

Currency of Social Institutions in Amharic Poems Recited on YouTube by Getnet Enyew

Tesfaye Mesele Zinabu

Faculty of Language Studies, College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Mekelle University, P.O. Box 321, Mekelle, Tigray, Ethiopia

Email: solianatm@gmail.com

Abstract This study examines the social institutions in three purposively selected contemporary Amharic poems recited on YouTube by Getnet Enyew. Through CDA and textual analysis, it finds that the family, though considered an essential institution in guiding members, lacks the discursive power to maintain closeness and unity among members. Similarly, religions are deemed to lose their power in guarding their followers from rebellion against God. Likewise, followers are portrayed as a seat for deceit, hatred, grudge, revenge, mischief, and insidiousness. Equally, the government is considered a seat of structural injustice, positioning victims without options, exposing them to substantive atrocities. Equally, education is found to lack its instructional power in shaping individuals who can positively influence public opinion and the citizenry's commitment, integrity, and national sensibility. The media serve as a platform for labeling, fueling a deep social divide and social ills that negatively affect citizens' lives and their sense of hope, peace, and happiness. Thus, there is a need for stakeholders such as government authorities, religious leaders, and policymakers to make every effort in capacitating these institutions through collaborative practices and maintaining their guiding ethos in the best interest of the public.

Keywords social institutions; social currency; Amharic poems; CDA; Ethiopia

Author **Tesfaye Mesele Zinabu** is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Language Studies, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mekelle University (Mekelle, Ethiopia). His research interests focus on gender, literary discourse, social values, family, inclusiveness, social conscience, children, justice, and reconciliation.

Introduction

Ethiopia is a land of diverse communities with a multifaceted tapestry of cultural and religious values, norms, linguistic and ethnic lines, and social institutions.

Through various age-old social institutions, such as religions and social currencies, communities in Ethiopia have been shaping public and familial interactions, promoting peaceful neighborhoods, managing challenges, and resolving conflicts within these social institutions and their associated social currencies (Karbo 50).

However, Ethiopia's legacy of governance and the political playbooks have taken their basis from making use of force and manipulation instead of dialogue and common understanding. Accordingly, the diverse speech communities, their social currencies, and ethnic lines have been shaped by the nature of governance in the country. In light of this, Adamu (24) states that governance in Ethiopia across history has seen issues of diversity caused by socio-political practices; it lacks the balance between maintaining diversity and unity, and this in turn has led communities to face threats regarding national cohesion, tension, clash, and collapse (Østebø 738).

In the course of changes of governance in Ethiopia, there have often been conflicts among elites, which have damaged social fabrics that uphold communities' cohesion and stability. The conflicts among the elites have been shaped by narratives that host historical legacies of hostilities and negative views of groups and out-groups of elites across the country (Asefa 25).

Driven by political upheaval, such differences, especially in present-day Ethiopia, have mounted and led to ethnic tensions and broad violence far and wide, resulting in displacement and loss of lives. Ethnic politics and mindset have fueled further tensions and exacerbated violence and instability. Given this context, webs of discourse (among which poetry is one), given in light of social institutions, can shape public opinion and amount to either a peaceful coexistence or a much graver political environment.

Accordingly, this study considers contemporary Amharic poems recited on YouTube by Getnet Enyew and explore the currency of social institutions within and among communities in Ethiopia, as reflected in the poems. The study investigates these poems based on the following research questions:

- 1) What is the social currency of social institutions in Ethiopia as manifested in the poems?
- 2) Do the social institutions make efforts to foster a climate of common understanding and mutual respect?
- 3) Do they uphold their social currencies well and promote coexistence and trust among communities, or aggravate polarization and social divide?
- 4) Have they themselves shown significant changes over the decades as a result of the political turmoil in the country?

Conceptual Framework

The study investigates contemporary Amharic poems recited on YouTube by Getnet Enyew to see the social currency of social institutions such as family, religion, education, government, and media. It explicates how these social institutions manifest their roles and are viewed within the communities.

Social institutions are understood as a basic governing system of society. They are deemed to be social forces that guide the function of societal relations, setting expected values and character traits of individuals (Wondmagegn 198). Likewise, Ferrera (1) defines institutions as regulations and systems that conventionally or casually compel the character of people in communities, combine choices, and organize their beliefs. Similarly, Baral (68) reflects that these institutions are influential in setting communal values and commonly accepted unwritten rules.

Through these shared values and rules, societies maintain social order and coherence. They are commonly considered pillars of society, underpinning healthy social relationships among and within communities. Such institutions can play a key role in shaping individuals to have integrity (Izham et al. 481) and are believed to maintain the social fabric and facilitate peaceful coexistence within communities. As Baral (70) indicates, they set societal expectations for individuals in a society to behave in manners that are deemed suitable. They render regulatory ways for individuals when interacting within their communities. According to Wondmagegn (198), they play an indispensable part in influencing the expected social standards, morals, and the characters or manners of individuals in a given society.

These social organizations encompass a wide range of institutions, including religion, family, media, education, and governance (Wondmagegn 198; Baral 69; Izham et al. 482). These institutions play a significant role in fostering social interaction, learning, and instruction among people. They promote the sharing of essential values, skills, and beliefs that can help maintain society's role. They have a critical role in maintaining the regulation of the code of conduct, enforcement of laws, which in turn ensures social cohesion and civil rights (Baral 69).

Family plays a key role in shaping children. Family heads take the lead to instruct children in ways to behave and communicate with people in an expected manner set by society (Baral 69; Izham et al. 482). Likewise, religious teachings nurture members of society with moral values and norms, and frame individuals to create a sense of belonging in communal life. These instructions can help strengthen the bonds within communities and foster a sense of care among individuals, showcasing a deeper understanding of life (Baral 69; Izham et al. 482).

Altan (3) states that education, as one of the imperative social institutions, could play a part in shaping an equitable and all-embracing society. Similarly, Baral (69) indicates that education, like a religious institution, can help communicate standards and moral values, which include respecting leaders, accountability, and working hard. It imparts insights and historical background about the communities to members, and strengthens familial and religious instructions in a way that individuals can have understanding and skillsets to get involved in societal engagements. Likewise, Izham et al. (482) state that education, as a socio-cultural institution, is essential in establishing and enhancing societal integrity.

In the same vein, media (television, newspapers, and social media) can inform individuals and shape public voices. The information spread through these media outlets can influence individuals' beliefs and moral standards (Baral 69). According to Ferrera (1), the media can be of use to bring about changes in people's choices and moral standards. Similarly, governments, through rules and principles, can help apply shared moral standards informed by strategies. They offer a basis for communal communication, such as ways in which individuals can communicate among themselves and resolve issues of dispute. By this token, they can apply laws and stabilize society, and ensure public cohesion (Baral 69).

To see the condition of social institutions and uncover the ways the recited poems as discourses represent institutional currency, critical discourse analysis (CDA) has been employed as a framework. CDA, as a critical approach, emphasizes communal problems. It takes up the communal causes seriously and upholds the practices and views of the disadvantaged groups (van Dijk 96). Likewise, as described by Fairclough (125), CDA can give contexts and insights into uncovering the challenges people face in specific kinds of communal life.

As indicated in van Dijk (106) and Flowerdew and Richardson (1), among other things, CDA can be used to unravel the underlying ideological assumptions, implications, allusions, and suppositions that are constructed in communication events or discourses about social practice. Through the study of language uses, such as rhetorical figures, CDA can help to shed light on the socially shared beliefs or the social power embedded in discourses.

To study discourse, there is a need to consider context and language use as the center of focus. Context, according to van Dijk (109), is a mental representation. It subjectively signifies practices of individuals, specifically the present communicative event, and gives prominence to the representation of communal cultural awareness of common and interactive situations and their partakers.

Statham (9) delineates CDA as a discipline that considers the interconnection

of communicative episodes, underlying beliefs, and control, and pursues to make a textual explication of the difficulties and the influential systems that uphold and strengthen ordered and classified institutions of communities. CDA, according to this author, examines the language use fashioned by a variety of institutions: communication outlets, the justice system, education, and governments. In light of this, CDA exposes the underlying systems of belief that buttress dominating communicative events in a communal environment.

Methods and Materials

This study has investigated contemporary Amharic poems recited on YouTube to see the social currency of social institutions through the lens of critical discourse analysis. Accordingly, based on purposive sampling, it has selected three poems [ይድረስ ለኛ (Let the message come to us), እባክህን ተወኝ ልጄ (Please, leave me, my son), ለኔ ባል (Say it is my concern)] recited by Getnet Enyew, an Ethiopian Artist who is widely known and watched on YouTube. Accordingly, the poems were carefully transcribed and translated into English. They have been thoroughly read, and excerpts fit to the views of the specific social institutions were identified and organized; the Amharic excerpts and their translations have been placed side by side to ease understanding. The selected excerpts from the contemporary Amharic poems have been qualitatively and textually analyzed. On the basis of the theoretical insights of critical discourse analysis, the study explicates what the persona reflects regarding addressees, their supposed views, deeds or misdeeds, moral grounds, beliefs, and cultural values constructed in the selected poems. Additionally, the study analyzes the language uses such as metaphors and allusions, and exposes meanings that are explicit or implicit. It argues against the grain and critically describes views from different angles.

Results

This study has explored the currency of social institutions, their values, norms, systems, credibility, public interest, responsibilities, and accountability as reflected in the poems recited.

Family as a Social Institution

A family as a social institution is believed to be a prime part of society that helps in setting up values, norms, and beliefs. Drawing multiple values and beliefs from other institutions, such as religion and education, a family takes a crucial step to instruct members with manners, build up its members' social skills, bring up children with culturally supported norms, and substantially shape them to socialize

and maintain peaceful coexistence within and among communities. The belief that parents are responsible for siblings' well-being, and children should follow their parents' instructions, is reflected in the following excerpt.

በዛሬ ክፉ ስራችን	Let not our today's evil deeds make our forefathers feel sad,
የትናንትና አባቶቻችን በልጆቻቸው አይዘኑብን	Let not our posterity feel shame on us,
የነገ ልጆቻችን በአባቶቻቸው አይፈሩብን	Please, brother,
እባክህን ወንድምፄ	Let not our hope perish, our days become dark;
እባክህን ተስፋችን አይርገፍ እባክህ ቀናችን አይጨልም	Our peace is our happiness, our country is our world,
ሰላማችን ነው ደስታችን ሃገራችን ናት የኛ አለም	(Let the message come to us)

As indicated in the above text, the persona reflects that responsibilities are like a relay; he pleads with the current brother, who takes the role of a father, to responsibly meet expectations and duly contribute to the benefit of the coming generation. If responsibilities are not handed off and duties are not passed well, family settings and communities at large will be negatively affected, the persona begs. He asserts that there will be disruption and miscommunication, which will affect continuity, sense of hope, and prospect if the brother addressed does not respond duly. The persona reflects that such a condition will put the forefathers to sadness and the siblings to shame, indicating 'shame' as a discursive power to press the addressee to bring change. The persona considers that the decisive power is in the hands of the current brother to maintain the connecting link.

In contrast to the above, the following persona seems to focus on distancing the child and claiming self-worth. He accuses the child of making excuses and instructs him/her to be his/her own, irrespective of the father's deeds or name. The persona instructs the child to be self-reliant, never to take the father as an excuse for his/her failure or as an enabler for his/her success. The persona states that the child should take himself or herself to account for whatever happens, life or death. Still, family instructions, rebuke as guidance, and hierarchy are normative powers in shaping manners and setting up values.

ባባቴ በአያትህ አጥንት	In the name of your father, my grandfather,
ይችን ውለታ ዋልልኝ ግብርና ስሜ ለኔ ትተህ	Do me this favor, leave my deeds and my name to me,
ራስህን ችለህ ኑርልኝ ራስህን ችለህ ሙትልኝ	And live your own life; die your own death.
	(Leave me)

The persona goes so far as to defend his name even after death and instructs the

child never to vow by his name. The persona, as a father, claims that the child's false vow will amount to a second death to him. He discloses that, at the current time, there are weaknesses and deceits. In light of this, the persona reflects that such practices are never part of his life. He instructs the child, though negatively, to be self-responsible and correct weaknesses and deceit.

ሞቴን በሰላም ልኑርበት	Let me live my death peacefully;
ከመቃብሬ አትቀስቅስኝ	Wake me not up from my grave;
ዘመኔን ኑሬ አልፌያለሁ	I lived my time and passed.
ዳግም አባትህን አትግደለኝ	Do not kill me, your father again;
በዘመንህ ድክመት ቅጥፈት	With the weakness and deceit of your time,
ስሜን ጠርተህ አትማልብኝ	Do not vow calling my name;
ያንተን እውነት ለማስረገጥ	To approve your truth,
አባቴ ይሙት አትበለኝ	Do not say "in my father's name".
	(Leave me)

The persona, as indicated in the excerpt below, takes instruction as a crucial and powerful way to shape the child's behavior and help him/her feel a sense of self-reliance and take personal truth, faith, and knowledge. However, he seems to disregard that such important values should be shared and passed among siblings, and, as such, it is part of parental responsibility.

እባክህን አንተን ሁንልኝ	Please be yourself,
እውነትህን እምነትህን እውቀትህን	Lean on your truth, faith, and knowledge,
ምርኩዝ አርገህ በራስህ ተማመንልኝ	Be self-confident and live on your own,
ራስህን ችለህ ኑርልኝ	Even if you feel sad upon your defeat,
በመሸነፍ ብታዝን እንኳን	(Leave me)
በኔ ባባትህ ስትል ራስህን ችለህ ውጣልኝ	

Though perspectives could vary among generations, parents are responsible for imparting important social values and ways of living together. It is through collective efforts and common understanding that societies can sustain and ensure coexistence. Rallying among different segments of communities and maintaining continuity of social ties are integral to family, education, and religion.

Religious Institutions: Beliefs, Values, and Practices

Even though religious institutions can play an indispensable role in forging ways to maintain core values such as peace, compassion, and reconciliation, they have been bent on the pitfall of ethnic biases which have further undermined age-long social interactions and cohesion, escalated differences and hatred, instigated

fear and threat, impeded possible reconciliatory efforts, and eroded peaceful and meaningful dialogues and the sense of coexistence. Even if they could guide ethical issues, impact political and social impartiality, and foster peaceful social discourse among communities through their religious teachings of Biblical and Quranic verses and narratives, they have been both victims and instigators of grievances.

As described in the following extract, the persona asserts the failure of religious institutions to shape their followers in light of the expected precepts and religious ethos that can connect them to godly life. The persona witnesses that religious followers have rebelled against God, made their bodies the host of a plot and deceit, overwhelmed themselves with hatred, and the intent of grudge and revenge, made their minds and hearts a seat of mischief, and insidiousness. The persona questions the generation in light of the current beliefs and deeds and feels that the new generation, unlike the old one, has been proven to lack the religious values that have been considered to undergird society's shared ways of life. The persona bitterly indicates that the generation has been led astray and has become dishonest to God, showing gross negligence to their country, only to their bitter tears, bloodshed, and demise, and the collapse of a country, a country with an outcry of distress to God, alluding to Rachel's bitter weeping from the Bible.

በጥላቻ የተዘራ በቂም በቀል ለበቀለ ሴራና ሸፍጥ	It's to us invaded by plot and deceit,
ለወረረን	Sown by hatred, grown by grudge and revenge
ከሀይት ቅጥፈት መሰረነት የህሊና ኣይናችንን ልባችንን	To us whose mind and heart have fainted,
ለሰወረን	By betrayal, mischief, and insidiousness;
ከሰውነት ተራ ወርደን ከፈጣሪ ተካክደን	To us who fell out of humanity,
ሃገር ሽቅብ የምትረጨውን እምባና ደም ለማይገደን	And became dishonest to God, negligent to the country,
	Which spouts bitter tears and sheds blood.
	(Let the message come to us)

Based on the entwined public and religious discourses of pressing concerns reflected in the above excerpt, the persona further takes the present generation as rebels against God and even deviant from the expected deeds of the world. He describes the generation's spirit as poisoned with revenge, dictated by grudges and hatred. He termed the generation as cruel beyond expression, stiff-necked, arrogant, and whose hands are blood-stained. He asserts that the present situation has seen the bloodiest clashes and is the most horrific, full of casualties. Against the backdrop of historical good deeds of the past, the present witnesses all evil, indicating that the current generation lacks religious teachings and Godly deeds, and grows small like thistles and becomes lighter than straw, and their situation goes downhill.

ከዘመንና ከፈጣሪ ባፈነገጠ ምግባራችን	Deviant are our deeds from the time, and God;
በጥላቻና በቂም በቀል በተመረዘ መንፈሳችን	Poisoned is our spirit with hatred, grudges, and revenge,
ካፍ ቋንቋ በላይ በሆነው ቃል በማይገልፀው ጭካ	Our brutality, words cannot express,
ንዖችን	Our heart is filled with arrogance,
እብሪት በደፈነው ልባችን ደም በተነከረው እጃችን	Stained are our hands with blood,
ከለት ተለት ቁልቁል አድገን	Day after day, we grow low;
የነዛ ዋርካዎች ከፋይ አነስን እኮ ችፍርግ አከልን	From the oaks, we grow small
ቀለልን እኮ ገለባ ሆን	Like the shrub, we become;
	Like the straw, lighter we grow.
	(Let the message come to us)

The persona brings the issue of the egoism of individuals to the fore and invites the readers or listeners to question their rationality and check themselves against the principles of God's precepts, against the deeds and expectations set by religious ethos, mentioning personhood, which is one of the expectations of religious values indicated in the Bible.

Amidst bitter censure, the persona, as indicated in the following excerpt, enquires into the existential crisis the country is suffering. The persona bitterly condemns the generation and points out that the world has become ashamed of the citizens' misdeeds [himself included] and indicates that God is crying over their offenses. The persona pleads with the generation, saying, "Enough is enough," and beseeching them to be a 'person' if not fitting into the Ethiopian identity. The persona vents his profound feelings of discontent and confusion on the fact that the present generation lacks fear of God, conscience, and personhood, which religious institutions are established to nurture followers with. His mention of God's cry over the offence is a signpost of the failure of religious institutions in delivering their due service and functioning as expected to help followers to live up to the values, beliefs, and practices.

ምን አገኘህ ምን አገኘን ወንድምዬ	What has become of you?
ምን አገኘን አለም እኮ አፈረብን	What has become of us, brother?
ሃገር እኮ አዘነብን ፈጣሪ እኮ አነባብን	The world felt ashamed of us.
እባክህን ወንድምዬ በቃ እባክህን ይብቃን	The nation fell into sorrow;
ከኢትዮጵያዊነቱ እንኳ ብንወድቅ	God wept because of us;
እባክህን ሰው እንሁን	Please, brother, let it be enough;
	Enough is enough;
	If we are falling down from being Ethiopians,
	Let us be human.
	(Let the message come to us)

The persona mentions that personhood has been severed because a parochial mindset outweighed religious teachings and has led to the ethnic divide in the country. He metaphorically questions citizens [himself included] that they have been shortsighted, blinded by parochial thinking, which does not go with the current times and practice of the world. Through analogy, he describes the citizens' narrow-mindedness as an expanse of land that is being irresponsibly shrunk to a worrisome land that suffocates dwellers. Unlike people who are deemed to follow religious ethos, the citizenry feed on hatred, led astray by ethnic divide, and fall from the height of humanity and behave like wild beasts.

እንዴት በዚህ ዘመንና አለም እይታችን መንደር	How come our view grows parochial,
ይቅር	Behind the current times and world?
እንዴት በዚች ሰፊ ሃገር በጥበት ጭንቀት እንኑር	How come we live in a narrow, worrisome land,
እንዴት በከምር ጥላቻ አይናችንን በዘር ይጋረድ	When we have a country with an expanse of land?
እንዴት ከሰብዓዊነት ተራራ ወደ አውሬነት ጎሬ እንደንደ	How come we get blinded by race, piles of hatred,
ውረድ	How come we fell down from the mountain of humanity,
	Down to the den of the beasts?
	(Let the message come to us)

This bloody experience, which has rocked the persona to his core, has thrown him into confusion. He has witnessed the horrors he could not bear. He questions what it means to be human. As described in the excerpt of the poem, the persona asserts that cruelty severs brotherhood, which is among the religious ethos. The constant occurrence of conflicts caused by heartbreaking prejudice circulating among different groups in the country, and the downfall and nonstop vicious circle of strife seem to leave the persona taken aback. The persona is baffled by their evil deeds and witnesses the generations' cruelty in putting their brothers to the dagger as unbearable and historically never-before-seen.

እንዴት ወንድም ለወንድም በካሪያ እንተራረድ	How come brothers mow down their brother with a
ምነው ወንድምዬ ምነው አገዳደልም እኮ ቅጥ አለው	dagger?
አሟሟትም እኮ ወግ አለው	Why, my brother?
	Killing has some way;
	And ways to die [Why this much cruelty?]
	(Let the message come to us)

Against the current religious deeds, the persona observes, as mentioned by the following excerpt, which interweaves historical and religious discourse, that

Ethiopia was a land where its people had the height of spiritual life, sound belief, justice, and love of sisterhood and brotherhood. He witnesses that the land was mentioned as exemplary for its respectful welcoming, even to ‘strangers’. The persona seems to look into the distant past; relates the past public good deeds, and, in contrast, showcases the present scenario as morally decaying, as stated in the following excerpt.

እኔና አንተ እኮ ማለት ቅዱሳን መጻህፍት	Don't you and I belong to a country repeatedly cited by holy
በበጎ ስሟን ደጋግመው የሚያነሷት	books?
ታላቁ ነብይ በምሉ እምነት ፍትህ ወደ ሰፈነ	The great prophet in full faith sent people, entrusting them to
ባት	Abyssinia,
ወደ አብስኒያ ሂዱ ብለው የሰው አደራ የላኩባት	A nation reigned with justice, not to our people but to
እንኳን አምሳያ ወገንን እንግዳን በፍቅር አክ	strangers as well,
ብረን	We accepted them with love and respect,
ተቀብለን ዘመድ አድርገን	Made them associates and helped them feel at home.
እንኳን ሰው ወፍ አለምዳለሁ የሚል ክቡር	“Not a person; we could even tame a bird,” as the saying goes.
ብሂል ያለን	(Let the message come to us)

Government as Social Institution: Values, Principles, Systems, and Practices

Like the religious institutions, the government, as an institution, is dictated by presumptions along ethnic lines and groupthink, as pointed out by the persona. The persona observes that the outgroup and ingroup's mind frame is constructed in discourses and universals, such as swift generalization, judgment, and stereotypes, which have been structured as dictating force. He asserts that there is structural injustice that positions some in power and others as victims. The victims, as described by the persona, have been left without options. The persona critiques the Ethiopian government apparatus as failing to meet the minimum needs of the citizenry, such as safety and security. Desperately, he states that the atrocities would not be stopped till the dawn of the day breaks, which metaphorically signifies the victims' inability to liberate themselves, and the hope to be saved by the intervention of other forces. The current substantive atrocities will go on till the cups of death and public trouble brim over -an extreme crisis.

እናንተም ግደሉ እናንተም እረዱ	You kill, you slaughter,
እናንተም ጨርሱ እናንተም ጨፍጭፉ	You mow down, you massacre,
ደመናው ተገፎ ሌልቱ እስኪነጋ	Till the cloud gets cleared,
ፅዋው እስኪሞላ መከራና ግፉ	And the day breaks up,
	The cups brim over,
	With adversity and atrocity.
	(Say, it is my concern)

The persona has pointedly mentioned those who absolutely misuse power and those who are mercilessly abused categorically. The persona describes that the atrocity is beyond the common kill count and dreadful. He positioned the killers as psychopaths and tormentors who are bent on violence and mercilessly put many to death. Ostensibly, the persona asserts that nothing stops these killers from their deadly acts and from committing mass atrocities. The government, as can be implied from the persona, could not take up the cause of the victims, nor defend citizens from perpetrators. The persona, heavily sad, reveals that there are untold adversities and atrocities; he indicates that the harrowing situation will remain unresolved till it becomes extreme. This implies that the government stands weak and cannot uphold the voices of its vulnerable citizens and bring those who commit violence and cause the defenseless to suffer. The persona, humiliated and in distress, witnesses the reign of anarchy and tyranny in the country. He asserts that the situation becomes favorable for killers to sever the social fabric which binds communities tighter and appears to be the center force of social injustice and a cause for the loss of lives, mass murder. Understood from the persona's remarks, this situation demands much attention and serious concern if justice is to be maintained and to bring the destroyer to law.

The persona's pent-up frustration finds expression in this discourse; baffled by the destroyers' acts of violence on the innocent, he witnesses that the powerless have no voice or protection. They have no one to uphold their cause and lift up their voices; in an environment of lawlessness, the killer is paradoxically positioned as the hearer of the public voice, as described by the persona.

አህያውን ፈርቶ ዳውላውን መግረፍ ሆነና ነገሩ

ሟች ዝም ስላለ ሟች ድምፅ ስላለ

የሟችን አሟሟት የገዳይን ተግባር

ለገዳይ ነገሩት

It is like whipping the sack, fearing the donkey;

For the dead becomes silent; for the dead has no voice;

They told the killer about the death of the dead,

And the deeds of the killer.

(Say, it is my concern)

The persona, as indicated in the following extract, further laments that the situation in Ethiopia is getting deteriorated; he warns that the violation of the periphery would spill over the center and that would lead to deadly consequences - an existential threat which can darken everyone's prospect; the persona in distress urges every citizen to take it as a serious concern and a lesson, or they could pay the ultimate price.

ስማማ ወዳጄ	Listen, my friend;
መች ለሱ ሆነና	It is not for him;
መች ለሷ ሆነና	Nor is it for her;
እኔስ ዋ ለራሴ	It is woe to me;
ዳሩ መሃል ሲሆን	When the periphery becomes the center,
መሃሉ ዳር ሲሆን	The center, the periphery,
ነገዋ ጨልሞ ተጨነቀች ነፍሴ	My soul worries, for its tomorrow gets dark.
	(Say, it is my concern)

Educational Institutions: Moral Values, Professional Commitment

Education is believed to cultivate critical thinking, bring social change, resolve pressing societal issues, foster a culture of peace, and enhance interdependence. It can serve to settle disputes on the basis of dialogue and common understanding, and help maintain peaceful relations among communities. Even so, the persona's reflection in the following excerpt can be a witness that education is not a guarantee.

In the current situation in Ethiopia, the persona asserts that education fails to serve society duly; rather, those who are lettered and have received education unexpectedly bring themselves into hideous deeds, corrupt the political system, and become a cause for bloodshed and the loss of many lives, leading society to a profound crisis.

እውን መማር ፊደል መቁጠር እንዲህ አስከፊ ነው	Does learning and being lettered have an ugly side, as such?
መልኩ	
እውን ለኩልነት ለፍትህ መቆም እስከዚህ ድረስ ነው	Does standing for equality and justice only measure up to this?
ልኩ	
እውን እንደሚባለው ፖለቲካ ይሉት ተግባር	As it is said, is the so-called deeds of politics rubbish to this extent?
እስከዚህ ድረስ ቆሻሻ ነው	
በስንት ንፁሃን ነፍስ ነው ወንድምዬ የምሳችን የሚ	How many innocent bloods do appease us, my brother?
ደርሰው	How many liters, how many barrels, how many gallons
ስንት ሊትር ስንት በርሜል ስንት ጋሎን ንፁህ ደም ነው	of blood?
እድፋችንን የሚያጠፋው	Would wash away our dirt? Enough, brother.
እባክህን ወንድምዬ ይብቃን	(Let the message come to us)

As indicated in the text above, the persona reflects that the outcome of the current education does not meet public expectations and that those who go through education and are lettered do not take up the issue of equality, and stand for justice. Instead, as the persona bitterly judges them, they are stained with moral filth that

does not come out easily and are deemed irresponsible persons who engage in ugly political misconduct and lead to much innocent bloodshed.

Media Institutions: Professional Integrity and Repercussions

The media, as a responsible social institution, is a public platform on which authentic and relevant information is disseminated, and public voices are heard. It is believed to serve citizens in fostering cultural values and norms. As a watchdog, the media responsibly and with integrity plays a crucial role in shaping public views and facilitating debates on relevant issues. Against this backdrop, the persona, in the following excerpt, mirrors that actors [especially those who are engaged themselves as activists] have caused damaging repercussions to the country.

ኣክቲቪስት በሚል ማእረግ ዘበናይ ካብ ተጠ	To us who are wrapped up,
ቅልለን	By the rank of an activist, a modern cloak,
ካገር በላይ ከሰው በላይ ከህግ በላይ ተቆልለን	To us who take pride in ourselves over the country, over the people,
ሰዎችን ከንሮ ነቅለን ፍትህ ጫማችን ስር	And over the law,
ጥለን	Uprooting people from their lives, putting justice under our feet;
በሃገር ላይ ፍቅር መግደል	It's easy stuff for us,
ተስፋ መግደል ደስታ መግደል ሰላም መግደል	To cause hope to perish, and kill love, happiness, and peace.
እንደ ውሃ ጥም ለቀለለን	(Let the message come to us)

The lines in the above text uncover the levels of unethical engagement in spreading misleading information that can seriously damage the citizens' sense of hope, peace, and happiness. The persona exposes that activists are unethical; their misdeeds, as stated in the text, uproot people's means of living, put justice underfoot, and undermine law and order. The persona exposes the activists' tragic flaw and failure to maintain integrity when disseminating information.

The elites, like the activists, feed the media with labeling, fueling a deep social divide, causing social ills that negatively affect individuals' lives and the social and political systems. Such views are reflected in the ensuing text:

የዚህ ሰፈር ኤሊቶች የዚያ ሰፈር ኤሊቶች እየተባባልን	The elites of this place, the elites of that place,
በህዝብ ስም እየማልን በወገን ስም እየማልን	We label each other,
ሀገር ኣቃጥለን ለምንምቅ	In the name of the public, we vow, and of a group, we vow,
በናቶች ሃዘን ሰቆቃ በኣባቶች እንባ ለምንስቅ	And warm ourselves, setting the country on fire.
	To us, who laugh at mothers' sorrow and lamentation,
	And tears of fathers.
	(Let the message come to us)

The persona in the above excerpt seems to assert that groupthink prevails over independent and rational thoughts; dictated by a political line that favors relationships along linguistic and ethnic lines, the groupthink propagates stubborn ethnic issues, drives divisive views about outgroups, influence public opinion and immorally drag groups into rigid ethnic frame of mind, and make mutual trust, coexistence, interdependence, and free voice impossible or challenging to achieve.

Discussion

This study scrutinizes the currency of social institutions in contemporary Amharic poems recited on YouTube by Getnet Enyew. It examines the currency of family, religion, government, education, and media in light of the public interest in Ethiopia.

Thus, it finds out that the family, as an essential unit of societies, can play a crucial role in instructing its members with the age-old social values that can help maintain social coherence and in shaping them to take due responsibilities and hand them off to siblings, establishing continuity. Likewise, Arora (1) states that family constituents are unified by attachment, collaboration, and shared love, with arranged responsibilities that enable communal steadiness. Similarly, according to Zeybek and Kasap (306), the family takes the responsibility for nurturing children with shared love, due regard, and intimate attachment. The family makes sure that members of the family care for each other and live in harmony. As indicated by Girma (29), in Ethiopia, heads of households, including grandparents, were given due regard by members of the family as parents and grandparents were taken to be providers of the living, and the basis for getting knowledge, and who they are.

However, given the current condition of Ethiopia, the poems witness that family members lack closeness and unity. The father is positioned in pleading with the child, and the child is located in making excuses for his/her failure and insincerely covering his/her weakness. Likewise, Ganiyeva (1579) concludes that the family as an institution is facing a crisis itself. Family ties are declining, and the family has been strained by the current cultural practices, the economic condition, schooling, health issues, and the dissemination of information. Ganiveva further suggested that morals altogether are eroded, and the family as an institution is deteriorating. Similarly, in Ethiopia, as reflected by Girma (29), the family ethos that holds family members to live in peace has been put to the test. Children begin to lose the sense of obedience and respect for their family heads these days. Unlike the findings from Girma, this study finds that the father, as a parent, is distant and sensitive about his self-worth over the child's condition.

As with family, religion as a social institution could not meet public

expectations. Østebø (723) acknowledges that there are religious conflicts in Ethiopia, and these conflicts are entwined with ethnic divide, both reinforcing social divisions. Still, this current study finds that religious followers have been located as rebelling against God, making their bodies the host of a plot and deceit, overwhelming themselves with hatred, and the intent of grudge and revenge, making their minds and hearts a seat of mischief and insidiousness. This can show that religious institutions lack the commitment to give religious teachings that are considered vital to undergird society's shared ways of life. As the poems witness, followers are led astray and have become dishonest to God, showing gross negligence for their country.

Furthermore, the government, as a social institution, is considered a seat of structural injustice that positions some in power and others as victims. The victims are positioned to have been left without options. In light of this, the government apparatus is failing to meet the minimum needs of the citizenry, such as safety and security. As a result, people are exposed to substantive atrocities and an extreme crisis, and victims are unable to liberate themselves and maintain their peaceful coexistence. In line with this, as indicated by Girma (31), even though the system of governance is purported to play its role in maintaining the family ethos and ensuring societal ties, the government in Ethiopia has begun to lose its power to regulate matters and maintain stability. The government is profoundly affected by deeply-seated corrupt systems and mismanagement. Likewise, Asefa (3) asserts that "at the center of the institutional failure in Ethiopia is the historic problem of governance, which has been characterized by a concentration of power among a few elites, engaged in arbitrary use of power over the silent majority of the population."

Like the government, education could not play its crucial role; it fails to shape informed individuals who can influence public opinion and shape citizens with commitment and integrity. Unexpectedly, those who are considered educated are thought to have little to no contribution to national sensibility. Rather, they are positioned in the discursive space as bringing themselves into misdeeds and political misconduct that can lead followers astray and stir up violence and bloodshed, leading communities to a harrowing crisis. In light of this, Worku (63) notes that the system of education in Ethiopia is largely knowledge-focused, failing to adequately address the concerns of preparing the citizenry's moral foundation and society's pressing social and ethical needs.

The media, as a social institution, is no different from the others. Irrespective of given media ethics, the activists and elites take media outlets as a platform to engage in labeling, fueling a deep social divide, and causing social ills that negatively

affect citizens' lives. Media outlets are deemed as a landscape for social forces that propagate unethical engagements in spreading misleading information that can seriously damage the citizens' sense of hope, peace, and happiness, putting justice underfoot, and undermining law and order. Driven by linguistic and ethnic lines, these media outlets propagate groupthink, stubborn ethnic issues, and divisive views about outgroups; they influence public opinion and immorally drag groups into a rigid ethnic frame of mind, making mutual trust, coexistence, interdependence, and free voice impossible.

In light of this, Moges and Terje (24) reported that the media landscape in Ethiopia, including the state media, has gone off the established media ethics and become a landscape for political manipulation, ethnic polarization, and propagation of biases about religious issues and conflicts, which led to losses of lives, displacement, and destruction of buildings. Correspondingly, Adamu (19) points out that social media, given its positive value in raising social consciousness, has become a landscape to propagate social flaws through unfounded information, false narratives, personal biases, hate speeches, and ethnic-motivated information that can instigate ethnic violence and dangerously affect communities' stability. Likewise, Dessie et al. (22) delineated that community-based private media (which lack the guidance of media laws to set expected media conduct, trustworthy and autonomous civic organizations, and political willpower to ensure social order in the country) have severed the interconnection of ethnic communities and played a significant negative role in destabilizing the country and in fueling violence. According to these authors, such unethical media practices have been supported by people in government positions.

Conclusion

This study investigates the currency of social institutions in contemporary Amharic poems recited on YouTube by Getnet Enyew. Through exploring these poems, this study has elucidated the role of social institutions within the communities. In light of this, the study finds that the family, as a social institution, is viewed to play an essential part in guiding members with time-tested social values that can maintain healthy communal solidarity; it has a bearing on them to take expected responsibilities. The study showcases that such values have been handed down to siblings, setting up persistence. Even so, in light of the current condition of Ethiopia, the poems witness that the family as an institution lacks the discursive power to maintain closeness and unity among members. The father, though culturally taken as symbolic power, is positioned in the discursive space as a pleading agent to

the child. Within the discursive landscape, the father is portrayed as distant and very sensitive about his self-worth over the child's condition. Likewise, children are labeled feeble and marked as failures, who insincerely cover their weaknesses with excuses. As with family, religion is found to lack the public expectations. It has been deemed to lose its power in instructing and guarding its followers from rebellion against God. Followers are portrayed as a seat for plot and deceit, hatred, and the intent of grudge and revenge, making their minds and hearts a seat of mischief and insidiousness. It has been described as lacking in the commitment to undergird society's shared ways of life. Equally, the government is considered a seat of structural injustice, positioning victims without options, exposing them to substantive atrocities, and an extreme crisis, and failing to meet the minimum needs of the citizenry, such as safety, security, and peaceful coexistence. As in the government, education is found to lack its instructional power in shaping individuals who can positively influence public opinion and the citizenry's commitment, integrity, and national sensibility. Even the educated are portrayed as having political misconduct that can stir up violence and bloodshed. The media is no different from the other social institutions; media outlets serve as a platform for labeling, fueling a deep social divide, and causing social ills that negatively affect citizens' lives. They propagate unethical and misleading information that can seriously damage the citizens' sense of hope, peace, and happiness.

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