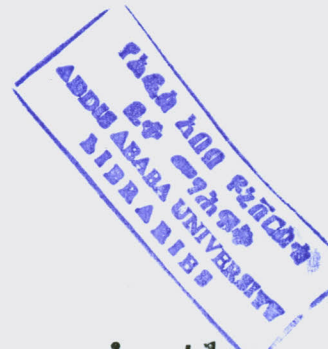


**Addis Ababa University**  
**Institute of Language Studies**  
**Department of Foreign Languages and Literature**



**Guji-Oromo Lyric Folk Poems in the  
Changing Social Climate**

**Ashenafi Belay**

**June, 2009**

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**By  
Ashenafi Belay**



**A Thesis Presented to the Department of Foreign  
Languages and Literature**

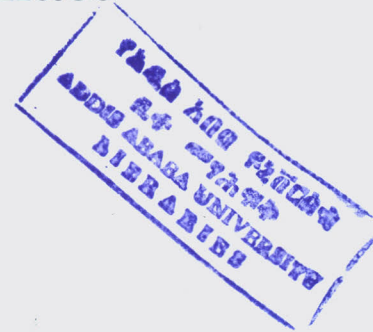
**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in Literature**

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# List of Abbreviations and Definition of Operational Terms

## A. Abbreviations

ACTB- Abbayyaa Woreda Culture and Tourism Bureau

EPRP - Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party

EPRDF - Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Party

G- geerarsa

Info. – Informant

OCTB- Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau

OLF- Oromo Liberation Front

Q- qeexala

W- weedduu

## B. Definition of Operational Terms

**Context** – the general physical and emotional setting at which recitations are undertaken together with the participants

**Lyric** – folk poetry that often has musical quality and expresses personal emotion or thought

**Performance**- recital or enactment of folk poems at every occasion by an individual or a group of individuals

**Transformation**- the process of alteration or incorporation of new items in folk poems resulting in the change of the original theme or context of performance

**Variation** – trends of content transformation or the shift in theme of folk poems due to the various inducing socio-cultural and historical realities

## Definition of Vernacular Terms

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>ardaa-</i>                 | field, land   |
| <i>areera-</i>                | buttermilk  |
| <i>arraffaa-</i>              | feast ceremony of abundance conducted once a year in the Spring season    |
| <i>ayyaana-</i>               | sacred force, destiny   |
| <i>baallii-</i>               | gadaa class   |
| <i>baatii-</i>                | new moon  |
| <i>baddaa-</i>                | forest  |
| <i>bantii-</i>                | tonsure worn by unmarried girls   |
| <i>battal'aa-</i>             | a head ornament decorated with cowries                                    |
| <i>booka-</i>                 | mead prepared for ceremonies  |
| <i>buttaa-</i>                | a war used to be waged by the <i>Kuusaa</i> grade class every eight years |
| <i>dannaba-</i>               | cattle taken by force   |
| <i>dheeda-</i>                | grazing fields, pastoralist Guji group                                    |
| <i>dinka-</i>                 | store room  |
| <i>falata-</i>                | a person performing sacrifices  |
| <i>faluu-</i>                 | performing ritual sacrifices  |
| <i>faroo/kaayyoo-</i>         | divine providence   |
| <i>farra-</i>                 | bad omen  |
| <i>finca-</i>                 | head ornament worn by an unmarried girl                                   |
| <i>girja-</i>                 | according to oral traditions, the origin of Guji                          |
| <i>gola-</i>                  | pen for horses  |
| <i>goobana-</i>               | full moon   |
| <i>guduruu-</i>               | haircut worn by small children  |
| <i>gujo-</i>                  | the father of the four clans of Guji (Alabdu, Hoku, Mati, Uraga)          |
| <i>hanfala-</i>               | leather belt worn by women  |
| <i>hirbora-</i>               | ivory ring worn on the right arm of a hero                                |
| <i>jila-</i>                  | feast, ceremony   |
| <i>Kilaashii-</i>             | a shortened form of Kalashnikov   |
| <i>kudha-</i>                 | a bull slaughtered on the ceremony of heroic recitation of killers        |
| <i>maqabaasaal moggaasaa-</i> | name giving, ceremony of introduction to <i>qarre</i> grade               |
| <i>mi'ee-</i>                 | fresh milk  |
| <i>midda-</i>                 | trophy  |
| <i>qaalluu -</i>              | spiritual chief   |
| <i>qayya-</i>                 | the wood which the Guji women use to smoke their legs                     |
| <i>quttoo-</i>                | ornamental head dress made of leather strings worn by the bride           |
| <i>shuumii -</i>              | appointee/ governor of a village  |
| <i>silga-</i>                 | milk collected from cows as soon as they give birth                       |
| <i>tolfannoo-</i>             | ritual performance done to correct bad omen                               |
| <i>ulee-</i>                  | stick, symbol of governance   |

# Pronunciation Key

The following brief guide is given to minimize the problem of pronunciation when reading *Afaan* Oromo expressions. Both the vowel sounds and consonant sounds are represented with some examples in all their variations: short and long vowels, gemination in consonants and the diagraphic representations of consonants in *Afaan* Oromo are indicated.

## Vowels

a – short – pronounced as /a/ as in *laga* /laga/ = river

aa – long – pronounced as /a:/ as in *laagaa* /la:ga/ = throat

e – short – pronounced as /ɛ/ as in *ergaa* /ɛrga:/ = message

ee – long – pronounced as /ɛ:/ as in *weedduu* /we:ddu:/ = praise song

i – short – pronounced as /i/ as in *ilkaan* /ɪlka:n/ = tooth

ii – long – pronounced as /i:/ as in *shiifa* /ši:fa/ = sword

o – short – pronounced as /o/ as in *orma* /orma/ = alien

oo – long – pronounced as /o:/ as in *loon* /lo:n/ = cattle

u – short – pronounced as /u/ as in *ulee* /ulɛ:/ = stick

uu – long – pronounced as /u:/ as in *duula* /du:la/ = warfare

→ Long vowels are doubled orthographically

## Consonants

c— pronounced as /c'/ as in *cooma* /c'o:ma/ = fat

q— pronounced as /k'/ as in *qaama* /'k'a:ma/ = body

x— pronounced as /t'/ as in *xaarii* /'t'a:ri:/ = effort

ch— pronounced as /č/ as in *bakkalcha* /ba'kkalča/ → full moon

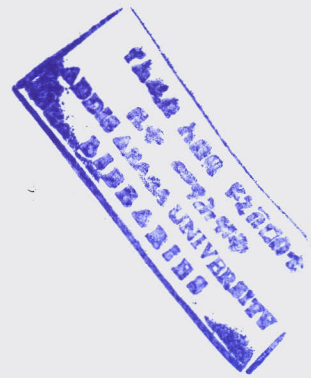
dh— pronounced as /d'/ as in *hidhaa* /hid'a/ = prison

ny— pronounced as /ñ/ as in *nyaata* /'ña:ta/ → food

ph— pronounced as /p'/ as in *naapha* /'ña:p'a/ → enemy

sh— pronounced as /š/ as in *shakkii* /'šakki:/ → doubt

→ When doubled, consonants are highly stressed



## Abstract

The primary purpose of this thesis is to analyze major transformation features of the Guji Oromo folk poetry (*weedduu*, *qeexala* and *geerarsa*) i.e. investigating how the folk poems respond to the various social factors which have left their imprints in one way or another. The contextual study approach is employed to undertake the investigation. This approach focuses on looking at the folk poems through the glass of the dynamic socio-cultural and historical realities which are the fertile grounds for the mushrooming of the folk poems. Through it the researcher attempted to explore the change and continuity in the main concerns and the performance contexts of the oral poems. To this end, intensive collection of the poems together with their contextual explanations has been undertaken through field work. Intensive recordings of the poems, informal interview and focus group discussions were used as the main tools to collect the data from the Guji informants in *Abbayyaa* woreda. The data was transcribed, translated into English and finally analyzed qualitatively. The descriptive analysis of the folk poems: *weedduu*, *qeexala* and *geerarsa*, is presented in the third chapter and the major transformation features of these genres are presented in the fourth chapter.

The thesis provides the thematic variations observed in the folk poems across the history of the Guji, the change and continuities in the context of their performance and the main inducing social factors for the changes. The field work coupled with the library research has helped the researcher to arrive at some conclusions regarding the three genres. The lyric folk poems of the Guji, particularly, the *geerarsa*, *qeexala* and *weedduu* have undergone a significant transformation in content and context of performance. The three genres portray the life experiences of the society at different points in time. The investigation indicates that some of the major factors which have led to such transformation include the conquest of the Guji by forces of Menelik coupled with the declining of the *gadaa* system, the introduction and spread of Christianity, and the forces of modernity which is championed by the youth.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to show the major transformation features of the folk poetry of the Guji Oromo in the changing socio-cultural climate. The thesis is divided into five chapters. This introductory chapter deals with the parts which highlight the focus and organization of the paper: that is, statement of the problem, objective, significance, scope, limitation and methodology of the study. Description of the major socio-cultural realities of the people on whom the study focuses is also provided.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Oral poetry has been important means of social articulation throughout the history of the Oromo people (Baxter Paul, in Van de, Loo 1993). This scholar indicates the predominance of the genre among the nation by saying "... the principal modes of prayers and symbolic expressions of the Oromo are in Oral poetry" (ibid: iii). Contrary to this fact, the folk poetry of this nation seems to have been given little attention by literary scholars as there are few studies conducted on them. Besides, the few studies conducted in this area seem to pin down the oral literature of the nation to a dull preservation of the nostalgic past, or overlook the dynamic nature of the folk literature by focusing on its structural classification. The study at hand was initiated by such an overlook paid to the crucial aspect of the study of oral literature, and tries to fill the gap by focusing on the lyric folk poetry of the Guji.

In his stay with the society as a student, the researcher could observe that oral poetry predominates in the daily life of the Guji. His observation of some of the changes during his stay made him believe that the folk poems deserve an up-to-date investigation, not just as a dry-as-dust hobby for antiquity, as the social atmosphere in which they are recited never remains the same. The researcher, then, found it imperative to investigate the transformation of the lyric folk poems of the Guji Oromo through a contextual approach which views the poems as dynamic improvisations induced by the ever changing social climate rather than as a fixed story of antiquity. The study tries to elucidate the thematic variations and major transformations in the

context of the Guji Oromo lyric folk poem performances and in doing so attempts were made to answer the following questions:

1. How are the Guji-Oromo lyric folk poems related to the dynamic socio-cultural contexts?
2. What changes or transformation have they undergone? (*Content / performance context*)
3. What are the inducing social forces leading to their transformation?

## **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is investigating the transformation of the lyric folk poems of the Guji Oromo through contextual approach. It focuses on assessing the major features of the three genres of Guji-Oromo folk poems: *weedduu*, *qeexala* and *geerarsa*, and elucidating the transformation in content and context of performance of the poems.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- identifying the thematic variation (trends of transformation in content) of the folk poems
- examining the change and continuity in the contexts of their performance
- identifying the social forces underlying the transformation of the folk poems
- assessing the extent to which they portray the dynamic social realities of the society
- explicating the prominent literary devices employed in the poems

## **1.3. Significance of the Study**

A nation's folk literature which is the sum total of the product of many individuals in the society is the reflection of that people's collective reality (Wa Thiong'o, 1997:4). So, a contextual investigation of the oral literature of a society helps to understand the thoughts, beliefs, problems, fears, wishes and hopes of its members (Boswell, 1962; Dundes, 1965). The study of Guji-Oromo folk poetry, which is part of the oral literature of the society, would be significant for it may serve the stated purpose. It may shade light on the people's constantly changing values, current socio-cultural problems and prevalent moral and cultural codes. As the study focuses on explaining the aesthetic categories of Oromo verbal art from a broader socio-historical perspective, it is important for preserving and enhancing social, cultural, and moral

riches, which empower the people to have a greater control over lives. Since it traces the changes and continuity in the main concerns of the poems, the study provides the trends of shift in the culture of the society. In doing so it helps the younger generation to see their place in the constantly changing social situation.

#### **1.4. Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study does not take into consideration other forms of oral literature. It is delimited to the investigation of lyric folk poetry of one branch of the Oromo called Guji, which inhabit the southern part of Ethiopia. As pointed out earlier, the Guji, like their neighbors, the Borana, have reserved their tradition under the umbrella of the *gadaa* system which was deeply interwoven with the spiritual and secular world of the Guji community (Hinnant, 1977).

The primary concern of the study is elucidating the transformation in content and context of performance of the folk poems. In doing so, the researcher focused only on three genres of the folk poems of the Guji: *Qeexala*, *Weedduu* and *Geerarsa*. Though there are other genres in the folk poems of the society, the study is delimited to the three dominant and versatile genres listed above. Beyond the concern with the transformation in the content and context of performance of the poems, the study also deals with some of the literary features dominantly observed in the poems and with the social factors behind the change or continuity seen in them. The oral poems for the study are collected from the Guji people living in *Abbayyaa* woreda of the Borana zone.

While conducting the research, particularly during data collection, the researcher came across some problems. One of the problems was the difficulty of obtaining several occasions in which the folk poems are often recited. This is due to the fact that the contexts at which they are performed are no more in place, especially for the *geerarsa* and *qeexala* genre. The researcher tried to compensate this limitation by asking the informants the detailed description of the performance to reconstruct the original contexts. It was also due to the financial constraint that the period of data collection was limited to the time indicated. As a result of this, the researcher may not feel the collection is exhaustive.



## 1.5. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

### 1.5.1. Theoretical Framework

According to Finnegan (1992:177), so far as instances of oral tradition or verbal arts are considered forms of literature, "they can be approached through any, perhaps all, of the established methods of literary analysis". This gives the analyst access to a host of possible approaches. The study of the various genres of oral literature has been affected by the different theoretical approaches to folklore which forward their own particular points of focus.

Dorson (1972) discusses twelve approaches/methods to the study of verbal arts in his book, *Folklore and Folk life*. He attempts to show the guiding intellectual and conceptual frameworks of the scholars propagating the principles of the theories. These theories or methods, according to Dorson, present their own theoretical points of view on how to approach the study of folklore. As the current paper is dominantly following two of the approaches, the researcher restricted the review of this section to 'Contextual' and 'Functional' approaches. This however does not mean that the paper ignores the other theories as they could be used as the need arises in the analysis of the folk poems.

Functional approach is concerned with "the role played by folklore in a given culture" (Dorson, 1972:20). This scholar indicates that the question at the heart of this approach is "How does folklore function in the culture?"(ibid). Scholars in the field of folklore like Franz Boas, his student Ruth Benedict and William Bascom are the main proponents of this approach. Dorson points out that the functional approach has been clearly articulated by Bascom who considers "verbal arts" as "the creative compositions of a functioning society, dynamic not static, integrated not isolated, central not peripheral components of the culture" (P-21). So, in Bascom's view oral literature which is part of the verbal arts is "creative" in that there are improvisations to it by the performers which are still 'functioning' (it is not a concern with an outmoded and forgotten society). He also indicates the dynamic nature of the folklore which is the main concern of the paper at hand. Furthermore, Bascom indicates that folklore (verbal art) is an all encompassing activity which dwells at the heart of a certain culture. He draws attention to the multifarious roles of verbal arts. He says "Proverbs help settle legal decisions, riddles

sharpen wits, myths validate conduct, and satirical songs release pent-up hostilities” (P-21). So, he recommends a due concern both for the search of ‘context’ and ‘text’-which is the basic tenet of the functional approach. In a nutshell what the functional approach to the study of folklore strives for is extrapolating the uses/functions of folklore items (proverbs, narratives, folk poems, etc.) in the socio-cultural situation of their performance.

Contextual approach is similar to functional approach in that it gives a strong emphasis on the situation of folklore performance. Dorson says about proponents of this approach: “They object strenuously to the text being extrapolated from its context in language, behaviour, communication, expression and performance, overlapping terms they continually employ” (P-45). This is what Okpewho refers to as “presenting a mutilated bit of reality” in his reference to separating a text from the context of its performance. The main proponents of this approach are Roger Abrahams, Dan Ben Amos, Alan Dundes, Robert Georges, and Kenneth Goldstein (P-45). What distinguishes this approach from others including the functional approach is the concern of the folklorists in this approach with the issue that “the folklore concept applies not to a text but an event in time in which a tradition is performed or communicated” (P-45). So, they view the folklore performance as a communicative event. In this approach, folklore actions are distinguished from other modes of social interaction by “contextual conversations” of time, place, and company. It demands subordinating texts and annotations to close analyses of group dynamics and psycho-cultural relationships and demands field work to be a more elaborate enterprise.

In this study, the researcher combines the above two methods in his study, but recognizes that all are not mutually exclusive and an eclectic folklorist may find all of them useful at one time or another. The methods employed in the study are then derived from the above two approaches to the study of oral literature. The methods and procedures of the study employed are discussed in the following section.

### **1.5.2. Methodology**

The method employed in this study includes both library work and field research. In this section, the description of both methods is briefly presented as follows.

### **1.5.2.1. Library Work**

The library work was used as a pre-field work preparation. McDonald emphasizes that library research is the starting point of field work saying "... systematic field work begins at desk, in the library and the archives" (cited in Dorson, 1972:409) The library research undertaken in this study involved assessing previous studies conducted on the Oromo oral poetry in general and the Guji Oromo folk poems in particular. It has been used as a spring board to undertake the field work. The library research also involved assessing recorded materials in archives on the folk poems of the Guji. To this end, the researcher contacted both the Oromia and Guji Culture and Tourism Bureau and obtained some tape recordings which have been included in the analysis of the study presented in chapters three and four.

### **1.5.2.2. Field Research**

#### **1.5.2.2.1. Nature of the Data and Subjects of the study**

Three methods of data collection are employed in this study. These are: intensive recording of the folk poems, informal interviews and focus group discussion.

According to Goldstein (1965:2) any approach to the study of folklore must begin with the materials of folklore. These materials of folklore are the data obtained through field work collection. Accordingly, the investigation in this study is based on the data collected through field work. The data sources for the investigation in this study are selected inhabitants of the Guji in *Abbayya* woreda. The area was preferred for the very reason that the researcher had contacts with them as a student, and the fact that the collection of the folk poems of the *Alabduu* Guji inhabiting the area had not been carried out previously. As the study tries to address the change and continuity of issues in the folk poems, the data are both the antiquarian and contemporary in nature. To obtain the data, informants were drawn from different age groups: that is, both the elders, who are thought to be the reservoirs of oral tradition among the Oromo, and the youths, are included. Purposive sampling technique was applied in selecting key informants among the elders of the woreda based on the social roles they play in the community. Few students from the preparatory class have also been included as the sources of

information for this study to check the nature of the transmission of the folk poems across generation.

As the study of the oral literature is dependent on recording, the researcher collected the folk poems mostly through tape recording. The poems are collected from individuals very well known among the society in reciting the poems. Interviews with selected elders and preparatory class students were conducted to obtain the socio-cultural and historical contexts of the poems and their place in the currently changing world. As a single context of performance cannot show the transformation features of the folk poems, it has become essential to conduct interview and focus group discussions to obtain the situation of the past performance. The focus group discussion helped a lot in raising issues regarding the current status of the performance of the folk poems, and in understanding the change and continuity.

#### **1.5.2.2.2. Procedure of Data Collection**

The collection of first-hand data has been undertaken in two phases of field work among the Guji people of the *Abbayyaa* woreda in the Borana zone. The first phase was a preliminary survey conducted last summer for two weeks (July 17—29, 2008). During the first stage, focus has been made on carrying out a preliminary field survey, specifically gathering base line information, searching for available documents, getting to know individuals who would play important roles in arranging and facilitating contacts with key informants among the society. The researcher introduced himself to the head of the woreda's Culture and Tourism Bureau (ACTB) and other local government employees and authorities. It was through the head of the office of Culture and Tourism Bureau of the woreda, Ato Mekonen Woldeyesus that the researcher contacted the administrator of the woreda Ato Waaqayyoo Halakee who approved the survey to be conducted.

After securing the permit, the researcher discussed with the head of the ACTB on how to meet some elders from the society and was provided with lists of individuals who are well known for their recitation of the folk poems. Having the lists, he began to establish rapport with the local people through explaining the purposes of the survey. The researcher was very fortunate to meet Girma Dambi, a resident of Samaro village whom he met through the help of children tending

cattle in the fields of Samaro. Girma played a considerable role in providing explanations about the overall situation of performance of the Guji folk poems of the *Abbayya* woreda and establishing a rapport with the local people and the elders who were curious about a stranger. Because of his assistance, the researcher could record many poems from him and the elders like Boonayyaa Galgalee and his young friends, Abebe and Tamirat who were also well versed in reciting folk poems.

The second and major part of the field work was carried out for a month, from 21 January to 30 February 2009. During this time, the researcher had a letter from the ILS (Institute of Language Studies, AAU) and the office of Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau, a digital camera to take pictures, a tape recorder, cassette and writing pad together with all the accommodation. As he did in the preliminary survey stage, the researcher first went to ACTB office and discussed the particular focus of the field work and on the three genres of folk poems in focus. He found Ato Mekonen very cooperative and resourceful with this regard. The head of the office was willing to allow the researcher use every help the office could offer including using cars for the long trips to the remote part of the woreda, such as *Foggee*, *Shaaraa* and *Waxambaa*. The researcher took this opportunity to ask Mr. Mekonen about arranging pre-data collection discussion sessions with the local elders and found him willing to go to the elders' house to inform them about the discussion. Six elders were contacted and briefed about the purpose of the study and the objective of the discussion and an appointment was arranged for the next day, January 23, 2009.

The discussion with these elders was held at the compound of woreda's police station because Mekonen found it favourable. It started at 10:00am in the morning and continued up to 1:00 pm. The discussion started with the blessings of three elders Ayyaanoo Halakee, Gammade Areeroo and Taaraa Dachee; it focused on the natures and contextual features of the Guji Oromo oral poetry. The researcher raised several questions regarding the 'what' of each of the three genres, their performance context, transmission and transformation of the folk poems. He could draw a great deal of information about the above issues including some verse lines which are recited by some of the elders in the middle of the discussion to demonstrate the contextual explanation. The elders articulated the historical realities with regard to the three genres and explained the

gaps created in the performance of the folk poems due to the changes in the socio-cultural context of the society. Though they were free to talk about the *weedduu* genre, which is free of any legal restriction, the elders were very reserved when discussing on the *geerarsa* and *qeexala* poems. They even refused at first to talk about them as they said it is legally forbidden to recite the *geerarsa* genre especially. As Mr. Mekonen, the head of ACTB was in attendance on the spot, they were able to forward critical information regarding the genres by distancing themselves from the realities in the past as the things are not happening today. All the discussion points raised and the recitations obtained from the elders at the discussion session were recorded and some pictures were taken.

The pre-collection discussion helped the researcher to frame the main issues that need deep investigation in his later endeavour of collecting relevant data as it provided the sensitive issues the researcher needs to take into consideration. On the following days, the researcher started taking trips to the villages like *Samaro* (a 45 minutes walk on foot from Dilla town) to collect the data. After staying in *Samaro* for four days with Girma (my local assistant) and collecting the folk poems together with some of the explanations, the researcher contacted the woreda administration office to use car for the trip to the remote part of the woreda. With the permission obtained the researcher took the trip to *Foggee* with Mekonen on the next day (24-01-2009) to collect the folk poems and interview the elders of six villages on our way: he stayed there for three weeks and collected many poems.

### **1.5.3. Transcription Translation and Analysis**

All the data gathered through tape recording were transcribed to written form immediately after the collection was over. On some tapes the whole information was transcribed. On the other tapes, only the required elements were transcribed and written in *Afaan Oromo* on note pads together with the description of the context and the names of the subjects. The transcribed data were translated into English.

As the folk poems originate from the cultural elements, most of them are laden with cultural words which have no equivalent terms in English. For such expressions, the translation is given by providing the description of the terms by including the term in the translated version of the

poems. The appropriate approach to translation of metaphorical and cultural texts, as Newmark (1982:50) indicates, is communicative translation. This is the approach in which the translated version is made communicative to the reader. It gives an opportunity for the translator to make the texts smoother, lighter and easier to understand. Attempts have been made to employ such techniques in order to reveal the themes of the poems. The poems are translated from the original language, *Afaan Oromo*, to English in a way that they give an image or tell something about the poems to the reader in English. Though it may be easier for the speakers of the original language to grasp the translated version, the researcher admits that he has not avoided all the problems as once a certain poem is translated to a target language it loses its flavour.

After carrying out the translation, the researcher embarked on the analysis. As it is difficult to include all the collected poems in the analysis, sample poems are selected and discussed. The most relevant method of data analysis employed in this study is the qualitative method. This method employs the collection, classification and analysis of oral texts. The collection of 210 Guji lyric folk poems was made possible by uses of the tape recording and writings from personal notes whenever informants preferred to recite the poetry very slowly from their memories, and recollections.

In doing so, the careful selection of the already collected and classified poems was made along with the removal of unnecessary repetitions and ambiguities. In the analysis of the final section of the poems, the researcher preferred to focus on content rather than form. This is due to the researcher's prime interest in understanding the social functions of the Guji oral poems in expressing the society's feelings, attitude, opinion, world outlook, etc. However, an attempt was also made to consider some of the major features and characteristics of oral poetry, which of course affect in one way or another the thematic investigation.

## **1.6. Socio-cultural and Historical Background**

Folkloric forms of a society emerge from the socio-cultural setting of the society. As knowledge of the socio-cultural realities of Guji people helps to accelerate better understanding of their folk poems, it is important to present it in a comprehensive way as follows.

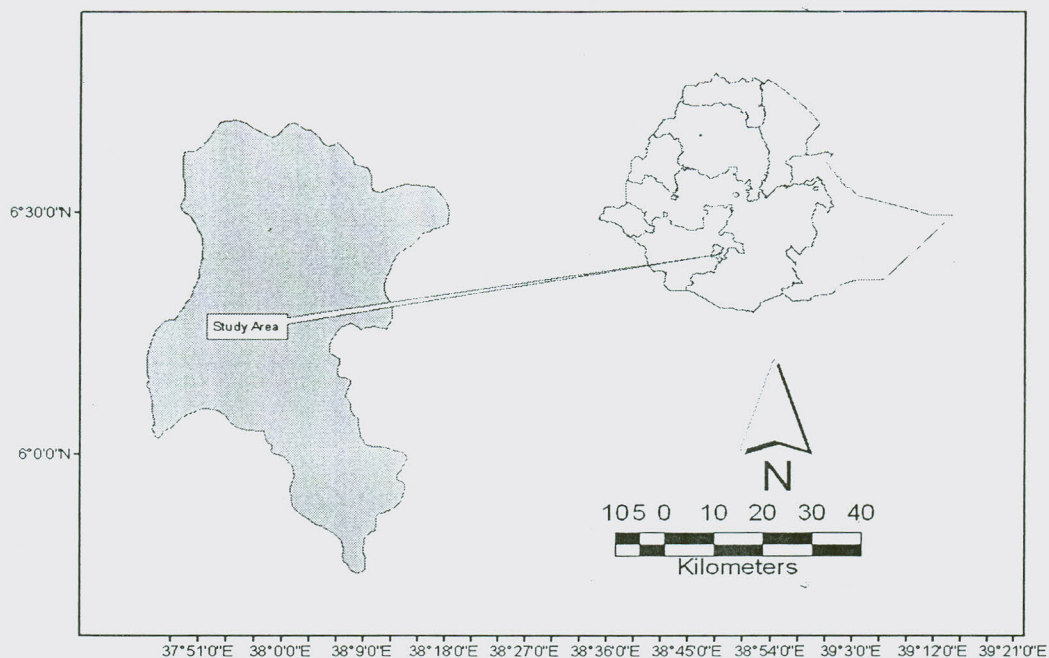
### 1.6.1. The Guji People and Their Physical Setting

The Guji are one of the Oromo ethnic groups who inhabit predominantly today's Borana and Guji administrative zones in Southern Ethiopia. They speak *Afaan Oromo*, one of the most widely spoken languages in Ethiopia, which belongs to the Eastern Cushitic language family (Bender 1976; Tadesse 1995). The Guji land is surrounded by various ethnic groups with whom they had both peaceful and hostile relations (see Map-2 below). In the South, they are bordered by Borana Oromo, in the Southwest by the *Burji*, *Koyra* and *Gamo*; in the East by the *Arussi* Oromo, and in the North by the *Gedeo*, *Sidama* and *Wolaita* ethnic groups (Assebe Regassa 2007). They had a long history of warfare with these ethnic groups (ibid).

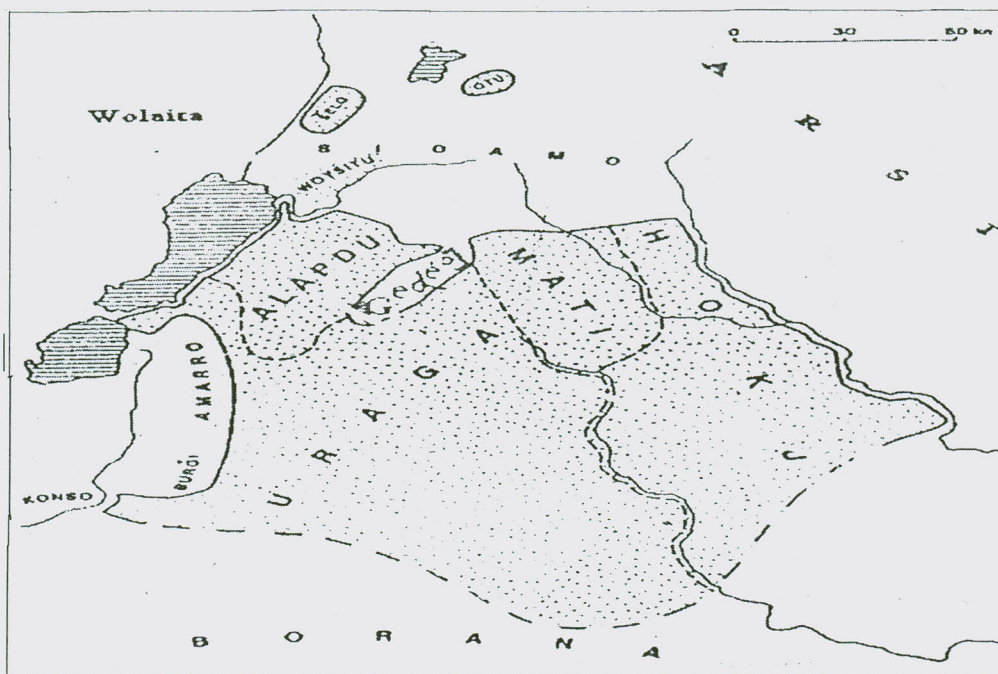
The Guji, unlike the other Oromo groups, are not of a single entity. They rather form a confederation of four independent, but mutually interrelated groups known as *Uruga*, *Mati*, *Hoku* and *Alabdu* (Assebe 2007; Hinnat 1977). Haberland (1963) divided these groups into two based on their physical location as the Northern Guji-*Alabdu* and the Southern Guji-consisting of the three groups-*Uruga*, *Hoku* and *Mati* (cited in Van de Loo 1991). Haberland magnifies the difference in culture between his two divisions of the confederacy saying they "differ markedly in culture". Other scholars like Hinnat (1977), Van de Loo (1991) and Tadesse (1995), who have conducted research on the Guji, however, maintain that there is not as such magnified difference in culture among these groups though some variations are admitted. This implies that despite their autonomy, in their respective territories and right of exercising *Gadaa* under their own leaders, each of the components of the confederation is mutually interdependent.

The *Alabdu* Guji, where this research is undertaken, is in turn a confederacy of two independent groups called *Haalo* and *Weessituu*. Some scholars tend to exclude the *Alabdu* from the major divisions of the Guji confederation. Based on oral traditions, *Dhadacha* for instance, has particularly indicated that "a Guji founding father named *Gujo* is said to have settled with his three children- *Uruga*, *Mati* and *Hoku* at a place named *Girja* moving eastward from *Adola*" (OCTB, 2006:192). Tadesse Beriso (1995) also writes, "The Guji form a confederation of *three* independent, but closely related groups known as *Uruga*, *Mati* and *Hoku*". Other scholars such as Hinnat (1977) and Van de Loo (1991), however, present them as part of the main division.

Map-1 Location of the Study Area



Map 2. Settlement Area of the Guji Oromo



Source: Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau (2006)

## 1.6.2. Forms of Social Organization: Secular and Spiritual

### 1.6.2.1 The *Gadaa* System of the Guji

As common with other Oromo groups, the Guji are organized under the *gadaa* system (Asmarom 1973; Hinnat 1977; Van de Loo 1991). These scholars maintain that the *gadaa* system is a very comprehensive institution of the Oromo without which the people cannot be understood fully. As the term *gadaa* represents so many varied concepts, defining it precisely is a difficult endeavor (Mohammed, 1990). Asmarom (1973), who made a thorough study on the *gadaa* of Borana, stresses the difficulty of defining it saying: "The term *Gadaa* cannot be given a univocal interpretation. It stands for several related ideas." The different definitions reflect the different attributes of the system and one definition cannot be complete because it leaves out other attribute. However, for the purpose of having a comprehensive understanding of it, it is good to refer to the following definition which Mohammed Hassan (1990: 26) adopts from the definition of Asmarom (1973) as "The *gadaa* system is a system of classes (*luba*) that succeed each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political and ritual responsibilities."

The *gadaa* system is one of the central elements of Guji social life which regulate their various involvements in administration, and which acts as an instrument of moral sincerity. The concept is centered on the notions of "fertility, repletion, peace, a sense of identity and religious values" (Van de Loo, 1991:18). It is profoundly interlocked with the spiritual and the secular world of the Guji and is made up of successive grades rotating every eight year. The passage from one grade to the next is usually marked by transition ceremonies held at particular stage, and this transition has the implication that the man is assuming a new social role. Within each stage, there are duties and responsibility the man is expected to discharge, and would be held accountable for (Tadesse 1995:311).

Though currently it is reduced mostly to ritual activities, the *gadaa* system had military, economic, legal and arbitrational responsibilities among the Guji society. It represents, according to Van de Loo (1991:23), "a most complex system of ranking authority, and decision-making for the entire local society". The *gadaa* system as a whole and each of the stages in it is

named among the Guji as *baallii*. Hinnat (1977), who has made a detailed study on the Guji-Oromo *gadaa* system, describes the stages in the *gadaa* life cycle citing some “ideal role models”, which portray the characteristic feature of each of the grades together with their particular rights and responsibilities. The grades he enumerates are: *Solluuda*, *Dabbalee*, *Karra*, *Kuusa*, *Raaba-miidoo*, *Doorii*, *Yuuba* and *Jaarsa*.

The first two grades, *Solluuda* and *Dabbalee*, contain children and early adolescents. The *Solluda* have little responsibility, while the *Dabbalee* are herders of small animals. The boy at the second stage is considered to be too young to carry out any social responsibility. The third grade, which is known as *Karra*, is what the *Dabbalee* grows into. To be at this stage the *Dabbalee* is expected to pass through the *Maqabaasaa* (name-giving) ceremony which approves of his adulthood with its attendant rights and duties. It marks a release from absolute control of the father, granting him the possibility of participating in public debates and addressing the *Abba Gadaa* (the *Gada* leader in position) directly. The *Karra* herds full grown cattle and participates in hunting of large game animals and raiding for cattle (Hinnat 1977).

The *Kuusa* grade is a stage of total break with socialization for the individual. During this grade, men “become like wild animals” (Hinnat 1977:122). This means that, they can do whatever pleases them as they are free of any social restrictions. It is a period of license occurring immediately before the grades of greatest constraint (ibid). Hinnat indicates that it is during this grade (*Kuusa*) that men are allowed to participate in the ‘*buttaa*’ wars waged every eight year in the past. The grade that follows this stage of total freedom is *Rabaa-miidoo*. Men are initiated to this grade following the ‘*bantii*’ ceremony which legalizes marriage at this stage. It marks a slight increase in ritual authority.

There is little difference between *Rabaa* and *Doorii* grades in the social roles they undertake. In the ritual sphere, however, *Doorii* marks the end of the learner period and the beginning of full participation as a senior man. When *Doorii* assumes the position of *gadaa*, they should be at the heyday of their political and economic power. The three grades after *gadaa* are all *Yuuba*. At this grade, the man withdraws himself from economic activity by giving all his cattle to his elder son, retaining only five for himself. He is not involved in debate, other than being

consulted as an expert on law and custom. He is dominant in rituals, and must be present at the *gadaa* promotion ceremonies, where he is one of the principal actors. The final set of grades in the *gadaa* cycle, the three *Jaarsa*, take full cognizance of a paradox in the life cycle. *Jaarsa*, who has seen many *gadaa* should be the wisest and most honored of all. He has passed through the entire lifecycle and achieved purity (ibid).

#### **1.6.2.2. Religion and the Qaalluu Institution**

In his study of the culture of the Guji, Van de Loo (1991) has indicated that the Guji live in a world full of forms of divinity. The great *qaalluu*, who is at the apex of the *gadaa* system, and the mystical power he embodies are of crucial significance in the religious and cultural life of the Guji. The Guji (currently elders) believe, in *Waaqaa* (God) who created everything in His power. The belief is led by the *qaalluu*, who is believed to be the messenger of *Waaqaa* (Taddese, 1996; Hinnat, 1977; Van de Loo, 1991). The Guji believe that *Waaqaa* lives far above the earth and sent *qaalluu* for the people with *gadaa*, law of peace and ways of life. The role of *qaalluu* of Guji is not restricted only to religious practices. He also plays an important role in reconciliation and is also the only person who can appoint the *gadaa* leaders during the power transition. With this regard Hinnat (1977) states that no ‘*Abbaa Gadaa*’ or his advisors will be legitimate unless they get recognition and blessings of the *qaalluu* (P-198).

There are two widely held concepts in the divine world of the Guji: *Kaayyo* and *Woyyuu*, which play a crucial role in maintaining social order. In the concepts of *Kaayyo* and *Woyyuu*, expression is given to two prime forces in the changeable world of the Guji. According to Hinnat (1977), *Kaayyo* is associated with “fertility and abundance, as well as their absence”. It is the quality which individuals may possess or lack and signifies the extent to which a person has succeeded in achieving the “ideal state of peace” and the rewards which come after it. Abundance in property and peaceful relation with other people are indicators of good *Kaayyo*, while draught and impoverishment signify bad *kaayyo*. In general, *kaayyo* refers to what Hinnat cites as: “*Kaayyo*, then, is not a thing, but a type of balance between man, nature and divinity” (1977:52).

*Woyyuu*, on the other hand, is a dangerous negative force. Its only positive feature is that it can be restrained and directed through various rituals. A person who is *woyyuu* is treated with both respect and great forbearance. The great *qaalluu* and his clan are *woyyuu* and have the power to curse (ibid: 61). Both are crucial in the socio-cultural life of the Guji for maintenance of social order.

### **1.6.3. Socio-cultural Dynamism among the Guji**

According to Raymond Williams, the traditional culture of a society is always in a state of flux and tends to correspond to its “contemporary” system of interest and values, for it is not an absolute body of work but a continual selection and interpretation (cited in Storey, 2006:39). Though it is difficult to claim that all aspects of a society’s culture give way totally to a new one, it seems mandatory for it to incorporate new forms which help it to exist in a new context. In the process of this transformation some of the qualities of the past tend to continue as they are while others shape themselves to conform to the current interest, and some others still are dropped. Regarding this, Mikhail Bakhtin says the following: “it is impossible to change the factual, thing-like side of the past, but the meaningful, expressive, speaking side can be changed, for it is unfinalized and does not coincide with itself (it is free)”(ibid). There could be a lot of factors which induce the changes and adaptation of a certain culture. Few among these are: modernity, education, religion, politics, system of governance, etc. Under this section, a survey of the change and continuity of the Guji Oromo socio-cultural and historical realities is presented so as to give a brief background to the analysis of the folk poems collected.

Various scholars indicate that externally induced changes coupled with internal dynamics have introduced significant changes in the Oromo socio-cultural realities. A remarkable shift in these realities was induced by the conquest and subjugation of the Oromo lands by the forces of Menelik in the closing years of the nineteenth century, which introduced a system of administration and governance which held a death blow to the indigenous ways of maintaining social order. The *gadaa* System, which has now become only a “dim memory” to the Oromo groups started to decline from the days of conquest (Hinnat 1977; Asmarom 1973; Van de Loo 1991).

According to Hinnat, the conquest caused a profound change in the life of the Guji, as it did everywhere in Oromia (P-21). He describes that the process of the conquest first started in the form of small scale raid into the territory followed by a large scale conquest by Menelik's forces in which the Guji attempted to block but eventually forced to surrender. Following the conquest, a landlord and tenant system developed and the Guji men and women were alienated from their land and made to serve the landlords both in labor and productions in addition to paying tax.

It was such exploitation and injustice which had led the Guji to avenge the landlords and officials who deserted the towns during the Italian occupation (1935-41). Tadesse Berisso (1995) cited a song depicting the retaliation of the society against the mal-administration during the reign of Hailesillase as follows:

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Hidhee nu hiika Atalaan    | we were jailed and released by Atalan (a Guji <i>balabat</i> ) |
| Hidhee nu dhaana habashaan | we were jailed and beaten by <i>habasha</i> (Amhara)           |
| Haluun sun baate barana    | now it is our time. We have the opportunity to retaliate       |

Hinnat (1977) describes that the Italians made use of such gaps to at least temporarily win the Guji to their side. He says, "Once the Italians were established, they won over many of the people through their reforms. The land tax was abolished. There was established a system of courts which the Guji found equitable. Northern Ethiopian landlords left and the Guji were given greater responsibility for conducting their own affairs in the countryside" (1977:26). This indicates that the decline of the socio-cultural institutions which make up the soul of the social cohesion of the Guji, the *gadaa* system and the *qaalluu*, can be explained in terms of the incorporation and the disasters it caused.

The first stages of the decline of the *gadaa* as a cultural institution are also in part, consequences of the new political and legal rules which have been imposed on the Guji. Hinnat (1977) maintains that the central government went to the extent of interfering in the handing over of the office by allowing the *gadaa* leaders stay in power for long during the reign of Hailesillase. Such a practice has led to the disillusionment of the Guji people, especially the young, about the fate of the institutions. In addition to the fact of the conquest, trips to markets, drinking houses and courts of the towns provided ample opportunity to learn of the models for belief and social action (ibid).

The conquest of the Guji, and its incorporation into Ethiopia by Menelik occurred more than a century ago. Since then, a number of basic changes have occurred. Their indigenous land holding system was changed. The vast territory, over which people once roamed freely with their herds, fell under the hands of landlords. Hailesillase accelerated what had been started by Menelik's administration. The Guji have also experienced various changes after the coming into power of Mengistu following the 1974 revolution. Warfare and cattle raiding between Guji and the societies on its borders have also been suppressed.

Other notable changes are in the areas of education and religion. Many elementary schools were opened; literacy campaign was also launched in Guji area, as was the case in other parts of the country. With regard to religion, there was a mass conversion of Guji to Islam and Christianity after the revolution. Tadesse (1995) expressed his fear that the conversion of Guji into two different religions may in the long run destroy their traditional solidarity of working together under the *gadaa* system.

Generally, the multidimensional nature of the various institutions that played a significant role in integrating the society had been devastated by different reasons. The *gadaa* system has been challenged from varying external and internal factors which altogether currently reduced its roles to ritual activities in the case of Guji. The incorporation of the territory and the subsequent imposition of the *Amhara* culture were the major factors behind the decline of the system. Hinnat (1977) argues that the assimilative policy of the imperial regimes strongly worked towards eroding the indigenous cultural practices, denouncing any of such practices as illegal. In fact, there were other factors such as the introduction of Missionary activities since 1950's, which undermined the spiritual world of the Guji that was in turn related to the *gadaa* system (Assebe 2007:221). The internal challenge was the force of 'modernity' among the youth who began to question about the advantage and practicality of the *gadaa* system. Caught between the forces of 'tradition' and 'modernity', the young generation has more recently become participants in the system. Despite these challenges, the Guji preserved some of their traditional institutions up to this date.

# Chapter Two

## A Review of Related Literature

This section deals mainly with two broad concepts: the conceptual framework of the paper and review of related studies. The former deals with the review of the published works of scholars regarding the description of core concepts such as folklore, approaches to the study of folklore, oral poetry, its features, its social relevance and its place in the dynamic world. This section gives a theoretical background to the analyses presented in chapter three and four. The review of related study part presents the studies previously conducted on the oral poetry of the Oromo in general and the Guji folk poems in particular. In this subsection attempt has been made to show the gap which the current study endeavours to fill.

### 2.1. Conceptual Framework

#### 2.1.1 Folklore Defined

Oral Poetry is a subset of the compass of oral literature which in turn is part of the wide scope of folklore. As folklorists like Alan Dundes and Thompson indicate, it is difficult to supply a watertight definition of the term 'folklore'. Scholars in the field provide various definitions to the term and recognize that it is a point of argument among them. Thompson, for instance says, "[a]lthough the word folklore is more than a century old, no exact agreement has been reached as to its meaning" (cited in Melakneh, 1990:12). Alan Dundes (1965:1) further strengthens this idea by saying, "[d]ebates about how folklore should be defined have been waged continuously ever since the word was coined in 1846 by William Thomas." The magnitude of the diversity of the definition of folklore is further illustrated by Maria Leach (1960) who cited twenty-one definitions of the term given by various scholars. As it is important to have an operational definition of the term, few of the definitions are presented below for the purpose of giving a firm basis for the discussion and analysis of the folk poems in the next two chapters.

To begin with, Okpewho (1990:1) defines folklore as “the selected body of knowledge or lore shared by the community as the representation of collective image....” According to this definition, folklore is an accumulated wisdom owned by a group of people and it signifies their communal symbol. Leach (1960:308), puts the definition as “... the accumulated knowledge of a homogeneous unsophisticated people, tied together not only by physical bonds but also an emotional one...” Leach’s definition is similar to Okpewho’s in that both emphasize the communal nature of the “knowledge”. Waterman, on the other hand, tends to present folklore as an embodiment of verbal arts only. He defines it as “a form of art comprising different types of stories, proverbs, sayings, spells, songs, incantations and other formulas which employ spoken language as their medium” (cited in Boswell, et. al 1962:1). This definition implies that folklore includes the forms of art preserved, transmitted and expressed through words of mouth.

Dorson (1972) puts the general terrain of folklore and folk life into four “not all-inclusive or mutually exclusive” divisions. The first sector, which is the concern of this paper, is “Oral literature”. According to this scholar, oral literature encompasses “spoken, sung, and voiced forms of traditional utterance that show repetitive patterns” (1972:2). He lists two major subdivisions of oral literature: “folk narratives” and “folk songs or folk poetry”. Each of these subdivisions has its own family of related species and corresponds with the modern works of novelists and poets though they differ in their nature of transmission and ownership (ibid).

The other three divisions include “Material Culture”, “Social Custom” and “Performing Folk Arts”. As these are not the concern of the thesis, the researcher omitted discussions about them. Dorson argues that although the above divisions ease the burden of dealing with every issue in the wide arena of folklore by allocating the concerns to the specific department, the grouping should not be taken for granted as mutually exclusive divisions.

From the definitions given above it seems important to consider the fact that folklore which is wide and divergent denotes the wider social heritage of mankind while oral literature which is a subset of folklore refers to the verbal heritage of man transmitted across generations orally.

### **2.1.2. Folk/Oral Poetry**

As pointed out earlier, folk/oral poetry is one of the major subdivisions Dorson (1972:2) puts under oral literature, which in turn is part of the folklore of a society. Oral literature depicts the collective image that governs the society and is regarded as the oldest form of verbal art. Oral literature in poetry form encompasses various sub-genres. The various types of songs sung on different occasions and for different purposes, poems and dirges, for instance, are included under the heading of oral poetry. The folk literature of a people, both in the form of prose and verse is in fact an oral activity. Finnegan (1970) lists three ways in which a poem can most readily be called oral. These are (1) its composition, (2) its mode of transmission, and (3) its performance. She points out that some oral poetry is oral in all these respects, and some only in one or two.

According to Finnegan (1992), oral poetry is a common occurrence in human society. It is found all over the world, past and present. She stresses the dynamic nature of oral poetry saying: "Oral poetry is not an odd or aberrant phenomenon in human culture, not focalized survival from the far past, destined to wither away with increasing modernization." This implies that it is not just something of far away and long ago. Folk poetry includes oral texts, remembered and transmitted in the medium of speech. They are written down by collectors (and sometimes recorded in audio formats); when written down, there is usually some editing and alteration of the text as spoken. Recorded versions of folk poems often exist in a lot of variant forms. This reflects both the fact that there is probably some improvisation each time it is performed, and the same basic poem is transformed over time and place by different performers.

### **2.1.3. Features of Oral Poetry**

As it is part of oral literature, folk poetry shares some natures with other genres which distinguish it from the written one. Folklorists like Ruth Finnegan and Okpewho list some features peculiar to oral literature. Finnegan (1970) lists three major features: performance, audience involvement and dependence on occasion as basic features peculiar to oral literature. Okpewho (1992) adds some other features like 'dynamicity', 'composition and training' and

'poetic/stylistic' features as dominant features in oral literature. These features are briefly presented as follows.

### **2.1.3.1. Dependence on Performance and Context**

According to Finnegan (1970), the significance of performance in oral literature goes beyond a mere matter of defining it. This is because the nature of the performance itself can make an important contribution to the impact of the particular literary form being exhibited. All the variegated aspects contributing to the effectiveness of performance in the case of more familiar literary forms may play their part in the delivery of unwritten pieces- 'expressiveness of tone', 'gesture', 'facial expression', 'dramatic use of pause' and 'rhythm'. Finnegan says:

For one to appreciate fully the significance of the depth and the impact of oral literature, one has to witness its actual performance. This is true for all the genres in oral literature because the actual performance depends on the socio cultural background, the mood of the artist, the audience and the ambience. (1970: 2)

The oral poet performs before a given audience in different instances where the audience has a considerable role in making the performance meaningful. The performance can be done in mass (groups) or individually. For instance in folksongs, song-leaders (soloists) on festive explicitly arouse the audience's attention to accompany him/her as choruses. They also expect them to participate actively in the performance and, in particular, to join in the choruses of songs which they introduce in it (Finnegan, 1970:10). Ruth Finnegan's study of the Limba verbal arts, for instance, revealed that, in a creative performance, members of the audience did not listen silently nor wait for the chief performer's invitation to join in. Instead, the audience would break into the performance with their addition, questions and criticisms. Such features are common to oral arts of every society.

With this regard Okpewho (1992:57) says, "An audience is the only context within which an oral performance makes any sense". This indicates that for Okpewho performance instances where there is no audience face to face with the oral poet to listen and to attest the performance is hardly any performance. Such a claim, however, puts into question the individual recitations

which actually depend on imaginary audience. Yet, such instances are recognized as oral performances as long as they help the performer produce the oral poetry. The audience on such occasions could be in the mind of the performer (Alembi, 2002:35).

Another related feature of oral poetry is that it is “context dependent”. Oral pieces are not composed in the study and later transmitted through the impersonal and detached medium of print, but tend to be directly involved in the occasions of their actual utterance (Finnegan, 1970: 329). According to Okpewho (1992:72), a piece of oral literature tends to be affected by such factors as the general purpose and atmosphere of gathering at which it is rendered. Ben Amos has also underlined with regard to the understanding of oral poetry that:

Any oral poem, like any utterance, is profoundly contingent on its context. To assume that it is detachable – that we can comfortably speak of “an oral poem” as a freestanding item – is necessarily to take it out of context. And what is the lost context? It is the performance, the audience, the poet, the music, the specialized way of speaking, the gestures, the costuming, the visual aids, the occasion, the ritual, and myriad other aspects of the given poem’s reality... (1982: 60).

This indicates that taking oral poetry out of its context of performance is like forcing fish to survive outside water body.

### **2.1.3.2. Volatility**

From the very nature of its transmission, oral poetry is liable to changes when recited in different occasions of performance. The variability and dynamics of oral literature is put forward by Finnegan (1970:8) as “...they are constantly transformed by the narrators and their transformations go much further than is generally supposed.” Alembi (2005:36) also notes that oral poetry is dynamic for it “has no fixed length of performance”. He further explains that the oral poem performers decide the length of their performance and their poems based on the contexts of their surrounding such as the audience’s interest. The following points made by Okpewho also explain the dynamic feature of oral poetry based on the skill of the performer: “One could go further and say that variation and manipulation of the material is a standard ingredient in the performance of oral literature and that the audience is more likely to be

impressed by a performer who shows some resourcefulness with the text of a chant or song than by one who simply recites his lines mechanically” (1992:45).

### **2.1.3.3. Composition and Training**

Some scholars in the field of folklore believe that oral poetry has no specific composer. It is argued that the authorship of a given piece of oral poetry is the community where it is recited. This is why it is interchangeably named ‘folk’ poetry. Okpewho says “Folk literature identifies the creators of this literature as the folk, by which was frequently meant the common, uneducated people mostly in villages or rural communities” (1992:4).

Though the specific oral poet may not be known, any piece of poetry, however, is believed to have a composer (Alembi, 2002:40) as the whole people could not be the original composers. From its very nature, oral poetry demands the oral poet to learn how to recite in different occasions. This implies that the poet needs to pass through some training in acquiring the skills. According to Alembi (2002:37) the fertile grounds for acquiring such a skill is observation of and participation in different occasions of performance such as ‘working’, ‘drinking’, ‘wedding’ and ‘cattle herding’.

Ruth Finnegan (1970) indicates the fact that there exists training in recitation in her study of African oral poetry particularly the oral poetry in the court patronage of Uganda by saying “[t]he skilled and separate nature of this poetry is further evident from the existence of specialist training particularly in the skill of recitation” (P-89). This specialist training, however, may not be true for all forms of oral poetry in Africa as some of the trainings may be done not in an explicit way. Lord (1960) suggests that the training of the oral poet may be undergone unconsciously. He says: “There is an unconscious process of assimilating formulas a young singer has to go through before he becomes a singer. As a boy he attends different performances made by different singers. There he begins to learn and assimilate the formula.” (P-32:33). He describes the steps through which the artist may pass in detail as follows:

For a considerable time, he will listen to his elders with more attention to the lines and phrases. He will pick them up from any singer whom he hears. As he practices singing by himself he realizes the need for them and he uses them, sometimes adjusting them more or less consciously to his own needs, sometimes unconsciously twisting them. They are not scored, but they are useful. In this way he acquires the formula of his elders and establishes his own formula habits. He is doing what all singers before him have done. (P-34)

Finnegan also describes various occasions where a performer could learn to compose and recite the folksongs. Among the lists are: 'initiation-ceremonies', 'wedding', and other ceremonial and public festive occasions such as 'victory', 'installation of a new chief', etc. (1970). As indicated by Finnegan (1970:21), at the time of departure, returning home, or during battle warriors compose or recite poems in expressing their exploits and celebrating their victory, or challenging their enemy.

#### **2.1.3.4. Some Literary Devices**

According to Okpewho (1972:70), oral poetry exhibits some stylistic qualities which make it distinguishable from other forms of oral literature. Below are some of the qualities which Okpewho (1992) listed in his book on African oral literature.

The first quality is Repetition. Repetition is one of the most fundamental features of oral literature. In Okpewho's view it serves both as "an aesthetic and a utilitarian value". This means that repetition is a technique which helps in making the poem appeal to the listener by adding beauty. It also serves in the total organization of the oral performance (P-71). This scholar says about the aesthetic value of repetition "... the repetition of a phrase, a line, or a passage does have a certain sing-song quality to it; if repetition occurs between intervals in, say, a song or a tale, the audience is often delighted to identify with it and to accompany the performer in going over a passage that has now become familiar" (ibid: 72). Repetition is also employed, sometimes profusely, to mark a feeling of excitement or agitation, whether in the sense of utmost delight or deeper anxiety and fear. Okpewho indicates that repetition depends on the context of the performance of the poems and could be manipulated well by the oral performer.

Parallelism is another device whereby the 'oral artist' brings together in a balanced relationship of ideas and images that may seem independent of one another. Parallelism does have various kinds. One of the kinds is the one in which the same words are used but simply transposed in consecutive lines-this may be called "lexical parallelism". According to Okpewho (1992:79), parallelism often becomes more exciting, or at least more striking, when two elements are brought together in a decisive contrast within the same or similar structures. Semantic parallelism is another kind wherein synonymous or antonymous words are brought together to create a stylistic effect.

The third device is piling (coupling). This is also one of the devices which oral poetry performers (reciters) use to achieve the sense of fullness and to impress the audience. Okpewho says with this regard: "One way in which this fullness can be achieved is by piling or coupling one detail or idea to another so that the whole performance builds up to a climax" (1992:83). This device is particularly common in songs and chants. He further adds that in its simplest form, piling or linking can take the form of "the last detail in one line-of song becoming the first detail in the next" (ibid).

Imagery is the other stylistic feature observed in oral poetry. According to Finnegan (1992:176), metaphor, symbolism and allusive language have always attracted attention in the literary study of style to which oral forms are no exception. This idea is further strengthened by Okpewho (1992:98) who argues that oral and written literature are basically similar in "the use of words and in the ways in which they employ words to paint mental pictures that appeal to our feeling and our understanding". Imagery is one of the devices which the oral poet uses in creating a powerful touch to the audience. In doing so, they usually employ similes, metaphors, personification, allegories, allusive overtones etc. Finnegan stresses on the difficulty of interpreting imagery without knowledge of the social and literary contexts as there can be layers of meaning one needs to be cognizant of the dangers of assuming a single authoritative interpretation of the images (1992:176).

#### **2.1.4. Social Relevance of Oral Poetry**

Oral poetry as a communal property serves many functions in the wider social or cultural milieu. The performance of the folk poetry in such a context does have some principal purposes for the society with which it enjoys interdependence. Okpewho (1992) discusses four major functions of oral literature in general. These are (1) 'entertainment', (2) 'asserting interests and outlooks', (3) 'teaching ideals and conduct', and (4) 'recording life'. Below is a description of these functions.

According to Okpewho (1992:106), entertainment is one of the major functions of oral literature. He says "it offers delight and so relieves us from various pressures and tensions both physically and mentally." He notes that the songs usually help to keep up workers' morale and relieve their boredom under the physical condition of work. In support of this idea he says: "Much more frequently, oral literature provides relief after the day's work is over" (1992:107). Besides, it gives psychological relief to the members of the society whether they are performers or audiences to the performance.

The second major function of oral poetry is its purpose in asserting interests and outlooks of the society. Regarding this Okpewho says: "A much wider function served by oral literature is to give the society ...a collective sense of who they are and to help them define or comprehend the world at large in terms of both familiar and positive to them" (P-110). He further adds that within a single community itself, it can be used to assert group interests in the sense of rivalry. In such contexts, its service is limited to asserting patriotic or nationalistic feelings. Furthermore, it helps the society to justify its place in the universe (Okpewho 1992:112).

Teaching ideals and conduct is another social function of oral literature, and oral poetry by inference. Okpewho discusses that oral literature in its various genres serves as a source of information to educate people about their being and becoming. He says:

So how is it possible for the citizens of a society to acquire, on a general or collective basis, information concerning themselves: who they are, their origins and connections, and the peculiar ways of living and behaving that identify them as a people and that must be preserved for the sake of cultural continuity? Obviously, such information is contained in the various forms of oral literature practiced in the society- songs, narratives, proverbs, riddles, and so on- which are delivered either privately... or publicly (1992:115).

This implies that oral literature (oral poetry) serves an important function in these areas of cultural education wherein the youths learn the wisdom of their society and identify their place in the dynamic social situation. Oral literature presents important cultural information. With this regard Okpewho forwards: "...even when it deals with events of history, [oral literature] presents constantly to members of contemporary society the standards of excellence that they should practice in their own interests and for the survival of the society" (1992:117).

The last most acknowledged purpose is the use of oral literature in recording historical issues of a society and the various stages in the life of human beings. They give information about how a society welcomes the newborn baby and the way it gives a farewell to the deceased. Birth is a significant moment which signifies an entry into life and at such occasions there are songs performed. Initiation ceremonies, marriage (wedding), funeral ceremonies are accompanied by songs. In addition to these occasions according to Okpewho (1992), the installation of new chief is accompanied by singing and dancing.

### **2.1.5. Lyric Folk Poetry**

Lyric refers to 'a poem composed to be sung' (Finnegan, 1970). As indicated by various scholars it is almost always accompanied by singing on various occasions (Barnet, 1985:45; Finnegan, 1970:241; Gordon, 1978:464). Finnegan (1970) points out that it is "the most common form of poetry in sub-Saharan Africa" (P-241). She indicates that it is difficult to recognize them as poems always because of the focus on the musical element. Yet she stresses the fact that it is a folk poem by saying "[b]ut this should not prevent us from calling them poems" (ibid).

The performance of lyric has unlimited number of contexts as it is common to find lyrics during birth, initiation, betrothal and wedding ceremonies, battlefield, funeral and memorial celebrations (Finnegan, 1970). On such occasions songs related to the particular celebration or ceremony are usually sung, but the issue is not restricted to it only. "It is likely that advantage will be taken of this opportunity to sing songs on many other topics" (P-242). She adds that "The subject of the many different songs sung on the various occasions include just about every topic imaginable. There are songs about wives, husbands, marriage, animals, chiefs, this year's tax ..." (ibid). This implies the wide range of issues which lyric folk poetry is concerned with.

As Finnegan indicates they deal with human issues dominantly, but also other issues of particular focus like cattle and means of sustenance are raised. In her words, "[a]mong pastoral peoples, songs are often composed and sung in praise of individual beasts. Cattle come to mean far more to their owners than mere economic sustenance, and are accepted as emotional and evocative topics for deeply felt expression" (P-245).

Lyric poems are recited/ sung during agricultural and pastoral activities even in the absence of musical instruments or audience to respond. It is very common to see its recitation among cattle herders or people at work on a plot of land to ease their work by singing it. Barnet (1985:453) observes that reality and says "[i]n work songs ... where there is no audience the singers sing for themselves, participating rather than performing... they really be singing about the way they feel inside, since they cannot say it to nobody, they sing a song about the way they feel inside." This indicates the fact that their performance is not restricted to the occasions where audiences are physically present. In terms of their length, lyrics are believed to be brief. Finnegan (1970), for instance, studying the nature of Somali lyrics, states that "the lyrics are characterized by extreme brevity- it usually consists of two lines" (P-254). The same idea is also forwarded by Gordon (1978) who notes that lyrics are "... frequently brief, melodic poems in which the [composer] is expressing an emotion aroused by some scene or occasion" (P-464).

Barre Toelken (1979), on the other hand, describes the nature of lyric in comparison to traditional stories and says that "A lyric is more ambiguous: in fact, it thrives on ambiguity and allusion." (in Oring, 1986 : 158). He notes that their performance refers to "the way they are sung and the situation in which they are sung". Such a nature of lyrics, according to this scholar,

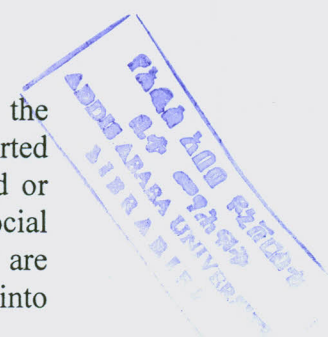
is the source of its inherent ambiguity. He asserts, “[t]hus the ambiguity inherent in a lyric actually enhances its capability of being the live scene in which it is performed” (ibid). As a result, it is a paramount importance to deeply investigate the context and style of the actual performance in conducting a study on lyric folk songs. Toelken stresses the issue of ambiguity further by saying, “[w]e need to be ready to admit, and even appreciate the fact, that lyric can mean more than one thing, even to the same singer, and that this possibility for complexity and richness in meaning is precisely why we sing lyrics-they often communicate a feeling or idea that cannot be articulated so well in any other fashion” (P-158).

In short, what qualities as lyrics, according to Toelken, is not based on its length (the fact that it is short), or its difficulty to the performer, or not because they lack narrative structure; “they are lyrics because they focus on the intense and distilled performance of unstructured thoughts and feelings” (Cited in Oring, 1986:158).

### **2.1.6. Oral Literature and Socio-cultural Dynamism**

Oral literary texts are products emerging out of social, cultural and political situations of a society. These situations undergo profound changes at different times in human history. The changes are seen as part of the development and normal instability of the entire knowledge (Storey, 2006:39). There could be a number of causes for the changes. Few among them are education, modernity, religion, politics and influence of media (Duncan Brown, 1999). The combined effect of these factors leads to the transformation of the socio-cultural realities of a certain society which in turn influences their oral poetry. As a result, it is important to see how the dynamism in the socio-cultural realities of a certain society impacts on its oral literature. Without taking into account, the social forces and historic factors, the analysis of oral tradition cannot be successful and sensible. This is what Landeg White describes in the following quotation:

Ideally, in interpreting oral performance, one would wish to pay the closest possible attention to the actual meaning of the poems, supported by oral testimony of their significance to the people who performed or listened to them, and supplemented by investigation into the social position of the performers, into the conventions of the forms they are using, into the context and contingencies of the performances, and into



the place of such poetry in the oral literature and general culture of the region as a whole. (1989:37)

Daiches (1969) also supports the idea that verbal arts are produced in a particular socio-cultural context. He argues that as they are the products of a search for cultural history, they should be examined within its artistic field which involves the exploration of meanings in context: traditions, cultural and ritual movements, political and social climate. He stresses that without paying attention to these factors, oral literature can hardly give effective response to all spheres of intellectual enquiry.

Toelken (1996) states that literary tradition has been reproduced by generations of non-literate audience in the course of its history. Its survival, continuity and success depend on how reasonably it satisfies intellectual interest, socio-political and economic needs of the society. Therefore, valuing oral tradition as a contemporary art demands assessing its contemporary importance. Unless they are viewed within the cultural universe of the society who generated it, living a proper judgement about it would be impossible. This is because of the fact that oral literature gets its essence from the general context of its performance as it is continually renewed to suit to the contemporary situation of its performance (ibid: 147).

In general, as society changes, some of the old ways of life inevitably give way to new ones. Much of the oral literature that is performed today, or that we see preserved in books, reflects a life-style that may have served the earlier generations well but would be considered outmoded or even dangerous today. Although both the performer and audience may respond to the contents of the material with nostalgia and perhaps pride, it is clear to everyone that things are no longer what they used to be (Okpewho 1992:115). This clearly explains the case of war songs performed in the past during traditional warfare among societies which Okpewho stated as "War is no longer an ideal to be looked up to in present day society. The true ideal of action today is excellence in whatever work or profession one practices. Indeed, if one does it well, one is assured of a fulfilled existence" (1992:117).

## 2.2. A Review of Related Studies

So far, a considerable number of studies have been conducted in the area of Oromo oral literature. These works focus dominantly on oral prose narratives. There have been few works on Oromo oral poetry. Surprisingly enough almost none of these works seem to have addressed the issue of dynamism in the oral literature as their main concern. I have tried to review some of the works hereunder in accordance with the degree of their relevance and their relation to the study at hand.

The studies conducted are both at under-graduate and graduate levels. At undergraduate level students of the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature made a significant contribution in collecting and carrying out thematic and structural analysis of Oromo oral literature. Among these students three of them, Tsegaye Geda (1973), Abera Zemedkun (1978) and Shigute Teshome (1986) have made studies on Guji oral literature.

The pioneering study on Guji Oromo oral literature is Tesegaye Geda's BA thesis: “የጉጂ ተረትና ምሳሌዎች” presented to the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature in the year 1973 (E.C). Tsegaye has made a thematic analysis of the tales, proverbs and songs he collected from the Guji. In his analysis, he showed how folk literature is exploited in adding emphasis to communication through the means of metaphor.

Another work in the same area is that of Abera Zemedkun's “የጉጂ ጎሳ የግጥም አይነቶች አሰላና ትንተና” which is also presented to the same department in partial fulfillment for the BA degree in the year 1978 (E.C). In his study Abera classified the oral poetry of the Guji into seven categories. He conducted a content and form analysis of the oral poems he collected. Abera recommended an in depth study to be carried out both on those poems he classified and the other kinds yet to be excavated. With regards to performance, though he did a survey on the oral poems of the Guji, Abera did not fully investigate them. The socio-cultural norms accompanying the performance of the folk poems were not dealt with in detail.

Shigute Teshome's BA thesis “የጉጂ ጎሳ ቦሊቱ ገረገሳ ግጥሞች” is another study on the Guji oral literature. This study is concerned with presenting a folksong genre of the Guji in its cultural context of performance. Shigute dealt with the socio-cultural context the “*bole*” songs, the dominant themes they display and the attitude the society have towards this performance. He also recommended a comprehensive study to be undertaken of the many folk poems among the society.

The three papers reviewed above are related to the study at hand in that they are all conducted on Guji Oral literature, particularly folk poetry. Yet there are considerable differences between them and the current study. As pointed out earlier, three of them focused on the content and formal analysis of the oral poetry of the Guji though Shigute's thesis deals with performance to some extent. In addition, the methods they used in collecting and analyzing the oral poems are seem not to take into consideration the contextual factors which matters in explicating various cultural issues embedded in the oral texts. No one among the three used sound or video recording to catch up the real performance. Their analysis also seems to be very general and vague. Shigute's work actually is better in many respects from the other two in that he focused on only one sub-genre and dealt with it in detail. Tsegaye's and Abera's thesis seem to ignore the context of performance of the folksongs totally and Shigute's thesis never consider the dynamism of the social situation in which the folk poem is performed. Contrary to all these, the study at hand tries to investigate the transformation in content and context of the performance of the folk poems.

At Graduate level, we find Tadese Jaleta's thesis conducted on the functions of Guji Oromo proverbs. Tadese (2004) has made a contextual investigation of the proverbs by collecting them from blessing sessions and local meetings of the elders. As he has made a contextual investigation of the proverbs, Tadese dealt with the social and cultural contexts of the society in detail. His thesis is related to the one at hand in that both deal with the socio-cultural investigation of the oral literature genres in detail. Besides, the particular place of study of both is also the same: the Guji people in *Abbayyaa* woreda of the Borana Zone. What makes them different is that this study is on folk poems while his is on proverbs. Another point of difference

is that the present study focuses on the dynamism of the folk poems in the dynamics of socio-cultural situation.

Asafa Tefera (2004) has also conducted a study on Oromo oral poetry. His work is a sociological analysis of poetic content of Jaarsoo Waaqoo's poetry set in the socio-cultural contexts of Oromo oral poetry. His study is similar to this paper in that both are conducted on oral poetry. There is a considerable difference between the two, since Asefa's work is a sociological study of an individual's oral poem set in the socio-political matrix of the Borana Oromo while mine takes into account the Guji society as a whole.

Another study closely related to this investigation is Addisu Tolesa's Ph.D dissertation which examines the 'geerarsa' folksong in an historical perspective. The primary purpose of Addisu's dissertation is analyzing the relationship between the folk song genre and the cultural identity of the society at different points in historical time. He indicated in his study that the 'geerarsa' served as a means of social and political resistance. Addisu's focus on transformation of the 'geerarsa' folksong genre, and history as an inducing factor in the transformation of the genre makes it closely related to the study at hand. Both studies differ in their study area, scope and particular points focus.

In addition to the above works, there are also few published works on oral poetry of the Oromo. Two of these are Cerulli's (1922), and Sumner's (1996) works. Cerulli's contribution, mainly, is a collection of oral songs, proverbs, and narratives from the tribes of Macca Oromo, particularly, Leeqaa, Limmu and Guma. His collection of narratives includes texts of historical and ethnological subjects. Though this work does not address the issue of transformation, it remains to be a very significant contribution as it is one of the earliest works to deal with the Oromo folk literature: In fact he is the first person to record and translate the folk poems into English. Though his translations mostly failed to correlate with the original verse, his work is an important contribution in the development of Oromo literature and deserves appreciation. .

Sumner's *Oromo Wisdom Literature: Songs* (1996) Vol. II is a collection and philosophical analysis of Oromo folk songs. It is a compilation of collections and analysis of various types of folk songs from the various regional Oromo groups. Though Sumner addresses some social

issues in his analysis of the songs, his analysis does not give a full scale account of the dynamism of the songs in line with the inducing social changes. He followed a structural approach in classifying and analyzing the folk poems he translated into English from different sources including Cerulli's work. As a result his data remains to be secondary as a whole.

As can be seen from the above review, the investigation of the thematic variation in Guji Oromo folk poems, the change and continuity in the context of their performance and the inducing socio-cultural situations did not get much attention. The present study is thus, an attempt to fill the gap. In its attempt to fill the gap the study focuses on three genres of Guji Oromo folk poetry (*weedduu*, *qeexala* and *geerarsa*) and try to address the transformation in content and situation of performance of the poems together with the social forces inducing changes in the ever dynamic socio-cultural and historical reality of the people.

# Chapter Three

## Guji-Oromo Folk Poems: A Descriptive Analysis

Folk poetry forms a bulk of the Guji folk tradition. As common to the other Oromo groups, the folk poems of the Guji have been important means of social articulation in the history of the people. The Guji people have indigenous names for the oral poems recited/ sung in a particular socio-cultural milieu. The most significant genres of oral poems dominant among the *Alabdu* Guji of *Abbayaa* woreda include: *Weedduu*, *Qeexala*, *Geerarsa*, *Dookkoo*, *Gelelee*, *Layee*, *Sarbicha* (Sirba Guji) and *Waarii* (Info. Mekonen).

Since the scope of this paper is delimited to the lyric folk poems of the Guji, particularly, to the three dominant genres: *weedduu*, *qeexala* and *geerarsaa*, all the genres of the Guji folk poetry are not treated in this chapter. This section presents a descriptive analysis of the three genres by focusing on their recurrent themes, context of performance and dominantly observed literary devices. In doing so, the researcher made use of the data obtained both from fieldwork and secondary sources.

### 3.1. Subject Matter Analysis

The oral poems of a society reflect the society's socio-cultural reality. They are important means of dealing with grievances, and festive moods, recreational occasions and euphoric times. They also provide historical truths, moral instruction and national feelings as they embody the conflicts and contradiction at the heart of a society's being and becoming. The lyric folk poetry of the Guji embodies such reality. In the following sections we shall see the general features of the three genres of the Guji lyric folk poetry. The following is a brief description of some of the main concerns of the *weedduu*, *qeexala* and *geerarsa* genres of the folk poems.

### 3.1.1. Weedduu

Among the Guji society, *weedduu* is a praise song poem performed at various social occasions. There are three main occasions at which it is performed among the *Alabdu* Guji (Info: Ruufoo Sharoo). The first one is when the Guji family prepares *bookaa* (mead made of honey) at various ritual ceremonies (*jila*). These ceremonies (*moggaasaa*, *arraffaa*, *tolfannoo*) are the most important occasions at which elders of the village are invited and recite the *weedduu*. Important men like the *qaalluu*, *abbaa gadaa*, owners of many cattle, and the cattle themselves are praised in it. It has its own procedures of performance and is usually performed by elders.

The second situation is related to the breeding of cows. The Guji prepare a feast ceremony in celebration of the abundance of cattle. When cows give birth to calves, the milk will be collected for some days to prepare *silgaa*. The *silgaa* will be served at the feast and after having the feast the participants start to recite the *weedduu*. The *weedduu* at this ceremony is concerned mostly with the praise of the cattle and their owners. In the recitations, issues like the wellbeing of calves, the reproduction of cattle, their significances in social and ritual affairs, etc are raised. The names of the owners of the cattle as well as the names of some of the particular livestock are praised.

Marriage ceremonies are the third important occasion for the recitation of the praise song poems among the pastoralist Guji. The recitations at this occasion are dominantly about the bride, the groom, their family, their riches and wealth, their land and kinships. From the groom's side the song focuses on how brave he and his kin are. As the wealth of the family is measured by the number of cattle or cattle kraal it owns, the song which praises the cattle are also observed in the *weedduu* performed at this occasion.

So as to address the overriding concern of the Guji praise poem (*weedduu*), the following divisions are used. Few examples which illustrate the variation among the divisions are cited under each of them.

### 3.1.1.1 Cattle Praise Poems (Weeduu Loonii)

Cattle husbandry constitutes the major livelihood of the Guji. It forms a crucial starting point and an outline of individual's place, and integration in social and economic activities. Throughout the whole life cycle, the individual depends on cattle for both nutritional needs and social achievements. "If the cattle are taken away" the Guji say, "nothing is left for us to do save cut our throats" (Van de Loo, 1991). 'Horii' designates the cattle as well as property, goods. Cattle constitute the main resource of food and are a basic medium of exchange and standard of value, being widely employed as payments of fees and compensations.

The cattle form a symbolic image beyond their economic benefits. They are sometimes identified as fathers and mothers metaphorically to indicate how much they are decisive in sustaining the society's life. The number and quality of cattle owned is a status symbol for the Guji family. The fact that the cattle are crucial in sustaining life of the Guji is one of the major themes of the *weeduu* poems recited at different occasions. The following lines, for instance, demonstrate how much the cattle are important in saving the owner from economic hardships (problems).

|   |  |
|---|--|
| W2. Miilli qaba bottii, harki qaba saatii | the foot has got boots, the hands watch            |
| Guyyaa cinqii namaa loonti ta'a waasii    | in critical problem, the cattle are one's warranty |

Here the cattle are presented as a guarantee in times of hardship. The first line of the poem simply presents associations which can be thought of as supports to the central message which is laden on the second line. The shoes-'*bottii*'/boots/ and '*saatii*'/watch/ in the first line can only be bought by the owners of many cattle as the cattle are sources of wealth of the owners. In addition to helping someone purchase luxury goods, the cattle are perceived as insurance to a Guji man in time of economic crisis as described in the second line. Whenever there is draught and crop failure, the Guji sustain on their cattle; such moments are considered as moments of critical problem where someone could survive only if he has cattle.

The cattle which are the warranty to the owner in times of hardship need care. A good cattleman grazes his cattle and brings them home safely. He keeps them in the valleys where they can get

sufficient grass and water. Taking good care of the cattle is another major theme recurrently observed in the *weedduu loonii* as illustrated in the following lines:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| W3.Horii abbaan tiffatu, cinaachi hin mul'atu | the cattle watched by the owner are plump          |
| Ka'ee dhaabbate warri jabbii jaallatu         | those who adore calves stand in their honour       |
| Duuba hafee gofolaa ristii xaaffatee          | the weak sit idle to inherit their family's wealth |

The above verse is a praise poem addressed to the person who took a good care of his cattle. The central theme of the poem lies in the first and third lines. The first line is a proverbial expression which metaphorically foregrounds the theme of discharging one's own responsibility in taking care of his/her property. It is also a criticism addressed to the weak who failed to take care of their cattle and let them become weak till the bones of the rib of the cattle become visible. The poem, then, presents the idea that people need to take care of and develop their property so as to be self reliant rather than looking at the hands of others for help in time of hardship. On the whole, the verse carries the message that honour comes only through hard work.

In the praise poems addressed to the cattle, details about their physical description, the honour and reverence the Guji people show to their cattle and the social status of the owners of many cattle are also major issues raised in the folk poems (see W4 --W6).

The Guji denounce any situation which results in the loss of their cattle. One of the major issues raised in their *weedduu loonii* is the expression of their anguish due to the loss of cattle through raid. In the folk poems related to cattle raid, the loss of cattle is mourned like the loss of a person as illustrated in the following lines:

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| W7.Farda banaqaa isaan ci'a dhaqa | the energetic horse, I take it to the wedding ceremony |
| Kattaa kaachisaa bassaa naachisaa | (the cattle) roll the rock; feed people with butter    |
| Ta hiyyuu baasu, ta haluu baasu   | make the poor wealthy, quench the thirst (of revenge)  |
| Loniwoo looniwoo                  | it is the cattle (woe is me who lost them)             |

Here the *weedduu* serves as a release of pent up emotions. The loss of cattle is perceived as the loss of comfort and security in the above poem. The poem is like an elegy to the death of cattle. Here, the *weedduu* serves as a means to express the grief haunting a person who lost his cattle which are the life blood of his existence. The benefits he used to obtain from them are now gone

and the man is wailing about the loss. The cattle are presented here as the sources of honour, caretakers, sources of empowerment and as a way out of poverty. A host of other *weedduu* poems included in the appendix reflect a similar point. The praise in the poems is usually addressed to the owners, the cattle themselves and the heroes who defend the raids against their cattle.

### 3.1.1.2. Praise Poem of the *Qaalluu* (*Weedduu Qaalluu*)

The *qaalluu* is the most revered mortal being who is thought to mediate between *Waaqaa* (God) and men in the Guji religious life. In the oral tradition of the Guji it is indicated that the first *qaalluu* was sent from *Waaqaa* to the Guji society (Taddese, 1995). In the praise poems addressed to the *qaalluu* the finding of the *qaalluu* is commemorated as in W12. In this verse, the appearance of the first *qaalluu* is celebrated and his journey to the current abode is traced. The *qaalluu* is represented as '*dhugaa*' meaning 'truth' in the folk poem to appreciate his role in keeping justice among the people. The poem is recited/ sung during the anointment of a new *qaalluu* in succession of the death of his father.

In addition to the commemoration of his first appearance, praises addressed to the *qaalluu* deal with his movement among the people and the adoration of the grand feature of his shrine (W9 and W11). The association but distinctiveness of the *qaalluu* and *Waaqaa* (God) is often made in the praise poems as seen from the following couplet.

|                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| W8. <i>Qaalluu waaqa se'e aabboo</i> | I thought the <i>Qaalluu</i> was God |
| <i>Bira geennaan bare aabboo</i>     | I only knew when I drew near         |

The above lines illustrate that because of the grand feature of the *qaalluu*, the reciter thought he was *Waaqaa*, but when he drew near him he found out that he is not God but His mortal messenger. Here, the implication is that it is only from ignorance and unexamined decision that people mistake the *qaalluu* for God, and that one needs to get near to understand the true nature of the *qaalluu*.

The *qaalluu* is associated with the welfare and fertility of the people and their stock. As a result, the society asserts the superiority and precedence of its *qaalluu* through the oral poems. Part of the society's appreciation deals with the grand feature of his residence/ shrine as seen in W10

below. In this poem, the reciter indicates the huge nature of the shrine with the number of pillars and classes it has. In the other poem (W9), the big shrine of the great *qaalluu* is appreciated through comparing its size to a mountain.

W10. Galma utubaa dhibbaa                      the shrine with hundred pillars,  
Dareensaa shantama                      its compartments are fifty

### 3.1.1.3. Ritual Praise Poems (Weedduu Jilaa)

The Guji have the tradition of celebrating cattle feast once each year. This celebration is called *arraffaa*. There are four main kinds of recitations performed at the *arraffaa* ritual ceremony. These are (1) recitation about the prayer for peace, (2) recitation about rain, (3) recitation about cattle and goats, and (4) recitation about the participants, the host and the next person in charge of the ceremony.

As indicated above, the feast at the ritual ceremony is prepared to praise God for abundance of cattle and to do prayer for the cattle and the owner. The following song is a demonstration of these wishes.

W13. Nagee'ile hoo nagee'ille                      (God) we pray for peace, we pray  
Gadaa qaalluun nagayaa                      let the *gadaa* and *qaalluu* be in peace  
Kormaafi kosiin nagayaa                      let the bulls and the surroundings be in peace  
Deettuufi teettuun nagayaa                      let the pregnant and the baby sitter be in peace  
Ollaafi oddoon nagayaa                      let the neighbors and people at *Oddoo* live in peace  
Hallayyoon nagaya                      let everyone dwell in peace

'*Negee'ille*' means 'let peace reside' for the people. *Gadaa* and *qaalluu* are revered and in the will of their long service, the people pray for their peace. The host in charge of the feast collects much butter ahead of the day of the celebration. The participants will be anointed with the butter and served with milk and '*buna-qalaa*' (a meal prepared from roasted coffee beans, butter and milk). After the meal is over, the participants will recite the '*weedduu jilaa*', the host being the initiator.

Another dominant recitation at the ceremony is about the participants' praise of the *qaalluu* for the rain that came as a result of his prayer. The *weedduu* at the ceremony is a praise poem of the

great *qaalluu* who in his divine power made the people get rainfall through his prayer and ritual performances. The following poem describes the society's intention in reciting the poems.

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| W14. Faltee roobaa manakee roobee  | you prayed for rain, it rained in your compound |
| Uummataa roobee                    | it rained for the people                        |
| Faltee roobaa manakee roobee       | you prayed for rain, it rained in your compound |
| Gimbottuu roobee                   | it rained on the large flat basket              |
| Roobee lolaase                     | the rain eroded the land                        |
| Roobee ummatii roobaa              | it rained for the people                        |
| Borojjii roobee, Madheechoo roobee | it rained for Borojji, it rained for Madheechoo |

In this poem, the people at the ceremony are praising the *qaalluu* for his prayer brought rain to their land. The rain is a symbol of fertility. In Guji, fertility and abundance are associated with good 'kaayyoo', that which the *qaalluu* is expected to demonstrate in his time of service. The existence of rain implies a good 'kaayyoo' as it is a favourable condition for the breeding of the cattle. When there is no rain, the *qaalluu* prays for it to God together with the masses, and this prayer is called "faluu", which literally means 'to solve the problem' or 'to come up with a solution'. In the first line of the above poem, the people are addressing the *qaalluu* on his deeds of prayer and that he brought rain for the people through his prayer. It says, "Because you prayed to God, it has rained in your compound". The 'compound' here, is a metaphor for the land the *qaalluu* administers, that is the Guji. The people who benefited from the blessing are also raised as indicated in line 7 in the above verse.

There is also a song addressed to goats at the *arraffaa* ceremony. The poem of the song demonstrates the description of the animal and the field it grazes. The song starts with "hoo rechoo hoo rechoo" which literally means "oh my goats" (W16). This song is restricted to the feast ceremony because the Guji gives value to the cattle such as cows, bulls and oxen than to the goat. The first line of the poem is repeated after each of the lines. W16 presents a physical description of the goat beginning from its eyes. The eyes of the goat shines like the sun. The goat grazes together with the other cattle and its meat is so delicious. Here in the poem, the oral poet is indicating that as the size of the goat is small, its skin is not adequate for some one to lie on. For the same reason of its size too, its meat cannot adequately feed the neighbours who are invited to the feast.

The concluding part of the *arraffaa* ceremony has its own particular recitation wherein the participants in the ceremony are named one by one (W17). The recitation is about the next person who prepares the ritual in the coming year. The recitation is carried out in a call-and-response manner. It is a praise poem recited about the next host of the ceremony.

#### 3.1.1.4. Praise Poems on Weddings (Weedduu Fuudhaa)

Marriage is one of the occasions at which the *weedduu* is recited. Before the wedding day, the couples meet on various occasions and participate on *weedduu* recitation. The following lyric poem recited/sung as a call-and-response is performed between a boy and a girl before their marriage. It indicates an insult which has its own advice for the boy that he should be ready enough in every matter before he takes the responsibility of married life. The girl says:

|                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| W18. Ana fuudhisa gantaa   | you are eager to marry me           |
| Yoo fuute maaliin fullitta | if you marry me, how do we survive? |
| Sa'a tokkicha qabda        | you have a cow only                 |
| Sanuu qaltee naatta        | you slaughter it and own nothing    |

Here the lady is ridiculing the boy by teasing at his wealth. He has produced not enough cattle which sustains married life. He has got only a cow, when he slaughters it he will be left with nothing and will lead a miserable life. The boy, on the other hand, responds to this mock by satirically attacking her as indicated in the W19. The interaction in the poem between the boy and the girl depicts the criticism in which they scorn each other and implicitly appreciate the value of good work. The recitation of the boy has a humorous effect as he ridicules at her by promising to slaughter a monkey for her. The mockery is about the boy's criticism of the lady for focusing on wealth and shows the end of the affair. Other similar issues are raised in the *weedduu* recited before marriage as in W21 and W22 which portray the yearning the youth to meet and enjoy their time together.

Beside this, on the verge of her marriage, the bride sings with her friends expressing how much she fears separation from her parents as illustrated in W20. In this poem the bride expresses her deep resentment about the separation which she blames her father and mother for. Her mother who used to understand her previously, became hard hearted this time. Such a criticism,

however, is not the real one, it is rather the culture of the bride to complain about her separation from the people she was familiar with to join a strange group.

What has been discussed above is based on the relation of the two friends before marriage. At the wedding ceremony however, there is a different *weedduu* which is particularly called '*damboo- biyyoo*'. This is a song which is performed when the bride is taken from her family's home. The poem presented in W23 is one of the song poems performed at the occasion and satirically portrays the status of the bride's family. This poem implicitly scorns the family of the bride. If the services the groom's men get from the bride's family are poor, they will satirically mock at them in their song. There are standards the groom men expect from the bride's family, and if these standards are met, the family will be praised and appreciated in the *weedduu* as seen in the following poem:

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| W24. Worri fuudhaa qaba uddoo  | the groom's men have a separate place        |
| Fuudhee galee hiike quttoo     | (they) take the bride and untie her ornament |
| Arongollee abboo sheelo gamaan | Arangolle is far beyond Sheeloo              |
| Isaa kennu abboo tissee lamaan | let him be blessed with two herders          |
| Worri fuudhaa qaba uddoo       | the groom's men have a separate place        |
| Kociin citte ka surre'e        | the belts of the widows are untied,          |
| Quufi bulte gursummoole        | they are now blessed with plenty of food     |

This poem describes the respect that the groom's men should get from the host of the ceremony. They should be served well, and should be given a secluded place till they leave with the bride. *Quttoo* refers to the ornament that an unmarried girl wears. It is untied when she marries to signify that she is married. It also signifies that the lady is virgin, another form of respect that her family owes the groom's men. As the above poem illustrates, the fact that the bride is virgin is the sign of her family's honour to the groom as they brought up their daughter in a proper way. The family will be ashamed if their daughter failed to be virgin and she too will be mocked at by the groom and his relatives.

As seen in the above discussion, the overriding concerns of the *weedduu* present a host of social and cultural issues which the society express in their daily life. Issues about the cattle, the *qaalluu*, social status of owners of many cattle, the romantic affiliations of the youths, praise and criticism of the family of the bride, etc are raised in it. In addition to the above issues, the

*weedduu* of Guji deals with the making of hives and production of honey. As the benefit obtained from making hives and producing honey is so crucial, the activity of making the hive has got its own particular praise song. A man who is strong enough to make many hives and produce much honey is praised like a hero. Songs of the bee hive usually deal with the activity of the men in cutting trees alone, chopping them and covering the hives with long savannah grasses (W25 and W26).

### 3.1.2. Qeexala

This is one of the genres of Guji oral poetry which is usually associated with the *gadaa* initiation at the time when the system was functioning properly. It is similar to the *weedduu* in its context of performance, but many of the issues they raise are mostly quite at odds. At the outset, it is important to indicate the fact that the *qeexala* is erroneously understood as dealing only with the issue of war. Such an implication is observed in the work of Van de Loo (1991) who designated it as “war song”. Among the society, the question “*qeexaltee?*” means “Did you sing the *qeexala?*” But it can also be used to ask, “Did you finish ploughing your field?” The use of the word in the latter question implies that the recitation of *qeexala* is undertaken after the successful accomplishment of field work on plots of land. It is, therefore, a mistake to generalize it only as a song of war as there are many occasions at which it is recited, and many issues totally unrelated to the theme of war recited in it. It must have been because of the fact that *qeexala* is occasionally used as an instrument of instigating the cultural wrestling among the youths and as a mobilizing force in times of warfare that Van de Loo generalized it as a ‘war song’.

*Qeexala* is popular among the youth and dominantly deal with the adoration of *gadaa* leaders and the *qaalluu* for abundance, peace and prosperity the society enjoy under their administration. It is recited on social occasions such as marriage, *moggaasaa*, *arraffaa*, *tolfannoo* and *gadaa* transition ceremonies. The *qeexala* performed on various occasions serves a number of social purposes among the Guji society. What follows is the brief description of some of these purposes.

### 3.1.2.1. Qeexala in Festive Occasions

Ritual ceremonies celebrated among the Guji are main occasions for the recitation of *qeexala*. During these ceremonies, the Guji men and women enjoy themselves with the abundance of food and drink at the house of the host which brought them together in the same roof in a festive mood. The main enjoyment at such occasions, however, reside in the performance of the *qeexala* folk poems which address various issues which entertain the performers as well as the audience. The recitation at every performance starts with the praise of the great *qaalluu* who made them take pleasure in abundance. The following lines illustrate the praise addressed to the *qaalluu* at the beginning of the performance of the recitation of *qeexala* on ritual ceremonies.

Q3. Goobanaa ifii buluu fe'ee                      the morning star *qaalluu* wanted to sleep  
    Qaalluun bulee qalee                              and slaughtered the bull the next day  
    Kormi goobe qaalluun boone                      the bull has grown fat, *qaalluu* is honored

In this poem the *qaalluu* is addressed as a morning star (the full moon seen in the eastern sky at dawn) to indicate the brightness of his administration the people are looking forward to. The fact that there is abundance and prosperity among them is illustrated in the third line which describes the plump nature of the bull brought for sacrifice and that the reputation of the *qaalluu* is indicated. Honor comes for him only if the people live in abundance. The honor and reverence of the society for the *qaalluu* is reflected in many of the poems recited at these festive occasions. Q4, for instance describes the will the society has of the flourishing of the *qaalluu*.

### 3.1.2.2. Qeexala as Social Criticism and Praise

*Qeexala* is used among the Guji as an instrument to praise or criticize the leaders at different levels of administration. It is a means through which they express their appreciation of the person who contributed to the wellbeing of the society. The names of these individuals are raised in the song and embellished. *Gadaa* leaders, the *qaalluu*, *hayyuu* and local administrators at each village who are committed to keeping the peace of the Guji are appreciated in it.

It also expresses the society's hate and opposition of corrupted leaders who live by exploiting the masses. When life becomes full of hardship both for cattle and the people as a whole because of the maladministration, when the Guji land is invaded by other groups, and when the

administration fails to settle things in the society and fail to base their rules on the *gadaa* principles, the people express their opposition and hatred for the leaders in their *qeexala*. The following recitation demonstrates this fact.

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Q5. Qociin ta sukkiyyaa | the small axe belongs to the bigger;       |
| Cuffiin madaraan galte  | the knife is in its container              |
| Ega beeraawwiin baddee  | after the war was over,                    |
| Edeemaa qanxoon qadde   | Edeemaa has become poor (poverty stricken) |

The Guji man, Edeemaa, in the above verse, was the governor of a village during the *Dargue* regime. My informants explained that this man used to recruit only sons of the poor Guji for forced military service as they could not pay him bribe. A rich family can save its son from going to war by paying Edeemaa some bribe. It was based on this reality that the Guji sung the above poem after the overthrow of the military regime to demonstrate his shameful act of corruption. As the poem expresses, he became poor as he could no more bribe them since the military campaign is over.

Praising the local leaders or social figures is also accomplished in *qeexala*. If the person has administered the people without any bias, they will sing in praise of him in public. What follows is a demonstration of such *qeexala* in which the man named Areeroo is praised for his determination in keeping the peace of the Guji:

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Q6. Areero ulee mure  | Arero has cut the stick (made the law) |
| Araddaan qabbana bule | the Guji land has become peaceful      |

This is the praise that in his administration, Areeroo has made the people enjoy the fruit of peace by fixing laws. ‘*Ulee*’ which literally means ‘stick’ is seen as a symbol of the rule of law and legislation among the Oromo. What the poem demonstrates, here, is then that Areeroo made the people live peacefully by respecting the rules of the land.

### 3.1.2.3. Qeexala as an Initiator of Wrestling and Warfare

One of the functions of *qeexala* is that it serves as an instrument of motivation in times of wrestling and traditional warfare. As an instrument of the cultural fight it initiates the youths to demonstrate their bravery by struggling someone from other Guji village. When they want to initiate the struggle, the youths recite the following couplets to provoke the other group:

Q8. Konkolaachoo taphanna                      let's play by rolling on the ground  
Kot woldhaanchoo qabanna                      come, let you wrestle with me

The person who lets his opponent down is brave and praised by his acquaintances. The man who won the struggle is loved by the ladies. He can marry any of them as he is seen as a symbolic hero. The one who is packed down on the other hand is humiliated in front of his friends. The Guji like to have people coming from warrior family as their in-laws for it is of advantage in cases of avenge for ones family members or in order to gain much booty in times of war. In the same manner, the Guji girls value bravery of their mate. If they marry a man who is a hero in the village, it is a source of honour for them.

According to Tadesse (1995), in the distant past the merit of killing an enemy and a larger animal was highly honoured among the Guji. He relates the motive of the society to the traditional socio-political organization of the *gadaa* system, which assigns different rights and duties to the grades. One of the many duties that the *gadaa* grades had to take over at one time was warfare. Before assuming the position of leadership, the *gadaa* class is required wage war against a community that none of their ancestor had raided. Before conducting a raid, or defending the invading enemy, the Guji mobilize their people for the war. *Qeexala* recitation is usually performed to initiate the people to stand for the peace of the land. This form of *qeexala* matches with what Van de Loo (1991) labelled as 'war song'. The following couplet is selected to illustrate the poems that reflect the initiation for war.

Q9. Timee Gidaaboo booressa                      (the cattle) flock into Gidabo River and turn it to mud  
Gujiin gumaafuu sooressa                      the Guji are eager for vengeance

In this poem, we see the composer mobilizing the Guji people as a whole by appealing to their emotion through his praise of their determination in taking revenge against the enemy who has caused infliction. He compares the action of the cattle flocking into the river to drink water with

the marching of the Guji men towards the enemy. Because of their large number, the cattle turn the clean water of the river into mud. Likewise, when they march against the invaders, the Guji will turn the enemy to dust by fighting in vengeance of their lost relatives. In connection with vengeance of the enemy one of my informants repeatedly indicated that the Guji are zealous of avenging their enemy (Info: Ruufoo Sharoo).

In a similar manner, Q10 demonstrates the mobilization through praising the people and looking down on the enemy. Here, the enemy is compared to garbage which is washed away by heavy erosion. As the heavy erosion cleans away garbage from the roads, the poem implies, the Guji chases away the enemy to the bush. It is simply a call for a united action against the raiders. Every Guji man is asked to contribute weapons to keep the land and people free of the invading enemy.

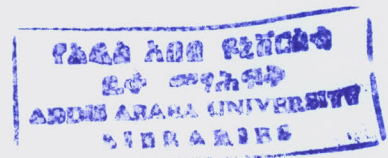
In addition to the mobilization, *qeexala* is performed when the people are back from the warfare. At this particular occasion the recitation addresses issues like how the war was fought, the people involved in the fight, the place and captives. As illustrated in Q11 which describes the setting of the war, the purpose behind conducting the war and the results obtained (that the tranquility of the cattle is kept and the *qaalluu* is honored), the folk poems deal with the adventures at the warfare.

#### 3.1.2.4. Qeexala as Motivation for Work

Another social function of *qeexala* is its use as an instrument of motivating workers on agricultural field. This function developed as a result of the shift in economic activity of the *Alabdu* Guji from pastoralist to mixed agriculture (Info: Gamade Shammara). When they are working on their plots of land, the Guji recite the *qeexala* to initiate each other to the hard work. The following verse demonstrates the pushing factor of the poem.

Q14. Gujii girjaa hujii diddaa  
Hujataan baddaa daassa  
Yoo hujje quuttee naatta  
Hujataan baddaa daassa  
Mee sodaadhu baddaa baatta

the Guji of *girja*, do you refuse to work?  
workers toil in the highlands  
if you work hard, you will eat well  
workers toil in the highlands  
let you not fear, you'll develop the highlands



In this poem, '*girja*' refers to the father of the four main clans of the Guji. Here, the composer refers to the original uniting father's children to get involved in the hard work on agricultural plots. The benefit of hard work has been indicated in the poem. Hard work is the source of sustainable food supply.

The same is true for the *qeexala* poem Q15 in which the people express the benefit of hard work on their plot of land in addition to rearing the cattle. The third and fourth lines metaphorically explain the benefit and hardship involved in producing cereal crops and *enset* (false banana).

The third line is used as an introduction into the description of the difficulty of preparing food from *enset*. As it is difficult to cut a tree from a deep cave, it is difficult to wait for long to have a food made of *enset* as it takes a long process. In contrast to this, if the society produces barley, it will be easy to prepare the food and be served within a few minutes.

As illustrated in this section (3.1.2), the *qeexala* of the Guji embraces various issues that reflect the socio-cultural reality of the society. It serves important roles in the life of the people by generating festive mood, addressing their criticism and praise of administrators, initiating cultural wrestling and mobilizing the people in times of war, and by acting as energizer in the context of social work.

### **3.1.3. Geerarsa**

*Geerarsa* is one of the genres of Oromo oral poetry usually recognized as reflecting the many experiences embedded in the society's social life. Among the Guji, it is usually recited by warriors and hunters of big game animals. The most famous warriors are celebrated in it based on their achievements. The *geerarsa* poems can be taken as praise poems of the traditional hero, as the composer is inspired by the heroic deeds to compose, recite and/or sing the folk poems, which is full of words of praise. A hero is given a special position in the Guji traditional life. He is respected, praised and feared by the society as a whole. The test of the courage of the person is measured by his participation in hunting, warfare against the enemy or in the traditional wrestling and his accomplishment at these occasions. *Geerarsa* also includes protest poems which denounce the socio-political adversities experienced by the Oromo people.

The heroic song poems of the Guji may be classified into two major groups based on the dominant issues raised in them. A brief description of these divisions is presented as follows.

### **3.1.3.1. Recitations of Hunters of Big Game Animals**

One of the ways in which a man demonstrates his bravery among the Guji was participation in hunting. A hunter who has killed big game animals such as lions, buffaloes and elephants is perceived as a hero who demonstrates his courage through undertaking a hazardous expedition. He is respected among the society and has the right to recite the heroic song of killers in which he adores himself and enumerate his heroic experiences and the danger of going on hunting expeditions in the wilderness. The praise in honour of the hunter's horse, criticism of the coward and praise of the courageous hunter and the expression of motives for participating in the expedition are three of the major issues raised in the recitations of the hunters.

#### **3.1.3.1.1. Recitation in Honour of the Hunter's Horse**

Hunters may go to the field either on horseback or on foot. If the hero did the killing through the help of his horse, he praises it in his recitation. The hero addresses his horse like his colleague and appreciates its activity as illustrated in the following lines:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| G1. Afaan hin beektu golee kiyya,<br>Gurruma caqafatta,<br>Anillee gurguraa hin jiru<br>Falfaltu duubuma haa gaafattu | my <i>Gole</i> , you don't know my language<br>you listen only with your ears,<br>I will not sell you my horse,<br>though the wicked have asked your price<br>behind my back |
|---|--|

In this poem, the hero describes that even though the horse (*Gole*) cannot speak as human beings; it listens to the directions given to it and accomplishes the task accordingly. Because the high quality of the horse at the hunting ground is admirable, other people are inquiring to buy the horse in disguise. People are competing to buy the horse because of its gallantry. The owner calls them (those who are asking for the price) iniquitous as he loves his horse and does not want to miss it. In this verse, we see him giving a promise to his horse not to sell it to anyone.

The praises in honour of the horses also reflect their proficiency at hunting. In G2, for instance, the horseman is addressing his expert at hunting horse as if it could listen to him. Having killed

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|   |  |
|---|--|
| G1. Afaan hin beektu golee kiyya,<br>Gurruma caqafatta,<br>Anillee gurguraa hin jiru<br>Falfaltu duubuma haa gaafattu | my <i>Gole</i> , you don't know my language<br>you listen only with your ears,<br>I will not sell you my horse,<br>though the wicked have asked your price<br>behind my back |
|---|--|

In this poem, the hero describes that even though the horse (*Gole*) cannot speak as human beings; it listens to the directions given to it and accomplishes the task accordingly. Because the high quality of the horse at the hunting ground is admirable, other people are inquiring to buy the horse in disguise. People are competing to buy the horse because of its gallantry. The owner calls them (those who are asking for the price) iniquitous as he loves his horse and does not want to miss it. In this verse, we see him giving a promise to his horse not to sell it to anyone.

The praises in honour of the horses also reflect their proficiency at hunting. In G2, for instance, the horseman is addressing his expert at hunting horse as if it could listen to him. Having killed

an antelope, the hunter discusses with his horse (*jaldo*) whether they will return home or go on hunting. The fact that the horses are helpful in making the hunter succeed in their killing of big game animals make the horses honoured among the Guji hunters and force them sing the heroic song in praise of them. Other poems included in the appendix part also demonstrate similar situation in which the expert horse is praised and revered when it is backing home from hunting (G44 and G45). Beyond their activity at the hunting ground, references are made to the care given to such horses in the recitations of the killers as seen in G3 and G4.

### 3.1.3.1.2. Criticism of the Coward

Another important issue raised in the heroic recitation of the hunters is the contrast between fearful and fearless hunter. This recitation alternates between the hunter singer and excuses another might make for not being able to hunt. The poem is recited by the fearless hunter who imagines the responses of the coward hunter. The following lines describe the criticism of the hunter singer about the coward who refused to go hunting for fear of hardship.

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| G5. Garri gamaa hurufaa | on this side the soil is soft                     |
| Ha gamanaa hurufaa      | on that side the soil is soft                     |
| Oolaan hudduu hurufaa   | the coward remains at home, his buttocks are soft |
| Daakuu gubbaa gulufaa   | and he grinds grain on the stone                  |

The man who remains at home while others go hunting is considered as a coward, a woman, who does womanish activity at home and whose buttocks become soft as he sits the whole day at home. The hunter-singer goes on with the criticism by expressing the false fabrications of stories of the coward to defend himself of a criticism from the killers as seen in G6 which illustrates the tales of bravado the coward invents in order to regain respect. But, other hunters will mock at him by indicating that he is obsessed with food (W7) and stays at home for fear of hunger which is seen as the test of courage and endurance of a hero.

The song also indicates that the coward at last rationalizes his weakness by displacing the sources of his fear as originating from his family's constant prohibition of his holding spear when even herding cattle.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| G9. Worri kiyya na malee<br>Kutaa tikaa na haale<br>Garaan kiyya na malee<br>Gugganaa dheefa haale | my parents do not like me<br>they only want me to keep cattle<br>my stomach contracts with fear<br>and I run away from running antelope |
|--|---|

Here, the reciter is expressing that his parents did not give him spear, they only wanted him keep cattle like small children do. In fact, he admits that he runs away with panic like a child when the antelope itself runs away out of fear of being killed by him.

### 3.1.3.1.3. Expression of the Motive of Hunting

One of major issues raised in the heroic recitation of killers of big game animals is the expression of the motives for killing the animals. One among these motives reflected in the recitations is the desire to keep the peace and tranquillity of cattle. As seen from the following example, the killing of the wild animals could be undertaken to keep the serenity of the cattle.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| G10. Baddaa galti gilibaan,<br>gaafa hinqaddu dulle<br>Gaafan neenqa ajjeese,<br>loowwan keenna rafee bulee | the antelope lives on his high lands,<br>the duiker has no horns<br>(the/day) when I killed the lion,<br>our cattle spent a peaceful night |
|---|--|

This poem describes that the motive for killing the lion is to help the cattle spend a peaceful night in their kraal, not for a mere interest of hunting. The same issue is also described in G11 in which the reciter expresses that he killed a lion in defence of the mother of calves.

Another major motive expressed is the motive of obtaining trophy. Such a motive is accomplished through an organized hunting of a group of men who go far distance on foot or on horseback to kill and obtain trophy. When they are back after a successful hunt, they boast about their adventure and the trophy obtained as a result of it. The following lines illustrate this case.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| G13. Abbaan biyyaa abbaa kiyya,<br>Anbassaan midda kiyya<br>Haluu haadha waati'ii<br>Maaliin Bushee ijjeese dhabeedhaati | the governor of the land is my father<br>now my trophy is a lion<br>in revenge of the mother of calves<br>(I) the tactful son of Bushee, never miss a shot. |
|--|---|

A son who is brave and obtains many trophies is considered as the honour of his father. In the above poem, the killer of the lion is celebrating his deeds by referring to the honour of his

father. He took revenge on the wild animal that had previously killed their cattle, the mother of calves. His accomplishment of this revenge is very much praised in the family and even among the society. The same motive is observed as causing the hunt of the wild animals in G14.

### 3.1.3.2. Recitations of Heroes of Warfare

In the Guji Oromo tradition, the people who have killed big game animals or enemies are considered as heroes and respected among the society. The degree of the honour given to them varies based on their accomplishments. The following verse describes the difference in the level of honour between them.

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| G15. Woorri neenqaa saree | the killers of lion are like dogs        |
| Warri gafarsaa looni      | those of buffalo are like cows           |
| Nama nama ijjeeset korma  | the killer of an enemy is brave          |
| Kanaaf akkana rom'a       | that is why he growls (shiver) like that |

In the above poem the hero who has killed a lion is perceived as if he has killed a dog in comparison with the man who killed an enemy. The man who has killed a buffalo, on the other hand, is taken as if he killed cows. This implies that what they have done is common and simple when compared to the one who mutilated an enemy. The singer undermines the hunters to foreground the accomplishment of heroes who killed the enemy at warfare.

The main issues raised in the heroic recitation of a killer of an enemy include: self praise and appreciation of his friends, revenge, mobilization for war, etc. The following description illustrates some of the major themes in the folk poems recited by heroes.

The theme of praise of self and friends is one of the main issues raised in the recitation of the heroes of warfare. The performance usually begins with the hero's praise of himself in which he wins the heart of his audiences through using expressions which mark his heroic undertaking such as "*Janni urkoo geerare, jarana takkaa eegaa*" (W16) which might be translated as "let you pay attention to the recitation of the resolute hero". The report of his heroic deeds then follows in the recitation in which he indicates the place where he succeeded and the fascinating skill of his recitation as seen from the following *geerarsa* lines.

G17. Geeloo ejjee geeraree  
 Hafuura qoom'aa buusa  
 Qoontuu qoontuu geerarsa  
 Hanfalaa hidhaa buusa

at geelo, I recite the heroic song of warrior  
 and weaken the power of the enemy  
 by singing satirical heroic songs,  
 I loosen the enemy group's belt (*hanfala*)

In the above lines of the *geerarsa* folk poem, the hero indicates that he sang the heroic song after killing an enemy at the place called *Geeloo*. He is boasting about his courage of going to the enemy land to demonstrate his manhood by killing the enemy. The *geerarsa* recited by the hero includes satirical elements which scorns the enemy group and let them become furious. It also illustrates that the way the killer boasts in performing the recitation is terrorizing. The loosening of the belt demonstrates their fear. A determined person ties his belt tight and is never shaken with fear of the enemy roaring from the other side, but what the above poem illustrates is that the enemy group are shivering with fear. The hero upholds himself and denigrates his enemies.

Similarly, the recitations reflect the group effort of heroes of a village who participated in the warfare or raid. G18 and G19 demonstrate the appreciation of the heroes of their combined effect in demolishing the enemy. In G18, the reciter describes the heroes from the *giddicho* clan as “*goota furfurii*” and “*guchii shaaloo*” which means “brave heroes” and “fast as ostrich” respectively to indicate their furious and active nature.

The second major theme recurrent in the recitation of the heroes of warfare is the issue of avenging the death of one's relative. A man who has lost his father always looks for opportunities to retaliate the enemy by participating in warfare. Unless he does this, he is considered as a coward. The following recitation demonstrates a case in which a person feels proud of avenging the death of his father.

G22. Limaatii qotee bishaan baaseera  
 Diina muree arreettii warraa baaseera  
 Abbaan du'ee ijoollee anaa lakkise  
 Haluu abbaa ijoollee  
 Dhiira muree buyyoora harkise

I have dug the land and made the water flow through  
 I have slaughtered the enemy and satisfied the family  
 My father was killed; I am taking care of his children  
 In vengeance of the children's father,  
 I have slaughtered the enemy and pulled him on dust

The loss of one's father is a big loss which disperses the whole family. When it is a natural death, the case is not taken as a serious matter as it is a common occurrence. When it is caused

by the enemy, however, it has a particular focus. The dead person's son is expected to make the family happy by avenging the enemy group through participating in raid, in addition to carrying the responsibility of bringing up his brothers and sisters. In the above verse, the first two lines, analogically describe the accomplishment of a desirable task. In the first line, the purpose of digging the land is obtaining water for irrigation. The water that flows from the stream makes the land ready for plough by watering it. In the same way, the purpose of killing an enemy described in the second line is to avenge the death of one's father and quench the thirst of the family for retaliation.

A man who failed to avenge the death of his relatives is always troubled by the thought of accomplishing his duty so as to be free of the mockery of the society. He expresses in his recitation that he could not make his father happy as his friends pleased their father with their heroic deeds. This idea is expressed in G23 in which the son expressed his regret by criticizing his own cowardice. He even prays to God not to bless cowards in his village. What the poem illustrates is that the son who is unable to meet the requirement of a brave person is a failure to his father.

Generally, the motive behind participating in warfare as seen from the above discussion is to feel free of the duty of avenging one's relative. In case the person failed to do that, he will be haunted and become restless as illustrated in the *geerarsa* poem in G24.

### **3.2. Analysis of Major Literary Devices**

Tropes are striking features of oral poetry in which words and phrases are used to embellish the language of literature in such a way that it produces evocative and profound social meaning that transcends the standard meaning (Gikandi, 2003:417). Dealing with them, then, helps in understanding feelings and passions which are best painted and made more colourful by the use of ornamental vocabulary. Under this section, the analysis of the major literary devices employed in the three genres of the Guji folk poetry (*geerarsa*, *qeexala* and *weedduu*) is presented with selected examples from each genre. As the main concern of the study is on the thematic variation and the change and continuity in performance, the researcher has focused

only on few of the literary devices observed in the poems. These include: repetition, parallelism, coupling/ piling, simile and metaphor, and personification.

### 3.2.1. Repetition

Repetition is one of the dominant literary devices frequently observed in the three genres of the Guji lyric folk poems. There are various kinds of repetition observed in the three genres. Three of the forms are: (1) repetition of words or phrases on a single line, (2) repetition of a line at different intervals and (3) repetition of words throughout the verse.

Repetitions which occur on the same line, usually the first lines, seem to be used to keep the rhythm of the line with the next one. The first lines of *geerarsa* folk poems, for instance, are usually short and the performer repeats the phrase or word to balance the meter of the two lines as clearly observed in the following couplets:

G19. Ilma Hoomii ilma Hoomii  
Maqaa Shendoo baafadhu

the son of Hoomii the son of Homii  
change your name into Shendo

G47. Harreen badde harreen bade  
Gangaloo gamaa dhaqxe

the donkey is missing the donkey is missing  
it must have gone to the ashes of that field

In the above two examples we see the direct repetition of a phrase (in the first example) and a clause (in the second example). If the repeated expressions are omitted, the rhythm of the poem would be affected. In addition to maintaining the rhythm of the poem, the repetition in the first example illustrates a case in which the oral poet puts emphasis on the central figure of the poem. In the poem, it is the son of a man named Hoomii which is addressed; the repetition, then, implies the emphasis the performer is paying to this person. A similar repetition is observed in many of the *geerarsa* poems (see G14, G38, G39, G48-50).

The other repetition form displayed is the repetition of a line at intervals. This kind of repetition is employed to provide a sing-song quality which helps the audiences participate in the performance by saying the repeated lines and identifying themselves with it. In G6, the first line is repeated after the next up to the end of the verse. A similar repetition is observed in G52 at which we see the central issue repeated in the first and third line verbatim. The expression “*tokkosaa harki tolee*” is repeated in the third line to emphasize the success the warriors are

experiencing on the warfare. Such a repetition seems to have been employed to foreground the heroic adventure of the hero.

This repetition is dominantly observed both in the *qeexala* and *weedduu* genres of the Guji. These genres mostly employ repetitions which make the audiences participate in the recitations. All the poems from W30 to W33 show the same feature of repetition in which the first clause of a line of the poem is repeated at the end of the next line and again in the first line of the next line. In some of the *weedduu* poems, all but few words are repeated (W13-W17).

### 3.2.2. Parallelism

Parallelism is another literary device seen to have been dominantly employed in the folk poems, especially in *geerarsa* of the Guji. This device is a mechanism through which the oral poet brings together ideas and images that may seem independent of one another in a balanced relationship. Whilst many instances of parallels appear in the poems incorporated under appendix, a few of the analogues may be cited at this juncture.

G24. **Areera unan malee**, mi'een nama hin gabbittu  
**Buusanii muran malee**, urkoon nama hin raffittu

G56. **Qananii** malee maanti bifa fuula  
**Woyyuu** malee maanti guduruu hiika

In the above examples, parallels are drawn between the expressions in bold. In the first example (that is, G24, the half lines of each of the lines are parallel to each other. '*Areera unan malee*' (unless one drinks yoghurt) is parallel to '*buusanii muran malee*' (unless one castrates the enemy) as they are the preconditions to the ideas expressed in the remaining corresponding half lines. Drinking yoghurt is considered as pleasing as castrating an enemy and this links the two beginning clauses of the couplet. Besides, the words '*dhugan*' and '*muran*' exhibit sound parallelism. The remaining clauses are also parallel in that both of them explain issues which come only after some preconditions are fulfilled. The fact that fresh milk (*mi'ee*) cannot make someone fat is compared to the fact that vengeance (*urkoo*) makes someone sleepless. In both of the clauses, the negative impact of failing to fulfil what is desired is expressed. The second example present parallels between two agents that are liable to do activities which are quite

different but made similar by the parallel presentation of them in the couplet and the fact that the duties are done only by the specified agents ‘*Qananii*’ and ‘*woyyuu*’. A host of similar parallels are displayed in the folk poems included under the appendix part.

### 3.2.3. Coupling/ Piling

Piling is the third device predominantly seen in the *geerarsa* employed by the oral artist to impress the audiences. In coupling, one detail or idea is piled with another to build a climax. It links details in verse. One of the manifestations is the link of the last detail in one line to the first detail in the next. Such occurrences are common in the Guji *geerarsa*. Three of the examples are cited below;

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>G57. Leegamo <b>tuulaa</b> jiraa<br/> <b>Tuulaa</b> gamaa <b>neeqqi</b> ittanaa jiraa<br/> <b>Neeqqi</b> dooddo fondogaan karra jira</p> | <p>Legamoo is at Tuulaa by now<br/> beyond the hill of Tuulaa, a lion is roaring<br/> the giant lion of <i>Dodo</i> is on the way</p> |
|---|---|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>G58. Gooba <b>Baree</b> himani<br/> <b>Baree</b> Waalleen himani<br/> Odaa <b>hiddaan</b> himani<br/> <b>Hiddii baalaan</b> himani<br/> <b>Baallii</b> koolaan himani</p> | <p>Gooba is identified by his father Baree<br/> Baree is identified by his father Waallee<br/> the oak tree is identified by its root<br/> and <i>hiddii</i> by its leaves<br/> Baallii is identified by its feathers</p> |
|--|---|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>G59. Dhala dancha lukkuu <b>sillatti</b><br/> <b>Silla</b> danchaa hoolee <b>dalluu</b> dhibe<br/> <b>Dalluu</b> danchaa ka raada <b>gooni</b> dhibe<br/> <b>Goonni</b> Galgoolee shibbiriin kaate</p> | <p>the hen lays many eggs but there is no <i>silгаа</i> for it<br/> the <i>silгаа</i> is enjoyable but the sheep has no hump<br/> the hump is fleshy, the heifer has got no bravery<br/> the brave son of Galgole is ready for causing<br/> terror</p> |
|---|--|

In the above example, we observe the piling of words in bold. In G57 the word ‘*tuula*’ is used as a last detail for the first line and the first detail in the second line, and the word ‘*neeqqi*’ comes in the middle of the second line repeated at the beginning of the third line. In G58, the link between ‘Baree’ in line 1 and 2, ‘*hidda*’ and *hiddii* in lines 3 and 4 respectively, and between ‘*baala*’ and ‘*baallii*’ line 4 and 5 respectively shows instances of piling. G59 also demonstrates the piling of details which link the four lines together. In the verse, we see the tie between ‘*sillatti*’ (line-1) and ‘*silla*’ (line- 2); ‘*dalluu*’ at the end of line 2 and beginning of line 3; ‘*goonni*’ at the end of line 3 and at the beginning of line 4. The link we observe between each

of the words show the cohesion of the details and give a sing song feature to the recitations of the poems.

### 3.2.4. Simile and Metaphor

Vivid similes also abound in *geerarsa* and the other two genres of Guji folk poetry. The following example from the *geerarsa* genre employ simile as a device to foreground the points in the verse. The qualities of the hero are compared with his horse, a young lion and another hero named Dashayo.

|      |                                     |  |
|------|-------------------------------------|--|
| G19. | -----                               | -----  |
|      | Akka shendootti itti siqii gaafadhu | like the brave Shendo, get closer to the fight |
|      | Akka gaamura mishayyoo.....         | like the young lion.....                       |
|      | Akka mishaa Dashayyoo.....          | like the good Dashayyo                         |

In the above poem, simile is used as a means to form the mental picture of the hero through explicit comparison of the person to a lion and another brave hero.

Metaphorical expressions are also employed in the three genres discussed. One of the most striking aspects of the metaphorical language in *geerarsa* recitals is the ascription of human characteristics, thoughts and emotions to animals. The following demonstrate the metaphorical expressions used to foreground the theme of the issues enumerated in each of them. The expressions: “*Goljaa kallaada adii*” in G14, “*Roophilaa Badhaasoo Bonuu*” in G60, “*Neenqa neenqa duchiisu dhiirti mara sodaatti*” in G12, “*booruu bishaan baddeessaa, boora bifa jaldeessaa*” in W61 all are metaphorical expressions which give colour to the description of individuals in the recitations. In G60 it is used to foreground the fast nature of the man on the battle ground; the one in G12 is used to express the courage of the warrior and the last one describes the sharpness/accuracy of the hero.

### 3.2.5. Personification

Personification is usually employed in cattle praise poems of the *weedduu*. Yet it is observable in the three genres. In *geerarsa*, for instance, the horseman gives a characteristic feature of a human being to his horse and conducts dialogue with it (G46). Cows, bulls and calves are also addressed with some human qualities in the *weedduu* songs. The song in honour of cows, (in W4) for instance, addresses a cow as stupid “*gowwaa*”. It is also dominant in the *weedduu* due to the fact that the Guji address their cattle like human beings.

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| W59. Ashuu haadha tiyyaa loowwanii | the cattle, my mother (caretaker)  |
| Gaararra yaati lootuu              | the spy wanders on the hill  |
| Loowwaniyoo shantama geetti hootuu | the calves of our cattle has become many (fifty)   |
| Loowwaniyoo dhakaa jala bobba’ii   | my cattle, go in peace under the rocks   |
| Dhaqaa gala hobba’i                | let you be in abundance of grasses in and out<br>(let you become successful all the day) |

Here, the cattle are personified in that they are addressed like human beings. They are depicted as mothers or caretakers whom the reciter adores and prays for their peace all the way through the day. A similar issue is raised in W54 which personifies the cattle as the father of children.

In general, though the analysis is not detailed, the three genres: *weedduu*, *geerarsa* and *qeexala* poems, exhibit the various tropes employed to articulate the issues of the reciters in arresting manner. Among the three genres however, the *geerarsa* employs much of the literary devices which the written poems usually demonstrate as devices to create literary effects.

## Chapter Four

### Major Aspects of Transformation in the Guji Folk Poetry

The traditional culture of a society is a continual selection and interpretation of its age old wisdom (Storey, 2006). As a result of this process, it is always in a state of volatility. The complex set of factors occurring at different times in the course of history of a society shapes its tradition in some way. Such transformation is recorded in the oral tradition of the society which includes oral literature. The Guji Oromo society's tradition is not an exception to this. The oral tradition of the Guji portrays the profound changes experienced by the society as a result of the emerging situations. As oral literature gets its essence from the general socio-cultural and historical reality, it depicts the change and continuity experienced. Toelken (1996:147) elaborates this feature of oral literature saying, "it [oral literature] picks the colourations, nuances, and styles of the group among whom it circulates, and gets continually rephrased to suit their responses to time, place, rhetoric, and performance". All the significant features which the oral literature picks need to be discerned to see its place in the contemporary time.

In this section of the paper, some of the major aspects of the transformation of the Guji folk poetry are presented by focusing on the three genres selected and discussed in the previous chapter (that is, *geerarsa*, *qeexala* and *weedduu*). The dominant change and continuity in the content or theme, context of performance and the main reasons inducing the changes or helping the perpetuation of the folk poem are presented in line with the socio-cultural and historical reality of the people.

#### 4.1. Trends of Content Transformation/ Thematic Variation

The analysis of the folk poems provided in the previous section (3.1) is based on the context of indigenous *gadaa* system of the Oromo which has now become a dim memory. The folk poems reflect the secular and religious realities of the people and mostly deal with their ritual activities. As a result of the new situations encountered after the conquest of the Guji land, the system

failed to function properly and the culture of the people showed a remarkable shift as observed in their folk poetry. The following deals with the variations in the themes of the poems.

#### 4.1.1. Thematic Variation in Geerarsa

Guji-Oromo contact with the Amhara and other groups from the North started with Menelik's conquest and incorporation of their land into the Ethiopian Empire in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a result of this contact, the lyrical poems which once had reflected the ritualistic and ceremonious feature of the people gradually started to incorporate new themes and forms as they encountered new socio-cultural and political realities in the changing social climate of the Guji. The *geerarsa* recitation which used to reflect the heroic deeds of heroes at the traditional warfare and hunting began to incorporate protest poems which reflect the society's opposition against the socio-political situation of the time.

The *geerarsa* poems collected from the contemporary Guji elders and the youth trace such a reality. The historical injustices experienced by the society, the exploitation of their labor and resources and the devaluation of their indigenous tradition are some of the major issues raised in the new forms of *geerarsa* recitation as reflected in the following examples.

|                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| G26. Qotattee fudhatte warqee keenna | they have looted our gold mines      |
| Gurgurtee leessite muka teenna       | they have sold all our trees         |
| Hidhadhaa ol ka'aa nama keennaa      | my people, let you get ready for war |

The above lines reflect the protest of the people motivated by the looting and destruction of their natural resources by the people in power. The poem is a call for defending the resources of one's land from the exploitation and looting through a united action. In the third line, the people are advised to stand united and get ready for the fight to make their resources kept from destruction. The gold and the trees from the area have never been used for the benefit of the local people, but the corrupted administrators are making much benefit out of them. Such a call for a united effort to protest the unfair exploitation of their labor force and natural resources are made in many of the *geerarsa* poems (G25, G29, G30, and G31).

In G29 and G30, we see the economic exploitation of the Guji by the landlords. In addition to serving them with the field works (husbands) and domestic chores (wives), the Guji were expected to bring bribes in kind. They were expected to bring the he-goats, bulls and one-third of all their agricultural productions. When they consume all their productions and left with cabbage, they demonstrate their agony through their folk poem recitations. In G29, the performer reveals the double exploitation of the society by the local governors. It is a paradox to feed on only cabbages while one gives his he-goat as a bribe to the landlord. A very similar double exploitation is expressed in G30 which the society manifests the agony they experienced under the heavy hand of the exploiters. The tenants who work the whole day for the landlord do not get enough food for their daily consumption. Even though they toil and sweat over the hard work, the production goes to the coffers of the landlords.

The folk poems also reflect the mistreatment of the society by the local governors (*shumii*). In addition to exploiting the masses, the *shumii* used to abuse the wives of Guji men for sexual gratification. The following poem demonstrates the voice of protest of the Guji man who denounces such action of the governor.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>G27. Bishaan karra duraa waraabe Makuraa<br/>         Etuun tiyya jedhuu fudhate ka biraa<br/>         Bishaan ulaa ulaa loonti jalaan una<br/>         Shaggee laccoo durra maradhee siin bula</p> | <p>Makuriya is fetching water from my stream<br/>         he abducted another lady while I complain about mine<br/>         the cattle drink water from the cave<br/>         my darling, may I spend the night in your embrace</p> |
|--|---|

The above verse describes remonstrance of a Guji man who has lost his wife to a *shuumii*. The speaker indicates that while he is complaining about his wife, he sees the same man abducting another lady. This is a disgrace to the society's culture at least when it becomes a public issue. The man wishes his lady not to be captured by such indecorous man. The central theme of the above verse lies in the second and fourth lines. The first and the third line also metaphorically support the idea. In the first line for instance, the reciter indicates that the fetching of water by Mekuriya from the compound of the victim is an indication of his intention to humiliate the man which is clearly described in the second line. A similar issue is raised in G28 which further elucidates the haughtiness of the appointed governors who meddle with married life for gratifying their temporal desire.

Another major issue raised in the transformed form of *geerarsa* is the vanishing of the indigenous values both in religious and secular sphere. The coming and spread of Christianity in the Guji land had accelerated the eroding of the indigenous religion. Such domination is met by protests in the folk poems of the society as seen in the following verse.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>G33. Alattaa lafa gaddaa<br/>         Haloo biyya argaddaa<br/>         Qananiin loontii madda<br/>         Biyya gumii Gadaa,<br/>         Dammaqaan buleera qeesii<br/>         Qannaanee si gabbarra, waaqa keetii abeetii<br/>         Abeetotaalle oolu, bulcheera kaayii keetii</p> | <p>Alatta is the land of misery<br/>         in Haloo, the green land of savannah grasses,<br/>         the source of luxurious life is cattle<br/>         in the homestead of the <i>gadaa</i> council<br/>         Damaqa has bowed down for priests<br/>         making us serve the priest, and bow for his God.<br/>         whatever we pray the whole day, our fate is<br/>         already decided</p> |
|--|---|

In the above poem, the performer describes the forced situation in which the people are made to bow down for the religious leader of the new religion without their will. The oral poet is describing the fact that Damaqa, has chosen to serve the priest, and forced his people to do same. He is enquiring in this poem that there is no logical reason for the man to surrender calmly. The last line of the poem clearly depicts the superficial nature of the prayer of the society, as they had no interest in doing the prayer from the start. They are describing that they know their fate is not in the hands of the priests aided by the convert man Damaqa. The superficiality of their acceptance of the religion is further illustrated in G34 which is a proverbial expression of the society's anguish about the imposition.

The criticism of the declining of the indigenous traditions is also the main themes in the current forms of heroic recitation of *geerarsa*. In their recitals of the poems they include expressions in defense of the original harmonious custom against the invading new ones seen as dangerous. In G35 and G36, we see such criticisms; in G35 criticism about the addiction of women to alcohol, and in G36 criticism regarding the new way of contracting marriage are presented.

The *geerarsa* poem also responds to the various social realities happening in the life of the Guji as demonstrated in G37, which illustrate the legal prohibition of warfare and hunting, and in G38, which portrays the protest of the injustices done against the society by the government in 1995 (E.C). A host of other issues included in the other *geerarsa* folk poems depict the recurrent socio- cultural and historical realities of the people. .

The influence of media is much more observed in the recitation of the youth as the poems collected from them reveals. The style of the recitation of the youngsters is at odds with that of the elders. Though they say that they learned the recitations from their fathers, much of the expressions they use seem to be copied from what they heard through the media or from printed cassettes. Three of my informants Girmaa Dambi, Galgoo Sharoo, and Ethiopia Kotoo's *geerarsa* recitation reflect such influence. In G39, we see Galgoo (22 years old) incorporating the recitation style of *geerarsa* of other Oromo groups, particularly, the Western and central regions which has a formulaic beginning. In the poems collected from elders the formulaic phrases repeated are "lolee lolee" for killers of enemies and "balo balo" for killers of big game animals. These expressions are replaced with "*geeraraan jiraa*" in Galgoo's recitation. Ethiopia Kotoo's *geerarsaa* recitation like Galgoo's is similar to the other Oromo *geerarsa*. His recitations are however full of his improvisations in which he indicated some socio-cultural and political issues of the present day Guji. The style of its recitation is borrowed from the original Guji *geerarsa* recitation.

G40. Kotoo abbaan kiyyaa  
 Hindeettii baadha kiyyaa  
 Gaafa lolli jabaate  
 Saffii ergate gara kiyyaa  
 Dhadhaa ilma Galalchaa  
 Akka xajjii kiyyaa,  
 Jara kaan galche biyyaa

Kotoo is my father  
 Hindeeti is my mother  
 when the war gets stronger  
 they call up on me.  
 (I) the brave son of Galalcha clan,  
 (I) chase the enemy to their belongings,  
 just like I send, the sip of mead to my stomach.

Here, we see the youth praising his family and his bravery which is very similar to the theme expressed in the *geerarsa* recitations collected from elders. The source of his skill of reciting the poem, as he expressed is his father. Based on such a background the youth of Guji which Ethiopia Kotoo represents, (actually few of them are versed in it) improvise with new historical facts as in the following verse.

G41. Abbaan bulchaa hiyyeessaa  
 Dhufe Mellesee ilmi Zeenaa  
 Mellesee dhufee ka'ee  
 Mangistuun ba'e keenaa  
 Warra Mellesee jibbu  
 Qalma geessina qeeraa

the father of the poor  
 Meles the son of Zenawi has come  
 when Meles came to power  
 Mengistu fled through Kenya  
 those who hate Meles  
 are sent to abattoirs (slaughter house)

From the above verse, we can see that the folk poem genre started to be used as a praise of public figures. Such praise poems are usually staged (recited at stages organized by the local administrative bodies, on meetings, bazaars, etc). According to my informants, the name of any public figure appreciated by the society can be used in the above poem. The contemporary political atmosphere which is in fact the face value observation of the day is represented in the transformed form of the society's folk poems. Inherently however, the people use their folk songs to demonstrate their agony and despair as in G38.

The government or leader who has completed his term of rule and left the position for the new one is usually criticized for not doing this and that in the contemporary *geerarsa* of the Guji. The immediate predecessor of Mengistu has been criticized in the following verse during the Dargue regime.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>G42. Hiyyeessa bulchi jennaan<br/>         Bulchaa itti wallaale,<br/>         Du'ee bade aanne Tafarii Bantii<br/>         Qalaadi haa hafu jennaan</p> | <p>when he was given the power<br/>         Teferi failed to bring justice to the poor<br/>         when the feudal system came to an end<br/>         why did the EPRP fled to the highlands?</p> |
|---|--|

In the above poem, Teferi Banti is criticized for not bringing justice to the poor and in the verse cited before that, Meles is presented as the father of the poor. As can be seen from the transformation of *qeexala* folk poem, the person praised during his time of government is criticized when he is replaced by a new one. The fact that the folk poems criticizing the contemporary government are suppressed when the governance is active may be because of the fear of bearing the consequences as indicated by my informants who preferred to talk about the past rather than the present.

#### **4.1.2. Thematic Variation in Qeexala**

The *qeexala* folk poem of the *gadaa* tradition presents the various socio-cultural and ritual performances of the Guji society. Like the *geerarsa* genre, it has undergone transformation of both content and performance. The original *qeexala* usually raises issue about the *qaallu*, abundance of cattle, traditional wrestling and warfare, *gadaa* ceremonies and various ritual practices among the society. As a result of the shift in the socio-economic and political reality in

the course of history of the Guji, this genre also began to incorporate new subject matters. The *qeexala* addressing the economic reality of the pastoralist Guji began to deal with crop production as a result of the shift in economic reality of the society as seen in the following poem.

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Q16. Gujii Girjaa hujii diddaa? | the Guji of Gitrjaa, do you refuse to work? |
| Hujataan baddaa daassa          | workers toil in the forest                  |
| Yoo hujjate quuftee naatta      | if you work hard, you eat well              |
| Hujataan baddaa daassa          | if you work hard, you eat well              |
| Mee sodaadhu baddaa baatta      | be courageous, you will develop the forest  |

This is an important indication of the manifesting power of the oral poetry of a society's ever dynamic socio-economic and cultural reality.

The praise the *qeexala* used to address about the *qaalluu* in the previous time began to be used for the heads of state which successively administered the country. When the Dargue came in to power after the 1974 revolution, for instance, the people denounced the deposed feudal government in their *qeexala* recitation and praised the socialist government of Mengistu. The following *qeexala* poem demonstrates this.

|                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Q18. Oo biifolee, | oh, my affluent people |
| Mangee biifaa     | Mange prospers         |
| Biiifa birraa     | the beauty of autumn,  |
| Biifolee,         | my affluent ones       |
| Mange biifa       | Mange prospers         |
| Biifni kiyjaa,    | success is mine,       |
| Biifolee          | my affluent ones       |
| Mange biifa       | Mange prospers         |

This is a praise song of the Mengistu government performed in the style of praise song of the great *qaallu*. In Q17 also, the despotic feudal government is criticized for the suffering it caused and the new one is welcomed. Yet when the term of the presidency of Mengistu was over in 1991, all the praise given to him shifted to the new one. The *qeexala* of the time of EPRDF demonstrates the criticism of the Dargue regime and the praise of the contemporary one. The same society which has been praising Mengistu in their *qeexala* like the honorable *qaalluu* of the land started to insult him and praise the new one as seen in the following verse.

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Q20. Abbaa duruu beekna | we know what a father does (for his children) |
| Mellese abbaa keenna    | Meles is our father                           |
| Ababbaa abbaa burjuu    | my father is the governor of Burjii           |
| Mellese nu haa bulchu   | let Meles rule us                             |
| Ababbaa abbaa tarii     | my father is the owner of Tarii               |
| Melleseen dura tari     | let-Meles advance!                            |

Nationalistic feeling which express the unity of the people of different villages as well as the unity of different groups of Oromo living in the neighboring lands are also portrayed in the transformed form of *qeexala*. In the *qeexala* of the *gadaa* tradition, the people used to wrestle by forming groups based on the proximity of their village, and such a practice is denounced in the contemporary *qeexala* recitals as illustrated in the following verse.

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Q23. Buqqisaafi shaaraan tokkicha | the people of Buqqisaa and Shara are one |
| Wanbadeet odduu fottossa          | it is the enemy that detach them         |
| Dambalashi seesa                  | the weapon <i>dambalashi</i> is fine     |
| Sharayoo qaldii seeta             | the youth of Shaara are serious          |

This indicates the motive of the youth to foster unity among the two villages by denouncing the separatism. It is only the vagabonds that think as if the two villages are enemies to each other, according to the poem cited above. The declaring of the unity of people who used to see each other as distinct by the older generation shows a big shift in attitude of the contemporary generation towards the national issue.

The unity and common origin with other Oromo groups with whom the Guji previously conducted warfare and raid are also demonstrated in the transformed *qeexala* song poems. The Guji used to conduct raids to the Borana land and the Borana did the same too. But as the current oral poetry of the Guji depicts, such a practice has now become a forgotten history and the contemporary youth has the picture of the unity of the two rather than their distinctiveness.

The following *qeexala* song demonstrates the motive of the youth.

|                                    |                                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Q24. Gujiif Booreen walkeessa      | the Guji and Borana are one          |
| Nama Oromo jibbu baasaa nu keessaa | let's fight those who hate the Oromo |
| Obbeyoo hoo kaalibor               | my friends, here is the gun          |
| Ijoolleen Booree                   | the people of Booree,                |
| Ka shiifa qaraa                    | whose swords are sharp               |
| Hadha diina qala                   | will slay the enemy today            |

In general, the contemporary *qeexala* of the Guji incorporates various transformation of content. It portrays the trends of thematic variation originating from the socio-cultural and political climate of the Guji. It has been discussed that the songs portray both the praise and criticism of higher officials, the adoration of the society of the body that works for the betterment of life conditions, and the motive of the youth to maintain unity among villages and neighboring Oromo groups. The transformation of this genre portrays both the historical changes and continuity, and the synchronic difference between the attitude of the youths and elders.

#### 4.1.3. Thematic Variation in Weedduu

Like the two other genres discussed previously the praise poem (*weedduu*) of the Guji depicts the historical facts which the Guji experienced. The challenges the pastoralist Guji faced during the feudal system of governance are reflected in the folk poems. As their land was taken by the landlords, they were in difficulty to obtain fields where they tend their cattle. The local governors (*shuumii*) demands bribe before letting their cattle graze on the fields. As a result the Guji started to take their cattle to the fields when they see the governors go home. If the *shumii* found their cattle grazing on the *Kaloo* (reserved grazing ground), they will make the owners suffer. The following couplet from the praise song of the cattle illustrates this.

W28. Butee buuyyoo buqqisu shuumiin dhaggite  
Ila shuumiin dhaggitu limmeen dhaabbite

the governors have seen our cattle eat their grass  
let the needle pierce their eyes so that they will never see again.

The above two lines demonstrate the will of the people to feed their cattle on the greenly lands which the *shuumii* prevents. The second line indicates the agony of the people and their wish for revenge. They hope that the eyes of the *shuumii* are blinded so that they may never prohibit the cattle from grazing on the fields. The desire to tend the cattle in the fields with much grass is hindered by the landlords. But this never restrains them of trying an opportunity to feed their cattle. The following verse lines show their determination.

W29. Manti una sijaaraa  
Nama araade malee  
Si yaasee maalti muga duuloo  
Nama maraate malee

who smokes cigarette,  
except the addicted man  
who dares forget to tend you, *duulo*  
except a mad person

Strict supervision of the cattle not to be caught by the landlords while grazing on the field is the theme of the above verse. The use of cigarette indicates the incorporation of new terms on the traditional folk poems. Smoking cigarette is considered as a bad and risky activity as forgetting to take strict care of the cattle. Much transformation is not observed like the other two genres.

## 4.2. Transformation in Context of Performance

The declining of the *gadaa* system among the Guji has led to the abolition of the many cultural and ritual performances at which folk poems and songs are usually recited. The three genres of folk poems discussed in the previous chapter had their own particular contexts of performances at which they were recited. As a result of the influence of the changing socio-cultural climate, these contexts are now replaced by the new developments and have made some of the genres common performances undertaken at every situation. Under this section, the new contexts of the performance of the Guji *geerarsa*, *qeexala* and *weedduu* are presented together with the social forces inducing the changes.

The *geerarsa* folk poem among the traditional Guji had a special context of performance. The heroes (both killers of enemies and big game animals) used to prepare a special sacrificial ceremony known as 'kudha' (Tadesse, 1995). This sacrificial ceremony is the stage at which heroes boast off their heroic deeds through the *geerarsa* recitation. Only heroes of warfare and hunting are invited to the ceremony at which a young bull is slaughtered. The hump of the bull is hung on a branch of a tree in front of the door of the host from which the heroes cut and eat after being tested of their deeds through the investigation of two elder heroes (ibid). Only the killers can recite the poems. Ladies and non-killers accompany them with other songs and dancing.

According to the Guji informants, recently the performance of *geerarsa* is undertaken mainly at marriage and 'moggasa' (naming) ceremonies. The performance of the *geerarsa* proper is not observed recently among the Guji society because it was forbidden nationally for fear of

instigating the youth for war. One of the elders interviewed during the field work reported the following about the current performance of the *geerarsa* among the Guji: "... *guddaan yoo geeraree jedhu, hin dammaqsa, nama mufachiisa, gadhaa hammeessa. Wonna kanaafi mangistiin dhogge jennaan lakkifneerra*" which could be translated as "... when the grown ups recite *geerarsa*, they initiate the youths, instigate them for war, it touches their emotion. It is for this reason that the government banned the performance of *geerarsa* and now we have abandoned it" (Info: Ayyaanoo Halake).

The abandoning of the *geerarsa* by the society could be explained both in terms of the prohibition of warfare and the spread and predominance of the Protestant religion among the Guji. One of the informants responded the following to my invitation of reciting the *geerarsa*.

*Ani geerarsa wollaaleera. Attam wollaalte yoo jette, ega kiristoosiin amanee, taarikii Iyyesuusii eengaddaa san haaso'a malee ka duraa sanii keessaa baheera. Wollaalummaa keessaa baheera. Kiristoos ka anaa jedhee rakkate .....*

I have forgotten the *geerarsa* now. If you ask me why, it is because of the fact that I became a Christian. Since I believed in Christ, I only sing about his history. I have now abandoned the old ways as I am freed from ignorance. Christ who suffered for my cause.....

This clearly indicates the attitude common among the converts towards the indigenous folk wisdom. The requirements of their religion have made the converts denounce the old egalitarian ways and relegate it as ignorance. The interviewee who gave me the above information was well known in the recitation of *geerarsa* before he was converted.

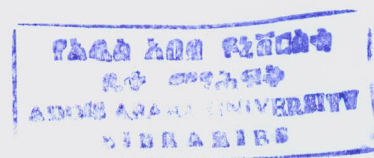
Though the recitation of *geerarsa* was banned due to the fear of its consequences, it has been reserved among the elders, and its adapted form is performed today among the youth at public meetings and on individual household bases. This is supported by the elders who responded in their interview that its performance is restricted to few individuals who learned the poems from the heroes themselves because it was legally suppressed by the government. Currently, as a result, no Guji man goes hunting or conducts warfare to obtain trophy and prepare the '*kudha*' ceremony at which he recites the heroic song.

In the Oromo tradition in general and in Guji tradition in particular, the women cannot sing the heroic song of *geerarsa*. This is due to the fact that they do not participate in the warfare and hunting the Guji men undertake to obtain trophy. The women are not perceived as heroes, but mothers of heroes. Their role is preparing accommodations for the heroes and taking care of the children while their husbands are at the warfare. They had no role in the recitation of *geerarsa* at the *kudha*.

Currently, however there are exceptional cases wherein we get woman well versed in the heroic folk song of *geerarsa* among the Guji. The case of Hachaboo Dambi, my assistants' mother, could be taken as part of the transformation in the performers of the folk poem. Earlier it was only restricted to men, and the women had no place in the performance even of accompanying by saying the refrains. Hachaboo Dambi recited much more poems which she said she learnt from her grandfather who was a hero than Girma and other informants. She was giving some of the verses to the men to recite.

Similar to the *geerarsa* genre, the context of performance of the Guji *qeexala* and *weedduu* recitative poems have undergone some changes. As has been described in the third chapter, both the genres had specific performance context of recitation. The dominant ones listed were: *moggaasaa*, *arraffaa*, *tolfannoo*, and *marriage* ceremonies. Currently, much of the ritual occasions at which they were performed are abandoned due to various social factors. One among the factors stated was Christianity, which the informants described as the main disaster to the indigenous ritual performances.

The *qeexala* song which is commonly used to praise the *qaalluu*, the most renowned religious figure among the Guji, has now began to be used to praise the public figures in the course of the history of its development. Such a change in the focus of the praise resulted in the shift of the context of the *qeexala* performance. At the various ritual ceremonies conducted, the Guji elders used to recite the *qeexala* recitation by first praising the *qaalluu* of the land. The youth used to accompany them by saying the refrains. The elders indicated that because of the absence of such ceremonies, they have now retired from performing it while the youths are seen to perform it on limited occasions. The new settings at which the youths perform the recitation include: social gatherings, social work settings, football matches, etc. Such occasion of performance and the



various modern issues raised in the recitation of the youth however, are not approved as the proper *qeexala* by the elders as it has lost its traditional features. The elders stress on the eroding of the traditional way in their discussion about the current situation of the performance.

*Amma kan irra jirru, seerri kuni aadaa Gujii keessaa hafeera. Duwwaa jira jechuudha. Waan tokko qanna namni jechaati ka danda'u miti. Duwwaa jira, aadaa gateera. Duri Gadaan fala qaba. Gaara bahee bara bokkeenni caame akkana kolbaa bahee fala, ardaa bahee waaqa kadhata, guyyaa san bokkeenni hin cobiiin hin ooltu. Yeroo san ni weeddisan ni qeexalan. Amma sunuu hafeera..... Qaalluun qaallomfanne kunillee ama boojuu lixeera. Kolbaa bahee falaa hin jiru; achuma qabamee te'ee, manaanuu, jireennaanuu booji'amee harka ormaa jira.*

(Info: Ayyaano Halake)

Currently, such a practice is dropt from the Guji culture. It has now disappeared. No one can confidently speak about its existence even. The people have lost their tradition. In the ancient time, *gadaa* had some means for problems. The *gadaa* council performs rituals on hills whenever there is no rain. It used to rain on such days. People then recite the *weedduu* and *qeexalaa* songs on such occasions. All these are abandoned today... the *qaalluu* which we revere today even is under a big influence. He never perform rituals at the hills, he stays at the shrine all the time as if he is imprisoned. He has surrendered his life and home to the aliens. He is under the influence of the oppressors.

The *weedduu* (praise poem) of the Guji which had main performance occasion similar to the *qeexala* song has not shown significant change in the context of its performance like the *geerarsa* or the *qeexala* itself. The setting at which it is used to be performed, however, is limited to few occasions as a result of the absence of the ritual performances. It has now become more of individualistic performance except on some ritual ceremonies (*jila*) celebrated on abundance of cattle. In the performance of this genre too, the roles of the elders have become insignificant as the modern ways have diminished their participation due to the changes in the socio-cultural situation. The case of marriage ceremonies which have showed a radical change for instance illustrates such a reality among the Guji.

# Chapter Five

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusion

Oral literature is a medium for transmitting historical knowledge, and as an inseparable part of history in the making; it has a timeless quality in that it reflects truths of a particular historic moment. In a given historical time, a representation of literary culture can possibly be judged if our evaluative technique takes into account the horizontal and the vertical factors of the distant past and present, which determine the direction of the development of traditional literature. Both horizontal (interpersonal or producer-receiver relations) and vertical (historical and cultural events) changes can reasonably be evaluated by considering the diachronic facts and the synchronic literary situations. In the analysis of this work, attempts have been made to approach the Guji folk poems through the socio-cultural perspective by taking into consideration the historical dimension.

In the last two chapters, an endeavour has been made to carry out the contextual investigation of the Guji lyric folk poems by focusing on three genres. The Guji *weedduu*, *qeexala* and *geerarsa* poems collected through field work have been analyzed through a contextual approach. Important points were raised regarding their recurrent themes, context of performance, and some literary devices dominantly observed in the poems. In chapter four, some points about the major aspects of the transformation of the Guji oral poems are addressed with particular focus on thematic variation and the change and continuity in the context of their performance. Based on the analysis in the last two chapters, it is possible to raise the following as the core points to wind up the discussion.

The *weedduu* genre of the Guji oral poetry, as discussed in chapter three, is a praise poem recited usually at ritual ceremonies. The cattle, the great *qaalluu*, distinguished cattle herders are usually praised in it. Many of the contexts at which these folk poems are recited have now disappeared and its performance is restricted to the few occasions (usually the “*arraffaa*” ceremony) prepared by few Guji family. Though the original contexts of its performance have

now mostly disappeared due to the change in the socio-cultural realities, it is dominantly survived in the memory of the elders among the society.

The *qeexala* genre of the Guji oral poetry is similar to what Ruth Finnegan termed as 'panegyrics'. It is not purely a 'war song' poem as Van de Loo (1991) named it as there are various occasions at which it is performed, and the issues raised in it do not always talk about theme of war. The fact that it was used as a mobilization agent during the traditional wrestling and warfare might have led Van de Loo to commit a faulty generalization about the genre. In addition to issues related to warfare and cattle raid, *qeexala* dominantly deals with the prosperity and abundance the society enjoy from the good administration of the *gadaa* leaders. At ritual ceremonies such as *toifanno*, *moggaasaa* and *arraffaa*, the recital of the *qeexala* begins with the praise addressed to the *qaalluu*. *Qeexala* is also used as an instrument to praise or criticise administrators at various levels of administration. Such praise or criticism addressed in *qeexala* range from the local leaders of the village to the head of the country. *Gadaa* leaders, *qaalluu* and local administrators who are committed to the service of the society are praised while corrupted leaders who mistreat the society are criticized and denounced. We can, therefore, associate the themes of the oral poems with the successive socio-political and historical swings taking place among the Guji.

The heroic folk poem '*geerarsa*' of the Guji reflect the heroic world view of the society. It is a praise poem (heroic recital) of the traditional hero recited by warriors and hunters. The recital of a big game hunter provides details about the experiences at the hunting ground, the hardship and challenges encountered, the astonishing movement of his horse and the motive of undertaking the adventure. Heroes of traditional warfare are more honoured than renowned hunters among the Guji society. The killer of an enemy enumerates details like his self-praise, determination and heroic adventure, appreciation of his horse, avenging the death of his relatives, etc. *Geerarsa* used to be performed at a special sacrificial ceremony known among the Guji as '*kudha*'. This ceremony is prepared by the heroes of warfare and hunting. A young bull is slaughtered and mead (*booka*) is prepared a head of the celebration. On the proposed day, the heroes invited to the celebration go to the house of the host by smearing their heads with butter and boasting about their heroic accomplishments. They recite the triumph song of killers at the

ceremony which takes place for a day and eat from the hump of the bull after being tested of their undertakings by two elders. The performance of the heroic recitation and the celebration at the *kudha* ceremony are currently not in action as they are legally banned. As a result, the current recitation of *geerarsa* is restricted to the recitation of elders from memories when asked to perform it.

The other major issue of this thesis focuses on the major transformation features of the three genres of Guji oral poetry dealt with in chapter four. The investigation conducted on the poems with this regard shows some transformation both in content and context of performance of the folk poems. The thematic variations observed in the three genres portray the shift in socio-cultural realities of the Guji from the time of conquest by the forces of Menelik to the current government. The folk poems collected from elders reflect the protest against, and praise of the administration of the successive Ethiopian governments who had affected the life of the society in one way or another. The protest poems enumerate the adversities encountered under the heavy hands of the feudal land lords, the corruption and arrogance of the local governors/*shumii* and exploitation and the looting of the resources of the people. The folk poems which once had addressed the ritualistic life of the Guji gradually began to incorporate new nuances which illustrate the changing social realities.

As a result of the conquest of the Guji and the declining of the *gadaa* system, many social occasions at which the society used to recite the folk poems were suppressed. The prohibition of warfare and hunting, for instance, led to the abandoning of the '*kudha*' ceremony and hence the recitation of the *geerarsa*. The coming and the spread of the protestant Christianity have also played a significant role in eroding the indigenous ritual performances among the Guji society. Some of the converts who were well versed with the oral poems before their conversion had denounced the recitations and relegated them as the concern of the unsaved ignorant.

As to the transmission of the folk poems the data gathered through the interview from elders indicate that there is a wide gap between the older generation and the current generation as the latter ones focused on the modern values. The fact that the youths are engaged in academic discourses has led to their dropping of the indigenous folk wisdoms, and their development of a superficial mask which is upheld as the style of the day. The elders indicated that the youths are

not interested in acquiring wisdom from their fathers as they have relegated it as some thing uncivilized and only focus on their education. With this regard, the interviews conducted with few students at the preparatory school indicate that the youths do not have the opportunity to learn the folk poems as their performances are either suppressed or limited to few families.

## 5.2. Recommendations

As presented in the discussion of the thesis, the folk poetry of Guji-Oromo portrays a number of socio-cultural and historical realities of the people. They also serve a number of social functions in the day to day life of the people. As the study is delimited to only three of the genres, the researcher feels that all the issues are not treated in depth so as to bring into light the multifaceted and complex social issues in the life of the society. At this juncture he recommends an in-depth investigation to be undertaken, particularly on the other genres like *dookkoo*, *layee*, *sarbicha* and *waarii*. If investigations are undertaken on these genres, the researcher hopes, they will reveal the dynamics of the culture of the people. The *dookkoo* and *waarii* genres for instance are recited by the female only, and an investigation conducted on the self-portrayal of the Guji women would reveal the changes and continuities in their self image across age and time.

In the current study, few issues in connection with the encounter of the Guji with the Italians in the reign of Hailesellasie have been raised. As this area is one of the potential sources of historical investigation, anyone interested in the dynamics of the society portrayed through their folk poems can undertake a valuable analysis. Besides, the speedy nature of the transformation of the folk poems will inevitably lead to creating a wide gulf between generations. With this regard, though there are attempts of awareness creation the woreda's Culture and Tourism Bureau, much effort must be exerted in helping the youth inherit the wisdom of their ancestors by compromising/ adapting to the need of the age. Such awareness creation could be created through incorporating the folk poems in text books which would serve as an initiation at younger age and inculcating the wisdom.

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## Appendix I

### Interview Questions and List of Informants

#### Qeexala

1. What is qeexala in the Gujii tradition?
2. Why do people perform qeexala?
3. What are the common social occasions at which it is recited?
4. Who does perform the recitation? The youths? Elders? Women?
5. Does it have any division?
6. Is it currently performed?
7. Is there any difference between the current and the old qeexala recitations?

#### Geerarsa

1. What is geerarsa in the Guji folk tradition?
2. Why is it recited?
3. Who recites the geerarsa? Where?
4. When do the Guji men recite it? At what occasions will it be recited?
5. What issues are raised in the recitation?
6. What is the current status of the performance? Is there any change?
7. How does some one learn to recite geerarsa?

#### Weedduu

1. What is weedduu?
2. Why is it recited?
3. What are the common occasions at which it is performed?
4. Who does recite it? Is there restriction of age or gender?
5. Does it have any division?
6. How does one learn to sing weedduu?
7. What important issues are raised in it?
8. What is the current status of its performance? Is there any change?

### List of Informants

| No. | Name                | Age | Address       |
|-----|---------------------|-----|---------------|
| 1.  | Abbabaa Gammadee    | 26  | Samaroo       |
| 2   | Ayyaanoo Ganamoo    | 26  | Foggee        |
| 3   | Ayyaanoo Halakee    | 60  | Gwangwa       |
| 4   | Badhaasaa Tottoree  | 70  | Gwangwa       |
| 5   | Badhaasoo Gammadee  | 32  | Samaroo       |
| 6   | Boonayaa Galgalee   | 66  | Samaroo       |
| 7   | Ethiopia Kotoo      | 25  | Gwangwa       |
| 8   | Galalchaa Biittuu   | 66  | Shaaraa       |
| 9   | Galgoo Ruufoo       | 22  | Shaaraa       |
| 10  | Gammadee Areedoo    | 80  | Gwangwa       |
| 11  | Gammadee Shamarraa  | 69  | Gwangwa       |
| 12  | Girmaa Dambii       | 28  | Samaroo       |
| 13  | Gochuu Adulaa       | 55  | Booyyee Caree |
| 14  | Hachaboo Dambii     | 66  | Samaroo       |
| 15  | Jiloo Fayyisaa      | 72  | Shaaraa       |
| 16  | Ruufoo Sharoo       | 68  | Shaaraa       |
| 17  | Shabbaraa Areeroo   | 78  | Gwangwa       |
| 18  | Soraa Shugo'oo      | 65  | Foggee        |
| 19  | Taamiraat Ruufoo    | 24  | Samaroo       |
| 20  | Taaraa Dachee       | 72  | Gwangwa       |
| 21  | Teshome W/Sillase   | 62  | Waxambaa      |
| 22  | Waxxeessaa Borojjii | 58  | Waxambaa      |

## Appendix II

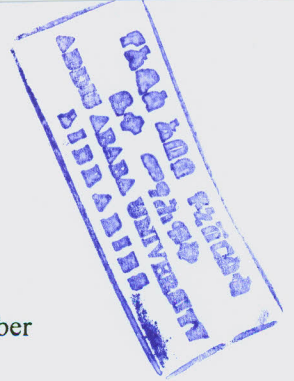
### List of the Folk Poems

#### Weedduu ( W)

- W1. Weeddisanee horu,  
Weedduu dhabeelle hintolu  
the cattle breeds when the owner recites *weedduu*  
the fertility is withheld if the cattle fail to get it.
- W2. Miilli qaba bottii, harki qaba saatii  
Guyyaa cinqii namaa loonti ta'a waasii  
the foot has got boots, the hands watch  
in critical problem, the cattle are one's warranty
- W3. Horii abbaan tiffatu, cinaachi hin mul'atu  
Ka'ee dhaabbate warri jabbii jaallatu  
Duuba hafee gofolaan ristii xaaffatee  
the cattle watched by the owner are plump  
those who adore calves stand in their honour  
the weak sit idle to inherit their family's wealth
- W4. Hayise gowwaa  
Gowwaa godeessa  
Maddallee booressa  
Bobbaan gogeessa  
Sango finqila  
Sangooma dhale  
Hayiso lobe  
Sangoon qirqiraa  
Dorrobee goobee  
Hayiso is a foolish cow  
the fool cow has horns growing down  
it transforms the river into mud  
the cows file out to graze  
Sango is running around  
she has delivered but does not lick the calf  
this hayiso song is long.  
Sango is running around,  
its udder is heavy and swollen
- W5. Buruusi baddaa oole  
Oli gori, goroo duddaa  
Oli gori, o'aa untaa  
O'aan suni o'aa muchaa  
the calf spends the day in the forest  
come up, calf, to the place behind the meadow  
come up, drink it warm (the milk)  
that milk is fresh from the teat
- W6. Hoo letee jabaasawoo  
Hoo letee Qulee abbaa malaa  
Hoo letee Yaaku abbaan falaa  
Hoo letee weedduu dhiiraa  
Hoo letee jogga deente moodduu  
Hoo letee weedduu dhiiraa  
Hoo letee dhaanee bahe fogguu  
hoo letee my brave people  
hoo letee Qulee is the subtle man  
hoo letee Yakkuu is the tactful man  
hoo letee song of the heroes  
hoo letee he went to Joggaa to face the enemy  
hoo letee song of heroes  
hoo letee he retaliated his foe by slaughtering them
- W7. Farda banaqaa isaan ci'a dhaqa  
Kattaa kaachisaa bassaa naachisaa  
Ta hiyyuu baasu, ta haluu baasu  
Loniwoo looniwoo  
the energetic horse, I take it to the wedding ceremony  
(the cattle) roll the rock; feed people with butter  
make the poor wealthy, quench the thirst (of revenge)  
it is the cattle (woe is me who lost them)
- W8. Qaalluu waaqa se'e aabboo  
Bira geennaan bare aabboo  
I thought the Qaalluu was God  
I only knew when I drew near

- W9. Sigodaanaa hoo godaanaa  
 Guddaa keennaa biyya raabaa hoyee  
 Hoo jilaan si godaanaa  
 Ilmaan sigodaana godaanittan seene  
 Mootii keenna godaansakee hinfeene  
 Hoo jilaan si godaana  
 Guddaa keennaa ruufa boraafattee  
 Hoo jilaan si godaana  
 Si godaanaa galma tulluu se'ee hoyee  
 Guddaa keennaa bira geennaan manaa hoyee
- the great qaallu, the people visit your shrine  
 our holly man in the land of *raabaa* gadaa class  
 people flock to your shrine  
 people roam to you I thought you don't travel  
 our king we didn't want you to travel such a distance  
 people flock to your shrine  
 our great one, you pillowed tufts of grass  
 we migrate with you;  
 I mistook your shrine for a hill  
 our great one, I knew only as I drew near
- W10. Galma utubaa dhibbaa  
 Dareensaa shantama
- the shrine with hundred pillars,  
 its compartments are fifty
- W11. Qaalluu Waaqa se'ee  
 Bira geennaan namaa  
 Weenniin arrii kormaa  
 Qanqaammii kajeelee  
 Huummoo lubbuu ibiddaa  
 Birbirsa arrichaa  
 Qaalluu sarbaa baaraa  
 Barri nuu nagaya
- I thought qaalluu was God  
 I knew when drew near (that he is a man)  
 the Colobus-monkey has white beard  
 it is eager to jump here and there  
 the stork, the fierce bird  
 sits on the shrub tree at Arrichaa.  
 the qaalluu has strong legs  
 it is the year of peace and prosperity
- W12. Dhugaan looteen dhutte aabboo  
 Dhugaan eessaa dhutte aabboo  
 Dhugaan Wondoo dhutte aabboo  
 Gaafa wondoo kaate aabboo  
 Dhuftee Doome bultee aabboo  
 Gafa wacciin kaate aabboo  
 Dhaqxee Daamaa bulte aabboo  
 Gaafa Dammaan kaate aabboo  
 Daxxee Amalake bulte aabboo  
 Amalakkeen kaatee aabboo  
 Hassee Wonee bulte aabboo  
 Galma qaalluu bulte aabboo  
 Galma tulluu seene aabboo  
 Bira geennaan beeke aabboo  
 Galma utubaa dhibbaa aabboo  
 Dareessaan shantamaa aabboo  
 Keessa ruufaan kabe aabboo  
 Gubba buuyyoo kabe aabboo
- truth has come in a disguised way  
 where did it come from, my dear?  
 truth has come from Wondoo, my dear  
 when it set off journey from Wondoo  
 it dwelt at Doomee, my dear.  
 when it went further on,  
 it spent a night at Daamaa  
 fom Daamaa it went on  
 it then dwelt at Amalakkee  
 from Amalakkee it set off its journey  
 it then spent a night at the plains of Wonee  
 it dwelt at the shrine of Qaalluu  
 we mistook the big shrine for a mountain  
 we noticed as we got closer  
 the shrine with hundred pillars  
 its compartments are fifty  
 the wall of the shrine is made of grass tufts  
 the roof is made of long and hard grasses
- W13. Nagee'ile hoo nagee'ille  
 Gadaa Qaalluun nagayaa  
 Kormaafi kosiin nagayaa  
 Deettuufi teettuun nagayaa  
 Ollaafi oddoon nagayaa  
 Hallayyoon nagaya.
- (God) we pray for peace, we pray  
 let the gadaa and qaalluu be in peace  
 let the bulls and the surroundings be in peace  
 let the pregnant and the baby sitter be in peace  
 let the neighbors and people at Oddoo live in peace  
 let everyone dwell in peace

- W14. Faltee roobaa manakee roobee  
 Uummataa roobee  
 Faltee roobaa manakee roobee  
 Gimbotuu roobee  
 Roobee lolaase  
 Roobee ummatii roobaa  
 Borojji roobee  
 Madheechoo roobee
- you prayed for rain, it rained in your compound  
 it rained for the people  
 you prayed for rain, it rained in your compound  
 it rained on the large flat basket  
 the rain eroded the land  
 it rained for the people  
 it rained for Borojji  
 it rained for Madheechoo
- W15. Zinni zinnaare loon jilaa  
 Zinnia zinnaare jibootaa  
 Zinnia zinnaare loon hanna
- Zinnia zinnaare booqaafaa zinibaa  
 Zinni zinnaare gabbisoo, zinibaa  
 Zinni zinnaare coomessoo zinibaa
- the cattle are flocking together;  
 the cattle of rituals are many  
 the cattle are flocking together;  
 the cattle from raid are many  
 the cattle are flocking together, the bulls are many  
 the cattle are flocking together, the fleshy ones  
 the cattle are flocking together, the fatty ones
- W16. Hoo reechoo hoo reechoo anaa  
 Horii ta ila biittuu  
 Horii biittuu laalaa galtuu  
 Horii cinaa loonii oolti  
 Horii cinaacha mi'ootti  
 Horii kadheen ceekuu hinguettu  
 Horii ceeku olla hinguettu  
 Horii boborruu qoraattii
- sing for the goats, yes for the goats  
 the cattle whose eyes are shining  
 the cattle that goes home with the guidance of the sun  
 the animal that grazes with cattle  
 the animal whose meat is sweet  
 the animal whose skin is too small to sleep on  
 the animal whose meet is not enough to feed neighbors  
 the animal that grazes on leaves
- W17. Kumoole eessa jiraa  
 Eessoo dawuroo  
 Sarara mina hangafaa jiraa  
 Sarara mina maandhaa jiraa  
 Sarara mina Bodee jiraa  
 Kumoole eessa jiraa  
 Eessoo dawuroo  
 Mina gammadee jiraa  
 Gammadee Amaaraa jiraa
- where is the owner of thousand cows?  
 somewhere in Dawro  
 he is around his elder's village  
 he is around his youngster's village  
 he is around Bodee's house  
 where is the owner of many cows)?  
 somewhere in Dawro  
 he is at Gammadee's house  
 at Gamadee Amaaraa's house
- W18. Ana fuudhisa gantaa  
 Yoo fuute maaliin fullitta  
 Sa'a tokkicha qabda  
 Sanuu qaltee naatta
- you are eager to marry me  
 if you marry me, how do we survive?  
 you have a cow only  
 you slaughter it and own nothing
- W19. Ijaaree mina hinqabu  
 Fuudhee ibidda hinqabu  
 Hidheessa gubbaa gala  
 Yoon si fuudhee jedhe  
 Jaldeessa si'ii qalaa
- I have no house  
 I have not a wife  
 I live in the forest  
 if I marry you,  
 I will slaughter a monkey for you



- W20. Hagangaroon goddee  
Nu gargar gorree  
Abbaan ormaa nyaapha  
Mana Gujii torba  
Ani garrolla hinbeeku  
Aayyoot na barsiise  
Miijalon ijaaraddi  
Aayyoo garroo tiyyaa  
Aayyon tiyya doode  
Kaddoo durra qoode  
Guyyaa boowaa oolte
- the *hagangaroo* tree is dry  
friends, we go in different ways  
my father is an enemy to me  
Guji clans are indeed seven in number  
I do not know the garrola song  
my mother taught it to me  
build a shelf for milk pots  
my mother understood and helped me  
but now my mother has become a fool  
she cuts the small calfskin for her daughter  
and cries the whole day through
- W21. Waraana kiyya urdee qaradha,  
cabinnaa?  
Udduma ati bultu qoradhee dhaggadhinnaa?
- I sharpen my spear by soaking it in the ground,  
will it break?  
may I find the place where you sleep in that darkness?
- W22. Gurraacha tooreen olii  
Akkuma loote loyii  
Dukkuma keessa koyii
- the black boy who lives beyond Tooree  
with great care and toil,  
please come to the bed-room
- W23. Damboobiyyoo mallayo  
Aabboti nuu danboobe  
Aayyooti nuu danboobe  
Danboobaan worra jilaa  
Danboobaan duruu jiraa  
Danboobiyyoo mallayyoo
- graceful are the family -  
the father has showed his grace  
the mother has showed her grace  
the grace of the host  
graceful people used to exist  
graceful are the family
- W25. Worri fuudhaa qaba uddoo  
Buba balloo tissoolee  
Fuudhee galee hiike quttoo  
Arongollee abboo sheelo gamaan  
Isaa kennu aabboo tisseee lamaan  
Worri fuuddhaa qaba uddoo  
Kociin citte ammo ka surre'e  
Quufi bulte ammo gursummoole  
Intaltikee gowwaa bursaa  
Bursaa gowwitulle loonti bulcha
- the groom's men have a separate place  
the herders are blowing the trumpet  
the groom took the bride home and untied her ornament  
Arangalloo is far beyond Sheegoo  
let him be blessed with two herders  
the groom's men have a separate place  
the widows are now blessed with plenty of food  
the widows are now blessed with plenty of food  
your daughter is unwise  
though she is unwise she will keep cattle
- W26. Sinbirreen fincoote  
Basa ijoollee teennaa bocatti qixoote
- the bird has urinated  
the children of our village are ready for chopping
- W27. Qocii tiyya wirsee  
namuu nan qarqaarre qofaa tiyya jisse
- I used my small axe to cut the tree  
I had no support, I cut the tree alone
- W28. Butee buuyyoo buqqisu shuumiin dhaggite  
Ila shuumiin dhaggitu limmeen dhaabbite
- the governors have seen our cattle eat their grass  
let the needle pierce their eyes so that they will never  
see again

- W29. Manti una sijaaraa  
 Nama araade malee  
 Si yaasee maalti muga duuloo  
 Nama maraate malee
- who smokes cigarette,  
 except the addicted man  
 who dares forget to tend you  
 except a mad person
- W30. Hiddii irbitee tikatti yaate  
 Ijoolleen hiddii irbite  
 Hiddii irbitee hassee gamboo  
 Burkutuu dalluun sirbite
- the children play with hiddii,  
 they are going to the field to keep cattle  
 the children of *gomboo* are playing with hiddii  
 the bulls of Burkutu, their shoulders are dancing
- W31. Jaanjuraa bula kormi gaanaa waate  
 Jaanjuraa bula  
 Jaanjuraa bula ka gomboyoon banane  
 Jaanjuraa bula  
 Godee meerre qadduun
- the bull becomes restless in the breeding season  
 it becomes restless,  
 the bull from *gomboyoo* becomes restless  
 it becomes restless  
 my dear take your turn
- W32. Saatoo qocata gaara oolee  
 Gadansi saato qocata  
 Godee ya hoyee hoo  
 Saatoo qocataa saamee oolee  
 Arroyyaan galee boqota  
 Godee ya hoyee hoo
- the antelope consumes leaves on the highlands  
 it consumes leaves from trees  
*godee ya hoyee hoo*  
 my spotted cow busily grazes grass throughout the day  
 it rests when it is back home  
*godee ya hoyee hoo*
- W33. Harooressaa boffee muree  
 Haaloo bonaa borcee une  
 Harooressa daaqaa muree  
 Haroo gannaa daakee une  
 Haroon gaayyoo gaangessa  
 Hin dorrobne baarbessa
- I cut the thick *haroressa* tree  
 the cattle flock to the lake and drink in winter season  
 I cut the coiled *haroressa* tree  
 the cattle swim and drink from the lake in summer  
 the Gaayyoo Lake has circular shape  
 the cow is expectant, it became pregnant recently
- W34. Hiddii ciree cilee aarse  
 Bara deegaa re'ee faarse  
 Leemmarraan guurani honcee  
 Leemmaan dudduugani warqee  
 Leemma gawwu maa cassite  
 Weedduu loonii maa gancarsite  
 Leemman dudduugani warqee  
 Jannaan duuchisani wantee
- I gathered the *hiddii* trees and burnt charcoal  
 in poverty years I praised the goats  
 people collect barks from the bamboo tree  
 they use it to prepare the false banana (*enset*)  
 why did you cut the growing bamboo tree?  
 why did you make the cattle song boring?  
 people use bamboo to prepare the false banana  
 the hero goes to war with shield
- W35. Lottuun kadharra baate  
 Hootuun shantama taate  
 Riqichatu malkaa ta'aa  
 Dibichatu sangaa ta'a
- the fighters are on the hill  
 the calves has now become fifty  
 it is a stream that becomes a river  
 the bull grows into an ox
- W36. Si'u iddee si'u qeense  
 Danaa Rabbii sittuu dheesse  
 Boora malee booqaa hindhalu  
 Marqi bosoo mooqa intaru  
 Booqaa malee burree hindhalu  
 Dhadhaan basoo kurree hintaru
- I pierced you with arrow and collect your blood  
 I respect you like the almighty Rabbii (God)  
 the cow gives birth to grey calves not to *booqaa*  
 the porridge of cruel women is only spoonful  
 the cow delivered *booqa* not the gray coloured calf  
 the cattle named *basoo* gives insignificant butter

- W37. Mootii biifaa qaalluu rafee hinkaane  
qaallu biifa jabbii muuda  
Utubaan hirroo aabbo  
Iyyoohoo iyyooho qaallu biifa  
the king of abundance, qaalluu is not awake  
the prosperous qaalluu anoints the calves  
the pillar of his house is so strong my dear  
iyoho, iyoho, the qaalluu is prosperous
- W38. Marroo jabaasawoo  
Hoo letee jannaswoo  
Yoo letee aanno teetee duree  
Marroo Aannoo duree  
Leteo goota ijoo  
the land where every one is brave  
my dear, where all are valiant  
my dear, the leaders are at Aannoo  
all the chiefs at Aannoo are fearless
- W47. Baabbicha baatte middoole  
Baan bare boonchoon jaare  
the brave clan has prepared the babicha ceremony  
the kids are growing and the grown ups are getting old
- W48. Loon gara gimbootti wal'oo  
Arbee gomboo jaallanee maa  
Kormi jilaatii moonaa jiraa  
Loon gara abbaa biyyaa qaallu  
Gomboo jaallanee qaallu bilbilli iyyaa  
the cattle are roaming to gimboo  
we adore the big cattle of gomboo  
the bull of the ritual is in the kraal  
the cattle of the governor Qaalluu  
their bells ring as they walk
- W49. Ballo shure bareeda kiyya  
Ballo eda qotii qotanu  
mataa awwaara qaba  
Ballo eda qotee horate  
Abbaan du'u awwaala qaba  
my dear, Shuree the beautiful one  
when one ploughs the land  
his hair gets dusty  
if some one ploughs hard and accumulates wealth  
he will have a distinguished funeral rite
- W50. Ballo shree bareeda kiyya  
Unuu jettee atillee takka je'uu anillee  
Ballo bulbulli bookaa uke  
Bulbulli booka ukee yeroo biraan baqeyyu  
Ballo shuree bareeda kiyya  
Kurkurri gooba bute  
my dear Shuree, the beautiful one  
you told me your story, shall I have my say?  
the mead is getting musty  
it was busy even in the morning  
Shuree the beautiful one,  
the bull is rocking its hump
- W51. Ballo dhalee Shamaree  
Worra abbaa Hottoyyo  
Ballo warra sangaan gamare  
Ballo adaa adeenti hattun  
Ada adeenti hattuu eda buliin banane  
Heda hortee dhabane  
Ballo nama gareerti dhaltuun  
Isii gareerti hantuun  
the children of Shamaree  
the family of Hottoyyoo  
their oxen are fleshy (well kept)  
my dear, the thief's way is odd  
they steal when the owners are in deep sleep  
once you loose your property (possession)  
evry one stare at you, even the feeble  
the famished gazes at you
- W52. Ballo shure bareeda kiyya  
Harru armii daari'ii  
Ballo heda bultiin ka tolteettu  
Heda hortee miidhaddee  
Dhaggi daarii hintartu gaarii  
Shuree, the beautiful one  
the Harruu village is near the border  
where life is so good  
when the cattle breed in abundance  
you see, good things will stay closer every time

- W53. Ballo shuree bareeda kiyyaa  
Kormaan lubbuu dhaadata  
Ballo warra abbaa Kotoyyo  
Balo warra Borojjii Bodee  
Ballo warra Bodee Fadooyye  
Hin koreeyyu dhugumaa  
Dhaggi gorbaan lukkuu fakkaata
- Shuree the beautiful one  
the bulls are bellowing in brag  
the bulls of Kotoyyo  
of Borojjii Bodee  
of Bodee Fadooyye  
they are not boasting, it is a reality  
look! Their number (cluster) is like that of chicken
- W54. Looniyoo guutoo  
Loon guuta badhaasa  
Loon eegee muxoota  
Loon abbaan mucootaa  
Loon hin gu'iin balloo  
Loon hindu'ii balloo  
Yoo guute hin dhaltaa  
Yoo duute hin baddaa  
Ee kattaa kaachisaa  
Loon bassaa naachisaa
- the cattle stuffs one's hollowness  
the cattle are bless in wealth  
one recovers from poverty by tending cattle  
the cattle are fathers to children  
let you not wean (stop giving milk)  
let you not die  
if you wean, you will of course deliver a calf  
if you die, you will perish  
oh, I roll the rock from hill  
the cattle makes one eat with butter
- W55. Jabbilee laddoo birraan geennaan banane  
Bonkee Sooraa waarsanee ka abbaa Masoo  
Booretti galee warri loowwan jaallatu  
Booretti gale Bulloon mucaa Shukkoo  
Lakkoolle dhaleera
- the calves of laddoo are set free in spring  
people praised Bonkee Sooraa of the Masoo family  
those who love cattle migrated to Borana  
Bullo the son of Shukkoo migrated to Borana  
his cattle gave birth to twin calves
- W56. Dibicha galee daariin durii  
Ashangoo jabbicha qalee  
Gaashaa biyyaan dhoggane diddama malee  
Aanne hilleensa baddaan maraa gubatte  
Shumanaa Iyaadigii bule hiyyeessaa
- our boarder was at Dibbichaa previously  
Ashangoo has slaughtered a bull to corrupt the officials  
we refused his taking of our land above twenty hectares  
the trees on the highland are all burnt  
our right are respected with the coming of EPRDF,
- W57. Maqaan Qabbalee waataa worra miqee  
Shumana Iyaadigii mabtii dhaganne
- the governor at Miiqee, his name is Qabbalee  
with the coming of EPRDF our rights are respected
- W58. Hayyaa loonii gaaraa iyyee jaldeessii  
Duuloo gaanee sillee badheessaa  
Hayyaa loonii hoo boora bisaan darbaa  
Henna misee gabbate duloon kiyya ammallee  
Booruu loowwan abbaa
- the monkey of the hill screams  
Duulo mates the heifer and blesses it with calves  
the cattle that has the colour similar to flowing river  
when my duuloo gets fleshy  
I will be the owner of many cattle
- W59. Ashuu haadha tiyyaa loowwanii  
Gaararra yaati lootuu  
Loowwaniiyoo shantama geetti hootuu  
Loowwanii yyo dhakaa jala bobba'ii  
Dhaqaa gala hobba'i
- the cattle are my mother (caregiver)  
the spy wanders on the hill  
the calves of our cattle has become many (fifty)  
my cattle, go in peace through the rocks  
let you be in abundance of grasses in and out  
(let you become successful all the day)

- W60. Lafti dhiite galgalaa  
 Duuloo kiyya dhiitee worrii dakkara  
 Abbaa kiyya daalacha duuloo  
 Gala gahee jarjaraa  
 Ajabiin yaate qobboo  
 Loowwan kaataa gala gomboo  
 Saxxoo dhiibata hiikka hedee goronsi  
 Saamee oolee arroyyaan galaa hiixata
- the sun is set, it is dark now.  
 my Duuloo, the family are looking for you  
 Duulo the head of my family (wealth)  
 you are rushing home  
 the termites are flourishing from the ground  
 the cattle run home from gomboo  
 the heifer pushes the bush as it wants to be untied  
 the red ones graze well and get relaxed at home
- W61. Booruu bisaan baddeessaa  
 Boora bifa jaldeessaa  
 Jaldeessaa gaaraa iyyuu  
 Jaldeessa goote hiyyuu
- brown like the muddy water of *baddeessaa*  
 brown like the colour of monkey  
 the man who chases monkey on the hills  
 poverty has mistreated him like monkey
- W62. Hayyaa loonii abbaa guddisaa  
 Guddisoo kiyya duuloo tika bade cubbisa
- my cattle, you are like a compassionate father  
 my caretaker, it is a sin not to take care of duuloo
- W63. Badalaan bade waaqni shoruu didate  
 Ta baddaloo oolchane Sidaamni hateera
- God has refused us rain, the corn is about to perish  
 the cattle that we keep are raided by the Sidama
- W64. Hoo looniyoo guutoo horee  
 Horee foonaa guutee horee  
 Horee foonaa buusee horee  
 Loon booree bookkisee horee  
 Loon tissee boochisee horee  
 Loon hingu'iin balloo  
 Loon hindu'iin balloo
- the cattle are breeding well  
 they are full of the kraal  
 I built another one (kraal)  
 the cattle of Borana are bellowing  
 the cattle made the herders cry  
 my cow let you not stop giving milk  
 let you live longer

## 2. Qeexala (Q)

- Q1. Warri middaa namanaata  
 Jalaa gori hoo
- the middaa group is dangerous  
 let you leave the way for them
- Q2. Warri dheedaa nama naata  
 Jalaa gori, hoo
- the dheedaa group is dangerous  
 let you leave the way for them
- Q3. Gobanaa ifii buluu fe'ee  
 Qaalluun bulee qalee  
 Korma goobe qaalluun boone  
 Goobanaa abbaa xulloo  
 Hamaa kiyya xuqee waamaa
- the morning star, qaalluu wanted to sleep  
 and slaughtered the bull the next day  
 the bull has grown fat, qaalluu showed off  
 the morning star, the father of Xuullo  
 (I) scorn the enemy that crossed my boundary
- Q4. Biifomii biifomii  
 Biiftuu gaaraa ta'ii
- (qaalluu) flourish and prosper  
 let you shine like sun on highlands

- Q5. Qociin ta sukkiyyaa  
Cuffiin madaraan galte  
Ega beeraawwiin baddee  
Edeemaa qanxoon qadde
- the small axe belongs to the bigger;  
the knife is in its container  
after the war was over,  
Edeemaa has become poor (poverty stricken)
- Q6. Areero ulee mure  
Araddaan qabbana bule
- Arero has cut the stick (made the law)  
the Guji land has become peaceful
- Q7. Woldhansoo Sidaamaa  
Woldhaanee ilaala  
Quphanchiisee quba si kaa'e
- the wrestling of the Sidamo  
let me test my strength with it  
I'll let you down and mock at you
- Q8. Konkolaachoo taphanna  
Kot woldhaanchoo qabanna
- let's play by rolling on the ground  
come, let you wrestle with me
- Q9. Timee Gidaaboo booressa  
Gujiin gumaafuu sooressa
- (the cattle) flock into Gidabo River and turn it to mud  
the Guji people are eager for vengeance
- Q10. Lolaan doobe naqee  
Lolee doobbii naqee  
Lola gaaraa si gargaara  
Anaan dura galtee  
Buusi dullaa hatte
- the erosion amasses garbage  
I fight to chase the enemy to bush  
I will side you in the war at the hills  
bring me the rifle you looted from the enemy
- Q11. Dukanaan duulchisee  
Ji'aan oriisisee  
Hoo lolee!  
Korma goobee  
qaalluun boonee
- we did the fight at night  
we smashed the enemy in the moonlight  
my dear brave fighters!  
the bull has now grown fat,  
our qaalluu showed off
- Q12. Goobanaa konkolaasaa Shuree  
Konkolaasee muree qolaasee geeraree  
Hoo lolee  
Korma goobee qaalluun boonee  
Silaa goobee lollikee goobana
- (I)the brave son of Shuree, who rolls the enemy  
(I) rolled the foe and castrated him  
I then sung the song of heroes superbly  
my dear brave fighters!  
the bull has now grown fat, qalluu is honored  
your fight ended in triumph
- Q13. Keenna abaalii, Gamboota maanii,  
Shiifa qabannee,  
Hidhaa hidhannee,  
Gambeelli keennaa  
Hamaa hin rifannee,  
Ta shiifa qaraa,  
Gamboo sii hilte,  
Ijoollee jaarsaa,  
Gambeelli keennaa,  
Kalaashii aarsaa,
- members of our group are from Gambo  
we have brought our sharp swords  
we tied our belts tight  
the youth of Gambela villge,  
have no fear of the enemy.  
their swords are sharp  
they will imprison the foe soon  
as do the sons of wise elders,  
the youth of Gambela  
fires the usual rifle kalashnikov

- Q14. Gujii girjaa hujii diddaa  
Hujataan baddaa daassa  
Yoo hujje quuttee naatta  
Hujataan baddaa daassa  
Mee sodaadhu baddaa baatta
- the Gujii of *girjaa*, do you refuse to work?  
workers toil in the highlands  
if you work hard, you will eat well  
workers toil in the highlands  
let you not fear, you'll develop the highlands
- Q15. Hammayyoolee hamma tiyyaa  
Qotii qottoo naanni xoxxoo  
Dhadhaatu dhooqaa murtee dandeettaa  
Bullaa si'ii loobaa turtee dandeettaa  
Qotiyyoolee abbaa koraa  
Galchee tolaa
- the people of my village  
lough with your axe, and consume roasted barely  
the tree in the cave, can you cut it easily  
I will make you food (of enset) can you wait to have it  
the oxen of Koraa's father, I brought from the field
- Q17. Jaanhooy hattichaa  
Bulii ollaa Burjuu,  
Mangeen nu haa bulchuu
- Janhoy the despotic king  
let you live in the neighbor of the Burji  
we want Menge to rule us.
- Q18. Oo biifolee,  
Mangee biifaa  
Biifa birraa  
Biifolee,  
Mange biifa  
Biifni kiyyaa,  
Biifolee  
Mange biifa
- oh, my affluent people  
Mange prospers  
the beauty of autumn,  
my affluent ones  
Mange prospers  
success is mine,  
my affluent ones  
Mange prospers.
- Q19. Mucaa mataa jigeessaa  
Darguu nurraa fageessaa
- that man with big skull  
chase the Dargue away from us
- Q20. Abbaa duruu beekna  
Melese abbaa keenna  
Ababbaa abbaa burjuu  
Melesee nu haa bultuu  
Ababbaa abbaa tarii  
Melleseen dura tari
- we know what a father does (for his children)  
Meles is our father  
my father is the governor of Burjii  
let Meles rule us  
my father is a hard worker  
let Meles advance!
- Q21. Limaatii qotee bishaan baase  
Mallaseen Zeenaa hizbii seese  
Limaatii qotee bishaan baase  
Mallaseen Zeenaa poolisii seese  
Limaatii qotee bishaan baase  
Mallaseen Zeenaa agarii seese
- many water pipes are constructed  
Meles Zenawi has made the people happy  
he has alleviated the water supply problem  
Meles Zenawi has helped the police well  
many water pipes are constructed  
Meles has made the country people happy
- Q22. Buqqisaafi shaaraan tokkicha  
Wanbadeet odduu fottossa  
Dambalashi seesa  
Sharayoo qaldii seeta
- the people of Buqqisaa and Shara are one  
it is the enemy that detach them  
the weapon Dambalashi is superior  
the youth of Shaara are serious

- Q23. Gujiif Booreen walkeessa  
 Nama Oromo jibbu baasaa nu keessaa  
 Obbeyoo hoo kaalibor  
 Ijoolleen Booree  
 Ka shiifa qaraa  
 Hadha diina qala
- the Guji and Bporana are one  
 let's fight those who hate the Oromo  
 my friends, here is the gun  
 the people of Booree,  
 whose swords are sharp  
 will slay the enemy today
- Q24. Lolee hoo lolee.  
 Woyyu midda  
 Abbaan fardaa ohoo  
 Oh lollolee ohoo  
 Booranchilee lolee  
 Lolee hoo lolee  
 Booree kaa'ee lolee  
 Lolee hoo lolee  
 Lolaan huura guure  
 Lolee waayyu gomboo  
 Lola hedee fuuree  
 Woyyu midda
- I fought so many times  
 the woyyu are brave (they have trophies)  
 the horseman oh!  
 damn! he fights well, oh!  
 the Borana also fight  
 they fight again and again  
 I fought for vengeance  
 I fought fiercely  
 the erosion wears away garbage  
 the woyyu of gomboo chases away their enemy  
 they are preparing for war  
 the woyyu are brave (they have trophies)
- Q25. Lollolee ohoo  
 Borachiise balloo  
 Booree kaa'e balloo  
 Shaara lafaa lolee  
 Shange nafa lolee
- I fought sternly  
 my dear, I grabbed him by neck and made him bellow  
 I made him panic with fear in retaliation  
 I fought fiercely at *Shaaraa*  
 and mutilated the enemy in the fight
- Q26. Ho lollolee lolee.  
 Amalakkee jilaa  
 Hamaan duuba jira  
 Kadhichoo qeerranchaa  
 Maa heddee qeexaltaa  
 Lolaan huura guuree  
 Lolee waayyu gomboo, lola hedee fuure
- I fought sternly  
 the *gadaa* ceremony is at Amalakkee  
 the valiant forces are coming from behind  
 the slim brave boy, you are scary like leopard  
 why are you singing the war song?  
 erosion carries away garbage  
 the woyyu at gomboo are prompting warfare
- Q27. Worri middaa nama naataa jalaan gori  
 Worri dheedaa nama naataa jalaan gori  
 Amalakkee jilaa hamaan duuba jira  
 Amalakkee godde hamaa qaalluu tolte
- the *middaa* are dangerous, let you not touch them  
 the *dheedaa* are dangerous, let you not touch them  
 there is ceremony at Amalakkee, the gallant forces are coming  
 the Amalakke River has dried; the enemy of qaallu has disappeared
- Q28. Ziinjaron jaldeessaa  
 buliin walitti luphee  
 Liqamanbariin Ruufo  
 Shabu iyyaappaa tume  
 Dargii baalee asuu yaale
- the Monkey is called *jiinjaroo* in Amharic  
 the people are fighting each other  
 the administrator is Ruufo  
 Shabuu has demolished the EPRP (*Iyaappaa*)  
 when the *dargue* of Baalee has tried to conquer us
- Q29. Edoo roophilaan girrisuu motoriin cadde  
 Mootoleen siisoo dhaddee tasa bade
- while the plane was flying its engine is broken  
 the kings disappeared as they lost the one-third share

- Q30. Kuun galtuu kuun dhaltuu  
Saree Qilxoo eessaan dhuttee somba butte
- this one is homeless that one coward  
where did Qilxoo's dog come from  
when it took the slaughtered caws lung
- Q31. Konkolaasoo taphanna .  
Koot wal'aansoo qabanna  
Gangalloo middaa  
Gangalchee jissa  
Jissee dhuuffisa  
Buna quufaa  
Jissee dhuuffisa
- let us play by rolling on the ground  
let you come and wrestle with me  
the roller of the middaa group,  
I will knock him down easily  
I knock him out and make him fart  
the man who drank much coffee  
I will fell him and make him fart
- Q32. Lolee hoo,  
Shaphee bulee lolee,  
Hoo lolee hoo,  
Shangee mureehoo,a  
Hoo lollolee lolee,  
Diida wixxii balloo,  
Diinaa riccii balloo,  
Hoo lollolee balloo,  
Wocaale Wocaalee Sidaamaa,  
Woldhaanee ilaala,  
Qaalluu biifaa  
Gadaa biifaa  
Hayyuu biifaa
- the brave fighters  
we dwelt at Shaphee and fought  
oh, the brave fighters  
Shangee mutilated the enemy,  
oh, the brave fighters  
the enemy are rushing to escape my dear,  
blow them apart my dear  
oh, the brave fighters  
those kids of Sidama,  
let me face them in fight,  
qalluu is flourishing  
gadaa is flourishing  
hayyuu is flourishing
- Q33. Wadhakkoo bulle,  
Walargaa dhunnee,  
Teenna ka Baalee,  
Gambeelli keennaa  
Dhufta ta maanii,
- we spent the night at Wadhakkoo,  
we came to meet each other,  
ours are from Baalee,  
Gambeella is ours,  
the students have come,
- Q35. Hiyyoo obboloo, boombii dhoosa  
Hiyyoo obboloo, boombii dhoosa  
Qunneen waddeessaa, boombii dhoosa  
Kenna lammachii boombii dhoosa  
Seesa wal keessaa boombii dhoosa
- oh my friends, the bomb explodes  
oh friends, the bomb explodes  
the bark of the fig tree, the bomb explodes  
the youth of our village, the bomb explodes  
flock together, the bomb explodes
- Q36. Gujii Girjaa Oromoo fiqaadi kan saanii  
Oromoo saanjaa bisaaanii koyi tuqii ilaali  
Oromoo natsaa wucii, Nageelle gama bahee  
Mootichi abbaa biyyaa, *gaazexaan* footoo ka'e
- the Guji Oromo of Girja act according to their will  
who dare fight the Oromo with sharp sword  
the OLF is rushing to Negelle town  
(qaalluu) had his picture posted on news paper
- Q37. Hiyyoo obboloo, boombii dhoosa  
Ijoolle teennaa, boombii dhoosa  
Waldhaakko jalaa, boombii dhoosa  
Waldhaggiin tarraa, boombii dhoosa  
Hiyyoo obboloo, boombii dhoosa  
Buusaa hurree'ee, boombii dhoosa  
Jissee hin naataa, boombii dhoosa  
Danaa kuullee'e, boombii dhoosa
- dear friends, the bomb explodes  
the youth of our village the bomb explodes  
through Waldhakkoo, the bomb explodes  
we miss each other, the bomb explodes  
dear friends, the bomb explodes  
the construction of the bridge the bomb explodes  
you will be shocked if I demolished  
the hunt of young lion, the bomb explodes

- Xabbaqaa boordii, boombii dhoosa  
Yootuu dagatte, boombii dhoosa  
Si buusa ooddii, boombii dhoosa
- the protection centre, the bomb explodes  
if you forget to be careful, the bomb explodes  
will take you to prison, the bomb explodes
- Q38. Farda bitanee lafoo irraan baasane  
Lafa jadduu geessanee  
Qalimaa haadhaa urkoo irraan baasane  
Hoolee horaa geettanuu  
Dhalee silla geettanu  
Sillaan koortee takaaltee  
Baalagee Beedaa dhanga dhowaa dhessite
- they bought the horse to ride  
they take it to the risky place  
one accomplishes one's mother's vengeance with it  
your sheep are multiplying  
your cows are now giving milk  
you tie them to milk  
the uncultured people of Beedaa are yelling
- Q39. Obbee hoo kaaliboor  
Godeehoo kaaliboor  
Gaara Bucciisi  
Hadha cuqqisi  
Obbeyoohoo kaaliboor  
Daraarte shemoo  
Darasaa cegoo
- my brother, here is the weapon (rifle)  
my dear friend, here is the weapon  
he people at the hill of Buchisii  
never utter a word today  
my brother, here is the weapon (rifle)  
the cabbage has flowered  
for the Darasa of Cegoo
- Q40. Kaasaa buddeenaa kaaliboor  
Ciisaa uddeela kaaliboor  
Obbeyoohoo kaaliboor  
Gaara buqqise  
Hadha cuqqise  
Hinaaftuu durra  
Hadha cuqqise
- a piece of bread, here is the rifle  
you have it at your bed,  
friends, here is the rifle  
the people of the hill  
they kept silent today  
those jealousy guys  
they kept silent today
- Q41. Nuti Mokeyo waliin  
Yoo beekte duraa gori  
Obbeyoohoo kaaliboor  
Ijoollee Mokee kaaliboor  
Kaasaa buddeenaa, bada uddeellaa  
Ka shiifa qaraa, hadha si qalaa
- we are with Mekonen  
if you are willing side with us  
my friends, here is the gun  
supporters of Mekonen  
a piece of bread, eat it at once  
the one with sharp sword, will slaughter you
- Q42. Koo miilaa kopheen balaxee  
Iyaadigii dhufte jennaan  
Mangeen yoo amallaxxe
- my foot has exceeded my shoe  
when EPRDF came  
Mengistuu fled in fear
- Q43. Galaanni dhassoo mare Booreen walakeessa  
Nama Oromoo jibbu baasaa nu keessaa
- the river surrounded Dhassoo through Boorana  
fight those who hate the Oromo

### 3. Geerarsa(G)

- G1. Afaan hin beektu Golee kiyya,  
Gurruma caqafatta,  
Anillee gurguraa hin jiru  
Falfaltu duubuma gadaafaddu  
my Gole, you don't know my language  
you listen only with your ears,  
I will not sell you my horse,  
though wicked persons have asked  
your price behind my back
- G2. Kurupho ari'anna  
Kuruphoon duute bade  
Jaldo waan galaa mari'anna  
G3. Qalaman gola bule, qalaman gola bule  
Gola didate dongoraa duuba bule  
Dongoree dadhabee tokkocha mataa muree  
let's follow the track of the antelope  
when the antelope is dead  
*Jaldo*, we will discuss whether we should go home.  
the mare sleeps in the horse stall in the house  
when it doesn't come inside, it sleeps in the kraal  
I did not kill (a wild animal) with spear,  
I have slaughtered only one
- G4. Qalama gola bule, gola didate  
Dankara duuba bula, dankaree dadhabe  
Abbankee tokkochan mataa muree  
Qalaman muchi shiifa, sanga gondoli shifa  
Gondole bonko shiifa, woldeenani citta diida  
Qoraan rifata, kararra tarkaanfata  
Qraasuma rifata, hanfala tarkaanfata  
the mare sleeps in the horse's stall in the house  
it sleeps at the gate post of the kraal  
your father has cut the head of the wild animal  
the mare has hard nipples, the male a sharp spear  
a sharp spear, I wait outside in the small forest  
the horse is afraid of fire wood and jumps over the fence  
afraid of the shaking milk pot it jumps over the belt
- G5. Garri gamaa hurufaa  
Ha gamanaaa hurufaa  
Oolaan hudduu hurufaa  
Daakuu gubbaa gulufaa  
on this side the soil is soft  
on that side the soil is soft  
the coward remains at home, his buttocks are soft  
and he grinds grain on the stone.
- G6. Mana hin oolu jedhee  
Baddaa keessa toolise  
Haluu baddaa keessa toolise  
Maddaa keessa loolise  
I did not stay in the house, he (the coward) says  
I was walking in the forest  
I remember very well in the forest,  
I killed an antelope when it was sleeping in its lair
- G7. Afaan booyyee  
Kalaadaa qofaa  
Badaa afaan booseyaa  
Ha nyaata qofaa  
(he speaks) with the wild pig's voice  
a mouth full of only teeth  
with the evil voice of an unkempt man  
who does nothing but eat
- G8. Ani aayyoo tiyyaa qaba  
Waan beelaa quba hinqabu  
Hareyyaatii qabaa,  
Duuchituu dhaba hin qabu  
I have my mother to take care of me  
I am not hungry  
I have my friends  
I am not deprived of anything
- G9. Worri kiyya na malee  
Kutaa tikaa na hale  
Garaan kiyya na malee  
Gugganaa dheefa hale  
my parents do not like me  
they only want me to keep cattle  
my stomach contracts with fear  
and I run away from running antelope

- G10. Baddaa galti gilibaan,  
gaafa hinqaddu dullee  
Gaafan neenqa ajjeese,  
loowwan keena rafee bulee
- the antelope lives on his high lands,  
the dukier has no horns  
(the day) when I killed the lion,  
our cattle spent a peaceful night.
- G11. Anatu loowwan dhaqe  
Anbassaan sa'aa qabee  
Sa'aa abbaa hambise  
Anbassaa addaa dhawa raffisa
- when I went the field to tend cattle  
I saw a lion roaring at a cow  
the lion has prevented it from going home  
I fired at his forehead at once and let him die.
- G12. Neenqa jaare cirriin faana godaanti  
Neenqa neenqa duchiisu dhiirti mara sodaatti  
Tokisaan qibaati'ii wanni hantuun maas'ii
- when the lion gets old, birds sit on its wound  
the brave man panics even the courage ones  
automatic gunfire is terrifying, but that of maasi'ii is  
terrible
- Tokkotee hindhabin jettee eebbittee haati'i  
Tokkashii Aroo, tokkosee dhowa qaroo  
Tokkashii deettee, tokko tokkichaan leesse.
- the mother blessed "Let you succeed"  
(I) the son of Aroo, I fire at the lion's eyes  
(I) the son of my mother, I extinguished them
- G13. Abbaan biyyaa abbaa kiyya,  
Anbassaan midda kiyya  
Haluu haadha waati'ii  
Maaliin Bushee ijjeese dhabeedhaati
- the governor of the land is my father  
now my trophy is a lion  
in revenge of the mother of calves  
(I) the tactful son of Bushee, I never miss a shot.
- G14. Ijoollee gaara teennaa, Bonee abban cola  
Bonaa gana roophilaa waaqarra barara oola  
Urkoon jaarsa tolchitee, ani loowwan tissaa oola  
Waaqni loonii anaa owwate yoona  
Abbaan biyyaa abbaa kiyya  
Anbassaan midda kiyya
- the youth of our village, *Bonee* is *Colaa's* father  
planes fly in the sky in winter and summer season  
fate has favored the old man, but I always keep cattle  
the God of the cattle has now answered my prayer  
my father has become the governor of the land  
the lion has now become my trophy.
- G15. Woorri neenqaa saree  
Warri gafarsaa looni  
Nama nama ijjeeset korma  
Kanaaf akkana rom'a
- the killers of lion are like dogs  
those of buffalo are like cows  
the killer of an enemy is brave  
that is why he grows (shiver) like that
- G16. Walaamo baaya seesa,  
Fardoo balaqa seesa  
Janni urgoo geerare  
Jarana takkaa eegaa
- the attire of [wolaita] is beautiful,  
so is the horse's decoration  
the brave son of Urgoo is chanting geerarsa  
(you guys) wait to see his superb performance.
- G17. Geeloo ejjee geeraree  
Hafuura qoomiaa buusa  
Qoontuu qoontuu geerarsa  
Hanfalaa hidhaa buusa
- at geelo, I recite the heroic song of warrior  
and weaken the power of the enemy.  
by singing satirical heroic songs,  
I loosen the enemy group's belt (hanfala)
- G18. Goota furfurri walitti funaantee  
Giddicho oddoola gamaan yaate  
Oddoolaan buusee ka Gujii guchiin shaallo  
Lamaaniin jaala dhiiraa shaalloleen faana kaate
- the *gidicho* clan have mobilized brave heroes,  
they are marching beyond the island of *oddoola*  
the brave sons of Gujii has gone there (for the fight)  
the brave friends of the heroes are a joining them.

- G19. Ilma hoonii, uma hoomii  
Maqaa shendo baafaduu  
Akka shendootti egga, itti siqii qaafaduu  
Akka gaamura mishayyoo, siqii gaafaduu  
Akka mishaa dashayyo hirboora hirreen baafaduu
- G20. Duulanu du'aa jiranii,  
Qananiin maafii duula  
Minninuu isaa du'aa  
Hiyyeessi maanti oola
- G21. Arfii qaran laana  
Hormaan kaate gaana  
Gaaritti jedhaa nageenya gara Amaaraa  
Jaagurree gungumaa burree damaa  
Jaala gurraacha jannaa  
Gummaade dhaqii deebi'i amma
- G22. Limaatii qotee bishaan baaseera  
Diina muree arreettii warraa baaseera  
Abbaan du'ee ijoollee anaa lakkise  
Haluu abbaa ijoollee  
Dhiira muree buyyoora harkise
- G23. Diida karaa Buccisii  
Waaq, goota malee yaraa hinguddisiin  
Sa'aan dibicha hin dhalle  
Abbaa, ilmaat gadhaa sii hingalle  
Ka anaa kudha hinqalle
- G24. Areera unan malee mi'ee nama hingabbittu  
Buusanee muran malee urkoon nama hin raffitu  
Urkoo mataa tole, tola mataa hin buudhani  
Urkoon turte je'anee goota hin dhiibani
- G25. Qabannee ulee leemmaa  
Haa jennu biyya keennaa  
Haa deebitu eeloon keennaa
- G26. Qotattee fudhatte warqee keenna  
Gurgurtee leessite muka teenna  
Hidhadhaa ol ka'aa nama keennaa
- G27. Bishaan karra duraa waraabe Makuraa  
Etuun tiyya jedhuu fudhate ka biraa  
Bishaan ulaa ulaa loonti jalaan una  
Shaggee laccoo durra maradhee siin bula
- the brave son of Hoomii,  
name yourself Shendo  
like the brave Shendo, get closer to the fight  
like the fearless young lion, tear the enemy to pieces  
like the good Dashayo, tie the ivory on your arms
- everyone participates in warfare risking his life  
if so, why should the rich go to war?  
staying at home, the poor dies of hunger  
if so, why do they abstain from warfare?
- the spear is sharpened slowly  
the cattle are at the breeding season  
say adieu to the peace of the Amhara  
my thunderous man with the color of honey  
a faithful friend of the brave black men  
let you show your bravery by going to *Gummade* now
- I have dug the land and made the water flow through  
I have slaughtered the enemy and satisfied the family  
my father was killed; I am taking care of his children  
in vengeance of the children's father,  
I have slaughtered the enemy and pulled him on dust
- in the fields of the Buccisii village,  
God, let only the brave profess,  
the cow did not deliver bulls  
father, you are not happy with your coward son  
as you have never prepared the *kudha*
- the fresh milk alone does not make one grow strong  
unless one drinks yoghurt  
there is no sleep if one fails to slay the enemy  
one cannot be anointed, unless vengeance succeeds  
a hero won't be ignored as the vengeance delayed
- holding the *leemma* stick,  
let's shout 'our land!'  
let our sweat be considered!
- they (the Amhara) have looted our gold mines  
they have sold all our trees  
my people, let you get ready for war.
- Mekuriya is fetching water from the stream  
he abducted another lady while I complain about mine  
the cattle drink water from the cave  
my darling, may I spend the night in your embrace

- G28. Amaartich booree Kabbee Dan'oo  
Kaabbisee dhufe shaggee malli maalihoo  
Amaartich gamaa cuubee buqifate  
Hinaaftichi namaa baay'ee burrifate
- the Amhara man at Booree, Kabbee Dan'oo  
is rushing towards us, what shall we do my love?  
he is taking his knife out of its container  
that envious man has become furious
- G29. Shuumiin futte tumaaleessa  
Shaanaa naanna waan hiyyeessaa
- the governors have taken the he- goat  
we eat cabbage, the diet of the poor
- G30. Dafqa cosse hujjitti  
Damma dhabe uni'iitti  
Gootaaf qonnee siisoo  
Afaan goge meerre farsoo
- I toiled for the work  
but my drink has no honey in it  
we till one-third of our land for the landlord  
yet, where is the mead for us?
- G31. Giittiin qawwee duutee  
Giittomma eessaa fuute?  
Garbuu xeroo'o naattee  
Gabbatee xeerii baatte
- the queen of the Amhara man died  
where did she get the title (Queenship)?  
as she consumed the barely reserved for rituals,  
she became fat and has grown buttocks
- G32. Baandaan gadii duule gara digoodii  
Guntunni hin jabaata akka chilootii  
Chilootii Amaaraa ta galgalaan baatu  
Kaarruu isa jalaa ta cirriiquun yaatu
- the group below our village marched to Digoodii  
the uprooting breast is hard like the court proceedings  
the court of the Amhara, that assembles at night  
saliva comes out through your lower kaarruu\*
- G33. Alattaa lafa gaddaa  
Haloo biyya argaddaa  
Qananiin loontii madda  
Biyya gumii Gadaa,  
Dammaqaan buleera qeesii  
Qannaanee si gabbarra, waaqa keetii abeetii  
Abeetotaalle oolu, bulcheera kaayii keetii
- Alatta is the land of misery  
in Haloo, the green land of savannah grasses,  
the source of luxurious life is cattle  
in the homestead of the *gadaa* council  
Damaqa has bowed down for priests  
making us serve the priest, and bow for his God.  
whatever we pray, our fate is already decided
- G34. Buleen golaa ta garmaamaa  
Manni qeesii ta awwaalaa
- one's home is for life  
that of the priest is for cemetery
- G35. Mixiin biyyaa bade  
Zaqqiin biyya qabatte  
Nadheen farra fidde unto barattee  
Galgala tola faana qabatte
- the traditional belt made of goat skin has disappeared  
the modern belt has now become popular  
our women are addicted to alcohol, and disobedient  
they follow the foot steps of their husband at night
- G36. Abbaan durii Waaqa ,faroo laala  
faroo laalee dibee manaa baasa  
Abbaan ammaa nyaapha  
birrii kuma naata
- long ago, fathers used to watch faro  
they used to anoint and give their daughter  
the fathers of these days are like enemies,  
they demand thousands for nuptial payment
- G37. Lola hedee Gerebbo ijoollee kuuse  
Loluu didde Birbirsi woynnee buuse  
Goota gaafa waalluu Galgeen jaare je'ane  
Jaarsoo Xiniqii ilma tuule je'ane
- Gerebo has been recruiting the youth for warfare  
but Birbirsa denounced the war and imprisoned him  
the hero of critical time, Galgee has now retired  
people say that Jaarso has killed his own son

- G38. Neeqqa battal'aa, neeqqa malkiin battal'aa  
Baga dide oromoon gosa biraa maan gabbara  
Hirkata mukaa malee, silaa roophiin lafatti hin baatu  
Hirkuu Iyaadigii malee, silaa Geedi'oon,  
Gujii dhaatoo sassaaqaa hin ooltu.
- the spotted lion, the lion with spotted skin color  
they are right, why should the Oromo bow for others?  
had it not been for the help of trees,  
the hippopotamus wouldn't have come out of water,  
had it not been for the cover of EPRDF,  
the *Gedeo* would not have troubled our people.
- G39. Geerarsaan jiraa geerarsaan jiraa  
Mucaan geeraree hinquunne  
Galgoo, shaaraa jiraa  
Waanumti lafa qotanu maasharaan Diillaa jiraa  
Mucaan geeraree hinquunne shaaraa badhiha jira  
Adurreen nama hin naattu  
Aduun nama hin ajjeettu  
Ejjeesan malee nadheen nama hin jaallatu.
- I am about to sing the heroic song  
a man, who is never satisfied of the song,  
Galgoo is at the fields of Shaara  
the plough material is bought from Dilla,  
the unsatisfied singer is at Shaara.  
the cat does not bite,  
and the sun never kills anyone.  
unless someone kills enemy, ladies do not love him.
- G40. Kotoo abbaan kiyyaa  
Hindeettii baadha kiyyaa  
Gaafa lolli jabaate  
Saffii ergate gara kiyyaa  
Dhadhaa ilma Galalchaa  
Akka xajjii kiyyaa,  
Jara kaan galche biyyaa
- Kotoo is my father  
Hindeeti is my mother  
when the war gets stronger  
they call up on me.  
(I) the brave son of Galalcha clan,  
(I) chase the enemy to their belongings,  
just like I send the sip of bookaa to my stomach.
- G41. Abbaan bulchaa hiyyeessaa  
Dhufe Mellesee ilmi Zeenaa  
Mellesee dhufee ka'ee  
Mangistuun ba'e keenaa  
Warra Mellesee jibbu  
Qalma geessina qeeraa
- the father of the poor  
Meles the son of Zenawi has come  
when Meles came to power,  
Mengistu fled through Kenya  
those who hate Meles  
are sent to abattoirs (slaughter house)
- G42. Hiyyeessa bulchi jennaan  
Bulchaa itti wallaale,  
Du'ee bade aanne Tafarii Bantii  
Qalaadi haa hafu jennaan  
Iyaappaa idi'uu ta'aa maafii baddaatti gala
- when he was given the power  
Tafari failed to bring justice to the poor  
when the feudal system came to an end  
why did the EPRP fled to the highlands?
- G43. Ta baddaa galto ijoollee teenna  
Salaxoon qabaa jqalti  
Duunee dhumanna malee  
attam Sumaaleen daarii teennatti tarti
- our people of the highlands  
will slaughter them with sword  
how dare the Somali cross our boundary  
we are devoted to defend our land
- G44. Hoolee fedhe goree keessat ilaala.  
*bole*e fideera daggito *teedo* keessat ilaala  
bole shenaa gabbate,  
golee kiya afaan qabee bitaala
- I see the sheep I want in the stable  
when the horse wants salt, it looks in the basket  
when you eat salt, you become fat, my *gole*  
and I put the bit in your mouth
- G45. Utaale ana dhibe  
Qananii lamii rartu  
Utaalaa kana dibe  
Gurrakee birtee kow
- I cannot ride the runner  
a good horse taken care of by two women  
the runner is anointed with blood  
a hole is pierced in its ear

- Qananii yoona hin qalla  
 Qurriba kaati toltu  
 Bundoole lafa laali  
 Qananii yoona hin qalla  
 Quluu tiyya asi na ilaali.
- G46/ Hi'ii/daalatti tiyyaa  
 Daalatti bifaheenka  
 Daaluu bifa qeeransa  
 Tanumati na geerarsa  
 Hin du'a malee hin yaadhu  
 Bagajjaa mataa kiyyaa  
 Hin du'a malee hin haadu  
 Adii hiriyyaa tiyyaa
- G47. Harreen baddee harreen bade  
 Gangalloo gamaa dhaqxe  
 Silaa gangalchee muree  
 Farda aaddee intalaa  
 Haati tokkichaa bade
- G48. Lolee beeka lolee beeka  
 Lolallee loltaa lafa jabbii qullaa  
 Faranjii malee maaltu xamanjaa tumaa  
 Odoo faranjii dhaggee bilowa harka muraa
- G49. Gujo Guyyee kennane Gummi Guyyee kennane  
 Guyyaa gaafa jadduu lubbuu Waaqaa kennane  
 Ejjaa fuudhee ejjedhe  
 Ejjee gaafate kiyya abbaan Fayyilee  
 Jarsarraa hayyuu fuudhe  
 Guyyaan gala jadduu  
 Shabee dhiirarraa lukaa fuudhe
- G50. Gama dibee gama dibee gangalatee balleessee  
 Daaraa dibee daaraa dibee gangalatee balleessee  
 Harree niitii qondaalaa badduu baalagee  
 Shaaanaan gadhaa hammeessee
- G51. Lolaan timee boolloo qayyaa balleesse  
 Lolli diqqaa hinqabuu ganaa harkaa madeesse  
 Lolaan timee boolloo qayyaa balleesse  
 Lolli dhufee dhirsaa niitii balleesse
- G52. Tokkosaa harki tolee,  
 harki qaataa barbaada  
 Tokkosaa harki tolee  
 qubni qaataa barbaada  
 Tokkosaan aayyoon deette kooshima Badhee  
 Tokkichi abbaa fakkaata
- when the good horse comes home  
 they say: "your horse is a good one!"  
 don't gaze at my horse with an evil eye, look to the earth  
 when the good horse comes home,  
 my clean horse, look at me.
- I like my grey horse very much  
 a horse with the colour of a lion,  
 a horse with the colour of leopard  
 you are the source of my heroic recitation  
 I don't mind dying in the fight  
 the long hair of my skull,  
 I do not shave it if I die  
 my friendly white horse  
 the donkey is missing  
 it must have gone to the ashes of that field  
 I roll the enemy on the field to cut genital  
 in revenge of the stupid girl  
 woe to the mother of the only son
- I have gone to war so many times  
 we fight the war where there are no cattle  
 who produces weapons unless the white men  
 if I found them, I will cut their hands with sword
- Gujo is given to Guyye, Gummi is given to Guyye  
 at critical time one submits his soul to God  
 I danced the *ejjaa* dance accompanying him  
 my father Fayile has enquired the truth  
 after inheriting the wits from the elders  
 the day we were back from war was so hard  
 Shabee had raided the fierce men on our way
- he rolled here and there and made the field bloody  
 he rolled over ashes and made the field ashy  
 that stupid wife of the qondaalaa  
 her stomach is full of cabbage
- the erosion has over flown the ditches of *qayyaa*  
 there is no small battle as I have wounded his palm  
 the erosion has over flown the ditches of *qayyaa*  
 warfare has come to separate husband and wife
- when the shot is on target  
 my hand presses the blower  
 when the shot is on target  
 my finger looks for the blower  
 (I) the chocolate coloured son of my mother  
 (I) am the one who resembles my father

- G53. Neeqqa jaare cirriin faana godaante  
 Neeqqa neeqqa duchiiisu dhiirti mara sodaate  
 Tokkisaan gibaati'ii wanni hantuun *maasi'ii*  
 Tokkotte hin dhabiin jettee eebbitte haati  
 Tokkaashii **Aroo** tokkosee dhowa qaroo  
 Tokkaashii deettee tokko tokkichaana leesse
- it is when the lion gets old that birds sit on its wound  
 (I) the lion that chases a lion is feared by many people  
 automatic gun fire terrifies, but not as that of *maasi'ii*  
 my mother blessed me so that I can fire correctly  
 the blaster of Aroo, I fire at the lion's eyes  
 (I) the blaster extinguished them one by one
- G54. Baddaa galtee gilibaan gaafaa hinqaddu dullee  
 Gaafa neeqqa ajjeese loowwan keenna rafee bule  
 Ka Sharuu sassaqa anooltu  
 Gujiin reefu ilaalaa dhufe mullee  
 Neeqqa jaare cirriin faana godaante  
 Neeqqa neeqqa duchiiisu dhiirti mara sodaate
- the antelope lives on highlands, the duiker has no horns  
 when I killed the lion our cattle spent a peaceful night  
 Sharuu the brave man of the *anooltu*,  
 the Guji visits has come to visit lately  
 birds follow the old and weak lion  
 the brave man that chases a lion is feared by many
- G55. Baddaa Sibuu birbirsi uree bahee  
 Gooda Sibuu guuntunni qomaan bahee  
 Bareeda goota maanii  
 Gootuu murtee qayyatte kaamennuu udda'a  
 Nama neeqqa ajjeese malkiin danchumaa  
 Neeqqa jaare cirriin faana godaante  
 Neeqqa neeqqa duchiiisu dhiirti mara sodaate
- in the forest of Sibuu, there may podocarpus trees  
 in the lowland Sibuu breasts are growing on chest  
 the hero is so handsome  
 the spirited lady's fragrance is so sweet as she used  
*gootuu* for smoke  
 the killer of a lion is handsome  
 birds follow the old and weak lion  
 the brave man that chases a lion is feared by many.
- G56. Qananii malee maanti bifa fuulaa  
 Woyyuu malee maanti guduruu hiikaa  
 Woyyicha mucaa dhaantuu  
 Halakee reebaa guduruu dhiigaa
- it is only good care that shines once face  
 it is only *woyyuu* that unties the *guduruu*  
 the *woyyuu* the boy who beat  
 Halakee Reebaa is untying *guduruu*
- G57. Leegamo Tuulaa jiraa  
 Tuulaa gamaa neeqqi ittanaa jira  
 Neeqqi Dooddoo Fondogaan kaarra jira  
 Fottossee muree ka Gujii guchiin shaalloo  
 Jaala dhiiraa shaalloleen faana kaateetti
- Legamoo is at Tuulaa by now  
 beyond the hill of Tuulaa, a lion is roaring  
 the giant lion of *Dodo* is on the way  
 the brave son of the Guji is about to castrate it  
 a brave friend of the hero is running after it
- G58. Gooba Baree himani  
 Baree Waalleen himani  
 Odaa hiddaan himani  
 Hiddii *baalaan* himani  
 Baallii koolaan himani  
 Nama abbaa hinqabne  
 Kooyyoo mukaan himane
- Gooba is identified by his father Baree  
 Baree is identified by his father Waallee  
 the oak tree is identified by its root  
 and *hiddii* by its leaves  
*baallii* is identified by its feathers  
 the fatherless person, Kooyyo  
 is named by the tree under which people found him
- G59. Dhala dancha lukkuu sillatti  
 Silla danchaa hoolee dalluu dhibe  
 Dalluu danchaa ka raada gooni dhibe  
**Goonni** Galgoolee shibbiriin kaate  
 Na matriyeesiin bite  
 Daanaa Qonxii Dheekkamuu  
 Jaalli soorsa gumii aanole
- the hen lays many eggs but there is no *silgaa* for it  
 the *silgaa* is enjoyable but the sheep has no hump  
 the hump is fleshy, the heifer has got no bravery  
 the brave son of Galgole is ready for causing terror  
 I have bought the bigger missiles  
 when Danaa Qonxii yells  
 his friends are from the *aanole* became furious

- G60 Muree mataan dhibaasu  
Waaqaan jala adeema  
Lafaan gubbaa adeema  
Roophilaa Badhaaso Bonuu  
Badhaaso dheeraa Bonuu
- he castrates and anoints his head with butter  
(he) walks under the sky  
and above the earth  
Badhaso Bonuu is like plane  
Badhaso the tall son of Bonuu
- G61. Duree guyyisee duulli duulli duree guyyise  
Duratti dursee muree fardoo aaddee intalaa  
Reeffaan buyyoo uwwise
- the day is so fortunate for warfare  
I have already killed an enemy and had my trophy  
I have covered the dead body of the enemy with grass
- G62. Ijoollee dheeda keennaa  
Ittisoo ilma Garroo  
Midda tokkichaana jaare  
Waaqa, Shibbirii fidi balloo!  
Middi tkkicha hinqabu  
Sanuu gasatti dhaadani  
Ilmi tokkich hinqabu  
Sanuu abbaan yaamani
- the youth of our grazing field  
Ittisoo the son of Gooroo  
people say has retired with one trophy  
Oh God, let you bring terror  
a single trophy is not a failure  
as the clan boasts with it  
there is no complain of the only child  
as he is called by his father's name
- G63. Loleen kaatee dhiira furfurrii geette  
Walitti funaantee Giddicho Oddoola gama teette  
Oddoon marrite daale bobbaasa geette  
Daalee bobba'ee galu tiyyeen qaratti eedde  
Qotiyyeen qarati naate ka dhaantu dhaana
- the warfare has started letting the brave ones furious  
the *giddicho* heroes are marching to *Oddoolaa*  
the *Oddoo* land has grown grasses, *daalee* is to enjoy it  
the oxen have had from it to brim  
(I) the black brave one, avenge their enemies
- G64. Foon qalanna jette  
Barbarree guurtee yaate  
Foon qalatee hin naatiinii  
Harrooleen kilaashii qattee yaate
- they wanted to slaughter our cattle  
they brought much *barbare*  
let them not have any meat  
those stupid guys carrying guns
- G65. Waraana maqaa gaadduu  
Wontee maqaa allaadduu  
Bona hin baattu Gidaabu ganna malee  
Gurraacha hin naattu budaa adii malee  
Dhiira *mixii* sanbaraa  
Hiyyessa bulii afaan balbalaa  
Diqqayyoo Hodhoo Boshaa murafo jarjaraa
- the War of the guerrilla  
the shield of the *allaadduu* clan  
the *Gidabo* river overflows during the summer  
it drowns only the whites not the black  
a brave man of thick goatskin belt  
the poor guy who dwells near the gate  
the young Hodhoo Boshaa is rushing for trophy
- G66. Hiyyuun mina oolchitee  
Yaruun duula dhoggitee  
Abbaa diidaa beekke jalaa muradha jennaan  
Darguun muraa dhoggitee  
Abbaa diidat ajjeesee  
Ilmee niitii silaa minaan boochisee  
Henna minan gale haatiifi nadheen kiyya  
Worri ana minaan kookkise  
Akka korma baallii fudhatee  
Ta Sharuu sassaqa anooltu  
Galeen worraan bookkiseera
- the poor mother lets her son stay at home  
the bad one prohibits from going to war  
when I wanted to avenge my enemies  
the *Dergue* prohibited the warfare  
had it not been like that, I would kill the husband and  
make the wife wail at home.  
when I go home, a warm welcome awaits me  
like the brave man that took Gadaa leadership  
the spirited son of *Sharu* would roar like lion at home

- G67. Caccabaan shuboo dhibbaa makiinni hamaa hirbaa  
Daadhii mashataa malee ka bookaa maanti jibbaa  
Boonaa Hargaagoo keessaa Gaarrade Hirgaa  
Boorsaa qabattee yaate shaarmuxaan Diillaa  
Halkan **Doonee Tenkeelle** je'aa dukkaneesse  
Ganaan woreera **Kucha** je'a digaalessa  
Hashee galtane daadhii dhiitee cufana jissaa  
Dhumu dhabinni shaaloo sirbaa
- the car with hundreds of broken wire is so swift  
who hates bookaa except the one prepared for sell?  
the bold man of Hargaagoo Garradee father of Hirgaa  
the whore are rushing to Dilla holding their bags  
at night Doonee Tenkelle stays with them too long  
I will terrify him says the brave Kucha  
when he is back home he kicks the door  
when the drink is over they start singing
- G68. Hayyoo lolee lolee lolee  
Tuksiin boosaa siingila  
Ilmeen jaarii mormaan qaddi bilbilaa  
Irreessa tursii baasa irsaasiin ibsaa  
Gama abbaa **Shubbaa** jaalii **Galoo**  
Gangalcha funuunsa Adoola tukssii  
takkaan jissaa
- while Adola kills with a single bullet  
the children of the elders have bell on their neck  
Irreessaa fires slowly lighting the bullets  
in the village of Shubbaa Galoo, I bleed some one  
while Adola kills with a single bullet
- G69. Se'aa sirbaa kal'ee qeerranchaa  
Keenna haloo hedee qeexalcha  
Haloon warra Suta'aa  
Anuu sii geerara, jaartii afaan muka mutaa
- let you sing like the leopard's skin  
ours are reciting the war song to take revenge  
the Haloo clan of Suta  
I will sing the heroic song for you
- G70. Wanni dhagginee hinbeekne  
Booranaan dhufa gaalli  
Kaasee jira Kambaanni  
Shawaa jira siraanni
- what we have never seen  
the camel comes from Booranaa  
the Kambata has taken them  
Shawa has the law
- G71. Shaaloo rigaa hadheessaa  
Gaafa dikkoo kooll'aa  
Maan dhageetta da'eessa  
Maan dhageettaa motii yoo mul'issuu dheessaa
- the traditional tooth brush of *hadhessa* tree is good  
come on market days, never care about the rumours  
forget it they will run away when I reveal it
- G72. Jajjaboo qotii dhoggee  
Goolloo facaasaa dhogge  
Facasee muraa qalinni kiyyaa  
Aadduu munnuuquu dhoggee
- the jajaboo tree has made the ploughing difficult  
the workmen on the field could not saw the seeds  
my sword disbands and cut the enemy to pieces  
I have prevented them from marching
- G73. Mucaa duula hamaa,  
Haati laddoo dhossitii.  
Gurbaa duulaan deebi'uu,  
Qalima haadhaa hagabuun mottositi.
- a mother whose son is brave  
conceals the night wear  
when he is back from hunting  
she punishes him with hunger
- G74. Alattaa biyya gaddaa,  
Haloo biyya argaddaa.  
Qananiin loontii maddaa.  
Hiyyeessii carqii maddaa.  
Hilleessi tusee bulee.  
Hiyyuu hantuu je'ee,  
Haloon buna daldalaa bulee.  
Haloon warra suta'aa  
Siin geerara, jaartii afaan muka mutaa
- Alatta the land of misery  
in Haloo the land is evergreen  
joy lies in possession of cattle  
the poor worries about their clothes  
the rabbit dwells in scantily forested areas  
the haloo started to trade coffee, lest they become poor
- the haloo of Suta,  
I will sing the heroic song for you

### Appendix III

#### Some Pictures Taken During Data Collection



Pic-1. Girma establishing rapport with the local people, Samaro



Pic-2. Recitatiopn after the rapport



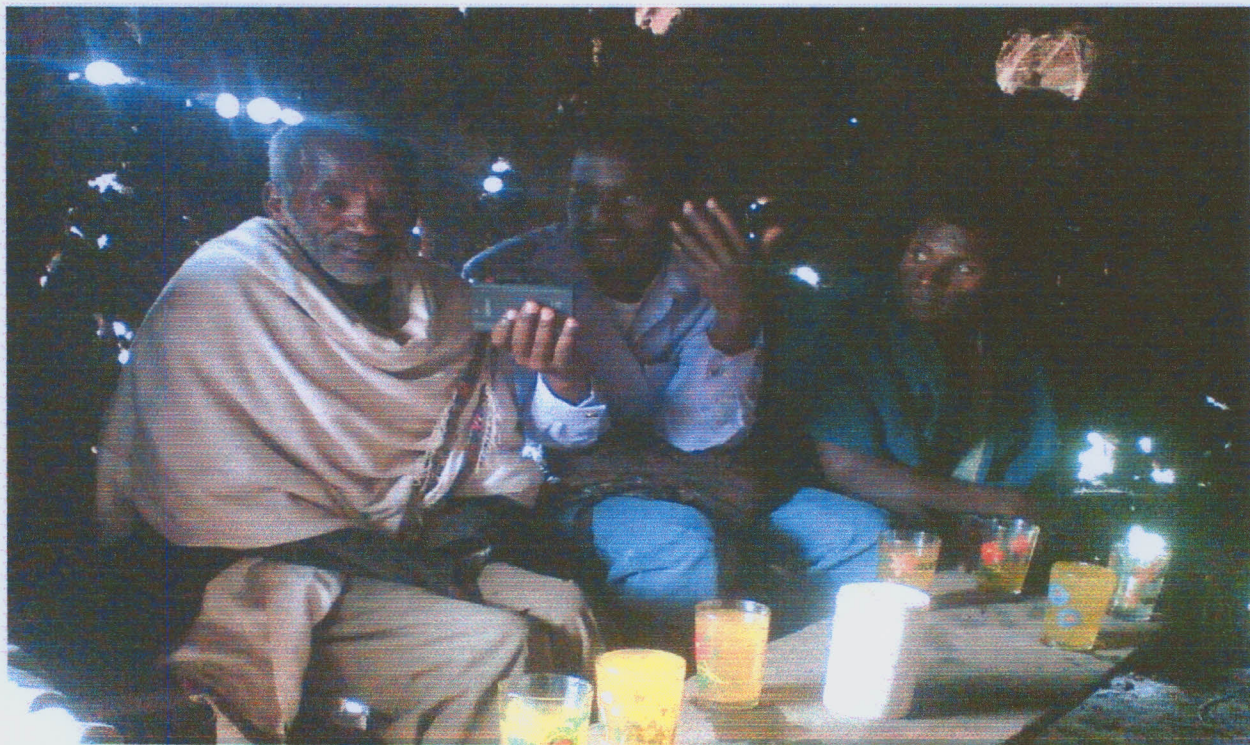
Pic-3- Participants at the discussion conducted at Gwangwa



Pic-4. Hachaboo Dambii (Geersarsa reciter) explaining about the cultural materials



Pic-5. Interview with Obbo Boonayaa Galgalee



Pic-6- Interview with Obbo Gochuu Adola



Pic 8- Blessing before recitation at Shaaraa Elementary School



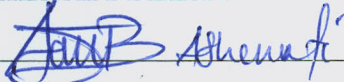
Pic- 9- Participants on the Discussion conducted at Shaara

## DECLARATION

I, the under signed, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: **ASHENAFI BELAY**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: June, 2009

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.



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**Dr. MELAKNEH MENGISTU**