

Dramatic Structure In Plays of Tsegaye Gebre Medihin

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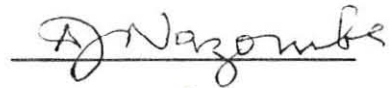
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ABSTRACT

Based on their genres, aesthetic and social values, plays may be classified as epic, absurd, cruelty, morality, historical, religious, revolutionary and the like. Structurally also, two approaches - the conventional or Aristotelian and unconventional, for instance, Brechtian methods are most often exercised by various practitioners.

The purpose of this thesis is to see the appropriate application of both the conventional and unconventional dramatic structures in some of the selected plays of Tsegaye.

In the introductory part of this work, the general assessment of other researchers' analysis on the plays of the same author is reviewed. The next theoretical chapter discusses the rules and principles of both the conventional and Brechtian epic playwriting.

In this section, the nature of Freytag's Pyramid, including its components - the exposition, complication and resolution parts is elaborated. Furthermore, the necessities of the divisions of a play into scenes and acts are indicated. Added to the conventional type of presentation, the unique characteristic feature of Brechtian epic theatre is also defined in this chapter.

In the light of the theoretical discussions, the second and the third chapters respectively examine the proper usage

of the conventional and unconventional dramatic structures
six of the plays of the dramatist.

Last of all, the concluding part attempts to put all the findings of this research in a more condensed way. What is more is that this study has been supported by interviews which are held with the playwright and two senior directors who directed several of his plays. All the discussions with the three interviewees, have separately been recorded by tape-recorder.



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The art of drama does not have an age-old history in Ethiopia. It may have been about nine decades since the introduction in its modern way. As a consequence, there exist very few prominent playwrights in the country.

Tsegaye Gebre-medhin is one of these dramatists. He has written about thirty full-length, and one-act plays in addition to his translations of four Shakespearean tragedies (Othello, King Lear, Mackbeth, and Hamlet).

In so far as their thematic focus is concerned, his original plays seem to concentrate on three major areas. When we primarily look into his post-revolution plays, for instance, Ha Hu Basadasat War (Alphabet in Six Months), Enatalam Tanu (Mother Courage), Malakata Wazadar (Melakata Proletariat), Makadam (Preface) and Abugida Kayiso (Abugida Transformed), we find them totally dedicated to the propagation of the so called Ethiopian popular revolution. The other plays such as Tewodros, Petros and Collision of Altars revolve around Ethiopian historical figures and/or happenings. The rest of his plays which fall into a third category like Yashoh Akalil (The Crown of Thorns), Balg (Autumn) and Yakarmo Saw (A Man of Tomorrow) deal with various walks of life of human beings in general. By taking samples from each of these groups, this study attempts to analyze and discuss six of his published full-length plays. These published plays are: the English version of Tewodros (a play that presents the life and tragic death of King Tewodros of Ethiopia who ruled the country in the

late 19th century), Ha Hu Basadast War and Eratalam Tanu, plays that demonstrate the outbreak of the revolution; and Balg, Yakarmo Saw, and Yashoh Akalil, plays which are purportedly original.

These texts are selected for two basic reasons. First, as indicated above, each of them entertains different subject-matters. Secondly, since they are published and staged in various theatre houses, the reader may have access to crosscheck the assessment of this research paper with the original texts.

Most of these plays of Tsegaye have attracted the attention of many scholars both from Ethiopia and foreign countries. Eight researchers: Debebe Seifu (1973 and 1980), Taye Assefa (1980), Thomas Leiper Kane (1975), Albert S. Gerard (1971), Assefa Aragahegne (1981), Teferi Alemu (1982), Aboneh Ashagre (1983) and Abebe Addis (1980), so far, have made significant assessments of Tsegaye's pre-revolution plays.

Some of the points investigated by these researchers are the use of language i.e. elevated and colloquial language, imagery, the nature of verse and prose dialogues, characterization, the historical and cultural aspects of the plays, the major thematic concerns, the genre of the plays, the life history of the author, and the general merits and demerits of the playwright in the light of his plays.

In his dissertation, Ethiopian Literature in English, Debebe Seifu, for example, attempts to point out some general weaknesses of Tewodros which are to be found in many of his pre- and post-revolution plays. He notes:

... it is important to make note of the general defects of this play (Tewodros); its verbosity and superfluous and arbitrary use of folk art¹

The superfluity and arbitrariness are not only characteristic of Tewodros, but also of almost all the plays of Tsegaye. And they are also revealed in character manipulation, the usage of language, the changes of settings, the creation of moods, and the exposition of conflicts.

In his other senior essay "The major characters in Yashoh Akalil, Balg and Yakarmo Saw" Debebe has also asserted, "የሸህ ለክሊል፣ በልግና የከርጥ ሰው ዘመናዊ ጭናግ ተውኔቶች ናቸውና ድባባቸው ጉም እንደለበሰ ነው።"²
Yashoh Akalil, Balg and Yakarmo Saw are all modern serious plays and their mood is cloudy throughout.

It is again not only the overall mood of each of the plays that is gloomy but also the life of each individual character is full of despair and without a bright future.

Although gloomy feeling characterizes most of his plays, some attempt is made in his post-revolution plays of Ha Hu Basadast War and Enatalam Tanu to come up with a happy and hopeful ending.

By comparing his pre- and post-revolution plays, one can see

deduce that characters and situations in Tsegaye's plays by and large are drawn or pictured from pessimistic points of view. In order to arrive at such a generalization, however, this fact needs further investigation.

Apart from the analysis given by the above scholar, Thomas Leiper Kane in his study, Ethiopian Literature In Amharic, has the following point to make about the exposition of characters in one of Tsegaye's plays - Balg.

... Some of the confusion is eliminated through the unambiguous indication of the speaker which is characteristic of written scripts..., yet the lack of a list of dramatis personae allows considerable confusion to exist as a glance at Tsegaye Gbra-madhen's "Belg" will show. ³

Thomas Kane clearly points out the obvious errors of the playwright. However, such type of errors, once more are observable in all of Tsegaye's other plays, with the exception of his historical play - Tewodros. This sort of ambiguity occurs either because of the absence of the list of characters or the lack of sufficient character descriptions. For instance, in his post-revolution plays (Enatalam Tanu and Ha Hu Basadast War), the list of characters is always given at the beginning of the plays. However, no description is given concerning their relations, their age difference, their level of education, their occupations, and their physical appearances. Because of all these shortcomings, every character is not seen playing a specific role; and the reader faces the difficulty of identifying which character plays which part. For example, in that same play - Balg, every character has similar philosophy

and definition of the poet, speaks poetic language regardless of his degree of knowledge and personality. Such lack of physical and subjective description in Tsegaye's plays and its outcome undoubtedly need complete investigation.

Although the investigations cited above have been carried out by various researchers, none of them entirely takes as its subject the dramatic structure, which is one of the prominent but unexplored areas of studies. It is, therefore, assumed that a study of the dramatic structure of the already stated published plays can help find out all his literary merits or demerits.

In so far as the dramatic structure is concerned, playwrights most often follow the conventional (Aristotelian) and unconventional, e.g. Brechtian (or alienation) methods of presentations. As a consequence, the various stages of the dramatic structure, the act of exposition, complication and resolution, may or may not be presented in their natural order. Since the pre- and post-revolution plays of Tsegaye are written in these two different ways or approaches, this thesis investigates which plays follow which method of presentation and how effectively.

This study, therefore, attempts to look into the qualities and defects of the six plays from the point of views of their dramatic structure.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL VIEW ABOUT DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

1.1. Definition of Conventional Dramatic Structure.

Any well-wrought work of imaginative literature possesses some kind of order and organization. This overall arrangement is called structure. Harry Show defines this literary structure as, "... the planned framework of a literary selection." ⁴

According to The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, the structure of any literary work serves as a bridge to integrate and communicate both its content and form. It further notes that, "... the structure of a work of literary art is its internal and external organization, and the ways in which its constituent elements are connected." ⁵

For obvious reasons, however, the structure of each of the literary genres; plays, novels, short stories and narrative poems, is always different from the other. The manner of description, treatment and delineation of settings, plot and characters are the major significant points that bring differences regarding the final shape they attain. For instance, if the overall arrangement of a play is compared with a novel, there are many peculiar points that make the dramatic structure different from the structure of the novel.

In so far as the plot construction of these two forms of literature is concerned, the playwright (because he has time constraint) usually restricts himself and selects

essential happenings that help the development of the conflict. The novelist, on the other hand, is more flexible. He has got the time and the place to depict every imaginable incident from different points of view.

The novelist, in his exposition of the settings, has full freedom to shift the time and location of the action wherever the need arises. On the contrary, the dramatist is very much limited to a specified place and time of day or year or century.

Regarding the portrayal of characters, the playwright, once again, does not have sufficient time and space to delineate numerous dramatic persons from various perspectives. In the works of the novelist, however, the relationship of characters is more intricate and has greater fullness of detail explanation. ⁶

Not only the structure of the novel but that of the short story and the narrative poem is also different from the dramatic pattern. Their scope of characterization, plot construction and the description of the settings are by far narrower than the play. Because of the existence of all these differences between them, the arrangement of a play is not the same as that of the novel, poem or short story.

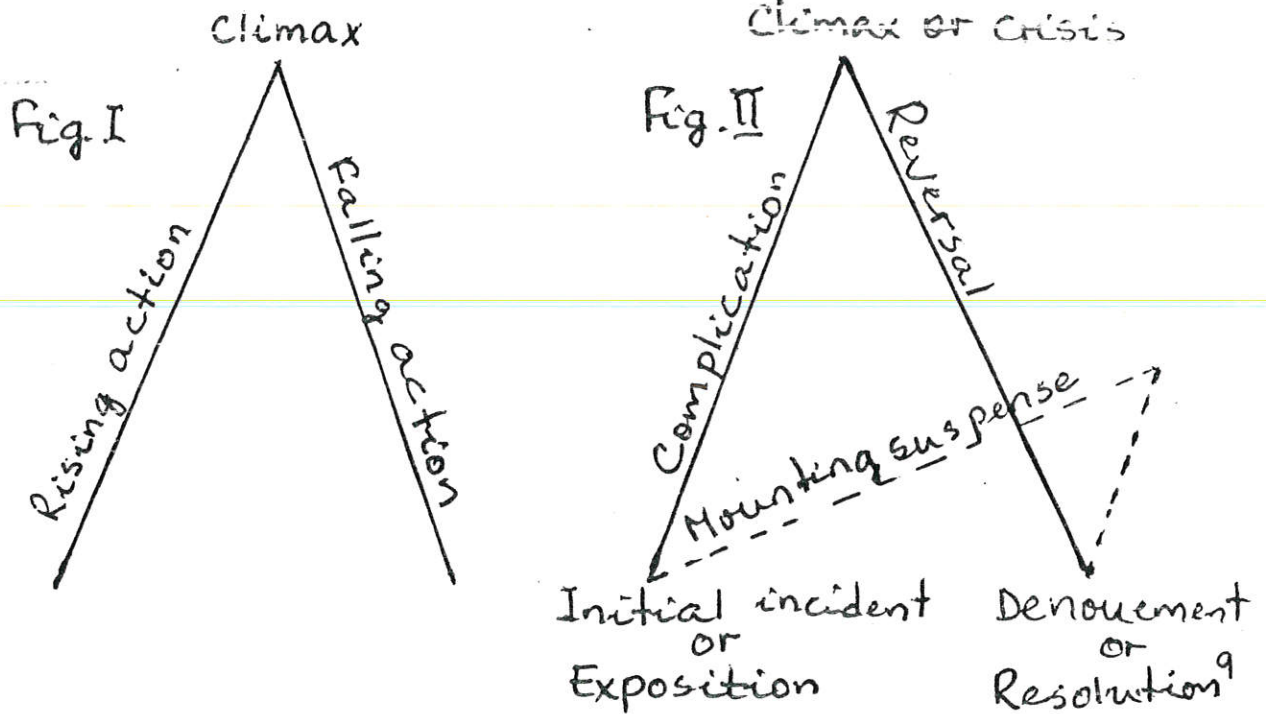
Thus, it is possible to deduce that dramatic structure is the combination of the elements of drama, plot, characters and settings in their restricted, selective and convincing order

along the line of the conflict of a play. According to Heimerl, the progress of conflict is the most decisive factor in the organization of these dramatic elements. He says, "... dramatic structure is the technical structure of a play which is determined by the necessities of developing the dramatic conflict." ⁷

Gustav Freytag, a German playwright, drama theoretician and critic, on the other hand, analyses the structure of a play from the point of view of the various stages of the conflict. For him, the chain of events of a well-structured play will commonly have three major and five minor divisions. To illustrate this new approach Freytag has formulated a graphic representation that indicates the relationship of the different phases of the dramatic conflict. Thereafter, the conventional dramatic structure is represented by the figure of a pyramid called Freytag's pyramid. This dramatic theory is thought to have been widely used throughout the world of drama.

However, Freytag's thought is not appropriate to some plays. In Brechtian epic play, for instance, where the separable episodes lack strong connection with each other, it is hard to apply Freytag's formula accurately. ⁸

The following two diagrams, therefore, are applicable only to those conventional plays in which the various sequences of the dramatic structure (the beginning, middle and ending parts) are properly identified.



Freytag's Pictorial Illustrations

As described in the second diagram by Freytag, the three major dramatic actions (which are located in the first figure) are further divided into five sub-divisions. The rising action splits into exposition or the beginning and the complication or the middle parts. And again the falling action or the ending section is divided into reversal and resolution (denouement).

Each of these major and minor divisions represents a unique and significant phase of a unified dramatic structure. Concerning the function of each of these component parts of the dramatic structure, Holman writes:

The introduction (or exposition) creates the tone, gives the setting, introduces some of the characters and supplies other facts necessary to the understanding of the play ... the complication is set in motion by the exciting forces and continues through successive stages of conflict between hero and the counterplayers up to the climax. The

downward [reversal] stresses the activity of the forces opposing the hero, and the catastrophe [resolution] comes as a natural outgrowth of the action. ¹⁰

As pointed out above, the first and the longest section of the various acts of the play is totally devoted to the explanation of the expository parts. It is so because this is the major opening section which establishes the base and reveals all the essential materials of a play.

First and foremost, this section provides the reader with the necessary background information of the setting (i.e. the time, the location and social circumstances of the action). Such an exposition of a setting is expressed mostly through the elaborated stage direction or the song of the chorus as in the case of clerical plays.

Apart from the description of the setting of the action, the relationship and identity of characters, the conflict, the subject matter and other important events that occur before the actual (proper) story takes place are all distinctively and precisely depicted in this section. Next to exposition comes the complication section. This part unveils a continuous and intense clash of the opponents (which is the contradiction between the antagonist and protagonist lines) until new information is discovered. This stage of complication creates high interest among the readers or audience and it is referred to as a scene of recognition or a scene of discovery or the climax. It is in this connection that G. Brouckett says, "The substance of most complications is discovery (any occurrence

of sufficient importance to alter the direction of the action)." "

As soon as the complication of the story arrives at this climax, the development of the conflict reaches its highest point. And exactly at this stage, the fortune of the protagonist is reversed. The reversal of the action occurs, as stated earlier, because of the protagonist's discovery of himself, or of his problem or of the world around him, a discovery which he lacked at the beginning of the story.

When and how this climactic point or scene of discovery takes place, Lee T. Lemon explains with pertinent example as follows:

In Sophocles' Oedipus Rex the scene of recognition [discovery] occurs when Oedipus learns that the man he promised to drive from his kingdom in order to avenge the murder of the old king is himself, and that he has murdered his father and married his own mother. ¹²

Like the incidents in the rising action (which includes both the exposition and complication), the decisive happenings take place in the falling action. In this final part, all the prevailing conflicts come to be resolved turn by turn. The various options that exist up to the climactic point are stripped away so that the ultimate fate of the main character or the protagonist becomes inescapable.

This final act in which the fate of the protagonist and the antagonist is highlighted is called the resolution.

Denouement or catastrophe are two different words used to express this concluding section.¹³ According to Joseph F. Trimmer, the term resolution includes: "The events that occur after the climax and bring the conflicts in the story to an appropriate conclusion."¹⁴

In the conclusion, what each of the major characters faces is either death, exile, marriage, separation, union, moral and material compensation or whatever necessary and convincing for answering the questions raised in the play. For instance, in Shakespeare's play Othello, the fate of the two protagonists - Desdemona and Othello is death, while the fate of that of the antagonist - Iago is arrest. In his other tragic play Romeo and Juliet too, the ultimate fortune of the two lover protagonists - Juliet and Romeo once again is death, and of the antagonists (members of the two families, who had age-long contradiction among them) is reconciliation.

* In the unconventional dramatic structure, on the other hand, even if the reader or the audience remains dissatisfied with unresolved problems, the conflicts are usually left open-ended. Since the author focuses on current social, economic and political problems, for instance, in plays that depict war, illiteracy, drought, health problem, natural calamity and the like, the ending portion remains suspended without complete conclusion.

In such a composition of plays, the audience in general is given various options for solving the prevailing social

issues raised. Some of the social problems, for example, may need governmental actions or basic reformation of policies. As a consequence, the authors of these plays prefer to leave to the audience rather than resolving conflicts on the basis of their own personal judgements. If they do so, they feel they restrict the community to a single resolution of these multi-faced problems. What the writers of such plays only do, therefore, is to expose the existing social crisis and leave the reader or the audience to debate the answer to the question put forward and seek a solution by action in real life. ¹⁵

With the exception of unconventional plays, the three prominent parts of the dramatic structure - the exposition, complication and the resolution are significantly present in most types of plays. Though the majority of these conventional plays (plays which are organized around the cause-to-effect arrangements of incidents) contain the above portions, they still retain minor differences in their shape.

If the same dramatist, for instance, writes a sketch, a full-length historical play and a modern realistic play on various occasions, there will obviously exist different arrangements in each one of the plays. The differences in the structure of these plays may occur either because of the differences in length or the technique he applies or the subject matter he chooses. If the same playwright also writes two carefully motivated, smoothly plotted and neatly resolved religious plays, there still appears a difference in the structure between them. Once again, if a playwright gives more

space to the expository acts or scenes than to the rest of the component parts of the dramatic structure, the shape of his play as well differs from the work of other dramatist that gives more emphasis to the arrangement of the complication of conflicts.

Hence, the overall composition of the elements of drama depends upon the individual dramatist's thinking, personality, and artistic tendency. Pointing out the relative variation of the dramatic structure of two or more plays, The New Encyclopedia Britannica gives the following explanation:

A revue sketch that turns on a single joke will differ in shape from a religious cycle, which may portray the whole history of mankind from the creation to the last judgement. A realistic drama may require a good deal of exposition of the backgrounds and memories of the characters, while in a chronicle play the playwright may tell the whole story episodically from its beginning to the end. ¹⁶

In the works of modern realistic dramatists, like that of Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion, The Man of Destiny, Back to Methuselah, Saint Joan and others, the expository part is given the prime concern. In these plays, Shaw frequently discloses the setting and the mood of the story, the behaviour, economic position, religious and educational background, costumes, physical appearances and the motive of the characters in two or three scenes of the first act.¹⁷ As a result, his plays are different in shape from say T.S. Eliot's religious play, Murder in the Cathedral. The reason is that Eliot gives more emphasis to the complication than to the introductory part. Apart from this, all his expository chapters are described through the

song of the chorus that narrates about the past, the present and foreshadows the coming incidents. On the other hand, the exposition in Shaw's plays is established both by his elaborate dialogue and the stage directions.

The relative differences in shape, therefore, are caused either by the variation in length (short or one-act and full-length plays), or by plot construction (sketch, or well-made plays with single and double cause and effect relationship), or by genre (tragedy, comedy, farce, and melodrama), or by thematic concern (historical, religious, political and the like).

In general, most dramatists follow the conventional method of playwrighting which includes the exposition, the complication and the resolution parts. However, their arrangements may differ from one another. These differences in shape are not basic and they do not violate Freytag's general formulation of the rules and principles of the conventional dramatic structure.

1.1.1. The Main Divisions of a Play

The separation of a whole into its parts is common in literary works. Most novels, for instance, are presented in different chapters; poems are also grouped in various stanzas; and essays as well are arranged in separate paragraphs.

Likewise, most plays (with the exception of one-act one-scene plays that are presented without interruption) are

divided into acts and scenes which are the major and minor dramatic units respectively.

1.1.1.1. Act

The division of a play into acts is assumed to have been derived from the rapidly shifting episodes of the Greek classical plays. In relation to this Lee T. Lemon says, "The concept of the 'act' apparently grew from the episodes of Greek tragedy." ¹⁸

Next to the classical period, the act division came to be familiar in the plays of Elizabethan dramatists. During this period especially dividing a play into five acts became a common practice. In the late nineteenth century, many playwrights such as Chekhov and Ibsen began to deviate from the five act divisions. This group of authors reduced the previous number to four. Eventually, the three act division became the most common and convenient arrangement for well-made and full-length plays.¹⁹

The method of the manner of dividing a play into acts in general varies in number and length depending upon the purpose and the interest of the individual playwright. In full-length plays, for example, each of the major parts of the dramatic structure, i.e. the exposition, the complication and the resolution, contains a different number of acts. Of all these component parts, the expository part naturally incorporates the longest act(s) and more scenes. In the introductory act, incidents are frequently changed to reveal the characters, the

atmosphere, the time, the place and the social setting of the play. The other acts (which present the complication and resolution), on the other hand, are made always shorter than the expository one.

As pointed out before, the shift of acts from exposition to the complication, from the complication to denouement is logical only in conventional playwriting.

An Introduction to Literature explains the significance of the transition from one act to the other as follows:

... an act division today (commonly indicated by lowering the curtain and turning up the house - light) denotes change in locale and lapse of time.

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In the unconventional mode of playwriting such as Brechtian Epic Plays, however, the act division is not commonly used in its strict sense of the term. Most of these plays are a string of loosely connected scenes or episodes. For example, Brecht's Mother Courage and Her Children, Baal, In the Jungle of the Cities, The Mother ... etc. do not have act divisions.

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Like the unconventional Brechtian epic plays, there are some conventional plays (plays with the three unities) that do not employ the act structure at all.

As the subsidiary actions are not important in such plays, dramatists usually concentrate on one idea or subject matter. Apart from the existence of unity of action, all the happy

of these plays occur in one locality and within a single day. Since the act division is unnecessary, all the incidents are completed either in one-act one-scene or one-act and more scenes. ²²

The act division therefore is manifested to be logical in conventional playwrighting. It is made always to be convenient both for the reader (since he knows where and when the action occurs), and the playwright himself (since it enables him to be more flexible in changing the time and place of the action of the play).

1.1.1.2. Scene

The division of an act of a play into various scenes is not assumed to be as logical as the act division. According to Frank Hurburt, the division of an act into scene indicates neither the change of the locale nor the time of the action. "The scene is a division of a play during which there is no change of time or place." ²³

Because of the unique formulation of the scene, many critics and dramatists of different countries propound contradictory ideas about its definition. Even after years of discussions about what constitutes a scene no consensus has been reached to derive the same yardstick for it.

For French critics and playwrights, for instance, the departure and entrance of a character is believed to change the whole composition of the group. And hence, this situation is

taken as the introduction of a new scene or phenomenon. For most English dramatists, however, the entrance and exit of a character does not indicate a change of scene. Only the stage clearings determine the beginning and ending of a scene. Concerning the French and English systems, Holman records:

...the entrances and exits of important personages determine the beginning and ending of scenes, as in French Drama, [but] many English dramatists regard the clearing of stage as the sign of a change of scene. ²⁴

Again for some other English critics and dramatists, the change of scenes are not considered to be marked by the stage-clearings (as most English dramatists think) or by the entrance and withdrawal of a character (as French dramatists believe) or by the change of the time and place of the action (like the shift of a new act). For them, the change of scene is exhibited by each of the play's high moments. They believe that every one of the scenes has a shape comparable to that of a play itself with the three major component parts (the exposition, complication and denouement) of the dramatic structure.

For these thinkers, the starting and finishing of every scene is clearly identified by its function, uniqueness and completeness like the arrangement of a well-made play itself. Hence, as Lee T. Lemon puts, this group of dramatists think that, "The most important principle in scene construction, perhaps is that of climactic arrangement." ²⁵

As presented in the preceding discussion, there are various conventions in constructing and using scene divisions.

Sometimes, however, the purpose of the shift of each scene appears to be obscure, and at other times its significance is clearly observed.

Though sometimes ambiguous and sometimes obvious definitions are both stated about scene divisions, most drama theoreticians and authors in common seem to agree on one point. They accept that the change of scenes is determined by the unique and different function of one what from the other. Hence, in their elaboration, the critics and playwrights point out that each scene needs to produce a single and concrete effect in order to be called a scene by itself.

1.2. The Unconventional Dramatic Structure

The unconventional approach of playwrighting is better known by the theory called the 'Alienation Method' or 'Brechtian Epic' which was developed by the German dramatist Bertolt Brecht. It is the system of creating the necessary distance between a work of art and a member of its audience. Fredric Ewen who made research on Brecht's art explains the approach as, "Alienation is the loss of control [of the audience's emotional feeling]." ²⁶

For Brecht, emotion should not dominate a work of art. it (emotion) must always be removed from the receptor so that the audience or reader can receive the message and be convinced by its meaning and forcefulness only. According to him, mere entertainment in theatre is not enough to the society. A play ought to have some social purpose to convey to the community.

To achieve this, Brecht believes that theatre must be epic in nature. This means that in epic theatre, events are narrated episodically instead of being shown live on the stage. By doing so, he thinks, it would be possible to minimize the identification of the audience with the characters and increase its detachment from the play. ²⁷

To distance the audience or reader from emotional involvement and enable him to draw his own appropriate conclusion, Brecht uses various technical devices. These mechanisms which are intentionally planned to distract the attention of the audience or the reader are: the direct addresses of the characters to the audience, the interruption of the story with dances and songs of the chorus, the presentation of motion or slide pictures, the putting up of posters, the intrusion of unreal characters, the grotesque appearances of costumes employed. ²⁸

Because of this fundamentally different conception, Brecht does not follow the precepts of the conventional or Aristotelian dramatic structure. In relation to Brecht's new theory and opposition to the traditional approach, John Gassner writes:

For twenty-four centuries, in Europe, the theatre has been Aristotelian...[But now], Brecht's new theatrical revolution challenges our habits, our tastes, our reflexes, the very "laws" of theatre in which we live. ²⁹

In Brechtian epic theatre, the usual rules and principles of plot construction, of portraying the individual as a

protagonist and the presence of a linear story are disregarded. The total focus in such plays is on the social problem at issue which is developed by independent episodes. These episodes which are loosely connected with one another are used in unusual arrangements that counter the normal expectations of the audience. This is, therefore, the type of play that Brecht insists to be written as opposed to the conventional way of playwrighting.

What comes next is the textual analysis of six plays of Tsegaye. Since his pre- and post-revolution plays are written on the basis of the preceding theoretical discussions, which play follows which method of approach is investigated.

THE CONVENTIONAL DRAMATIC STRUCTURE IN PRE-REVOLUTION PLAYS OF TSEGAYE

2.1. The Establishment of the Beginning

2.1.1. Exposition of settings and moods

As pointed out in chapter one, setting is concerned with the time, place and social reality in which the action of a play takes place. According to the statements of M.H. Abrams, a play or any other story can have either the general or the specific or both types of settings at once. He says:

The setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historic time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of an episode or scene within a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place. ³⁰

In the description of these general and specific settings, the actual geographical positions and the physical arrangements, for instance, the location of the windows and doors in a room, the historical period, the season of the year, the time of the day; the occupations and day-to-day manner of living of the characters such as the religious, political, social and economic conditions may be simultaneously or separately described depending upon the type of play.

A suitable exposition of all these things obviously assists the reader or the audience to recognize the place, the time and the prevailing social circumstances that enable him to create his own general and appropriate feeling of the action

of the play about any difficulty.

The purposefulness of such a description of the general and specific settings depends upon the awareness and maturity of the individual playwright. For instance, in the works of those dramatists in which the concrete details of the settings are depicted, the appearances, movements and actions of their characters are easily visualized. In the works of some other playwrights, however, because the specific elements of the settings are lightly sketched, such visualization is limited. And hence, it won't be possible to reach the emotional feeling of the readers in accordance with the place and time of the action.

When the settings of Tsegaye's four plays - Tewodros (1964), Yashoh Akalil (1952 E.C), Balg (1958 E.C) and Yakarmo Saw (1958 E.C) are examined in the light of these two types of presentations, different attempts are observed to have been made to meet the interests of the reader or the audience.

2.1.1.1. Tewodros

The opening scene of act one of Tewodros does not exactly disclose where and when the action takes place. It merely instructs the reader about the nature and significance of suggestive staging:

Suggestive properties and lights indicate the necessary scene changes and perform the service of a curtain... Musical passages accentuating the dramatic content of each scene serve as bridge from one scene to another. ³¹

As the above quotation proves, the dramatist fails to show the real setting in its convincing way. The natural phenomena such as the shift of a day to night, or of the sun set to sun rise is not presented as it occurs. What are expressed in the above description are all the works and interpretations of the director suitable for the stage performance. Substituting the sound effects, light effects and make up in place of the appearances of the natural events, therefore, could have been left to the director of the play.

In the middle paragraph of the expository section of the first scene again, a suggestive tukul - a house with a thatched roof of cylindrical shape, is very lightly described.

In his description, the playwright attempts to indicate only the exterior feature of the hut:

We now see properties on the platform which suggest the exterior of a "Tukul" scene. A flat basket is placed at centre stage containing 'Koso' flowers [the name of a certain wild flower used as antidote for tape-worm] for the evening sun to dry. A young Ethiopian boy about 18, Kassa dressed in 'tebuko' shirt and senafil is chasing the flies off the 'koso' leaves.³²

Nevertheless, the exposition does not visualize in all the general and specific locale, the living standard and moral condition of the historical figure - Kassa and his mother Atetegab. It does not even disclose the proper association of 'Koso' flower with the lives of the family.

Apart from the place and the social circumstances of the characters, the time of that historical moment is not sufficiently exposed. Of course, 'the evening sun' is mentioned somewhere, but further explanations about the uniqueness and importance of the year, or the season or the day that help to build up the mood of this historical play are not given.

In act one scene two of this play, the locale of the action is changed from Kassa's forest camp to the castle of Gondar. This time, the given exposition of the setting to some extent makes the reader visualize the garden-room of Gondar palace, and the feeling of Tewodros on his first visit to Gondar.

Nevertheless, many of the essential historical incidents that must have come early before the exposition of this scene are left unrevealed. According to the time sequences of the actual history, for instance, Kassa first went to the bush for revenge. After building a strong hold, he began to rebel against the queen. In order to maintain peace and stability, Empress Menen sent elders. Based on some preconditions, reconciliation took place. Afterwards, she appointed Dejatch Kassa as ruler of certain districts and married him to her grand-daughter to avoid the danger of uprisings again.³³ When and where all these happenings took place are totally omitted in the story of the play. Hence, the unexpected presence of Kassa in Gondar castle creates very little effect in the establishment of the background information of the play.

The other defective point in this scene lies in the discrepancy of the expository part with the coming incident.

Right at the beginning, it is introduced as if the scene of the marital ceremony of Kassa and Tewabech is going to be conducted. The moment the stage direction ends, however, without any lapse of time, a high level meeting of the royal family continues to discuss Kassa's betrayal and banditry activity.

Immediately after the meeting a resolution is passed and Wond-yirad, commander-in-chief of the royal army, receives an order to hunt and bring Tewodros dead or alive. Very quickly, once again, the scene changes from the throne room of Gondar palace to Dejatch Kassa's forest camp.

In this forest scene, the description of the surroundings is quite well done and creates more or less the true atmosphere of life in the bush. What remains unspecified is the exact historical place of the scene. Denbia, Quarra, Chilga and Metema were some of the major forest areas where Tewodros used to move and ambush the royal army several times. In order to be historically precise, therefore, some of these places in particular should have been defined.

The various scenes and the act division itself in act two, on the other hand, are less logical than in act one. The first scene of this section, for example, begins with the exposition of children's game which breaks the already established mood of the play. It says, "When the curtain goes up after a brief musical introduction, a group of children are playing "Kukulu" (hide and seek) on the open stage" ³⁴

In the second scene, however, the setting comes back to reflect the actual happening of the story of the play. This coming action (which has a significant place in the history of King Tewodros) is stated to occur in a palace of Shoa. "The spots dim on the messenger and come up quickly on Shoa palace."

³⁵ Though the entire feature of Shoa palace is not depicted, it would have been much more appealing had the second scene started with this description instead of the children's game.

After Tewodros's return from Shoa, the third scene of act two is disclosed to take place in his throne room. "The light dims on the messenger and comes upon Kassa's throne. He is seen drinking 'tej' from a long wancha" ³⁶

But, the above statements by themselves do not indicate the whereabouts of Tewodros. No concrete description is given whether he is in Gondar palace, or in his capital city - Debretabor or in any other guest house. Especially at the end of this scene, when the British army approaches, the place and the time of his death is not made clear either through the stage direction or the dialogue of the characters. Until his suicide, Tewodros is assumed to remain seated in his palace only drinking his "tej" which does not seem to have any historical truth. Instead, however, the author ought to have described the scenery of Magdala where the heavy fighting took place and the hero decided to take his fate into his hands.

In sum, all the nine scenes of act one and act two of the historical play, Tewodros, are marked by the film like changes

of both time and place. As a consequence, it is not possible to differentiate the role of the act and scene divisions in both cases.

What is more, except Gondar castle and the Shoa palace, the rest of the noted historical spots like, for instance, Debretabor - his capital city, Maqdala - a mountain fort where he fought against the British army and committed suicide, Quarra - his birth place, Gafat, the locality where he established gun-foundries and work-shops, and other places should have been given place in the exposition of the various settings of the incidents of the play at least through the dialogue of the characters.

2.1.1.2. Yashoh Akalil

In Yashoh Akalil, Tsegaye's description of the setting is a bit odd compared to his chronicle play - Tewodros. At the beginning of its first act, lieutenant Tezera - one of the major characters in the play, is exposed at the top of Tossa mountain of Desse town. The eye-catching scenery of Desse town and its surroundings during the month of Meskerem are beautifully expressed in accordance with the feelings of this character.

According to the exposition provided, the action of the play seems to start at the top of Tossa mountain. All of a sudden, however, the place of the action without any preparation shifts to the small hut of Ayalew's parents and begins to re-establish a new setting with an entirely different

atmosphere. Hence, the exposé section lacks consistency.

The point of attack of the play at this new setting, on the other hand, is disclosed well. The temporary separation of the husband and wife, the distressed feeling of their lonely son Ayalew, the poorly furnished house that indicates the living standard of the family, the food they eat, the cloth they put on, are all convincingly depicted.

In the second act, the general setting remains the same town - Desse. Only the specific setting is chosen to shift to one of the big bars in the morning.

In this bar, however, except for the fact that Tezera is seen taking alcoholic drinks and confronting Ayalew, nothing important happens in association with the already established action. Hence, the change of the setting from the hut to the bar is insignificant for the progress of the conflict. If the need at all arises, this act can take place in the hut where the first act occurs.

The setting of the third act also exhibits the same problem. In this act, the specific place is selected to be the house of a feudal lord Fitawrary Yilma.

Without any recognizable motivation, Ayalew goes to the house of the lord. After the exchange of dialogue about the relation of the lord with Ayalew's mother for some time, they change their course of discussion. All of a sudden, Fitawrary

gets nervous with the love affair that his daughter and Ayalew are said to have established. The change of the place of this action, once again, is not convincing and economical. If Fitawrary had been angry because of the rumour concerning the relationship of Ayalew and his daughter, he could have gone straight to Ayalew's house and caught them red-handed making love. And such preference of the locale could have been taken as an acceptable background motive for his anger.

The exposition of the setting in the fourth act is quite different from the previous ones. Firstly, both the general and specific settings are transferred to Genet Hotel of Addis Abeba, which is some three hundred fifty kilometres from Desse, for no apparent reason. Secondly, what is described at the beginning of this act through the stage direction does not totally agree with what is happening later.

የምናየው የገነት ሆቴልን ወደ አዳራሽ መግቢያ በረንዳ ነው። በያመቱ እንደተለመደው ዛሬም የአራት ዓመት ኮርሳቸውን የጨረሱት የባችለር ዲግሪ እውቃዎች የፍፃሜ በዐላቸውን በፓርቲ (በድግስ) የሚያከብሩበት የመሀንዲስኮሌጅ ተግሪዎች ናቸው። አያሌውና የቀሩት የክፍል ባለደረቦቹ ኮርሱን ባይጨርሱም በዐሉን ለመካሄድ ተጋብዘው መጥተዋል። ታዲያ ዘውዴም የአያሌውንና የሐረገወይንን ፍቅር በቅርብ የሚያውቁ ጓደኞች ስለሆኑ በየጊዜው ሊያስታርቁአቸውና ቢቻልም የመቶ አለቃ ተዘራ ከኮሪ ከመመለሱ በፊት ሊያስተዳድሩአቸው ይጥራሉ።³⁷

What we are looking at is the veranda that leads to the entrance of the Hall of Genet Hotel. As usual, students of Engineering College, who have completed a four year courses, are celebrating their graduation ceremony with their fiances. Even if they did not complete their courses, Ayalew and other friends are invited to attend the party. As Taye and Zewde are intimate friends that know the love of Ayalew and his girl friend Haragawain very well, they have made several attempts to reconcile them and if possible to get them engaged before

37
lieutenant Tezera returns from Qore.

From the description given above, the atmosphere of the coming incident is quite bright. The reader or the audience expects to see people drinking, dancing, singing and enjoying. After all it is a graduation party, the closure of one chapter and the beginning of another in the life of the graduate. Throughout this act, however, the graduation ceremony is totally ignored. Only the case of Ayalew and Haragawain continues to be given attention.

The transference of the setting of this act from Desse to Genet Hotel of Addis Abeba, therefore, lacks logical connection for it does not have any concrete association with the graduation party. It is not after all proper to mediate and bring peace among friends at this time, place and circumstance.

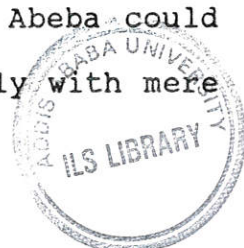
Again, in act five, the setting of the play unnecessarily is taken back to the house of Fitawrary Yilma in Desse. Here, the misfortune of each of the two major characters is reported from different sources. Ayalew (the protagonist) is said to have been sent to Amanuel Hospital because of mental illness. Tezera (the antagonist) is told to have died of his severe wound while he was fighting with enemies at Qore war front. In this act the playwright presents only the reports of the destinies' of these characters through the dialogue of Haragawain and her colleagues.

If at all the need arises, however, the setting of this act could have followed the plot path of either the protagonist

or the antagonist. Because the time and the place of the action are not condensed and well selected, the act does not present a single and complete meaning in the end.

Generally, the exposition of the settings of the five acts in Yashoh Akalil are all along different. At the starting points of each of the acts, a very lengthy description of the setting is provided. But, in each case, the selection of the setting is not suitable to the action taking place. Hence, it does not make a direct contribution to the creation of the overall atmosphere of the play.

Besides, there are so many incidents that do not justify the act division and the change of the settings. For instance, all the acts that take place in Desse and Addis Abeba could occur in one or two of either of these places only with mere changes of the specific settings.



2.1.1.3. Balg

Tsegaye's other play - Balg follows the same approach as Yashoh Akalil in its method of exposition. The opening of its first act, the forest of Dedeho and the waterfall of Guder (which have nothing to contribute to the establishment of the mood of the main story of the play), are introduced:

ጉደር 11 ሰአት። ከጉደር ጅጅቴና የዴዴሆ ጫካ ራስጌ በምትገኘው ሚያ ላይ ሀሩይ ስዕል ሲለል አባተ ማዶ ማዶውን ይመለከቷል። ሀሩይ የሚለለው ጅጅቴውንና በአሻገር የሚታየውን የምሽት ሰረቀ-ብርሀን ነው።³⁸

Guder [a district West of Shoa] eleven o'clock: in a field on top of Guder waterfall and Dedeho forest, Hiruy is drawing and Abate is looking at the natural scenery from a distance. Hiruy is painting the

waterfall and the sun-set beyond the horizon.

Even if they do not harmonize with the actual incidents of the play that begin at Ambo-town sometime later, the time, place and the mood of the surroundings are well demonstrated. What is left unclear in this act, however, is the purpose of the coming of Hiruy and Abate at this time and to this particular region. As the dialogue between Abate and Hiruy below indicates, the only reason why they come from Addis Abeba is just to watch the evening gambling that will be held in Hailesselasse's Hotel at Ambo town:

አባተ

ሀሩይ ዛሬ ግታ አምቦ ቀዳማዊ ኃይለሥላሴ ሆቴል ውስጥ የሚደረገውን የቆግር ውጊያ ሄደን አናይም?

ሀሩይ

ከአዲስ አበባ የመጣሽው ይኸንኑ አያለገሁት ብለህ አይደለም እናያለን እንጂ ³⁹

Abate

Hiruy, why don't we go to Hailesselasse First Hotel this evening and watch gamblers' fight there?

Hiruy

Of course we will go and watch it. Is not the sole purpose of your coming from Addis Abeba to see this?

According to their discussion, the only motivation of their coming from Addis Abeba is not to draw and appreciate nature, but to spend their week-end watching the people gamble.

Apart from informing what the initial aim is, their dialogue makes the reader or the audience curious of what miracle is going to happen that evening in the gambling room of Hailesselasse's Hotel at Ambo town. The portrayal of the local colour of the forest and waterfall of Guder and the presence of Abate and Hiruy there, therefore, do not have a

functional purpose and a link with the coming incident of the evening in Ambo.

What is more unexpected and surprising is not only the introduction of these two men at Guder in the evening sun, but also the appearance of other six characters at the same time and place by mere chance.

... እንደ አርጌካፖርትና ካኪ ሱሪ ያጠለቁ የ 50 አመት ሰው ቀስ ብለው
እያግተቡና እግዚአብሔርን እያመሰገኑ በግራ እጃቸው ጌራ ወርቅን ጎትተው
[ይገባሉ]...

አባተ

(ዞር ብሎ ያያቸውና በመገረም) እርሰዎን ደግሞ ምን አመጣዎት?

ባሻ ሀጎስ

እጅግ ብታጣሽርሽር እንዳላመጣኝ ታውቃለህ አቶ አባተ። እኔን ያመጣኝ የአየር
ግግረተ ድሎት ሳይሆን የሀይወት ፍቅር ነው።⁴⁰

Uttering thank giving words, a fifty year old man who is wearing an old over-coat and a pair of trousers [comes in] gently with his youngest daughter holding her hands tight.

Abate

(looking at them surprisingly) what brought you here?

Basha Hagos

If you do not understand at all, I hope you won't miss the point that I did not come for picnic, Abate. And I came here not to enjoy fresh air either, but for the love of life.

Though the relationship between these characters is disclosed step by step through their dialogue, the real motivation of their coming to this place still remains obscure.

Two and half hours later in the same evening, the setting of the second act is changed to Macheistis Hotel which is also

located at Ambo town. According to the exposition given (foretold) earlier, however, the next expected scenery to come into vision was supposed to be the gambling room of Hailesselasse Hotel.

By bringing a new situation into sight, nevertheless, the playwright creates a problem not only in his presentation of an unexpected place, but also the characters and the mood. They are all new and different from the previous ones that were demonstrated in the first act.

In one of the rooms of this hotel (Machestis), Abate's wife and her brother are seen discussing her problem of pregnancy. Even though the real conflict of the play revolves around this point, the driving force that initiates the woman to come from Addis Abeba and what favourable condition prevails to start the actual story at this hotel is not disclosed.

Few hours later that same evening, the place of the action still shifts from Machestis Hotel to the Hailesselasse Hotel without any apparent reason. In this hotel, the action concentrates on two unconcerned dramatic persons - Hiruy and Feyissa. These men are merely seen sitting and drinking coffee having no involvement in the actual happenings of the story.

The main purpose of the change of this act is assumed to show the live happening of the gambling. But, except for the shouting of the gamblers which is heard far off, nothing of it is shown on the spot. Hence, the change of the place in this

act is made with no apparent and important purpose.

Two years after, the setting of the last act shifts to Abate's house in Addis Abeba. This change of the time and the place, however, is totally insignificant to the major subject of the play. This is because that every conflict entertained in this play was resolved beforehand in the rooms of Macheztis and Hailesselasse hotels that same night at Ambo town.

Abate's wife, for instance, gave birth on that night in one of the rooms of Macheztis hotel; Gizaw committed suicide in the gambling room of Hailesselasse hotel. The same evening Abate was told that the newly born baby was not his own but that of the deceased. Thus, the extension of this last act and the change of the setting is done only for the sake of showing the reunion of the already separated husband and wife.

2.1.1.4. Yakarmo Saw

Of all Tsegaye's conventional plays discussed so far, Yakarmo Saw is taken to be the best for its appropriate handling of the description of the settings. All the actions, from the start to the end of this play, are completed in one well specified locale. In his introductory part, the playwright explains why he is governed by the unity of place in detail:

አስቀድሞ ድርሰቱን በሀሳቤ ሰነድ የቀዳማዊ ኃይለሥላሴን ቴአትር የገንዘብ ፣ የቴክኒክና የሌላም ልዩ ልዩ ቀዋሚ ችግርና መሰናክል በቅርብ በመመልከት ከግደራጃ ወጪ ተቆጥቦ ሙሉ ዝግጅት ለማቅረብ የምንችልበትን ዘዴ በሥራ ለመፈተን ነበረ።⁴¹

From the outset, when I sketched this play in my mind, I seriously thought of the technical, financial and other long-standing problems and obstacles that faced Hailesselasse Theatre

Restricting myself to the portrayal of a few characters [and a single setting], I designed the method that enabled me to present the play with the requirement of minimum cost of production.

From his previous experiences, the playwright learnt of the disadvantages of multiple changes of settings. Because of the numerous shifts of place and time in his earlier plays - Tewodros, Yashoh Akalil and Balg, so many implausible and illogical descriptions of settings are wielded in every type of act. And such method of presentation incurs a high cost for the construction of each of the particular scenery during its production. Thus, learning the lesson from his previous experiences, Tsegaye wrote this play both economically and convincingly.

Unlike the settings of the former plays, therefore, in Yakarmo Saw, the full description of the setting is established right at the beginning of the play. First, its general setting is described to be in Addis Abeba, specifically in Mogus's house. This house is located in Golla, a township far from the centre of the city.

The social background of the protagonist is exposed vis-a-vis the house he lives in. He earns the least salary and lives in a room the size of an ordinary kitchen.

In addition to this, his age, health condition, marital status, for example, how he gets divorced and leads a miserable life with his youngest brother, his possessions and other facts necessary for the creation of the general and specific

atmosphere of the play are all disclosed beautifully and naturally.

What seems unnatural in this play, however, is the exposition of the settings in the second act. Because of the unnecessary restriction of the locale of the action, Mogus is forced to report what happens to his brother in prison. The reason could be not to break the unity of the place. To show the live happenings, nevertheless, the place of the action could have been moved from the room of Mogus to the jail where his youngest brother is imprisoned and suffers a lot.

In general, Yakarmo Saw and the rest of the three plays contain varying numbers of acts. For instance, Yashoh Akalil contains five acts, Balg four, and Yakarmo Saw has three. Though it consists of numerous scenes, Tewodros is limited only to two acts. In all the plays except Tewodros, therefore, scene divisions are not used.

2.1.2. Exposition of characters

It has been stated in the theoretical part of this study that characterization in a play is a method which helps both the playwright and the reader to differentiate one dramatic personage from another.

The physical appearance (i.e. age, size and sex) is one means of identifying each of the characters that comes next to the description of the settings in a play.

The inner system of revelation concentrates on the social interaction of the characters. Their religion, profession, economic status, educational background, political outlooks, level of consciousness and other personal tendencies such as their hobbies, preferences and the like are included in this second stage of the identification of the dramatic persons. Even though the dramatist is not always expected to employ all of the techniques, the psychological and the moral issues are other levels of character revelation.⁴² As Oscar G. Brockett suggests, such means of separating one character from another is accomplished:

... through descriptions in the stage directions, prefaces, or other explanatory material not part of the dialogue; through what the character says; through what others in the play say about the character; and most important; through what the character does.⁴³

2.1.2.1. Tewodros

The first level of exposition of characters in Tsegaye's historical play - Tewodros begins in act-one scene-one through the list of the table of characters in the front page. In the first column of this page, the relations of eighteen characters are disclosed in all. Out of these, twelve characters are historically known figures and the rest of them are imaginary.

What seems to be the major problem in the social revelation of these characters is the exposition of some of the historical characters. It is true that such characters have different features in various historical periods. But, they are portrayed only as if each of them has a single and uniform role

to play throughout the play. Even then, if all the historical characters from the start to the end had to take the same part, it would be possible to introduce them each at once. But, if one looks into Kassa's personality, for instance, one can see him changing from time to time according to his political achievement and military victory. There are three historically as well as dramatically emerging Kassas. Young Kassa, Dejatch Kassa and Emperor Tewodros of Ethiopia who passed through different social circumstances and levels of political consciousness. Each is well identified. On the list of the characters' column, however, Kassa is described only as Emperor Tewodros who is mature in life and a politically well experienced leader.

And again the two ladies Tewabech and Tru-worq are disclosed as the first and second wives of Kassa respectively without indicating the time gap of Tewodros's significant position. But, in the actual history, Tewabech is the wife of Dejatch Kassa and later King Tewodros; and Tru-worq is mentioned to be Tewodros's wife after the death of his first partner. When Tewodros or Kassa married whom is not clearly indicated, their introduction seems ambiguous.

In order to avoid such confusions, therefore, the relation of characters needs to be exposed either according to their appearances or important roles in the story.

The other point which is believed to be a distortion of historical fact is the revelation of Kassa living with his

mother at the age of eighteen. In real history, on the contrary, Kassa is said to have been brought up by his mother until he is eighteen. Rather, history confirms that at this age, Kassa was a well known fighter and leader of the highwaymen in the bush. In relation to this Sven Rubenson records, "...after he [Kassa] emerged as the leader of an army... he was himself only some ten years old."⁴⁴

In so far as his personal temperament is concerned, also nothing sufficient is presented in the play. Throughout the story, Tewodros is shown only as aggressive, decisive, fame lover and more than anything he is described as a power seeker from the very beginning of his history. His ambitious and power seeking nature in the play is stated through his monologue, " I heard voices calling me 'Tewodros, Tewodros!' me! Tewodros voices entreating - 'Rise'..."⁴⁵

In the actual history, nevertheless, Tewodros's idea of kingship was entirely non-existent at the beginning. His strong desire to capture the throne is a later development, especially when he comes to be politically conscious.⁴⁶

In this play, on the whole, Tewodros from the time of his youth till his final fate is characterized as a one dimensional historical character. Even Empress Menen and her compatriots merely take him as a common criminal and distrusted highwayman. However, in the eyes of historians like Rubenson, for example, Tewodros was very much flexible. He was both polite and sympathetic to friends but bitter to his enemies depending on

the circumstances. Especially at the beginning of his time, he was optimistic to lead the united and prosperous country. But, later on, after the death of his beloved wife and after a conflict is created between the clergymen and his regime, his personality shows a drastic change. Because of the dissemination of the wrong propaganda against him, many of his followers begin to desert and form their own opposition groups. To maintain peace and order, Tewodros makes several expeditions where there are civil unrest and people's uprisings. He is, for instance, reported to have had about seven expeditions to disarm the rebels in many places of Gondar, Gojam, Tigre, Wollo and Shoa regions. As soon as he turns his back, however, the uprisings become worse than before. Finally, he starts to take harsh measures to stop such violence.⁴⁷

It is during this time that his personality is said to have deteriorated more than ever before. This behavioral complexity and dynamic change of Tewodros's personality is not fully revealed in Tsegaye's historical play.

In his economic status, on the other hand, Tewodros is presented only as a son of Koso Seller, a poverty stricken woman. Though it remains undisclosed, however, history confirms that on his father's side, he is from a well-to-do family background, and even his mother is said to be of royal descent.⁴⁸ This historical fact, once more is not given a space in the play.

The other historical character in this play is Tewodros's mother, Atetegab. Even if her portrayal is fairly well done, she is taken as a type character. She is a poor widow and a follower of Orthodox Christianity. Because of her love and good will to Kassa, she prays to St. Mary to protect her only son from any danger:

Atetegab: (kneeling with tears choking her voice)
protect him, St. Mary. I am surrendering my only one
into your protection. You have only one, and thus,
I come to you St. Mary, protect mine as you would
yours...⁴⁹

In addition to her religious devotion and moral strength, Atetegab is delineated as humane. She strongly protests against bloodshed among human races and the political unrest of the country. In this regard, Kassa's running into the bush is out of her wish and desire.

After their separation, Atetegab never had the chance to meet Kassa. She appears only in act-one scene-one merely as an innocent mother and disappears forever from the political scene of Tewodros. Neither her well-being nor her death, therefore, is made official in the play. Hence, her exposition in the play does not have a considerable role to play in her son's political life.

Furthermore, the major and minor historical figures in Tewodros are all drawn as flat characters. Each one of them is remembered only for his/her own single behaviour or activity. For instance, Kassa's first wife, Tewabech, is decent, humble and loyal to him until death separates her from her husband.

His second wife, True-worq, on the contrary, is offensive in temperament and indifferent to the ups and downs of his political life.

The rest of the characters as well are presented as true to history. Gebriye and Gelemo are both strong, loyal to their master and brave fighters; Empress Menen is fast in making decisions and is hot-tempered; Ras Ali is talkative but indecisive and powerless to make his ideas practical; Wond-yrad is a man of words; the two prince boys, Menilik and Alemayehu regardless of their age are all the time conscious of the impending danger.

With the exception of the messenger who is well drawn as a prophet, the rest of the fictitious characters are not convincing. After four children are exposed to be members of the chorus, they are seen being given specific roles. Representing the opposition groups, the children are divided among three war leaders. The first group belongs to Tewodros's side, the second group stands on the side of the royal family in the name of the commander in chief of the royal army - Wond-yrad and the third group is named Workit, a chief of the banditry group in Wollo. Imitating the real deeds of these rivals, a mock fight begins among themselves. All of a sudden, however, without any pertinent point of discussion, their game comes to an end. Hence, their nature of characterization and role is not clearly identified in relation to the development of the story of the play.

2.1.2.2. Yashoh Akalil

The descriptions of characters in Yashoh Akalil is quite different from the chronicle play - Tewodros. Their part and relations to one another is not directly provided in the first column of the beginning of the play. Only the social backgrounds of some of the major characters are lightly mentioned in the preface. The physical nature, psychological makeup, moral quality and social activities of the characters are introduced in detail in different acts of the play through their dialogue.

Of all the characters portrayed in the play, however, no one is dynamic in its presentation. Among the three main characters, for example, Ayalew, who is from a poor family background, is a student of Addis Abeba University. In so far as his personality is concerned, he is drawn as a guiltless and socially acceptable young man in all his parts throughout the play.

The antagonist, Tezera, on the other hand, is introduced in contrast to Ayalew in physical appearance and temperament. His good looking nature, clothing and profession are disclosed in opposition to Ayalew's qualities. "ተዘራ የከቡር ዘበኛ ሙሉ ልብሱን ለብሶ ሲገባ የሰውነቱና የልብሱ መስግግት በተፈጥሮ የሆነ እንጂ በሰው እጅ ሥራ የተደረሰበት አይመስልም" ⁵⁰

When Tezera enters dressed in his imperial Bodyguard uniform, its suitness with his posture looks so natural rather than artificial.

In spite of his attractiveness, this man dislikes marital life. He is said to have been married formerly to an unnamed woman. Because of his dislike to live in wed-lock, he divorced

his wife. He repeatedly declares his negative attitude to marriage saying, "እኔ እኮ የጋራ ትርጉም አይገባኝም"⁵¹

I don't understand what is meant by a thing called marriage.

His hatred of marriage makes him oppose the rules and principles of Ayalew who has never experienced such partnership in his life. Tezera's relation with the opposite sex all in all is superficial, short lived and full of cheating. Throughout the play, this personality of his is consistent and matches with what is described in the stage direction, his actual action and words.

The actual personality of the third character, Haragawain, however, contradicts the expository stage direction which says:

የፊታውራሪ ይልማ ሴት ልጅ ወይዘሮት ሐረገወይን የአሥራ አምስት አመት ተኩል ልጃገረድ ናት። ሐረገወይን በሀብት የተቀማጠለች በውበት፣ በጠባይ፣ በትርፅና በአእምሮ ብሩህነት የታደለች ወጣት ናት።⁵²

Miss Haragawain, the daughter of Fitawrary Yilma, is fifteen and half years old. In addition to her good conduct, she is wealthy, beautiful, intelligent and well-shaped.

In reality, however, Haragawain is presented as a girl who is good for nothing. As soon as she gets introduced to Tezera, for example, she is seen running after him attracted by his handsomeness. Eventually, she betrays her former boy-friend, Ayalew and starts to live with Tezera.

The first introduction of Tezera and Haragawain in Ayalew's home, on the other hand, seems a bit implausible. Since both of them are the son and daughter of two known feudal lords who used to live in the same small town - Desse, some thirty years ago, and since feudal lords have had the tradition of making contacts between them, it would be incredible to deduce that their children could not have the chance to know each other.

Had their acquaintance been made earlier, therefore, it could have served as a good justification for their later experience of falling in love with each other.

In act one, in general, the three major characters Ayalew, a college student, Haragawain, his girl friend, Tezera, Ayalew's opponent and other two minor characters - Baldras Emru, Ayalew's father and Waizero Asnakech, his mother are introduced properly at the right time. In addition to these characters that appear on the stage, Fitawrary Yilma, haragawain's father, is mentioned to be off-stage.

In the next three consecutive acts, however, characters which are new and unexpected in the story of the play continue to be exposed. In act two, for example, though one of the three new characters, Kinfе, is an intimate friend of Tezera, his presence and introduction together with the owner of the bar has no purpose to serve. Of course, the occupation, physical appearance, and family relationship of the three characters are separately revealed. Yet their exposition all in all is a

wastage of time and space. It has no relevance to the love relationship that has already been established between the three characters. If Brihanu, the bar owner and his sister-in-law intrude exactly when Ayalew attacked Tezera and if they attempt to mediate them, their interference would have at least indirect association with the purpose of the play and their introduction would be meaningful and necessary for the development of the conflict.

Again in act four, the six less important characters, Taye, Zewdu, Etaferahu, Feleke, Alemayehu and Aychesh are presented suddenly. Even if the social, psychological and moral constitutions of the characters are fully exposed step by step in different acts, their relation and physical appearance normally and essentially should have been indicated in the first or second act of the play as discussed in the theoretical part of this study.

In each of the four acts of this play, new and irrelevant characters are introduced. This method of exposition creates a problem both for the author and the reader or the audience.

When characters are many in number and unexpected in their introduction, the author faces a difficulty in differentiating and clarifying the role and personality of each one of them.⁵³ As in the case of this play, Yashoh Akalil, for instance, let alone the stock characters, the role and the social background of the well delineated major characters themselves do not attain their individuality. Tezera is the son of a known feudal

lord, Keqnazmach; Haraqawain is also the daughter of another feudal lord, Fitawrary Yilma; and Kinfe as well is the son of a famous feudal lord, Dejazmach Tariku. They are all from well-to-do families that share the same outlook and have similar sentiments.

2.1.2.3. Balg

As in Yashoh Akalil, the absence of the list of characters in Tsegaye's other play Balg creates the same problem of identifying the relation of each one of the dramatic personages.

The social bondage of some of the characters is even hidden and misleading. Without disclosing their relationship, for instance, the two major characters, Abate and Hiruy, are seen discussing their rather lengthy philosophy of life until the story of the play goes for some thirty-six pages. From their dialogue, they sometimes appear to be work-mates or brothers, at other times mere passers-by who had met on the street as a matter of chance. It is after a long while (after the time of exposition is passed) that their friendship is mentioned in a short phrase to the reader or the audience. Hence, the exposition of their relation is neither timely nor properly.

In the same manner as Yashoh Akalil again, characters in Balg resemble one another in their likes and dislikes. All the characters of both plays, for example, have common interests and tendencies in so far as their sexual awareness is



concerned. The two friends, Hiruy and Abate, spend ample time talking about their female partners. Though Abate's response is cool and does not reflect Ethiopian manhood, morality and pride, the illegal relation of his wife with Gizaw is raised in their discussion. The three men, Gizaw, Feyisa and Sahilu on their part, are also seen chasing after the same girl, Gerawork. And again Tsiyon, the pregnant woman, is a victim of sundry love affairs. Even Basha Hagos, the old man, in recalling the good old days he had with his dead wife, shows his strong desire for love.

Apart from their similarity in sexual interest, most of the characters are also exposed as self-centred, dishonest, irresponsible and ambitious in achieving their own goals. Gizaw is shameless in snatching and seducing every woman he finds attractive. A teenager girl, Gera-work, is money minded. She prefers the old guy to the bare-handed youngster only because he is wealthy. Basha Hagos likes his daughter to stay with Gizaw as his mistress in order to make money for the entire family. Since Tsiyon, Abate's wife, goes with Gizaw betraying her legal husband; she is unable to shoulder the responsibility of a house wife.

The characters in Balg, therefore, have the same motivation and personality as those in Yashoh Akalil.

Generally, even if characters are all exposed in the first act, their delineation is not well established. The author himself admits his errors in the introductory part of Balg:

"የበልገን" ድርሰት ላይ ከአድራሻው ዓመት በላይ በጥንቃቄ ጊዜ ላይ በውላጃ ለግንባራ የሚገባው ፅሁፍ ሆነ የአተራረብ ገጽ ላይ አዳዲስ ሊቀጥቶ ... ባገመዳ በሚታተምበት ጊዜ ከተፈለገው ሐተታ ጋር አቃኛዋለሁ።⁵⁴

When I read this play, Balg, today, six years after, during its publication, I came to notice some of the language and technical weakness that ought to have been corrected..., when it is reprinted, however, I will correct all the errors and rewrite the play with the necessary explanations.

2.1.2.4. Yakarmo Saw

All the common shortcomings which are seen in the above plays, however, are corrected in Tsegaye's next play, Yakarmo Saw. The three dramatic personages, Mogus, Tekola and Zerfu, who are all male characters, are drawn from their real and appropriate motivation.

They are all poor and socially isolated men. Mogus, the protagonist, is a clerk of the documentation section in an unspecified governmental office. Even though he has been working for eleven years, his monthly income is still below the average. Because of his mental problem, he was divorced from his wife two years ago.

His old uncle, Zerfu, who comes from the country-side, lives temporarily with him. This old man on his part suffers from an intestinal disorder. Since they are both sick, Mogus and Zerfu are physically weak and are incapable of defending themselves from any danger. It is, therefore, Tekola, Mogus's younger brother, who is able to perform such duties if any danger befalls them.

What is unique in the character delineation of this play is the presentation of off-stage characters with almost equally important roles as the above three major characters. There is Ato Telila, who rents the room to Mogus and his family is bed-ridden because of tuberculosis. His nervous and endless cough is heard next room at every interval. No one (wife, children or any relative) is mentioned as living with and assisting him. Even if Ato Telila has been sick for long, he seems sympathetic and helpful to the people. Whenever Mogus is in trouble, for instance, he calls on him urgently for help and constructive advice. Like Mogus and his uncle, this man is a desperate character and lives with a dim future.

The other important off-stage character, who is in fact believed to be the cause of the conflict, is Mogus's wife. Since this woman fled from Mogus while he was critically sick in hospital and became the mistress of his boss, she has been totally inhumane, forgetting her duties.

All the off-stage characters, as well as the major and minor characters in Yakarmo Saw, by and large, are drawn quite naturally. Their social integrity, personal appearance, moral and psychological constitutions are revealed not only by mere out-and-out stage description but by their real action, speech and thoughts.

2.1.3. Exposition of conflicts

The exposition of conflict in a play comes next to the description of settings and characters.

Conflict (which is the basic framework of a play) may manifest itself in two different ways: externally and internally.

The external conflict may appear between protagonists and antagonists, between an individual and society, between man and universal forces, among different groups of persons which represent antagonistic interests or points of view.⁵⁵ The existence of the external conflict in a play or any other story exhibits itself as in the following circumstances:

Whenever two or more persons (or groups) seek to possess the same object, occupy the same place or the same exclusive position, play incompatible roles, maintain incompatible goals, or undertake mutually incompatible means for achieving their purposes.⁵⁶

The internal or psychological conflict (that is man against himself), occurs in the mind of the protagonist or antagonist. And it is believed that the best plays are often built on this type of conflict.⁵⁷

This psychological or internal conflict occurs when an individual vacillates to arrive at a certain decision, say being unable to express hatred or love and being thrown into a dilemma. Such psychological confusion may originate from the social experiences of the individual's over ambition, emotion and excitement. As noted by Hampden, the inner contradiction is caused by the external social context. He says:

Inner conflict takes place in a character's nature. Sometimes it is between emotions which outward circumstances cause to clash, such as the struggle

in the mind of Brutus, between his patriotism and his love for Caesar, of the struggle in Macbeth between ambition and honour.⁵⁸

Both the external and internal conflicts, therefore, constitute the core of all plays.

The revelation of the inner and outer conflicts in Tsegaye's plays is mostly effected through the soliloquies, monologues and dialogues of the protagonists or heroes themselves rather than the discussion of other participating characters.

2.1.3.1. Tewodros

In the historical play, Tewodros, the conflict is revealed through the monologue when young Kassa has a nightmare:

Dejatch Marou!... the convent is on fire... the children... the school master, the monk... Dejatch Marou and his gang are out for revenge!... revenge on my helpless friends... stop him, St. Michael! stop him!⁵⁹

Though the initial conflict is disclosed in such a way, Dejatch Marou has nothing to do with Kassa's first revolt and armed struggle. History disproves that the convent was burnt down not by Dejatch Marou and his men as conceived above by the playwright. That disastrous expedition which caused Tewodros's uprising, however, was led by Ras Yimam. Rubenson confirms the then destruction of the monastery, massacre of defenceless school children and Kassa's running into the bush as follows:

Before 1927 he had began school in the convent of Tekle Haymanot at Chenker between Gondar and Lake Tana. In the civil war that led ultimately to the battle of Koso Ber, the convent was sacked by Ras Yimam's troops. Many of Kassa's school mates were killed or emasculated, but Kassa escaped the fate of the others. Instead of returning to his mother, he sought refuge with Maru's people.⁶⁰

As is commonly known, writing a historical play does not mean distorting or ignoring the existing historical fact. When the first description of the conflict in the play is compared to the second passage from Rubenson, the former is devoid of historical realities. Though it is possible to add imaginative elements to a given historical time, place and action, the playwright totally misunderstands the prevailing true contradiction of Kassa and his enemies.

Kassa's first confrontation, as history tells, is obviously with Ras Yimam. Later on, when Kassa emerges stronger in the armed struggle and conscious in politics, his revolt focuses on the regime of the Queen, Empress Menen. After the downfall of the Queen and the dismissal of her son, Ras Ali, from Gondar palace is speeded up, his course of conflict changes. Many regional chiefs such as Amede Beshir of Wollo, Tedla Guallu of Gojam, Bezabih of Shewa, Kassa Sebagadis of Tigre and Tusew Gobeze of Gondar form large armies at their disposal and revolt against Tewodros and his government. In addition to these rivalries, Tewodros was also in bad terms with some of the foreign diplomats and the clergymen, especially with the foreign appointed leader of the church

arch-bishop Abune Sclama.⁶¹

In the course of this play, however, Tewodros's struggle with his first enemy, Ras Yimam, is not presented at all. Over and above this, the other most sensitive conflict which existed between Tewodros and his rivals in different regions (with the exception of the Shoa nobilities) also remains understated. The only conflict which is exhaustively treated parallel with the happenings of history is Tewodros's struggle against the royal family in Gondar.

On the whole, the conflicts that Tewodros is involved in are both individual and social in their nature. In all cases, however, the exposition of these conflicts is not uniformly done. Throughout the play, Tewodros is seen engaging in several chains of social conflicts. When he overcomes one sort of conflict he faces another one. Technically, however, the conflicts are not inter-related.

Since there is a historical basis, the expositions of the episodic conflicts should have been linked together in order to give a wholeness to the overall meaning of the play. His conflict with the royal family in Gondar, for instance, has a tangible and obvious linkage with the later uprisings of many of his rivals in various localities. As Tewodros is not considered to have royal blood, his opponents do not recognize and respect his kingship. On top of that, foreign intrusion and secret alignment with many of his rivals in the name of humanitarian help could have intensified the overall conflict

and created a complete dramatic effect.

2.1.3.2. Yashoh Akalil

Even if there are minor conflicts that do not last long and in no way help the build up of the mood, the major conflict of Tsegaye's other play, Yashoh Akalil arises from the relationship of three characters. Ayalew, the protagonist, who is a second year college student and a member of the lower class, stands on one side, while Tezera, the antagonist, who is an extremely handsome and rich person, stands on the opposite side. In between these two different characters, there comes Haragawain, a daughter of a known government official. Because of her beauty, she is the centre of their dispute.

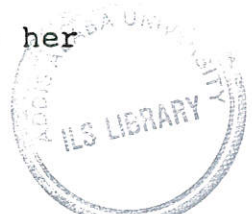
Both ayalew and Haragawain have been intimate friends for long. Apart from his intimacy to Haragawain, Ayalew seems to have had a strong desire to marry her when he finishes his college education. One evening however, unexpectedly, Tezera goes to Ayalew's house and meets Haragawain there for the second time by chance. He immediately falls in love with her. Although her response has not been disclosed well, Haragawain on her part changes her mind and inclines towards this attractive military officer. Because of the relationship of the girl and the commander, suspicion and animosity develop between this officer and Ayalew.

In the meantime, Baldras Emru, Ayalew's father, who knows this open secret pushes his son to marry Haragawain at any cost before she is snatched by Tezera. But, since Ayalew has

economic constraints, he can not make use of this advice. He, therefore, finds himself in a dilemma between doing or abandoning what he is told to do. Then, the protagonist himself begins to reveal his inner contradiction as shown in the following soliloquy:

([አያሌው] በመጨነቅና በሀሳብ ተውጦ እየተንጎራደደ ብቻውን ይጮሃል) - አገባት? ሐረገወይንን አገባት - አገብቻትስ? አሁ-ሁ-ሁ-አገብቻትስ? ሐረገወይንን እንኳንስ ላገባት መውደድም ኃጢአት ነው... ወደኔ ደረጃ ቁልቁል ልነትታት? ላረክላት? እንደግንግጥ ተራ ሴት ላዋርዳት?...⁶²

([Ayalew] being troubled and preoccupied with thoughts, he lonely paces around the room and cries aloud.) - Marry her? Marry Haragawain - What to do after marrying her? Ha-ha-ha-ha- what do I do after marrying her? Let alone marrying her, I am guilty of loving her ...Am I going to pull her down towards me? Am I to contaminate her? Am I to degrade her just like an ordinary woman?



In spite of the fact that the internal as well as the external conflicts are both exposed in such a way, they don't seem to intensify and engage the true feelings of the reader or the audience. The whole paragraph only signifies that Ayalew is not in a position to determine or take action either to marry her or discontinue his relation with her. Even if Ayalew loves and adores Haragawain, he lacks the courage to ignore her or pursue his relation with her. And hence, he is between his desire and his indecision. His inability to decide either way decreases the momentum (forward movement) of the play.

Moreover, the reason for Ayalew's internal conflict is not portrayed convincingly. Though he is from a poor family, he is young, educated, physically fit and, as a result, can hope for a better life in the future. With such bright prospects in life, he is capable of marrying a wife even more beautiful than Haragawain. Hence, to make this psychological conflict appear more natural, there should have been given additional background exposition that proves the unique and unbending intimacy of the two lovers before leading him to the worst. Had the relations of the two major characters been established that way, the consequences of Ayalew's self conflict would have been much more plausible and curious.

2.1.3.3. Yakarmo Saw

Tsegaye's method of exposition of the conflicts in his plays Yakarmo Saw and Balg, is similar to that of Tewodros and Yashoh Akalil. The major conflicts in both of these plays are again introduced through the protagonists themselves; but this time the self-exposition is made practical using the monologue and dialogue of the mentioned characters. In Yakarmo Saw, for instance, the protagonist, Mogus, expresses the prevailing situation of both his hope and despair in the following manner:

... ተሁኔ ትታኝ ከመኮብለጊ በፊት ሚስቴ ከመሄዱ በፊት ወ - ወፈረኔ ነው ብላ ጥላኝ ከመሄድዋ በፊት ለልጆችንና ለኛ አንገት ማስገቢያ የምትሆን ዛሬ ጋባ ብጤ ሳልቀለስ ብዬ እታትር ነበርኩ። ... ያሁን ጥረቴ ዛሬ ጋባ ለመቀለስ ሳይሆን ተስፋ ላለመቁረጥ ነው። ... አዎን ዓላማዬ ሁሉ ለመደርጀት ሳይሆን ተስፋ ላለመቁረጥ ብቻ ሆኖ ቀርቷል። (መረር ባለ አንደበት)... እኔ ግን ለኔነቴ ነገርኩት "ተው ሞገስ" አልኩት እንዲችል ገሰፅኩት። ፀጥ እንዲል + ከስተር እንዲል + ለጥ እንዲል + ቀጥ እንዲል ነገርኩት። ⁶³

... before Tihune fled leaving me, before my wife left me, before she went away calling me mad, I was trying hard to build a shelter for both of us and

our child. My struggle now is not to construct that **shelter but just not to lose all my hope... Yes my** whole aim is not to be prosperous but to resist hopelessness. (Bitterly)... I several times told myself "don't give up, Mogus". I advised myself to stand firm. I told myself. I told myself to be silent, to be serious to be a steady and upright man.

Although his inner conflict is disclosed in his report for the first time, the cause of his madness has not again been disclosed at all. Why did Mogus in the first place become mad? As seen in Yashoh Akalil, the cause of the protagonist's (Ayalew's) madness has to some extent been identified and his background motive explained.

On the other hand, in Yakarmo Saw, only Mogus is reported to have been mad from the very beginning. No additional background information is given as to why he divorced his wife. His madness, alone by itself, could not be the cause of the irreconcilable external conflict with his wife and internal conflict within himself.

Besides, the degree of annoyance and the personality of his ex-wife is obscure. What kind of woman was she that failed to carry out her duty or responsibility? Such a question can be raised since in a relationship of husband and wife, one of the duties of each partner is to support and attend the other in times of difficulty. However, no sufficient evidence that justifies why she is not in a position to fulfil her obligation has been given. As a consequence, the motivation of the

husband's conflict with his wife is inadequate and in fact seems to be arbitrary because of its off-stage presentation. There should have been at least a satisfactory report of the cause of her evacuation from the house.

Even though the background information about the origin of the conflict of the husband and wife lacks adequate justification, Mogus's previous dreams, needs, and hopes could have been better expressed in his own words of narration. He was formerly ambitious to lead a better life, to live with his wife in love, to bring up their son together, and to build a new house for the whole family. Because of their disagreement unfortunately, his hopes have totally been dashed. In this case, the unexpected opposites of his early demands and the exhibited real happenings are put distinctively and clearly.

In addition to these conflicts, Mogus is also in conflict with the whole society. This situation once again is disclosed by the protagonist through the following monologue.

ጎ-ጎረቤት ጀርባውን አዞረብኝ። ሀፃናት ጣቶቻቸውን አሾሉብኝ። ጓደኞቼ በሹክሹክታ አንደበታቸውን ቀለሉብኝ። እኔም ጓዳ ውስጥ ተወሽቄ ... ድምጺን ቀ-ቀብረ ተ-ተንሰቀሰኩ።⁶⁴

My neighbours turn their backs on me, the children point their fingers at me, murmuring for themselves my friends ignore me, I hide myself in my room and sob endlessly.

The above passage suggests that the protagonist is totally alienated from the whole society. This indicates that there is a reason for the protagonist to go against the mutually accepted norms or standards, beliefs and thoughts. However, the

reason why he is alienated from the whole community is still not sufficiently disclosed.

2.1.3.4. Balg

As indicated earlier, the introduction of the conflict in Tsegaye's play, Balg is not different from the above mentioned plays. Until one of the major characters, Tsiyon, she is in fact one of the two protagonists in this play, exposes the whole contradiction, the play goes smoothly almost in a straight line for some fifty-two pages. Thereafter, the main conflict is released by the protagonist as has been the case in the rest of the plays. Nevertheless, the exposition this time is neither in the form of monologue nor in soliloquy, but through the conversation between Tsiyon and her youngest brother, Sahilu.

ዕዮን:

ሃሁሉ የኃጢአት ዋጋ ሞት ነው አይደለም?

ሃሁሉ:

ነው ብለን እናምናለን።

ዕዮን:

የወንጀልም ዋጋ ቅጣት ነው። ... ሃሁሉ እኔ ኃጢአተኛም ወንጀለኛም ነኝ። አየህ ሃሁሉ የአረገዝኩት ልጅ የአባተ አይደለም። የባሌ አይደለም።⁶⁵

Tsiyon

Sahilu don't you think the price of sin is death?

Sahilu

We believe it is.

Tsiyon

I know the price of crime is punishment... Sahilu I am both a sinner and a criminal. You see, Sahilu, the child I conceived is not that of Abate, my husband.

Through the above dialogue, Tsiyon has exposed a very serious conflict unwittingly. Of course, Tsiyon has concrete evidence which indicates that the child in her womb is not that of her husband. Firstly it is proved through medical examination that her husband is incapable of having a child. Secondly, Tsiyon had secret and illegal intimate relations with Gizaw, the rich man.

On the basis of this evidence, Tsiyon is sure that she has not conceived from her husband, Abate. This situation and the guilty feeling, therefore, should have driven Tseyon into madness. The playwright, however, does not depict the emotional feeling of the pregnant woman, Tsiyon as expected. She even does not look genuinely worried. As a result, the exposition of the external conflict does not seem to be plausible.

Generally, the nature of the exposition of Tsegaye's plays contains touches of psychological conflicts of the protagonists. Yet, the characters' self exposition of conflicts is not skilfully and sufficiently executed in the opening acts.

2.2. The progress of the Middle (complication) parts.

The middle or the complication section of a play, as worked out in detail in the theoretical section, begins with one type of discovery of new information and ends with maximum point of rising tension. Such discovery includes things like the finding of the lost objects, the exposition of the mischievous persons, the elaboration of hidden facts...etc., that help the established conflict to reach its highest point.

In addition to getting the knowledge of the unknown, this new identification helps to narrow down the infinite possibilities or options that the action possesses previously and makes the story move with suspense until the resolution is provided.⁶⁶

2.2.1. Tewodros

The tying of the complication section in Tsegaye's historical play Tewodros is quite unique when compared to the rest of his imaginative plays. Since all the facts, the coming to power and down-fall of his regime are already known from Tewodros's real history, no multiple options other than a single way is expected from the very beginning to the end of his life in the story of the play.

The structure of the play is organized following the chronological happenings of two different historical chapters. What makes this presentation special, however, is that except for the fact that the hero (Tewodros) and his followers remain to be the subject in both of these major divisions, no real bridge is established to connect the two episodic historical moments. Because of its exceptional presentation, the complication section of this play is not located in the middle portion. It merely appears in two distinctive turning points.

In the first memorable part of the play, the complication arises with the intensification of the conflict between two sides, Kassa or later Tewodros and Queen Menen. When Kassa rises against her regime for the first time, she takes it as simple as anything that will stop without causing any-more

trouble. By giving him the hand of her grand-daughter and appointing him as a ruler of certain districts in the South-Western extremes of Gondar, therefore, she puts an end to the prevailing dispute with Kassa.

When he goes to the bush rejecting all the offers for the second time, she again thinks it is a minor opposition and it would be possible to make him submit to her throne by force. To fulfil her plan, she gives a strict order to the royal military commander, Dejatch Wond-yirad. That "The traitor! He [Kassa] must be taken alive and hanged in public."⁶⁷

But, unfortunately the outcome of the battle-field is different. The royal army is defeated and the commander in chief is captured instead. It is after this unexpected triumph of the opposition force is heard of in the palace that Empress Menen comes to discover the military strength of Kassa.

The queen is thus left with only one option: declaring war. To wage this last and decisive war against Kassa, she begins entertaining a new plot:

I too shall get my teeth of revenge into him. I too shall bite the serpent that attacks me! I shall tear him apart! Yes myself shall march against him!⁶⁸

Kassa on his part follows the day to day activities of Empress Menen and her men through a disguised colleague who lives among the royal family in Gondar palace. He sends a letter to Kassa by hand and informs him of all her military preparations and secret plot.

Like the queen, therefore, Kassa on his part recognizes the development of his irreconcilable animosity with her. Because of his discovery of the latest information, Kassa himself begins to make preparation for the decisive confrontation.

These aggressive steps taken by both sides lead the story line to one direction. Hence, this provocative war which is followed by the expected victorious or disastrous outcome creates the highest interest (excitement) for the readers. In doing so, the author successfully builds up the complication.

In Tewodros's next historic times, the conflict is not at all the continuation of the first phase. And his struggle is no more with Empress Menen and her compatriots as before. After his kingship, a new and a completely different social resistance arises.

His plan to introduce and promote the idea of modernization throughout the united country - Ethiopia is the cause of this new form of conflict between him and other social groups. Some of these groups who revolt against his administration are religious men, local chiefs and foreign diplomats. Even many of his former loyal followers including his intimate men Dejatch Aleme, Menilik and others desert him especially towards the last part of his regime. As a result of the intensification of the uprisings in various places and the numerous desertions, he starts to take desperate measures. He, for instance, puts many people, including foreign diplomats

into prison.⁶⁹

Finally, after he has been encircled by the British army led by General Napier and his rivals get stronger and stronger, Tewodros comes to realize his inability to win or escape. He has full knowledge of the critical situation he is in. And this is the place where the highest point of the complication section is exactly located.

Notwithstanding that these two series complication parts or scenes of recognition are stated mostly by the narration of the messenger and seem technically to be unnatural, both of the episodic stories are more appealing to the readers in their presentation.

2.2.2. Yashoh Akalil

The method of entwining of the complication section in Yashoh Akalil, on the other hand, is quite different from the above chronicle play, Tewodros, for at least two reasons. First and foremost the middle section of this linear story is the outcome of the already established major conflict. Secondly, up to its scene of recognition so many possibilities that make the story-line move into various directions are hinted at side by side.

Even though the protagonist, Ayalew, understands that his family background is different from that of his girl friend, he at first thinks that this by itself won't be the cause of their separation. Later, however, Haragawain her self says that

she is no more willing to continue her friendship with him. But she never discloses the reason.

Even after this clear stand of hers, Ayalew does not totally lose hope. To exhaust the remaining possibilities, he makes several attempts. For instance, he sends friends to persuade her so that she may reverse her decision. In his last trial, however, she shows contempt for him in addition to her negative response. In the meantime, Ayalew discovers that she is determined not to change her mind any more to compromise on this issue.

This firm determination of the girl, therefore, gives a clue for the last adjustment of the play. Whatever the conclusion may be, the existing relation of these two friends suggests an unhappy outcome.

All the way through the play, in general, the building up of the complication section is accomplished by the direct exchange of the dialogue of the characters which is contrary to the method of its development in his next imaginative play, Balg.

2.2.3. Balg

In Balg, the scene of recognition is fully explained through the message which is sent by the antagonist to the protagonist. Just before he commits suicide, the antagonist, Gizaw, writes a short note to Abate having declared his illegitimate fatherhood for the newly born baby.

Even if this complication is not carefully motivated and seems a bit superficial in approach, it brings another additional obstacle on the path of the protagonist and creates a high narrative interest in the reader or the audience.

Because the protagonist's line of action is again restricted to a single direction, the reader obviously expects to see either an immediate separation of the husband and wife or some unpleasant happenings to occur to them.

2.2.4. Yakarmo Saw

The type of the conflict which is elaborated in Yakarmo Saw, on the other hand, is not objective in its kind like the above play Balg. Rather, its central conflict which is already set forth i.e., Mogus versus himself is a psychological one. After her withdrawal from the house, Mogus's wife is heard to have been a concubine of his immediate boss. This abusive and embarrassing relationship becomes shameful for his relatives. Especially his old uncle Zerfu is always in great distress as a result of this indignity.

Taking his uncle's awareness into account, Tekola secretly takes the initiative to avenge his brother's enemy. It is, therefore, after Tekola's unexpected and brutal action that Mogus and his uncle Zerfu realize the extent of the damage caused by the run-away wife.

Even if this deliberate measure is a relief for the old man, the fortune of the protagonist is not reversed with this

discovery. Hence, the flow of the story line does not assist the reader to concentrate on a single problem and to anticipate its outcome. The desire of the reader to discover what will happen next for example, such questions as: will the hero reconcile with his wife? will the criminal be punished? are not condensed to the single solution seeking problem like the rest of the plays discussed before.

2.3. The Nature of the End (resolution) Parts.

Concerning the resolution of a play, as discussed at length in the first chapter, a playwright usually has two options - solving all the problems exhaustively or simply leaving them to the reader (audience) to seek a solution for themselves.

The resolutions in the pre-revolution plays of Tsegaye fall in one of these alternatives. In some of his plays, the clearing away of the complications (i.e. the final adjustments) are well elaborated. In some other plays, the appropriate conclusions are not drawn at all.

A close investigation of his earlier plays Tewodros, Yakarmo Saw, Balg and Yashoh Akalil reveals that they are written on the basis of conventional or Aristotelian theory of playwriting. Each one of these plays is constructed in such a way that it maintains suspense until the last moment or the resolution part. From the types of conflicts that are introduced and complicated, the reader or the audience could not accurately anticipate as to what the last outcome of the

events would be.

2.3.1. Tewodros

Though some fictional events, characters and spirits of the past age are combined with the actual history in Tewodros, their presentation in the play is not sufficiently re-created. Like its exposition and complication sections, the resolution takes place according to the chronological happenings of the true history. Without any addition or deletion of the actual facts, therefore, this historical play ends with the suicide of the hero.

2.3.2. Yakarmo Saw

One of the rest of the imaginative plays of Tsegaye that maintains a moderate suspense is Yakarmo Saw. As explained before in the exposition portion, the central conflict of this play revolves around Mogus and his wife. For no obvious reason, the husband is reported to have been in hospital just to get a treatment of his mental illness. While he was in hospital, his wife leaves the house for fear of her husband.

At a later time (after he gets relative recovery), Mogus comes to realize that his wife is living with his immediate boss. Their marriage was not legalized. But she is living with the man under the name of house-maid.

This situation means a defeat for him. His uncle Zerfu, who comes from the country-side, is also deeply touched and gets sick because of this immoral happening. He is all the time

impatient and never accepts Mogus's failure. As a consequence, Zerfu urges him to use force to bring his wife and child back home. "በጥይት በለው!... እንዴት አንተ! በቤታችንም የለው 'በእባት ርሰትና በሚሰት የለም ዋዛ!' ነው እኮ ከነተረቱ በጥይት በለው!!"⁷⁰

Shoot him!... Never seen in our family! Haven't you heard the popular saying 'no joke for those who come against the father-land and a wife' Give him the bullet!!

But Mogus is always indifferent to his uncle's agitation. Instead, his younger brother - Tekola, becomes convinced by Zerfu's motivation. A few days later, Tekola goes straight to the man's house, snatches his brother's wife and wounds him with a knife badly. Tekola is jailed soon after he commits the crime. And thus, an attempt is made to resolve the conflict in such a way.

This method of evaluation of the problem, however, is unconvincing for the reason that the victim is completely out of the story and is ignorant of the relationship between the husband and the wife.

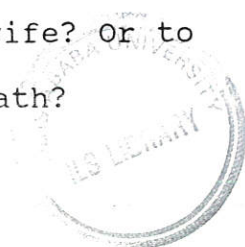
It is reported that the wounded man does not even have any knowledge whether the woman who lives with him is the wife of his work-mate - Mogus or not. This measure, therefore, would have been much more acceptable had his wife, who violates her responsibility of taking care of her mentally sick ex-husband been punished instead of the unknowing person.

After a murder attempt by Tekola, however, their uncle Zerfu dies of an intestinal problem. The story of the play

assumes an end with the announcement of this man's death which does not have again direct significance to the conflict and its resolution parts of the play.

The trouble in this play is that though the supposedly evil character is punished, the ever existing problems remain unresolved. The protagonist Mogus does not fully recover from his mental illness. He still finds himself in self-conflict. In addition to this, Mogus remains separated from his wife and child. And also the severely wounded man is reported to be on his death bed. Then, what would the final fate of each character be? Will Mogus recover from his mental disorder or go on being mad? Will he commit suicide? Will there be a reunion of the family or separation forever? What will happen to Tekola?...These and other problems that the protagonist and the rest of the characters face are not at all tackled.

Even the title of the play, Yakarmo Saw itself creates ambiguity. It has no clear association with the content of the play. Two researchers, Debebe Seifu and Abebe Addis, have given the English equivalent of the Amharic title. Debebe takes Yakarmo Saw to be "A man of Tomorrow"⁷¹ ; and Abebe names it "The Future Man"⁷² 'A Man of Tomorrow' seems the nearest English equivalent to the Amharic title. But who is 'A Man of Tomorrow'? To whom does it apply? Does it refer to Tekola who is in prison, or to Mogus who is left mentally deficient and lonely? Or to the child born of Mogus and his ex-wife? Or to a man who is found in hospital between life and death?



Although on the surface the title of a play seems to indicate a particular character, a thorough investigation shows that it does not appeal to any one of them identified. It rather creates a sort of ambiguity.

The resolution part of this play, by and large, does not give complete answers to all the problems that demand substantial resolution.

2.3.3. Balg

An assessment of the resolution part of Balg, Tsegaye's other play, shows almost a similar situation and treatment. As has been demonstrated previously, the fundamental cause of the conflicts in this play is also a man-woman relationship like that of Yakarmo Saw. What makes Balg different from Yakermo Saw is the simultaneous presence of two distinct conflicts.

The centre of the first conflict in Balg is Gerawork. This girl, who is described as the most beautiful woman, has love affairs with Gizaw, Sahle and Feyesa. Each of them falls in love with her. As a result, they often contend with each other just to win the girl. Among these three contenders, Gizaw is, however, old and is no match for Gerawork. But, since he is a rich man and can afford to satisfy her material needs, the girl in return tends to favour him.

In the second conflict also, this man, Gizaw once again, appears to play the role of the antagonist. As elaborated in the exposition of conflicts in detail, the major contradiction

of the play arises from Gizaw's secret sexual relation with Tseyon - the wife of Abate. What complicates the matter is that the woman conceives a child by him. It is made known earlier through medical examination that her husband is incapable of having a child. As a result, the infant that Tseyon conceives for Gizaw throws everyone into confusion.

Though the complications of these two entirely different conflicts of the play, Balg, are well-constructed, no concrete resolution is made to tackle the respective conflicts.

What is unconvincing and, in fact, unnatural in the conclusion is that Gizaw, who is the antagonist of both conflicts is merely reported to have shot himself dead in a gambling room of a certain hotel. The cause of this suicide is mentioned to be his loss of twenty-one thousand birr in an over-night gambling. But the cause and the effect of his suicide is obviously a deus-ex-machina brought forth by the playwright. This contradicts Shaw's famous remark, "A cause is the reason. An effect is the result of the operation of a cause. [And] cause and effect are necessarily related."⁷³

As seen in Tsegaye's play Balg, however, the death of the antagonist does not have any relation with the prominent conflict of the play. In resolving the conflict that way, therefore, the author seems to think that the elimination of Gizaw will reduce the tiresome task of finding a logical resolution for the conflicts he had created.

What seems also more amazing is that immediately after the announcement of Gizaw's death, almost within the span of three or four minutes, his letter is handed over to Abate, the one whose wife has conceived a child from the deceased. The letter is intended to serve the purpose of disclosing the top secret, the pregnancy of the wife. It says, "አባተ እንደታወቀው ፊት ለፊት የምትወልደው ልጅ የኔ ነው።" 74

Abate - for your information, the child Tseyon will give birth to is mine.

It is, however, inconceivable for a person who has lost twenty-one thousand birr in a short time of gambling and who is at death's door to have the presence of mind to leave such a calculated message.

Though the note is implausible its handing over to Abate carries the plot further to its final point and causes the separation of the husband and wife. After two years of separation, however, the wife, together with her child, comes back home through the mediation of one of their intimate friends, Hiruy. But this mediation is effected without the proper coming into terms of the husband and wife. The wife's apology for her wrong doing is not explained at all. Only the husband with a broken heart is seen receiving her without reservation.

What is totally neglected up to this stage is the first conflict which has, in fact, no real link with the major story. After the unexpected death of Gizaw, it might be assumed that this conflict has ceased to exist. But the other two opponents,

Sahle and Feyesa fight on until Feyesa declares the girl, Gerawork, to be his wife.

Comparatively speaking, the resolution part of Balg solves all the existing problems better than Yakarmo Saw does. In fact, many of the causes and effects of the former lack aptness, plausibility and logical clarification. For instance, Gizaw - the antagonist commits suicide, but without a related cause; Gerawork - who is the centre of the dispute among the three men is reported to have married Feyesa, but once again, how Feyesa achieves his goal and becomes fortunate is not elaborated. It can, therefore, be concluded that no unanswered question is left in this play except for the shortcomings explained above.

2.3.4. Yashoh Akalil

Tsegaye's other pre-revolution play, Yashoh Akalil, resembles the above two plays both technically and thematically. As has been exposed so far in various sub-topics of this study, this play has also two kinds of conflicts like that of Balg.

The first short-lived conflict is established between two old men - Fitawrari Yilma and Baldras Emru. The fundamental cause of their contradiction is that the powerful feudal lord, Fitawrari Yilma, forcefully snatches the wife of Baldras Emru - who is powerless to withstand him.

The root cause of the second conflict that arises between Ayalew, Baldras Imru's son and Tezera, an army officer, is not different from the first one. Like his father's fate, the former has his girl-friend snatched by the latter.

Soon after, the first conflict gets resolved through the mediation of their son - Ayalew. The mother returns home and the father welcomes her. Ayalew's effort to settle his parents' disagreement is convincing. But the settlement as a whole lacks justice. This is to say that the father whose wife is snatched is not morally as well as materially compensated. Regarding poetic justice, Thomas A. Hart notes,

All conflicts between good and evil, whether in drama, the epic, or the novel, must be concluded with the reward of the virtuous and the punishment of the evil, in order that good persons may be encouraged to persevere in their good works, and that evildoers may be frightened from a persistence in evil course.⁷⁵

In resolving the first conflict of Yashoh Akalil, however, neither the morally wounded person is rewarded nor the evil-minded is punished.

The second prominent conflict of Yashoh Akalil is resolved in a similar way as that of Yakarmo Saw. After Tezera, who snatches Ayalew's girl-friend, goes to a war front, Ayalew and his former girl-friend stay separated. After a year of separation, Ayalew and his former girl meet by chance at a

graduation party held at Genet Hotel. Through the initiative of Ayalew, they begin to exchange words leading to reconciliation. But the girl remains loyal to the lieutenant and rejects Ayalew's appeals.

In the dialogue, Haragawain's negative response to his apology shocks Ayalew and he faints. In the mean time, however, a telegram is handed over to Haragawain, which reads:

"የመቶ አለቃ ተዘራ ከኮሪ ጦር ጊዳ ቆሰሎ ተመልሏል። ደረጃዋ ሆስፒታል መተኛቱን
እንደታወቀው ይረዳል። ደክተር ሞራቲ።"⁷⁶

Lieutenant Tezera has come back wounded from Qore war front. He would like you to know that he is now in Dire-dawa Hospital. Dr. Morati.

Even if the delivery of the message at that place and time seems unlikely, it does to some extent help to advance the complication part to its finale.

Early in the morning of the following day, therefore, Haragawain leaves for Dire-dawa ignoring Ayalew. But she is unfortunate that the moment she arrives at the hospital, her beloved boy-friend, Tezera dies. The cause of his death, once more, has no relation with the conflict of the story.

Though the antagonist, Tezera, is punished by death, which is external to the story of the play, the play once more ends without properly tackling the main problem. Nothing is also said about Ayalew's reaction except the announcement of his madness and admission to Amanuel mental hospital.

The resolution part of Yashoh Akalil, therefore, resembles Yakarmo Saw in many ways. In both plays, the antagonists are punished and the protagonists of the plays are also destined to a tumour of the brain and their future is undetermined.

UNCONVENTIONAL DRAMATIC STRUCTURE IN POST-REVOLUTION PLAYS OF TSEGAYE.

It has already been indicated in the introductory portion that the two post-revolution plays of Tsegaye, Ha Hu Basadast War and Enatalam Tanu are written based upon the Brechtian alienation principles.

3.1. Ha Hu Basadast War

According to the rules and guiding principles of the unconventional playwriting (alienation method), the opening scene of Ha Hu Basadast War begins with the song of the chorus. The song depicts the tiresome duty and the successful mission of an unnamed military commander. The singers of the chorus express their heart-felt appreciation for his victory in safeguarding the motherland and getting his promotion.

As the song of the chorus goes on, a beggar named Dera, who looks semi-abnormal, comes into sight. This aggressive man strictly warns the members of the chorus to stop their nonsense singing. Then he goes on to introduce another individual by the name Semu Tasse, who was a known teacher before he became a mental patient.

In the meantime, Semu Tasse physically appears on the scene and starts to expose himself. He explains where he has been staying for the last nine years. In his monologue, he narrates all his experiences during his stay in Wollo region,

especially in four provinces. He discloses how the people of this region are victimized by drought and are presently in a very critical situation. In all his descriptions, Semu never exchanges words of dialogue with other characters. Instead he narrates and directly addresses the past happenings to the audience.

This direct address or narration of the past events is one characteristic feature of Brechtian epic theatre that Tsegaye has attempted to apply in this play. However, as is seen in the various episodes of this play, narrating events by itself does not completely avoid the emotional involvement of the reader or the audience. When Semu Tasse presents the pitiful condition, the starving people of Wollo and his personal attachment to them, there is a tendency on the part of the audience or reader to sympathize and identify himself with the people of the drought affected area. To interrupt this tendency and break the sympathetic mood a sound effect (though it is not relevant and convincing) is employed aiming at breaking the sorrowful feeling. The stage direction reads:

ደንገት ከሩት ከደጅ የድንጋይ ውርወራ ካካቴና ተኩስ ደሰግና ፀጥታ ይሆናል። ወዲያው የቤተክርስቲያን ደውል ከደቡብ ሲደውል ሰውን የከበበው መብራት ከአልጋው አካባቢ ግደ ያለውን ሥፍራ እያየ ያልፋል።⁷⁷

All of a sudden throwing of stones on the roof of the house and the rattle of machine-guns are heard from afar. Following the shooting, a church-bell rings from the southern direction. Then, after observing the surroundings, Semu carefully leaves the place.

The point to be made here, is that the sound effect which is described through the lengthy stage direction is not

the police man who was chasing the students is said to have killed his own son by mistake.

Once again, in this independent episode before the reader begins to involve and identify himself with the bad fortune that happened to the police-man, another interruption follows. The scene reverts to the discussion of the woman and the deaf man of the first episode. Though the incident of the demonstration has its own wholeness, it does not have a real linkage with the initial discussion of the problems of starvation. As a consequence, no progress is made regarding the conflict of the first social problem.

As it has been explained, this play Ha Hu Basadast War does not have a single story line and a limited number of social conflicts. It merely attempts to survey and present the social circumstances of the country that existed during the out-break of the so called Ethiopian popular revolution. The various economic and drought problems, the illiteracy problem, the uprising of factory workers and students, the injustice of the feudal system, and other social problems are discussed directly or indirectly in different episodes. In all these discussions numerous effects and the intrusion of unreal characters, which do not seem necessary to the meaning of the play, are employed.

A grader, for instance, is heard passing nearby every now and then without a clear implication. And also Sheik Hussein (who is a sort of wizard) is heard off-stage uttering an

cantation in Oromo language accompanied by the beat of a drum. Other new characters with entirely different opinions and suggestions intrude at short intervals without sufficient reasons. These examples indicate that the author had faced difficulty in applying alienation method properly in a single situation.

Concerning the application of Brechtian alienation method, Peter Demetz says, "It is true for Brecht as for every poet concedes with critical questions, that strictly speaking, his [Brecht's] theory of theatre fits only his own work."⁷⁸

This might, therefore, be the reason for Tsegaye's failure in the proper use of the Brechtian alienation method.

The other point is that though the deliberate portrayal of odd characters is common in the alienation method, Tsegaye excessively makes use of these unreal characters in Ha Hu Basadast War. For instance, Tidu is an abnormal journalist; Semu Tasse is also an abnormal teacher; Ayaya Kale is a deaf migrant monk; the beggar - Dera is mentally ill; Grageta, Madam Gene and others are all odd characters. From this, it might be possible to deduce that the author seems to think being odd is the only characteristic feature of mentally affected characters.

These characters, however, are not in a position to argue over the given matters and suggest or pass logical and sound resolutions. As clearly seen throughout the play, Ha Hu

Basadusat War, these abnormal and ordinary characters are always obstacles to the development of the introduced situation. They simply ramble here and there without restriction.

In the middle of the play, for instance, what Grageta and Tidu discuss is very personal and out of the existing social context.

እኔ የሰው መውደድ የለኝም። እንዲኖረኝም አልፈኝም። ጌጥና ንብረቱን እንጂ ሰው ጭቃ ነው። ... ሰው አስቀያሚ ነው። ከጭቃ ወጥቶ ጭቃ። ካረገ ወጥቶ አረገ ድሜ ነው።⁷⁹

I have no love for people. And I don't permit myself to love them. I know without his superficial and artificial decorations and possessions, man is dust particles. ... Man is ugly. He is built out of mud and he is transformed into this useless dust particles.

Such independent episodes that focus on personal philosophy of the nature of man are presented at every interval. As a result, incidents are not interrelated to give a complete and coherent message.

Because each of the episodes is left disconnected, the exposition, complication, the climax and the resolution parts of this play are not smoothly constructed and distinctively located.

Finally, this play ends with choral songs accompanied by folk-dances of various nationalities. In their songs and dances, the singers call for equality, unity, prosperity and freedom to be secured in Ethiopia. The various social problems

that were raised, for example, the problem of drought victims, the problem of injustice, corruption ... remain unresolved.

3.2. Enatalam Tanu

In Tsegaye's next revolutionary play - Enatalam Tanu (Mother Courage) the same technical devices (which are common in the alienation method) are also observed being applied. In his preface, the author explains that he has taken a major character from Brecht's typical revolutionary play, Mother Courage and Her Children. He notes, "ከቴአትሩ ባህርያት ውስጥ በተለይ የእናት አለም ጠኑ ባህርይ ብቻ ከቤርቶልት ብሪክት ስመጥር አብዮታዊ ቴአትር ወደ አማርኛ የተመለሰ ነው።" ⁸⁰

Among the characters, only Enatalam Tanu has been taken from Bertolt Brecht's famous revolutionary play - Mother Courage and adapted into Amharic.

It would, however, be difficult to accept that Tsegaye's Enatalam Tanu and Brecht's Mother Courage are the same plays. In relation to this point, Debebe Seifu in his dissertation Ethiopian Literature in English asserts:

Tsegaye has written and produced another play, [Enatalam Tanu]. This play despite the writer's assumption otherwise, has apparently nothing to do with Bertolt Brecht's play of that time.⁸¹

As Debebe has noted, except for the fact that both plays deal with social problems (Brecht's with the problem of war and Tsegaye's with the problem of starvation), they share no common features at all. What must be noted here, however, is that Tsegaye has tried to imitate Brecht in so far as the technical aspects are concerned.

In this play, as well, the relations and affairs of the characters, the atmosphere of the episodic stories, the description of the conflicts are presented objectively by employing various devices of the alienation method like his previous play - Ha Hu Basadast War.

Right at the beginning of Enatalam Tanu, for instance, one of the characters - Gebreyes is seen torturing Belay Zeleke who is a historical figure. Since it is well known in history how this patriot was jailed and sentenced to death, Tsegaye's presentation of this incident is non imaginative. What seems imaginative and different from the objective type of presentation is the way Gebreyes tortures Belay. This dramatic action undoubtedly enables the reader to identify himself with the sufferer. To avoid such emotional involvement, however, the dramatist (this time deliberately and wisely) employs the effect of the radio speech delivered by His Majesty Hailesselasse. The Emperor in His speech narrates how Mussolini invaded Ethiopia, how he used poisonous gas to eliminate the famous patriots and put the struggle to an end, how the people were intimidated, sent into exile and deprived of their rights by these foreign invaders.

This presentation, apart from the removal of personal involvement, enables the audience to understand the historical reality and contrast the past evil actions with the present corruption that Hailesselasse's regime used to exercise. What is out of order as far as the alienation theory is concerned is the dramatic presentation of the next horrible incident. The

author shows the reader or the audience how the patriot - Belay is put to death on the stage. Everybody witnesses how his soul is divorced from his body. Such live presentation is not possible in Brechtian alienation method since it makes the audience indulge in emotional action.

After the death of the patriot, another incident which does not have any linkage with the previous action is again introduced. Adewokaw, a woman who is mentally deranged, starts criticizing Haileselassie's regime. All of a sudden, however, this woman disappears and another patriot prisoner by the name Dambel is introduced.

This man begins to narrate his sorrowful life history. He discloses how he lost his parents during his childhood and how he grew up in a grave-yard. This personal life history once again does not have any connection with the previously demonstrated social problem (i.e. injustice). Soon after, without any hint for expectation, Dambele's narration is also interrupted by another abnormal character by the name the idiot Moro. This man on his part goes on to narrate his life history.

At the end of this play, a slide film that shows a colourful celebration of His Majesty's birth day is presented. Immediately after the celebration, the first declaration by the military force is released through the radio. It announces the overthrow of Hailesselasse's regime and the out-break of the revolution. Then, the chorus highlights this historic time; and machine-guns are distributed among the characters who are

supposed to have been subjugated for so long and are liberated at last.

As in Ha Hu Basadast War, in this play Enatalam Tanu, many independent episodes (as clearly pointed out above) are presented time and again having no relation to one another. As a result, no single story or conflict that revolves around a certain social problem is effected.

In this study, an attempt has been made to identify the major features of the two dramatic structures and their application in four pre- and two post-revolution plays of Tsegaye Gebre Medhin. As elaborated in two previous consecutive chapters, he follows both the conventional and unconventional ways of playwriting in his historical, revolutionary and other original plays.

As far as the introductory parts of his conventional plays are concerned, Tsegaye is extravagant in using many of the dramatic elements. With the exception of the historical play - Tewodros, since the frequent shift of the settings and portrayal of numerous characters in such plays are commonly accepted, in the rest of his imaginative plays, the description of settings, the delineation of characters and the exposition of conflicts are not economical. Of course when Yakarmo Saw is compared with Yashoh Akalil and Balg, relative progress is seen being made in reducing only the number of characters and the concentration of the dramatic locale.

Apart from the description of unnecessary settings, the delineation of characters and conflicts is repetitive in many of the plays. In his exposition of the dramatic locale, for instance, Tsegaye usually uses bars or hotels, hospitals and mountains. In Yashoh Akalil, two different hotels - Zarayaqob bar of Desse and Genet hotel of Addis Abeba are disclosed one after the other. In Balg again two hotels (Machestis and Haillesselasse) are drawn in the same town Ambo. Even in Yakarmo

Saw, Tekola is reported to have committed a crime in a certain bar or hotel. Such repetitive presentations of places apart from their lack of originality may result in loss of interest among the readers or the audience. In all the plays, on the whole, the settings are changed at an alarming rate. They are most often film-like in their presentation.

Like his portrayal of locales, characters and conflicts do not seem to be selective or original either. The dramatic personages are replicas of characters observed in other plays. They have similar social backgrounds, similar interactions and problems, the same motivations and goals. For instance, in Balg, Yakarmo Saw and Yashoh Akalil, the sources of the conflicts or the driving forces of the characters are always based on man- woman relationships or love affairs. In all the situations, men have either wives or girl-friends. Their individual or social conflicts arise as intruder characters come and interfere with their love affairs.

In each of these plays, women are always pictured as dishonest, irrational and money-minded. But men, on the other hand, are quite innocent and destined to play inferior roles of their wives or girl-friends.

As in the case of his unconventional plays, the mere physical appearances of characters are exposed accidentally. Since the dialogue of every character is poetic and philosophical it would be difficult to identify each one of them clearly and separately.

In addition to their accidental exposition, characters which are introduced in one act disappear in another act without letting the reader know about their whereabouts. Except for Yakarmo Saw, such unexpected appearance and disappearance of characters is commonly observed even in his conventional plays, including the chronicle play, Tewodros.

Of all the component parts of the dramatic structure, however, Tsegaye's conventional plays can be considered best in their complication parts. In each of the plays, the highest point of the complication is reached with the protagonist's discovery of new facts about himself or his surroundings.

The resolution of the three conventional plays of Tsegaye are characterized by two common features. First and foremost, both the protagonists and the antagonists are equally punished. The former are physically and morally defeated and the latter are destined to death. In all the three plays, moreover, the punishments take place off-stage and without the related causes and contribution to the unity of the major conflicts of the plays.

The second common point is that at the end of each play, women are seen betraying their men even without having any pretext.

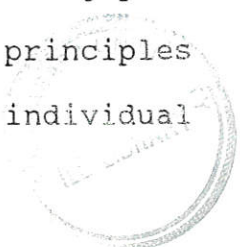
Since the same method of the clearing away of the complication of each play recurs so frequently, Tsegaye's final adjustment or resolution in his conventional plays somehow

seems to create a sense of monotony.

Such redundancy in character delineation and selection of situation as well is seen at large in his two episodic post-revolution plays - Ha Hu Basadast War and Enatalam Tanu. Of course, Tsegaye has attempted hard to apply Brechtian alienation method in these plays. To remove the emotional involvements of the reader or the audience, he employs various technical devices like the deliberate portrayal of unreal characters, the direct address to the audience, the exaggerated social commentary, the use of documentary techniques and slide projections. However, the author all the same fails in formulating and utilizing meaningful unconventional dramatic structure. Except for the excessive use of Brechtian alienation effects, he could not develop a single and interrelated situation out of the diverse episodes. He merely attempts to address all sorts of the prevailing social problems without proper selection and restriction of the prime subject matter.

It, therefore, is not possible to conclude that Tsegaye has used the Brechtian alienation theory effectively as is seen, for example, in Brecht's play Mother Courage and Her Children. As a result, unlike Brecht's plays, the political, ethical and moral messages of Tsegaye's plays cannot clearly be understood either by the reader or the audience.

As in the Brechtian epic theatre, however, in Tsegaye's post-revolution plays the conventional rules and principles such as the plot construction, the portrayal of an individual



as a protagonist, and the presence of linear stories are totally avoided. The important things in his plays are only the prevailing social problems which are constituted of many independent episodes. These incidents which are loosely connected with one another are presented in unusual arrangements that counter the normal course of unconventional dramatic structure. Hence, even though the dramatic structure of Tsegaye's post-revolution plays is quite different from that of his pre-revolution plays that follow the conventional way of play writing, they cannot be taken as paragons of Brechtian epic theatre.

APPENDIX

A. Interview conducted with the playwright Tsegaye Gabre Medhin

Question: Playwrights and critics agree that the best play springs from the nature of the character rather than from the nature of the event or situation. Is this statement true of your plays?

Tsegaye: Yes, my plays obviously spring from the nature of characters. First I see a shape standing somewhere, walking to a certain direction or doing something impressive. Then, I will come to understand its internal as well as external characteristic features. Once I begin to visualize this figure, instead of telling or ordering him what to do, the character himself will talk to me and guide me where to move. Later on, the whole situation comes in it. So, the crucial aspect on my playwriting lies upon the character making or moulding. And I think that shaping a character in a certain situation is a harder task than the creation of the event.

Question: In so far as the dramatic structure is concerned, it is known that there are the conventional and unconventional types of approach. In conventional (Aristotelian) playwriting, the beginning, the middle and the end parts of the plot have strong bondage to one another and in that of unconventional (Brechtian) one, these parts are very loosely connected. Which method of presentation do you think your pre- and post-revolution plays did have?

Tsegaye: Aristotle was a ritualist. And I am as well a ritualist. I have a lot of dramatic elements to take from my religious ceremonies. In the sense that the plot of a play used to spring out from religious practices. In such plays, priests were actors. They were walking in the footprints of God. In its strict sense of the term, however, I don't allow myself to be limited to Aristotelian or Brechtian principles since I have got sources from my church traditions. Of course, borrowing some guiding rules helps us to intensify and develop our traditional theatre to the higher level. But, I believe that being strictly governed by certain rules or principles is being intimidated and such intimidation will limit our creative power, our imaginative power. Even though I have my own way, my pre-revolution plays follow the Aristotelian way of playwriting. An individual is the centre of the story. When we come to the present world, Brecht is the worker - playwright. He is far removed from the traditional way of plot construction. He characterizes a worker as a hero, not the angel as in the case of conventional playwriting. In fact, my plays which I wrote during the revolution follow the Brechtian method of playwriting. Like that of Brecht's, my characters are workers as heroes.

Question: It is said that one of your pre-revolution plays, Yakarmo Saw, adheres to the three unities. Would you accept that this play of yours keeps the unity of time, place and action?

Tsegaye: Particularly in this advanced world, 20th century,

action is the most significant element. In writing their plays, dramatists economize the time and place of the action. This, in fact, attracts the attention of the 20th century reader and audience on the whole. In my own previous experiences, especially when I was in Britain, France and Italy for short term training of my discipline - theatre, the value of the unified time, place and action was clear to me. And as a result, I made use of the principles of the three unities in my later plays including Yakarmo Saw.

Question: Many modern dramatists, for instance, Bernard Shaw, believe in a more elaborated exposition of settings, movements and emotional feelings of the characters. Do you make use of such descriptions in your plays?

Tsegaye: The art of drama or theatre appeals not only to our ears but also to our eyes. In addition to the words or the dialogues of the characters, the elaboration of a setting will help a person to anticipate what will happen at the end of the story of a drama. So the description of the elongated settings and movements of the characters is important to the understanding of the play. It serves as a link between the director and the whole essence of the play. That is why Bernard Shaw insists that directors should direct plays as they are written. In my plays also, I explain the settings, gestures, properties, and movements through the stage directions. This I think helps the director to understand my plays as I understand them.

Question: It is a known fact that the aim of the play is to appeal to the audience when the play is performed.

either to educate or entertain the society or to reach both goals. What could be the sole purpose of your plays?

Tsegaye: I entertain people to educate them better. I make my plays entertaining in order to educate the society. I believe my plays must adhere to morality. Take, for instance, my historical play Tewodros. Since its prime motive is to enlighten the society, to insist that morality be built, it has less entertainment. It is because without education you cannot keep Africa together, you cannot keep Ethiopia together. So entertainment and education are two inseparable things in theatre. There is a popular Ethiopian proverb for this, saying:

ከሶን ለልጅ መስጠት በግር ጠቅልሎ ነው።
ግሩ እየጣረጠው ከሰው እንዲያድነው።

'Giving Koso (anti-tapeworm which is bitter) to a child is advisable to coating it up with honey in order to get him cured without much suffering from its bitterness.'

Question: did you face any peculiar difficulties in writing your historical play - Tewodros?

Tsegaye: Historical plays require peculiar assessments of facts. First and foremost, I had to study and find out the Ethiopian particular characteristic of the word 'Mekegnet' 'jealousy'. In commemoration of the times, events and lives of both Tewodros and Yohanes at the Institute of Ethiopian studies at Addis Abeba University. One among the audience asked 'who killed Tewodros?' I said the Ethiopian tradition of 'Mekagnenet', jealousy, the Ethiopian art of Mekegnet. He [Tewodros] then, was single and alone on Megdala when the other Kassa, later

Aste Yohanes, led the British army and brought it to the feet of Maqdala mountain. Of the British men, young Kassa, Yohanes was the best in collaborating with the British army and shooting his countrymen. Yohanes in turn, during his fighting with Derbush, Sudanese army, while his neck was cut, Menelik with a strong 60,000 army did not support him. And the death of Menelik is obscure. later on again, the body of Haileselesse was asphalted. All happened because of envy, jealousy. So I came across a peculiar difficulty in finding the Ethiopian culture of intrigue when I wrote an Ethiopian hero - Tewodros.

Question: What would you say about the actual differences of your historical play - Tewodros from your imaginative (fictional) plays?

Tsegaye: One is a play on the herofication of heroes. It is the re-building of the outlooks of the nations. This gives opportunity to the people to be aware of their past and present national history, sovereignty and integrity. Others focus on social criticism. They condemn the social evils. So heroic plays differ completely from social criticism. The one is to accuse the ills of the society, and the historical play is to build confidence on the national stand.

Question: A German playwright Bertolt Brecht used to employ various technical devices in his plays in order to eliminate subjective elements. In your post-revolution plays, as well, especially in Enatalam Tanu and Ha Hu Basadast War, these effects are made practical. Do you use these devices for the same purpose?

Tsegaye: Enatalam Tanu is an adaptation of Brecht's play Mother Courage and Her Children. So the technical devices Brecht used, I have used. Habesha (the Ethiopian) deals with subjective elements. He accuses the individual instead of discussing the communal problems or social values. The Habesha kills the individual by adding more fuel to the fire just to keep his own power safe. Brecht is a worker - playwright who rose on the German stage to put aside such subjectivity. He was, then, passing through the issue at hand - objectivity. Even today, on our stage, ninety percent of what is being staged is on subjectivity, person against person. Because objectivity fights third world politicians a lot, our stage is intentionally busy with subjectivity in order to divert the attention of the people. As a result, Brecht's idea of objectivity is not accepted.

Question: Would you have anything more to add about the dramatic structure of your pre- and post-revolution plays?

Tsegaye: I have a lot to say. The idea of 'pre- and post-' I think should be said with more care and more awareness about it. Today has turned around to be revolutionary-time again. As I have pointed out earlier, whichever time it is, we need to focus on objectivity. We must fight against all forms of social evil. If we take the prevailing circumstances of the country, some argue vehemently 'this is democracy' and others believe and vehemently say 'there is no yet democracy in the country'. Consider my historical play, the martyr bishop,

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Petros, the anti - fascist hero who was shot dead by Graziani in public. This is a 'pre-revolution play', but the present leaders are post-revolution and supposedly democratic. And yet, they are no more willing to put this play on the stage. I am begging about their bureaucratic bushes in order not to allow the play to be banned. Therefore, in spite of the coming of the post- revolution time once more, and the draft of the so called 'people's charter', we are back to zero again. No martyr Petros play on the stage, but the idea of one party rule. I vehemently say that when we have records about the past glorious or ill, we will get the chance to learn more about ourselves. However, such pride in the Ethiopian past glorious history is either betrayed or neglected.

B: Personal Interviews conducted with Haimanot Alemu and Abate Mekuria, Senior Directors of the plays of Tsegaye Gebre Medhin

Question: How many of Tsegaye's plays have you directed so far?

Haimanot: My first one is Asam Bayagasu (skeletons in pages). It was the first one I directed as such. I also directed a production of Tsegaye's Oda Oak Oracle at the University of Menosota in 1972 as part of my graduation honours project. And the other plays I directed were Petros Yachin Sahat (Petros at that hour) and Enatalam Tanu (Mother Courage). I think these are the ones I directed from his published and unpublished works.

Abate: I have directed Yakarmo Saw, Oda Oak Oracle, Ha Hu Basadast War (one of his political or revolutionary plays). And from his collected poems Esat Woy Ababa, I have tried to visualize the drama in the poetry. I remember I have dramatized the three poems "Manaw Mints, Birabiro and Aye Markato". I have done them not only for the stage but also for television screen. I have also directed his translation, Othello. I think Tsegaye is a very good translator particularly Shakespeare's three tragic plays, Othello, Macbeth and Hamlet were his super translations.

Question: Which one of these plays you think was the most difficult to put on the stage? why?

Haimanot: I think that the most difficult probably would be Enatalam tanu. Designing this production, on the whole,

was a big challenge. I had to play one of the leading part or the role of the protagonist, Arbegnaw Denbal. It was I think quite a challenge for me to direct, design and play the leading part at the same time. Added to that there were a lot of technical difficulties that we had to overcome. One thing that comes to my mind is the fact that we had to hang somebody on the stage - Belay Zeleke. Not only did we hang him in view of the audience, but also we had to show the hanging itself happening in front of the audience and leave him hanging for almost forty-five minutes while the rest of us have our speeches. I was one of those people who gave the speech in front of the dead-body. At least for that time this incident required building scaffold because the guards had to stand above the prison fence. So I would say that directorially enatalam Tanu was probably the most challenging work I have done of Tsegaye's plays.

Question: Would you believe there are major differences between Tsegaye's pre- and post- revolution plays in so far as their dramatic structure are concerned?

Haimanot: Regarding dramatic structure, I do not see a significant change or difference between his pre- and post- revolution plays because they suffer from the same deficiency. I mean that Tsegaye most often concentrates on character development and, in fact, the development of certain key things which are probably good items for his style of writings. But in terms of dramatic structure, Tsegaye is not a disciplined playwright. He is not a man who has gone through the discipline of playwriting. From

the academic point of view, on the whole, he is not really a man that has got any formal training in playwriting as far as I know. As a result, the lack of real dramatic structure in his plays becomes a very difficult task for the directors to work on. So, I don't see any significant change or difference in terms of the structure of his pre- and post- revolution plays.

Abate: Yes, I believe there are major differences between his pre- and post- revolution plays. Those plays which have been written during the revolution were more or less works of a workshop product. They were director - playwright and actor - director workshop plays. New ideas were always developed and those ideas were scored by the group. If, for instance, we take most of the characters of his revolutionary plays, real people are presented being personified. In Ha Hu Basadast War, Tidu, represents personally Endalkachew Mekonen and Dr. Akalilu Habte, both of whom are government officials that have had key positions in those days. Awko Abedu Gazetegna was delineated to represent Tegegne Teshawel. He was the image of those modern educated people. If you take other characters Gene, Semu-Neguse Tasse and Hamssa Aleka, they were also portrayed to represent the Dergue or the new (the coming) revolutionary groups. Even in his unpublished plays, Abugida and Melkata, characters were developed to represent various people and opponent political groups of the time like E.P.R.P, MESON, WOZLIG, SEDED, and others through the portrayal of ordinary soldiers, farmers and cadres. These were how characters

and situations used to be formulated in his post-revolution plays. When we see his plays before the revolution, I can say that even though he is not a mature and disciplined playwright, Tsegaye was on his own. On the whole, his pre-revolution plays are more or less self-controlled and not confused. In his revolutionary plays, however, Tsegaye is totally unethical, and unacademical. He has never paid attention to the creative works of the play. Rather, as a politician, he has paid attention to the prevailing political thinking. In these plays, plot constructions are not there, linear stories are not there; what we find there is mere characterization and the capturing political situations just to win favourism.

Question: It is known that before he puts the play on the stage, the final authority (the director) is expected first to interpret the development of the plot, the nature of the theme, characters, sceneries, effects, costume and the like. Have you ever faced any serious problem in understanding all these elements when you direct the plays of Tsegaye?

Haimanot: Traditionally in Ethiopia, the director is not yet the final authority. There are a lot of interferences. Especially Tsegaye has been government official on top of being a playwright. He has been able to twist the arm of the director and I am not exception to that. When you direct a play of your boss, or the Minister, or the permanent secretary, he has the right to come and interfere on the stage. And it is very hard to tell your

boss, 'get out of it; it is non-of-your business, I am the boss here.' So that you said here, the final authority - the director is not in a position to cut, reshape and interpret the text as he sees it fits. Even in some cases people like Tsegaye would come up on the stage and start directing the play or would simply say, 'you are doing something wrong to my play, you are ruining my play what are you doing?' I certainly had this problem with him when I did Enatalam Tanu. I remember we had a very big conflict since he wanted to add some new things that have nothing to do with the original script just to please the current officials or the Dergue. He was imposing on my directing skills; he was imposing on my interpretation and he was even imposing on the arrangements of little things like costume, scenery and effects. So I have always had a problem in understanding those dramatic elements that Tsegaye tries to portray in his plays. I have always been unable to find the thread or the story of the play. What he is trying to put across, as a playwright, has never been clear to me. This could be partly due to the fact, as I always like to joke with my colleagues that Tsegaye writes for three different periods at the same time. I mean he writes about the past, the present and he also wants to be relevant for the future. Well that is fine, if he can do it fine. But, the problem I feel in the post-revolution plays is that his writings are intended to get credit from some interested groups. He fashions his messages appealing to those people who are currently in power. And at the same

time, he does not want to be left out in future governments. So, this for me really creates a lot of problems in understanding his motives of what he is writing, why he is writing and some times I also get confused as to for whom he is writing.

Abate: Yes, in many respects. I think the construction of his plays, especially his post-revolution plays are quite unique to understand them. What he does in all his plays is creating and capitalizing the public opinion. In each of the plays, setting or scenery is absent; plot is absent; story is absent, the conflict is not clear. So, connecting the different situational episodes and shaping them into a meaningful play is a big challenge as I have proved in his first revolutionary play - Enatalam Tanu.

Question: Which one of Tsegaye's plays requires more complicated scenery (setting)? Do you think this helps for the building up of the true mood of the play?

Haimanot: You know scenery is a very good element in a play. When we talk about the sceneries of Tsegaye's plays, the first thing that comes to my mind was Ha Hu Basadast War. I have found memories of the late great artist Gebre Kiristos Desta painting the background with Taddesse Mesifin. I remember he was painting may be 20 meters width by 70 meters length. It was an incredible piece of work, and personally, I would not have done it as a director. Because the setting was so pretty and so realistic, it could easily distract the attention of the audience. This experience by itself was quite a challenge both for the director and the actors. The other play that

created some difficulty for me and inconvenience for the actors was the production of Atsem Bayaqasu (Skeletons in Pages). We had to have the actors that represent heroes or the kings of Ethiopia, Menelik and Yohanes come out of the grave. So we had to construct grave-yard or tombstones on the stage. Added to that we had to create ghosts, devils and all sorts of supernatural things. So, that was the challenge in terms of the construction of stage sceneries. Does it help the mood of the play? Yes it does. I am, of course, doubtful as to how much the scenery in Ha Hu Basadast War helps to build up the mood of the play. But obviously in Atsem Bayaqasu, scenery played the most important part in creating the illusion of the spirit.

Abate: Tsegaye does not bother about the setting or scenery. The director is the one who bothers about designing the setting. He is more aware of his philosophical ideas and poetic language. Of course, Tsegaye suggests the setting of his plays. But he never gives complete descriptions. So, I can, on the whole, say that setting as an aspect of a play does not influence Tsegaye that much.

Question: Which one of Tsegaye's plays would you appreciate most? Why?

Haimanot: Probably I appreciate Petros. I think this historical play is best in terms of its originality. It has structure, conflict and other dramatic elements. Over and above this play has survived the taste of time.

Abate: I believe Tsegaye is a poet not a dramatist. I like his language, I give value to his poetic language and his

translations are beautiful, that is all. We have to know Tsegaye for one thing. He is a political animal. As is known, the human problems are not only limited to politics. It is one aspect of the human problems. If a writer concentrates on political visions, there is no doubt he will be one-sided. If he supports one group and opposes another, he won't address the broad (universal) human interest. Tsegaye suffers from the same problem. As a result, I don't find and I could not cite any well-constructed play of Tsegaye even from his pre-revolution plays.

Question: In some of Tsegaye's plays, for instance, in Tewodros, Balg and Yashoh Akalil there are frequent shifts of the time and place of the action. Do you think such changes bring any side-effect?

Haimanot: I think they contribute towards the confusion. As I have mentioned it earlier, because Tsegaye has not gone through the discipline of theatre training, he is not afraid to break the rules and principles of playwriting. He is most interested in characters who utter his own words. So acting wise, directing wise his plays are very difficult. Since there is no motivation why things happen and why monologues or speeches are given, one cannot justify his plays easily. All he does is just jump from one period or one time to another and in the end all he gets done is confusion.

Abate: Of course, they do. The description of settings in Tsegaye's original plays are always illogical. They are problematic to put on the stage as they are. The settings

and, in fact, ideas were re-written on the stage through the improvisation. Frankly speaking, I have suffered a lot in selecting, construction and shaping the significant settings when I directed his plays.

Question: Have you got any additional remarks regarding the dramatic structure of the pre- and post-revolution plays of Tsegaye?

Haimanot: Well, I will have nothing really except to say few things about his plays. I think that you can understand his plays fully if you can understand the man. It is very hard to put yourself, your own story, your background and your psychology in your play without any re-creation. In many of the characters of his plays, you find a lot of Tsegaye and his real experiences. On one side it is good because we get very good characters. On the other hand, since it does not have the necessary distance between the author and his characters, we will be very much restricted to focus on the known fact. probably you could say that he had more distance in his pre-revolution plays because he was concentrating on themes other than politics. But, in his post-revolution plays because he fashioned for political purpose to bring his own acceptance as the genius or Shakespeare, Tsegaye himself is more involved and identified as characters. My only hope is that I hope he will give us another play before he passes away. Of course, I don't expect any well-made plot, story or form in it, but I would mind getting some more characters if he can find them.

Abate: I think Tsegaye is more or less fair in his pre-revolution plays. He was trying to be a writer. But in his post-revolution plays, Tsegaye denies the very institution of literature. He has denounced his artistic quality. I could spell out, in all his revolutionary plays, the very concern of literature was abused. Of course, Tsegaye has recorded the events of Mengistu's regime, in that case we can say he has contributed a lot.

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I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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