

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE**

**A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF MARXISM ON BEALU
GIRMA'S THREE NOVELS: HADDIS, YEKEY KOKEB TIRI,
AND DERASIW**

MICHAEL FIQUIREMARIAM

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**BY
MICHAEL FIGUREMARIAM**

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Declaration

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

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Abstract

Marxist critics see art as a reflection of the social foundations of their societies. Through literature, they seek for a greater understanding of the inner workings of a society as well as evidence of rejection/propagation of the dominant ideology. This paper has attempted to see the influence of Marxism in Bealu Girma's three novels: Haddis, Yekey Kokeb Tiri and Derasiw. It has tried to see whether the novels reinforce Marxist principles and Socialist ideals. Furthermore, it has made an effort to look into Bealu's ideological outlook as reflected by the novels.

The foundation of the research is laid in chapter one. In this section the background of the study, the statement of the problem, purpose, significance, scope and methodology of the study have been discussed. To realize the objectives that are set in the first chapter, detail explanation is given on the central concepts of Marxist literary criticism in the second chapter. In this section, an endeavor is made to examine how literatures reflect the realities of the period in which they are composed or set. In addition, this section attempted to indicate how dominant ideologies manifest themselves in literary works. Moreover, the beliefs and perceptions that different Marxist critics held concerning art and literature has been discussed. This section also contains a survey of different research papers that deal with Bealu's novels. Here an attempt is made to show how this research paper is different from the ones that have already been conducted.

In light of the theoretical concepts of Marxist literary criticism an attempt is made to analyze the novels under study in chapter three. In this part, each novel has been analyzed one by one by taking into

account the time in which the novels are set. The themes and characterization of the major characters have been critically analyzed to find out whether the novels reinforce Marxist agenda. An attempt has also been made whether the novels reflect the social, economic and political condition of Ethiopia during the time they are set.

Chapter four concludes the study with some findings. As it has been shown in the analysis of the novels under study, Bealu was able to reflect the socio-political realities of the country at different time in history. Furthermore, he indicated his socialist vision through the portrayals of optimist, caring, kind and committed characters.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background of the Study

Art is a reflection of socio-economic condition; it is a social force which, within its emotional or ideological weight, shakes or moves people. It is believed that art and literature belong to definite classes and geared to definite political lives. These are some of the views and perceptions held by the prominent figures of Marxism. In fact, Marxists generally consider the socio-economic and political conditions of a particular country at a particular time when they attempt to study a work/works of a given artist. Diyanni (1998:1905), after scrutinizing Marxist's beliefs of interrelating literature with the socio-economic condition of the time in which it is written says, "Marxist critics generally approach literary works as products of their era, especially as influenced, even determined by the economic and political ideology that prevail at the time of their composition."

It is important, therefore, to note the significance of literary works in revealing the different ideologies prevailing during their production. Strengthening this point, Ngara (1985:21) comments that literature enables us to see the nature of ideology of an epoch because it is socially conditioned. In other words, works of art are basically reflection of particular social condition and relationships. Although they have an autonomous existence and are produced by individuals who may hold divergent view about life, they have a more or less direct relationship with historical development.

Consequently, in analyzing literary texts from Marxists point of view, it is important, first of all, to grasp the relative meaning of ideology

from Marxist perspective and its relationship with literature. Marxists have defined ideology in a similar fashion as the dominant idea of an epoch or a class with regard to politics and law, morality, religion, art and science. However, when it comes to the relationship of art and ideology, there exists some difference among Marxists themselves. For some Marxist critics, literature is nothing but ideology in a certain aesthetic form. For this group of Marxists works of literature are just expressions of the ideologies of their time. Opposing this view, some other Marxists argue that literature challenges the ideology it confronts. For this group, literature can be used as a weapon against the existing social structure and to promote a cause. Therefore, from the two views raised regarding the relation art has to ideology, it can be said that literature is not only a passive product of historical condition, a passive reflection of reality, but can also influence and help to shape reality.

To conclude if we are to understand fully and appreciate the rise, development, concerns and styles of the literature of a nation, we must see that literature in relation to the history and struggle of its people and in relation to the various ideologies that arise from socio-economic condition.

Hence, in this paper the researcher attempts to study the influence of Marxism on Bealu Girma's three novels: Derasiw (1972 E.C), Yekey Kokeb Tiri (1972 E.C) and Haddis (1975 E.C). The official ideology of the period in which these novels were written was socialism.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

For many Ethiopian literary critics, Bealu Girma is one of the greatest novelists that the country ever produced. His firm stand, in expressing the truth (even if the truth might have cost him his life) and in showing the realities of the time through his works, has earned him a top place as a prominent contemporary Ethiopian literary figure.

It doesn't require to be a literary scholar to understand that most of Bealu's novels are reflections of the social, economic and political conditions of the pre-revolution and post-revolution Ethiopia. Class struggle, the revolutionary process, corruption, bureaucracy, ignorance, and the political struggle were the major themes in most of his works (Hailu, 1978).

However it would be worth mentioning the fact that regardless of the themes and styles of a novel, a Marxist interpretation of any novel is incomplete without exhaustive analysis of the ideology of the author, ideology of the period in which the novel is written and the relation of the content of the novel with the socio-political realities that prevailed at the time of its composition. Therefore, this research will endeavor to investigate, applying the concepts of Marxist criticism of literary works, how Marxist thoughts influenced Bealu's writing by critically analyzing his three novles: Derasiw, Yekey Kokeb Tiri and Haddis.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

As Ngara (1985:50) pointed out "the influence of any ideology on a body of literature is the result of historical conditions and can enter unobtrusively in the writer's consciousness and creative work." Hence, it could be said that works of literatures produced at a

particular period in time some what reflect the socio-economic and political situation of that time. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to see how far Marxist thoughts and theories had influenced Bealu's writing by making a Marxist analysis on three of his novels, namely Yekey Kokeb Tiri, Derasiw and Haddis. More precisely, this study endeavors to give critical response to the following questions:

- What is Bealu's authorial ideology (social vision) as reflected in his works? What social, economic and political elements appear in his works? How important are they in determining or influencing the lives of the characters?
- Are there instance of conflicting ideologies? In other words do the novels reinforce Marxist or classist agenda?
- What ideologies do the major characters in the novels represent?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study will help critics to understand the application of Marxist principles and theories in analyzing literary works. Besides, this research is hoped to benefit the critics in explaining the ideological orientation of the writer by analyzing the Marxist elements presented in the stories. Moreover and most importantly, this study will provide an opportunity for other researchers, who plan to conduct a literary research in ideological assessment of literary works, by making itself as a reference material.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to examining three novels of Bealu Girma from Marxists stance.

1.6 Methodology

As the analysis of the research focuses on Bealu Girma's three novels, the major procedure for data collection was a critical reading and

analysis of these three novels: Yekey Kokeb Tiri, Derasiw and Haddis. For the purpose of analysis, theoretical sources relevant to the topic under scrutiny had been gathered first. In this phase the writer of this paper collected relevant literature on critical works on ideology and Marxism together with some other relevant local and international researches. To make the analysis thorough and well focused, important extracts that reveal the ideologies of the characters and the author were selected. Finally, interpretations of the extracts had been made so as to arrive at certain conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Theoretical Background and Review of Related Literature

2.1. Theoretical Background: Central Concepts of Marxist Literary Criticism

Marxist literary criticism takes its principal inspiration from the political and philosophical writings of Karl Marx but also Frederic Engles. According to Marxism, the consciousness of a given class at a given historical moment is derived from the modes of material production. Marx in ‘*A Contribution to the critique of Political Economy*’ (1859) illustrates this point by saying “the modes of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual process in general. It is not the consciousness that determines their being but on the contrary their social being that determines their consciousness.” Marxist literary criticism as Conway (1996) writes, proceeds from Marxist’s philosophical assumption that “consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence...life is not determined by consciousness but consciousness by life.”

Defining Marxist literary criticism has always been a difficult task for Marxist critics. This is due to the complexity and dynamic nature of the concept of Marxism in which this literary theory is based. Underling the complexity of the subject, Eagelton (1976) notes that “Marxism is a highly complex subject and that sector of it known as Marxist literary criticism is no less so.” Similarly, Mulhern (1992:2) emphasizes the ever changing nature of the subject saying:

Marxist culture is something more than its inherited canon, various and evolving as this may be. Marxism is historical not merely because it is itself fully a part of the history it

seeks to understand and action. History is as much a part of Marxism as Marxism is of it; they inhabit one another in unending tension....Marxism has not "arrived" nor has it "departed". It persists theoretically and practically, in a continuing history whose outcome is uncertain

However complex and evolving the subject may be, some scholars have attempted to define Marxist literary criticism from different perspectives. Eagleton, for example, takes Marxist literary criticism as a kind of criticism which "analyses literature in terms of the historical conditions which produce it; and it needs similarly to be aware of its own historical conditions." Eagleton's view seems to suggest that the historical conditions that exist in a certain period determine the kind of literature that is produced at that period.

In a brief electronic article which introduces the origins of Marxist literary criticism (<http://everything2.com>) an anonymous scholar defines Marxist literary criticism as follows:

Marxist literary criticism aims to explore tensions and contradictions in writing. And obviously, Marxists see meaning as intrinsically linked to social status and convention, and thus they seek through literature for a greater understanding of the inner workings of society as well as evidence of rejection/ propagation of the dominant ideology within a work of literature.

In this definition, we can see that Marxist critics are preoccupied in identifying the dominant ideologies of a society and in understanding the social condition of societies through works of art.

An elaborate and comprehensive definition of Marxist literary criticism is given by Murfin and Superiya (1998). In their *Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary terms*, they define Marxist literary criticism as:

A type of criticism in which literary works are viewed as the product of work and whose practitioners emphasize the role of class and ideology as they reflect, propagate and even challenge the prevailing social order. Rather than

viewing texts as repositories for hidden meanings, Marxist critics view texts as material products to be understood in broadly historical terms. In short literary works are viewed as a product of work (and hence the realm of production and consumption we call economics).

Murfin and Superiya's definition of Marxist literary criticism other than including the role of ideology and class in opposing, propagating or reflecting the prevalent social order, it introduces a different way of looking at literary works as the product of economics. This deterministic relationship between literary works and economics would lead us to the central concept of Marxist criticism-that of a base and superstructure.

2.1.1 Base and Superstructure in Marxist Literary Criticism

According to Marxism, every thing that happens in a society is in some way related to and determined by the mode of production, also called the economic base or simply 'bases'. In fact it claims that "the economic relation-forces and relations of production or modes of production are the primary determining factor in all social relation." Marx as quoted by Siegel (1970:10) underscored this premise by stating that "the mode of production in material life determines the social, political, and intellectual life in general". Similarly Biztray (1978:18) in an attempt to elaborate the concept of base and super structure writes:

.....the active productive man gradually creates an increasingly sophisticated relation to his material world, to his fellow men. The sum total of production factor is called the "economic base" of human existence, from which rises the legal and political superstructure and to which corresponds definite forms of social consciousnesswith the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less transformed. In short there is nothing in human consciousness, or in its products (to which literature and art also belong) that does not originate in the economic conditions of a given age.

Eagleton had also come up with detailed explanation of the meaning and relationship of base and superstructure. In his *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (1976:5), he says that “from the economic structure of a society or what is commonly known by Marxists as the economic base, or infrastructure emerges a superstructure-certain forms of law, politics, a certain kind of state, whose essential function is to legitimate the power of the social class which owns the means of production”.

From the above explanations forwarded by Marxists on the notion of base and superstructure, it can be said that the superstructure is a direct or nearly direct reflection of what is happening at the level of the base.

For Marxism art is one aspect of the superstructure. And hence Marxists stress that there is a direct relationship between the content and form of a literary work and the economic class, social or ideological factors that shape and determine content and form. Therefore, as Trotsky in Siegel(1970:15) notes “ a knowledge of how literature is governed in a general way by the functioning of the modes of production is essential for its fullest understanding.”

Recent development in Marxist literary criticism, however does not accept the idea that literature is absolutely determined by the economic base. Contemporary Marxist critics reject the idea of a determined base and a determined superstructure in literature by accusing the model for not acknowledging the possibility that literature might be in opposition to the dominant formation of the economic base. Demetz (1967:151) illustrates the shift of attention of Marxist critics from the deterministic relationship of base and superstructure to mutual relationships:

The relation between foundation and superstructure is now characterized by the possibility of mutual interaction; moreover this interaction is subject to the scientifically indeterminate effects of “a whole series of accidents”. There is no longer a direct contact between more distant spheres; economics may exert its influence upon the neighboring area of politics, but it can no longer force the more distant sphere of literature directly under its tyranny. The more abstract fields of the superstructure are only lightly touched by economic impulses which in turn, are subjected to serious metamorphoses on their way through the intermediate levels.

2.1.2 Content and Form in Marxist Literary Criticism

Marxist critics position on the form and content of a literary work is clearly stated by Eagleton(1976:20) who says “Marxist criticism has traditionally opposed all kinds of literary formalism attacking that inbred attention to sheerly technical properties which robs literature of historical significance”. He further asserts that “a good deal of Marxist criticism has in practice paid scant attention to question of artistic form”. Therefore it is no surprise if we see many Marxist critics focus on content rather than form.

Marxist’s conception of the supremacy of content over the form of a literary work could be traced back to Hegel’s work which suggested that “the content determines the form” (Biztray, 1978:14). However, Hegel himself abandoned this view and emphasized the unity of content and form in his later work *Genesis of work*. Hegel as quoted by Biztray (1978:4) writes “there is not only classical form but also classical content. Besides, form and content are so closely tied together in a work of art that one of them can be classical only if the other is classical too”. Marx who seemed very much influenced by the Hegelian tradition he inherited supports Hegel by saying “literature should reveal the unity of form and content”. However, he contends that “form is no value unless it is the form of its content”.

The relationship of form and content has become a speculative issue in contemporary Marxist criticism. Some Marxist critics such as Trotsky went as far as saying that art must be judged from the Point of its achievement in form which is so unlike Marxism. In his article *The Formalist School of Poetry and Marxism*, he attempted to justify his view by stating:

Materialism does not deny the significance of the element of form, either in jurisprudence or art. Just as a system of jurisprudence can and must be judged by its internal logics and consistency, so art can and must be judged from the point of view of its achievement in form, because there can be no art without them.

In the other extreme, opposing his view, some Marxist critics believe that the content of a literary work is the decisive element of the work as a whole and that the form only serves to make the work as expressive and convincing as possible. A. Lunacharsky, as quoted by Fluss (2008), contends “the form must correspond to the content as closely as possible, giving it maximum expressiveness and assuring the strongest possible impact on the readers for whom the work is intended.” According to him, “in every master piece, the form is determined wholly by the content.”

Eagleton (1976) in his part has also tried to pin point the position of Marxist literary theory towards the relationship of the form and content of a work of art. Accordingly, he asserts that “Marxist criticism sees form and content as directly related and yet wants to assert in the end the primacy of content in determining form”. While explaining this statement in detail, he says:

...forms are historically determined by the kind of content they have to embody; they are changed, transformed, broken-down and revolutionized as that content itself changes. ‘Content’ in this sense is prior to ‘form’ just as

for Marxism it is changes in the society's material content, its modes of production, which determines the forms of the superstructure (Eagelton, 1976:22).

Georg Lukacs, who is believed to have thoroughly studied the problems of literary forms than any Marxist critics, has also come up with a different theory. For Lukacs the truly socialist element in literature is the form. Even though he believes that art carries within itself the ideology of a certain period, he does not agree with vulgar Marxists' perception which states that a literary work reflects the ideology of an epoch only through its content. According to Lukacs "the true bearers of ideology in art are the very forms, rather than abstractable content of the work itself." As he said "We find the impress of history in the literary work precisely as literary, not as some superior form of social documentation" (Eagelton, 1976:24). Plekhanov took side with Lukacs and illustrated how literary forms carry the ideology of a country in which the work is written. He exclaims that "the transition from classical tragedy to sentimental comedy in France reflects a shift from aristocratic to bourgeois values."

As it can be seen in the above discussion, Marxists find it hard to come to terms concerning the relationship between the content and form of a literary work. However, it can be said that many Marxist critics are inclined to believe that the form of a literary work is subordinate to its content. In fact, Ngara (1985:3) explains Marxist criticism as "content based theory which, in its present state, cannot adequately account for the formal aspect of fiction." He even goes on to criticize Marxist criticism for its failure to give attention to the formal aspects of literary works in its theoretical framework. He comments:

If it is a combination of the what and the how that makes great art, then the how should receive due attention in any

theory of criticism that has a claim to comprehensiveness and adequacy. It is the major weakness of Marxist criticism that it does not pay sufficient attention to the how of particular works of art (Ngara, 1985:5).

Recent trends in Marxist criticism, however, have started to address this weakness. As Jameson (1971) pointed out “literature and culture can not be separated from their social and political context and that careful attention to both form and content must be given to elaborate the political significance of cultural artifacts.”

2.1.3 Ideology and Literature

In order to understand Marxist literary criticism in its totality, it is important, first of all, to grasp the concept of ideology from the point of view of Marxism and its relationship with literature. Although it looks simple to define ideology and identify the relation that it has with art and literature, Marxist critics do not come up with the same understanding regarding this issue as yet. To begin with, let us see how different Marxist critics view ideology.

Marx considers ideology as part of the superstructure generated by an economic base and works to justify that base. He illustrates his point by stating that “the ideologies present in a capitalist society will explain, justify and support the capitalist mode of production.” Similarly, Marx’s friend Engles believes that ideologies give people ideas about how to understand themselves and their lives and these ideas disguise or mask what is really going on. In Engles opinion Ideology functions as an illusion which masks the real or objective situation. Engles explains his view further by saying “the illusion that is created by ideology create false consciousness in people, who believe the ideological representation of how the world works and thus misperceive, or do not see at all, how the world really/objectively works” (<http://www.colorado.edu>). Coming to recent Marxist critics,

Ngara (1985) by taking the basic concepts of Raymond William's definition of ideology adopts a simpler definition of the term. According to his definition, "ideology refers to the dominant idea of an epoch or class with regard to politics and law, morality, religion, art and science". Eagleton, who is probably one of the leading contemporary Marxist critics, takes side with Engles's view of ideology as an instrument of creating false consciousness. Accordingly, he says:

Ideology is not in the first place a set of doctrines; it signifies the way men live out their roles in class society, the values, ideas and images which tie them to their social functions and prevent them a true knowledge of society as a whole (Eagleton, 1976: 16/17)

What makes all these Marxist critics similar is that their conception of ideology arises from the basic concept of Marxism-the base and the superstructure model. For these critics ideology is part of the superstructure and its function is to "legitimate the power of the ruling class in society" (Eagleton, 1976:5). According to these group of critics, literature is simply a vessel for propagating the dominant cultural ideologies among the people as a whole, preventing exploration of ideas as 'truth'. In many cases, it becomes a means for legitimizing the power of the superstructure class. As Eagleton states:

Literature is nothing but ideology in a certain aesthetic form-that works of literature are just expressions of the ideologies of their time. They are prisoners of 'false consciousness', unable to reach beyond it to arrive at truth. It is a position characteristic of much 'vulgar Marxist' who tends to see literary works merely as reflections of dominant ideologies.

Generally, from the above definitions and discussions, it seems possible to conclude that ideologies for Marxism are changing ideas, values and feelings through which individuals gain experience in their societies. And they usually present the dominant ideas and values as the belief of the society as a whole, thus prevent individuals from seeing how society actually functions.

This view of ideology as an illusion which reinforces the dominant ideology of society, however, could not get the approval of some Marxist critics. Althusser rejects the notion of false consciousness, stressing that ideology is the medium through which we experience the world. As Good heart (1997:3) quoting Althusser pointed out:

Althusser explicitly distinguishes ideology from false consciousness. Ideology, according to Althusser represents “the attitudes, predilections and dispositions of a group, “its practice and lived experience” which cannot be constructed as true or false. It is not “a contingent excrescence of history; it is a structure essential to the historical life of societies.

Althusser, by rejecting the determining effect of economics, saw ideology as itself a determining force shaping consciousness, embodied in the material signifying practices of “ideological apparatus” and enjoying relative autonomy.

It is, therefore, important that all ideology, as Althusser in Mulhern (1992:45) states, “must in practical way ‘hail’ or interpellate individuals as subjects so they perceive themselves as such, with rights and duties, the obligatory accompaniment”.

Althusser has also tried to formulate a different theory on the relation that art has to ideology. Contrary to the vulgar Marxist critics, he

believes that there is a complex relationship between art and ideology. Eagleton (1976:18) explains Althusser's opinion as follows:

Althusser argues that art cannot be reduced to ideology, rather a particular reaction to it. Ideology signifies the imaginary ways in which men experience the real world, which is of course the kind of experience literature gives us too-what it feels like to live in particular conditions, rather than a conceptual analysis of those conditions. However, art does more than just passively reflect that experience. It is held within ideology, but also manages to distance itself from it, to the point where it permits us to 'feel' and 'perceive' the ideology from which it springs.

Althusser's structuralist type of Marxist thought and its major emphasis on the relationship between ideology and culture laid an important foundation for other critics who are particularly interested in the political dimension of art. Pierre Macherey (one of Althusser's colleagues) who focuses on the production of literary texts within the cultural context of official ideologies suggests important ways that literature might oppose the process of interpellation by revealing the ideological illusions on which official society is based (<http://www.textetc.com>). In illustrating his idea, he uses the idea of how literary language is influenced by the other discourses (scientific, theoretical, every day speech) that surround it in the historical moment. For him, much of the ideological power of literature comes from the way its language is able to mimic and parody these other discourses.

Christopher Cadwell has also challenged the belief of the earlier Marxist's thought which states that literature can only promote the dominant ideology of a society (hence the ruling party). He says that "all art is produced by tensions; between these tensions, between

changing social relations and out-moded consciousness. At such crisis points, art is likely to present a significant challenge to the ideology of the ruling group.”

To conclude, according to Marxism, all ideologies are not desirable. An ideology is said to be undesirable if it tries to promote repressive political agendas that prevent members of the society from understanding the material or historical condition in which they live and desirable if it sparks the light of freedom for oppressed classes. Strengthening this point Good heart in his *Reign of Ideology* (1997:64) writes, “ideology necessarily plays an ambiguous role in Marxist thought: as a false consciousness when it refers to the ruling class and as good ideology when it refers to the interest of the revolutionary class.” Therefore, it is important for a typical Marxist critic to look at a literary work as both a product of work and as something which itself goes out and does work—the work of reinforcing, perpetuating or challenging its culture’s dominant value systems (or ideology).

2.2 Marxists Conception of Art and Literature

Marxists, who generally believe that the economic and social conditions determine the religious beliefs, legal systems and cultural frameworks, consider art and literature as a truthful reflection of these conditions. As Balibar and Macherey in Mulhern (1992:26) argue, “the classical Marxist theses on literature and art set out from the essential philosophical category of reflection”. To understand this category fully, they contend is, therefore, a key to Marxist conception of literature. In general terms literature is conceived as an historic reality by many Marxists. Emphasizing the strong tie between literature and the socio-economic conditions of its composition, Tyson (1999:63) writes:

.... For Marxism literature does not exist in some timeless, aesthetic realm as an object to be passively contemplated. Rather like all cultural manifestations, it is a product of the socio-economic condition and hence ideological condition of the time and place in which it was written, whether or not the author intends it so.

Though the formalist attacked Marxists for not giving sufficient attention for the artistic value of literary works, Marxists still stress that literature cannot be detached from historical and economic conditions. Underscoring this point, Craig (1975:20) comments that “Marxists are not prostituting literature when they use it as a source of historical knowledge; they are paying it the attention it calls for”. Similarly, Trotsky in Craig (1975:377) sharply criticizes formalists who advocate the idea of artistic beauty and pure art saying “the effort to set art free from life, to declare it a craft self-sufficient unto itself devitalizes and kills art. The very need of such an operation is an unmistakable symptom of self decline.”

It is not only the formalist, however, that challenge Marxists conception of literature as reflection of historical conditions. Arguments have also risen among Marxist critics themselves regarding this issue. For example, Mehring, who was the first to apply Marxist principles systematically to German and European literature, according to Demetz (1967) condemns the class struggle and the revolution for poisoning pure art and literature. Expressing his view, Mehring in Demetz (1967:188-189) writes:

...in the present every literary effort is condemned to failure as long as the class struggle poisons men's mind, any pure joy in beauty, any genuine creativity is impossible. “In all revolutionary periods”, “in all class fighting for their freedom”, taste will always be extensively obscured by logic and morality which translated into philosophy, means only that where the capacity for

perception and desires are severely restrained, aesthetic judgment will always come under pressure.

It is these differences that necessitate revisiting the views of prominent Marxist critics on literature and art. Hence, in this part, the writer of this paper will attempt to review the various perceptions that different Marxist critics held regarding art and literature.

2.2.1 Marx and Engles on Literature

Even though Marxist literary criticism owes the political and philosophical writings of Marx and Engles for its foundation, it is important to note that Marx and Engles did not develop a complete aesthetic theory. As Eagleton (1976:2) notes “Marx and Engles’s comments on art and literature are scattered and fragmentary, glancing allusions than developed positions”. Marx and Engles’s view on literature is very much influenced by their ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’ model which states that the mode of production in material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general. Accordingly, they argued that “literature, like all cultural phenomena is fundamentally determined by its economic condition” (Muhlern, 1992:18). Biztray on his *Marxists Models of Realism* assures this point saying “Marx and Engles restrict the function of literature to the reflection of the economic basis of society.” Later on, after the death of Marx, however, Engles limits the deterministic effect of the economic forces over the superstructure to a certain degree. Demetz, who notes the gradual change of Engles’s view on the ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’ model comments:

Where Marx was satisfied with the plain linear dependence of the superstructure upon the economic foundation, the late Engles limits the effects of the economic forces and postulates at the same time the possible effectiveness of the intellectual epiphenomenon.

.....Engles admits that in every moment of human history there exists a level of intellectual traditions removed from the area of economic forces. (Demetz, 1967:144-145)

Engles's letters to Mina Kautsky (1885) and Margart Harkness (1888) could also give us some idea to identify his opinion on literature. In his letter to Kautsky as Ngara (1985:10) paraphrases it, Engles states clearly that the socialist novelist does not have to provide a solution to the problem of his day. All a socialist novel needs to do is, as Engles notes, shake the optimism of bourgeoisie and instill doubt as to the eternal validity of their assumption.

A similar point is emphasized in the letter that he sent to Harkness. In that letter Engles comments "there is no need to write point blank so cialist novel." Engles as quoted by Ngara (1985) says "the more the opinion of the author remains hidden the better for the work of art". Basing these comments some doubt that Marx and Engles opposed partisanship in literature. However as Ngara assures:

The two "founding fathers" (Marx and Engles) of Marxism regard literature as a reflection not merely at the "social" and material "realists" of certain age but also of the consciousness of the age, appealing at the same time to the readers' consciousness (Biztray, 1978:21).

2.2.2 Mehring and Plekhanov on Literature

Mehring and Plekhanov are considered by Demetz (1967) as the first disciples in the historical development of Marxist literary criticism. Both Mehring and Plekhanov were the first to apply Marxist literary theory in European and Russian literatures, respectively. These two critics have much more in common than differences regarding literature, and how it should be conceived. Mehring whose literary

theory aims at the prophecy of the future possibility of great literature, believes that producing great literature at the time where there is class struggle is impossible. He comments that “the political derive of the fighting classes destroy any possibility of disinterested enjoyment; and with the destruction of detached joy the possibility of great art is demolished (Demetz, 1967:188-189).

Similarly Plekhanov, as Demetz states, believes in Marx's economic foundation of art and in the overwhelming force of historical development. However, like Mehring, he is concerned with the autonomy of pure art. While expressing Plekhanov's view on art, Demetz (1967:198) notes that “Plekhanov took the position that propaganda for or against Marxism destroys the work of art because political rhetoric forces “the writer into the role of the preacher.”

If there is any difference between Plekhanov and Mehring, it is a difference in their view on whether art should reflect what is happening in the world. Unlike Mehring, Plekhanov did not completely abandon the “utilitarian attitude towards art” which tries to force art into the service of outside forces. Enforcing this view, Muhlern(1992) quoting Plekhanov writes:

Plekhanov takes for granted the power of “art” as a value and sees it as a particularly rewarding “test” of “general view of history”: a science that raises its standard on the highest ground of culture must be recognized as a great intellectual power.

For Mehring, as Biztray (1978:7) states, society determined the author's view, which then determined the work. For Plekhanov, however, the author's mediating function between the external reality and the internalized world of the work was more complex.

2.2.3 Trotsky on Literature and Art

Trotsky who was one of the major architects of the Russian revolution is also among the prominent figures in Marxist literary criticism. His major work *Literature and Revolution* is still considered as a classic work in Marxist literary criticism. Trotsky's view of art and literature combines both the utilitarian function of them and their autonomous, independent existence. As he says "a work of art should in the first place be judged by its own law that is by the law of art. But before we really understand we must see that work in its historical context" (Siegel, 1970:13). In his essay *Formalist School of Poetry and Marxism*, Trotsky expresses how literature serves its utilitarian function without losing its artistic beauty. He says:

From the point of view of an objective historical process, art is always a social servant and historically utilitarian. It finds the necessary rhythm of words for dark and vague moods; it brings thoughts and feelings closer and contrasts them with one another, it enriches feelings; makes it more flexible, more responsive, it enlarges the volume of thought in advance and not through the personal method of accumulated experience, it educates the individual, the social group, the class and the nation. And this does quite independently of whether it appears in a given case under the flag of a 'pure' or a frankly tendentious art (Craig, 1975:367).

Even if Trotsky is very much concerned with the historical origins of literature, he emphasizes the need for understanding 'art as art'. In his book *Class and Art* as Siegel (1970:15) notes, Trotsky attacks those who find the sole value of Dante's *Divine comedy* for understanding the state of mind of certain classes in a certain epoch. He writes that "such view of literature makes it merely a historical document, not a work of art which must speak in some way to our feelings and moods".

Trotsky has also something to say on the kind of literature and art that should be produced during revolutionary period. As a person committed to the cause of the revolution, Trotsky is especially

interested in literature that are written by those with the revolutionary tendencies. Hence, he says:

During the period of revolution only that literature which promotes the consolidation of the workers in their struggle against the exploiters is necessary and progressive. Revolutionary literature cannot but be imbued with a spirit of social hatred, which is a creative historic factor in an epoch of proletarian dictatorship. Under socialism, solidarity will be the basis of society. Literature and art will be tuned to a different key (Siegel, 1970:60)

Though Trotsky is a faithful advocator of 'literature for the cause of revolution' he strongly feels that intellectual creativity must be free from lies, hypocrisy and the truly spirit of conformity. He outrageously opposes Stalin's and his proponent's declaration which forces writers to produce literature that only serve the party (soviet socialist party) and the revolution. He exclaims:

Our Marxist conception of the objective social dependence and social utility in art, when translated into the language of politics does not at all mean a desire to dominate art by means of decrees and orders. It is not true that we regard only that art as new and revolutionary which speaks of the workers and it is nonsense to say that we demand that the poets should describe inevitably a factory chimney or the uprising against capital! Of course the new art cannot but place the struggle of the proletariat in the centre of its attention. But the plough of the new art is not limited to numbered strips. On the contrary, it must plough the whole field in all direction (Craig, 1975:369)

From the above discussion it can be concluded that, literature, for Trotsky does not only serve as an instrument to promote the struggle of the proletariat to abolish capitalism but also as an artistic beauty that appeals to our senses, feelings and emotions.

2.2.4 Lukacs and Realism

The contribution of Georg Lukacs for the development of Marxist criticism is so great that many literary critics consider this Hungarian

Marxist theorist as a “founding figure” in the 20th century Marxist literary theory. Lukacs’s view of literature is highly tied to the concept of realism which is for Lukacs a true reflection of life in its totality. Like Hegel as Biztray (1978), states, Lukacs is anthropocentric in his definition of literature. Lukacs gives a comprehensive definition of Realism with its characteristics in *The German Collection of Lukacs Writings*. Accordingly, he explains:

Realism is “the reflection of humanism in art. Also Realism is never a matter of technique. It is one kind of style opposed to other kinds, but the expressions of a high degree of consciousness and a set of human experience on behalf of the writer” (Demetz, 1978:62).

With regard to the characteristics of realism, Lukacs lists three basic points. The first one is concerned with the creation of concrete, vivid, and tangible human situation (Biztray, 1978:62). Next to concreteness, as Biztray notes, comes ‘the total view of life’. According to Lukacs ‘details are not self justifying’ but must contribute significantly to the over all picture”. He, thus, accuses the naturalists specifically for seeking the illusion of totality through endless details. The third characteristics of realism according to Lukacs, is the concept of typicality. For him “every day life is chaotic and full of coincidences.” Therefore, the writer has to distinguish the representative and significant experience from the accidental ones and recognize their sequence.

Lukacs strongly believes that only realistic forms of fiction are artistically and potentially valid. He contends that the greatest artists are only those who can effectively represent the totality of human life. He feels that the task of art is the truthful and accurate representation of the totality of reality .It aims at a profound and comprehensive depiction of reality and does not present reality abstractly” (Ngara, 1985:15). Lukacs sharply criticizes ‘naturalism’

and its photographic method of depicting reality since it is a distortion and deterioration of realism into abstraction. He comments:

While the crux of Marxist aesthetics is realism, it also combats vigorously to naturalism and any direction which is satisfied with a photographic reproduction of the immediately perceptible surface of the external world. True realism enables the writer to see the connection between things and to relate his description of objects to the essence of these objects and of the reality around them (Ngara, 1985:15)

When we look at Lukacs's position on the commitment of the writer and his work we find that, though he was a party member, he took a reluctant and less political attitude. In fact he was criticized by Brecht for "separating the tendency of the author from the tendency of the work" (Biztray, 1978:108). According to Lukacs, "the writer is committed only to himself, to his objective judgment of perceived reality, his humanism and his capacity to reflect his experience in a dialectical way" (Biztray,1978:64). Lukacs has gone as far as saying that literature will lose its complacency and aesthetic value if it is written in favor of political and other merits.

As Eagleton (1976:53) noted Lukacs has been attacked on two main fronts for this position. He has been harshly criticized by Brecht who claims that "Lukacs makes a fetish of nineteenth century realism and is culpably blind to the best of modernist art". Other than Brecht, Lukacs was reproached by his own communist party comrades for being less enthusiastic to use literature for the cause of socialism.

Opposing Lukacs's conception of realism, Brecht argues that "our conception of realism need to be broad and political, free from aesthetic restriction and independent of conventions" (Craig, 1975:424). Realist for Brecht means:

Laying bare society's causal networks/showing up the dominant view point as the view point of the dominators/

writing from the stand point of the class which has prepared the broadest solutions for the most pressing problems afflicting human society/emphasizing the dynamics of development/ concrete so as to encourage abstraction.

Contrary to Lukacs's view of the writer as a recapturer and recreator of human life, Brecht argues that "the role of the artist as of the intellectual is the overthrow of the weight of the heritage; to the question "what does the proletariat expect of its intellectuals? The answer is that they 'disintegrate' bourgeois ideology" (Mulhern, 1992:251). For Brecht "a literary work is a good work in so far as it produces a specific knowledge, a certain domination of reality." The difference between Lukacs and Brecht's conception of realism is clearly explained by Biztray (1978) who writes:

According to Luacks, although the author's political consciousness may be ideologically incorrect, he can still create correct characters unintentionally. According to Brecht the author's political consciousness may be ideologically right and yet he still may create false characters intentionally, to attain a rational distance between his audience and his heroes (Brecht regarded this device, this "intellectualizing through distancing" as an application of the Marxist idea of alienation to literature and the theatre, he called it estrangement). While Lukcacs tends to forget that perception is already an integrated part of human consciousness, Brecht tends to forget that there is also false consciousness and therefore cannot be evaluated solely in terms of itself (p. 109).

2.2.5 Socialist Realism and the Writer's Commitment

For western readers according to Craig (1975), the term 'Socialist realism' means little more than the novels and plays of which Soviet writers produce to the orders of their government; the sort of art that highlights the good features of Soviet lives and glories over the malignant ones. In fact, he asserts that even western socialist critics

tend to be skeptical as to whether 'socialist realism' has any meaning at all. However, he argues that socialist realism is a school of new tradition which aims to 'describe the force working towards socialism from the inside'. Its purpose is as Craig notes "to locate those human qualities which make for the creation of a new socialist order". Different literary critics attempted to define Socialist realism in different ways. Mitchell, for instance, defines socialist realism in the field of literature as a "literature written from the point of view of the class conscious working class, whose socialist consciousness illuminates their whole view of the nature of the world and of the potentialities of man kind (Craig, 1975:214). Similarly Sholkov in Abiy (1986:8) defines socialist realism as "the art of truth of life comprehended and interpreted by the artist from the point of view of devotion to the Leninist party principles". For him any art that actively insists men to build a new world is socialist realist art.

Gorky, who is considered as the father of socialist realism has also, came up with the definition of his own. Accordingly, he writes:

Socialist realism asserts life as action, as creative endeavor the aim of which is to constantly develop the finest individual abilities of man for his triumph over the forces of nature, for his health and longevity, for the great happiness of living on this earth which he wants to cultivate in Conformity with his constantly growing requirements, and make of it a beautiful home for mankind, united into one big family (Abiy, 1986:8).

Abiy (1986:9) while attempting to summarize these definitions (and others) express socialist realism in a nut shell. He says:

Socialist realism includes the role of art in the struggle for communism. Partisanship is another characteristic of socialist realism. This means commitment to the Marxist Leninist principles and the party, the party representing

the people in the historical process of the past, present and future.

As it can be deduced from the above discussion socialist realism is strongly tied to the Marxist concept of commitment which emphasizes that art should necessarily be proletarian and should serve the society as a moral instrument.

According to socialist realism, Eagleton (1976:38) states "it is the writer's duty to provide a truthful historico-concrete portrayal of reality in its revolutionary development, taking into account the problem of ideological transformation and the education of the workers in the spirit of socialism." Socialist realists strongly contend that the committed writer should take part in the struggle of the age and must take side with the oppressed group. Max Adereth in Craig (1975:465-466) stressed this point in his article *What is Littérateur Engagee* saying:

The committed writer knows that in modern society, he must side with certain social forces against injustices, he refuses to compromise with the establishment but his rebellion is part of a wider movement. For him literature becomes what Satre calls an "integrated and militant function"

For a Marxist, as Adereth argues, commitment implies fellow feeling and cooperation with a wider group. Therefore, as socialist realism contends a committed writer need to write "for the people", to affirm their aims and aspirations at the conscious level of his views. Jack Mitchell strengthens Adereth point by stating that a true proletarian novelist must write in an inexhaustible, intellectual, emotional and sensual curiosity about the actual, concrete, existing life of the working class (Craig, 1975:249).

Mao Tse-Tung, a faithful proponent of socialist realism, has also something to say regarding the role of literature in society at the

height of revolutionary struggle. Mao equates committed literature with revolutionary literature and states:

Revolutionary literature is subordinate to politics and should serve and influence the revolutionary cause, they are cogs and wheels in it...; they are indispensable cogs and wheels in the whole machine, an indispensable part of the entire revolutionary cause. It is the duty of the revolutionary writer therefore, to produce works which awaken the masses which fire them with enthusiasm so that they can unite in one single effort to transform their environment (Ngara, 1985:13)

Socialist realist's view of literature as a means of propagating the official policies of a ruling political party (the communist party) and its commanding tone that obliges writers to write nothing but the revolution and the proletariat was highly disapproved by prominent Marxist critics. Trotsky, for example, expressed his irritation saying "the belief that we force poets, willy-nilly, to write about nothing but factory chimneys or revolt against capitalism is absurd (Eagleton, 1976:43). Similarly, Eagleton (1976) put his detestation of socialist realism in a forceful manner. He expressed the theories of socialist realism as the "most devastating assault on artistic culture ever witnessed in modern history- an assault conducted in the name of a theory and practice of social liberation."

As it has been tried to show in this section, the theories of Marxist literary criticism is varied and complex. Marxist literary theory is very broad and entails within itself contradictory, dynamic beliefs and opinions of various Marxist critics. The following extract taken from Demetz (1967:223) clearly explains this fact and hence a good concluding remark:

The center of attention in Marxist criticism has shifted. In the last century one spoke of foundation and superstructure, of cause and effect; in recent decades interpretations have emerged that are trying to place economics and the world of literature in a complicated and

oblique relationship. The sociological background of the author and his political opinions are ignored, and critics concentrate on questions of inner structure of the work of art, the social implications of its form, or the development of genres in the stream of historical consciousness.

2.3 Review of Related Literature

Bealu's novels have always been the center of attention for many scholars who have studied the contemporary Ethiopian literature. In fact Zerihun (1986) pointed out that until 1982 academic year alone more than fifty research papers that deal with Bealu's novels had been conducted by students for partial fulfillment of their degrees. Out of these papers, the writer of this research attempts to review the most relevant and prominent to this research and tries to show how this paper is different from theirs.

The first person to conduct a research in Bealu's novels is Asfaw Teshager(1968E.C). In his attempt to investigate the major characters of Bealu's novel and their society (የበዓሉ ግርማ ገፀ ባህርያትና ያለበት ሀብረተሰብ), he chooses Abera Worku and Lulit Tadesse from Keadmas Bashagar Haddis Sahle from Ye Helina Dewele and tried to analyze their personality and outlook towards life.

A comparatively broad but a similar approach to the aforementioned research was undertaken by Bisrat (1972 E.C). In his paper (አበራ ወርቁ የከጸድማስ ባሻገር ዋና ገፀባህሪ) Abera Worku-major character in keadmas Bashagar, Bisrat attempted to analyze Abera's personality and ideological beliefs as depicted by the author. In his conclusion, Bisrat writes that Bealu has effectively created a character that resembles real people who lived at that period.

Among researches conducted in 1974 E.C, it is important to mention Aklilu Michel's thesis: **የበዓሉ ግርማ ድርሰቶች አፃፃፍ ስልት** (Narrative Style in Bealu Girma's Novels). This paper investigated the author's language use taking into account the words, sentences and figures of speech he uses in his novels.

In the same year, Zemenay tried to compare and contrast the theme, techniques of characterization and narrative mode that are observed in Bealu's two novels, keadamas Bashagar and Derasiw. After critical analysis, she came up with the result that though there is a slight difference in the themes of the two novels, the narrative style and the way characters are portrayed are similar in the two novels.

Hailu Abebe(1978E.C) has also tried to look whether Bealu's post revolution novels reflect the realities of the period in which they were written. In his paper **የበዓሉ ግርማ የድህረ አብዮት ልቦለዶች ያተኮሩባቸዉ የህብረተሰብ ጉዳዮች** (Social Issues that are given Due Emphasis in Bealu's Post-revolution Novels), Hailu critically analyzed three of Bealu's novels and concluded that Bealu had effectively reflected the different societal issues of the epoch through his novels.

Tsegaye Wedajo's MA thesis: *An Analysis of Themes and Literary Technique in the Novel's of Bealu Girma* (1983) is another piece of research that is worth being reviewed here. In his study, the researcher analyzed Bealu's four novels from the angle of their themes and narrative techniques, specifically how issues of self-critic, lustfulness and social critics are reflected in his novels in line with the depiction of the major characters and the narrative technique the author employs. At the end of his research, Tsegaye concluded that Bealu knows his characters very well that he can understand their inner feelings and actions.

Fikre Tolossa (1983), in his Ph.D dissertation: *Realism and Amharic Literature* studied Bealu's Keadmas Bashagar and Yekey Kokeb Tiri along with other fourteen novels written by different authors. Fikre attempted to see whether the characters and the plot of these novels are plausible. At the end of his research, he said, among other things, that Bealu succeeded in creating characters that possess the behavior and personalities of real people.

The last research paper which the writer of this thesis would like to review here is Elias Ayalneh's MA thesis “ገፀክርስቶስ በበአሉ ግርማ ቅድመ አብዮት ኖሏል።” (The Figure of Christ In Bealu Girma's Pre-revolution Novels). In his study Elias attempted to show that Hailemariam Mamo from Keadmas Bashager and Haddis Sahle from Ye Helina Dewele are portrayed as figure of Christ. At the end of his research, Elias come up with the finding that the two characters possess the personalities and qualities of Jesus Christ and are therefore presented as Christ figure, reflecting Christ's characters and outlooks.

As we can see from the above reviews, the focuses of most of the researches on Bealu's novels were narrative style, thematic analysis, characterization and plot construction. Even though the themes and characterization of the novels have also been dealt in this paper, they are used to see Bealu's tendency towards Marxist principles. Besides, this paper, other than looking whether Bealu's novels reflect the socio-economic condition of the country at the time of their composition, it also sees how the economic system that prevailed at that time affected the lives of the characters. No one has attempted, as far as the knowledge of the writer of this paper is concerned, to critically and thoroughly analyze Bealu's novels in accordance with the theoretical concepts of Marxist Literary Criticism. Therefore, this

research study will make an effort to investigate the influence of Marxism on Bealu's novels by practically analyzing the selected works using Marxists approach to literary criticism.

CHAPTER THREE: Analysis of the Novels

3.1 Analysis of Haddis

3.1.1 Haddis: Synopsis

Haddis tells the story of Haddis, a brilliant young teacher from poor family background, Tafesse, a foreign educated aristocrat, Fitawrari Teka, a respected feudal landlord and Aynalem, a daughter of Fitawrari Teka. Before becoming a teacher, Haddis was an intelligent second year university student. However, seeing his very poor mother getting weaker and weaker while trying to earn money to support herself and him, he decided to quit his education for a year and share the burden she carries. But finding a job was not easy as he thought. Most of the employers were more interested in his blood line (which is not good enough) than his knowledge and ability. After many attempts, however, he finds a job with the help of Tafesse who was then the head of administration in the Ministry of Education; He becomes a teacher in one of the remotest part of Ethiopia –Supe, part of the former Elibabour region.

Supe's green landscape and fresh air receive Haddis with a warm welcome. But the school director (Ato Yirga) who considers the coming of this young energetic and smart man as a threat to his long lived authoritarian administration starts to give Haddis a hard time. As a novice teacher, Haddis tried to avoid getting involved in a fight with Yirga. However, he could not keep his eyes closed and his mouth shut to Yirga's unfair, immoral and unjustifiable deeds. His relationship with Yirga gets worse especially after he disgraced the school director

in front of the school staff by telling that during the selection process for school enrollment, he (Yirga) left out students who are from poor parents (peasants) in favor of students from rich families (landlords) even though the former got higher scores in the entrance examination.

The confrontation between Haddis and the school director continues while Haddis raises the idea of building a new school in place of the old one which is dilapidated and accepts only few students. Ato Yirga who is pretty much occupied with the lucrative coffee trade than the school affair was suspicious of Haddis's move and tried everything in his power to alter Haddis's dream. In the meantime, the materialist Tafesse who could not climb up in the aristocratic ladder of Hailesellasié's regime as he expected comes to his birth place Supe, to be a coffee farmer and trader. He gets no other best opportunity than coffee trade as the easiest route to be what he always dreamed, a rich and powerful person who can do whatever he wants with his money.

He is a strong adherent of capitalist ideology which encourages people to accumulate as much capital and money as one can by any means. Tafesse expressed the importance and the role that money can play in this world in the following manner:

ገንዘብ ካለ በሰማይ መንገድ አለ። ... ሀይወት ያለ ገንዘብ ምን ዋጋ አላት? አየሀ አለም ብዙ የሚያጓጉ ቆንጆ ቆንጆ ውብ ነገሮች ፊትህ ላይ ስታስደንስ ትውላለች። ታዲያ ያለ ገንዘብ አይገኙም። ያለ ገንዘብ የሀይወት ውብ ነገሮች አይገኙም... ያለ ገንዘብ ደስታ አለ ቢሉህ አትመን። የዋሾዎች ወይም የደካማዎች ወሬ ነው። ያለ ገንዘብ የሚገኝ ነገር የለም። ሰው በመሠረቱ አላቂ እቃ ላይ የሚያተኩር እንስሳ መሆኑን አትርሳ... ዛሬ ገንዘብ ነው እግዜር። ሀይል ነዋ። ገንዘብ ሀይል ነው። በሞትና በሽረት መካከል ያለውን ጥያቄ የሚወሰነው ገንዘብ ነው ገንዘብ ካለህ በምድር ላይ የማትገባበት ነገር የለም (ገፅ:95-98) ።

If there is money, there is always a way.... What value does life has without money? Life offers you lots of beautiful things, but you can't hold of them unless you have money. The beauties that life provides to this world cannot be grasped if one has no money. Do not believe if some one told you that happiness can be attained without having any money. This is the idea of the mendacious and the weak because nothing can be gained with out money. Remember that a human being is basically a materialist animal which pays huge interest to consumerable goods.Today money is 'God'. It is power. The question of life and death can only be decided by the amount of money you possess. If you have money, there is no terrestrial heaven that you cannot have access to (pp: 95-98).

In order to achieve his dream that is getting rich quickly, *Tafesse* uses the privilege and power he gets from his "blood". He is the son of *Kagnazmach Birru Ejarssu*- a famous landlord who administered *Supe* before the fascist Italy executed him. He forced small scale coffee traders and farmers to sell to him their coffee beans with very cheap prices and with loan; he threatened, whipped and even killed those who tried to resist his command like request(p.139).

Tafesse's immoral and selfish acts were hugely disapproved by *Fitawrari Teka*(his uncle) and *Haddis*. Unlike *Tafesse*, *Haddis* is egalitarian and feels that when one lives in this world, she/he has to do something for the betterment of the society. For him, building a new school is the very little he can do to *Supe's* children whose chance otherwise is to be shepherds and maids due to the low intake capacity of the old school. Thus, he completely commits himself to finish the new school despite *Tafesse's* alluring offer to make him his business partner (P.92). *Haddis* is sensitive to the peasants' suffering and pain resulted from the unfair treatment and exploitation of the land lords. Just after few days of his arrival in *Supe*, he was engaged in writing letter of complaints for the illiterate peasants whose land is

forcefully taken by landlords without any compensation (P.52). Even though he was unsuccessful, *Haddis* has also tried to stop Tafesse from displacing the peasants who lived in the land which he claims to be his father's property. In fact, in the final chapter of the novel, by setting aside his friendship and the favor that Tefesse did him, Haddis took side with the angry peasants and confronts Tafesse openly.

On the other hand, Fitawrari Teka, who owns almost half of the houses found in Supe, is highly critical of people (particularly Tafesse's) un-satiated desire to accumulate more money. He feels that land and tenants are the most important things than money for a feudal landlord of his standard. He says:

የባለባቶች ክብርና ግርማ ሞገስ ያገራችን ወግና ስነሰርዓት መሠረት መሬት ብቻ አይሆንም። ጨሰኞችም ናቸው። ... የኛ ክብር ፀጋና ሀብት ጥንትም ሆነ አሁን እንዲሁም ለወደፊት መሬት፣ ሰውና ጀግንነት ነው (ገፅ: 112) ።

:: ሰው እንዴት የገንዘብ ተገዥ ይሆናል? ለማናቀው ዘመን የገንዘብ ሴሰኛ መሆን የሚያሳዝን ነው (ገፅ179)::

Do not think that land is the only base for the honor and grandeur of the noblemen and our country's traditional custom and etiquette. The tenants are, too. Our honor, grace and wealth in the past, now and in the future are land, human resource and valor (P.112).

How can man become the slave of money? It is very saddening to see a human being becoming obsessed with money for the time he\she does not have control of it (P.179).

Contrary to other land owners, Fitawrari Teka is sympathetic and caring to peasants who are in trouble and badly treated by their respective feudal lords. In fact supe's peasants call Fitawrari with a nick name- *አባ ቢያ*- which means "father of the land." Haddis, who is attracted by the good-natured and affilable Fitawrari Teka at his first acquaintance, did not take much time to get close to Teka's families.

Besides his love affair with Aynalem, Fitawari's only daughter that ended up in marriage, firmly tied his relationship with Fitawrari Teka.

However, the revolutionary movements of the masses start to shake the ruling class. Finally in March, 1974 the revolution up roots the feudal Hailesellasie regime and ends the exploitative feudal- peasant relationship. Land becomes the property of the masses. Fitawrari Teka who could not stand to see his land taken by tenants fled from his home to fight against the new power. Unfortunately, he could not get enough followers. He eventually committed suicide defying police's request to give himself up (P.320). Similarly, Tafesse who sees his dream crumbling down before his eyes set fire on "his forest" in frustration. He was killed by the same people whom he used to beat, threaten and kill –the peasants. For Haddis, however, the revolution is the only way that can bring a new, classless world- a world where people live in mutual respect, love and companionship.

3.1.2. Haddis as a Reflection of the Oppression and Exploitation of Peasants during the Feudal Ethiopia

Set in 1973/74, Haddis is a story which shows the social, political and economic conditions of Ethiopia during the final years of the feudal regime that is ousted by the Ethiopian revolution of 1974. It reflects the realities of a period-a period which is characterized by the concentration of land in the hands of the few landlords that concomitantly lead to the spread of tenancy. It is also a period that witnessed the uprising movement of the masses against the repressive and exploitative ruling class. Confirming these facts, Bahiru in his *A History of Modern Ethiopia* (2002: 194/195) states "the last decade of the regime saw extensive commercialization and mechanization of agriculture which lead to the eviction of tenants, as landlords found it more profitable to work on the land themselves."

Bealu as a writer who is concerned to reflect this reality shows in Haddis the inhuman actions of the landlords. In Haddis, we see peasants displaced from their land by landlords (such as Kegnazmach Bekele and Tafesse) for reasons of developing mechanized agriculture. In the first chapter, for example, we see tenants (Aba Wako and two other tenants) telling Fitawrari Teka that their feudal lord (Bekele) has told them to leave the land and that they have come to request him to mediate between them and their lord to reconsider his decision:

*ቀኝ አዝማች ደህና ነው ወይ
 ቀኝ አዝማችስ ደህና ናቸው። እኛን ድሆቻቸውን ጤና ነሱን
 እንጂ
 እንዴ፣ ለምን እኮ
 ከመሬታችን ላይ ነቀሉን። እንዲያው ጎጃችሁን ነቅላችሁ
 የምትሄዱበት ሂዳ አሉን። ከዚህ የመጣነው አርባ ሰዎች ነን፤
 ከቤተሠባችን ጋር ከ200 በላይ እንሆናለን
 ምን ሊያደርግበት ነው?
 ዘመናዊ እርሻ አስፋፍቦታለሁ ነው የሚለው። መንዲስ መንዲስ
 የሚያካክሉ የርሻ መኪናዎች ገዝተውና ሾፌሮች ከአዲስ አበባ
 ድረስ ቀጥረው አስመጥተው አገር ምድሩን እየገለበጡ ነው
 (ገፅ: 49) ።*

*How is kegnazmach?
 He is fine, but he is causing us-his poor people- a lot of
 trouble.
 What? Why?
 He evicted us from our land. He told us to dismantle
 our homes and to go any where we want to go. We are
 here forty in numbers and with our families our
 number could exceed two hundred.
 What does he want to do with his land?
 He said he wants to expand mechanized farming.
 Buying huge tractors and hiring drivers from Addis
 Abeba, he is turning the expanse of the field upside
 down (p.49).*

Apart from telling us how the peasants and tenants are exploited by the landlords, Bealu has tried to show the huge difference in the living conditions of the “poor” and the “rich” in that period. For instance, in the first chapter we are introduced to Haddis and his mother’s small

hut which is described as cold, indicating that food has not been cooked in it for days. In the same chapter we came across a woman who used to earn her living by making and selling pottery. We see the woman leading a miserable life because she was forbidden by the land owner and the police to take the clay soil from the owners land.

On the other extreme, the life style of the landlords can be expressed as luxurious and comfortable. Fitawrari Teka and Tafesse's living conditions can be taken as very good examples. Both of them live in big comfortable houses; Tej and whisky are their daily drinks and both of them own a number of body guards, assistants and tenants that protect and look after them. The following description of Tafesse's house can give us a glimpse of what the rich land lord's home might look like:

እየተጠማዘዙ ወደ ሰገነት የሚወጡት ደረጃዎች በእብነበረድ የተሰሩ ናቸው። ትኩስ የቤት ቀለም እውድ ያደርጋል። ... ወለሉ ላይ የተነጠፍት ሰፋፊ ቀይ ምንጣፎች ከተመሳሳይ መስኮት መጋረጃዎች ጋር ተዋህደው አይን ያሞቃሉ። መደገፊያቸው ያጌጡ ሰማያዊና ቀይ ምንጣፎች በወግ ተደርድረዋል (ገፅ፡ 191)።

The twisting stairs that take up to the gallery are made of marble. The smell of fresh house paint has filled the gallery. The spacious, red rugs carpeted on the floor that match with those curtains hanged on the windows attract the eye. Blue and red mats or rugs with their decorated braces are orderly put in place (P.191).

In order to make our understanding of the period in which the novel is set complete, Bealu has also attempted to include historical facts. These include the students' movement with a slogan "Land to the Tiller!" Teachers strike and the soldiers mutiny which all happened in consistent with the time that Haddis is set. Bealu has also showed the

desperation of tenants who use violence as a last resort to end the domination and exploitation of the ruling classes. In the novel, Wako- a tenant who is displaced from the land owned by Kegnasmach Bekele- killed his feudal lord and fled to the forest (P:175). He was later caught and hanged in the market (p.227).

3.1.3 Classism and Christianity: the Major Means of Legitimizing the Power of the Ruling Classes

Classism which associates quality of people with their breeding is the dominant ideology in feudal Ethiopia. From a classist perspective, as Tsyon (1999:55) writes, quality is ‘in the blood’, that is it is inborn. Hence, people at the top of the social scale believe that they are naturally superior to those below them: more intelligent, more responsible, more trustworthy, more ethical, and so on. They are, therefore, perfectly suited to lead the people and the nation.

In *Haddis*, we can see the ruling classes using classism along with Christianity in order to legitimize and maintain their power. The ruling monarchs, for example, assure the masses that they are descendents of the *Solomonic* dynasty and that they are chosen by God to rule the country. Fitawrari Teka’s classist comment on the dissemination of modern education among the common people could reveal the prevalence of classism in that period. While talking with *Haddis* and priest Mehari, he says:

የሀክምናና የዕድ ጥበብ ትምህርት ቢስፋፋ ጥሩ ነው። “ግን ዛሬ የድሃ ልጅ ሁሉ መማር የሚፈልገው ያስተዳደርና የፖለቲካ ትምህርት ብቻ ሆነ ሰውን የማስተዳደር ስልጣን በትምህርት አይደለም የሚገኘው እሱ የፈጣሪ ፋንታ ነው። ከሠው መርጦ ሰሹመት ከእንጨት መርጦ ለታቦት ይባል የለ... (ገፅ: 181)

“... It is good if medicine and handcraft education are expanded.” said Fitawrari, “ but today the young who are from poor families are only interested in getting themselves trained in political and administrative related fields. Nonetheless, the wisdom to rule peoples is not gained through training. It rather is God’s responsibility to choose men who could be rulers. As the saying goes “among all men only few are selected for appointment as only few woods get the chance to become an arc” (p.181).

In another episode, we see *Fitawrari* calming down the angry tenants whose house is destroyed by their feudal lord- *Tafesse* telling them that they need to have fear of God (ፍርሃ እግዚአብሔር) and that they have to accept their lord’s decision without any question (P. 189).

We can also see the strong alliance of the church and the ruling class which is a familiar feature of Feudalist regimes. In *Haddis*, Priest *Mehari*, a member of the clergy, enforces the idea that an individual’s destiny is already determined by God and she/he can do nothing to change it. He says:

ሙያ ለእያንዳንዱ ሰው ከሰማይ ተወስኖ የተሰጠ ነው።... ገበሬ ነገዴ አንጥረኛ ቀጥቃጭ ሸክላ ሰሪ እንጨት ሰባሪ እንጀራ ጋጋሪ የሚያደርገው እሱ ነው። ከሱ ትዕዛዝ ውጪ ምን የሚሆን ነገር አለ ሁሉም ይህን አውቆ የተደለደለትን እንጀራ አሜን ብሎ ተቀብሎ የበታች የበላዩን አክብሮ ቢኖር ኖሮ መቼ ችግር ይገባበን ነበር... የገበሬው ልጅ ገበሬ የነጋዴው ልጅ ነጋዴ የፋቂም ልጅ ፋቂ የቀጥቃጭ ልጅ ቀጥቃጭ ሁሉም ለዘር ማንዘሩ የተሰጠውን ሞያ ተመስገን ብሎ ካልሠራ የአንድ ሀገር ኑሮ ዘለቁታ አይኖረውም። ሁሉም እግዚር በጥበቡ ባደለው ሙያ ፀንቶ ቢኖር ምንኛ መልካም በሆነ ነበር።

Any profession is God-given. It is God that makes a person a farmer, merchant, silversmith, black smith, woodworker, baker, etc. Nothing happens outside God’s whim. We would not have faced problems if the God-given

*professions were accepted whole heartedly. ...
A country's prestige and grace will not be
sustainable if every one doesn't come to terms
with the occupation he\she is given. How
wonderful it would be if all try to live satisfied
with the profession that God has bestowed up
on them.*

As it can be seen, classism and Christianity are employed as effective instruments by the ruling class to justify and support its mode of production (feudalism). They blinded the masses so that they could not see the exploitation and domination of the economic system that is applied by the social class which is in power.

3.1.4 Haddis: the Enlighted Major Character and the Protagonist of the Novel

Haddis is the major character and the protagonist of the novel- Haddis. He is presented as an enlightened, energetic young man who takes society's problem as his own. He feels that every human being has a duty to work for the improvement of the masses, who are leading a miserable life because of the economic system. Coming from a lower social class, he himself is the victim of the socio- economic system that exploits and oppresses the masses. Even if *Haddis* is fully aware of the injustices of the system, he didn't consider violence as an option to fight the ruling classes. Rather, he opted for something (for example, building a new school) and wait for the revolution to come.

Haddis was never a radical revolutionary. But he believes that revolution is inevitable and that people have to get prepared for it before it comes. During his student years even though Haddis was among radical revolutionary groups, he did not wholeheartedly support their movement (P.177). He felt that shouting for a change by

carrying slogans would not lead to the desired out come of the revolution. He insisted:

የምንናገረውን ለምን በስራ አይገለፅም? ከብዙ ጩኸት ትንሽ ስራ ትብልጣለች፤ ብዙም ትናገራለች ለውጥ ለውጥ ስለተባለ ውሃው ወደ ወይን ጠጅ ተለውጦ የቃና ዘገሊላው ተአምር ሊደገም አይችልም። ጥያቄው ምን እንበል? ሳይሆን ምን እናድርግ እጃችን ምን ይሰራ ነው።

Why don't we put what we say in to practice? Small work is much better than too much talking for it tells much. Talking about change over and over again will not change the water into wine as once happened. The question is not "what to talk?" It rather is "what to do?"

Pragmatist is probably the best term that can characterize *Haddis*. Through out the novel, he is depicted as a sympathizer and supporter of the oppressed classes. For example, he writes letters of complaint for the peasants whose land is overtaken by the landlords; he builds a new school for the children; he sheds his tears whenever he sees unfair things happening to the low class people. And finally he stands beside the peasants to fight the oppressive landlord (*Tafesse*). Contrary to *Tafesse's* bourgeoisie view of the world where the larger fish eats the small ones, *Haddis* dreams about creating an ideal world that can accommodate the needs and interest of all people. He argues.

ይህች አለም የጋራ ንብረታችን ነች። በጋራ ልንጠቀምባት ይገባል። በተቻለ መጠን ለሁሉም ጣፋጭ እንድትሆን ከማድረግ የበለጠ ክቡር አላማ የለም። ይህች አለም ለጥቂቶች የሳቅ አለም ለአብዛኛው የእንባ አለም ለብዙዎቹ ሲኦል ለጥቂቶቹ ገነት ብትሆን ምን ደስታ ይገኛል። ያላቸውም ሊደሰቱ አይችሉም የሰው ልጅ የተሟላ ደስታ ሊኖረው የሚችለው የጋራ ደስታ ሲኖረው ነው... ሰው ለተሻለ የጋራ ህይወት፣ ለጋራ ደስታ ራሱን ሊለውጥ የሚችል ይመስለኛል (ገፅ: 105-106) ።

This world is our common property. We have to use it collectively. Is there any nobler thing to do than making this world a better place for all? How can one be happy to live in a world where only few lead a comfortable life while the majority is leading a miserable life? Those who are wealthy couldn't even be happy for human being's pleasure is complete when there is collective happiness. A human being can change itself for a better common life and pleasure (pp. 105-106).

Regarding his religious view, Haddis is not among the Christians who believe that their destiny is already decided by God and that they cannot interfere with God's work. Seeking better life, liberty and happiness were his religion- if that is considered as a religion (p.130). He also believes that he is the master of his own destiny (p.247).

3.2 Analysis of Yekey Kokeb Tiri

3.2.1. Yekey Kokeb Tiri: Synopsis

Yekey kokeb Tiri is a story which mainly focuses on the power struggle of two political parties, EPRP (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party) and Derg, which regards itself as the guardian of the revolution in the aftermath of the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974. It tells the story of an enthusiastic "revolutionary guard" (አቢዮት ጠባቂ) who works for the government to protect the revolution from a sectarian movement (EPRP) which operates underground.

Having lost his parents at an early age and with no relatives to take care of him, *Deribe* grew up as a servant in a rich, aristocratic family headed by *Ato Gulilat* and *W/o Amsalu*. Before the revolution *Gulilat*

was one of the higher officials in the *Haileselassie* regime and *Amsalu* had a vast rural land which she inherited from her noble families. Thanks to Ato Gulilat, Deribe found a temporary job in the Ministry of Information. And just after the revolution he left his masters whom he served faithfully and tirelessly for years.

When Deribe left his masters home he has only one thing on his mind-to become a man. A man that is respected and honored. He believes that by getting himself higher in the social class, he would win *Hirut's* (*Gulilat's* daughter) heart that had ignored and despised him. Considering his options, he finds that holding an important post in the government office is an effective short cut to achieve his dream. He believes that if he has a political power he would easily get rich and hence be respected (P.61). His love for *Hirut* and the desire to get her become the driving forces behind his every move:

የሂሩትን ልብ ድል ለመምታት የሚረዳ ከሆነ-ክፉም ሆነ
ደግ አይነት ሳያሽ ከማድረግ እንዳማይቆጠብ ህሊናውን
አዘጋጅቶ ነበር ወደ ስራ አለም የተሰማራው። (ገፅ.61).

When he accepts the job, he prepared himself to do whatever it is, good or evil, if it helps him win Hirut's heart (p.61).

He, therefore agreed with the administrator of the organization in which he works and become an under cover worker. According to their agreement *Deribe* was expected to give his boss detail information on the workers who are taking active part in the organization's *Yewyiyit Kebeb*(discussion club)- worker's club which works towards ensuring the proletariat's right in government organizations. In return *Deribe* guarantees his position as a permanent worker and gets a salary increment with a promotion. However, he could not get a peace of mind with what he has done to his fellow workers. Besides, he still could not get *Hirut's* attention

despite his desperate attempt to impress her with an expensive gold bracelet that he offers her as a gift.

Deribe who is disappointed and ashamed with his deeds, become a regular drinker until he gets acquainted with *Finot*- one of the secretaries in his place of work. His friendship with *Finot* changes his dream completely and shows him the right path that he should be following- struggling for the cause of the revolution. Within short period of time he was elected as the chairman of the revolutionary guards in his Kebele. He was given the responsibility of safeguarding the revolution from a sectarian movement which uses violence and killing to curb the revolution. He was also expected to collect guns and weapons that were not handed in by previous government officials and civilians.

On the other side of the coin, there is EPRP which works in secret to dismantle the military regime, Derg (Committee), which is in power. It uses guerilla fighting as an effective strategy to fight the military regime. In the novel EPRP is presented negatively as a movement that tries to clinch the power in the name of establishing a “Provisional Peoples Government”.

Led by *Laeke*, the movement targets revolutionary guards and important personnel who work for the government. Among the members of EPRP were the son and daughter of *Gulilat –Teseema* and *Hirut*. Even if both of them carry out missions which are ordered by their leader (for example, disseminating leaflets, painting the walls and streets of Addis Ababa with their party slogan and so on) they do not really believe in their party’s doctrine and ideology and its means of fighting the ruling party. In fact *Tessema* who could no longer stand the killing and violence that his party is engaged in, urged his sister and her boy friend *Tefera* to leave the party before something bad

happens. But the adventurous Hirut who always loves to find herself in a dangerous situation ignored her brother's advice and prepared herself to accept what is coming. She is joined by *Tefera* who is blinded by her love.

In the final chapter of the novel, *Deribe* was informed about the underground movement and their hiding place by Tesema. When his force finally stormed the place, he finds *Hirut* seriously injured and *Tefera* killed. Besides them lays the body of *Laeke*, who was killed by *Tefera* when he tried to kill *Hirut*.

The novel ends while *Deribe* is taking *Hirut* to her family's home where he could find a car that will take her to a hospital. The gleaming red stars that sparkle the dark sky indicates the bright hope that the future holds.

3.2.2 Socio Political Condition of Ethiopia Just after the Revolution as Reflected in *Yekey Kokeb Tiri*

From the point of view of both theme and time perspective, *Yekey kokeb Tiri* begins when *Haddis* ends. While *Haddis* tries to give us an account of the socio-economic condition of Ethiopia just before the revolution and at the time of revolution in a rural setting, *Yekey kokeb Tiri* attempts to reflect the bloody struggle of two political powers (*Derg*, and EPRP) right after the revolution. As history tells us after the *Haileselassie* regime is overthrown by the popular uprising and the military, a civil government that is elected by the masses was supposed to take the power from the military. However, the military junta remains in power by arguing that in the absence of political parties, the proletarian party could not be created overnight. So until a proletarian party is established, it claims that it has to stay in power

in order to make sure that the power would not slip into the hands of reactionaries and anarchists.

Contrary to the military junta's (*Derg's*) ideology, EPRP insisted that power should be quickly transferred to a civilian party that represents the masses. It urges for the establishment of "Provisional People's Government" which becomes the party's brand slogan. The difference in ideological stand that is held by these two political parties as to when the proletarian party should take over the power resulted in what is referred to as one of the bloodiest civic clashes the country ever witnessed. In the campaign of urban terrorism, EPRP militants claimed the lives of many ideologues and functionaries of the regime, while the latter executes thousands of the members of EPRP in a mission called the Red Terror.

Yekey kokeb Tiri, which can be categorized under the literary genre of historical novel, attempts to give the readers a glimpse of what the situation looks like at the time of this bloody confrontation along with the ideological differences of the two parties which gives rise to their clash. The author tries to express the reality of the period in different chapters. For instance, the following passage indicates the horrible picture of *Addis Ababa* at the time when the fight between EPRP and Derg was at its peak.

.. አልፎ አልፎ በአንዳንድ አካባቢ የሽጉጥ ተኩስ ይሰማል- ነጭ ሽብር። አልፎ አልፎ ቀይ ሽብር የተፋፋ-መበት ትኩስ ሬሳ ከመንገድ ዳር ወድቆ ይታያል። ከደም ኩሬ ውስጥ በጀርባው ወይም በደረቱ ተጋድሞ። ልጆቻው ቤት ያላደሩ ወይም የታሰሩባቸው ቤተ ዘመዶች፣ እናት፣ አባት፣ ወንድም፣ እህት፣ አጎት፣ አክስት... እብድ ሆነው ጨርቃቸውንና ደረታቸውን በመጣል ከአንዱ የወደቀ ሬሳ ወደ ሌላው ተከታትለው በመሮጥ እያገላበጡ ይመለከታሉ።

....A pistol shot could be heard here and there---
White Terror. Here and there lays fresh dead
bodies along the sides of a road in blood bath
lying in their backs or bellies indicating the
mounting of the Red Terror. Families whose
children stayed out the previous night or who
were imprisoned and their relatives---mothers,
fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts ... came
out crying madly and looking one dead body
after the other in search of their lost children
(p.122)

In other instance we see EPRP militants killing a revolutionary who has just been elected as vice- chairman of the revolutionary guard of a certain *kabele* (pp: 120)

Bealu has also given us a brief highlight on the central ideology of the two political powers. EPRP'S Provisional Peoples Government is contrasted with *Derg's* democratic right for the oppressed through struggle. *Derg's* political ideology is clearly expressed by *Deribe's* speech which stressed the importance of the revolutionary struggle for the establishment of a proletarian party.

... በኢትዮጵያ የወዛደሩ መደብ ገና እያቆጠቆጠና እያበበ በመሄድ ላይ ነው። አሁን ባለንበት ተጨባጭ ሁኔታ ሀልውናው የተጠናከረ አይደለም።... የሀቀኛ አብዮተኞች አይነተኛ ተግባር ሀቀኛ ታጋዮች የሰርቶ አደሩን ፖርቲ እንዲያስገኙ አመቺ ሁኔታዎችን እንዲፈጥሩላቸው መታገል ነው እንጂ በቅጥረኛነት ስሜት ለቡድኖች አምባገነንነት እርስ በርስ ሹኩቻ ማካሄድ አይደለም (ገፅ: 224/225) ።

.... The working class or the proletariat in Ethiopia is a newly emerged and growing class. So under the existing situations its existence is not strong and assured. The job of true revolutionaries has to be creating a favorable condition for the establishment of a workers party but not to develop factional fight among workers by making them develop the feeling of dependency for autocratic groups (pp.224\225).

Yekey kokeb Tiri also shows the economic and psychological crisis that the former regime's aristocrats have suffered after the land reform proclamation that prohibited the sales, lease or mortgage of rural land and the nationalization of urban land and extra houses. In the novel, *w/o Amsale* and *Ato Gulilat* were among the primary victims of the proclamation. *W/o Amsale* who owned acres of land and a number of tenants that provided her with everything that she needs, finds it hard to accept living with a few hundred birr that her retired husband gets from his pension (p.110). Besides, her classist mentality that does not even consider lower class people as men, was unable to accept the new government which she thinks is infiltrated with "poor" people. We also come across a man (*Terfe*) who becomes insane after his butcher shops were confiscated (p: 227).

3.2.3 Yekey Kokeb Tiri:Reinforcing the Ideology of the Ruling Party

Yekey Kokeb Tiri is set in a time when Ethiopia is making ideological transition- a transition from feudalism to socialism. Though the transition to the new social order seemed to go smoothly at the beginning, the revolutionary process could not remain bloodless until the end. The power struggle between the Provisional Military Administration and EPRP which gave rise to a bloody clash vanished any hope of a peaceful transition towards socialism.

In Yekey Kokeb Tiri, *Bealu* invites us to condemn the underground movement of EPRP which is presented as reactionary and distractive to the revolution. As it is depicted in the novel, EPRP was engaged in antisocialist campaign and terror in order to overthrow the military government which is presented as the guardian of the revolution. We are given the highlight of EPRP'S reactionary tendency in some of the duties its members have to carry out:

...አገራችን ስትወረር፡ ወታደሩ መሀል ገብታችሁ የምታካሄዱት አድሀሪ ጦርነት ነውና አትዋጉ እያላችሁ ቅስቀሳ አካሂዱ... የጭቁን ብሄረሰቦች መብት እስከ መገንጠል ድረስ አሁኑኑ እንደግፋሉን በሉ... ወዛደሩ ምርቱን እንዲቀንስ ከአገሪትዋ አቅም በላይ የሆነ የደሞዝ ጭማሪ እንዲጠይቅ አድርጉ ...ወታደሩ እንዲዋጋ ቅስቀሳ አድረጉ...

During the time of invasion of our country agitate the military that they are fighting for a wrong cause and the war is a reactionary war!....Support and propagate the right of self determination of oppressed nations and nationalities up to secession!.... Make the working class decrease its production and ask for a high ceiling salary increment. Also stimulate the army not to fight...

Besides, *Bealu* invites us to criticize EPRP members by letting us know that they are uncommitted and do not really care about the cause the party is fighting for. For example, *Tessema* does not even believe in his party's central ideology-Establishing provisional People's Government. He remained as a member because he was afraid of *Laeke* (the leader). *Hirut* joined the party just because she enjoyed doing dangerous things without being caught. And their leader- *Laeke* (a drug addict) uses his position in the party to avenge his father's death (his father was killed by the government).

On the other hand, with some reservation, *Bealu* presents the policies, doctrines and ideology of the ruling government in a positive manner. In fact many of the government based revolutionary guards are portrayed as a true vanguard of the revolution. In different parts of the novel, we are informed in brief about the different missions that the government is carrying out to protect the revolution from reactionaries and anarchists. The following excerpt, for example, informs us that the major goal of *Yekey Kokeb Tiri*- a government mission which aimed to unite the people to stand for the cause of the revolution:

የቀይ ኮከብ ጥሪ አላማ ግድያ አይደለም። ሀቀኛ አብዮታዊያን ካልተገደዱ በስተቀር በሰው ህይወት ላይ ርምጃ አይወሰዱም። ሁሉም ነገር ለሰው ከሁሉም በላይ ሰው ነው የሀቀኛ ታጋዮች አላማ። ስለሆነም አብዮት የሚካሄደው ለሰው መሆኑን በቅድሚያ ማወቅ አለብን። አላማቸው ህይወትን መንከባከብ ለሰው ልጅ ደስታ መሻት ነው። ግድያ ምንግዜም ቢሆን አላማቸው አይደለም (ገፅ: 279)።

Killing is not the purpose of Yekey Kokeb Tiri. True and just revolutionaries, if not compelled, do not kill any one. Everything for the people; beyond every thing the welfare of human beings, is the drive behind the purpose of true revolutionaries. Accordingly, we have to know that a revolution is conducted primarily for the sake of man. Their objective is to protect man's life and pursue his\her happiness. Killing can by no means be their aim.

We are also invited to show our appreciation to the brave revolutionary guards who sacrificed their life for the cause of the revolution-for the freedom, equality and happiness of the working class. While talking to his fellow comrade *Deribe* (the chairman of the revolutionary guards) stressed that they should sacrifice themselves for the revolution so that the coming generation would enjoy the fruit of the revolution (pp: 128).

Even though Yekey Kokeb Tiri openly propagates the views and beliefs of the ruling regime, it doesn't acknowledge the evil acts that members of the military government are engaged in the name of revolution. In the novel we encounter an ex-revolutionary guard who raped and savagely murdered innocent civilians by accusing them that they are reactionary and anarchists (p.30 and 31). The author also tells us that in the name of Red Terror- an offensive government operation that targets reactionaries and anarchists who try to hinder the revolutionary struggle-some members of the ruling party were engaged in the killing of innocent people (p.27). Besides, the novel

indicates that there were so many pseudo revolutionaries who use the revolution as a golden opportunity to quench their thirst for power.

It can, therefore, be said that Yekey Kokeb Tiri reinforces Marxist-Leninist principles which the ruling regime declared as its official ideology. However it questions the commitment and truthfulness of the people who put into practice those principles.

3.2.4 Deribe: the Major Character and the Protagonist of the Novel

Deribe is the major character and the protagonist of Yekey Kokeb Tiri. He is a character that represents the socialist ideology which the ruling party tries to inculcate into the peoples' mind. Before he becomes a committed revolutionary, Deribe had a feudalist mentality. All he thought about was getting himself higher up in the social class so that he can get married to Hirut who is from a respected, rich and aristocratic family. What he aspired for was to acquire all the things that the rich possess so that he would get the respect and attention he sought for so long. But in no time he realized that there is a bigger and nobler cause that he has to live for- struggling for the revolution.

The new Deribe whom we meet after he decided to take part in the revolutionary struggle is depicted as a charismatic person that completely dedicates himself for the cause of the revolution. After Deribe is elected as the chairman of the revolutionary guard at his kebele, we see him engaged in a number of arguments that arise among his fellow comrades. And in all occasions Deribe has managed to persuade his opponents with his eloquent speech. It is with these speeches that Bealu introduced us to the political ideology of the ruling party. For instance, in a meeting that calls for members of the

revolutionary guards to pass decision on Wasihun (an ex-chair person of the revolutionary guards who shed the blood of many innocent people in the name of revolution, while almost all of them agreed for the execution of the criminal in the spot, Deribe argued against their idea saying that they cannot be legislators, prosecutors and judges at the same time (pp: 34).

It can be said that Bealu uses Deribe as a mouth piece of the author who is an ardent supporter of the government. In the following speech that Deribe made, for example, we are informed about the central aim of the revolutionary struggle and the quality of a true revolutionary:

ጉዋዶች! ትግል-ትግል ስንል አላማውና ግቡ ምን እንደሆነ ማወቅ ይገባናል። የጭቁን መደቦች ትግል አይነተኛ አላማና ግብ የሰፊው ህዝብ ነፃነት እኩልነትና ፍትህ ነው። የጭቁኖች ደስታ ነው ግባችን። ሰለሆነም ሀቀኛ ተራማጆች የማንንም እንባ ማየት አይፈልጉም። ጭካኔ መሰሪያቸው አይደለም ካልተገደዱ በቀር። አላማቸው የሰው ዘር ደስታ ነው (ገፅ: 229)።

Comrades! We have to first understand the objective of struggle. The main objective and purpose of the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed is the mass liberty, equality and justice. Our purpose is the pleasure of the oppressed. As a result true progressives do not want to see any one crying. Cruelty is not their way of handling things unless they are forced to. Their aim is man's glee.

In another instance we find Deribe reflecting Socialist's dream of controlling nature and the coming of a bright future. While consoling Tessema who was hopeless about the future, Deribe says:

... ህይወትን አጨልመህ ለማየት ትሞክራለህ። ህይወት ግን ብሩህ ናት የሰው ልጅ ያለ ተስፋ አይኖርም። ተስፋ የሚያደርገው ደግሞ በከንቱ አይደለም። ባለው የመመራመር ችሎታ አለምን ሊያውቃት ይችላል። አንድ ቀን ተፈጥሮ ድል

ያደርጋል። የተፈጥሮን ምስጢር የህይወትን ትርጉም
ፈልፍሎ ያውቃል (ገፅ 229) ።

*You just want to look the darker side of life.
But life is bright. Man cannot live without
hope. And he is not hoping for nothing. With
his ability to investigate, he will understand
this world. At some time in the future, he will
triumph over nature; he will explore and
understand the secrets of nature and the
meaning of life (P.229).*

3.3 Analysis of Derasiw

3.3.1 Derasiw: Synopsis

The story of Derasiw revolves particularly around a novelist who tries to compromise his love for art with his responsibility of taking care of his family. Sirak was married to a pretty woman (Martha) who was from a rich, aristocratic family (Her father was a minister in the HaileSELLASIE regime). But things did not work out between the two couples. Finally, when the ruling regime was overthrown after the revolution, Martha who felt insecure left Sirak and went to England with their baby boy without even telling him. Before she decided to fly away, Martha insisted that they had to leave Ethiopia together, but Sirak rejected her idea saying that he wanted to stay and be part of the revolutionary process.

Sirak whose heart is broken by the loss of his wife and his only son directly went to 'Teret Sefer' where he could find Tsegie- a barmaid whom he had an affair with. Fortunately, Tsegie who was desperately looking a way out of her miserable living condition happily accepted Sirak's request to marry her. Things looked great at first. They began to live in a small house which they rented from Haji Mustefa. Besides, she gave birth to a son. However, their peaceful home started to be disturbed by his love for writing. Tsegie did not like to see her

husband ignore his son and herself and focused more on his writing. Furthermore, the debt they had incurred for the publication of his first book irritated her. She could not understand why he is wasting his time in writing which adds nothing to improve their living condition.

Sirak who was tired of listening to his wife's complaints and reproaches use his friendship with Seble as his safe haven. Seble is his colleague and works as a secretary. Her great passion to read fictions was the reason that initiated their relationship. When they knew each other very well after some time, Sirak realized that she read fictions to forget the abuse and mistreatment she experience in the hands of her vicious husband. The sympathy which they show to each other leads to their intimate friendship which eventually grew into a love affair.

Even though Sirak enjoyed every minute of the time he spent with Seble, he felt that they had to stop their secret love affair before somebody (his wife, or/ and Seble) gets hurt. But before that he decided to do something to change Seble's unhappy life. Consequently, Sirak confronts Seble's husband (Zamene) and told him that he would lose his beautiful wife if he keeps on treating her like a commodity. Zemen who is mad at Sirak's dreadful act punched him in the face. But later on he realized that he had been a bad husband and promised Seble that he would change. Similarly, in the last pages of the novel, Tsegie who never respected Sirak's strong feeling for art and writing began to support, understand, and share his feeling. She buys him a new table and chair; she also promised him to help him in writing his script. The novel ends when Sirak reads the Script of his new novel to his wife who listens attentively and passionately.

3.3.2 Derasiw : A Shift in Theme

Derasiw is set in 1979, five years after the fall of the feudal regime. It was a time when the military government consolidated its power after it wiped out all its rivals. Compared to Haddis and Yekey Kokeb Tiri which prominently deal with the revolutionary process and the politics of the period in which they are set, Derasiw is different in its focus of attention. It focuses on the life of an artist (a writer) who is trying to create a work of art that reflects the reality with its complete beauty. Derasiw indicates the complex relationship of art, an artist and life. However, as Marxist literary critics claim any work of art somehow reflects the socio-economic and political situation of the time in which it is set. And Derasiw is no exception. For instance, we see a glimpse of how the land reform proclamation affected the feudal aristocrats and landlords through the lives of some characters. In Derasiw, Zemene who was a kind and good husband changed into a monster that enjoyed beating and abusing his wife (Seble) after he lost his big rural farm land and three villas he inherited from his families (p.67).

Just as he did in Haddis and Yekey Kokeb Tiri, Bealu expressed his support to the revolution which he thinks will bring about a wonderful future that the future generation will enjoy. Here is Bekele (a soldier who just came from a battle ground) talking passionately that he will shed his blood and give his life for the revolution so that others including his families will have a bright future.

ለማን የምዋጋ መሠለዎት? ለእነሱ ነው። ለአብዮቱና
ለአገሪቱ አንድነት ዛሬ የምጥተውና የምደማው እነሱ
ነገ ብሩህ ተስፋ እንዲኖራቸው ነው። እዚህ
ተቀምጬ ምን አደርግላቸዋለሁ? ደግሞ እኔ እዚህ
ሆንኩ አልሆንኩ ምንችግር ይገጥማቸዋል? እድሜ

ለሰፊው ህዝብ ደጀንነትና ለአብዮታዊ መንግሥት . .
. (ገፅ: 186)

For whom do you think I'm fighting? I'm fighting for them. I am sacrificing my life for the revolution so that they will have a better and bright tomorrow. What would I do if I stay here? Whether I am here or there fighting they would face no problem thanks to the gallant broad masses and the revolutionary government (p.186).

In another instance, we find Bealu praising the positive change that the revolution will bring to the martial system which is based on wealth and social class. While talking to Sirak about what the future marriage might look like, Seble predicts that in the future the relationship between a husband and a wife will be based on only mutual love and respect (p. 68).

On the other hand, Bealu criticizes the authoritative government announcements and notices that oblige people to participate in discussion clubs and Kebele meetings. Some of the announcements run as follows:

ሃሎ . . . ሃሎ ዛሬ ልክ በሁለት ሰዓት ስብሰባ ስላለ የቀበሌው ነዋሪ የሆናችሁ ሁሉ እንድትገኙ አብዮታዊ ጥሪ ቀርቦላችኋል። በቀሪ የተመዘገበ ከቀበሌው የህብረት ሱቅ ማንኛውንም ነገር ሊገዛ እንደማይችል በጥብቅ እናስታውቃለን (ገፅ: 30)

Hello!...Hello! Today, at 8:00 am there will be a meeting. So all of you who are living in this Kebele are expected to participate. Absentees will not be allowed to buy anything from the Keble union's shop(p.30).

የውይይት ክብብ አባልነት ምንም እንኳን በግለሰቦች ፍቃድ ላይ የተመሠረተ ነው ቢባልም መማር የውዴታ ግዴታ መሆኑ ታውቆ ከዛሬ ጀምሮ ውይይት ክብብ በማይገባ

በመስሪያ ቤቱ ሰራተኛ ላይ እርምጃ የሚወሰድ መሆኑን አስታውቃለሁ (ገፅ: 145) ::

Notice! Even though it was said that membership of discussion club is based on the willingness of individuals, it has now been found out that learning is the duty and responsibility of our workers. Therefore, from now on, the organization will take actions against those workers who are not participating in the club (p.145).

Reacting against these threatening and obligatory notices, we see the major character (Sirak) being involved in a fight with his boss arguing that communists do not use force to accomplish their goal. He contends that true communists get the acceptance of the people by presenting themselves as examples; i.e. by engaging themselves in activities that ensure the happiness of the masses and by sacrificing themselves for making the life of the society a better one (p.146). Sirak concluded his argument by saying:

አብዮት የማካሄድና ሰሻሊስታዊ ስርዓትን የመገንባት ታሪካዊ ተልዕኮ ምን ጊዜም ቢሆን ሙሉ ፍቃደኝነትንና ነፃነትን ይጠይቃል (ገፅ:146)

....the mission of carrying out the revolution and the building of a socialist order will always need the complete willingness and freedom of the people (p. 146).

3.3.3 Sirak: The Major Character in Derasiw

Sirak is the major character in Derasiw. He is a writer and a critic who believes that artistic works have greater role to play in the struggle for socialist revolution. Even though he tasted the bitterness of losing his beloved ones (his former wife and son), he is presented as a kind and optimist person who always thinks that life is great and every body should cherish living in this world. All he dreams about

while living in this earth is not accumulating money and improving his family's living condition but producing literary works that assure people that there is a better tomorrow and a hopeful future. Here is how he expressed his dream:

ህልም አልማለሁ። ህልሜ ግን የሰፊው ህዝብ ህልም ነው።
ህልማቸውን ለማለም፣ ተረታቸውን ለመተረት፣ ሳቃቸውን
ለመሳቅ ለቅሶአቸውን ለማልቀስ፣ ጭንቀታቸውን ለመጨነቅ
ነፍሴ ትፈልጋለች። ነፍሴ ለሰው ልጅ ያላትን ፍቅርና
ምኞት ለመግለፅ ቃላት ያንሱአታል። የሰው ልጅ ደስታና
ስቃይ ሊገልፁ የሚችሉ ቃላት . . . ይህ አለም ከንቱ የሰው
ልጅ ህይወት ትርጉመ ቢስ እንዳልሆነ የሚገልፁ ቃላት
የሰው ልጅ ይህችን አለም ድል ለማድረግና ለመለወጥ እንጂ
ድል ለመሆን ያልተፈጠረ መሆኑን የሚገልፁ ቃላት . . .
በሰው ልጅ ልብ ወስጥ ተስፋን የሚያጠነክሩ ቃላት . . .
(ገፅ:115)

I have a dream. And my dream is the dream of the whole people. My soul wants to dream their dream, to tell their tales, to simile their simile and to share their sadness and worries. My soul doesn't have enough words to express its love and wishes for the people. Words that express the happiness and sadness of human beings; words that assure people that this world is not useless and life is not meaning less; words which express that man is not created to be beaten by nature but to be triumphant over it. Words that invigorate peoples' hope (p.115)

Sirak firmly believes that a writer should by no means write in order to get money (p.192). He feels that art is not a commodity- something that is sold for money. Rather it has a particular mission- a mission of presenting both the good and the bad that the society experience in their lives. Sirak thinks that at a time when man is trying to change his environment after it takes control of nature, art should be part of and reflection of this struggle:

የሰው ልጅ ስለአካባቢው ከሚሰጠው ገለጻ አእምሮው ከማይረከብት ጊዜ ላይ ደርሶናል። ሰው አካባቢውን ከቁጥጥር ስር በማዋል ብቻ ሳይወሰን ለመለወጥ በሚታገልበት ወቅት የጊዜችን ኪነት የትግሉ አካልና ነፃብራቅ እንድትሆን ይፈለጋል። መሆንም አለባት። ተልዕኮው አለምን ለመለወጥ የሚደረገው ትግል አካል መሆን ነው። የሞራል ለውጥና የህይወት ተሀድሶ ነፃብራቅ የሰፊው ህዝብ እስትንፋስ መሆን አለበት (ገፅ: 152) ።

Human beings are no more satisfied with the description that they are given about their environment. At a time when man is struggling to change his environment after he controlled it, art that is produced at this time should and must be part of and reflection of this struggle. Its aim should be part of the struggle to change the world; the reflection of the moral change and the rejuvenation of life. It should be the voice of the people (p.152)

Based on the beliefs and ideological outlook of Sirak, we can say that Bealu's conception of art and literature is highly influenced by the socialist school of thought which gives a significant place for the utilitarian function of literature. As it has been discussed in the previous chapter, Socialist realism gives a particular emphasis on the role of art in the struggle for communism. Socialist realists argue that literary works should necessarily reinforce the Marxist Leninist principles and the communist party. Bealu has indicated his inclination to this literary thought through Sirak who feels that art should take the lead in the struggle for Socialist revolution.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to see how much Marxists thought and principles have influenced Bealu's authorial ideology by analyzing three of his novels: Haddis, Yekey Kokeb Tiri and Derasiw from the point of view of Marxist approach to literary criticism. After a detail explanation is given about the theories of Marxist literary criticism, an attempt has been made to apply some of the theories to the ideological content, setting and arguments put forward by the major characters of each novel.

Based on the analysis it can be said that Bealu has successfully reflected the social, economic and political condition of Ethiopia at various points in history in all of these three novels. In Haddis, for example, he has presented the class division which is characterized by the oppression and exploitation of the peasants by the landlords. In his other novel-Yekey Kokeb Tiri, Bealu tries to portray the chaos and the bloody conflict that followed the Ethiopian revolution of 1974. In this novel, although Bealu propagates the ideology of the ruling party, he has cunningly indicated his detestation of the killings that some members of the ruling party are engaged under the grab of the revolution. In Derasiw Bealu has showed little interest in the politics of the period in which the novel is set. But still he was able to show his concern on the forceful and authoritative methods that the government is using to instill the principles of socialism into the people's mind.

From an ideological stand point, the three novels under discussion indicated Bealu's inclination and commitment to socialist principles. He condemns the feudal relations and production and the rise of capitalists. In Haddis, he argued that people around the world should

fairly and equally share the abundant wealth that the world offers to them. In Yekey kokeb Tiri and Derasiw he stressed the importance of the socialist revolution in bringing about a happy, bright and promising future to the people of the low social class.

From the themes and ideologies that the novels reflect, it can also be said that Bealu was a progressive author and positive thinker who believed that there is a better and bright tomorrow. In all the novels Bealu created characters that tirelessly attempt to change their environment and peoples' life amidst frustrating and disappointing conditions. In Haddis, for instance, we find Haddis who completely devotes himself to build a new school for the children who might have been destined to be illiterate for their whole lives. Similarly in Yekey Kokeb Tiri, we come across Deribe who is determined to give his life to the cause of the revolution which will ensure the freedom, equality and happiness of the future generation. And in Derasiw we find a writer (Sirak) who tries to contribute his share in the struggle for the revolution by producing literary works that reinforce the belief of socialism.

In conclusion, it could be said that Bealu is not only concerned with the socio-political issues, that he is not only presenting the reflection of the reality of the period, but he is also projecting his socialist ideology and his vision of a classless world where people live in mutual respect, love and happiness.

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