting, the mandate of Directors of Boards, has been controlled by top government officials: First, Tefera Walewa, Second, Juneddin Saddo, and currently [third] Kassa Tekeleberehan? How can we anticipate the autonomy of AAU in undertaking its activities when the president is appointed by

the government and be accountable to the body that elected it? How can we anticipate the autonomy of AAU in undertaking its activities when the popular ideals of university are supplanted by the mission of ‘nationalization’ that merely instrumentalize the overall activities of a university? How can we anticipate a clear demarcation between academic callings (or activities) and ideological missions given that the highest mandate in the making of university decision is dominated by top government officials and the government appointed president?

The autonomous functioning of AAU is hardly possible in a situation when/where the government has sought to apply political criteria in the appointment of presidents, vice presidents, deans, and other high ranking positions; when the Board Directors²¹ are top government officials or politicians; when security forces are stationed on campus; when independent student unions including their newspaper is banned by the government; when unions organized by teachers are crippled, when university professors are fired unconditionally for boldly expressing their feelings and ideas; when student admissions and placement are managed and directed by the Ministry of Education.

All these measures are, directly or indirectly, orchestrated by the government for the sole instrumental end of achieving the standardization or ‘nationalization’ missions of universities which is anchored in the implicit “either ... or...” However, “it is incompatible with the idea of the university”, Jaspers (1959) upholds, “that the state demands any more direct services from the university than to supply professionally trained people” (p. 127).

²¹In fact, in all Ethiopian universities, the directors of Boards are top government officials.

4.2 Contemporary Challenges to Academic Freedom in Addis Ababa University

4.2.1 Political and Ideological Interference

Higher education is besieged by a number of intricately linked contemporary problems that would weaken it. One of the main contemporary challenges facing higher education against the road in ensuring academic freedom is the presence of an improper political or ideological interference by governments for, naturally, universities are highly political and engulfed by many political pressures. Yet, since “the *university function*”, according to Dewey, “*is the truth function*” (cited in Tierney & Lechuga, 2005; emphasis added), it is inevitable for universities to annoy or irritate those in power during their activities of scholarship and instruction which involves inquiry, questioning and challenging the status quo and reach at better understanding and discovering new ideas and knowledge.

When I decry and condemn political interference, I am not talking about the absolute independence of universities from governmental affairs for states also had an interest on universities. Rather I mean, by echoing the words of Bostock (2002), that “*certain kinds of inappropriate interference by politicians or their appointees are highly damaging to the performance of the essential tasks of these institutions*” (p. 19; emphasis added). The problem of political interference is not unique to a certain region or country; rather it is a global phenomenon affecting and engulfing nations all over the globe. The main rationale behind meddling in the affairs of universities, by politically motivated individuals who are in power, is that they need to use the university for a narrow utilitarian purpose of gratifying their political whim or propaganda, irrespective of the validity or invalidity of their argument .

However, according to Paulsen, “a people, who establish and maintain a university, cannot as such have an interest in the preservation of false conceptions” (quoted in Fuchs, 1963, p. 436); and “it is disastrous if the state demands something which only serves the purpose of political propaganda” (Jaspers, 1959, p. 127) other than producing professional individuals. Put simply, political interference, which is primarily preoccupied in circumventing the day- to- day activities of universities, is an obstacle in realizing the ideals of university education and the means, academic freedom, which can be used in ensuring these ideals.

In the current Ethiopian context, according to the report presented by HRW (2003), governmental power has been used to turn educational institutions into a system that largely serve the interests of those in power (p. 5). The government has established a systematic and sophisticated foundation, the missions of ‘nationalization’, as it is clearly stipulated in the meaning of its ideology, which has instrumentally used AAU to serve the sole purpose of sustaining political power instead of making this institution as a place of academic excellence and intellectual exercise. Since it came to power, the government has introduced a number of bureaucratic rules that, directly or indirectly, serve the interests of power-holders at the expense of the essential missions that needs to be pursued by universities.

Among other things, there were different bureaucratic procedures that has been introduced in AAU, such as the introduction of reform to bring efficiency, strategic planning, Business Process Re-Engineering (BPR), Balanced Score Card (BSC), the two-year contract agreement to be filled by the university professors with the corresponding appointment of handpicked individuals into the higher administrative positions, the introduction of different types of trainings or seminars such as Program for Capacity Building Strategy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia’ within the rubric of Revolutionary Democracy and Ethnic

Federalism which has been given since summer 2002 – workshops that “serve as forums of indoctrination and breeding grounds for political partisanship” (Baye, 2008, p. 44), the recently introduced policy of the 1 to 5 arrangement, etc., are the major ones. However, these are not the only ones since, according to an individual interviewed by HRW, “*there are one hundred ways of putting pressure*” (quoted in HRW, 2010, p. 1; emphasis added), up on members of the academia to accept the political programs of the government. According to different writers and organizations such as the HRW, these strategies which are, in fact, not inherently bad, are used wrongly to turn the university in to a system that largely serves the Party.

BPR, for instance, which basically involves the process of re-arranging how a certain institution functions, including reviewing procedure and reevaluating of staff, according to the report of HRW (2010), is intended at improving the delivery of services and capacity within state institutions or agencies essentially by streamlining procedures and removing non-performing or ineffective civil servants and retraining those who are effective (p. 58). On the ground, however, the philosophy, a Lecturer from AAU argued, “*has ceased to be a management science, it is now an ideology*” (quoted in HRW, 2010, p. 41; emphasis added) for, according to many journalists, teachers, civil society activists and donors - the supporters of this program under the help of the Public Sector Capacity Building Programme (PSCB) - BPR is a political weapon in the hands of the ruling EPRDF. For them, “the process involved, where all state employees”, including university professors “must reapply for their jobs according to a grading system heavily weighted in favor of subjective assessments, is open to abuse in an environment as heavily politicized as Ethiopia” (HRW, 2010, p. 58).

Moreover, BPR, which is thought to shorten activities thereby maximizing efficiency, has crippled many activities of the university and pushed a bad situation into worse via its over bureaucratization:

What I call the *over bureaucratization* of the University can be seen in how we ended up having four vice presidents instead of the former two and up to ten or more directors under each of these vice presidents, including also ten directors in the office of the president. At faculty level what used to be efficiently managed by a dean involves a director above the dean and a host of other committees with *overlapping functions both at faculty and department levels. Is it not puzzling that small departments with only ten faculty members in some faculties had up to six different committees again with overlapping duties and responsibilities?* (Bekele, n. d., unpublished article; emphasis added).

The other “bureaucratic surgery” or procedure that is used in order to implement the political purpose of the government is the introduction of the two-year contract agreement that enables the government to fire and expel top and high ranking university professors who are critical of the government and government policies and actions. After firing these university professors of a special caliber, the government appointed top university positions, starting from the president, by handpicked individuals and recruited teachers, who, irrespective of their academic qualification, are expected to become politically loyal to the Party. Today, the procedure has been changed: To be recruited and then assigned to teach since “political allegiance is considered as an academic merit”, states Girum.

Such an appointment and recruitment of handpicked individuals based on political expediency stands in a stark contrast to the ideals of university since, according to Jaspers (1959), “the university is judged by its ability to attract the best people and provide them with the most favorable conditions for research, communication, and teaching” (p. 77). Also, “*academic institutions are meritocracies, not democracies. They make no attempt to distribute their resources to everyone. Instead, they try to reserve these resources for people whom they judge can best make use of them*” (Robinson & Moulton, 2002; emphasis added).

To use the words of Bertrand Russell, “appointments to academic posts and hiring within universities and colleges should be made *based on competence on a pure academic grounds* to judge an individual’s qualification (Irvine, 1996, p. 21; emphasis added); and “*when issues peripheral to a person's academic abilities are ignored*” (ibid; emphasis added). Contrary to this golden ideal, AAU has become an institution where government Cadres give “political trainings” (or better to call indoctrination), for professors and students alike – hence the university has retained nothing peculiar to its mission except one thing, that is, a university only by name. All these bureaucratic procedures are contrary to the ideals of a university, as a market place of ideas and centers of intellectual excellence, for, in the words of Alemayehu G/Mariam (2010), “*the maze of bureaucratic rules and regulations imposed by governments often stifle creativity, learning and the expansion of knowledge*” (p. 5; emphasis added).

All told, while universities are market places of ideas where different and controversial issues are debated and discussed, hence creativity and knowledge production is peculiar to them, AAU is unable to live up to these ideals for there has been an excessive political control of the government by introducing bureaucratic procedures that largely serve the whim of preserving the political power of the Party. However, once the government is willing to establish universities, it is logically contradictory to impose its political ideology at the expense of universities role, ‘critics and conscience of society’ - the reason of its establishment.

4.2.2 The Influence of Globalization

The most pervasive and dynamic problem facing contemporary universities is the negative influence of globalization.²² Globalization, according to different writers, is a historical,

²² There are two types of contradictory arguments which are presented regarding globalization vis-à-vis universities: the first group says that globalization is a chronic challenge that affects higher education

political, cultural, and economic process that involves the fast movement of people, goods and services, or ideas among and/ or between countries and regions- facilitated and accelerated mainly by the modern information and communication technology, such as the internet and the emergence of an international dominance of English language since World War II. Globalization not only involves the historical, cultural, political, and economic process but also “has brought with it major changes that affect all social, cultural and political systems all over the world” (Bubtana, 2006, p. 8) and it has influenced “all aspects of higher education and will have also an impact on the concept and practice of academic freedom” (ibid).

The negative influence of globalization on higher education in general and academic freedom in particular is complex in the sense that it has resulted and is the source of a number of other intricately interrelated factors that affect academic freedom. The main challenges of globalization in relation to higher education includes: the introduction of a new global knowledge economy²³ that has changed the socioeconomic imperatives with the immediate effect of diminishing the role of the state in financing services including education - facilitated mainly by the advice of the WB; globalization facilitated the liberalization of trade in service such as in education like what the GATS²⁴ are doing; it has made academics more mobile –

institutions; and others argue that globalization is not only a challenge but also it has opened opportunities for higher education. However, according to many writers, in Africa globalization is more than a threat to higher education in general and academic freedom in particular.

²³ *Knowledge economy* rests on the capability of knowledge in bringing economic development. It is an economy that takes knowledge as the main engine of economic growth via its knowledge centers – universities.

²⁴ The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) which is mainly run under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO), is designed to facilitate and increase the liberalization of trade internationally thereby by include education as one of the service sector.

encourage the migration of skilled labor, that is brain drain; it has reduced knowledge to the extent of an information or commodity that can be bought and sold, etc.

The immediate effects of such a paradigm shift, due to globalization, have changed the ways and circumstances within which instruction (or teaching), scholarship (or research) including the corresponding publication and dissemination of the accumulated knowledge are delivered there by affecting academic freedom. In the current global environment teachers are not the sole provider and disseminator of knowledge for it is also possible to undertake this task by using computer technology, such as the internet to outreach the wider community. However, such an overdependence on technology, at least, undermines the most important functions and characteristics of the academic such as “the human elements of love, caring, compassion, sympathy, imagination and creativity” (Stack, 2008, p. 165). Globalization has changed knowledge as an information commodity. As a result, in the modern computer age, according to Chachage (2006), the authority to make decisions will rest on and determined by the question of access to information (p. 52) – it undermines the traditional roles of universities in the production of knowledge and its corresponding interpretation.

Regarding research, it is argued that globalization has ended universities role of being a leading site or center of knowledge production for there are other private and multinational research companies and agencies with a better financial capacity to undertake research. There is no an inherent mistake in undertaking research by private companies or corporations, rather the problem arises when such a production of knowledge is circumvented in order to make profit. This is true because it is inevitable for universities to establish cooperation or partnership with these companies or corporations, both private and public, for the sake of financial assistance. The immediate dire ramification of this partnership undermines academic freedom because the

nature, motive or callings of corporations is quite opposite to the calling of universities: profit maximization versus knowledge production respectively.

As a result, these companies which are powerful, at least, in finance, want to manipulate academics by circumventing the finding of research to be in accord with the predetermined motives of these corporations at the expense of academic excellence. Also, the purpose of research will be to produce knowledge which is practically valuable. What follows is that publications and funding will be determined by the decision of these corporations who do not know the difference between corporations and universities. This can be seen in relation to the motives of a global institution- the WB.

There are international organizations, mainly the WB and International Monetary Fund (IMF), which, directly or indirectly, facilitate and accelerate the process of globalization – hence are commonly termed as agents of globalization for, among other things, “they tend to advocate the borrowing countries to follow the path of the New Global Economy” (Olukoshi, Sall, & Abdulwahed, 2006). The WB not only facilitates the process of globalization but it also negatively affects the way and condition that African universities, including AAU, function. The view of the WB, for instance, is that since higher education is “too inequitable and marginal to national development goals” (Samoff & Carrol, 2004), resources have to be redirected from higher education to priority areas such as basic education involving mainly the training of skills.

The idea is that higher educations should function by being cost effective. The outcome is that universities should be focused on a ‘market - oriented centers of excellence’ - replacing the traditional role of universities – the intrinsic pursuit of knowledge. Such a view, however, is unrealistic in our situation for, in the words of A. Olukoshi, “in a context where poverty and inequalities continue to pose formidable hurdles to development, concentrating on narrow

market-oriented understanding of higher education might *undermine the social and civic responsibilities of the academy* to the ordinary African” (quoted in Bekele, 2013, p. 26; emphasis added), including Ethiopians. The overall influence of the Bank, be it implicit or explicit, in our universities, Samoff & Carrol (2004) noted, is dangerous for academic freedom in such a way that, among other things, there is a possibility for the recipients of its loan to be instructed regarding what they should and should not do including its methods - the *how* (p. 43). Such an imperative of the Bank, as it is noted above, negatively affects the institutional autonomy of our universities.

In the Ethiopian context, the negative influence of donors such as the WB on our universities, specifically on AAU, is also significant. This negative influence, according to Bekele (2013), may be a direct consequence of the World Bank’s philosophy which viewed higher education as a private good and the corresponding conception of knowledge as a commodity (p. 23) – the immediate results of the reform of higher education which was initiated in the 1990s to bring efficiency. One way of achieving this policy is by giving more emphasis and value to science and technology over the social sciences and humanities based on the assumption that the former are more vital for development since they can produce immediately saleable goods and services than the latter. This was the kind of attempt to change universities in to vocational schools.

Such a motive and influence of the Bank in our universities is clearly pronounced in the recently introduced government’s policy of 70:30% - for the fields of engineering, technology, the natural sciences and the faculty of social sciences and humanities respectively. Such an approach clearly contradicts the traditional purpose of university – the free pursuit of broad liberal education which cultivates the intellectual virtues of students such as “maturity of

judgment, decency and wisdom” (B. Birhanu, personal communication, May 25, 2015). Also, such a conception is a clear manifestation of how knowledge is categorized in such a way that knowledge of certain disciplines becomes “more valuable” and “authoritative” than others albeit such understanding negates the notion of knowledge as a universal concept. The consequent implication of such a categorization of knowledge, in turn, creates the corresponding categorization of persons: those individuals who are specialized in disciplines which are said to be “more valuable”, such as in engineering, technology and natural sciences, are “more privileged” and “authoritative” than those who are specialized in the social sciences and humanities. This would create a condition where by the academic freedoms of one faculty member is violated by the other.

Also, since “research funding is provided mainly by donors, especially from Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Nations (Saint, 2004, p. 104), which are the main contributors of the finance of the WB, it has been given more emphasis on science and technology, which are the sources of the immediately saleable goods and services, at the expense of social sciences and humanities - the sources of liberal education. However, according to different writers including Bekele (2003), this [emphasis on producing immediately saleable goods and services] kind of thinking which is mainly buttressed by the WB, has not only explicitly attacked and undermined the significance of social sciences and humanities, but also has an implicit and indirect role of undermining Africans including Ethiopians in the sense that it negates the essential nature of humanity such as thinking, being morally responsible, the ability of making an independent judgment, etc., when it advises only the inculcation of certain skills:

The philosophy behind such thinking borders on racism in the sense that it assumes that for the developing countries it would be enough if they could engage in certain fields which have directly to do with the production of immediately

needed products and skills that may be necessary to start up and run businesses” (p. 23).

generally, obviously, no one hates development and prosperity, but the problem is that development does not only refer to an aggregate economic growth, rather there are other values, such as freedom or liberty to do something or behave in a certain manner, that needs to be considered for “development without freedom is not true progress” (HRW, 2010, p. 86). Accordingly, the significance of academic freedom in undertaking academic tasks is an incontrovertible truth, hence globalization, including the corresponding global institutions such as the World Bank’s attempt at dictating and shaping universities, Awasom (2006) argues, unquestionably signify the violation of academic freedom and university autonomy (p. 99) since the Bank has erroneously assumed that higher education is a private property and knowledge is a commodity.

4.2.3 Neoliberalism’s Attack on Academic Freedom

Another contemporary challenge facing higher education in general and academic freedom in particular is the influence of neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism, according to Harvey (2005), is a discourse or narrative that lets or models the world to function in terms of capitalist markets – the policy objective is to reform systems, institutions, and behaviors in a way that render them instrumental for making capital (Marginson, 2013, p. 354). In other words, neo-liberalism, in the words of Paul Treanor

is a philosophy in which the existence and operation of a market are valued in themselves . . . without any attempt to justify them in terms of their effect . . . and where the operation of a market or market-like structure is seen as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action, and substituting for all previously existing ethical beliefs (quoted in Nelson, 2010, P. 60; emphasis added).

What follows is that the dominant principle of this philosophy has become privatization and corporatization that best fits the market. When this philosophy is applied to higher education,

it becomes that “*higher education should be a privatized commodity rather than a common good*” (ibid; emphasis added); and its effectiveness should be determined according to market forces – to what extent it is viable. Since the principles of privatization and corporatization are guided by the market forces, knowledge is valued by its use value: knowledge that earns income is valuable while disciplines that produce little or no income are relegated and discarded as worthless – a direct influence of globalization and global institutions such as the WB – with a consequent negative effects of narrowing the traditional roles of universities. This is what is called ‘academic capitalism’, according to Slaughter and Leslie, is an “institutional and professorial market or market-like efforts to secure external moneys” (quoted in Park, 2011, p. 86). However, university education is not limited to activities which are profitable or income based.

According to these writers, the decrease in general governmental expenditures on higher education, similar with the principle of globalization and global institutions like the WB, is the driving force for institutions as well as faculty members to enter into market or market-like behavior (ibid). Market like behavior, in turn, according to Park, refers the competition of institutions and faculty for external funding via using different strategies such as endowment funds, university-industry partnership or corporatization, external grants and contracts, an increase in students tuition fees (ibid). Such a motive has squeezed academics to focus on applied (or problem solving) research at the expense of pure research – hence it undermines research in the social sciences and humanities which focuses on pure research. In this way, university’s role of the social and political agency has been eroded and evaporated for the free market reigns supreme over the main missions of universities. In the words of Giroux, this practice has created an environment where

Higher education has entered into a state of being *so highly corporative that market forces now reign supreme over the fundamental tenants of higher education: freedom of inquiry, curiosity of the world, and matters concerning pedagogy. ... Such a shift threatens the experience of students and the public nature of higher education* (quoted in Park, 2011, p. 92; emphasis added).

As a consequence of such a measure, Gumport (2000) noted, there has emerged a paradigm shift in the sense that ‘the dominant legitimating idea’ of public higher education has been changed from the traditional and popular idea of higher education as a social institution, then moving toward the idea of higher education as an industry or corporation (p. 70). In other words, there has emerged a perception that colleges and universities are increasingly seen as one sector of the economy resembling quasi-corporate entities, firms or businesses that produce and sell a wide variety of goods and services in a competitive marketplace – universities, for instance, are expected to do a research that can produce revenue– a clear departure from the ideals of university as it is propounded by Newman, Humboldt and many others.

The perception of higher education as an industry, however, has gradually eroded and displaced the roles of higher education as a social institution where public colleges and universities are viewed as places where a broader range of social functions such as the cultivation of citizenship, cultural heritages (or values) that have been firmly held and adopted by the society, including the cultivation of good character and habits of the mind or critical thinking, are reproduced and maintained (or preserved). Such roles of higher education as a social institution is, more or less similar, if not exactly identical, to the role of liberal education – an important weapon which help to preserve the ideals of university education in general and academic freedom in particular.

The perspective of higher education as an industry has a mere narrow utilitarian or consumerist end in the sense that it has reduced the whole idea of knowledge in to something valuable – a claim which states that “all knowledge acquisition will be judged by its vocational uses,

marketability, and practical applications” (Nelson, 2010, p. 54). Such an ‘instrumentalist epistemology,’ an understanding that knowledge is valuable only if it is practically applicable, has squeezed higher education institutions into job training stations. Yet, “*job markets and markets in general are a constraint on creativity, scientific inquiry, fidelity to the pursuit of truth and intellectual freedom in general*” (Chachage, 2006, p. 63; emphasis added).

Academic consumerism always elevates the interest of consumers as its key yardstick in restructuring, if it is needed, academic programs and academic services. Student consumerism, which is the effect of viewing higher education as industry (or corporation) and which is the most important aspects of academic consumerism, often occurs when students lack a reading or writing habits, but simply think about the instrumentalist purpose of bread-and-butter questions such as where to get employed and how much one will be paid – to pass examinations and then get a job at the expense of what they should have and are expected to know. This is the result of educational consumerism within a capitalist society that has “created a drive through, *fast-food approach to higher education: students go where they can get what they want as quickly as possible, as conveniently as possible, even if it’s mass-produced*” (Klinger, n. d., p. 7; emphasis added).

Unfortunately, the perception and practice of higher education as a social institution and/or centers of liberal learning is hardly possible in an environment where, according to Nicolescu (2009), market theories and principles are gradually now being used and applied by many universities (p. 37); and market principles or systems are “held to have inherent means for achieving the most cost-effective delivery of a service” (Bridges & Jonathan, 2003) – a dangerous step in undermining the main missions of universities. The overriding principles of economic theories prescribe that organizations, such as universities, should function only based

on the values of ‘economic rationality.’ Accordingly, “the main services of teaching and research”, with in a university setting, “are variously supplied and priced to correspond to laws of supply and demand. Students, parents, state legislatures, employers, and research funders are seen as customers” (Gumport, 2000, p. 71-72).

Naturally, however, educational aim, such as university education, according to Dewey (2004), should be founded upon *the intrinsic, unlike extrinsic or instrumental ones, activities and needs* (p. 116; emphasis added); and “there is truth in the saying that *education must first be human and only after that professional*” (Dewey, 2004, p. 207). This argument substantiates Newmansequean understanding of the role of liberal education – the intrinsic cultivation of knowledge and the then cultivation of the intellect. However, he added, what is intrinsically good is also useful – an admonition which has gradually been eroded from AAU.

The principles of demand and supply and the corresponding cost-benefit analysis, however, stand in a stark contrast to the ideals of university – the pursuit of knowledge irrespective of its immediate use value. This, however, does not mean that universities do not need finance and the immediate, pragmatically speaking, application of knowledge. Rather, it is to mean that since knowledge is a universal concept and exists everywhere, discriminating the exploration of knowledge based on its practical application undermines the principle of academic freedom in particular and the ideal of university as a whole.

After all, since we cannot be certain about which knowledge will be practically applicable and beneficial to the society in the future, “*no corner of knowledge should remain unexplored*” (Gumport, 2000, p. 84; emphasis added) – the intrinsic understanding of the idea of the university - knowledge is good in and of itself. Therefore, the best adage regarding the relationship between market theories (or economic principles) and university education, echoing

the words of Robert Maynard Hutchins, ought to be “not that universities do not need money or that they should not try to get it” (quoted in Levine, 2006, p. 5). Instead, it is to mean that universities “*should have an educational policy and then try to finance it, instead of letting financial accidents determine their educational policy*” (ibid; emphasis added).

All the above noted problems of higher education which, implicitly or explicitly, are the effects of neo-liberalism that squeezes universities to market forces in measuring their effectiveness are also apparent and are the characteristic features of AAU in particular and Ethiopian public higher education institutions in general. Such a market orientation of university activities can be demonstrated, for instance, in the overall mission statement of Ethiopian universities: “Producing (*in a cost effective and result oriented manner*) quality human resource *in disciplines relevant for the socio-economic development* of Ethiopia, as well as *undertaking relevant and quality research*” (Teshome, 2003, p. 7; emphasis added). This is a clear indication of the fact that higher education institution, in Ethiopia, is highly oriented towards the market forces there by instrumentalizing the roles of knowledge. This is to mean that what matters most is not the pursuit of knowledge in and of itself which is almost not known or advertently (or inadvertently) neglected; rather, the question is to what extent it suits to market demands and to what extent it is relevant for development.

Currently, it is preferable to study natural and computational sciences including engineering and technology, a fact which is vividly incorporated in the government’s policy of 70:30%, than the social sciences and humanities not because the first are aimed at pursuing knowledge in and of itself and the latter not; rather, it is because of the presumption that studying the first category has got more market preference than the second ones - a wider possibility to be employed and earn more. For instance, the most frequently asked and pervading question that I

have been asked vis-à-vis my area of specialization, philosophy, is regarding employment opportunity - the extent and number of alternatives that I could be hired and how much I will be paid – typical of academic consumerism which attempts to measure disciplines in terms of their use value.

In AAU, the social sciences and humanities, especially philosophy, history and language studies, are engulfed with this chronic challenge due to the assumption that graduates have little chance, after specialization, to get a job. Closely related to this problem is the fact that, in AAU, research in the social sciences and humanities is underfunded based on the assumption that research on these areas is not problem solving, hence knowledge in these disciplines is less explored and disseminated – a vivid indication of discriminating knowledge by privileging one at the expense of the other. These are some of, if not all, the clear manifestations of the influence of the philosophy of neo-liberalism and the corresponding academic consumerism that measures effectiveness in terms of its consequence or use value which would lead AAU astray from one of the essential ideal that every university should ensure i.e. the realization of intellectual excellence or the disciplining of the mind - the cultivation of critical thinking and the making of an independent judgment.

However, an approach in measuring knowledge merely based on its use value is due to the lack of an awareness of the best admonition of Pendley (2008) which says that “*just as the obligation to feed the body must be met in order for the body to grow, there are certain obligations which, if met, feed the growth of the soul*” (p. 134; emphasis added). As a consequence, such an approach in measuring knowledge by relying only in its use value not only undermines the golden ideal of university education in general but also the main *telos* of academic freedom, the liberty to explore knowledge, reason, and truth irrespective of its

immediate usefulness or practical applicability, in particular. In the presence of these deep rooted and intricately interrelated contemporary problems or ‘underminings’, we can say that AAU is in ruins. At this point, the question that needs worth probing, according to Barnett & Standish (2003), is this: “do we just shrug our shoulders and accept that the story of “the idea of the university” is at an end or can we continue the lineage?” (p. 225).

4.3 Liberal Education in Defense of the Ideals of University

Universities, as it is repeatedly mentioned in this paper, are repositories where a liberal quest for truth and knowledge, the very purpose and essential role of universities, is primarily and properly sought. Also, the true *telos* of universities stands in a stark contrast to the pursuit of a narrow instrumentalist purpose, the most pervasive attitude which handicap the proper realization of university ideals including academic freedom, such as the emphasis on the training of vocational skills over the values and cultural appreciation, commercialization and commoditization of knowledge, etc., at the expense of the cultivation of the intellect. One of the main, but not the sole, solutions in addressing this challenge is by focusing on the teaching of broad liberal education in our universities.

It is commonly argued that “every educational system has a moral goal that it tries to attain and that informs its curriculum. *It wants to produce a certain kind of human being....*” (Bloom, n. d., p. 26; emphasis added). In some nations, the purpose was to produce morally responsible persons, in others technicians, still in others hard workers. In the same vein, universities with a liberal education curriculum want to produce citizens of a certain kind. For Newman, liberal education is nothing other than the “cultivation of the intellect” and the cultivation of intellect, in turn, is nothing other than “intellectual excellence” with the object of apprehending and contemplating truth. He added that

.... Liberal Education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman. It is well to be a gentlemen, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life; - these are the connatural qualities of a large knowledge; they are the objects of a University; I am advocating, ... (Newman, 1852, p. 146).

For Levine (2006), liberal education is primarily focused on one of “the most important of all human goods—the wherewithal for leading good lives as human beings and citizens” (p. 4); and “a good program of liberal education feeds the student's love of truth and passion to live a good life” (Bloom, n. d., p. 345).

Historically, the ancient form of liberal learning emerged by the ancient Greeks who were thought to be ‘speculative about life and the world.’ Liberal education²⁵, Levine (2006) upholds, was primarily intended at producing elite persons with an ‘especially cultivated type’ (p. 13) which is, more or less similar, if not exactly identical, with Newmansqean understanding of the notion [liberal education]. Aristotle, who was the main proponent of this teaching, claims that there are motives that are best suited to the training of, unlike the ‘slaves or servile’, a ‘free person’: a type of learning, the training of ‘intellectual arts’, that is pursued for its own sake and vital for promoting the good life (Levine, 2006, p. 13-14). Here, Aristotle, like Newman, is not arguing against the significance of studying useful arts, rather he is to mean that “they should not constitute the whole point of learning” (Levine, 2006, p. 14). For ancient Greeks, the training of these intellectual arts are commonly termed as the Seven Liberal Arts which includes disciplines such as arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic. From this

²⁵ This understanding of liberal education, however, is not shared by all proponents and educators of education during that period. Among others, a sophist such as Isocrates, gave primacy on the training of ‘civic activities’ that can promote the arts of discourse as the most significant type of training which was given, like Aristotle, for free men.

historical underpinning, one can infer that the primary purpose of liberal education focuses on developing, enriching, and inculcating the intellectual aspects of an individual.

In the opinion of many writers and commentators, liberal education is the main instrument to help students in building the skills of critical thinking and skills of analysis by focusing on and interested in exploring and evaluating different perspectives and competing claims. This is due to the reason that students of liberal education are not focused on studying or specializing certain vocational skills, rather they are interested in comprehensiveness or holistic nature of education and the corresponding knowledge with a sophisticated habits of mind - they are able to make their own judgments regarding complex and controversial questions. It is also argued that

True liberal education requires that the student's whole life be radically changed by it, that what he learns may affect his action, his tastes, his choices, that no previous attachment be immune to examination and hence re-evaluation. *Liberal education puts everything at risk and requires students who are able to risk everything* (Bloom, n. d., 370; emphasis added).

This entails that liberally educated individuals are not conformists for they are not destined and even interested to follow a predetermined and pre-established standard, preferring, rather, to resist and follow the path of dissenters regarding things that they are not happy with for they are familiar with dealing and viewing other alternative ways of approaching an issue or phenomenon. They are individuals with a strong sense of responsibility not only to the self but also to others; they are risk takers; they are curious about intellectual questions with the capacity to navigate a new territory of knowledge; they are capable of not only to approach problems critically but also are ready to accept criticisms by being open-minded and they are honest both to the self and their academic activities. That is why a broad liberal education is said to be the true defender of academic freedom.

At this point it is worth quoting the idea of “public good model of higher education” based on the cardinal principle that this model not only resembles with the ideals of liberal education but also is a true defender of academic freedom. Such a model is highly in accord with the Mertonian²⁶ (1942) norms of science such as:

Communalism, universality, the free flow of knowledge, and organized skepticism. *Communalism* refers [sic] the common ownership of thoughts, knowledge, and ideas. *Universality* refers to the notion of evaluating individuals on a universal set of truths. *The free flow of knowledge* is closely related to communalism and refers to the ability of information to dissemination across the field. Finally, *organized skepticism* refers to notion of all ideas being subject to professional scrutiny. These ideals are seen as essential in the development of knowledge and a key part to the professional status of the professoriate (Park, 2011, p. 92-93).

These norms, directly or indirectly, are anchored in the ideals of university education in general and in the study of liberal education in particular; and such a model, according to Park, protects academic freedom so that faculty members would be in a position to research issues of their interest (ibid).

However, the training of liberal education has been challenged and attacked for it is thought to be, pragmatically speaking, impractical, useless and not suitable for development or not suitable to produce goods and services that can be consumed immediately. Globalization and neo-liberalism are the main challenges facing liberal education in the sense that they tend to measure and evaluate something in terms of its use value. Such kind of negative thinking regarding liberal education has proliferated and exacerbated especially after the development of

²⁶In 1942, Robert K. Merton has identified four norms or imperatives, Universalism, Communalism, Disinterestedness, and Organized Skepticism, which need to be followed by a scientist. Disinterestedness, which is not mentioned by Park (2011) above, is the idea that scientific undertaking is not aimed at money or personal gain in general; rather it is aimed at gaining recognition – the immediate result of scientific achievement or the production of knowledge. See <http://iie.fing.edu.uy/ense/asign/hciencia/trabs2001/victor/docs/merton.html>.

the philosophy of pragmatism, with the adage of see if it works, in the United States of America. However, the constant challenges and attack which have been experienced against liberal education is tantamount to the crisis of university education, even, to the extent of a crisis to our civilization:

...the crisis of liberal education is a reflection of a crisis at the peaks of learning, an incoherence and incompatibility among the first principles with which we interpret the world, an intellectual crisis of the greatest magnitude, which constitutes the crisis of our civilization (Bloom, n. d., p. 346).

AAU, which has been strongly influenced by globalization and neo-liberal attitudes, has started to undermine the value of social sciences and humanities – the true sources of liberal learning – as it is clearly indicated in the policy of 70:30%. This is an indication of the decaying and crisis of liberal education or a crisis in the overall intellectual aspects of the university. The logical outcome is that the university has become the sources of bigotry, sources of replicators, and conformism where individuals who are unable to question the *why* and *how* of something. All these manifestations of the crisis of liberal learning are the defining features of the current AAU.

To conclude, the training of liberal education, together with the “public good model”, is one of, probably, the main strategy that helps to defend and preserve the proper ideals of university education in general and academic freedom in particular for this type of training is not instrumentally designed to achieve a certain narrow utilitarian ends. Likewise, the liberally educated individuals do not have a certain fixed career goal based on the rationale that knowledge is always expanding constantly, and, even, it is not certain to know its final or eventual destination and it is holistic. In other words, liberal education, unlike the pursuit of immediate utility, such as the commercialization and commoditization of knowledge, is mainly interested in the pursuit and cultivation of the intellectual and moral aspects of an individual and

the development of humanity. As a result, it paves the way for the free and proper exercise of academic freedom in particular and the true ideals of university education in general. Finally, let me conclude my discussion and analysis regarding the significance of the training of liberal education by borrowing Rorty's underpinning of hope which posits: "let us live in hope; let us read the world as if liberal education were possible" (Barnett & Standish, 2003).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The idea of university is introduced based on the aspiration that since we do not have a complete knowledge of our world, our world needs to be understood by a continuous inquiry, questioning and critical examination –hence university is a place that quenches such a thirst. This is to say, the ideal of university, as it is stipulated by Newman, Humboldt and many others, prescribes that universities should be stations where knowledge is pursued irrespective of its immediate use value. Making universities as the prime centers of knowledge production and dissemination, however, does not relegate the fact that the produced knowledge can be used in solving existential problems such as the absence of peace and security, problems related to health, the environment, education, etc. Rather, once knowledge is pursued and produced intrinsically, its use value comes immediately, to use Newmansqean underpinning. After all, since public universities are financed and established by the community and since they are not ‘Ivory Towers’, it is the moral responsibility of universities to address and ameliorate the practical problems of their community.

Universities are free markets of ideas for it involves intellectual debate, inquiry, and discussion, based on logic, on various issues including the controversial ones. The overall end of universities is producing a generation of intellectuals who are knowledgeable, skilled and morally responsible who could serve not only himself/herself but also his/her country at large. The main instrument of knowledge production is research (or scholarship) or *Mirmera*, to use the words of Maimire Mennasemay – a means that pushes the frontiers of knowledge by exploring new territories of knowledge. The produced knowledge through research, one of the missions of

universities, has to be disseminated via teaching (another mission of universities) and publication to the wider society to be used (community service) – a third mission. These three traditional missions of universities, however, could not be realized in a vacuum. It needs a liberty or freedom, academic freedom, which enable the academic community to freely pursue, inquire, question, criticize and create new ideas or modify the old ones. Thus, academic freedom, albeit it has no a single conclusive definition, is a privilege which allows the free functioning of the three main missions of teaching, scholarship and community service with in a university setting.

The main manifestations or parameters of this freedom are the freedom to hold and express one's (teachers or students) ideas, the privilege to be granted tenure security, the freedom to associate and form a union (both by students and teachers) defend their privilege, the presence of an autonomous functioning of universities pertinent to the internal activities and decisions of universities such as who may teach (related mainly teachers' recruitment), what may be taught (related to the issues of curriculum), how it shall be taught (related mainly with the methods of delivery), and who may be admitted to study (related to students' admission).

Standing on these and other related parameters, historically, AAU has traversed a long journey of ups-and-downs in the road to realizing its ideals, by using its weapon, academic freedom, since its establishment in the early 1950s. Accordingly, relatively speaking, the Imperial regime is credited for granting this freedom for the academic community although there were certain limitations in using this freedom. However, this freedom has started to be perverted and eroded during the Military regime for there were attempts to control the university though there was no heavy-handed attempt to do so. However, such an attempt in controlling the day-to-day activities of the university has reached at a stage when it is not only threatened and

perverted but also totally curtailed, under the current regime. The question, here, that needs worth probing is how.

The primary and overarching political purpose of the government is “poverty reduction” and “bringing development” thereof. In order to achieve this political mission, the government has decided to use education in general and universities in particular as the primary place of knowledge production via research and teaching. Such a lip service is a “manifest meaning”, to use Maimire’s underpinning, which has been hegemonically dominated the “surplus meanings” of controlling universities in order to establish a hegemonic system. By controlling universities, it is possible to maneuver and instrumentally use in a way that circumvent the overall activities of universities for a narrow utilitarian purpose of serving the government of Ethiopia- the mission of ‘nationalization’ - using the threesome missions of teaching and research including community service for maintaining state power in the name of “poverty reduction” and “bringing development.”

Obviously, no one negates the goal of poverty reduction and bringing development at its outset. Rather, the blunder occurs when the government tries to make universities as the main centers of policy indoctrination by establishing a fixed “standard” of education and the corresponding knowledge – an approach that contradicts the ideal of universities for one cannot establish a limit for knowledge. Knowledge is against standardization for it opens a wide range of endless possibilities. The logical outcome of such standardization is that only knowledge which is stipulated and espoused by the government is not only considered as knowledge but also is the only valuable one. Such standardization is undertaken by presenting an option which is dichotomous: either to follow the standard that is established by the government and then bring development by “reducing the existing poverty” or to remain poor and underdeveloped. To

put the matter in its baldest manifestation, the only way out to eradicate poverty is to follow the path or policy of the government. It implies that the way that teaching, research and community service are conducted should be in line with the pre-established standard, i.e. the policy of the government - a clear departure from the ideals of university. Thus, those who act and diverge from such a paradigm or standard are acting not only against the policy of the Ethiopian government but also against the interest of Ethiopian people.

The roots of the government's standardization policy and its corresponding false dichotomy, is anchored in the interpretation and application of the ideology of Revolutionary Democracy. The option presented is clear: either to be in line with the teachings of Revolutionary Democracy and the fruits thereof or to face a miserable and unforeseen consequence. The obvious and expected (or preferred) alternative is to enjoy the benefits by accepting the teachings and practices of Revolutionary Democracy. To accept the teachings and practices of Revolutionary Democracy is tantamount to have a solution for every problem – a single mind glass which is capable of approaching the overall problems of the Ethiopian citizen in general and problems pertinent to AAU in particular.

Basically, trying to pretend and convince an individual of the presence of “only two options”, by undermining the presence of other alternatives, is tantamount to argue that there are only two ways of approaching every phenomenon or problems in this world, including the problems of Ethiopian society- a true authoritarian dictate – a powerful system that is capable of dominating and stifling reality that lies beyond its own setting or purview. The claim that there are only two ways of approaching nature or phenomenon is self-refuting in the sense that even in order to prove and justify the fact that the “two options” are the only options at hand, we need to have another parameter or approach to stand and rely on.

What is missing in this alternative is the very nature and interpretation of Revolutionary Democracy: whether it has merits or demerits since no one is allowed to debate and question the very nature of this ideology – antithetical to the ideals of university and its corresponding knowledge production - no territory of knowledge remains unquestioned. The ideal of university prescribes that since knowledge production is an intellectual exercise, then the best adage to be followed is to know the fact that intellectual work is not only essentially ungovernable but also is infinite. Unlike this cardinal insight, individuals should accept the ideology of Revolutionary Democracy even when its teaching is found to be partially mistaken, if not totally wrong. Such a teaching encourages only conformity, collective thinking, and unanimity thereby disregarding and curtailing dissent, subversiveness, independent and critical thinking, curiosity, imagination and an autonomous judgment – a clear departure from the missions of university education. In this situation, it is logical to be skeptical of an assumption that pretends to be authoritative, echoing the words of Zara Yacob, “is everything that is written in the Holy Scriptures true?” (quoted in Bekele, 2013, p. 27). This is to say, is everything that is incorporated in and propounded by Revolutionary Democracy true?

Revolutionary Democracy, not a liberal democracy, in its rejection of difference and dissent by aiming at creating individuals who think alike by making individual thinking as part of a collective thinking, resembles a company that produces a certain product with the same brand name. However, such an approach disregards the fact that "those who begin coercive elimination of dissent soon find themselves exterminating dissenters. Compulsory unification of opinion achieves only the unanimity of the graveyard” (Vestal, 1999, P. 139). Also, to anticipate the conformity of each and every members of the academic community regarding all aspects government policies and actions not only relegate the ideals of the university, but it also

undermines the very nature of man. Mankind is not one and the same. It is natural to be different and to have diverse opinions thereof. In principle, the government advocates the principles of diversity as it is possible to infer, at least, in phrases such as “nations, nationalities and peoples,” “multiculturalism” or the recently introduced logo of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) – “the voices of diversity and renaissance.”

Obviously, such an instance of a false dichotomy and standardization is true of all other policy issues and actions stipulated and exercised by the government. Accordingly, when a certain policy is introduced by the government pertinent to universities, members of the academia are not allowed to question, scrutinize and debate on the very nature of the policies but simply to accept. Such a practice is true of the policy of BPR, the introduction of so called “harmonized curriculum”, 70:30% policy in university students’ admission, modularization approach, 1 to 5 organization, the BSC program, and so on. Such and other policies are imposed in a top-down approach irrespective of the interest and idiosyncrasy of stakeholders. In order to achieve its policy of a top-down implementation of policies and directives, thereby controlling AAU, in the name of progress, the government has used the ‘positivist knowledge’, as it is interpreted by Lyotard, which negates conversation and debate between the government and the academic community.

The overall implication of presenting only two options and the missions of “nationalization” thereof is that everything which is not under the control of the government’s policies and strategies is considered as an enemy and detrimental to the system. The logical conclusion of such an approach is that the freedom to hold and express one’s (teachers’ or students’) opinion, the freedom to form, both by students and teachers, an independent and viable associations, the presence of tenure security and institutional autonomy becomes hardly

possible. Obviously, all these important manifestations and parameters of the privilege of academic freedom are totally crippled in AAU.

This entails that, the very attempt to control universities and create a hegemonic system thereof, by using the missions of ‘nationalization’ and the corresponding false dichotomy, stifles the autonomous functioning of AAU in its overall internal activities of teaching and research. This is the main reason for the core internal activities and decisions of AAU such as who may teach (related mainly teachers’ recruitment), what may be taught (related to the issues of curriculum), how it shall be taught (related mainly with the methods of delivery), and who may be admitted to study (related to students’ admission), are, in one way or another, controlled by the government. In effect, in AAU, one cannot anticipate the privilege of academic freedom and the realization of its true ideals – pushing the frontiers of knowledge and then disseminate this knowledge, mainly via teaching and publication, to the wider society, in order to solve existential problems.

In addition to the political maneuver by the government, in the name of “poverty reduction”, there are also other challenges that handicapped AAU from properly realizing its ideals by using and defending academic freedom as an important means. For instance, neoliberalism cum globalization, in their advocacy of the free market principle, privatization, and corporatization, has strongly affected AAU from realizing its missions of teaching and research. Under neoliberal philosophy and globalization, the guiding principle becomes use value – to what extent something is valuable in solving practical problems and brings revenue or profit.

As a result, knowledge becomes a commodity that can be sold and bought and even be privatized. The logical outcome is that AAU is increasingly seen as one sector of the economy resembling quasi-corporate entities, firms or businesses that produce and sell a wide variety of

goods and services in a competitive marketplace. Such a perception is a dangerous step in that it has eroded and displaced the social roles of universities – the cultivation of citizenship by inculcating the cultural heritages and values that have been firmly held and adopted by the society, the cultivation of good character that develop a sense of responsibility to others, the cultivation of a generation with good habits of the mind or critical thinking. As a result, there is no a true academic environment in AAU. Instead, the university has become a place where a significant number of professors are ‘intellectually opportunistic’ who are ready to conform and replicate what has been said and propounded by the government via its top-down approach and students who are academically consumerist.

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