

MAJOR FEATURES OF CONFLICT IN TEN
POST - 1974 AMHARIC SHORT STORIES

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B Y

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POST-1974 AMHARIC SHORT STORIES

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A B S T R A C T

A good fictional work is not a passive report but one that captures the attention of its audience. The attention of the readers is captured usually when fictional work is based on conflict that employs major features such as unity, balance, plausibility and significance. The short story, which is one type of fictional work, has not been studied so far in this regard. The absence of the systematic study of conflict, its types and features in relation to Amharic short stories, necessitated the undertaking of this research work.

Consequently, ten post - 1974 Amharic short stories have been selected according to the type and features of conflict they are based on. An attempt has been made to present a thorough technical analysis of the major features.

The study reveals that unity of conflict is employed satisfactorily in many of the short stories. It is maintained in the production of the cause and effect relationship of conflicts as well as in the contribution of different conflicts for the purpose of the author.

When compared to the other features of conflict, balance is a feature which is least employed. Here too, the study uncovers many points that justify the imbalance of the conflicts, especially as seen in " Tutun ", " Aderaw " and " Dantew ". However, this does not mean that there are no short stories that show balance of conflict; " Andualem" and " Dibibkosh " can be cited as good examples.

The same is true with plausibility. Short stories such as " Andualem ", " Yemalada Tila" and " Dibibkosh" have employed

this literary device quite beautifully. On the other hand, short stories such as " Zinabu Mache Naw Yemizanbaw ?", " Ale-Biratu" and " Yetasabara Lib" respectively lack plausibility in the incidents where Etsegenet's blood spilled, Alem failed to quarrel with his father and Brihane drank much alcohol.

The conflicts in many of the short stories have significance. Good examples occur in " Anduaalem" and " Zinabu Mache Naw Yemizanbaw ?" where the main characters became mad and in " Tutun" and " Adaraw" where the characters accepted the idea of leaving their birthplace due to the significance of the conflict.

Some of the authors of these short stories seem beginners who perhaps think that **only** telling a story is what a short story is. However, as the short story is becoming more and more popular, and the competition of writing a short story is becoming fiercer , there will be a qualitative change. Moreover, taking into consideration the merits and demerits of this literary device, future writers can enrich the technique of short story writing.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

A short story which is a work of art is meant not only always to reflect the life of a society but also to stimulate its audience. To fulfil these tasks, it should be constructed to capture the attention of its reading audience. This will be possible when the construction of a story is developed from a well - constructed plot that is based on conflict. Hence, conflict is essential for the construction of a story.

Conflict is the struggle between two opposing forces in which Man plays the central role. A literary work reveals the life of the people in a setting through the actions and reactions of its characters. The protagonist wishes to fulfil certain actions or strives to change certain events. However, there may be reactions that hinder these actions. These reactions can arise from the protagonist himself, from another character, from the society or from any natural calamity. As a result of these, conflict occurs. Thus, conflict basically involves the two opposing forces : the hero and the villain. The rest of the forces only aggravate or retard the conflict.

Hence, conflict is the contradiction between characters, between a character and the physical world or within a character. These three types of conflict are known as psychological, physical and social conflict. In most cases all these three types or two of them appear in the work together. For instance, Harry Shaw contends,

All of Hardy's novels contain elements of each kind of conflict, but the dominant struggle is usually social. . . . The great

tragedies of Macbeth and Hamlet contain elements of each kind of conflict, but the basic one in each instance is internal. 1

The short stories that have repeatedly employed these types of conflict as a base for their/^{plots}are what this thesis deals with. The short story is a kind of prose fiction with few characters and a limited setting in comparison with the novel. It is a distinct literary form with a unified affect on its audience. It is also one of the most condensed literary forms as Edgar Allan Poe so memorably says ;

The story must aim at a single effect determined beforehand. The story must have unity; everything that does not contribute to the predetermined effect must be excluded. The story must be short, but not so short that the "pre-established design" cannot be realized; the reader must be able to complete the story in one sitting. 2

So the short story is brief, but it is a complete literary form that gives full satisfaction to its readers.

This research is undertaken because none has been done on conflict in relation to the post-1974 Amharic short stories. On the other hand, as conflict is essential to keep the story going, a literary piece of this kind should have well-designed conflict in order to keep its readers in suspense and make enjoyable reading. Adrian H. Jaffe and Virgil Scott say, "... Conflict is the backbone of a story; it... provides us

1
Dictionary of Literary Terms (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1972), p. 92.

2
Quoted by Leland B. Jacobs and Shelton L. Root Jr. eds., Ideas in Literature Book 3 Dimensions (Ohio : Charles E. Merrill Books, INC., 1932), p. 529.

with pattern and direction and gives us the sense of a story going somewhere."³ Accordingly, the researcher believes that a short story with no conflict is a passive report and does not interest readers. In the writing of a short story, after the opening situation which might even include the initial generating circumstances, complications are expected to arise. Joseph F. Trimmer and C. Wade Jennings state,

These complications are almost always the result of conflicts - conflicts among characters, conflict between a character and his or her environment, or conflict among the thoughts, needs, and emotions of a single character.⁴

Thus, research should be made on conflict in the short stories.

Whatever the type of conflict or whether different types of conflict appear in a literary work separately or together, it should have the important features of unity, balance, plausibility and significance. Therefore, the main aim of this paper is to see how these important elements are employed in post - 1974 Amharic short stories. However, the thesis does not deal with all the post - 1974 Amharic short stories. The selected short stories are listed in the appendix.

A brief synopsis of each story will be given under the type of conflict to which it belongs. The synopsis and the quotations from the Amharic books are translated into English by the researcher.

³ Studies in the Short Story (New York: Michigan State University, 1966), p. 3.

⁴ Fiction (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1985), p. 2.

This thesis consists of four chapters. In the first chapter, an attempt is made to lay the theoretical framework of types of conflict (psychological, social and physical) and the features of conflict (unity, balance, plausibility and significance). The second chapter deals with a textual analysis of features of psychological conflict. The third chapter deals with a textual analysis of features of social conflict and the fourth chapter deals with a textual analysis of features of physical conflict. Finally, a conclusion will be given.

CHAPTER I

Types And Features Of Conflict

For the action of the character and for the progress of the story, the importance of conflict in any form of literary work is unquestionable. An author reveals the life of the people of a certain locality by the action or reaction of the characters in his work. The characters act or react in order to resolve their difficulties. This fact is supported by the editors, Albert K. Ridout and Jesse Stuart. They say, "for the character to act or react, he must be faced with a problem, and being faced with a problem, he must become involved in a conflict."⁵ A brief discussion of this important technical aspect of literature is essential.

Conflict has three main types (psychological, social and physical) and four major features (unity, balance, plausibility and significance).

Types

To begin with a definition of the conflict as used in literature, most scholars agree that it is the disagreement between two forces that determines the pattern of events, or plot; its type is determined by the kind of force that contradicts the protagonist of the story. The force might be another character or characters, or nature, or contradictory demands within the protagonist. The disagreement between the characters

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Short Stories for Discussion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), pp. xiv - xv.

or between a character and the society is known as social conflict, whereas the disagreement between a character and the physical world is physical conflict. The one between two strong motives of a character is psychological conflict. Thus, what follows is a brief discussion of each.

Psychological conflict is the occurrence of two opposing motives that cannot be resolved¹. In relation to this, Wilhelm Reich says :

The psychic process is the result of a conflict between instinctual demands and external instinctual frustration; from this conflict develops, only secondarily, an inner conflict between wish and self - denial. 6

Psychological conflict arises when a character is in a dilemma; that is, when he wants to accomplish certain objectives and yet does not want to for some other reason. In both cases whether he accomplishes ^{the objectives} or not, the character experiences distress. This type of conflict within the character is approach - avoidance conflict.

Approach - approach conflict is another type of psychological conflict. That is, at other times the character vacillates between two equally desired gratifications. The third type of conflict occurs when the character fails to determine between two dangers or threats that equally he wants to avoid. Such a conflict is termed avoidance-avoidance conflict. All three types of psychological conflict are not equally severe. The third type of conflict is more serious than the others.

⁶
Character Analysis (London: Vision Press Limited, 1948),
 p. 295.



A person who is the victim of psychological conflict is torn between what he is and what he intends to be. Furthermore, D. E. Berlyne says,

← conflict is said to occur whenever processes are simultaneously initiated in the brain that do not fit well together, tend to disrupt one another, and tend to drive the organism towards different and mutually exclusive forms of motor behaviour.⁷

As a result of this, a change of behaviour arises in the character.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe says, "every writer in his own works depicts to some extent himself—even when he does not wish to do so."⁸ This shows that the author of a text, based on psychological conflict, himself somehow has elements of such a conflict within himself. However, this research limits its scope of study to the characters of the literary works which are the product of the author rather than extending the investigation to the authors themselves.

Human personality involves concepts known as the id, the ego and the superego that constitute a portion of the total personality of a human being. The behaviour of a person is the result of the interaction between these elements of human personality. The id is the structure of the personality system which consists of the inborn and the primitive characteristics while the ego is associated with the reality. It enables the individual to negotiate realistically with the objective world.

⁷ Aesthetics and Psychology (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1971), p. 150.

⁸ Quoted by Sergei Antonov, "Author and Idea", Soviet Literature, III, (Moscow: The Writers Union of the U.S.S.R., 1974), p. 143.

The superego is the segment which helps the person to adapt to the social values.⁹

Since the function of the ego is to enable the individual to negotiate with the objective world, there is the possibility of refusing to act in line with an instinctive tendency of the id. The reason for this is that it is the role of the ego to control the intellectual and the perceptual functions of the person. James Strachey says,

← Just as the id is directed exclusively to obtaining pleasure, so the ego is governed by considerations of safety. The ego has set itself the task of self-preservation, which the id appears to neglect. 10

Hence, there will be conflict between the id and the ego. As a result of this conflict between the elements of human personality, there will be a change of behaviour.

Similar conflict can take place between the ego and the superego, when the ego due to the pressure from the id fails to control the intellectual and the perceptual functions which might be contrary to the social values. In this connection, A. A. Brill says,

← ... the ego weakened and was carried away from reality, from the outer world, by the id. ...The psychosis in this case represented a conflict between the ego and the outer world. 11

9

Heinz Hartmann, Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1964), pp. 30-48.

10

The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), III, 199.

11

The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud (New York: Random House, Inc., 1938), p. 23.

When an instinctual desire is repressed at an early stage or repressed later on due to the strength of the pressure against it, the person tries to find an alternative for his wishes. There is nothing special in his behaviour. On the other hand, when the desire is fulfilled, however the person may act against reality or the cultural value, he is all right with himself. However, the inner conflict is produced when the instinctual desire is neither fulfilled nor repressed.

Naturally people defend themselves from the dangers threatening them from the outer world and from the repressed inner impulses. One of these impulses is by showing different forms of behaviour, such as being proud, humble, cruel or kind,¹² which are understood through the interaction of the person with others. This depicts the importance of characterization of the literary work which will be discussed later (page 7). When this behaviour of an individual becomes extraordinary, the person suffers from psychological conflict.

Another means by which the inner conflict is revealed is through dreams. They uncover the suppressed internal desire. It is said, "Dreams are one of the manifestations of this suppressed material; theoretically,...in tangible experience, it has been found true in at least a great number of cases."¹³

When a person is conscious, he is forced by the ego, which tries to cling to reality in order to retain its normal state

¹² Reich, p. 145.

¹³ Brill, p. 539.

and suppress his internal desire. But when he is asleep or subconscious, the denied internal desire can be seen in his dream since the ego is not on duty.

Hence, the presentation of the dream is very helpful to understand the personality of a character that leads to the revelation of the inner conflict.

Furthermore, an interior monologue of characters is another device that helps readers to understand inner conflict. Interior monologues are quite closely bound to the norms of psychological realism. They produce the illusions that reveal what a character is thinking.¹⁴ When a character is obsessed with something that haunts him, he often speaks to himself. In such speech, he reveals what haunts him, which is likely to be his instinctual demand that is suppressed by the ego.

The writer using all the necessary literary devices and having caught the reader's attention, takes the chance of going back to fill in the necessary background. The historical background of the character, which is revealed through characterization, helps the reader to know the cause of the inner conflict that goes on in the mind of the character. Dorrit Cohn says,

← psycho-narration has almost unlimited temporal flexibility. It can summarize an inner development over a long period of time as it can render the flow of successive thoughts and feelings or expand and elaborate a mental instant. ¹⁵

14

← Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 76.

15

Ibid., p. 34.

To fill in all the necessary background information, the narrator should have unlimited access to the character's inner feelings, or the narration should be a monologue so that a character himself reveals his own feelings. Characterization shows the character's inner feelings, desire, love, hate, physical and moral make-up and his total personality. In characterization, the psychology of the character is probed into so that his reaction to the present situation is seen falling in with his general moral make-up.¹⁶ Therefore, proper characterization is very important to understand the cause and effect of inner conflict.

As characterization depicts, the cause of inner conflict is diverse. At times it is caused by the other types of conflict known as social and physical conflict. This is when the instinctual demand of a character is suppressed by his social or physical conflict.

Social conflict is defined as the contradiction between men or a group of men. The struggle between characters is called social conflict; therefore a protagonist's struggle against a society is a variant form of social conflict.¹⁷ The motive behind social conflict is of various types. It can be economic, cultural, religious, political or moral. Whatever the motive that leads to conflict, the conflict is called social for the reason that it is carried out between people.

16

Joseph Warren Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932), p. 28.

17

Harry Shaw, pp. 91-92.

Hence, there are various kinds of social conflict, depending on the motives of the people who are involved in the conflict. One kind of social conflict is cultural conflict, which is directed by the motive of imposing one's own culture on others or defending the imposition. Cultural conflict also takes place, when one fails to exercise properly the culture of the locality. Another type of social conflict is political conflict. It can be generated between rivals due to their desire to possess political power. The third form of social conflict is religious. It occurs when a group of people try to preach a certain new religion in a new locality or try to ban certain religious acts. The reason for such religious differences is that many religious people do not want to see the development of a religion different from their own. Fourthly, economic conflict is also the disagreement between people over material possessions. There can be many types of social conflict of this sort since the motive for contradiction varies. Hence, whatever the initiating motive of the conflict may be, and as far as the contradiction is between the characters, the conflict is social.

Social conflict often brings the conflicting groups to an accusation, a verbal or physical confrontation. The outcome of the conflict might bring one in the group, who finds himself wrong, to regret his involvement in the conflict for acting in a certain way. Such an outcome often produces another type of conflict: psychological conflict.

Each group of the participants in the social conflict is equally capable of checking or directing the course of action

of the conflict. Unlike the natural force in physical conflict, the capability of one group of the participants of the social conflict to check its opponent is not predetermined. This helps the conflict to have a fertile ground to develop and maintain balance; one of its major features. However, this does not imply that physical conflict lacks balance.

Physical conflict is the third type of conflict. It is a struggle between Man and natural calamity such as great floods, drought, earthquakes, tornadoes and epidemics. When such natural disaster, Acts of God, take place, people suffer very much. The tragedy is that people have no ability to control, stop or reverse the course of such natural calamities. The only course they have is to struggle to save their lives. As a result, they try to escape the calamity by leaving the locality, except in the case of an epidemic over which they have little control. Even in such a case they cannot help a person who is already a victim of a disease such as AIDS.

When the character in the literary work lacks the ability to check the course of action of these natural calamities, it seems that the conflict lacks balance. But the way in which the literary work keeps its reading audience in suspense is in the way the characters try to withstand the calamity or the effort they make to come out of the difficulty.

Most of the time, the outcome of the physical conflict is physical injury. But sometimes when some characters fail to find a way out of their physical conflict, the conflict becomes abstract and develops into a psychological type. In this



connection, Miriam Allot says, " A more subtle type of conflict is internal conflict that moves away from obviously opposed physical force to...psychological struggle."¹⁸ A number of *points in* Amharic short stories agree to this theoretical discussion. Some of the texts such as "Zinabu Mache Naw Yemizanbaw?" and "Yemalada Tila" treated under the next chapter are good examples.

To sum up, from a technical point of view, conflict is of great value in a literary work. The type of conflict is determined by the nature of the participants in the contradiction. Whatever the type of conflict, whatever causes it or in whatever way it is revealed all three types of conflict fulfil their task appropriately only if they use the major features of conflict properly. Hence, the major features of conflict are the core subject of this research.

Features

Conflict takes place when both the opposing forces that are involved know each other's intentions and hinder each other. The antagonist^{aspect} can be the inability of the hero or a natural calamity that checks the intention of the protagonist. For the effective use of conflict, its important features such as unity, balance, plausibility and significance should be applied properly.

A story may develop by joining episodes in different events. Each episode has its own conflict. In a good literary work,

18

Novelists on the Novel (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1960), p. 247.

the conflict in each episode will have a cause and effect relationship. That is when a conflict causes another conflict, and the subsequent conflict develops from the preceding one. The editors, Adrian H. Jaffe and Virgil Scott say,

In a narrower term of conflict, however, unity means that each development in the conflict of a story must follow logically - if possible - inevitably from the preceding development. 19

Thus, the story has unity of conflict. In such a story, the conflict in each episode is found contributing to the attraction of the story. This is because the conflict in each episode has a cause and effect relationship. Thus, this makes the story understandable.

The other aspect of unity of conflict is when all the conflicts in each episode contribute to the intention of the author or to the final end. Hence, this shows the important position unity of conflict holds in a literary work.

Balance of conflict has also a similar position in the appreciation of a literary work. Adrian H. Jaffe and Virgil Scott say, "... the skillful writer will balance his opposing forces so that his outcome remains in suspense until the end of the story."²⁰ This is possible when the short story has a well - constructed conflict which is the base for any action or plot. But to hold the reader in suspense, the conflict should not be of the type that helps the reader to predict the outcome from the beginning due to the superiority of one of the opposing

19
Studies in the Short Story, p. 5.

20
Ibid., p. 4.

forces. The conflict develops and keeps the reader in suspense when the two opposing parts involved in the conflict have a balanced power for struggle and the prediction of the resolution in one way or another is very difficult. On the contrary, when the force of power between the two opposing forces is far superior or inferior to the other, the reader can readily guess the outcome. Consequently, there is no suspense. Hence, he can lose interest.

At times, however, maintaining equitable power between the two opposing forces can be difficult and unrealistic. For instance, when the conflict is between an individual character and a society, the individual may be inferior to the society. Here too, the reader can be kept in suspense if the character is wise enough not to confront the society tactlessly but devises ways and means and strives to resolve or escape the difficulty or win the conflict. The reader will be eager to know how he resolves, escapes or wins the conflict. If physical power is taken to be the only means of examining the balance of power of opponents in the conflict, all the literary works that are based on physical conflict lack balance. But physical power is not the only means. Even between individuals, there may not be balance of physical power; therefore, balance of conflict is expected to appear in reasoning as well. That is in the way the characters try to succeed in the conflict or escape the danger, particularly in the case of physical conflict.

Furthermore, balance can be between the error that the character makes and the punishment he receives. When the disciplinary action taken against the person who has made the

error lacks balance with the error, the audience will lose interest unless the underlying purpose is to expose injustice. So, there should be an acceptable balance. If the error and the action taken against it have an acceptable balance between them, then the story is plausible.

Hence, plausibility is another feature of conflict which should be taken into account in the analysis of a story. Plausibility is the extent to which an illusion or a given idea about something appears true to the audience. In this regard, it is said that,

←—Plausibility refers to the appearance of truth; a plausible characterization, incident, conversation, or suggestion appears reasonable but is not necessarily entirely true or accurate. All worthy literary artists seek to produce work that is credible, no matter how imaginative it may be. 21

As the term has a general applicability, plausibility should¹ be maintained not only in conflict but also in the setting, the character and the language. For instance, plausibility of conflict cannot be discussed without discussing plausibility of character. In this case, for the conflict to be plausible, it should appear reasonable as taking place between the two opposing groups, even if the literary work is imaginative or has no verisimilitude.

An author may begin his literary work with a conflict since it holds the attention of his reading audience in suspense or for any other purpose not apparent to the reader. But if he

21
Harry Shaw, p. 289.

begins with a conflict that has no plausibility, the story may be spoiled and the reader will lose interest.

To overcome this loss of interest, the plot of a good literary work is based on conflict that has these major features, including significance. Significance is the final feature of conflict that is examined in this section of the thesis. A conflict is said to have significance when it is of paramount importance to the participants in the conflict to fulfil their desires. When the character finds no other way to fulfil his aim except by being involved in the conflict, then that conflict has significance.

The motives of the opponents, which are the source of the conflict, need to be significant. The significance of the issues raised shows the capability of maintaining the effect of the conflict, which is a change in the behaviour of the character. That is, the character develops a new kind of behaviour as a result of the outcome of the conflict he experiences. In such a situation, the character in the conflict suffers physically and mentally to attain his objective. Willoughby Johnson and William C. Hamlin say that "the good writer will be certain that the conflict he presents has depth and significance, it will be a relevant examination of meaningful human problems."²² Hence, the appropriate use of significance with the other major features of conflict is essential to reflect the life of the society in a credible way. This will be seen practically in the texts which will be discussed in the next section.

²²
The Short Story (New York: American Book Company, 1966),
p. 13.

CHAPTER II

Features Of Psychological Conflict

Through the action and reaction of the hero and the villain in his story, an author reveals life, entertains, educates or stimulates his audience. The action of the hero is confronted by the reaction of the villain; consequently the struggle between them moves the story forward. It is mainly in this regard that the conflict is said to be the driving force of a literary work.

With psychological conflict, the contradiction is within the character himself, between his opposing motives that cannot be resolved. In an analysis of psychological conflict, it is hardly possible to depict a character's inner feelings without paying attention to what he does, what he says or how he understands the world. Harry Shaw Writes,

← Writers use any or all of several basic means of characterization: a character is revealed by his actions, his speech, his thoughts, his physical appearance and what other characters say or think of him. 23

Regarding the problematic nature of revealing inner feelings, Berlyne says, "the psychologist interested in behaviour is willing to talk about processes going on inside the organism that cannot be observed directly but must be inferred from what can be observed."²⁴ Therefore, the presence of the inner conflict is noted only when it is what is actually seen in the character's behaviour such as being mad. Hence, most of the time, the

23

Dictionary of Literary Terms, p. 71.

24

Aesthetics and Psychobiology, p. 7.

extraordinary action of a character is known to be the effect of his inner agitation. This effect should be studied and systematically analysed in order to discover what the possible cause of the conflict may be.

The personality of the character should be understood well in order to see the effect of his inner conflict. Hence, the effect of the psychological conflict on the character will be seen by closely observing his characterization and his background.

For conflict to serve its purpose properly, the narrative should contain at least its major features known as unity, balance, plausibility and significance. In order to analyse these features in a certain conflict, the text that deals with that type of conflict as the basis of its plot should be identified.

A turning point in the political history of Ethiopia can be taken as 1974. As a result of the change in the political order, many literary works that unmask the weaknesses of the old order were published. But, Amharic short stories that deal with psychological conflict are not many in comparison with those which deal with social conflict. However, some are selected for analysis. The selected texts are "Anduaalem", "Zinabu Mache Naw Yemizanbaw?", "Yetasabara Lib" and "Yemalada Tila". A brief synopsis of each text will be given before the analysis of its major features.

The first short story, "Anduaalem", began in a hospital when Anduaalem, the main character, learnt the result of his medical check-up which revealed that he is sterile. But his desire to have a child is great. The doctor suggested that he should adopt a child of a poor family.

Andualem knows neither his mother nor his father. His mother ran away leaving him behind when she gave birth to him in a hospital.

Andualem, who had no parental love, had a pessimistic view of life. But since he was introduced to Simret, who became his wife, he changed. He became a happy person, friendly with everybody. He began enjoying life. He hoped to have a child so that he could give him the parental love and care that he lacked. But his sterility hindered him from enjoying life. He became unfriendly to others.

Andualem told Simret all that the doctor told him. Then, he asked her to divorce him so that she could marry somebody else and to give him her first child for adoption.

After some months, Simret married a man called Getachew. She gave birth to a child by a Caesarean operation. The doctor told her not to become pregnant any more, warning her of the danger. So she had a tubal ligation which forced her to go back on her word to Andualem.

Andualem showed a clear change of behaviour. He became mad. One day, he went to Getachew's home and sent the nurse to buy him some medicine. Before the nurse returned, Andualem ran away with the baby. The parents of the baby were called and started pursuing Andualem.

Andualem, carrying the baby, went from town to town. The baby's parents pursued him. The baby fell ill and died in a hotel room. By chance, the parents running after him were in the next room when the baby died. When Andualem screamed at the death of the baby, the parents ran into his room.

The second short story is " Zinabu Mache Naw Yemizanbaw ?" It commenced with a description of Etsegenet's personality. She is a very farsighted, pleasant, clever and kind child of about seven or eight.

Numerous newcomers roamed about the town, wearing tattered clothes. They were followed by many children. When they saw a person in the street, they ran to him and stretched out their hands to beg. When Etsegenet saw these children she was much disturbed. They were constantly in her mind. Etsegenet asked her mother why these children came to the town. Her mother told her that they came due to the drought. She repeatedly asked questions concerning rain, money and food that the children from a drought-stricken area lacked.

One day when her mother was not at home, the children and their mother came to Etsegenet's home. Etsegenet gave them all the food. Because of this, her mother was very annoyed and beat her. In trying to run away from her mother, she fell down. Her forehead was cut and bled a great deal. After a while, she was taken to a hospital.

During the night, she had a nightmare. In her nightmare, she talked incoherently. Finally, she was taken to Amanuel Hospital; however, there seemed no hope of recovery.

Etsegenet did not speak most of the time. When there was no one looking after her, she ran out and went from place to place, stretching out her hand begging. As she begged, she said, " When will it rain ?"

The third story is the story of Ato Brihane which began in his wholesale shop one Saturday morning. He walked back and



forth in the shop frowning, sighing and thinking. The darkened face, the uncombed hair, the frown on his face, the swollen eyes and in general, the very strange manner of Ato Brihane showed that he did not spend the previous night well. Staggering, he went out of the shop and moved away. He kept on roaming. He talked to himself, but what was repeatedly heard was only the unfinished sentence, " what if...". When he was nearly run over by a city bus, people shouted at him; but it was in vain for Ato Brihane did not hear them.

When Ato Brihane came home, his daughter and his wife asked him what had happened to him. He never answered. He stared at the photograph of Dagnev and himself that had been taken when they were young. The photograph reminded him of how his life had been saved by his friend Dagnev. That was when they fought against the bandits who used to rob them. It was after that day that their friendship for each other was strengthened. Finally, saying " what if..." and throwing his hands with annoyance, he went out of his house.

He kept on roaming around the city, visiting people and places that he knew. Finally he entered a bar that he often went to and sat in a lonely room. The bar attendants without being asked gave him gin. He drank much gin. He laid on the table and slept for so long that the owner of the bar told the bar attendants not to disturb him.

At the end, when the bar owner came to wake him, he found Ato Brihane dead on the table, holding a letter in his hand. The letter was from Ato Dagnev. It explained the ups and downs of their earlier life. It kept on reminding Brihane that half of

Ato Dagnev's wealth was burned; he became poor, and Ato Brihane did not help. By doing so, he broke their promise which was to help each other when one was in need. Another letter from Ato Dagnev's son, enclosed in Ato Dagnev's envelope said that Ato Dagnev had committed suicide.

The fourth short story, "Yemalada Tila" is about the difficulty of Yisehak Shumiye in having sexual intercourse. Yisehak had great fear of being in the dark.

Once when he was a child, his mother left him alone, locked the door from outside and went away during ^{the} night. When he was asleep, a small kerosene lamp fell down and set fire to his blanket and burned his left arm. He was shocked by the event and jumped out of bed. Fortunately, his mother came back before much damage was done. As a result of that horror, Yisehak had great fear of being alone in a dark room. Thus, since his feeling for intercourse subsided due to being in the dark, he had great difficulty in being in a dark room.

Yodit, his girl friend, insulted and despised him when he lost his sexual feeling for her, which happened when she turned off the light. But another time, he forbade his other friend, Elfinesh, to turn off the light and succeeded in satisfying his sexual desire.

With this brief background of the short stories, the analysis of the conflict will be made.

As revealed in the short stories, the ambitions to be fulfilled by the protagonists are neglected by the defect or inability of the protagonists or by the impossibility of the

conditions. Hence, the psychological conflict occurs within the protagonists. This conflict uses its major features as will be seen consecutively.

Unity

In "Anduaalem" as the author portrays in detail particularly, when Anduaalem's background is assessed, it is known that his mother abandoned him in the hospital for she could not stand the social pressure as Anduaalem is an illegitimate child. Since she abandoned him due to this conflict between reality and social expectations, Anduaalem grew up an orphan devoid of parental love and care. He wanted to make up for the parental care he lacked by giving it to his own child. Sterility was a natural defect within him that reacted against his instinctive desire. This reaction caused a psychological conflict between his strong desire to have his own child and the inability to have a child. This conflict is indirectly caused by the conflict between the mother and the society, because the society does not accept an illegitimate child.

The duty of the ego, which according to Freud is associated with reality, is to control the inborn desire (the id). The ability to control was before the impulse was fully developed. Reich says, "Once an impulse is fully developed...it can no longer be fully repressed. At this stage, a denial can only produce an insoluble conflict between instinctual urge and prohibition."²⁵ Similarly, in Anduaalem it is after the desire

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Character Analysis, p. 151.

to have a child is well developed that his being sterile is known. At this point, there is no ability to control the desire. Hence, the instinctive wish to have a child is neither accomplished nor repressed before it goes too far. Consequently there arises the conflict within him, which is the cause of the change of behaviour that is seen in his actions and outlook.

This internal conflict within Andualem is confirmed by his behaviour: his attitude towards himself and others. Hailu Tsegaye said, " he likes neither himself nor his surroundings, and becomes lonely and unfriendly with the society."²⁶ Out of this conflict develops another conflict between Andualem and Getachew's family as he ran away with the child. However, the effect of this psychological conflict is social conflict.

The psychological conflict within Andualem becomes the cause of another psychological conflict within Simret. Simret wanted to keep her word by giving her first child to Andualem. Unfortunately, she was told by the doctor that she *could* not have another child because of her defective womb. She also wanted to have a child for herself and her husband, Getachew, wanted one too. Hailu Tsegaye said :

← Remembering her promise to Andualem, Simret could not accept the idea of tubal ligation, but finally she could not help it. She knew that she will not give the child to Andualem. Even if she wanted to, her husband did not want to give his only son to Andualem. Understanding this, she could not even bring up the idea of adoption for discussion. 27

26
Afararasachiw (Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Press, 1981 Eth. C.), p. 14.

27
Ibid., p. 28.

So, she could not keep her word. Hence, she was in a dilemma, in an approach-avoidance-conflict. The conflict within her not only tortures her but also saps her energy and she becomes progressively weaker. This chain of conflict shows the unity of conflict in the text.

In "Zinabu Mache Naw Yemizanbaw?" the psychological conflict is between Etsegenet's strong desire to help the drought-stricken children and her inability to help them. She wanted to help them. When the children came to Etsegenet's house she said, "Mammy ! mammy ! those children came. Please ! please ! give me injera with wat and let me feed them."²⁸ From this characterization and what she repeatedly asked, one understands the source of her conflict to be the pitiful condition of the children, which is the result of the physical conflict. This strong motive to help the children brings about a social conflict, the conflict between the daughter and her mother.

Although Etsegenet wanted to help the children, she did not know how to. Even when she asked her mother what turned the children into beggars or what caused the drought, she was not given satisfactory answers. Failing to understand her concern, her mother told her that she was a mere child and ~~could~~ not understand the situation. She said, "Oh ! Etsegenet- eat the food and get up. I cannot explain these all to you. You are a little child. You cannot understand."²⁹

²⁸
Ibid., p. 116.

²⁹
Ibid., p. 115.



Hence, the contradiction between the id and the ego; that is, between her desire to solve the children's difficulty and the inability to solve it, is the conflict within her. This conflict in turn causes the change of behaviour and eventual insanity.

The intention of the author is to draw the sympathy of the readers to the condition of the drought-stricken children. The conflict Etsegenet is in also contributes to this intention of the author. Thus, this is the purpose of unity of conflict. In her insanity and dream also, she talks about the children's difficulty. In her nightmare, she says, "When does the rain fall for our teacher?"³⁰ In her insanity, she asked for coins and said, "When will it rain?"³¹ She was preoccupied with the children's plight. This reveals her sympathy for them.

In "Yetasabara Lib", the cause of Ato Brihane's heart break, as can be deduced from the letter sent to him from his friend, was his own failure to help his friend when in need. Brihane's instinctual desire, selfishness, prevents him from helping his old friend. At the end considering the social norm, his superego urged him to regret not helping his close friend. But at that time, he could not help since his friend was already dead. Hence, his guilty conscience troubled him.

Although what causes his psychological conflict is withheld until the end, from the title of the short story,

³⁰
Ibid., p. 122.

³¹
Ibid., p. 123.

"Yetasabara Lib" ("The Broken Heart") and from Ato Brihane's uncommon action and very strange manner, it can be understood that he has an inner conflict. The author intends to show the extent to which this inner conflict affects the person who suffers from it as is seen in the outcome of the conflict. Hence, it is revealed that the inner conflict is related to the death of Ato Dagneu.

In " Yemalada Tila ", Yisehak Shumiye developed the fear of the dark as beginning the day when his mother left him alone in the evening of the fire. As Daglas Petros, the author, disclosed, Yisehak suffers from " fear of the dark... fear of loneliness... fear of uncovering himself after the light is put out."³² This fear of the dark prevents sexual activity in the dark. Being in the dark for such activities is the social norm of the society. So, the superego urges him and his bed-mates to accept it. But his instinctive fear reacts against this and he suffers from the psychological conflict.

Related to this, Yisehak has another conflict; that is, his stimulated sexual desire is checked by the dark and this hinders the sexual act since he loses his stimulated sexual desire for it. This conflict between the desire of the sexual act and the loss of the feeling has a cause and effect relationship with the first conflict: the fear of the dark and the custom of extinguishing the light for the sexual act.

Balance

In "Anduaalem" what drives the character into a state of psychological conflict is the frustration of his desire to have his own child and the realization of his sterility. It is a natural desire to live for ever through one's own child. However, after a medical check-up, Dr. Bisrat said, "Your desire to have a child is extraordinary."³³ The narrator also said, "Anduaalem's desire to have a child is more than the desire of everybody else..."³⁴ The reasons for his strong desire are explained in the text.

← Anduaalem wanted to have a child for two main reasons: one is that he did not know his own ancestry. So, he wanted to extend an ancestry that begins from him... like Adam. The other reason is that he wanted to make up for the parental love that he lacked when he was a child by giving it to his own child. 35

Contrary to his strong ambition, a natural defect seized him. After a medical check-up, it was proved that he is sterile. This was^a biological defect that could not be corrected. These conflicting aspects: his strong ambition and the biological defect, have balance because both of them are nearly equally difficult to overcome.

Consequently, Anduaalem hopes to make use of the doctor's advice by adopting a child of a relative. Although Anduaalem has no relative, at least no one that he knows, Simret was to help

³³
Hailu Tsegaye, p. 10.

³⁴
Ibid.

³⁵
Ibid., p. 15.

him in this. She agreed with him earnestly because she loved him. But she was also caught by a natural defect. She has a defective womb and was warned not to bear any more children. She was also advised to have a tubal ligation. Under such circumstances, she could not give her first child for adoption to Andualem; therefore, she considered backing out of her promise at least for the sake of her husband, who loves her very much. The breaking of her promise as a result of her defective womb put her in a dilemma with her own desire to help her friend. So she had a psychological conflict.

Hence, since giving her son for adoption to Andualem or not giving are equally difficult, the balance of the conflict Simret finds herself in is easily observed. As a result of this, one cannot predict how the conflict can be resolved; hence the readers are kept in suspense.

Similarly, in "Zinabu Mache Naw Yemizanbaw?" the contradictory circumstances Etsegenet is in are her strong desire to help the drought-stricken children and her inability to help them. The girl could not overcome both situations for they were equally difficult.

Taking into consideration her personality, the situation of the drought-stricken children could easily affect her. Thus, she could not forget them and avoid helping them. The narrator revealed the circumstances she was in saying,

Etsegenet worries especially when she sees these children. She often sees them as she goes to and comes back from school. She stops and watches

them as something unusual and thinks about them.
... As a result of this, she does not follow
her lessons very well these days. 36

On the contrary, she has nothing of her own with which to help them. But when she gave them some of her parents' food, she was beaten severely. So she was in a dilemma between two balanced opposing situations.

The description of Ato Brihane's unusual action and very strange manner are believed to be caused by the letters he received the previous day from Dagneu Addisu and his son Berihun Dagneu. It is known that he received nothing else except the letters.³⁷ According to the message in the letters and the close relationship between the two friends, it can be proved that the death of Ato Brihane was caused by the conflict between his regret for not helping his old friend, Dagneu, and the inability to help since Ato Dagneu was already dead.

Considering the strong tie between the two old friends and their promise to each other on the one side and the inability to help a person who was already dead on the other side, the balance between these two conflicting circumstances can be seen.

The protagonist in " Yemalada Tila " longed very much for sexual intercourse mainly for three reasons. Firstly, he was an adolescent or in a stage when he could be very sensitive for

36
Ibid., pp. 111 - 112.

37
Yezina Worku and Jemal Suleyman, Yetashata Seytan and Other Stories (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Agency, 1978 Eth. C), p. 48.

such activities. Secondly, his mother had an ambition to have a grandchild and urged him to have a child. Thirdly, his girl friend, Yodit, ridiculed him when he failed to make love to her since she did not know that he had a dark phobia. He wants to succeed and put an end to such contempt.

In a monologue the protagonist revealed the difficulty he was in. As if he was talking to his mother, he said, "Is it not since I lost sexual feeling that even Yodit ridiculed and punished me like that? Then, Mammy—don't you understand my problem?"³⁸ In such a way he reveals that he has no sexual capability and cannot have a child to satisfy her ambition. He clarifies it saying that even Yodit went away because his sexual feeling subsided. Hence, his desire to succeed balances the inability of the sexual act, because the pressures from his girl friend, his mother and his own sexual desire are equally difficult to overcome as is his failure to have sexual intercourse. As a result of this, readers can be kept in suspense until they know the solution.

Plausibility

A literary work becomes believable when its conflict maintains not only unity or balance but also plausibility. For instance, "Anduaalem" is an interesting short story because of the plausibility of its conflict as well. The conflict Anduaalem is in is plausible because the reasons for his desire

to have a child are credible and being sterile is also a possible natural defect. Similarly, the conflict Simret is in, and the way it is presented have credibility.

Andualem asked Simret to divorce him; so that she could marry somebody else to give him her first child for adoption. Marrying one's own wife to somebody else is incredible in the Ethiopian context. However, this extraordinary suggestion of Andualem's shows the extent to which he is eager to have a child.

Likewise, the plausibility of the conflict that Etsegenet suffered from is deduced from the characterization given to her at the beginning of the story. In addition, it is revealed that the horror of the drought-stricken children shocked the people of the town including Etsegenet.³⁹ She was very worried when she saw them or was reminded of them. They would come to her mind unexpectedly, as a result of which she could not follow her lessons properly. Both the prevailing situations which absorbed her and her personality are credible reasons that prove the plausibility of the conflict.

Etsegenet wanted to help the children, but has nothing of her own. Her mother even did not give satisfactory answers to the questions that she asked about the drought. Worst of all she beat her when Etsegenet gave the food to the children.

³⁹ Hailu Tsegaye, p. 110.

Moreover, what Etsegenet said in her nightmare also reveals the unconscious mind which reflects what goes on her mind. She said, " When does the rain fall for our teacher ?"⁴⁰ In relation to this, in a book Ann Jefferson and David Robey edited, it is recorded,

the unconscious is a dynamic sub-system containing instinctual drives attached to representations, especially childhood wishes, ... which can only get through in disguise, as so-called 'compromise formation', symptoms, dreams, jokes and slips of the tongue. ⁴¹

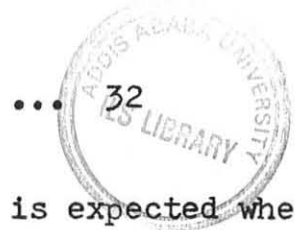
Contrary to all the reasons the story reveals for the plausibility of the conflict, Etsegenet is too young to understand the effect of the drought. But she is an extraordinary child because the narrator himself is astonished how such a young child is affected by the children's circumstances.⁴² Hence, the story lacks verisimilitude, unless she is regarded as an extraordinary child.

As one deduces from her attitude towards the children, her nightmare, her personality and the circumstances, her conflict had a direct relationship with the drought and the drought-stricken children. Hence, these show the plausibility of the conflict within the child.

⁴⁰
Ibid., p. 122.

⁴¹
Modern Literary Theory (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1982), p. 146.

⁴²
Hailu Tsegaye, p. 110.



The presence of psychological conflict is expected when it is reflected in the observable behaviour. Therefore, although he does not talk, the extraordinary behaviour of Ato Brihane in " Yetasabara Lib" is the effect of his inner agitation. The description of his physical appearance and the way he behaves show that he has something that tortures him from within. Moreover, the narrator said, "There is no one who understood that he received nothing except these two letters which he got yesterday."⁴³ These present the situation he is in in a plausible way. Furthermore, to depict the plausibility of the effect of the conflict, the authors said,

When the feeling of a person is much affected and there is no way out of his problem or when the conscience of a person is touched and he cannot bear it, his heart is broken. Then, if there is no remedy for it, the person can be affected and die due to this. ⁴⁴

He repeatedly utters the unfinished sentence, "what if...". When he says this, he inserts his hand into his pocket and touches the letter he received from Ato Dagneu. From this, it can be concluded that by saying " what if..." it seems that he means "what if I had helped him", because from the message of the letter that he has ⁱⁿ his pocket, saying " what if..." is meant only regret for not helping his friend.

Besides, when he says " what if...", he stares at the photograph of Dagneu and himself that had been taken when they

43

Yezina Worku and Jemal Suleyman, p. 48.

44

Ibid.

were young. Hence, this also shows that his trouble seems to have a direct relation to his friend, Dagnev. Finally, it becomes very plain when the two letters from his pocket are read by the police, because they disclose that Dagnev died without receiving his help.

According to the letter, Ato Dagnev blames Ato Brihane for not keeping his word which was to help his friend when in need. Because of the close relationship between them and the cultural value of keeping one's word, it is plausible that Brihane suffers from an inner conflict.

The conflicting situations in " Yemalada Tila " are also plausible. Yisehak's fear of the dark could bear a direct relation with the incident of the evening of the blaze. In his mind the dark is associated with the horror of the blaze which frightened him. So, whenever the light is put out he is shocked, being reminded of the horror of that incident. As a result, his feelings subside. Thus darkness reacts against his desire to have a child. Hence, this conflict has plausibility because without sexual intercourse, it is impossible to have a child.

Significance

The conflict within Yisehak has significance because he cannot escape from it for various reasons. He cannot help having the human desire for intimate relations with the opposite sex. Similarly, he cannot overcome the wish of his mother to have a grandchild. On the other hand, his girl friend, Yodit,

ridicules him for his lack of sexual feeling. She said, "... what has killed your sexual feeling which troubled us? Aren't you wearing trousers like a man ?..."⁴⁵ Such an insult cannot be ignored, particularly when it is from a girl that one loves. Being a youth, the desire to fulfil sexual demands was important for him. Therefore, the conflict has significance.

In " Yetasabara Lib ", the letter Ato Dagneu sent to Ato Brihane mentions their mutual regards, the pleasure and sorrow they shared and finally the breaking of their promise. This letter is so touching that Ato Brihane suffers from a guilty conscience and cannot help regretting not helping his friend. Since the conflict Brihane falls in is so significant and results in regret, the heartbreak causes his death.

The extent to which Etsegenet is moved^{by} the pitiful circumstances of the drought-stricken children is well described by the narrator of the story who is capable of reading the minds of his characters. He said that when she saw these children, she was very worried. They come to her mind so often unexpectedly. As a result of this, she could not follow her education properly.⁴⁶ She also asked many questions concerning drought and rain. This reveals that she had pity for the children. Hence, the conflict is so significant that Etsegenet cannot help being involved.

⁴⁵
Daglas Petros, p. 68.

⁴⁶
Hailu Tsegaye, pp. 111-112.

When one carefully considers Andualem's background and his reasons for having his own child, the desire to have a child is very important for him. Unfortunately, when he realizes that he is sterile, he develops an extraordinary behaviour. He takes off his clothes, puts out the light and weeps sitting on a chair. He does strange things: he talks to the pictures of babies hanging on the wall of his house, washes them in a bowl of water and destroys them.⁴⁷

The conflict his friend Simret is suffering from is also important for her because she cannot help being tortured by the thought of giving or not giving the baby to Andualem. The fact that she does not want to offend either Andualem or her husband puts her in a dilemma. These all prove that her conflict has significance.

The protagonist in each story takes part in the conflict for he finds it important for him or cannot escape from it. Such a conflict which forces the characters to be involved has significance.

⁴⁷
Ibid., pp. 32 - 37.

CHAPTER IIIFeatures Of Social Conflict

A literary work often reflects the life of a society through the action of its characters. The protagonist wishes to accomplish certain actions or strives to change certain conditions. In the course of his action, there may be a reaction by another character that hinders the action of the protagonist. Hence, social conflict breaks out and both the good and the evil participants of the conflict are involved.

Since the protagonist finds his action very important, when he faces difficulties that hinder his action, he is often determined to overcome them. As a result, there will be a struggle between the protagonist and the other characters who stand in his way. Generally, in what is felt to be a good literary work, when the protagonist either loses or overcomes the conflict and the struggle is over or when the hidden motive is revealed, the story ends.

This is why conflict is thought to be important to keep the story going. To be effective, it is necessary to employ all the features of conflict : unity, balance, plausibility and significance. Before presenting the analysis showing how these features have been exploited in the short stories under study, the presentation of a brief synopsis of each text is given.

" Dantew " is a short story about the conflict between Dantew, the husband, and his wife, Tsedale. It began with Dantew's anger when he heard that his wife had committed



adultery. He beat her and she ran away.

The cause of their quarrel is a forged letter that Damtew thinks Tsedale wrote to her former boy friend, Gared. This letter stated how she enjoyed going to bed with Gared, and that the child she gave birth to is Gared's. The letter is handed to Damtew by his friend, Wedajo, with a photograph of the child and Gared. But it was Gared who wrote the letter imitating Tsedale's handwriting. He obtained the photograph of the child with the help of Tsedale's friend, Hirut. Gared developed his own picture alongside that of the child.

Being fooled by this incident, Damtew left his wife and child for one year and six months. Then he regretted quarrelling with his wife, and tried to bring her back. But she had left Addis Ababa and he failed to find her.

In the short story, "Ale-Biretu", the main conflict is between Alem and his parents. The story is Alem's biography. Alem is a boy, born to drunken parents. Alem received neither love nor proper child-care from his parents. He is not even given enough food. Moreover, he is ashamed of their daily drunkenness and cannot bear it when people laugh at them. One day, his mother was drunk and his intimate friend, Yonas, laughed at her. Alem could not stand it and beat Yonas.

Finally, Alem could not go to school and started working for his living. After a semester, when the father learns that Alem did not go to school, the father quarreled with him. Alem ran away and did not go home after that day. From what his mother said and his father's cruelty, Alem learns that the

father is not his real father. His mother told him that he looks exactly like one of her earlier lovers.

After a while, his mother died and he was brought home. Ato Nardos, a director of the theatre who knows Alem's interest in books and his love of plays, employed him as an actor.

" Dibibkosh" is the other short story. It begins with the explanation why the main character, Aregash, came to Addis Ababa. She came to Addis Ababa twelve years before from Wollo because of the drought. Then she worked in a factory. She had completed the literacy campaign program, built her own house, married a person called Abegaz and given birth to a child.

The manager of the factory where Aregash worked was a reactionary person. It is suspected that he was involved in embezzlement . On the other hand, Aregash is a hard-working person. She is also a militia woman and cannot tolerate anything done against the revolution. Due to this she is not on good terms with the manager. She said that he was involved in the anti-revolutionary movement. He cut her salary and finally dismissed her. Then, the members of The Workers' Controlling Committee imprisoned the manager.

This is just a summary. There are different conflicts that were initiated by different motives. The presence of these conflicts is essential. In line with this, Amare Mammo says that a literary work that has no conflict, effort and

solution cannot be considered a literary work.⁴⁸ He states that an author should select a conflict among the various types that daily occur between people that is very significant for the main character. The main character should overcome the conflict since it is significant for him. Amare continues saying this story that has no significant conflict does not keep its readers in suspense.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the researcher believes that the story should employ the other features of conflict (unity, balance and plausibility) to be a work that maintains readers' attention.

Unity

The role unity of conflict plays in a story is essential. It is unity of conflict that brings together all the episodes in the text and makes the story a unified whole. One aspect of unity of conflict is the cause and effect relationship between the conflicts in different episodes. The other aspect of unity of conflict is its contribution to the objective of the author. These aspects can be seen in each short story as it is analysed.

To begin with, Zenebe Abreham says that the child who used to be happy with Dantew starts disliking him and runs to

⁴⁸ Yeliba Wolad Dirsat Atsatsaf Masaratawi Mamariya (Addis Ababa: Oxford University Press, 1968 Eth. C.), p. 42.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

his mother when the father comes to him.⁵⁰ Damtew started frightening the child for he thinks the child is illegitimate. This is the main conflict between Damtew and Tsedale, since he believes that Tsedale gave birth to an illegitimate child.

When Tsedale saw the picture of Gared, she was annoyed with him and tore up the photograph, because she thought Gared had a part in that. There is unity between the two conflicts: between Tsedale and Gared and Tsedale and Damtew. The reason is that Gared caused both conflicts.

Hirut was a former girl friend of Damtew and a classmate of Tsedale. Hirut was a naughty girl and could not remain Damtew's girl friend. It was after they gave up their relationship that Damtew married Tsedale. Taking advantage of this background, Gared urged Hirut to take revenge on Tsedale. To attain his spiteful plan, Gared told Hirut that it was Tsedale who made Damtew dislike her. What he said seemed true to her. So, Hirut disliked Tsedale and collaborated in causing the wickedness with Gared. For instance, Hirut stole Tsedale's son's photograph and gave it to Gared. Gared developed the photograph of the child with his own, so that it seemed the photograph of the two was taken together.⁵¹ Therefore, the conflict between the two women contributed to produce the main conflict between the husband and wife.

⁵⁰
And La And (Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Press, 1981
Eth. C.), p. 52.

⁵¹
Ibid., p. 69.

There is also a conflict between Dantew and a young man in a bar. But there is no reason for their quarrel. However, both might have been drunk and might^{have} acted without thinking. Although this conflict has no relationship to the main social conflict between the husband and wife, it contributes to the intention of the author, which is to reveal that at times people interfere in the lives of others without intending to hurt.

All these conflicts between the husband and the wife, the father and the child, the two women and Tsedale and Gared contribute to the central idea. It is the jealous act of Gared, the villain, that ruins a happy family life. He is jealous of Tsedale's success in her marriage with Dantew. Hence, he contrived a spiteful plan to destroy the marriage. The conflict Gared generated in each episode has unity with the destruction of the family which the author intended to reveal.

The main conflict in " Ale-Biretu " is the irresponsibility of Alem's father for Alem's up-bringing. Moreover, what aggravates the conflict is that whenever the father comes home drunk, he beats Alem. This conflict between Alem and his father was caused by the unfaithfulness of the mother with her husband. She was unfaithful, because she gave birth to an illegitimate son. This unfaithfulness is the main cause of all the conflicts in their home.

Alem's life is full of conflict. There are various minor conflicts that have unity with the main conflict. For instance, there is the conflict between Alem and Saba, the actress. The cause of their conflict is that she did not pay due attention

to the character she represented on the stage. Alem scolded Saba saying " why should the act be spoiled for the sake of your secondary desire ?"⁵² The same is true with Alem's life which is spoilt for the sake of his mother's adulterous practice out of which he was born illegitimately. Thus, the conflict between the two characters has a similarity with the main conflict, which was caused by Alem's lack of proper upbringing as a child.

Alem absented himself from school whenever he could not have something to eat. This led to friction between Alem and his teachers, a conflict that had a direct connection with the conflict between Alem and his parents who failed to carry out their responsibilities such as giving Alem food.

When Yonas laughed at Alem's mother when she was drunk, Alem felt humiliated, was angry with Yonas and beat him. This conflict between the two boys has unity with the conflict between Alem and his drunken mother. The reason for this unity is that the cause of both conflicts is Alem's mother's drinking habits.

Here, the intention of the author is to show how the violation of the custom shames the child. Had Alem been a legitimate child, the father would have shown concern and given him paternal love and care which would have changed the

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Jemal Suleyman and Yezina Worku, Yaltamachat Chigign (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Agency, 1982 Eth. C.), p. 15.

course of Alem's life. Moreover, as a husband, he would have taken care of his wife had she been faithful to him. Hence, the chain of conflicts in the story supports this intention of the author.

In " Dibibkosh " the conflict is between the proletariats and the bureaucrats represented by Aregash and the manager of the factory respectively. Solomon Lemma said ,

The manager of the factory is a person who performs anti-revolutionary deeds. Particularly he does not want to see the improved life of the workers and their satisfaction in their work. 53

This is the cause of the conflict.

All the other minor conflicts have unity with this main conflict. For instance, Aregash exposed the anti-revolutionary work of the manager. To revenge himself on her, the manager first cut her salary and then dismissed her. This conflict between them is due to their opposing attitudes towards the revolution.

The other aspect of unity of this conflict is its contribution to the propagandist service of the short story, which is the author's objective. The manager is a person who exploits the workers and the factory, whereas Aregash is made to be a hard-working person among her colleagues.⁵⁴ These

53
Eth. C.), p. 11. Yegir Isat (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Agency, 1979

54
Ibid., p. 16.

two personalities are in conflict. Although Aregash was dismissed, the workers were victorious because the members of The Worker's Controlling Committee imprisoned the manager. This success, which is the propaganda for the proletariat's victory is the result of the conflict in the story.

Balance

A good short story holds its readers in suspense usually until the end. This remains true when the two conflicting groups balance in the way they challenge each other. The ways the two opposing groups arrange for themselves to come out of their difficulties should have balance. Balance should be maintained in the way they reason. Furthermore, a balance between the error a character makes and the punishment he receives should be maintained in order to make the story interesting. Each of the stories mentioned will be examined from this perspective.

In "Damtew", the two opposing forces are Damtew and Tsedale. Gared, Hirut and Wodajo are the group who are there only to cause and aggravate the conflict. Tsedale is innocent of the charge of adultery. She told her husband that she was innocent. But she could not prove her innocence. She was beaten and ran away. However hard she tried to explain her innocence, she was considered guilty. Hence, there is no balance of conflict and no suspense since she was not given the chance to prove her innocence. Thus, the struggle between them is not satisfactory.

On the other hand, neither of the two opposing groups know who caused this wickedness. The author does not let the husband and wife know the work of these malignant people. Had it been known, Tsedale could have been defended. So, the conflict loses balance.

On the one hand, when it is seen from Dامتew's point of view, in relation to the society's custom, Tsedale is an adulteress. He beat her. Hence, there is balance between her guilt and the punishment.

In the short story, "Ale-Biretu", not much can be said about the balance of the conflict. The story has little suspense. However, the irresponsibility of the parents and their being drunkards balance the moral strength of their son. Alem strives his best to come out of the difficulty he is in. He is wise and courageous enough to withstand the hardship and his parents' moral degradation. This maintains the balance of the conflict.

Unlike in the first two short stories, the conflict between Aregash and the manager in "Dibibkosh" is well balanced and holds the reader in suspense until the end. Though the manager uses his position as manager, Aregash also has supporters such as the representative of The Commission for Organizing the Workers Party of Ethiopia and her colleagues. The steps taken by both groups against each other also show the balance of the conflict. The manager dismissed Aregash and she also has him imprisoned with the help of the members of The Workers' Controlling Committee. 55

The two groups challenge each other well. As a result of the balance created, the readers cannot guess the outcome of the conflict until it ends. Hence, it maintains suspense.

Plausibility

A work of art is plausible only when it is constructed in a way that the story is likely to be believed. The plausibility of the work enables the reading audience to maintain their interest. Since the texts, ^{being} analysed in this section present life as it is, plausibility is achieved.

For instance, Hirut secretly meets Tsedale and hears from her whatever Dantew tells Tsedale in secret. Hirut tells the secret to Gared and Gared in turn tells Wodajo, who in turn tells Dantew. In such a way the secret that Dantew tells his wife circulates and comes back to him.⁵⁶ Dantew suspected that his wife has committed adultery with Gared, because whatever he tells her comes back to him from Gared through Wodajo. Dantew received a letter written by Tsedale to Gared about their love affair and a photograph of his son with that of Gared.⁵⁷ Having this evidence, there is no reason why he will not believe that she has had intimate relations with Gared. Hence, the conflict between the husband and the wife has a reasonably firm ground at least as far as Dantew is concerned. So it is a plausible conflict.

⁵⁶
Zenebe Abreham, p. 69.

⁵⁷
Ibid., pp. 62-63.

Damtew insulted and beat his wife. When Tsedale heard of the insult, she *could* not stand it, neither could she control herself. So she violently threw a drinking glass at him, but missed him.⁵⁸ It is plausible for a genuine person to be violent when unfairly defamed and fails to defend himself.

In "Ale-Biretu", the main conflict is between Alem and his parents, particularly his father. One day when his father beat Alem, his mother tried to intervene. But the father ordered her to go away. He also asked her whether she was not the one who gave birth to this enemy in his home and pushed her away.⁵⁹ This word "enemy" annoyed Alem very much. He started thinking of it. Finally he realized that the father is not his real father. This is the cause of the conflict in their house. This too is plausible. It shows that the father is cruel to Alem because he is not his legitimate son. His mother told Alem that he looks exactly like the sheep merchant, her earlier lover.⁶⁰ This proves his illegitimacy and the plausibility of the conflict between the "father" and the son.

When his mother died and Alem was brought home, he insulted all the mourners saying "you killed her and gathered here. Go out from here!"⁶¹ All of them ran out of the tent. This

58

Ibid., pp. 64-65.

59

Jemal Suleyman and Yezina Worku, p. 72.

60

Ibid., p. 73.

61

Ibid., p. 84.

conflict between Alem and the mourners has plausibility, for he is drunk. But after all the people have gone away, Alem was alone with the father. Alem regarded the father as the person who caused his mother's death. He was also drunk and yet being in conflict with the father, and having all the reasons to quarrel with him, he did and said nothing to him. This is implausible, because a person who has such reasons to quarrel and is placed in such a situation would quarrel.

The opposite attitudes towards the revolution in "Dibibkosh", the conflict between Aregash and the manager, has plausibility. Aregash is portrayed as a revolutionary. On the other hand, however, ^{when} the manager said we should make all the necessary sacrifice for the foundation of The Workers' Party of Ethiopia; we should look after our revolution which we consider as our eyes,⁶² he was taken to be a reactionary. It is plausible for the manager to say that, because no anti-revolutionary would say in public that he would destroy the revolution unless he was an outlaw in the bush. Secondly, since she exposed what she thinks he did, it is plausible that he would cut her salary and dismiss her in order to have revenge. It is also plausible that the group on her side, The Workers' Controlling Committee, would imprison the manager to revenge their comrade, who was dismissed by him.

Similarly, Aregash who was displaced by drought from her homeland in Wollo and obtained all the benefits from the

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Solomon Lemma, p. 13.

revolution; that is, a job, a house, education and family, besides being a militia woman, has plausible grounds to support the revolution and fight against all whom she thought reactionaries.

Significance

A character is involved in conflict only when he finds it very significant for him. As seen in each short story, the protagonists find that the conflict they are in affects their lives and they are determined to solve it. So, the conflict in a good short story has significance for the characters.

For example, at the beginning of "Damtew", the main character was very annoyed. As his anger was aggravated, he plucked out some of his hair. Moreover, when Wodajo gave him what he calls evidence, for Tsedale's adultery, he was so annoyed that anger darkened his face. These feelings show the significance of the conflict. Besides jealousy, the destruction of the family caused great annoyance. So the conflict between Damtew and Tsedale has significance.

In "Ale-Biretu", the conflict between Alem and the father has significance because the father claims that Alem is not his son. The father could not stand the sight of an illegitimate child and could not live under the same roof *with him*. As a result, he not only disliked Alem but was cruel to him.

Moreover, Yonas laughed at Alem's mother when she was drunk. Alem could not stand this. He considered it as if

he is ridiculed himself. Thus, he quarrelled with him and beat him. This shows the conflict between the two boys has significance, especially from Alem's point of view.

A teacher cannot stand a student who ridicules him. In accordance with this, since Alem made fun of his teacher, it stands to reason that there is a conflict that has significance between Alem and his teacher.

Similarly, the conflict in " Dibibkosh " is significant. For both Aregash and the manager it is a matter of life or death. Once she exposed his anti-revolutionary work, it was inevitable for him to be involved in the conflict and act against her to save himself. The same is true for her. She could not stand a person whom she understands was opposed to the revolution because her advantage was in line with the revolution. In addition, since he dismissed her, she cannot live without earning her living. So she has to fight him.

Hence, significance in all the three short stories is well-maintained. Consequently, the stories keep the interest of their readers, since the readers will be eager to know the outcome of the conflict.

In general, the short stories analysed in this chapter have employed all the features of conflict well, except^{for} the lack of a strong balance in the conflicts of "Damtew" and "Ale-Biretu." However, the short stories are so interesting that they can capture and maintain the attention of their readers.

CHAPTER IVFeatures Of Physical Conflict

Nature is a force that controls the phenomena of the physical world and affects the life of a society. To avert the misery that befalls him, Man is engaged in a constant struggle with Nature and attempts to derive all his benefits from it. But at times, Nature becomes severe and Man loses what he used to obtain from it. The tragedy is not only this, his very existence is checked by various types of natural calamities such as great floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, drought and epidemics. During such times, Man comes into conflict with the physical world. He hardly controls it, except for looking for a way in which to save his own life.

Although the balance in physical conflict is not as strong as in social conflict, it does not mean physical conflict lacks balance (see chapter I). Of course, the inability of Man to put Nature under his control weakens the balance. Nevertheless, the way the character prepares to come out of the difficulty or to withstand it forms a balance with the natural calamity. Besides, the other features of conflict should also be employed to create an effective conflict on which to base the story.

Most of the time, it is thought that an author reveals, in a literary work, the life he experiences or imagines. The reason for the scarcity of Amharic short stories that are based on physical conflict seems to be the natural phenomena that are suitable for life, except for the drought in our country. Because when the natural phenomena are normal for life, writers could not imagine the conflict between Man and such type of

natural phenomena. As a result, the few short stories that have been written on physical conflict base their conflict only on drought, the recurrent phenomenon in Northern Ethiopia, as seen in "Tutun", "Adaraw" and "Yemiyalf Kan". Hence, the researcher had no chance of selecting and presenting the analyses of short stories that base their conflict on other different forms of natural calamity.

K. L. Knickerbocker and H. Willard Reninger say that:

We must know what happens to whom on the literal level. Unless the literal facts of the story are clearly understood before further analysis begins, we are likely to misconstrue the story's total meaning. 63

So, before presenting the analysis of physical conflict, a clear picture of the stories is given so that the readers of this thesis can have a firm command of the stories.

The story called "Tutun" begins with a discussion of nature and the disaster brought by the drought in Northern Wollo. The story is about the husband and wife, Anteneh and Itenesh. Due to the famine caused by the drought, they lost their child. They ran away leaving their home behind to save themselves from death by the drought. They arrived at Alamata after a day's journey.

After a few weeks' sojourn in Alamata, the husband and wife left for a fertile settlement area. They began a new

63
Interpreting Literature, 5th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, INC., 1974), p. 16.

life there. Having escaped from the effects of the drought, Itenesh told her husband that her child when he was dying, said ' tutun ' (the breast or the milk from her breast). This was to remind him that their child died of hunger. The husband soothed her saying that they would have another child.

" Adaraw " is another short story based on the Wollo drought. Its protagonist is a fourth-year Addis Ababa University student, Alemu. The terrible drought which his parents suffered from was related to him in the letter his father sent to him.

Alemu went home to visit his parents but found no one there. They had left their home to **escape** the famine and went where they could have food. On their way, all of them died except his little brother, Gashu. Gashu went to the Perbengo Village Center in Gambela. Alemu followed his brother to Perbengo and met him there. After they recuperated, Alemu wanted to go back to Addis Ababa. He begged his brother to stay at Perbengo. Finally after Alemu convinced his brother, he returned to Addis Ababa University.

The third short story, " Yemiyalf Kan ", is presented in flashback form. That is when the protagonist, Zertihun, was invited to dinner. The dinner reminded her of the horror of the famine that she suffered from in her birthplace.

A week before she came to the present place, Zertihun went to Senbate to beg for food, leaving behind her husband, Asgelil, who was suffering from the effects of famine. As she reached there, she found many people gathered together begging for food

She thought she could not obtain food from such a gathering and pulled off her bracelet to try to sell it so that she could buy food with the money. She found no one who would buy the bracelet. Finally someone frightened her and seized the bracelet from her hand and asked her its price. He bought it cheaply. Zertihun also bought some food and went home. When she reached there, she found her husband dead.

As can be seen from these synopses, all three short stories reflect the horror of the drought in Wollo. People in the area are the victims of this natural calamity. Drought is what causes the conflict between Man and Nature. This conflict has elements that make the literary work readable. Adrian H. Jaffe and Virgil Scott state that "The elements of conflict and character are the two basic and necessary elements of fiction."⁶⁴ Since the drought is not something that one can reverse, the balance of this conflict between Nature and Man lies only in the means people use to save their lives. It is in the light of this that the balance as well as the other features of conflict will be examined.

Unity

In these three short stories there are not many episodes in which unity of conflict can be studied. However, some points that show unity are cited from each story. For example,

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Studies in the Short Story, p. 9.

in "Tutun", the author described the landscape that is much affected by the drought. He said, "The grey hills that are covered by stones and gravel protrude - Nature's funny laugh, breasts of the earth that have swallowed seeds of grain for four years."⁶⁵ This description exhibits the conflict between Man and Nature.

This is the main conflict from which other conflicts originate. First, as a result of the famine, Anteneh and Itenesh lost their child. Even the child asked for breast milk when dying. But the mother could not respond to her child's request because she too had been weakened. Second, since they wanted to live not to die, they were forced to leave their homeland. Third, it is immoral and humiliating for a person who is not disabled to beg for food. But Anteneh was forced to eat food, obtained by begging. These conflicts have a direct relation to the conflict the husband and wife had with the drought.

The other point about unity of conflict in this text is the contribution of each conflict to what the author wants to reveal. In this story, the author reveals the extent to which drought affects mankind. The respect people have for a burial ceremony is lost, due to the large number of people that die of famine. Hence, when a daughter of a person whom they know

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Adam Reta, Mahilet and Other Stories (Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Press, 1981 Eth. C.), p. 51.

closely was taken to the cemetery, no one wanted to attend the funeral.⁶⁶ This change of behaviour of the people is the effect of physical conflict. As the two characters left their home and reached Alamata somebody gave them food. When Anteneh became aware that the food was obtained by begging, he wept bitterly.⁶⁷ Hence, being forced to leave home (where one was born, nursed and brought up) for good and to beg without being disabled are the effects of the physical conflict the author wants to show.

In " Adaraw ", Alemu's father, as he wrote in the letter, fails to help his son. He said, " I am sorry for not sending you money even for buying paper...What can we do? Our help is discontinued since our threshing floor turned barren."⁶⁸ In this story there are two conflicts that have unity with the conflict between Nature and the characters. Firstly, since the failure to help his son was due to the drought, it is the effect of the physical conflict that the author wants to depict.

Secondly, Alemu went home to find his parents and relatives alive and to help them. But he found no one at home. He followed them and found some of them dead and others almost dead. This loss of parents and relatives is a conflict that has unity with the conflict between him and the drought.

66
Ibid.

67
Ibid., p. 59.

68
Abdu Rahmeto and Nigusie Ayele Teka, Mushiraw and Other Stories (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Agency, 1979 Eth. C.), p. 147.

In " Yemiyalf Kan ", to save her life and that of her husband, Zertihun went to town and tried to sell her bracelet so that she could have money to buy food. Knowing that she was helpless, a hooligan seized the bracelet from her hand. Zertihun narrated her story saying,

As I was confused and looking here and there, a man snatched my bracelet out of my hand. I was startled and turned to him. ... A bloodshot person stared at me and 'for how much will you sell it ?' he said in a scolding tone.⁶⁹

The conflict between Zertihun and the hooligan is related to the physical conflict because if the people were not suffering from famine, the hooligan would not have a convenient opportunity to buy the bracelet so cheaply.

Balance

Since natural calamity is a participant in the conflict that is not challenged by a character, its superiority is clearly seen. However, the balance of such a conflict is maintained by the effort the character makes to survive the natural calamity. Thus, readers are kept in suspense for they will be eager to know how the character saves his life. Dagnachew Worku proves this, saying that "...what makes readers curious is the concealed idea and deed of a character."⁷⁰

69

Inaho and Other Stories (Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Press, 1980 Eth. C.), p. 62.

70

Yetsihuf Tibab Mamariya (Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Press, 1985), p. 293.

Hence, since the way the characters save their lives from the calamity is unknown beforehand, readers will be curious to discover the solution.

When the physical conflict is due to drought, as in these three short stories, the character has not much option except to leave the area. In "Tutun", when Itenesh told her husband that their child was dying, he said, So, what do you want me to do?⁷¹ This implies there is no solution for it. Therefore, it reveals the imbalance between the calamity and the effort of the husband, as a result of which he despaired. When the characters resort to their only option, they leave their home in Wollo and settled in the southern part of the country as is the case both in "Tutun" and "Adaraw".

In "Yemiyalf Kan", however, it is not known how Zertihun came to her present location, which was different from the previous one. The text does not state that she went out of the drought-stricken area to save her life. But the effort she makes to overcome the result of the calamity is selling her own bracelet and buying food with the money. As far as there is food to be bought, if she sells her bracelet at a fair price and arrives home before her husband dies, it is the correct measure to overcome the effects of the famine. Thus, her effort balanced the calamity.

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Adam Reta, p. 53.

Plausibility

Unlike balance, plausibility is well-maintained in the short stories of physical conflict. In "Tutun", it is stated that the hills have never produced grain for four years. A peasant who had no means of income except the produce from his farm would definitely starve to death when he failed to harvest during that time. Thus, it is believable that Anteneh and Itenesh suffered from famine, and were forced to flee their home. Consequently, they were exposed to begging food to live, though it was an immoral act for them. Hence, it is plausible that Anteneh wept bitterly when he heard that the food his wife gave him was obtained by begging.⁷²

Under such drought-stricken conditions, it is believable that many people would die and others would be unable to go to funerals. Thus, it is plausible that only ten people accompanied a corpse to the cemetery,⁷³ contrary to the culture of the society. Moreover, it seems reasonable that the father who suffered from hunger despaired of his child's state of health and said "So what?"

As a consequence of drought, the characters suffered not only from an inability to produce crops but also from the loss of animals. For example, in "Adaraw", it is stated, "The drought has killed the six cows with their bulls. From all

⁷²
Ibid., p. 59.

⁷³
Ibid., p. 51.

those cattle, we are not left with even a pair of oxen."⁷⁴

Similarly, Zertihun said,

O ! the bad day !... We lost two oxen, a cow
and two calves. The grass and leaves dried
and became soil. The springs dried up and
we lacked water to assuage our thirst. --The
Alala Aman field is full of rotten carcasses.⁷⁵

Thus, with such a long drought, it is quite obvious that animals did not survive.

The selling of the bracelet is also plausible because the hooligan asked Zertihun where her husband was and if there was someone whom she knew in the town. In this way he became certain that she could not defend herself.

Significance

When the conflict is between Man and Nature, its significance is beyond question because for the man who participates in the conflict, it is a matter of life or death. Nothing is more important than prolonging one's life. Since the conflict in the texts treated in this chapter is between Man and Nature, which threatens him with death, its significance is well - maintained.

The effect of the conflict can be observed in different forms. First, since there was no farming for a long time, the characters had nothing to eat. This forced them to be

74

Abdu Rahmeto and Nigusie Ayele Teka, p. 147.

75

Inaho and Other Stories, p. 59.

involved in the conflict. Second, to obtain something to eat and survive, the characters were forced to give up their home and go elsewhere in search of food. Leaving one's home is not a simple matter. But they had no option. Third, as a result of this conflict, they lost their children and relatives. The loss of one's close relatives is not easy to withstand. Fourth, the final calamity that a person fears is death. It is with this death that the physical conflict threatens the characters. Thus, the significance of the conflict is beyond doubt.

Zertihun gave priority to life and sold her bracelet in order to buy food with the money and save lives. To show the priority of saving life to decoration of oneself, she said, "... what purpose does it serve hereafter? The decoration of a human being is his life- his being all right."⁷⁶ So, she sold her bracelet, the dowry she was given by her husband on their wedding day,⁷⁷ to buy food. This shows the significance of her physical conflict.

The physical conflict Zertihun suffered from is so significant that she could not forget the image of the drought even after a long time when she was invited to dinner. The circumstances she went through could not be forgotten, because it left a scar on her heart : the loss of her beloved husband.

⁷⁶
Ibid., p. 61.

⁷⁷
Ibid.

The conflicts in each story caused the loss of life. Hence, they are significant to the characters that are involved. All the effects seen in the texts are appropriately produced. So, the conflicts are plausible.

Generally speaking, the texts employ all the major features of conflict, but plausibility and significance are the two major features that are better employed in comparison with the other features.



C O N C L U S I O N

In the preceding three chapters, the researcher has tried to give an insight into the merits and demerits of the post - 1974 Amharic short stories. An attempt ^{been} has _^ made to deal with the short stories from the perspective of the types of conflict on which the short stories are based. When the number of short stories in relation to their types is taken into consideration, there is an apparent imbalance. Stories that are based on both physical and psychological conflicts are very limited in number, whereas stories of social conflict are ~~larger in number~~. In her thesis for her Master's Degree, Olga Yazbec summarized the thematic focus of the Ethiopian short stories in a similar way. She said,

The main emphasis in Ethiopian short stories is on social criticism, that is, the criticism of the old regime and the social injustices that resulted from the feudo - capitalist system, namely, nepotism, slavery, prostitution and urbanization problems. Post-revolution short stories reflect the victory of the Ethiopian Revolution through class struggle between the working class and the bourgeois minority. 78

It is as the short story is seen in its entirety that the difference in the number of stories that are based on different types of conflict is understood. Otherwise, many short stories of social conflict incorporate an episode of physical or psychological conflict in them. For instance, even among these

78

" The State of the Short Story in Ethiopia: An Unexploited Genre," (Addis Ababa : A Thesis Presented to the School of Graduate Studies, Addis Ababa University, 1981), pp. 56-57. (Unpublished).

short stories, " Yemalada Tila " begins with the incident of the blaze and goes into the psychological conflict, "Dibibkosh" opens with the physical conflict and resorts to the social conflict and the psychological conflict in " Zinabu Mache Naw Yemizanbaw?" is caused by the physical conflict.

Therefore, there is no opportunity to select short stories of physical and psychological conflict. The researcher is compelled to work on what is available. Accordingly, it is seen that stories of physical conflict are solely based on the conflict between Man and drought. Drought is a recurrent phenomenon in Northern Ethiopia. As a result of this fact, except for " Tutun ", the two short stories of physical conflict are mainly adopted from historical occurrence rather than fiction. They lack creativity to produce various episodes in which unity of conflict would have been better maintained.

This weakness seems to occur since some writers wrongly expect that characters and incidents in a short story cannot be fully developed. In spite of the limited length of a short story and its limited scope of the presentation of events that center around a major incident, detailed explanation of incidents and a portrayal of characters depend on how the writer is selective in providing the essentials. Hence, this lack of creativity in presenting significant episodes lessens the literary quality of the stories.

In each text unity is maintained in two ways. The first is the chain of a cause and effect relationship. That is, a preceding conflict is a cause for the subsequent conflict.

This in turn causes another conflict. For instance, in "Ale-Biratu", the unfaithfulness of Alem's mother to her husband is the first conflict that causes the irresponsibility of the father for Alem's up-bringing. This irresponsibility in turn results in Alem's leaving school. Since the father did not supply Alem with food, Alem was obliged to earn his living. Leaving school was the cause of the quarrel between Alem and his father.

The second way in which unity is maintained is in the contribution of each conflict in different episodes to the central idea of the author. In "Damtew", the intention of the author is to disclose how jealousy and ill-will of some individuals destroy a happy family life. Since the main concern of the author is to reveal the destruction of the family, he does not allow the husband and wife to know that there are spiteful people at work behind their quarrel. This objective of destroying family life is realized because of the contribution of each conflict in the text.

Keeping secret the spiteful people's plan, the author, of course, maintains his intention of revealing the destruction of the family, but this makes the conflict lose balance. Balance is the least appropriately employed feature in these texts.

In the texts such as "Tutun-", "Adaraw" and "Damtew", there are actions and reactions that contribute to the imbalance of the conflicts. For example, as in "Damtew", though the author has his own motive not to prove the innocence of Tsedale, this absence of proof of her innocence contributes

to the imbalance of the conflict between Tsedale and her husband.

Anteneh's despaired attitude towards his dying child reveals that he has surrendered. There is, therefore, no struggle between him and the calamity. Both in " Adaraw" and " Tutun ", the old people make no effort to leave the drought - stricken area. It seems they despaired of surviving and accepted the on-coming death. Similarly, being desperate and not going to the burial ceremony shows giving in to the natural force that works against them. In addition, eating food obtained by begging, which is contrary to the morality of the society, is a good reason to reveal the imbalance since some may prefer dying to eating such food. Hence, these points attest to the imbalance of the conflict between its participants. On the contrary, this same act of eating such food gives the characters the strength to withstand the natural calamity, because it helps to prolong life. So the balance or imbalance of this point depends on the angle from ^{which} one looks at it.

In spite of these weaknesses, there are various aspects whereby balance is maintained between participants in conflicts as in " Dibibkosh" or " Andualem". However, the balance between the cause and effect of conflicts in " Yetasabara Lib" seems to fail. For instance, despite the social norm to keep one's word and the close relationship between Brihane and Dagneu, Brihane's death as a result of not keeping his promise seems to be not only rather exaggerated but also contributes to the implausibility of the conflict.

The plausibility in these texts has its own merits and demerits. In "Zinabu Mache Naw Yemizanbaw ?" and "Yetasabara Lib ", there are some points that reveal the implausibility of the effects of the conflicts. For instance, although the cause of Etsegenet's insanity is the psychological conflict developed in her, the blood that spills out of her bashed in forehead gives a wrong impression of her insanity. It seems unreasonable to give emphasis to the spilled blood or even to mention it, because loss of blood can also cause ill - health.

Similarly, the story tries to show that Brihane died due to an inner conflict. To the researcher the author seems not satisfied with the plausibility of the conflict. That is why he suggests that Brihane's death is caused by the conflict within him. (see quotation 44). However, instead of meddling in the narration of the story, if he made his characters reveal it in their dialogue, it would be more plausible. But contrary to the author's reason for Brihane's death, it seems that his death was caused by the amount of alcohol he drank because it is emphasized that Brihane drank very much alcohol. He immediately died there on the table. This seems to confuse the cause of his death since too much alcohol can kill.

In addition, although Etsegenet is characterized as a very unique, perceptive and sensitive child, she seems to be too young to understand the horror of the famine. The conflict would be more plausible if she were portrayed ^{as being} a little older.

Likewise, being drunk besides having all the reasons to quarrel with his father, Alem did not quarrel with his father.

It cannot be said that it is due to his decency, since he was drunk and misbehaved in the presence of the mourners, which also shows the implausibility of the absence of a quarrel between him and his father.

As can be understood from the texts, the plausibility of physical conflict is mainly enforced not for the artistic presentation of the story but for the strong verisimilitude of the conflict.

However, when one examines all the stories in their entirety, many of the conflicts are plausible. Short stories such as " Andualem ", " Dantew " and " Yemalada Tila " have many points that contribute to the plausibility of the conflicts of their respective stories.

Short stories of significant conflict produce certain effects in their participants as a result of their struggle. From this point of view, almost all the stories show a change of behaviour in their protagonists. The change of behaviour in Andualem, Etsegenet and Brihane is the main one. All three become mad. The reason for the insanity is that the conflict affects their mind. The characters of the physical conflict agree to leave their homeland. They beg for food to prolong their lives. These effects would not be accepted if the characters had not gone through the conflict and were affected by the drought.

In general, all sorts of people, men and women, young and old, educated and uneducated and poor and rich are affected by the psychological, social and physical conflicts

as revealed in the texts. Hence, it is possible to understand that the conflicts can affect people in all walks of life, regardless of sex or age.

Generally, some of the major features of conflict have been employed effectively and others less effectively. These features of conflict receive due attention and need be exploited by short story writers. The appropriately used features of conflict help to enrich the Amharic literary heritage.

A P P E N D I X

The arrangement of this appendix is based on the sequence of the appearance of the short stories in the thesis.

- " Andualem" (a person's name) in Afararasachiw (She Destroyed) by Hailu Tsegaye.
- " Zinabu Mache Naw Yemizanbaw ?" ("When will it Rain ?") in Afararasachiw (She Destroyed) by Hailu Tsegaye.
- " Yetasabara Lib" ("The Broken Heart") in Yetashataw Seytan (The "Devil" that was Sold) by Yezina Worku and Jemal Suleyman.
- " Yemalada Tila " ("The Early Phobia") in Simotagnaw (The Complaining) by Daglas Petros.
- " Damtew" (a person's name) in And La And (One to One) by Zenebe Abreham.
- " Ale-Biratu" ("Ale the Iron") in Yaltamachat Chigign (The "Seedling" that has no Comfort) by Jemal Suleyman and Yezina Worku.
- " Dibibkosh" ("Hidden Motive") in Yegir Isat (Extreme Anger) by Solomon Lemma.
- " Tutun" (" The Breast") in Mahilet (a person's name) by Adam Reta.
- " Adaraw" ("The Entrusted Message") in Mushiraw (The Bridegroom) by Abdu Rahmeto and Nigusie Ayele Teka.
- " Yemiyalf Kan" ("The Time of Famine that will be Improved") in Inaho (Here You Are).

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