



Literary Onomastics in the Novel ምንጉዋብ [Mintwab]

Yihene Melese^{1*}, Tesfaye Dagne² and Haimanot Wasie¹

¹Department of English, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Debre Markos University

²Humanities Faculty Bahir Dar University,

*Corresponding Author Email yemelesem@gmail.com

Abstract

The objective of this article is to analyze how the Ethiopian naming system has been utilized in the Amharic historical novel called 'Mintwab' to indicate power relation. The approach used for the study is New Historicism in its sense of contextualizing culture, history and Literature as texts reflecting power relation. The scope is limited to personal names in as discoursed in the novel. The study is useful in any interdisciplinary effort to explore Amharic literature anew. It serves as an example of the fluid co-habitation between Literature and history irrespective of the level of veracity claimed. The study has shown that frictions of identity, transition, recognition, intrigue and regionalism have been discoursed in the novel through naming. The novel has been used as a vehicle of history and culture to assert contestable identity. Personal names of the eponym, other personae and nick-names exist as manipulatable instances giving a fluid picture to history and cultural context. This is stirred by the intertextual inclination of the novelist's earlier work which is equally sensitive to names.

Key words:-Onomastics, Textualization, Historicization

I. Introduction

African Literature is in a conscious “movement from the written language back to the oral, a reminder that African literature may really be best described as lit/orature, an interlock between two co-existing traditions.” (Andrews, et al, 1998: 92). In this spirit, the Amharic historical novel Mintwab, textualizes and historicizes a lot. Conventional history is put under question mark taking it as fluid resource or text yielding itself to interpretations. Through

historicization, fictional incorporations are given a historical context. Power relation is mirrored through naming (onomastics).

According to Alima (2018:36), “Onomastics is a study of names that consists of place names, personal names, nicknames and literary onomastics. Onomastic theory is a multidisciplinary approach consisting of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, history, religion, politics, economy and so on”. As to Literary Onomastics, There is an interest among critics in the names of characters that



tends to go beyond the narrow limits and confines of seeing them as mere tags that distinguish one fictional character from another into the broader figurative import and implication of those names. Character names can be used as expressions of experience, ethos, teleology, values, ideology, culture and attitudes of varying shades. (Wamitila, 1999:34).

Ethiopian scholars, both religious and secular, assert that naming is a very serious matter in Ethiopia. Mahtemeselassie (1942) attaches immense significance with Ethiopian names .He portrays social, political and religious philosophy through his gathering of names of horses, titles, and material heritages. He brings into his discourse of names the Geeze saying “እስመ ስሙ ይመርሆ ነበ ምግባሩ” to mean “his name gears him to his acts ”(Mahtemeselassie,1961:8). This scholarly maxim shows that an individual shall live up to the kind of activity framed by his name. Whether one is expected to be a warrior, a spiritual, a dissenter, a benevolent or whoever else is implied by his name. Deviating from that would invoke reactions similar to the foreign maxim “what is in a name?”

We may also take into account the different Amharic proverbs of the wider public

revolving around the importance of a name. Amharic proverbs like ስምን መላክ ያወጣዋል [a name is bestowed by an angel], የሚያልፍ ቀን የማያልፍ ስም ይሰጣል [a temporary test of life could tag with an indelible bad name], ከስብ ስም ይሽታል [more odorous is a name than a congealed fat is], and others show this.

There are different names like personal, baptismal, coronation and many others. In the earlier quoted source, Mahtemeselassie indicates that horse names might indicate administration and justice, charity and generosity, vision of development and prosperity, fairness and spirituality, viciousness and mercilessness, anger and ferociousness and other claims or attributes of a person. As to who might bestow names, he mentions fellows of a person, favor-seeking bards or Azmaris, and even the person himself. This is as distinct from personal names given by parents or other nears and dears and baptismal names bestowed by priests. Other traditional scholars also deal with the personal and non-personal names and the philosophy behind them.(Tesema,1951;Desta,1962;Kidanewold



,1948). The scholars have shown that meaning-based purposive naming is the feature of both personal and non-personal names

Coming to secular scholars, studies made on naming in different nationalities of Ethiopia have shown that naming is not an absurd tag; it rather is a conscious mirror of the past, the present and the future. (Zelalem, 2003; Elyas (2004; Gebre, 2010).Ethiopian naming system (onomastics) is thus a classic Ethiopian legacy concept and ingenuity (Elyas,ibid) Religion, philosophy, psychology and many other factors play into it. The portrayal through it of issues like personality, authority, prophecy, history, reality, reputation, magic, superstition, identity, repudiation, recognition ,gender and others make naming very important in Ethiopian culture. It must be in this vein that Yonas (1995) asks “What is not in a name?” as a title to summarize the popular images of Ethiopia which are invoked as soon as the name of the country is mentioned. Power relations and frictions are indicated through names be it through trivializing or admiration.

As Birhanu (1999) shows, Ethiopian Literature is known to be very sensitive in its manipulation of names. Famous eponyms like Tobbya of Afework Gebreyesus,

Adefris of Dagnachew Worku, Haddis of Baalu Girma, and others have a lot to tell just through their names. This in no way forgets other famous characters like Bezabih of Haddis Alemayehu,Awoke of Hiruy Woldeselasia,Araya of Girmachew Teklehawariat,Mezgebu of Adam Reta and many, many others though they are not eponyms

II. Methodology, Scope and Significance

The Study is a qualitative one which analyses relevant extracts from the novel used as a primary resource utilizing a new historicist approach. This is opted as the theory very much plays with cultural poetics and context reflecting fluid power relation. In view of the fact that New Historicism has different perspectives, the approach here is more of eclectic focusing on the insights of Foucault and Stephen Grenblatt. Even if the novel exploits non-personal names very much, the scope here is only to personal ones. The study is useful in aligning the spirit of Amharic Literature to the broader set of African Literature which gives a high regard to naming as it could be seen in the works of writers like Achebe. It may also be taken as part of the process to answer calls to study Amharic literature anew through modern literary theories. (Taye& Siferaw, 2000; Yonas, 2010).



III. The Literary Onomastics of the Novel

Fitting into the above observations regarding names, the novel *Mintwab*, named after the eponymous character right away invites onomastic explorations. Wh-questions around her name are worth-pondering over. Who named her so? Why, where and how? What significance could the naming play in shaping the track of events? Such questions automatically lineup as soon as the name is mentioned. Reading into the novel this way shows that not only the naming of the major character but also that of other personae is much exploited in the novel to show identity, transition, intrigue and other facets through power frictions.

A. The Eponym

The major character's transition from one role or status to another is indicated through naming. First, her proper name was *Wolete Giorgis*, *Wolete* for short. It means servant of *St. George*. The name of the parish church where she was borne and brought up is *Wofta Georgis* (*Wofta of St. George*); she would most likely be christened there and her baptismal and given name could be just one even if the more frequent culture is bestowing separate names.

Named *Wolete Giorgis* as a Christian, the major character is primarily meant to serve God and His saint, *St. George*. She is not for

herself. Her Christian identity and her sex are not the only ones marked through her name but also the driving power. When she marries king *Bakafa*, the church-educated king finds himself mesmerized by her. He monologues not in the popular Amharic but in the elite language, *Geez*: “ምንተ ንወህብ? -What shall we bestow?” He then answers it in Amharic: “ምንት ቀብ ብያታለሁ/ I have (re)named her *Mintewab*” .He claims this is in view of her physical beauty and wisdom. His self-questioning shows that naming is something to be taken seriously and it is to be granted by an authority, cultural or otherwise .It is not a groundless claim to be tagged by an individual for him/herself. Such an act leads only to derision. The culture expects conferring a new name to a bride; the king here plays that role as well. In the new historicist sense, the so-called devoted Christian king enters into power struggle with *St. George* and he gives her a new secular name. In the church and state sense of history, power is reversed into state and church. Two languages, the ecclesiastical *Geez* and the vernacular Amharic engage in the fight over her name and the latter wins. This contravenes our expectation as the king is a well-versed clergy man. Even if he monologues in *Geez* the winner public



dialogue is in Amharic. She is thus named Mintwab, an out-and-out populist name not expected to be bestowed by a highly educated church man. The new name frames her activities very much with the interest to leave her own fingerprint in history. Her mentoring grandmother so often says she would make her another queen Eleni, a name reminding King Zera Yacob's wife from home and the mother of Constantine the Great from abroad, both known for their profound marks in church-and-state history. The Ethiopian Eleni is known to have shown utmost Christian devotion including sponsoring monasteries and writing scriptures by herself. Her non-Ethiopian namesake is famous in the Christendom for officiating the resurfacing out of the Holy Cross. (Gorgorios, 1986; Lulie, 1997).

Yet, the transformed character vows to become herself through power struggle. "ጃናሆይም ቢሆኑ ምንትዋብ ብለውኛል። እንዴት ያል ድንቅ ስም ነው? ምንትዋብ! እንዴት ያል ድንቅ ስም ነው? ስዛሬ ወዲያ ምንትዋብ ነኝ። እሌኒን ሳይሆን ምንትዋብን እሆናለሁ። Even His Majesty has renamed me Mintiwab. What a wonderful name! Mintiwab! Here after, I am Mintiwab. I will live to be Mintiwab, not Eleni," she vows to herself (p.83). The

influence her new name is to have is shown in her repetition of the wonderfulness of the name. She is to compete with her old models and to excel them rather than just stand on equal terms. The wish of her mentor is belittled though the two outwardly admire each other.

As to her coronational name, "ምንትዋብ በነገሰች በወሩ ታላቅ ባል ሆነና ብርሃን ሞገሳ የሚል የንግስና ስም ተሰጣት። እውነትም የግዛት ዘመዷ ላይ ብርሃን ፈነጠቀች። /A month after her coronation, Mintiwab was bestowed with the coronational name Birhan Mogesa. Indeed, she has thrown light during her reign."(p.163). Her political and cultural influence is framed by those two names throughout her palace life. When confronted by contestants, she often said "እኔ ምንትዋብ/ I Mintewab" to assert herself. Close associates who wanted her to be strong have called her "እቴጌ ብርሃን ሞገሳ/Her Majesty Birhan Mogesa."

She undergoes official coronation as an empress along with her son following her husband's death, she is named Berhan Mogesa following tradition which gives coronational name to kings and queens. Her sex and what is aspired through her as an empress are foregrounded. History shows



that until it leaves its place to horse names, coronational names to males were given appending the morpheme “ሰገድ” to mean “so-and-so or something bows down to you.” (Mahtemeselasie, 1969). Thus, Mintewab’s husband, son and grandson were named Mesih Seged, Berhan Seged and Adiam Seged respectively. Even the messiah bows to Bakafa; so does light [power] to Iyassu II; and mankind surrenders to Iyoas. The coronational parallel of Seged was ሞገሳ for females. It means ‘Charismatic’. The tradition was so patriarchal that no one was expected to surrender even to a female as powerful as Mintewab; she was only so charismatic like fellow Ethiopian Queens. Living up to this name, she is hoped to just bring light to the dark. The novel accordingly shows the transformations she has brought in art, architecture and administration. She undergoes transitions from an ordinary village girl to a royal status with different capacities. This is reflected through her fitting names. In later ages, such a royal name for a female is abrogated as a horse name which begins with አባ/Father is exclusively for males. The females are left just with the name ንግስት፡ እቴጌ [Queen/Empress]. Yet, the character tramps on cultural restrictions and acts as a defacto ruler to whom is bowed by both sexes. Her

coronational name is proven to fall short of the roles she plays as a political ruler. Light and charisma are not enough for her. She rules surpassing the limit of her royal name as a female.

The eponym also takes names of other persons seriously. A malaria- infirmed person healed under the roof of Wolete’s parents leaves without telling who he is. He is latter referred to as ‘the man/ሰውየው’ and she asks herself in a dialect-ridden Amharic: “ዛሬያ ሰውየው ማናቸው? ስምም የላቸው?... ማን መሆናቸውን ስነኳ ሳይናገሩ ማዶል እነዴ የኸዱ? እንዴ እስተመቼ ነው የላቸው ማንነት ሚደበቅ? ለምነው ሚሸሸጉ?/ So, who is the man? Does he not have a name of his own..Is it not without telling who he is that he left? Come on, for how long is his identity to be a secret? Why is he in disguise?” (p.5). She does this because she culturally knows a name has a lot to tell.

B. Other Personae

Another instance of transition is the case of her village lover. He was named Tilaye by the family. When his hope of marrying Woletie is shattered as the king takes her for himself, Tilaye leaves his village vowing to be a king of painting. He wanted to make art his queen to fill the void left by his



sweetheart. Psychological struggle is ensued between a woman and art. After many arduous years, he graduates as per his vow painting the Trinity. Three masters witness his kingship in the art realm. he bows to kiss the foot of one of the masters, after being lavishly praised. This time, the master says, ተነስ ልገ፤ አንተ የሰክል ንጉሥ ነህ። ንጉሥ እሰው እግር ላይ አይወድቅም/Stand up, Son. You are the King of Painting. A king never bows to the feet of a man. (p.214). The master belittles himself as an ordinary man to elevate his disciple to the highest rung of the ladder. The crowning is echoed by another master as well. Untold, some sort of divine machina makes them call the painter a king, certifying that what he lived for has materialized. This tag circulates so widely that even the queen wants him badly for his service with no slight expectation that he might be her own childhood lover. When the two meet late in life, he tells her that he is dubbed as the king of painting. The king of painting and the queen who also passionately loves art meet again in different capacities. Developments indicate so soon that they may resort to their childhood romance as she worries little to norms or gossips which exert their own power.

ስሙር ማለት እርስዎ ነዎት?

የባለምበራስ ሁነኝ ልኝር ጥላየ ነኝ።

Are you the Semur?
I am Balamberas Hunegn's son, Tilaye.

Here, the clergy and the public enter into a fight. The answer utterly shocks Mintwab and she sets aside her royal etiquette shouting, “ባለምበራስ ሁነኝ የቋራው?... የሳቸው ልኝር?... ጥላየ?/ Balamberas Hunegn? Quara? Hi's son, Tilaye?” The response is in the affirmative. As we see, the ecclesiastical name of the king of art becomes unnecessary here and he takes her back to her days as Woletie. She reciprocates sticking to his old name though he is not that free to comply same way and same level. She reprimands him for not paying a visit to her for so many years using his old name. “ጥላየ መጠየቅ ላነተ ነበር እሚቀል፤ ምንስ ቢሆን አብረን አድገንም አልነበር?/ Tilaye, it was easier for you to visit me; have we not been brought up together against all odds? To make him feel at ease, she tells him to avoid wagging his tail. He tells to her. He jocks that it is due to what are culturally called ካህናተ ደብተራ /palace clergymen/who are known to behave thus and he is one. They are those like Aba Mogesie of Haddis Alemayehu who live for the proverb”እንደንጉሡ አጎንብሱ/Bow the king's way (dis)approving only following the track of Fitawrari Meshesha. Then, Tilaye baldly serves as a liaison between her



and the wider public telling her successes and failures. In a stance unusual to royalty, she gives the compliment to time and the failure to herself. It needs her gut to behave the human way recognizing successes and failures. He now freely reacts on the vibrant intellectual spirit of the time including anthropocentric art and her utter nepotism in governance which culminates in the Era of Princes.(TekleTsdig,2000). He in a way tells her she is not up to the name Mintwab. The power of love demeans strict royal norm which could have invoked serious punishment for any other trespasser. She vows to herself not to leave him again until death. Maybe, they may resort to romance as she has asked him if he has married. The answer was no. Even if she asks him if she were the reason, he keeps quiet and she refrains from pressing him out of understanding. Meanwhile, living up to the artistic and intellectual spirit of the time which New Historicism takes into due account she engages him on two seriously philosophical questions: what is time? Who is man?

On the occasion of evaluating his masterpiece, one of the three suggests that his name be changed to fit his current status. The two masters approve it saying not only the name but also the procedure thereto is

appropriate heeding to the following onomastic explanation which gives due regard to the outgoing/untimely name as well :

ተማሪ እናት አባቱ ያወጡለትን ስም እየተወ ለራሱ ስም ያወጣል።ዜማ ሲማር ጥዑመልሳን ነኝ ይላል።ቅኔ ሲማር ባህረ ጥበብ ነኝ ...ማንቴስ ነኝ ይላል።አንዳንዴም እስበሱ ስም ይሸላለማል።ይህ ልዛቺን ግን ትሁትና የሰራ ሰው በመሆኑ ይኸው የባላገር ስሙን እንደያዘ ጥላየ እንደተባለ አለ።ምስጢሩ ደግ ነው ጥላ ከለላ ትሆነኛለህ ሲሉም አደል አባቱ ጥላየ ማለታቸው ድንቅ ስም ነው።ግና ለንዳነተ ያለጠቢብ አይሆንም።ሠዓሊ ተሁኖ ጥላየ መባል ምስጢሩ አይገጥምም።ስለዚህ ዛሬ እናነተ ወንድሞች ተፈቀዳቸው ስሙ ስር ብየዋለሁ።ደሞም ፊቱኑ የነበረ ወግ ነው።መምህራን ለጥበብ ልገቻቸው ስማማል ያሉትን ስም ይሸልማሉ።እክላ ምን ትላላችሁ ስሙ ስር አይደለም ጥላየ?

A church disciple names himself dropping the name his parents have given him.He calls himself ‘Teumelesan to mean ‘the sweet-voiced’ when he studies hymns; if he studies poetry, he says his name is Bahiretibeb ‘ to mean ‘the sea of wisdom’ and so on .At times, students award names for each other.This son of ours is ,however, so humble and industrious that he is still named ‘Tilaye’ which is his folk name. The mystery is fine. Is his father not saying you shall be my guard and protection when naming him ‘Tilaye? It is a wonderful name. Yet, it is not fit for such an artist like you.



For a a painter, to be named ‘Tilaye’ makes the mystery assymetrical. So, if you my brothers allow me, I have as of today named him ‘Semur’ to mean ‘the fittest’. This is as per tradition. Masters award their children in the art the name they feel fit. So, what do you say? Is Tilaye not Semur? (P.215).

The church authority tells us who may name someone- the person himself, parents and other authorities. Each has its own dream, value and aspiration be it mere personal bragging or due recognition. Transitions, specializations and claims are portrayed through names. Names need not be elitist to carry aspiration and wisdom. Even a lay parent could do that. Yet, the boundary between a lay and an elite should be marked. Since the assertion of the intellectual parents has outweighed the vision of the biological parents, Tilaye has to leave his name hitherto, picking an intellectual replacement in Geeze which is tailor-made to his current stature. As the authority has rightly said, we learn why Tilaye’s father named him so when father and son disagree on the walk of life the latter should take. “ጥላ ከሌላ ትሆነኛለህ ብዩ ያሳደግሁህ ልገፍ ዛጲያ ምን ታረግልኝ ኑሯል?/My son who I have nurtured hoping you would be my defense and stalwart”.(p.34). As the transition of Abram

and Sora of the bible is sealed through changing their names into Abrham and Sara so is the case with the shift from the populist Tilaye to the elite Simur (Genesis,17:5,15). To assert transition from one status to another, a king adopts a new name; so does a bishop. When popes are demoted or ex-communicated due to heresy or schism, their promotional name is denied and they go back to their old name. Thus, both enthroning and dethroning are indicated through naming. Even when people are at odds with a seating emperor, they may use his old name as a token of disrespect. Detractors of Haileselassie used to use his pre-coronation name, Teferi, by way of dishonoring his Imperial stature.(Addis Ababa University,1993).

Tilaye and his fellow disciple and host in Gondar, Abrha, dialogue on the meaning behind the word ‘master’, showing power may be vested not just in administration but in being a high-ranking intellectual:

አለቃ ሔኖክ የቤተክርስቲያን አስተዳዳሪ ነበሩ እንዴ?

ሥለምን ጠየቅኸኝ?

አለቃ ስትላቸው ግዝዮ። በቅኔ ቤት መምሮቻቸንን መርጌታ እንል የለ? ልክ እንደዛ ነው። ሹመት ነው። ሥእል ተምረው ረዥም ገዜ ሰርተው ሲያበቁ ሊቀጠብብት ኸዚያም አለቃ ይባላሉ። አለቃ ትልቁ ሹመት ነው።



Aleqa Henok, has he ever been a church head?

Why do you raise the question?

You call him Aleqa.

He is named Aleqa

It is just like the Qene tradition of calling your teacher Merigeta. It is a title. Having studied painting and worked for years, one is named LiqeTebebt and then Aleqa. Aleqa is the highest title (p.54).

The name ደብተራ is also interpreted through character interaction. This name does not carry identical sense in the elitist and in the popular sense. For church scholars, it means someone trained in the church teachings and serves the church in hymn, poetry or other services. (Desta, 336; Tesema, 1098). Yet, the public identifies the name with witchcraft and other demonic inclinations. The novel employs the term for both the popular and intellectual senses.

In a confrontation between Tilaye’s father, Hunegnaw and an unnamed scathing Debtera who trivializes humstrung and limping Hunegnaw alleging he faced his physical disability while he was retreating at a battlefield due to cowardice. To this, Hunegnaw angrily reacts “አንተ መተተኛ ደብተራ። እኔ ሁነኝ በእንዳነተ ያለ ድግምተኛ አልሸረደድም” /You sorcerer Debtera! I, Hunegn, am not this trivial to be

mocked at by a witch like you.”(p.31). The angry man denies the other side all the positive connotations his name might carry; he exclusively defines the Debtera negatively. As we read on, the angry man tells him that battlefield is something the Debtera is not entitled to talk about as he never knows it. All the Debtera is claimed to know is sniff for pots of drink and feast. The angry man refuses to call the Debtera by his given name though he asserts his own. In mentioning his own name, however, Hunegn seems to say that he lives up to it since it nearly means” trustworthy, recognizable, and so on. Yet, the Debtera has attacked him well showing Hunegn is never up to his name. The Debtera is presented as unworthy to be named. Even when he rejects his son’s intention of being a painter pressing very hard to make the son a soldier, the reason is to physically revenge the Debtera whom he insults “ጠውላጋ/scorched”.(p.34). The name means different for the intellectual because when Semur compliments the queen decades after for the favorable age she and her contemporary rulers created, the Debtera is respectfully mentioned among the intellectual beneficiaries.(P.)

C. Nick-naming

Nick-naming is so common and adept in Ethiopian culture. Political figures have



been nick-named as ጉዲት እሳቶ [the Monster/the Fire] ስሁል [the sharp-edged] and others to show the marks they have allegedly left.(Tekletsadiq,2000).The novel has used nick names to portray political intrigue, regionalism and derision among others. Mintwab’s son is officially named ‘ብርሃን ሰገድ ኢያሱ’ to mean ‘light/power shall bow to you.’Yet, the public calls him ‘ቋረኛው ኢያሱ’/Iyasu of Quara-not just to distinguish him from his grandfather who was also named Iyasu but to imply he was not entitled to assume a Gonderine seat as he is from Quara.Power struggle over legitimacy is indicated through naming.

Here is a case that collides the royal circle against the morally-sensitive public. When her husband King Bekafa dies,young Mintewab engages in an incestuous relationship with his cousin named Iyasu. This friction is demonstrated between Mintewab who wants to continue her incestuous relation and her son King Iyasu who wants to give it a stop.Her son asks the mother about his namesake and incestuous lover:”ግራዝማች ብትይውም ሰው አሁንም ምልምል ኢያሱ ነው እሚለው፤ ኸዝሀ ወዲያ ውርደት አለ?/Even if you call him Commander of the Left,, the public still calls him’ Iyasu the Picked? What is more shameful than this?”.(p.223).The naming

lore vents public derision of the unwelcome palace affair. History is textualized against the will of the ruling circle showing vested power may be weaker than public power.

Tilaye’s/Simur’s father reveals his grievance against the social ostracism he is facing because he sided with a patricidal king.He shows the friction presenting the formal title and the discomfoting popular nick-name side by side. “ሰው ለአጤ ተክለሃማኖት ስለተዋጋሁ የአባቱን የአጤ አድያም ሰገድ እያሱን አልጋ ለመውረስ ብሎ ላስገደለ ለርጉም ተክለሃማኖት አደረ ብሎ ሲያማኝ/Because I fought in defense of Atse Teklehaimanot, the public backbites me saying he has fought for the cursed Teklehaimanot who has killed his father Atse Adiam Seged Iyasu to take the throne,”says the man,with the formal ‘Atse’ and the nick-name “cursed” side-by-side.

Deviant as she is in as much as she is a conformist and conservative, we find Mintwab baffling a priest who uses a nick-name about a king who loved music.The priest says, “ዘፋኝ ዳዊት ዘፈን አለቅጥ ወደዱ::በገና ይጫወቱ ማልነበር? የንጉስ ወጉማደል/Dawit the Singer loved music excessively; he used to play the harp.It is unbecoming of a king.”(p.).To this Mintewab angrily reacts thus:”ዘፈን የወደዱ



እንደሆነስ ማንን ጎዱ? ምነው አቤ ዳዊት የሰሩትን በጎበጎውንም ብታወሩ?/What is wrong with his liking of music? Who did he harm? Why not you talk of the good Atse Dawit has done? Just like Tilaye’s father, she uses the formal Atse rather than the popular nick-name, the singer.

D Intertextuality

This is included to show the author’s consistent tendency to exploit naming. In the author’s earlier novel called ‘Mine to Win’,the major character is named Tewaney. He was so named by his Qene master uncle who informs him the very first day at school.”Did anybody tell you that I named you after a qene liq?”The uncle, Merigeta Awoke asks child Tewaney. (p.28). This has a great inspirational effect on the child.”I wanted to remember what he told me for as long as I lived. I felt inspired and was even more determined to work hard and become a qene teacher,” says the character narrator Tewaney. Taking the name seriously continues and when he meets a hermit who asks his name, the name Tewaney automatically leads the hermit to ask as to who gave the child such a name. The answer is “my uncle....He teaches qene”.(p.63). When Tewaney grows into a master, he compliments his uncle for the name he bestowed. “Thank you for changing

the course of my life I believes giving me a philosopher’s name imbued me with aspiration to be learned, if not become a philosopher.”(Pp.194-195).He repeatedly interrupts his learning to live up to the short-term needs of his mother and father marrying and living near them. Yet, his heavy intellectual name plunges into struggle over the carrier of life .Accordingly, the weight of the name wins and he devotes his life to learning wandering away from his parents.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

In view of the fluid relationship between history and Literature, the study has shown that the novel has been used as a reservoir of the Amharic and Geez names to show volatile power relations in the sense of New Historicism. Through names personal transitions and political intrigues have been encoded. Identity, vision, derision and other facets have been indicated though they are often contested by actors of power. The discourse of power and friction is shown through the manipulation of names. The eponym, other personae and nick-names have well served an interdisciplinary purpose wedding literature to history, culture and other contexts.It is recommended that not only students of Literature but also those of related others



like Linguistics, Folklore and Anthropology explore the almost unexplored onomastic text in Amharic Literature to get a more dependable image of Ethiopian society and state

References

I. Primary Source

አይወት ተፈራ፣ 2012 ፣ ምንት-ዋብ ፣ ታሪካዊ ልብወለድ፣ ኢክሊፕስ ማተሚያ ቤት፣ አዲስ አበባ.

II. Secondary Sources

Alima Jibril Hussen. (2018). Descriptive Analysis of Oromoo Personal Names and Naming Practices in Eastern Wollega Zone of Oromia National Regional State: School of Graduate Studies and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature Addis Ababa University: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Andrew, W.L, et al. (1998). African American Literature. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Austin.

Elias Yemane. (2004). Amharic and Ethiopic Onomastics: a classic Ethiopian Legacy, concept and ingenuity. The Edwin Mellen Press: New York.

Hiwot Teferra. (2016). Mine to Win. Eclipse Printing: Addis Ababa

Taye Assefa and Shiferaw Bekele. (2000). The Study of Amharic Literature: An Overview *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2, Special Issue Dedicated to the XIVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies.

Tewodros Gebre. (2013). Period, History, and the Literary Art: Historicizing Amharic Novels: Northeast African Studies

Wamitila, K. W. (1999). "What's in a Name: Towards Literary Onomastics in Kiswahili Literature". AAP Yntiso Gebre. Cultural contact and change in naming practices among the Aari of southwest Ethiopia *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 2010, Vol. 22, No. 2 Taylor & Francis, Ltd.

Yonas Admasu. (1995). Narrating Ethiopia: a Panorama of the National Imaginary. UCLA.

Yonas Admasu. (2001). On the State of Amharic Literary Scholarship. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1 Institute of Ethiopian Studies.

Zealelem Leyew. (2003). Amharic Personal Nomenclature: A Grammar and Sociolinguistic Insight : *Journal of African Cultural Studies*. Vol. 16, No. 2. Taylor & Francis, Ltd.



ሀዲስ አለማየሁ. (2013). ፍቅር እስከ መቃብር፤ ማንኩሳ ማተሚያ ቤት፤ አዲስ አበባ.

ሉሌ መላኩ (1997). የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ፤ ትነሳኤ ዘጉባኤ ማተሚያ ቤት፤ አዲስ አበባ

ማህተመስላሴ ወልደ መስቀል፤ ዝክረ ነገር. (1942). ብርሃንና ስላም ማተሚያ ድርጅት፤ አዲስ አበባ

ማህተመስላሴ ወልደ መስቀል፤ ዝክረ. (1961). ቼ በለው፤ ንግድ ማተሚያ ቤት፤ አዲስ አበባ

ሰሎሞን ተሸመ ባዬ. (2007) ፎክሎር ምንነቱና የጥናቱ የትኩረት አቅጣጫ ፤ አዲስ አበባ

ብሩሀ ዓለምነሀ (2009) የኢትዮጵያ ፍልስፍና- የዘረዳዕቆብና የወልደ ሕይወት ሀተታዎች ትንታኔ ከነሃተታቸው፤ አዲስ አበባ

ብርሃኑ ገበየሁ. (1999) የገጽ-ባህሪያት ስሞች ስነጽሑፋዊ ፋይዳ በአማርኛ ልቦለዶች. *Ethiopian Journal of Languages and Literature*, no 9, Institute of Language Studies, Addis Ababa University,

ጎሩይ ወልደስላሜ (1999). የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ከንግስተ ሳባ እስከታላቁ የአድዋ ድል፤ አዲስ አበባ

ተክለጻድቅ መኩሪያ (2000). የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ከዐጼ ልብነድንግል እስከ ዐጼ ቴዎድሮስ፤ አዲስ አበባ

ተሰማ ሀብተሚካኤል. (1951). ከሣቴ ብርሃን ተሰማ የአማርኛ መዝገበ ቃላት፤ አርቲስቲክ ማተሚያ ቤት

ኪዳነወልድ ክፍሌ (1948). መጽሐፈ ሰዋስው ወግስ ወመዝገበ ቃላት ሐዲስ ፤ አርቲስቲክ ማተሚያ ቤት

የኢትዮጵያ መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ማሕበር፤ (2000). መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ የብሉይና የሐዲስ ኪዳን መጽሐፍት ፤ አዲስ አበባ