

# Innovations

## Ethnocentrism vis-à-vis Ethiopian Nationalism as Reflected in Yismake's Därtogada and Kibur Dīngay

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**Abstract:** *This paper makes a critical analysis on the state of ethnocentrism and pan-Ethiopian ideology during the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) regime as reflected in YismakeWorku's two Amharic novels, titled Därtogada (2009) and KiburDīngay (2013). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed to make the critical analysis of the selected novels. The study reveals that the ethnocentric political system employed during the EPRDF's regime has been serving as a fertile and legitimate ground for the proliferation of tribal ideology at the expense of pan-Ethiopian ideology. In the two Amharic novels, the ethnic political system is portrayed as a perilous tool via which Ethiopia's future existence is questioned asserting strongly on the need to abolish such a divisive political thought and promote Ethiopian nationalism instead.*

**KeyWords:** 1.Ethiopian Nationalism; 2.Ethnocentrism; 3.Criticism; 4.Critical Discourse Analysis; 5.Ideology

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### 1. Introduction

It is impossible to avoid political or social elements from literary works for the fact that human experience is partly political or social. The writer is a medium in the art of creation, and thus; it is markedly impossible for him or her to operate outside the beliefs, interests and experiences in life. WaThiong'o (1972, p. xv)underscores that "literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces of the particular setting". This point of view leads us to the presumption that literature is a means by which societal realities are visualized implicitly and/or explicitly.

Regarding the role and primary concern of literature, some scholars argue literature should focus on achieving aesthetic excellence, 'art for art's sake'; whereas some sociologically inclined groups insist that any literary art that fails to address one or more aspects of social reality fails to be an art (Onwanka, 2010, p.60). As Tewodros (2013, p. 22) asserts literature is the byproduct of history and vice versa. By reading literary products, one can easily understand the effect of literature in history and its counter impact on literature. Therefore, trying to understand literature in isolation from the cultural, political and social contexts of the setting is impossible (Anteneh, 2010, p. 188).

The Amharic novel, since its inception as a genre in Amharic literature, has come through entertaining various issues of different political periods. Needless to say, novels such as *FiqirEskāmāqabir*

(1965<sup>1</sup>), *Adäfris* (1970), and *Kadmas Bashagär* (1970) which were produced in the 1960s and in the early 70s, therefore, are the most noted Amharic novels which came into being in an unprecedented sociopolitical environment. These novels are said to be the reflections of the time they were written, often acclaimed for criticizing the political and social conditions of the time. Many novels written after the 1974 revolution, particularly those which were published during the Därg regime are concerned with critiquing the imperial sociopolitical system (Anteneh, 2014, p.189). Some other works, on the other hand, reflect commentaries on the Därg regime. Be'alu's *Oromai* (1983), for example, depicts the brutalities perpetrated by the Därg officials during the Därg regime (Tadesse, 1995).

When the EPRDF came to power in 1991, there was a change in political ideology and state structure that totally changed the sociopolitical environment of the country. The federal state structure introduced then was new both in kind and in political discourse in African continent (Semahagn, 2012, p. 172; Bekele, Kjosavik and Shanmugaratnam, 2016, p.5). In this newly introduced federal system, ethnicity and language became the basis for demarcating regional state territories. And the ethnic based federal structure configured contrary political ideologies in Ethiopia: Ethiopian nationalism and radical ethnic nationalism (Loukris, 2001) with legal illegitimacy for the former and a fertile ground for the latter. These contrary political thoughts in turn have segregated the wider public into two opposite frontiers. Since then, the ethnocentric ideology has turned out to be one of the major issues that take the center stage of discussion among scholars (Aalen, 2002).

The motivation to conduct study on “Ethnic vis-à-vis pan-Ethiopian nationalism” is thus instigated from the intention to understand how ethnocentrism and Ethiopian nationalism are portrayed in selected novels published in the EPRDF regime. The researchers then went through the novels published in this period and came to a decision that Yesmake's *Därtogada*<sup>2</sup> (2009) and *KiburDingay*<sup>3</sup> (2013) are the most likely appropriate novels as these works generally emphasize on ethnic vis-à-vis pan Ethiopian political thoughts. To this end, the study attempt to answer the following basic questions:

- a) How do the novels treat ethnocentric and pan-Ethiopian thoughts?
- b) What narrative techniques do the novels employ in the attempt to (re)reconstructing the pan-Ethiopian identity?

## 2. Methodology

Purposive sampling technique was employed to select Yismake's *Därtogada* and *KiburDingayas* far as the two novels are greatly concerned with ethnic vis-à-vis pan-Ethiopian political thoughts. Critical analysis on how the two contrary notions [ethnocentric and pan-Ethiopian thoughts] revealed in the selected novels along with non-literary textual evidences was made using CDA. The theoretical framework is formulated mainly on Van Dijk's (1995, 1998) theories of ideology and ideological representations as beliefs, perceptions and attitudes of groups in a given sociopolitical environment and Wodak's (2009) theory of discursive construction of national identity.

The study is merely qualitative since construction of meaning is developed through conceptual interpretation obtained from theoretical concepts and the selected novels in line with the context of the political period when the novels were written. To strengthen the ideas raised in the analysis section,

<sup>1</sup> All years indicated in this paper are in Gregorian calendar

<sup>2</sup> Page numbers indicated for the extracts taken from the novel *Dertogada* should be understood in accordance with the 9<sup>th</sup> edition (reprint) of the novel.

<sup>3</sup> Page numbers indicated for the extracts taken from the novel *KiburDingay* should be understood in accordance with the 5<sup>th</sup> edition (reprint) of the novel.

important extracts from the novels were taken and translated into English. Extracts with related issues are put under the same subsection of the analysis part.

### 3. Conceptual Framework: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

A given discourse, by implication 'text', can be analyzed applying different discourse analysis approaches. In this case, Hardy (2002) forwards four different discourse analytical research approaches. Of which, CDA, which is employed in this study, is one among others. CDA is a theoretical framework which is politically committed to social problems. It focuses on showing the role of discursive practices in maintaining unequal power relation between different groups where their result brings about sociopolitical change (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 64).

There are different but related notions raised by various scholars regarding principles, theories and approaches of CDA. Among these theories, Wodak's CDA is known as a discourse historical approach follows a complex concept of social critique whereby national identity is constructed. According to Wodak (2009) some narrative systems employ topological labeling (such as pronouns "we" and "our") so as to construct national identity discursively, and by way of this, a given national identity sought is produced, promoted, and maintained. Wodak notes this kind of national identity construction is realized using shared historical past, shared culture, political rhetoric on the basis of present situations and future assumptions and the 'national body'. Wodak in the same vein affirms that for national identities which are under threat are maintained, supported and reproduced by perpetuation and justification by tracing narratives of the past (histories) which in turn influence topoi of histories (Wodak, 2017, p. 9).

In Dijk's CDA, ideologies are important elements for social representations of groups; they can be expressed in discourses, in general and in political discourses, in particular. According to Dijk (1995, p. 245; 1998, pp.128-129) the concept of ideology is associated with other forms of communal mental representations such as specific knowledge and perceptions shared by a group. That is to say, social representations (group beliefs, attitudes, ideologies and the like) are by definition more general and they need to be used by group members in different situations. Therefore, an individual's perception or understanding on a situation presupposes a wider communities' [the group in which that particular individual belongs to] perception on the situation. Ideologies, particularly at social micro level indirectly control social practice and they are often described in terms of group relation where a given group with a certain ideology is dominant over the other(s) (Dijk, 2000, p. 35).

It is stated that a given ideology belongs to a given group and is the fundamental beliefs and systems of thinking that guide members of the group. It is by such common perceptions that members of the group do things or behave in a given sociopolitical environment. That is to say ideologies are formed through similar discourses concerned with important social and political issues not arbitrarily, but as systems of beliefs (Dijk, 1995, pp.11-17). However, such systems of beliefs [ideologies] - be it political, social, or whatever it may be, are not immune from criticism; they, therefore, face criticism or a total condemnation from different directions.

### 4. Summary of the Narratives

*Därtogada* is packed with complicated stories with multiple themes dealing with the past, present and future of Ethiopia. Ethnic politics, poor natural resource utilization and backwardness that affect Ethiopia's sociopolitical state are emphasized. It further accentuates the need to getting out of poverty and backwardness which could partly come into reality through technological advancement, unity and utilization of unique talents. The novel, beyond one's imagination, narrates the great efforts exerted by extraordinary individuals so as to settle the problems that the country faces. While turning pages of the novel, one learns

that the characters and narrators are very much disappointed by the ethnic political system. The two contrary political thoughts: ethnocentrism and Ethiopian nationalism are one of the central themes entertained in the novel.

The other novel, *KiburDingay* by the same author, is a fictional narrative where a man named DedimosDorri who turned into dog through magic takes the role of the major fictional character. In the story we are told that DedimosDorri found himself being a black dog through magic somewhere in a dense forest around Yirgalem, a regional town located 329 kms south of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital. The dog narrates the story when he walks [which took him days to complete] from the dense forest, where the magic happened, to Addis Ababa.

The author employed magic(al) realism as a literary technique to narrate the story. It seems that the magical realism literary technique used in the novel gives the narrator a free space to criticize the ethnocentric political system. It is by the time the late prime minister of Ethiopia passed away that the story time is set, and it seems the death of the prime minister gives a political flavor for the story narrated in the novel. The dog narrates about the political ridicules he listened, and incidents he observed in association to the context.

## 5. Analytical Discussion

### 5.1 Deconstructing the Ethnocentric thoughts

*Ideologies organize social group attitudes consisting of schematically organized general opinions about relevant social issues. They show the material and symbolic interest of a group which could be directed towards dominating [sustaining domination over] others or resistance against dominations (Dijk, 1998, p.8).* In *KiburDingay*, the dog narrates that while he walks along the main road in Yirgalem, he comes across a group of ordinary people holding hot discussion and debates about ethnic politics and its problematic nature. They reflect their feelings and thoughts about the political condition they experience. One of these anonymous characters, for example, says: [Ethnic and religious issues are at a very tense stage] (p.72). It seems that the character develops such an attitude from the sociopolitical environment he/she lives where ethnic political ideology is criticized and pro-Ethiopian thought is praised. The narrator (the dog) and the anonymous characters in *KiburDingay* represent the social position on the Ethiopian political thought. That is to say, they stand against ethnic political ideology which by implication attests the characters' position on the Ethiopian politics. These thoughts, therefore, are not spontaneous creations of the narrator's or characters' minds; they are rather socially acquired and constructed.

In this regard, Dijk(1999; 1995, p. 257) discusses, when one speaks, reads or writes, he/she uses his/her mental models as the cognitive basis of discourse production and comprehension process and "discourse is one of the major means and condition of socially shared minds". From Dijk's conception of discourse production and comprehension process, it is possible to say that a single statement by an individual on a certain sociopolitical issue is derived from the society's perception, and the perception of an individual equates the perception of the society. As shared ideologies influence the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs of the language user, it can be manifested at specific and concrete events in the form of storytelling and argumentation as noticed in the novel.

The story time in *KiburDingay* is situated some days later the late prime minister of the country passed away. The dog narrates that the other topic of discussion was on the cause(s) of the late prime minister's death. When one of the anonymous characters mocks the cause for the death of the prime minister is being busy of bulky work, another character ridiculously replies: [Of course, it is hardly possible to say that he was unoccupied. He has been working laboriously to eliminate opposition parties, foster narrow

mindfulness and establish tribal groups...] (p.68). This extract strengthens the issue discussed above. It affirms Dijk's notion of context model in discourse processing that group beliefs, attitudes and ideologies that belong to a certain group can be manifested and expressed by individuals in specific events and situations. The extract is all about the narrow and tight political space for the opposition and the government's investment in radicalizing ethnocentrism. It is also to show the extent to which ethnocentrism is deliberately intensified by the leader(s). Accordingly, the ridiculous response of the character(s) presupposes the position of the group to which they are members.

Blommaeret and Bulcaen (2000, p. 449) based on the notion of Fairclough's CDA states that "[t]he way in which discourse is being represented, re-spoken, or rewritten sheds light on the emergence of new orders of discourse, struggles over normativity, attempts at control, and resistance against regimes of power". As to this conception, the pan-Ethiopian ideology revealed in *Därtogada* serves as an attempt to struggle the normativity of ethnocentric ideology and by extension as a resistance against the regime. In the novel a beggar raises an issue about Mengistu Haile Mariam. Mengistu, who ruled Ethiopia for 17 years (1974-1991) in a motto '*Ethiopia First*', was the supporter and promoter of socialism. Many argue that Mengistu is a true Ethiopian nationalist though there are some who accuse him for being brutal to those who oppose him. Notwithstanding the accusation by his opponents, he is portrayed as a patriot in the novel. In describing his patriotic deeds, a beggar asks for coin in his name, referring him courageous and brave. The following extract reveals how the beggar represents Mengistu. [In the name of the hero Mengistu H/Mariam, any one of you who would love to say 'Ethiopia first; death to the corrupt', please offer me pieces of coins.] (p.125). The importance of this statement is to forward critical commentaries against the EPRDF governance system. By showing how officials in the political administration are ethnocentric and corrupt compared to the Därg officials, the novel attempts to dissolve the normativity of ethnocentric thought on the one hand and resist the regime on the other.

For many reasons revealed in *KiburDingay*, the narrator seems to feel hopeless with regard to Ethiopia's future. Several important questions are left unanswered. The narrator feels that Ethiopia suffers from lack of courageous citizens who dare to pay sacrifice for the country. In this particular case, the criticism that directed to the government goes beyond the individuals operating in the political system. It criticizes all who identify themselves as 'Ethiopian' for not being patriots like the old generation. [Who would pay sacrifice for this country in defending truth, of being victim of hatred for truth, of being tortured for truth and of facing a bitter death for truth?] (p.55). It seems that the narrator criticize the generation who dares to sleep quietly when the country suffers from multiple sociopolitical problems. The reproach goes to all fellow Ethiopians, the new generation, who seem loss sense of patriotism. The new generation is severely blamed and negatively represented for its being a silent servant of the system. It is represented as a 'false conscious' product of the ethnic political system. The novel therefore reveals that patriotism, loyalty, truthfulness and the like are buried under selfishness and tribalism. By condemning the new generation, it tries to reconstruct a generation with qualities of the past generation. The novel also depicts why such a problem come to true.

Hoping of something these days is hardly possible. No more promising asset; no more promising hope [vision]; no more promising party [political]; no more promising compatriot. They made everything dull and worthless. (p. 132).

In the extract above, the narrator describes his/her displeasure with what happens to the economic, social and political matters of the country. When saying "No more promising asset... hope ... political party...compatriot", it is to mean that the economy is harshly embezzled; people are left with no ambition to achieve; the opposition political parties are doomed to be nonfunctional, and people are brainwashed and made dull by the regime's ethno centered rhetoric. Here, it seems the negative phrase "no more" is repeatedly used to overstate the multiple problems Ethiopia faces.

Ideologies are perceived as some kinds of group self –schema with evaluative propositions defining a certain group in relation to identity (race, ethnicity, religion etc), norms (way of thinking, beliefs, attitudes), positions (a place in a certain hierarchy) and the like (Dijk, 1995, 251). It is by way of these classifications that ‘otherness’ is formed. It is said that ethnocentric ideology is divisive and a formation of ‘self’ and ‘other(s)’ by which ‘in group’ and “out group’ attitudes are realized. Consequently, there might be usage of rhetorical means such as metaphor and hyperbole which excludes one group from the other semantically and lexically. Social conflict is, therefore, cognitively enhanced, discursively sustained and reproduced by excluding ‘out-groups’ or ‘others’ from ‘in groups’. *Därtogada* tells us that such manifestations are evident in Ethiopian political environment- that in a place where one was born and grown up is perceived as the ‘out group’ because of his/her ethnic background. These systems, as Dijk explains, are in environments where there are social and political inequality, or by *elite discourse otherwise* [emphasis mine]. The following extract from *Därtogada* deals with the formation of ‘otherness’.

In our country, you are labeled an outsider in your own homeland and your own village where you grew up. You leave and die stranger like one who unnoticed everything for you are warned with a loaded gun that the matter of your country does not concern you (p.108)

The given excerpt shows how “otherness”- being ethnically different in Ethiopian case, which has been installed in the minds of the people, brought about the formation of ethnic others. It is legally supported in regional constitutions that individuals from a certain ethnic group are not legitimate citizens in a region which does not belong to their own ethnic group. The novel portrays that the formation of ethnic “other” becomes a sensitive matter. The semantic representation of the words “stranger” or “outsider” in the narrative describes how one is labeled based on the language he/she speaks, or from which ethnic group he/she is regardless of his/her being a human creature.

It is evident that Eritrea’s secession was an incident happened after EPRDF had taken power. The narrator is an Ethiopian nationalist, and it seems that he/she is very much disappointed with Ethiopia’s division into two states. Stating this unfortunate political phenomenon, the narrator in *KiburDingay* describes his/her pessimistic feeling about the future. The narrator is uncertain about Ethiopia’s future. The following extract is all about that. [Part of the motherland, Ethiopia becomes Eritrea today; we don’t know what tomorrow holds.] (p.150). In the extract, the narrator seems to stress on the matter that political ideologies that result in disintegration and division of people results in being pessimistic to the future state of one’s country.

## ***5.2 (Re)constructing the Ethiopian National identity***

Dominant groups are always in a position to impose their political thoughts on the dominated ones; this however, does not mean that the dominated groups have nothing to do with ideologies. They have their own “ideologies that control their self-identification, beliefs and actions” (Dijk, 1995, p. 245). In showing opposition to the ethnic ideology that is being established in the political system, the narrator in *KiburDingay* confirms that he is an Ethiopian nationalist, and by extension promotes a pan-Ethiopian ideology. According to Wodak (2009) national identities are continuously negotiated, co-constructed, and re-produced so that it could be sustained or even strengthened. In this regard, the narrator’s declaration of himself as a natural Ethiopian and the criticism against those who remain submissive to government officials is evident in the novel as quoted hereafter. [My being Ethiopian is not a charity by someone; it is rather a natural gift] (p.44). In the first declarative sentence, Ethiopian national ideology is discursively promoted. The statement strongly opposes the ethnocentric ideology that prioritizes ethnic identity to identify an individual. In similar vein, semantics with nationalist ideology are oriented typically towards some important issues such as self-identity description and/or promotion of nationalism. In the statement quoted above, it is

evident that there are ideological semantics embodying pan-Ethiopian ideology. The ideological semantics such as [being Ethiopian] (p.44) is a natural gift which one can obtain[in blood] (p.44) are thus used to strengthen the abstract pan-Ethiopian ideology. Similarly, the word [motherland] which is repeatedly used in (e.g. pp.149-150) in *KiburDingaye* equates the country with a biological mother, portraying national ideology. This gives a kind of flavor of motherhood to show people's affection to their country. The term [my home land] (p.75) in the same novel embodies the abstract conception of belongingness and deep love to one's country. These ideological semantics are overloaded by a great deal of pan-Ethiopian ideology, and the statements wherein all these words are found state thoughts of Ethiopian nationalism.

It is understood that the political atmosphere, particularly in the post 2005 national election period was tough (Abbink, 2006; Carter Center, 2009). During the pre-election period, many pan-Ethiopian nationalists hoped that there would be a change in the political system as the potential winner was supposed to be a political party with a pan-Ethiopian ideology, Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD). However, the reverse was happened unexpectedly and people went out for demonstration which eventually resulted in killing and imprisonment of the masses. The political fever goes deep even into monasteries where worldly things are not worrisome. Since the political problem was highly intensified, daily information was sought, and a monk was required to buy a radio on a day after the election though listening radio was prohibited in monasteries. By the time the monks held discussions about Ethiopia's political matters, the case of Eritrea was raised for one of the monks named Abba Gebregzi, an 'Eritrean decent', who remained in Ethiopia for he strongly believes that he is an Ethiopian. When a monk interrogates the nationality of Abba Gebregzi, another monk argues about Ethiopians false ethnic division. As to him, an Ethiopian identity is truer than a given ethnic identity. The statements in *Därtogadareads*:

It is not Eritrea, but Ethiopia that patriots like Zer'ayDires scarified their lives for! Was it not Ethiopia that was protected by patriots like *Ras Alula Aba Nega*, the flame gate, the guardian of Ethiopia? I do not care whether you were born in south or north, in west or east. Tell me if you are asked about your ethnicity in this monastery. No one asks you about that. You must not be certain that where you were born gives you[r] identity as you do not know what belongs to you is not limited in where you were born. The only thing that you never feel ashamed is your being Ethiopian. That is it (p.214).

Hall (1996) as cited in Wodak (2017, p.16) asserts that '[n]ations and national identities as systems of cultural representation are based on (grand) historical narratives, which usually emphasize origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness.' The extract above reveals the use of grand historical narrative which recounts patriots of the past who defended Ethiopia's sovereignty. It is based on the historical account about Ethiopia. Obviously, Ethiopia is a nation which has never been colonized. The Ethiopian national identity maintenance, (re)production and promotion is based on such supposedly grand common historical narratives. Ethiopian nationalism ideology is thus used as a counter discourse against ethnocentric ideologies. The heroic deeds of individuals in history are used to show how Ethiopia was united which by far is used to promote national identity.

Nationalism and nationhood have come into existence as a sign of modernity. Maintaining, (re)producing, or supporting national identity is undertaken using various ways. Using toponymical labeling to show solidarity or union are some of the ways in which national identity is constructed (Wodak, 2017). Related to this, it is evident that Eritrea became an independent state in 1993, during the first two years of the EPRDF period. Despite Eritrea's secession and its independence, the long lasted relationship between the two nations is still an important issue in literary works. The following text from *Därtogada* explains how Ethiopians and Eritreans feel towards one another.

For sure, how could a country without boarder is referred to as a nation? For that matter, our fellows who reside in Eritrea say, "Let alone us [Eritreans], our camels identify the green, yellow and red flag". I hope we will be re-united one day. It is sad to see Eritrea's secession by the time Europe is yearning to cross borders without visa, use the same currency, and be recognized under the same flag (pp. 139-140).

The novel tries to convince that the secession of Eritrea is not merely based on the good will of the people. Using the great deal of attachment Eritreans have to the [Ethiopian] green, yellow and red flag, as an example, it narrates how the Eritrea's succession is unnecessary which happened by the time Europe is yearning to stay united. The topolymical labeling pronouns "we" and "our", and the Ethiopian flag with "red, yellow and green" color that we get in the extract above designate an attempt to reconstruct a discursive Ethiopian national identity which seeks an eventual reunion of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

It is evident that EPRDF's political system is very conducive for political parties established in the name of ethnic identities on the one hand and very abysmal for political parties established in non-ethnic background on the other. Believing that it is the worst time ever for Ethiopia, *Därtogada* years a better future and forwards some solutions to settle the problem. The following statement insists what needs to be done. [Those ethnic and tribe based political parties shall be banned. That is it. They are divisive forces which brought about disparity among the people.] (p. 177). According to Wodak (2017) institutional and material social structures influence the construction of national identity. It is related to the belief that the coming into existence of ethnic based organizations and institution such as political parties, media, financial institutions and so forth have worsen ethnocentrism. The narrative recommends that so as to deal with ethnocentrism and restore unity among Ethiopians, de-legitimizing ethnocentric ideology in the political system needs to be implemented. This can be realized by creating a system which bans ethnic based political parties, and establishing a system wherein pan-Ethiopian political parties can safely be mushroomed. The novel also prophesizes problems related to ethnic division could be settled if Ethiopia is civilized in science and technology (p.237). The unity and togetherness is believed to be realized by advancing the nation in science technology. For example, the construction of rail ways both at underground and ground level are symbolized as blood vessels to connect all Ethiopians who reside in different corners of the country.]

## 6. Conclusion

Narratives are shaped not in a vacuum, but in a very complex political and social environment where at least part of these political and social issues are entertained in line with the context of the time. Amharic novel, since its introduction as a literary genre in Amharic literature similarly has played significant role in reflecting various social, political, and other crosscutting issues that happened in Ethiopia across time. During the EPRDF regime, many Amharic novels which entertain various issues have been published. However, the two Amharic novels, *Därtogada* and *KiburDingaiwereselected* and analyzed using critical discourse analysis (CDA) for they entertain shared notions on the Ethiopian politics.

The study reveals that narrators and characters in the novels have negative perception on the ethnic political system which according to Dijk is a shared belief of the group to which they are members. It shows that Pan-Ethiopian ideology serves as an attempt to struggle against the normativity of ethnocentric ideology, and by extension as a resistance against the regime. The study indicates that the ethnocentric political system has resulted in classification of people by which 'ethnic other' is formed. Furthermore, the new generation is represented as 'false conscious' product of the system, and severely blamed for being submissive to the system, or for not being patriot like its forefathers. By condemning the new generation, it tries to regenerate a new one with qualities of the past generation.

A discursive kind of national identity (re)production and maintenance is revealed in the novels. In this regard, discourse semantics which embody abstract national ideology are employed to promote pan-



Ethiopian thought. Ethiopian grand narratives of the past: patriots, war triumphs and topomycal labeling that promote unity and togetherness are also employed so as to reproduce an inclusive Ethiopian ideology. The narratives, therefore, insist on the necessity of learning from the past to build a generation with a patriotic sprit.

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