

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND
LITERATURE



A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF
ARSI OROMO ORAL LYRIC POETRY

BY
ZEBENAY SEYOUM

JUNE 2009
ADDIS ABABA

**A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF
ARSI OROMO ORAL LYRIC POETRY**

**A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE SCHOOL OF
GRADUATE STUDIES OF ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN LITERATURE**

**BY
ZEBENAY SEYOUM**



JUNE, 2009

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF
ARSI OROMO ORAL LYRIC POETRY**

**BY
ZEBENAY SEYOUM**



APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS:

Olga yazbec

Advisor

Tesfaye Gebre Mariam

Examiner

oz

Signature

[Signature]

Signature

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to express gratitude Miss Olga Yazbec for her constant advice, scholarly input and valuable time that she devoted in reading my thesis. I am equally indebted to Dr. Abiy Daniel for his guidance at the beginning of this thesis.

I would also like to thank OREB (Oromia Regional Education Bureau) for granting me sponsorship opportunity to do my second degree. My thanks goes to WACTZO (West Arsi Culture and Tourism Zone Office) and KCTO (Kofale Cultural Tourism Office) for their genuine provision of valuable information, particularly Bonsamo Miesso, the WACTZO; expert deserves the utmost gratitude and appreciation for assisting and guiding the data-collection phase thoughtfully throughout the data collection process in the field. I am particularly indebted to my informants who have committed their time in providing concerning cultural information needed for the study.

My thanks and appreciation go to Gebi Misha who has assisted me in translating the poems, editing and commenting on the thesis. I am also grateful to Muktar Aman and Aman Usman for similar contribution. My great appreciation also gose to Susie Brady, Eshetu Aga and Dereje Hinaw, for their unreserved encouragement, typing and editing of my thesis. I would also like to thanks the secretaries and typists of Asella Teacher Education College.

I am also indebted to my closest friends Bilisuma Bonsamo and Endaylallu Worku, Yimam Workineh, and Sinkineh Gebre-Mariam for their genuine support and advice. I am no less thankful to my colleagues for caring and sharing the burden of my study.

I would also like to express gratitude to my parents, Seyoum Demisse and Belaynesh Tesema, for their unreserved support and encouragement; my brothers and sisters; my family Dadi Gada and Gadisa Dadi for their unending affection, tolerance, caring, and sharing in many ways.



Table of Contents

Contents	Pages
Acknowledgments	i
Table of Contents.....	ii
A key to Oromo Script.....	iv
The reading system of consonant and vowel sounds.....	vi
Definition of Operational terms	vii
Abbreviations	ix
Symbols	ix
Abstract.....	x
 CHAPTER ONE	
Introduction	1
1.1. Background of the Study	1
1.2. Objectives of the study	3
1.3. Significance of the study	3
1.4. Scope of the study.....	4
1.5. Socio- Historical background of the Arsi Oromo.....	4
1.6. Economic Background.....	5
1.7. Religion.....	7
1.8. Marriage.....	9
1.9. Food Culture	10
1.10. Socio-Political Background	11
1.11. Arsi Oral Tradition	12
1.12. Language.....	13
1.13. The Background of West Arsi Zone.....	14
 CHAPTER TWO	
A Review of Related Literature.....	17
2.1 The Concept of Folklore.....	17
2.2 An Overview of Oral Poetry.....	19
2.3 Overview of Lyric Poetry	25



2.4 The Importance of Performance	30
2.5. Composition and Performance of Oral Poetry	33
2.6 A Review of Local Studies Related to Oromo oral Poetry.....	38
 CHAPTER THREE	
Methodology	41
3.1. Library Research.....	41
3.2. The Field Research	41
3.2.1. Sample of the Study	41
3.2.2. Instruments of Data Collection	42
3.2.2.1. Interview	42
3.2.2.2. Focus Group Discussion.....	43
3.2.3. Field Experience.....	44
3.2.4. Transcription and Translation	51
3.2.5. Limitations of the Study.....	52
 CHAPTER FOUR	
Thematic Analysis of Selected Arsi Oral Lyric Poems	56
4.1. A Description of Weelluu Songs	56
4.1.1. An Analysis of Selected <i>Weelluu</i> Lyric Poems.....	63
4.2. Description of <i>Baye-Bayee</i> : Bridal Parting Song	75
4.2.1. An Analysis of <i>Baye-Bayee</i> : Bridal Parting Wedding Song.....	82
 CHAPTER FIVE	
Conclusions and Recommendations	103
5.1 Conclusions	103
5.2. Recommendations.....	108
Bibliography	110
Appendix A: Questionnaire	114
Appendix B: The Collected Poems.....	116
Appendix C: Lists of Informants	124
Appendix D: Photos of Some Informants and Occasions	125

A key to Oromo Script

In case the Afan Oromo poems become difficult for understanding, here is an overall introductory key sound system and orthographic system of the Latin script (Afan Oromo writing) system today. Next, consonant and vowel sounds systems of the Oromo alphabet are represented as follows:

A) Vowels sound

Short	Long
a	aa
e	ee
i	ii
o	oo
u	uu

- In the above table the short vowel phonemes are represented with each of the five vowel letters while the long vowel phonemes are represented by doubling the vowel letters as shown in the above table

Eg. laga laagaa
Lafa laafaa

B) Consonant sounds. The consonant sounds are divided into single consonant and double consonant sounds.

Single consonant Sounds

b	m
c	n
d	p
f	q
g	r
n	s
j	t
k	w
l	x
	y



Digraphs

Double Letters and Sounds: CH, DH, PH, NY and SH

Note that

- Single-letter consonant symbols have the usual English sound except for C, Q, and X are used to represent different, sounds in Afan Oromo.
- The digraphs CH and SH are also present, as in English which DH, NY and PH represent and pronounced different sounds
- Each of the consonant sound can be weak or strong. The weak consonants are represented by single symbols while stressed consonant sounds use double symbols

Example: Sodaa Soddaa
 Balaa Ballaa

- However, in the case of digraphs, only the first letter is doubled for stress. It is written as CCH.
- Gemination is indicated by doubling the symbol representing the sound
- Plosive D, is written with DH in Afaan Oromo
- Plosive T is written with X in Afaan Oromo
- Plosive K is written Q in Afaan Oromo

The Reading System of Consonant and Vowel Sounds

In the following table, the reading system of both consonant and vowel sounds are presented with their English and Oromo words in which the sound appeared.

Oromo Sound	English Reading System	Oromo Reading Systems
A	Anna	Aadaa
B	Bag	Buna
C	-	Caamsaa
Ch	chair	Gaachana
D	Dance	Dubartii
Dh	-	Dhugaa
E	Egg	Eeboo
F	Father	Fayyaa
G	Goat	Ganama
H	Hat,	Humna
I	innovate	Ijoollee
J	Jet	Jaalala
K	King	Kaayyoo
L	Lang	Lafa
M	Man	Mana
N	Note	Nagaa
Ny	-	Nyaata
O	On	Oduu
P	Porridge	Poolisii
Ph	-	Quruphee
Q	-	Qabeenya
R	Read	Ragaa
S	Sew	Seenaa
Sh	Sheep	Shaakala
T	Tea	tapha
U	Unique	Umrii
V	Valley	
W	Wax	Waaqa
Y	Young	Yaadannoo
'	Ban'quet' assembly'	Re'ee

Definition of Operational Terms

- Aadaa and seera:* are the custom and laws respectively that are functionally inseparable.
- Abbaa Gadaa (Abbaa Bokkuu):* is the head of the Gadaa government in a period of eight years
- Abbaa Muudaa (Qaalluu):* A spiritual head (religious leader) who holds the *muudaa* office for life.
- Antiphonal:** A type of verbal recitation of poems in more than two performers.
- Arriyyoo:* is a name, which is derived from ‘Arrawaa’ which is a lavish nickname given to a brown cow particularly the one on the stage of first pregnancy, which literally means brown color cow (Injifata Tegegn, 2006:11 and informant Bonsamo Miesso, expert at west Arsi Cultural and Tourism Bureau).
- Bayee-Bayee:* bridal song performed by the bride and her friends during wedding occasion.
- Context:** The situation point of discussion or events in which a poem naturally occurs.
- Gadaa:* is a socio-economic, political and religious institution of the Oromo.
- Garamba:* is a juniper like shrub growing peculiarly (on extinction today) along rivers in highland locals like West Arsi.
- Geegawoo:* Number of cattle given to a bride at the wedding day
- Golaa:* is bedroom to mean traditional innermost compartment of thatched huts confining exclusive to women or bridal occasion as well as kitchen service simultaneously apart from the common lobby or salon.
- Lyric Poetry:** The shortest form of oral poetry and usually links to the day-to-day human activities
- Muuda:* (literally, anointing), however, it was a ceremony at the Muudaa center when the Gadaa leaders visit the Abbaa Muudaa and were anointed for the office.
- Occasion:** A circumstance, occurrence or state of affairs that bring two or more people together and reason for discussion.

Performance:	The (Citation) use of a poem in a social or cultural context, mode of language use, a way of 'speech'
<i>Singee</i> :	women's 'sacred stick' used to keep justice or protect men's violence towards women particularly those who are pregnant or who have recently given birth.
Solo:	A single performer of song or the recited text
Tradition:	All inherited element in a society.
' <i>Woradaa</i> ':	Amharic term for administrative structure under zone
<i>Weelluu</i> :	love song that is usually performed by the youth.

Abbreviations

OREB:	Oromia Regional Education Bureau
WACTZO:	West Arsi Cultural and Tourism Zone Office
KCTO:	Kofale Cultural Tourism Office
SNNP:	Southern Nations, Nationalities and peoples
STVO:	<i>Sangantaa Televizini Oromiyaa</i> (Oromia Television Program)
JOS:	Journal of Oromo Studies

Symbols

Italicized text: Any *italicized* text or word (s) in the present study should be considered as *Afaan Oromo* term in place of the quotation mark “ ” or to distinguish from the vast unformatted English version.

* : Asterisk indicates additional definition or remark about the word(s)

ABSTRACT

Oromo oral lyric poetry has been less exhaustively recorded and studied. This paper attempts to provide the thematic analysis of the lyric poems of the Oromo people in West Arsi zone. So, the general objective of the present study is to investigate thematic aspects of some selected pieces of oral lyric poems (*weelluu* love songs and the *baye-bayee* bridal parting songs). Specifically, the study focuses on collecting West Arsi oral lyric poems, describing the context of their performance, identifying the major themes in the poems and identifying the social function of the poems.

The qualitative method is employed in analyzing the west Arsi oral lyric songs (*weelluu* and *baye-bayee*). Interview and focus group discussion were the main tools used to collect the data. The guiding sampling principles and procedures employed here are based on the availability; accessibility and purposive selection of the required data were the basis for selecting the two genres from two most conventional west Arsi districts namely, from Kofale and Shashamanne. From the two genres, 12 pieces of *weelluu* poems and 15 pieces of *baye-bayee* poems, were selected, transcribed, translated and interpreted for their ultimate thematic analysis accordingly.

The result or findings of the analysis of both the *weelluu* and the *baye-bayee* lyric songs show various crosscutting themes. Hence, the overall finding can generally be stated as more grievance of the feminine voice rotating around male dominance, isolation from parents as a result of forced marriage and suppressed outcry (lamentation) of deeply secretive love and its need for expression despite the implicit cultural disapproval of the transparency of love affairs. To see the findings genre by genre, the *weelluu* lyric poem expressed views and feelings of the composers as follows: depth and pain in love, endured stress in loving, mysterious nature of love, emotional needs of the lovers, praising and commenting about their beloved one, obstacles and solutions of enduring love are some of the identified major themes. Similarly, the *baye-bayee* reveals disappointment, loneliness, separation, ambition, advice, rebuking, alienation, blaming, oppression, violation, fear, vision, admitting superiority, insulation, criticism, encouragement and the like as articulated by the bride portrayed as major and minor themes of this particular genre.

This study also reveals sub-findings constituting the strong expressive role of figurative language or linguistic devices that the poet (poetess) used such as analogy, metaphor, simile, imagery, etc. to suggest the theme of the poems and to convey extended meaning of the poems when composing the songs. More tertiary thematic results other than the specified here were also discovered through the analysis including and recommended points

Finally, conclusive statements have also been provided to point out the overall results of the research. In addition, based on the reviewed literature the analysis and the conclusion, some recommendations have also been given to direct the research problem towards its future development. The researcher recommends that the two genres need an immediate focus as they are at the verge of extinction due to factors like today's technological experience, urbanization, modern education and political movements. Other recommendations were also given in the paper.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

The basic research problem in the present study is investigating the oral lyric poems of the western part of Arsi. As many scholars agree, oral literature is the embodiment and manifestation of various aspects of life. Scholars should study the oral literature of a given people or group and appreciate its value, history philosophy and wisdom etc. (Fekade Azeze 1998:10). Thus, it is possible to say that oral literature and society are interrelated because oral literature can show the social historical, economic and political experience of society. It is also believed that this store of folk experience contributes greatly to deepening one's knowledge of humanity. It has been stated that "people's feelings, hopes, aspirations, fears, philosophies and aesthetics or their way of life in general can be understood through the various forms of oral literature...." (Kabara and Mutuhi, 1988:11). Thus, studying oral literature give a profound insight into a given society's creative imagination.

Finnegan (1977) asserts the importance of oral poetry by defining oral poetry as the oldest form of folklore in which people communicate their deepest emotions, philosophies or experience. This definition applies to Ethiopian folk poetry context because oral poetry is the oldest form of art and it is deeply rooted in the oral tradition of the people.

Getiye Gelaye (2000:171) also asserts the use of oral poetry saying "the role of oral poetry in contemporary royal politics, in an area where the majority of the population is illiterate and where writing is not a significant medium of expression." Therefore, one can say that Oromo poems and songs play a significant role in reflecting serious contemporary issues and problems of the rural society, besides their function as entertainment and instruction in the daily lives of the peasants. The oral lyric poetry is also used for reporting and commenting on current affairs for political propaganda, to reflect and influence public opinion. Thus, composing, chanting and reciting poetry is a widely known and deeply rooted practice among most Oromo.

Oral lyric poem is one genre of oral poetry that plays a vital role in the society's daily life. According to Finnegan (1970:247) "Lyric poetry which is played on various occasions, deals with different topics." She notes that lyrics discuss issues of love, wives, husbands, marriage, animals, chiefs, the year's tax, the latest football match, a recent intrigue, the plight of a cripple, dependence on his family, an amusing incident, a friend's treachery or an enemy's vices, the relationship between a variety in the human and natural world and so on. In general, one can say that people express their happiness, sadness, wish, feelings etc. in poems. Hence, the study and classification of Arsi oral lyric poetry is an important field of research both for Ethiopians and foreign scholars.

The researcher selected this genre of oral literature for the following reasons. In the first place, Africans have a unique oral tradition which makes them different from the rest of the world. For example, one can identify African identity through proverbs, folk tales, oral poetry and the like in both written and spoken language. Thus, this indigenous cultural heritage should be preserved and developed so that it contributes to related fields such as anthropology and sociology. Besides, African oral literature serves as the cornerstone for the linguistic, cultural, artistic and historical studies.

The second specific reason is that the Ethiopian societies in general and the Oromo people in particular are the richest owners of oral literature and of oral poetry. It is because of this that the researcher is interested in conducting research on Arsi Oromo lyrics. Moreover, it is also because there have only been few research works done in this area. Thirdly, oral literature, namely oral lyric poetry, has had long traditional function least analysed among Arsi people. Their poetry and songs are deeprooted in their lives. Hence, they use the poem for different purposes. For example, it has been common for them to use lyric poems in harvest, wedding and on funeral occasions. However, this invaluable culture has been disappearing. Fourthly, as it was widely discussed by Finnegan (1970:78), oral poetry is being marked by greater speciality that is mostly employed for more serious purposes than prose. Inshort, the above-mentioned rationale has motivated the researcher to investigate the issue in question.

Based on the current state of the art and pressing issues related to the study of oral lyric poetry of Arsi, the stated research problem, the following questions will be raised and attempted to be answered throughout the course of the research.

1. What kinds of social function does west Arsi oral lyric poetry serve?
2. What kinds of themes do the west Arsi oral lyric poems carry?
3. How is west Arsi's oral lyric poetry performed and composed?

1.2. Objectives of the study

General Objectives

The general objective of the research is to examine the thematic, functional and performance prevalence of oral lyric poetry of west Arsi Oromo community in terms of their beliefs, attitudes artistic reactions through different events in their locality.

Specific Objectives of the Study

The present study specifically aims:

1. to collect west Arsi oral lyric poems, namely *weelluu* and *baye-bayee*,
2. to describe their context of performance.
3. to identify the themes raised in the poems and
4. to identify the use(the socio function) of oral lyric poetry.

1.3. Significance of the study

The study is significant for the following reasons:

1. First and foremost, the direct user of this research output is thought to be the wide public possibly readers who may be interested to know the thematic messages conveyed through the lyric poems under analysis.
2. Secondly, experts from different sectors i.e from the fields of education in preparation of curriculum, cultural and tourism, historians, anthropologists and sociologists among others may find the result of this research informative in one way or the other.
3. Thirdly, other researchers such as undergraduates and postgraduate students may need the present research out put as a source of information or insightful document.

1.4. Scope of the study

It is difficult to cover all types of Arsi oral poetry. Therefore, the present study is confined to west Arsi Oromo lyric poetry and specifically *weelluu* love poems and *baye-bayee* bridal parting oral lyric poems because it will not be possible to investigate exhaustively all the other oral genres within the given time and limited resources. Other researchers may note the other lyric songs (sub-genres) that this study has circumvented (these are *ashoo-ashilaa*, *trar-tarri*, *faaruu loonii* etc.)

1.5. Socio- Historical background of the Arsi Oromo

In this section, an attempt has been made to introduce Arsi with respect to geographical location, the people's socio-political, cultural, economic, life and linguistic background in the context of its oral tradition in a way more that is relevant to the study.

The Arsi Oromo people are one of the major Oromo groups inhabiting south central Oromia. Regarding this, Abas Haji (1982) says that the Arsi (*Siko-Mando*) are one of the largest branches of the Oromo ethnic group like the *Macca-Tulama*, *Sabo-Gona*, *Itu-Humbana*, *Raya-Azebo*. They live not only in the present day Arsi region, but also in both sides of the Wabe Shebele River. The Arsi residential territory stretches to Tulama and Ania in the north of Somalia in the east to Borana in the south Sidama and Darasa in the west.

Concerning its location, Hussein Badhaso (2000) says that the Arsi habitat is bounded on the north, by Tulama and Ania, on the east by Somali, on the south by the Borana Oromo community who extend into Kenyan territory and on the west by the Sidama and Darasa. Similarly, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arsi_Zone further indicates that, the recent Arsi territorial location as it is bounded on the south by Bale, on the west by the Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples' Region, on the North west by East Shawa, on the North by Afar Region and on the east by Western Hararghe.

Hitherto, there is no written historical evidence that clearly states when and why the name Arsi was given in the area. However, there are different assumptions which are traditionally (orally) handed down. Hence, for the purpose of this research, it will suffice to accept an assumption,

which seems valid and supported by different scholars. According to some studies, the name Arsi is derived from a man called Arsi (Arse) and Arsi(e) had got two children called *Siko* and *Mando*. *Siko* and *Mando* in turn begot five and seven children respectively. In the same way, these twelve children reproduced themselves and made large clan and the area now so named alike as ‘Arsi’ which is inhabited by this Arsi group (Hussein, 2000; Abas, 1982). Hussein Badhaso (2000) also asserts that the Arsi derived themselves from the seventeen sons of Arsi, and consequently extended into a common ethnic stratum (Hussein Badhaso, 2000 Abas1982). The five sons called *Shanan Siko* namely *Bullallaa*, *Wacaalee*, *Jaawii*, *Waaajii* and *Ilaanii* and the seven sons are jointly called *Torban Mando* (meaning the seven sons of *Mando*) namely *Raayyaa*, *Kajawaa*, *Hawaxaa* (*Hawaxxuu*), *Utaa*, *waayyuu*, *Harawaa* and *Biiltuu*, respectively.

Jaylan Hussien (2005) in this regard states that the Arsi group sub-group themselves into two contrasting yet complementary subdivisions named *moieties* who are further divided into *Mando* and *Siko moieties*. Another side also confirms that the Arsi Oromo are parts of the largest group of the Oromo, called *Barentu* confederacy and according to Braukomper genealogical data of 1973 their emergence as a separate major Oromo group was dated back to the second half of the 19th century (Dadi Gada, 2000). Other written sources also mention that the Oromo are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia and are divided into two main branches: *Borana* and *Barentu*. Likewise, under *Barentu* confederacy, the Arsi are divided into two main branches namely *Siko* and *Mando* and have settled over a larger area than any other settlement of the Oromo major clans (OCTB, 2006; Jeylan, 2005).

Generally, the Arsi region used was referred to the present-day Bale and Arsi administrative zones. However, in addition to the present Arsi and Bale provinces, the Arsi Oromo settled a large portion of Eastern Shewa and a small portion of Sidama zone of Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) (Hussein Badhaso, 2000; Jeylan Hussein: 2005:25).

1.6. Economic Background

Like the other major ethnic groups of Ethiopia, in general and the Oromo in particular, the Arsi Oromo people’s economic basis is mainly agriculture. Historical records reveal that they were practicing agriculture and herding for quite a long period. Therefore, mixed farming culture is the predominant agricultural activity for the Arsi Oromo. The broader mass of Arsi live in rural

areas depending on a mix of livestock and crop farming for survival so, cultivating and harvesting varieties of crops and having many heads cattle are considered as a mark of prestige and pride.

Cattle raising had been the most valued possession among the Arsi Oromo according to Baxter (1978); Hussein (1990); Lewis (1905) cited in Jeylan Hussien (2005). As it has been confirmed by some informant elders of the present study, one's number of cattle remarkably indicated the economic and social position of a person in the society. Regarding this standard, it has been clearly stated that "among the Oromo, the best cattle men are equally respected together with those who have distinguished themselves on the battle field or a big game hunting" (Sumner, 1997:224). The attempt to attain such value is therefore a part of hard-working observable today among them.

Both men and women have participated in the agricultural work. Besides, the women have been also responsible for domestic activities.

The Arsi seem to have undergone great changes from the stage of pastoral nomadism to cultivation. According to some knowledgeable informants, like other Oromo groups since long, the Arsi were semi pastoralists who depend mostly up on animal husbandry and their products for survival. Gradually, they have come to practice sedentary farming i.e. mixed agriculture. Before the adaptation of mixed farming, the Oromo of this area had used the products of their cattle for food, clothing and shelter and sometimes for bartering. (Dadi Gada, 2000). In addition, the geographical location determined the economy of the inhabitants. Accordingly, the base of the economy of the people living in the highlands is mixed farming of grain crops; coffee together with cattle breeding whereas in the lowlands pastoralism is the dominant economic activity. Owing to its conducive climatic conditions as well as some related ecological attributions, the area's product is a substantial amount of grains and animal products for the central market.

According to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arsi_Zone 11th March 2000 shows, as early as 1912 coffee had also been a major cash crop in Arsi when the two Belgian companies were granted concessions of 1464 hectares of land for cultivating coffee in this zone .

Normally, one and sometimes two crops can be harvested annually from the same field. Among the major food crops are cereals (wheat, barely, teff, sorghum, corn, millet etc.) Ecologically and agriculturally, Arsi is the richest zone in Oromia. Livestock products, coffee and wild life are diverse and abundant.

Briefly, Arsi is generally favored for its abundance of natural resources and suitable climatic conditions for effective agricultural undertaking as well as other development projects.

1.7. Religion

Broadly speaking, the Arsi Oromo at present practice three major types of religion. These are the traditional religion (*Waaqeffannaa*), Islam and Christianity. Gada Melba claims that before the introduction of Christianity and Islam, the Oromo in general and the Arsi in particular practiced their own religion (Gada Melba: 1988). However, since the nineteenth century, the traditional religion had been practiced along with either of the two universal religions. Prior to Christianity and Islam, the Arsi Oromo believed in the Supreme Being called *Waaqaa* (the sky God). *Waaqayyoo* is often called *Waaqaa* short form in Afan Oromo meaning God the creator of all things and the source of all life. "Hence whether the Oromo become Christian or Muslim, the traditional way of exercising their religion has existed (Dadi Gada: 2000). They believed in one *Waaqaa*, which is equivalent to the English word God. *Waaqaa* is the same for all. He is the creator of everything source of all life Omnipresent, infinite in- comprehensible, He can do and undo any thing. He is pure intolerant of injustice crime, sin and all falsehood. Workeneh Kelbesa (2000:22) on his part said that in the Oromo traditional religion, *Waaqaa* has multiple attributes. *Waaqaa* is He who is before everything else. *Waaqaa* is uumaa (a creator of everything in the world). *Waaqaa* is *hunda-beekaa* (omniscient). *Waaqaa* is *hunda- tolaa* (omni benevolent). *Waaqaa* is *hunda danda'aa* (Omnipotent). *Waaqaa* is the source and love of Dhugaa (truth). *Waaqaa* is *qulqulluu* (pure). *Waaqaa* is intolerant of injustice, crime, sin and all falsehood. Furthermore, he says that for the Oromo *Waaqaa* is external and the final cause of all things. The Oromo, therefore, has the concept of Monotheistic supreme God from time immemorial although the Oromo conception of God is quite distinct from the western one (Workeneh, 2001; 22).

Eshete Gemeda (2007: 28) also states that *Waaqaa* is the God of sky and earth, the creator and sustainer of life worshipped in prayer, sacrifice as the guardian of social morality and as the source of all things; good and bad. This underscores the basis of Oromo social ritual and religions aspects in which *Waaqaa* called *Waaqaayo* or Rabbi the omnipotent is the source of life and the creator of everything.

Some of the Arsi Oromo are still practicing traditional belief that was also regarded to be the earlier and native belief of the Oromo people. This is called *Waaqeffannaa* that has been defined as a belief in one God who has created everything and above all in its power. *Qaalluu* (commonly known as *Abba Muudaa*) is a significant and a principal figure in the belief. According to Eshete Gemeda (2007: 28), the traditional ritual ceremonies and festivals are led by a senior *Qaalluu* called *Abbaa Muudaa* (literally the anointing) leader of pilgrimage who was elected on the basis of his intelligence, sound judgment, honesty and spiritual quality. *Qaalluu* is regarded as the eldest son and representative of *Waaqaa* on earth. Hence, *Qaalluu* is guardian of laws of *Waaqaa*, Oromo tradition as well as ethical norms. It played a major role not only in uniting the Oromo people to live up to cultural standards and moral quality but also helped implement the egalitarian principles of the Gada system. As Gada Melba has pointed out the *Qaalluu* institution was once a repository of important ceremonial article (Collective symbols) in the buttaa ceremonial such as the Bokkuu (Scepter) an ornamental rod carried by the Abbaa Gadaa. (Gada Melba (988: 20)

According to Workeneh Kelbesa, the *Qaalluu* serves as an intermediary between human and the ayyaana (spirit). The role of a *Qaalluu* is similar to the role of a bishop in the Christian world and of Imam in the Muslim world. *Qaalluu* or *Qaallitti* (female deity) is expected to respect traditional taboos (safuu) and ritual observances, follow the truth, and avoid sin. (Workeneh Kelbesa, 2001: 26)

Gada Melba asserts that the *Qaalluu* is regarded as the most senior person in the lineage and clan and the most respected in the society. Like wise, the Arsi Gada institution is concerned with formulation of the social, political, cultural and economic orders among the people by creating sets of ritual status based on age and generation. It serves as ritual through which each member of the Arsi society is supposed to pass as well as the organization that regulates this ritual. (Gada

Melba 1988).Henc one can say that the Arsi Oromo particularly the, west Arsi, are stil practicing their traditional religion inspite of being Christian or Muslim.

However, in most parts of Arsi Oromo the people usually depend on two dominant religions and the now less practiced traditional belief. Next to these religions, Protestant is also emerging as newly wide spread denomination in the society especially around Kofale and Shashamane.

According to the informants, the religious practices found in Islam and those found in orthodox Christianity do not however overlap. They are appropriate in their own right. Regarding their religious differences, they usually co-operate in their agricultural activities and share their happiness and adversities.

In addition, the Christians as a whole have established common social norms and conventions and communal rules. Moreover, one can say that there are no feelings of religious segregation or social discrimination or problem of identity crisis in any form of social intercourse at any level of social acts. Hence, they live by respecting each other.

1.8. Marriage

Among the Arsi Oromo, marriage is one of the popular cultural affairs. Therefore, marriage has high social value. It is also encouraged, and its stability is valued for different religions. In the tradition, parents of the male are involved in choosing a wife for their son

According to the informants, polygamy is the common feature of the Arsi Oromo marriage tradition. This is most common among the Muslim community and the followers of traditional religion as they give high regard for begetting many children and maximizing the number of their clansmen. The number of wives a man can have depends upon his wealth. (It is possible for a man to have three or more wives if he could allow each wife to maintain a separate household.) Badhaso cited in Jeylan (2005) supports that Arsi oral traditions also reveal that the people had an elaborate tradition of marriage. Other scholars like Hayase and Liaws (1997); Lewis (1985) cited in Jeylan (2005) state that the Arsi oral traditions reveal the strong root of polygamy, which is also well known in other sub-Saharan countries.

This is evident according to Arsi saying, "*Namni niitii takkaa nama ija takkaa ti.*" Which means a man who is limited to one wife is just like one who has only one eye indicates the value of polygamy in the society (Jaylan Hussien, 2005).

Unlike other parts of Oromia, the Arsi practice varieties of marriage traditions. According to Abas and Hussein, there are six types of marriages namely; *gabbara*, *wolgara*, *membeto*, *hawata*, *butii* and *dhaala*. The first was called *gabbara* a way by which a number of head of cattle ranging from 50-120 have been given to the girls' family. In addition, it may take different forms such as gifts of house furniture, butter, honey etc. Abas (1982), Hussein (2000). The respondents claim that this type of marriage was unusual initially in their tradition but was adopted in the latter period from unknown origin.

The second type of marriage is *wolgara*, which means exchange of girls between the different clans to marry the bride's brothers. However, sometimes a father of a girl would exchange his daughter with that of the in-law's to have another wife. The third is *butii* abduction of the girl without her will and her family consent. The fourth type of marriage is known as *Heweta*, which took place with the agreement of a couple without the permission of the girl's relatives. The fifth kind of marriage is the inheritance of a widow of one's brother by the brother of the dead person. It is known as *dhaala*. Finally, the sixth type of marriage is *membeto* where the sister of the deceased is married to the widower (Abas 1982:15 Hussein 2000). Even though there is continuous campaign against, some of the harmful marriages types have been practiced up to the present time. They have their own marriage lyric poems like *asho-ashila*, *tar-tari* and *baye-bayee* songs which are composed during the wedding occasion.

1.9. Food Culture

Arsi is also known for its unique food culture, which makes it distinct from that of other Oromo groups. The main food crops are barley, wheat and sorghum. *Marqaa* (porridge) and *chukko* are the famous food types in Arsi that are prepared from these crops. Besides, according to informants, there are other types of cultural food and drink. Accordingly, from grain crops, foods like *micciirraa*, *finiina*, *shakaka*, *halaqanaa*, *marqaa*, *bachoo*, *caccabsaa*, *marmaree*, *qixxaa*, *xoroshoo*, *koottaa*, *qunnee*, *qalqalloo*, *xaltaa*, *dibaa*, *gutumaa* and so on are prepared. Similarly, from meat they usually want to eat *dheedii*, *waddii*, *gocaraa*, *hutisa*, *babaa*, *kochee* and the like.

succeeds each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political and ritual responsibilities. (Mengesha Rikitu, 1992:8)

According to informants, this traditional socio-political system has been practiced especially in the area where the research is conducted i.e. the west Arsi Zone. For the Arsi, the Gada institution seems to be an authorized body that generates the social, cultural and political codes and governs the day-to-day life of the people and all aspects of the traditional life of the people. In general, in the Gada system the *qaalluu* is a supreme cultural and religious leader, which governs the social and cultural structure of the Arsi people. This institution is still practiced in west Arsi like Kofale, Qarsa, and Arsi-Negalee. It regulates the day-to-day social, political cultural and economic life.

On the other hand, the *siinqe* institution also plays a great role in the Arsi *Gada* system side by side to regulate the women's socio-cultural, religious and economic aspects of their life. *Sinqee* originally means a thin tall sacred stick held by congregation of women on occasion of peace-making between husband and wife, for prayers during draught and natural calamity, etc. It was used as the weapon by which traditional Arsi Oromo women fought for their gender rights that the *Gada* law provided for them and society honored it. According to Kuwee Kumsa (1997) during the period of *Gada* rule, women were excluded from the politico-military structures, they were not born into a *Gada* grade; they were only married into one. Women were considered sources of life; for them, taking life was considered taboo. Despite its high gender-role segregation, *Gada* was exclusively egalitarian because the two separate domains had a strong functional interdependence and one was not valued any less than the other was. Thus, the *sinqee* institution functioned hand in hand with the *Gada* system as one of its built-in mechanisms of checks and balances (Kuwee Kumsa, 1997, 119). The *sinqee institution* has also had its own distinctive oral lyric genre known as *ateetee* song and is functioning actively in the woredas of the present research site to date.

1.11. Arsi Oral Tradition

Like the other Oromo groups, the Arsi did not have written literature in the past. Oral traditions, thus, remained the sole source of knowledge about the society's socio-cultural experiences (Jaylan Hussien 2005:23). In spite of continuous foreign cultural incursion and pressure, the Arsi are still rich in oral tradition. They use oral tradition or oral literature such as songs, poems,

riddles, prose, narratives and the like to express their feelings, attitudes and beliefs in their life. Historical, cultural and political pieces of information go across generations as well as among the people mainly orally. They transmit their ideas and values by telling folktales, proverbs, oral poem, riddle etc. In other words oral literature reflects various aspects of their life.

Oral lyrics which are the focus of this study, are applied as a medium of transmission of socio-cultural information (customs, beliefs, norms, internal feeling, and moral) and the like from one generation to the next. Regarding this, Jaylan also notes that this describes the economy, culture and history of the people of the area. Therefore, oral tradition is the part and parcel of their life. One can for example interpret the nature of the people's economic values and type from their oral literature in general and from their oral lyric poetry in particular. For example, the "*faaruu loonii*" cattle praising songs of Arsi convey the prestige of pastoral economy in the society. (Jaylan Hussien 2005:20).

Furthermore, their oral traditions, like marriage songs *ashoo ashilaa*, *baye-bayee*, *tar-tarii*, and the like reveal that the people have an elaborate tradition of marriage with various prohibitions and preferences. Apart from this, their different lyrics serve to mirror their popular details of realities of life. As a result of this, whether literate or illiterate, Arsi people exclusively use oral literature like proverbs, lyric oral poetry and sayings in their expression of feeling, ideas wishes, beliefs, etc. Since, they give more value to oratory and folklore, they are concerned about its gradual extinction and they want their tradition to be compiled and persevered. Hence, one can assert that their oral tradition especially the lyric oral poetry is a vehicle or pivotal in its role to create public response to cultural, social, political and economic issues at large.

1.12. Language

Since the Arsi belong to the Oromo ethnic group, the widely spoken is the Oromo Language, Afan Oromo that is a native language descending from its Cushitic language family. Amharic Language has also been used as a medium of communication beginning from the period of the Amharic speaking rulers. For a long time, Amharic had been the official and church language that was spoken in towns and Christian dominated areas. Yet Afan Oromo has remained the widely-spoken regional or official language by vast population in the present Oromia in general and in Arsi zone in particular. In this connection, the Arsi local dialect and cultural originality is so

unique that it is interesting for other cultural counterparts because language is one defining feature of the local cultural, social, historical, economic and psychological setup of a group of people from past to present through future.

1.13. The Background of West Arsi Zone

Unless specific information is needed, almost all aforementioned points relating to Arsi in general relate to the West Arsi. Since West Arsi is the focus of this study, it is worth-giving a brief background about the area and the society.

West Arsi Zone was reorganized in 2006 following the new administrative reform of the region, which was implemented by the Federal Democratic Republic Government of Ethiopia. West Arsi has an area of 11 774.4 sq. km. It is surrounded on the North, East, North-West and South directions by Arsi, Bale, East Shewa Zones and SNNPRS respectively. Formerly, the woredas of West Arsi were part of the East Shewa, Arsi and Bale Zones.

The capital town of West Arsi Zone is Shashamane, which is located at 250 km South East to Addis Ababa. Administratively, the town is divided into one city council and seven kifla-katama (districts or kebeles) with an estimated population of more than 134, 000. Shashamane serves as a crossroad for all southern towns of the country. It is close to Rift Valley lakes and tourists attraction areas (Awassa, Abjata, Langano, Shalla, Bishangari Lodge) all of which are known for their unique biodiversity and various types of endemic birds.

The zone exhibits a rough landscape and has three different climatic areas; cool, temperate and hot (i.e. Badda, Beddadare and Gamojjii). These various types of climatic condition and the fertility of the zone are suitable for crop production such as cereals, fruits and vegetables. Outstanding landmarks of the mid-east and the rift-valley natural lakes, namely Langano, Abjata, Shalla, part of Lake Awassa are found in the western part of the zone. Administratively West Arsi Zone is organized into 12 Woredas, namely Shashamane, Arsi Negele, Shalla/Ajje, Siraro, Kofale, Qore, Gadab-Asasa, Dodola, Kokosa, Adaba, Nansebo, Shashamane town (Pamphlet from West Arsi Zone Culture and Tourism Office, 1999).

The most dominant people in west Arsi especially in the rural area are the Oromo who are followers of the Islam religion. Shashamane town is unique for being an interception point of

many towns in west Arsi and a commercial juncture or center of multi-ethnic groups like the Amhara, Gurage, Wolayta, Kembata, Tigre...etc both as passengers or residents. These non-Oromo are mainly followers of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant religions. On the other hand, the Oromo traditional belief '*Waaqeffannaa*' (a belief in *Waaqaa* a super God) is also still practiced side by side with the above-mentioned religions. This is evident in Kofale, Arsi- Negele and other woredas.

Concerning education or schools, in 2005-06 in west Arsi zone (excluding Shashamane town) there are about 165 first cycle primary (grade 1-4), 251 second cycle primary (grade 5-8), 12 junior and 5 comprehensive high schools. All the primary schools are government owned except 12 first cycle primary and 12-second cycles primary schools. Twenty-four first cycle secondary, two junior, and a single comprehensive high schools are private schools.

As it was mentioned earlier, the basis of the economy of the zone is agriculture. Agricultural production, which is mainly subsistence, is in the hands of individual farmers who cultivate based on traditional farming. In the zone, mixed crops wheat, barley, enset, potato, maize, beans, peas, soybeans, sorghum, *teff*, coffee and fruits are produced. Besides, coffee, lentils, *chat*, leanseeds, onion and some exportable items such as hides and skins are the main products for cash. Minerals are also produced in the zone. The zone is also one of the main organic coffee growing areas in the region and is favorable for extensive agriculture. Moreover, it is also the centre of mechanized state farms namely *Gofer*, *Serofta*, *Ardayita* and *Hunte* etc. (Pamphlet from West Arsi Zone Culture and Tourism Office, 1999).

West Arsi zone is also the home of domestic animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, horses, donkeys and mules that are important in various forms of the life of the society. The zone has dense forests in mid eastern highlands, which are rich in "*Birbbissa*, *woddeessa*, *Hindheessa*, *Ejersaa*, *Heexoo*, *Qilxuu*, *Leemmanii*" and many other species of indigenous trees are used for timber production, firewood, shade for coffee plants, animals, soil preservation etc.

Furthermore, west Arsi has varied natural and cultural attractive areas in the Rift valley as well as in mountainous areas of Dodola, Adaba and Nensebo woreda. These mountain areas are the home of wild animals including hyenas, monkeys, apes, red fox, mountain nyala, antelope, leopard, rabbit, olive-baboon, swain's hartebeest, wild pigs, and various endemic birds. (Pamphlet from West Arsi Zone Culture and Tourism Office, 1999).

CHAPTER TWO

A Review of Related Literature

2.1 The Concept of Folklore

Since oral-lyric poetry, which is the core subject of this study, is part-and-parcel of the broad body of 'folklore'. It may be worthwhile to deal with the concept to a certain extent. As far as the researcher is concerned, there is no clear-cut definition of folklore. Different scholars defined folklore from different perspectives. Regarding this, scholars assert that the definition of folklore has created much controversy among scholars for a long time (Dundes, 1965:1-3; Bauman, 1984 cited in Fekade Azeze, 2003; Leach, 1950:398-399; Melakneh Mengistu, 2005:10; Fekade Azeze, 1989:33 and Shibeshi Lema, 1986:9). It may be worth considering some of the arguments that are raised by some of these scholars. For instance, Dundes (1965:1-3) cited in Fekade (2003:105) states:

Debates about how folklore should be defined have been waged continuously ever since William Thomas coined the word in 1846. Lore-the materials of folklore rather than the people who use the materials has been described in terms of origin, form, transmission, and function.

Furthermore, he also explains, that there has been no widespread agreement among folklorists about what folklore is. Similarly, Bauman (1984:37 cited in Fekade 2003) also strongly agrees that the definition of folklore is a debatable issue. He said:

Folklorists ever since the late eighteenth century have continued to give pride of place to oral folklore indeed, some would define folklore itself as "oral literature" or "verbal art" or "literature orally transmitted," though others would insist on the inclusion of customary, behaviors and beliefs, materials folk culture and the like.

From this quotation, one can understand that there is a disagreement among scholars in defining folklore. In addition, this disagreement occurs among scholars who categorize folklore as a verbal art and includes customary behaviors and beliefs, material folk culture and the like.

Concerning these controversies, Leach (1950:398-399), in her standard dictionary of folklore, mythology and legend has provided twenty-one definitions of folklore. Among these definitions, however, the researcher focused on the ones that are related to this study. For example, Jonas Balys cited in Leach (1950:398-399) states:

Folklore comprises traditional creation of people, primitive and civilized. These are achieved by using sounds and words in metric form and prose [including] talk, beliefs or superstitions, customs and performances, dances and plays. Moreover, folklore is not a science about a folk, but the traditional folk science and folk-poetry."

According to the same source, it can be said that folklore is the accumulated store of what humanity has experienced learned and practiced across the ages as popular and traditional knowledge, as distinguished from so called scientific knowledge. Specifically, folklore consists of the beliefs, customs, superstitions, proverbs, riddles, songs, myths, legends, tales ritualistic ceremonies, magic, witchcraft, and all other manifestations and practices of primitive and illiterate peoples and of the "common" people of civilized society. Folklore has very deep roots and its traces are present even among peoples that have reached a high state of cultural development.

The matters that occupy the student of folklore and folk life may be placed under this, sung, and voiced forms of traditional utterance that show repetitive patterns one large subdivision is folk narrative, which in turn has its own manifold distinctions. Other major subdivisions of folk songs or folk poetry are related to family or species of lyric poetry itself. Traditional tales and songs circulate by word of mouth. Besides, the originators of this work are unknown. They may be short anecdotes and rhymes or elaborate romances and epics (Dorson, 1972) cited in Leach (1950:398-399).

Dorson (1972:5) also classifies folklore into four main categories based on its function. These are: oral literature, a social folk customer, material/culture and perform folk art. Similarly, Alan Dundes (1986:5) supports the above idea by stating that folklore is the tradition, unofficial-non-institutional part of culture that encompasses all knowledge, understanding, values, attitudes, assumptions, feelings and 'beliefs transmitted in traditional forms by word of mouth or

conventionally. Ethiopian scholars like Shibeshi Lema (1986:8) and Melakneh Mengistu (2005:12) further summarized other scholars' controversial definitions of folklore. They agree that folklore denotes man's social and material heritage and specifically 'oral literature', refers to the verbal form of the heritage, characterized by its artistic qualities. It is transmitted from generation to generation by word of mouth like, oral lyric poetry.

From the above discussion, it can be inferred that folklore refers not only to the unwritten literature of people, but also to the customs, beliefs and traditions that people have handed down from generation to generation.

Folklore encompasses orally performed traditions and artistic expressions of the people in their accumulated life experience, which is handed down from one generation to the next. Oral literature is one of the main categories of folklore which consists of both prose and verses such as poems and songs, myths tales, fables, proverbs and the like. The researcher focuses on oral poetry and attempted to analyze its social, political and economic significance.

2.2 An Overview of Oral Poetry

In this section, the researcher discusses oral poetry, which is the subject of the study. In doing so, the definition, characteristics, and the significance of oral poetry are touched upon.

According to Lord (1965: 591) cited in, http://en-wikipedia.org/wiki/oral_poetry retrieved 23 March 2008 online, "Oral poetry is a form that is transmitted orally and memorized or improved rather than written down." Furthermore, it is stated that oral poetry existed primarily within oral cultures. Similarly, Eshete Gemeda (2007:211) also defines oral poetry as song that originally existed among the people who highly use oral tradition from one generation to the next. Oral poetry exists in several versions. It includes love lyric (love songs), work songs, cattle praising songs etc...

On the other hand, some scholars relate oral poetry with traditional people. For instance, in the words of Getiye (2000:21) "poetry is composed in oral performance by people who cannot read or write. It is synonymous with traditional and folk poetry." However, this definition has its own limitations because the literate people can also use oral poetry for different purposes. Regarding this idea, Finnegan (1977:24) argues that "Oral poetry is not a single and simple thing. It can

occur in many different kinds of setting.” Furthermore, she explains that, “poetry can occur in a society with partial literacy or even mass literacy as well as in supposed 'primitive' culture". Shibeshi defined oral poetry as one of the important branches of oral literature. As Shibeshi (1986:9) Oral poetry is also considered as the oldest form of verbal art. Shibeshi also added that oral poetry encompasses various types of songs like oral lyric poetry which are sung on different occasions and for different purposes.

According to Finnegan (1977:15), “oral poetry essentially circulates by oral rather than written means, its distribution, composition or performance are by word of mouth not through reliance on the written or printed word”. From the above definition one can infer that oral poetry can be composed, performed and transmitted orally from person to person, or from one generation to the next generation.

Finnegan (1977:3) added that "oral poetry is not an odd or aberrant phenomenon in human culture. It is not a fossilized survival from the far past, destined to wither away with increasing modernization. In fact, it is a common occurrence in human society." From this definition, one can understand that oral poetry is not only just a survival of the past but it is a normal part of our modern life as well as that of people who are more distant.

Furthermore, she also argues that poetry is common to human beings throughout time and space. She states, “Oral poetry is not just something of far away and long ago. In a sense, it is all around us; still it is found all over the world past and present" (Finnegan 1977:4). Therefore, it can be concluded that people use oral poetry in their daily life with out the limitation of time and space.

According to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/oral-poetry> retrieved 23 March 2008 “oral poetry differs from oral literature in general, which can include short and more variable pieces and can coexist much more with written literature, by certain consistencies within its form.” From this, one can observe that the form of oral poetry is almost similar to that of written poetry. Oral poetry is a prevailing form of oral literature, which is found in different contexts and used by many people unlike written literature. Besides, its style makes it unique compared to the other genres of oral literature.

Likewise, Finnegan (1970:98) asserts that poetry is the oldest literary genre for African people in general and Ethiopians in particular. She also considers Ethiopia as one important exception in that "there is a long history of patronage of the Coptic Christian church". She particularly appreciates 'qine', which according to her is oral essential poetry, a famous product of the 'dabtaras', or professional religious poets. Furthermore, she also mentions the role of Azmari' or professional free-lance poets of Ethiopia, who according to her are found everywhere, from the courts to the poorer houses, roads or to public gatherings commenting on their audience or on local events.

Therefore, oral poetry is the oldest form of oral literature for African people in general and Ethiopian people in particular. In other words, it is possible to say that oral poetry is closely connected with the life of the Ethiopian people.

Finnegan (1977:264), Daniel (1998) and Getiye (2000:68) strongly claim that poetry and society are interrelated. Getiye Gelaye (2000:172) argued that:

Poetry exists together with our lives. Here in the country side, regardless of age and sex every one composes a variety of poems and songs, or recites and improvises others poems we sing songs and recite poems in the agricultural fields, on our journeys in the bush, on holidays, at weddings and funerals. We also sing songs when we feel Lonely, helpless and during impositions and injustices imposed on us by the state and its local agents. In general, we express our happiness and sadness in our poems and songs (Getie Gelaye 2000:172).

Finnegan (1970:57, (1977:145) argues that a society can be fully understood with its songs. Kabira and Mutahi, (1983:3) in Mesfin (2000:9) support this view and note that, "In order to understand one's community, it is important to look at their literature. Both written and oral literature reflects and shapes the lives and ideas of a people." Hence, oral poetry can reflect society's ways of life its culture and philosophy of life. Therefore, by looking into the oral poetry of a certain society, it is possible to get a glimpse into the social norms of a given society.

Daniel (1999:8) Fekade (1998:10) comment Oral poetry is one of the most popular literary forms. Hence, people with little or no education and regardless of sex and age express their happiness and sorrow by their lamentation in poetic forms. Furthermore, Fekade Azeze(1998:9-10) states that:

One source of the peasant knowledge and knowledge about the peasantry itself is oral literature. The history, culture beliefs and practice of the people are found in their folk tales, oral poetry, and the various forms of oral literature. These are also important sources to the study of the attitude of peasants to the life death, work development and reality around them in general.

Fekade also reminds readers that it is important to study oral literature if students of literature are to appreciate, the people's feelings, hopes, fears, aspirations, philosophy and aesthetics. Generally speaking, people's ways of life are reflected through oral literature (Fikade, 1998:3). Based on the above ideas, one can say that oral literature in general and oral poetry in particular can reflect the value of a given society.

Regarding the major themes of oral poetry, Dessalegn (1991) cited in Fekade (1998:10) said that, "hunger, induced, migration, peasant grievances against injustice etc. are some of the major themes that are reflected in folk songs." Similarly Okpewho (1992:138) notes that, "love, praise, criticism, war and death are themes which are discussed in Africa oral literature and oral poetry in particular."

Finnegan (1970: 272), Okpewho (1992), Anrzejewski (1985) Getiye, (2000) and Assefa (2006) agree that poetry plays a special role in most African rural communities, especially during times of social and political change. Likewise, the Oromo poems and songs also play a significant role in reflecting serious contemporary issues and problems of rural society besides their functions as sources of entertainment and instruction and justification in the daily lives of the peasants. Concerning this Tasama (2000: 51) cited in Assefa (2006:98) states that:

Abusive Oromo songs are sometimes directly used as a means of social pressure, enforcing the will of public opinion. Though no names are

mentioned unpopular individuals, or those who look for opportunities during such hard time, as in the geerrarsa song above about a bad final in history's one ridiculed and attacked through geerrarsa.

According to Assefa (2006:16), "oral poetry plays an important, often pivotal role in correcting public life of the Oromo people and does not merely consist of those anonymous oral narratives and poems handed down by tradition." From the above statement, one can conclude that Oromo poems and songs can be used for reporting and commenting on current affairs, for political propaganda, to reflect and influence public opinion. Briefly, Oromo people's oral poetry enhances a positive image of their public life in one way or the other.

In addition, the Oromo people use poetry for different socio-cultural purposes in different social contexts. For instance, as Andrzejewski (1985:413) asserted, religious poetry is used in the traditional religion for prayers, blessings and invocations connected with ceremonies, festivals and sacrifices. Furthermore, she explains that in their prayers the Oromo people ask for various favours including protection against the ills and dangers of this world. Besides, the above function they also use poetry extensively in connection with pastoralist, agriculture and allied pursuits, domestic animals, and the like (Andrzejewski, 1985: 413-414) and Sumner, (1997:370-371).

Oral poetry also provides people with mental relief by responding to their questions regarding the natural phenomena and their surrounding. Regarding this Eshete (2007:138) says that poetry is a response to this call and it is seen as a literal reaction to the external world of which he is an integral part" (Loelb, 1988:170 cited in Eshete, 2007:138). Furthermore, Loelb further explains, "poetry is a natural utterance having a timeless quality. It does not merely occur in a particular circumstance, but it must be understood as being a response to every circumstance." In other words, this indicates that oral poetry is characterized by being truth of all or no specific times of publication as if it were factual.

The social and historical context always encompasses the narrative in a particular occasion and the impulse of the poet here is to secure its permanent existence. He/she does this by locating appropriately the image with in the putative original. "For example, the *Daboo* is part of Oromo co-operative movement of the *Gadaa* tradition, which is viewed as the center of perfect social

harmony; it is the base for solving social and economic problems and facilitator of national and democratic outlook'' (Eshete, 2007:137-138).

To sum up, the researcher of this thesis has touched up on the definition, the significance and the over all characteristics of oral poetry. This is to say that oral poetry is delivered by word of mouth. In addition, using poetic devices like rhyming and figurative speech, for example, makes oral poetry unique from the rest of oral literary genres. Moreover, she has also discussed the unlimited role of oral poetry which reflects the political, cultural, moral, philosophy and experience of people's life.

2.3 Overview of Lyric Poetry

In this section, the researcher discusses genre of lyric poetry, which is the central subject of the study. To begin with, all features of oral poetry can be applied to lyric poetry. Besides, the researcher has chosen this topic because of two major reasons. Firstly, the researcher wants to limit the area of the study since there are different forms of oral literature such as ballad, epic and panegyric etc... The second reason for choosing the topic is because lyric poetry is the shortest form of oral poetry and is usually linked to the day-to-day human activities.

A number of scholars have given different definitions of lyric poetry. Nevertheless, among these various definitions, the researcher of this thesis focuses on certain definitions that are in one way or another related to the subject under discussion.

According to *The New College Dictionary* (1980:307) cited in Mesfin (2000:8) "a lyric is a poem having a form and quality of a song". It is also defined as "a short subjective poem, a song-like outburst of the author's inner most thoughts and feeling" (Mesfin, 2000:308). This definition implies that lyric poetry is composed based on and incorporating the author's intention and feelings instead of others' feeling exclusively.

Lyric poetry, as one genre of oral poetry, is a relatively short non-narrative poem to sing. As Finnegan (1970:241) stated, "It is a short poem which is sung and probably the most common form of poetry....one of the most important kinds of African oral literature". Abrams (1981:99) also defined lyric as "the term is now used for any short non-narrative poem presenting a single speaker who expresses a state of mind of a process of thought." According to the above

definition, lyric has the power to expose the abstract feelings of the author that are revealed immediately and clearly to individuals themselves than any other person. Hence, it is more personal than other kinds of poetry. Besides lyric is also a short song, which is performed by an individual singer by using an instrument called lyre about his/her, feeling. Melakneh Mengitu (1999:80) also supports the above idea by saying "Lyric is a fairly short poem dealing with the thoughts and feelings of a single speaker, usually taken to be a poet". Finnegan (1977:13) defined lyric as a relatively short non-narrative poem that is sung and it occurs extremely widely. It can probably be universal to human culture. In the above definition, Finnegan pointed out that a lyric is a type of poem which most of the time can be associated with human or cultural issues. She also said that lyric is extremely important and a wide category of oral poetry.

As to the performance of lyric poetry, there are controversial issues among various scholars. Some say that musical instruments must perform it while others claim that instruments must not perform it. For instance, according to the *New Encyclopedia Britannica* (vol. 7, 1993:592) "lyric is a verse or poem that is supposedly susceptible to being sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument or that expressed intense personal emotion to arouse." From this one can infer that it is harmonized with a musical instrument to suit and to arouse intense personal emotions. "In this respect, what makes lyric unique is not only the personal mood but also the accompaniment of musical instrument.

Regarding the accomplishment of the instrument, Martin retrieved on 2 March 2008 online, states "lyric poetry is a poem which is much shorter than the narrative poetry and they encompassed many forms and subjects, but they were always performed with accompaniment of the lyre." From these two definitions, it can be inferred that lyric cannot be performed with out a lyre or a musical instrument. Hence, a musical instrument is one of the most important tools for the production of lyric poetry.

However, Finnegan (1970:24) and other scholars accept both definitions involving performance with musical instrument as well as without the instrument. For instance, "lyric poetry refers to either poetry that has the form and musical quality of song or a usually short poem that expresses personal feelings, which may or may not be set to music. It is a poem that expresses feelings and may be a song that could be performed to an audience" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/poetry> retrieved 3 March 2008). Therefore, the researcher feels that the poet may or may not use an

usually consist of only two lines". Nevertheless, this does not mean that all lyric poetry consists of only two lines. Regarding this Birhanu Gebeyehu (1999:383) points out that lyric poetry is relatively the shortest form of poetry when compared with other forms of poetry such as ballads, epics etc. One can generalize that sometimes its length may extend to more than two lines.

In addition, repetition is one of its characteristic of oral lyric poetry. According to <http://.wikipedia.org/wiki/poetry>, a common feature of lyric forms is the refrain, whether just one line or several that ends or follows each strophe. The refrain is repeated throughout the poem either exactly or with slight variation.

According to Miruka (1994) cited in Mesfin (2000:87), there are three patterns of oral performance such as solo, choral and antiphonal. Okpewho (1992:135) opined that "There are roughly two patterns of performance in songs and chants: The solo performance and the group performance." Likewise, the lyric oral poetry can be performed either in-groups (antiphonal) or in single (solo) performance.

Regarding the interaction during the performances of oral lyric poetry, Finnegan (1970:270-271) and Okpewho (1992:135) agree that the interaction of performers and audience takes on the form of turn taking between the soloist and the choral who respond in some way. According to Finnegan, with the general antiphonal form, there are several possible variations (ibid). There is more than one cantor; two or even, three may interchange the verses with each other as well as with the accompanying chorus (ibid).

Based on Finnegan (1970:159), Eshete Gameda (2007:125) and Okpewho (1992:35) agree that the other simplest and widely occurring types of antiphonal is repetition in the 'call' and 'response' form and shows how even this type of antiphonal only can be elaborated in actual performance. Regarding this type of antiphonal performance. Okpewho states:

" the group may comprise two or more persons. But the important element in antiphonal is that one party provides a "call" and the other a "response". This may sometimes take the form of "question" and "answer" but more frequently it is advice that allows the performers to take turns in bringing out various sides and aspects of the same subject." (Okpewho (1992:135).

Therefore, the above description of the mode of oral poetic group performance shows that multiple numbers of performers are involved. Besides, the form of the discourse (utterance) takes on a form of verbal prompt questions to elicit answer or response turn by turn in terms of words or statements. In this way, the performers who are taking turns are cautioned or cued to prepare for the next new answer (response) or for further question like turns of kicking a ball more skillfully and competitively.

The "call" and "response" is the defining characteristic of some Oromo song performance like harvest songs and wedding chants. Eshete (2007:125) explains that "The call' and 'response' is, for instance, in work song and cattle song performance, a specific oral text is recited as a salutation in which the style and the recitation usually vary with individual narrator and events or occasions." In other words, it goes without saying that individual performers also vary in entertaining skill and style. The particular response or tune varies with the particular work season and therefore the occasions like harvest, wedding, looking after cattle etc. necessarily have different call and response patterns as well as themes.

In addition, the singers are divided into two singing groups namely, the soloist or lead-singer and those who join in the chorus and each of them recites the same text in a variety of rhythmic tones. The soloist's leading statement or phrase is usually followed by the response of the audience in which every one is joined in the chorus after each verse line takes place in the twoway organization of voice groups, that is, the 'call' and 'response' aesthetic relationship" (2007:125). Likewise, Finnegan (1970:260) also pointed out that "the 'solo' and 'choruse' refrain is another type of antiphonal collaboration between leader and chorus." She also notes that in song of this pattern, there is not the same balanced alternation between the two parts.

There are also occasions on which individual singers perform and compose a lyric. As Mesfin (2000:87) puts it, neither chorus nor instrument supports the soloist performance. Both Finnegan (1970:262) and Mesfin Messele (2000:88) note that solo performance is the nature of specific oral poems like love songs, lullabies, praise songs and some work songs.

From the above discussion, one can infer that people can express their thoughts and feelings about a subject in a brief and artistic way by using lyric poetry. In addition, all lyric poems convey the individual's thoughts and feelings in lively language. Lyric poems also have their

own distinctive features such as musical accompaniment and brevity. Furthermore, they can be composed and performed in different antiphonal performance with different socio-cultural purposes.

2.4 The Importance of Performance

Many scholars like Finnegan (1977:2), Fekade (1984:13) and Bauman (1984) cited in Peter (2007: 47), said that the significance of the actual performance in the collection and analysis of oral literature in general and oral poetry in particular is still largely neglected. Concerning this, Finnegan (1977:121) says that, "performance in oral literature has until recently received less attention than the element which oral poetry more closely shares with written poetry text". Furthermore, she stated that the performance aspect of oral poetry is sometimes forgotten." (Finnegan, 1977:28) However, scholars of oral literature like Finnegan (1977), Okpewho (1992), Bauman (1984), Melakneh (1996), Eshete (2007) Getiye (2000) assert that performance is one important part of oral literature. For example, Finnegan (1977:21) argues that performance is the central criterion. Such cases must be classified as oral literature. Furthermore, she added that performance lies at the heart of the whole concept of oral literature. Hence, performance and content are also applicable to oral literature (Finnegan, 1977:21-28). Particularly, it can play a crucial role in the actual realization of this poetry as literature. Okpewho (1992) also shares Finnegan's idea that the study of performance has become one of the most exciting and rewarding developments in the study of oral literature.

Thus, performance is the first and most basic characteristic of oral literature. According to Finnegan (1970:214) oral literature by nature is "dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion". She further stated that by its nature, oral literature is passed down word for word from generation to generation and thus reproduced from memory through the centuries; or alternatively. Oral literature is something that arises commonly, from the people or 'folk' as a whole. Similarly, Okpewho (1992) bases his definition of oral literature on performance. Nandwa and Bukenya (1983) in Okpewho (1992) "oral literature may be defined as those utterances whether spoken, recited or sung, whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree the artistic characteristics of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenuous expression." From this definition of oral literature, one can understand that one cannot



talk about oral literature in the absence of performance since the performance implies the total act as well as the context or environment involved in the delivery of oral literature. It is also opined that "verbal art" is one which can stress and only to be experienced and studied as the interaction of performance (Peter, 2007:47).

Finnegan (1992:92); Bauman (1984) in Peter (2007:47) conceived that performance is a mode of language use, a way of speech. Finnegan added that performance "becomes constitutive of the domain of verbal art". Similarly, Melakneh (1996) argues that, "performance is the most obvious characteristic of oral literature. It is orally transmitted by word of mouth. It is also based on dramatic presentation of the imaginative interaction of the audience," as Melakneh (1996:15) views it. From the above scholars' point of view, one can understand that performance itself becomes constitutive of the domain of verbal art. In accordance with Bauman in Peter (2007:51), "it must be addressed in the study of verbal art." Besides, scholars who are doing their research on oral literature should give attention to performance.

Performance in poetry is also very important because poetry reflects the actual peoples' life. Concerning this, Finnegan argues that "poetry is not just something, natural and universal' that can be abstracted from its social setting. Its very dissemination depends to a large extent on the varying social conventions that surround its performance and reorganization" (Finnegan, 1977:27). She also added that the setting apart through performance and content is also clearly applicable to unwritten poetry. Finnegan stresses that emphasis should be given to recognize like mode of delivery or social function and setting. Regarding this Finnegan puts (1977:26) as:

A 'poem' may include the context and setting of the performance the mode of delivery, the audience's action, the musical-setting as well as the stylistic features already mentioned (particularly the recurrence of refrains) and in general the atmosphere of 'play' rather than 'reality' an activity set a part from, 'real life'.

On the other hand, Finnegan (1977:17) and Birhanu (1998) assert that performance is one of the criterion that makes poetry 'oral'. According to Finnegan, there are three criteria in oral poetry. These are related to (1) composition, (2) mode of transmission and (3) performance of the oral poetry.

Furthermore, Wanjiku, Bukenya and Austin (1994:98) quoted in Finnegan (1977:2) also stressed the role of performance in oral literature "for one to appreciate fully the significance, the depth and the impact of oral literature, one has to witness its actual performance". This is true of all the genres in oral literature because the actual performance depends on the socio-cultural background, the mood of the oral artist, the audience, and the ambience. Eshete (2007:65) supports the above idea by saying that folk literary genres reflect social realities and the experienced situations, and their study involves four major points: The narrator or performer, the audience, cultural milieu, and historical situation. The relevance or irrelevance and the continuity or discontinuity of any verbal narrative depends on the perfect or imperfect unity of these factors. Concerning this Goldstein (1975:11) in Eshete (2007:65) stated that:

Similarly, the notion of performance is central to the study of folklore as communication. Indeed, it is through the study of performance that folklore can integrate its scientific and humanistic aims in a forward-looking way. On the other hand, the notion focuses on social interaction and the kinds of communicative competence that enters into interaction.

Coming to Oromo folklore, Eshete (2004:26) puts that besides recreational value the performance of Oromo folklore has also a special purpose. For instance, the *suunsumaa* (satirical humorous poems) are performed to address social equilibrium, political and moral correctness, whereas work songs record people's collective endeavor and the importance of lasting solidarity. He states that:

"The 'Call' and 'response' singing in work songs creates oral aesthetic event in which harmonious and spontaneous friendly interaction takes place within the group. Therefore, the performance of a song establishes communal values and reinforces social order within Oromo society. As the manifestation of social cohesion, it reminds the new generation of the qualities of conducts that are appreciable and praise worthy in cultural communication". (Eshete, 2007:126).

From this, one can understand that Oromo oral performance can be used for recreational (make people joyful) relaxation, and to express people's social values. It can be used as means of reflecting the political, social, cultural and economic aspects of life. Oromo oral poems show the reality of the Oromo people as a mirror shows one real image. Furthermore, Eshete added as performance conveys certain messages within a given space and time, the social context which determines the meaning of a verbal text needs to be understood by the consumers or the audience. According to Eshete, a successful performance of folk song can occur not merely because certain action is unique to the context of a particular text but if that action serves as a powerful mirror of the existing reality.

On the other hand, Goldsten (1975), cited in Eshete (2007:125) asserted that performance is a very vital step of oral literature. Regarding this, Goldsten puts it as:

The notion of performance is central to the study of folklore as communication indeed; it is through the study of performance that folklore can integrate its scientific and humanistic aims in a forward-looking way. On the other hand, the notion focuses on social interaction and the kinds of communicative competence that enter into interaction: (Goldstein, 1975:/cited in Eshete 2007:125).

Therefore, the researcher believes that performance is significant and oral literature should be interpreted in relation to the social context from which it springs.

2.5. Composition and Performance of Oral Poetry

As different scholars such as Finnegan (1977); Birhanu (1998); Mesfin (2000) and Tesfaye (2007) argue the nature and process of composing poetry have caused many controversies in the study of oral poetry. The main arguments among scholars focus on the question of authorship, memorization, composition-in-performance and composition prior to performance. Among the above controversies, however, the researcher would like to examine the question of authorship since it is a topical issues.

For some scholars like Alembi cited in Tesfaye (2007:9), oral poetry is believed to have no specific composer. Scholars assert that the authorship of a given piece of oral poetry belongs to the community as a whole in which it is recited. Scholars known as the pupilists support this idea. According to Finnegan (1977:45), the pupilists and the specialist school, argued that poetry is a communal creation with no acknowledged individual author. In addition, pupilists argue that oral poetry is "the possession of the people." Finnegan (1977:45) cited in Birhanu (60). However, many scholars do not support this idea. For instance, Alembi, (2002: 40) cited in Tesfaye argue that "Though the specific poet may not be known, any piece of poetry is supposed to have a composer/even though it is very difficult to identify the particular poet, every poetry has its own composer. Finnegan (1977:188) shares Alembi's idea when she asserts "researchers in oral poetry have recently come up with an alternative view which proves that oral poetry is not generally anonymous or communal creation but a specialized one with a named poet'. In the same way, Birhanu (1988) also believes that oral literature has a particular poet. Birhanu asserts that any oral poetry is composed by a poet .However, the society immediately uses the individual poetry on different occasions and it considers as if it is their property". He states that:

But since oral poetry is mainly transmitted through the word of mouth, it spreads like "bush fire" from one person to another. In learning and delivering a certain piece, the original composition involves some changes so that it will not be the same song any more" (Birhanu, 1998:61).

From this, one can understand that, oral poetry can be transformed as it is recited by many people who add their style to it.

From Finnegan viewpoint (1977:170) a variety of people are expected to be poets in different groups and societies. She states that most poets are men and there is also a situation in which the women poets perform and compose poetry individually. However, it seems that it is less common for specialist poets to be women.

In addition to the above evidence, Finnegan asserts that there is an individual poet .She identifies the different types of poet in the tradition of societies where poetic composition is the domain of specialists.

There are 1) the professional poets with official and permanent position (perhaps organized into self-perpetuating and powerful group) 2) free-lance and unit a cued poets who are never the less often highly specialized and effective 3) less specialized poets who emerge when poetry is diffused widely through society and poetic craft expected in a measure form every one (Finnegan 1977:200 cited in Birhanu 1998:61).

From this, one can deduce that oral poetry in general and that of Arsi oral-lyric poetry in particular can be performed and composed; by one of the above-mentioned poets everywhere depending on the socio-cultural situation of the society.

The poet has the chance to compose and perform oral poetry on different occasions. Finnegan argues that oral poetry can be composed and performed according to the nature of each genre. It is also performed on different occasions such as marriage, workplace, funeral and the like. These songs are composed spontaneously as the occasion demands (Finnegan cited in Birhanu, 1998:30). This idea is supported by Okpewho (1992:128) who says that "the Yoruba of Nigeria have various kinds of 'oral poetry' performed on a variety of occasions" Similarly, African people compose and perform oral poetry on different occasions. It is commonly known that Africans recite poetry while doing their work. Concerning this Okpewho (2007:137) states that:

...there are hardly any occasions our activity in traditional African life that is not accompanied by songs and chants. When a child is born, songs accompany the moments of receiving and merry-making at the good fortune. When the child is crying or about to sleep, lullabies are song by the mother. Of course, intend to "Lulu" the child forest"...

Like wise, different events in the society like wedding, work, funerals, etc... are occasions in which the Oromo lyric poetry is recited/performed: These occasions are common contexts in which the individual compose or performed oral poetry.

Similarly, the Oromo people in general and the Arsi in particular usually compose and perform oral poetry during their daily activities and to express the emotional need of the love makers. They want to express their emotions through poetry.. Regarding this Eshete states that:

The Oromo Weelluu /weedduu/love lyric is a short poem in verse produced by individual composer and it serves as cultural and literary reputation for the pastoralist who composes. It is one of the most striking examples of romantic comedy and emotional love poetry in rural Oromiya, especially among the young population. There are at least two related themes of the poems: those addressed to the beloved woman, especially a girl, in hope of marriage, and second, to women loved and admired from a far whom other poet has seen once and wishes to see once again. In the wedduu poetry, the verbal artist narrates and frustrated love creates an atmosphere of sincere and profound emotion (Eshete, 2007:128).

Okpewho (1992:100) also supports Eshet's idea by saying "performance take place in many kinds of situations from highly organized and planned to quite informal or impromptu. It is important to be alert to this variety rather than just presupposing one model (most likely projected from personal preconceptions)". In addition, different ceremonial occasion like wide ritual ceremonial occasions are situations in which the poet can compose and perform oral poetry. Regarding this Okpewho (1992:137-8) states that:

Burying the ceremonies marking entry into adolescence-initiation ceremonies for boys and puberty rites for girls songs are performed to mark this important stage in traditional African life. When the adult gets married, songs mark the occasion-ranging from good-humored fantast the young man or woman surrendering along cherished freedom for the "prison" of the mental home to sincere advice to the young life on how to ensure a happy life for her self and her new family.

Furthermore, he said "songs and chants also accompany the various occasions of men and women, ...the various chants that contain formulae for healing ailments or foretelling the future; or the inspired chants and songs aimed at firing the course of hunters and warriors before encounter to praise them for their fate" (Ibid:138).

Oral poetry is also compiled when one wants to admire certain fellows because of their great achievements. Concerning this, Okpewho (1992:142) says "praise poetry is performed mentally

based on feeling of admiration of a person or an object." Okpewho adds, "A poet who praises the manly looks of a warrior is perhaps moved by as much admiration as the young Acholi lover who praises the face and the neck of his girl friend. In discussing praise poetry, however, we are inclined to look at those songs with highlight the achievements of the subject of praise or at least those sterling qualities that make a person superior to every one else and a leader of his/her kind." Furthermore, he said that praise poetry is performed in variety of customers fighter by the subject of the praise or by some one else attached to the subject who may enjoy some patronage or employment by the subject (1992:142).

Besides, Okpewho (1992:144) notes that 'how', when, by 'whom' the praised poetry is performed" a good majority of praise poetry deals, however, with the praise of others by more or less professional praise-singers, sometimes accompanied with musical instruments such as drums (as among the Yoruba). Many of the people thus praised have distinguished themselves in various endeavors such as war, hunting and farming.

On the other hand, different scholars like Finnegan (1977), Mesfin (2000), Birhanu (1998) Getiye (2000) noted that oral literature in general and oral poetry in particular are composed and performed at different times to different audiences by different singers differently. In this respect, Okpewho (1992:42) says "one form of oral performances differ from the other depending on factors such as the age and energy of the performer, the nature of occasion and setting". Similarly, Kabira and Bukenya (1994:98) also argue that performance will vary from place to place and from artist to artist, the rendition of even standard memorized piece can never be the same. Birhanu (1998:30) supports the above idea by saying that performance varies largely from one form of poetry to the other. It demands different kinds of audience participation. Some forms need to be recited whereas others need to be delivered in declamation or songs. Some require the participation of the audience in singing the refrains whereas others are purely solo. Some are accompanied by hand claps and drum, whereas others do not need this. Likewise, the Arsi oral lyric poetry is composed (performed) differently based on various contexts for different socio-cultural purposes.

From the above discussion, one can understand that oral poetry is composed by individuals or groups of poets. In addition, different occasions such as weddings, religious ceremonies, children's games, funerals, elegiac etc are best opportunities for the composition of oral poetry.

2.6 A Review of Local Studies Related to Oromo oral Poetry

Under this section, the researcher attempts to review some studies published and unpublished materials on Oromo oral literature in general and oral poetry in particular. The works reviewed in this section are directly related in many aspects to the present study. .

There are a few published materials on Oromo oral literature in general and oral poetry in particular. Among these works, *Cerullis (1922) Folk Literature of (the Oromo) of Southern Ethiopia* is one of them. This book is mainly a collection of oral songs, proverbs and narratives from the tribes of *macca* Oromo. This study has contributed much to the development of Oromo oral literature since it is one of the earliest works to deal with Ethiopian oral literature in general and Oromo oral literature in particular. The oral texts in this work also serve as the reflection of the socio-cultural environment of Oromo society within the context of late nineteenth century Ethiopia.

The second published research work is Sumner (1997) *Oromo Wisdom Literature volume II songs*. It is a compilation of collections and analysis of 208 poems from the various regional Oromo groups. This study is much more relevant to the present work. The poems had first been collected and printed by different expatriate scholars in different languages: Italian, French, German and English. Sumner's attempt at classifying is made mainly on the bases of genres, subject matter and clear situations. Since his data is dependent on secondary sources, it does not show the real social context. Nevertheless, he has played a great role in compiling the texts into one volume.

The other published work is *Afoola Oromo Sirba Warroomii Geerrarsa Mararoo* (1993). In this study, the authors have attempted to collect different types of Oromo oral poetry. However, they have not indicated the areas from where they have collected the poems. Moreover, they do not indicate the social context and performance during the composition of the actual poems. In other words, these poems are neither analyzed nor discussed but only classified under different categories based on their themes.

The other most recent published work is Assefa Tefera (2006) *Theorizing the Present Towards a Sociology of Oromo Literature Jaarsoo Waqoo's poetry*. The main objectives of this study is to

analyse the poetic content of 'Dhaaduu' of the Borana 'Geerrarsa' (the poet) and his Dhaaduu attempt is also made to cast light on impacts of the geerrarsa genre on Oromo literature particularly Oromo poetry unlike the former (the above mentioned studies), Assfa's study takes place within the Oromo socio-political and cultural context. However, his study is mainly focused on one aspect (genre) of oral poetry that is the *Geerrarsa*.

Among the unpublished MA works, Desalegn Seyoum (1986) "*Cerulli's Folk Literature of the (Oromo) of Southern Abyssinia*" is one. He has attempted to show how Cerulli's collections (works) reflect Oromo culture. Moreover, he has tried (attempted) to examine the cultural historical significance of the collection of Oromo Poetry in 1922. However, Desalegn's study is 'textual' and is based on Cerulli's anthology.

Abraham Alemu (2000) has also conducted research on the topic Jimma prose narratives. He has analyzed the most important features of oral narratives such as the occasions in which they are actualized, the types and role of narrators and audience, the style of narration, and the attitude of the culture bears towards their narrative have been discussed.

The third person who has conducted research in this area is Jeylan Hussein (2005) M.A research on *The Function of African Oral Arts. The Arsi Oromo Oral Arts in Focus*. His research mainly emphasizes how the Arsi use their oral arts to symbolize their religious philosophy.

The fourth research work relevant to Oromo literature studies is Addisu's PHD dissertation. "*The Historical Transformation of a Folk Genre the Geerrarsa as a National Literature of the Oromo (1990)*". The primary purpose of his study is to analyze the relationship between the Geerrarsa Folk Song and Oromo culture identity both before and after the socio political changes that took place when the Amhara ruled Ethiopia. He has also given attention to a general concept in the historical and generic transformation of Geerrarsa. Moreover, he provides ethnographic and performance context for the *Geerrarsa*. Nevertheless like Assefa Addisu also observes one genres of oral poetry.

In addition to the above works, there have been some B.A. works which have been conducted, Yenealem (1996), *Images of Women in Arsi Work Poems*, Tajitu (1994) *Sunsumaa (War Song)*

and *Geerrarsa (Song of a Hero)* Hussein Badhaso (2000) *Arsi's 'Marriage Custom'* are some of the studies to be mentioned.

All the above works have helped the researcher in giving background of the present topic however; they have not touched the Arsi oral Lyric poetry, as far as the researcher is concerned. Therefore, this study will focus on the investigation of Arsi Oral Lyric poetry. The study will try to show what the Arsi people think, feel and experience through their oral lyric poetry in work; love, marriage , sorrow and in different current circumstances.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This chapter deals with the research procedures or methods used in conducting the study. It raises few points on collecting and analyzing the data. Furthermore, it also explains and gives brief description about the translation and selection of the poems that are included in the study. The research was conducted using primary as well as secondary sources. In order to elicit information for this research, the researcher used different methods and procedures such as library search and field search, which are briefly outlined, in the upcoming subsection.

3.1. Library Research

Some background information was gathered using library sources of the related literature in the field of oral literature in general and oral lyric poetry in particular. Unpublished materials, articles and recorded texts that are related to the field were examined to set information on the Arsi lyric oral poetry, on the methods of research on oral literature in the field as well as on its analysis. These steps enabled the researcher to decide on the appropriate tools for data collection.

3.2. The Field Research

3.2.1. Sample of the Study

The subjects of this study were the selected knowledgeable elders and the youth from two districts of west Arsi zone, namely Kofale and Shashamane. These informants of the districts were selected as target sample for the research because they are believed to represent a source or reservoir of cultural heritage namely oral art in general and oral lyric poetry in particular. Besides, the people have highly tied themselves up with their cherished culture much more than any other part of the zone.

Regarding the sampling techniques, the researcher employed purposive sampling technique and principles to select the informants. As a result, these informants are believed to have much experience of the cultural, social and economic practices in the area such that they could give reliable data regarding the meaning: cultural and social background of the oral lyric poetry

gathered. Hence, the study has involved famous singers or composers of oral lyric poetry as key informants inhabiting the locality.

Totally, the sample was designed to comprise eleven participants in collecting oral lyric poems performed in the surrounding. Interview was conducted with singers who could compose and recite the poems. In addition, six informants were involved in group discussions and gave information about the context, the meaning and the nature of performance of the collected oral lyric poems.

3.2.2. Instruments of Data Collection

In order to collect the Arsi oral lyric poems, the researcher employed interview and focus group discussion as main tools to collect information on the context, performance and meaning of the collected oral poetry. Therefore, the data for the study was gathered using the two key instruments of data collection with a purpose of raising reliability and validity of the results. More specifically, these tools allow intensive group discussion. These instruments of the folklore data collection will be outlined briefly in the following subsections.

3.2.2.1. Interview

The interview method is an important way to gather information of data and enables the researcher to talk with the subjects who give information and explanation on the poems. It was used for collection of some oral lyric poems, for obtaining meaning, identifying the theme that the poem carries and spotting out the use of the poem, the context and occasions on which the poem can be composed. Furthermore, interview is also used as a means to get the past and contemporary information about the Arsi socio-cultural realities as well as its values.

The interview was carried out with eight chosen elders comprising five men and three women, two young girls, and a young man. These informants were selected in consultation with the officials and experts of west Arsi zone and Kofale district cultural and tourism office based on their age, deep knowledge of the socio-cultural reality and oral tradition of the targeted community.

Subsequer
at the end
by the rese

On the ne
on the targ
the field a
office head
herself to
Shashama
necessary
and poets f

They arran
then, the r

On the dat
researcher
lyric poem
general an
office, she

Both the of
informant

interview v

of oral lyri
the intervie
took rest in
singer feel

Then the in
researcher.

Shashaman
reasons. Th
could broad

selecting and collecting only two genres of oral lyric poetry namely, *weelluu* (love song), *baye-bayee* (bridal chant). Although the field assistant and his colleagues have strongly suggested *faaruu loonii* (cattle-praising song) and *ateetee* (mediation song), the researcher decided to narrow down selection only to the two previously selected genres for the purpose of scope. After that, schedule for the field-trip was arranged to go to the selected Kofale and Shashamane sites.

In the first feild-trip week, the researcher with the field assistant went to the target woreda in order to arrange introductory meeting with the informant elders. After mutual understanding of the research goal was assured, dates and ways of getting the targeted informants and their information was fixed through discussion. Due care was taken in ways of selecting the ultimate informants and the type of informants needed for the required data. Therefore, their age, sex, willingness and responsiveness were the basis for selection as long as the researcher and the officials reached consensus. Hence, arrangement was made to meet the proposed individual informants to collect the poems. Accordingly, a very convenient market day was arranged to meet the informants who should come a long way to Kofale town on the grand market day Wednesday.

Returning to Shashamane with this appointment date in mind, the researcher took the advantage of acquiring further information about the data to be collected and about the socio-cultural context in which lyric poetry, *weelluu and baye-baye*, are performed and now elicited by the researcher. This was done by returning to Shashamane town for a fortnight stay to meet different informative and conversant residents of the surrounding.

Carrying the necessary field materials such as walkman, tape-recorder, camera, battery, different cassettes and notebooks, the researcher met the appointed informants in Kofale as per the appointment. The hospitable officers have made a notable accomplishment in the data elicitation process by arranging the focus group discussion and the interview with the informants at the district administrative compound in their own office.

Before starting data collection, the field assistant who is virtually an insider to the investigated culture, introduced the researcher, the informants, the roles, the goals and procedures from the outset. This data collection step was followed by the researcher's self-introduction too. Furthermore, the willingness of the informants was earnestly requested in order to get genuine

television and radio. On the one hand, she seemed to be delighted to be seen through these media while performing the art. On the other hand, she feared the reaction of elders who might watch her on TV or hear her on the radio for example, while trying to compose poems like *baye-bayee* songs. The people may unknowingly consider it shameful especially for women to compose a song that could have normally been done by unmarried girls.

However, with the help of the officer, the researcher persuaded her clearly by confirming that the purpose of the research was for fulfillment of her second degree but not for publicizing secrets through different media. Later on, the woman also agreed to compose the poem that was asked even though the composer hesitated in the middle of composing.

Finally, the interview with the informants was completed successfully with the informants. Therefore, the researcher also thanked after providing an incentive as well as words of feedback. The researcher at last invited the informants, the field assistant and the officers, to supper since they were helping her in facilitating the whole interview of the day's program. As a result, the woman went to her house with pleasure. The officers, the researcher and her field assistant also admired the woman for her knowledge and ability of composing the songs and the confidence she had. After that day, the woman also became known in composing the songs and the officers of the district proposed and appointed her to arrange an interview for composing some more different types oral poetry and other oral arts that she knew for. Based on this proposal, the west Arsi Zonal Cultural and Tourism Office also arranged different programs with STVO so that the oral artist could start to transmit different types of oral poem such as reciting and performing *ateetee* song through TV and radio in collaboration with her friends with the help of my field assistant, Bonsomo Mieso.

In the above section, the researcher endeavored to explain what her field experiences during her data collocation in west Arsi Zone looked like. In the next section, an attempt has been made to describe the researcher's main limitations, field experience and problems encountered by the researcher while collecting the data on oral lyrics.

words are told in the source language Afan Oromo. Thenafter, it was translated in to English language.

The translation of data from the Oromo language in to English was made with much attention to preserve the original meaning. Hence the translation was almost direct even though repetitive expressions have been omitted. In doing so, every possible effort was made to provide the English reader with sensible translations. Some Afan Oromo words which were loaded with cultural meanings and for which the researcher could not find equivalent English words were used as they are.

Finally, for the sake of convenience and consistency, all the English translation in this thesis are transcribed in the same manner as that of Oromo language. Furthermore, the terms in the study were not literal in most cases. However, effort has been made to make the translation versions succeed in conveying the essential qualities and meanings of the many original poems collected, only some have been used in this study. Apart from this, sampling has been made based on relevance, accessibility and the ability to reflect the people's internal feelings.

As much as possible, only those poems relevant to the study have been collected. In that case, they were translated into English. The translated version was rechecked against the original to find out whether or not some improvement in the translation should be made or not. Furthermore, sometimes interviews were needed during transcription with elders or with colleagues who have had the exposure to the culture and language in order to get the intended meaning of the translated poems and to accomplish the research task.

3.2.5. Limitations of the Study

In this section, the researcher discussed some major constraints which could be encountered when conducting this research in general and during fieldwork data transcription and translation in particular. Some of these limitations have been forwarded as follows:

Some of the informants could not compose a complete poem because they forgot the poems. Therefore, they were not able to indicate the exact starting and ending point of each stanza in the poems. Moreover, they could not remember some of what they might compose themselves. However, the field assistant with one of the experts of Cultural, and Tourism Office of the

woreda, corrected them whenever they made an error when reciting the poem. Moreover, they guided them by showing the right ways of composing the songs.

At first, some of the informant elders and households did not volunteer and were reluctant to compose some types of Arsi lyric poetry such as *weelluu* and *baye-bye* since reciting such types of poems was not permitted and they were aged. Furthermore, they believed that composing such types of songs especially *weelluu* song is shameful. The elders considered that such types of songs are recited by youth rather than by adults. Because of this, the informants hesitated to compose such types of songs. However, the researcher, the field assistant including the KCTO Officials insisted on their composing and on giving the full information of the song by explaining the purpose and feelings conveyed through them. They also convinced the informants by explaining the importance of the investigation is to contribute to the preservation of these genres as valuable cultural heritage of the people. Because of this, the elders easily diverted their composing direction to the research goals by admittedly noticing the reason, which is raised by the researcher when they began composing the songs.

Especially, the elderly men refused to compose such songs because it would be considered disgraceful and insignificant role for their age. Besides, it would be essential to abide by the prohibition of religious denominations. Therefore, these aged admirers of their own culture and wanted to give the young a chance of singing because the people tend to associate love with the youth rather than with the aged. However, the field assistant persuaded them to recite the songs despite the norms since they used to compose such kinds of songs when they were young. Furthermore, the field assistant believed that they knew how to compose different types of Arsi oral literature in general and only lyric poetry in particular.

Since the performance of the Arsi lyric poetry is seasonal, it is difficult to get adequately natural contexts within a short stay of the field survey. In order to minimize this risk, the researcher with the help of the field guide and the zonal and woreda officer arranged simulated contexts to call upon known singers from the surrounding kebele to elicit relevant data from the informants through interview and focus group discussion.

The other problem that the researcher encountered was translation. As it has already been known, translating a poem from the original language into another certainly poses innumerable difficulties. Due to this, injustice has been done probably to the original material because bad translations could distort facts. That means, translating a poem from a source language to the target language is a challenging task. In the translation process, linguistic and non-linguistic properties make the translation so difficult. Identifying and re-instructing messages transmitted through the source language and getting idiomatic or metaphorical expressions in the text of the target language was demanding. Furthermore, in the process of translation, the Oromo oral poems lose much of their aesthetic value such as their appeal to feelings, rhythm, condition or context and depth of meaning. Hence, all these factors made the translation process difficult although efforts were made to overcome the effect. Loss of some concepts was inevitable since the source language and the target language were from different culture and geographical proximity. In order to minimize the loss of meaning and contents of the original version, expanding the English version by adding phrases or sentences that are hoped to hold close sense contained in the words of the poems was necessary. As it has been mentioned earlier, the task of transcribing and translating the data was apparently a very difficult undertaking. Therefore, in order to minimize the difficulty, it was necessary to request the assistance of colleague Gebi Misha, who virtually knew well both the culture and the language. Accordingly, the poems were checked against the transcription as well as the translation besides making all the necessary corrections.

The fourth major problem in most Arsi oral lyric poetry, which was collected by the researcher in most cases was that most of the introductory first lines do not have any tangible relationship with the meaning of the poem's subsequent lines. The importance of the first line simply appeared to create rhyming with the next lines. Due to this, it was difficult to show the unity between the two lines during translation. Some lines were translated with additional lines, additional ideas, words, phrases and clauses. Hence, it was difficult to translate in similar or equivalent lines. Yet, this problem was minimized by the researcher, by the guiding the assistant and by the researcher's colleagues who know the language and the culture of the society well enough in line with the intended meaning.

The other problems that were not related to transcription and translation were the external problems such as lack of transportation, bad weather condition and the like. Transportation from

Shashamane to Kofale was somewhat difficult and tiresome since the road was rather sticky pavement full of mud. In addition, the town did have sufficient services such as agreeable restaurants with bedrooms and clean water and the like. Furthermore, during the field data collection stay at Shashamane, the hot weather was tiresome for the researcher so, it was very difficult to accomplish much of the activities in the afternoon.

Besides, transcribing and translating the texts, one of the major problems seen during conducting this research was the dialectal variation. This dialectal variation could be phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic. As already known, the west Arsii particularly Kofale, Kokkosa and Arsi Nagelle surroundings have peculiar dialectal expressions which often challenge many speakers of the language. Afaan Oromo speakers from nearby as well as from the rest of Oromia. However, to overcome the above-mentioned problems, the field assistant and colleague played significant role in giving equivalent meaning which is given by the informants during interview at the focus group discussion, transcription and data analysis. They were very helpful because they were residents of the cultural setting who enabled to get the closest dialectical connotation and denotation of a word or an idea. Mostly, these people are much more sensitive to Oromo culture and custom in general and that of Arsi people in particular. Thus, one can say that the dialectal variation did not impede the study since the researcher did not directly interpret what the speaker actually said. The speakers were asked to explain their ideas whenever things were not clear enough or wherever the dialectical variation caused ambiguity at any point in the interview and in the focus group discussion in case of unclear sounds or so.

Generally, in order to reproduce authentic texts in other words, to retain their originality the researcher with the field assistant devised mechanisms such as listening repeatedly to differentiate the utterance of the composer or singer. Hence, the ambiguities, which were mentioned earlier could be removed as much as possible.

CHAPTER FOUR

Thematic Analysis of Selected Arsi Oral Lyric Poems

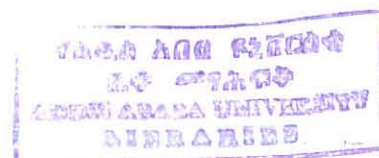
Having reviewed studies related to this thesis, the researcher attempted to analyse the selected poems in this chapter. The central research questions supposed to be answered in this chapter are therefore, (1) what are the themes of the poems? (2) What are the functions of the poems? (3) How are the poems performed? Thus, this chapter focuses on the analysis of the poems and discussion of findings.

4.1. A Description of Weelluu Songs

In this section, the researcher attempts to give an overview of Arsi love lyric, which is known as *weelluu*. In this regard, the researcher has included the definitions, characteristics, performance and composition of *weelluu* love lyric that are presented by both scholars and informants in the area.

Weelluu has been the most popular folk song among the youth in Arsi Oromo society. It is a love song, which is composed by bachelors to express their deepest emotion of love towards the person they have loved. Baxter identifies *weelluu* as a type of Arsi song which is popular among young men. Eshete (2007:128) defines *weelluu* as follows: “the Oromo *weelluu* or *weedduu* love lyric is a short poem in verse produced by individual composers and it has cultural value. The reputation of the pastoralist is also attached to it.” it is one of the most striking examples of romantic comedy and emotional love poetry in rural Oromia especially among the young people. Eshete (2007:128). Baxter (1974:809) supports Eshete’s viewpoint stating that “both the individual song and the genre is known as *weelluu*. To sing such a song is *weellisuu* and a singer of such songs is a *weellisaa*”. From the above scholars’ viewpoint, one can infer that *weelluu* is a poem sung by young men and performed in rural areas to address the person to be loved.

The informants’ definition of *weelluu* is not very different from the definitions above scholars. Informants like Bonsamo Mieso see as a type of love song which is mainly sung by young unmarried ones. Informants also maintain that this song is not composed and performed publicly: rather it is sung quietly and secretly. It is culturally inappropriate to sing *weelluu* in the family



unacceptable in the society. Sometimes, if their colleagues are present around them, the women can compose the song with the men by taking turns. Or else, their poem include those messages which are told by the men in choral groups. They compose their song based on what the men express in their songs.

Regarding the setting in which this type of song is performed, Baxter (1974) asserts that *weelluu* cannot be performed in front of people and around homesteads since its message carries taboo in that, love is associated with sexual lust. He also states that *weelluu* is a young man's song, which is sung outside homesteads and only in playful contexts. The sexual references appear in contexts of passionate feeling such as affection, boasting, pleasure some of which are moving while others are concerned with nature, social responsibility and reproductive sexual relations.

Baxter (1974) also notes that since *weelluu* can sometimes be told through emotive language, it should only be composed when looking after cattle or in the bush not at home.

Similarly, the informants also point out that *weelluu*, unlike other Arsi oral poems cannot be composed everywhere. It is sung either to forget distance and fatigue during a journey, or in the evening when the people sit in groups together farther away from elders and even alone.

According to informants, the main reason for the young men to perform the song in the field is the young people's desire for privacy. There is also a strong wish that their parents and elders should not hear them sing such songs. They also aspire freedom of chatting about love affairs. They want to talk about love affairs freely.

Regarding this, Baxter also asserts that the young men like to compose songs when they are far from their homesteads and meet their friends in the fields. He states that young Arsi men talk and sing a good deal in idleness especially when they are away from their elders.

According to informant Bonsamo Miesso, most of the time the bachelors compose the song alone since they do not have the opportunity to meet the woman or the girl. Nevertheless, both men and women also sometimes sing the song aloud to each other from a distance turning their face towards each other.

According to respondents' the young men compose the song for each other from a distance because they both know that is unacceptable to compose *weelluu* by sitting near each other. However, at times both men and women compose the song sitting near each other. This happens if they are not shy or they can do it while they are engaged in agricultural activities such as weeding, harvesting, thrashing and doing other similar activities.

Informant Bonsamo Miesso, noticed that, men and women sing to each other if and only if they are not from the same family or clan and if they do not have any blood relation. For this reason, the young people sing *weelluu* with counterparts from another clan, who are not their relatives.

In the pervious section, it has been mentioned that *weelluu* is a song which is mainly composed by young men based on some scholars' and informants' ideas. However, it can also be sometimes performed or recited by other groups of people, men and women. A woman and a man who has just got married recently can recite it. As to informants' response, there is time at which the women who have got married soon compose *weelluu* with a bachelor. Besides, a girl or a boy who is ready to get married can also compose it. Respondents also assert that it is culturally acceptable for bachelors to compose *weelluu* in order to express their love for the married mistress who also has the right to love bachelors as sex partners. Therefore, these lovers can have the opportunity to compose *weelluu* (love song) according to informant Aman Usman, instructor in Assela T TC.

Like wise, Baxter noted that older people could also compose *weelluu* even though it is popular with young men. He states that the singers are bachelors or more likely to be young married men who are responsible for maintaining the health and fertility of a family and its herd. Therefore, one can deduce that *married men and women including immature cow-hearding boy can sing weelluu.*

Unlike other Arsi oral lyric songs, namely *baye-bayee* or *ateetee*, the *weelluu* song does not carry diversified themes; rather it revolves around one particular theme that is love. In other words, it focuses on personal issues rather than social phenomena.

The frequent subject matter in this particular genre is to express the emotional needs of the person. It is a means of expressing love and its emotional effect. Therefore, it is possible to say

that *weelluu* has been a medium through which the collective wish, love, hope and aspirations of the young men are expressed. Regarding this, Baxter also comments that *weelluu* is a means of expressing the deepest love of the individual. He notes, "Among Arsi *weelluu* has been a major means of expressing the soul itching and burning issues within an individual's mind and heart" (Baxter, 1974:8144). He also adds that *weelluu* expresses the inner most feelings of the narrator (the poet) the individual singers in a beautifully and symmetrically arranged lines of poem. It touches on love related aspects.

Besides, it addresses and appeals to the person to be loved. Eshete (2007:128) on his part also says that the theme of *weelluu* revolves around the issues of individual life rather than social matters.

Informants also believe that the Arsi oral love song is a song, which is composed to express their deep and mature love for their lover. They also stated that it is a song in which the bachelors show their sexual love for the beloved person.

By and large, *weelluu* is a type of Arsi love song in which the poet expresses the romantic love to the beloved one. In other words, *weelluu* only can be sung by the bachelors to express their love for the opposite sex (sexual partner). Informants also added that *weelluu* can be sung by young men for their partners to express their love, admiration, wish and values, like beauty. Regarding this, Baxter states that the songs are probably more expressive of desire rather than their fulfillment. He also further states that the Arsi rituals, prayers and blessings stress virility and thrusting sexually as crucial contributory components to reproduction and fertility in the *weelluu*, though virility and sexuality are central for one to make reference to fertility.

Regarding the training of *weelluu* informants told that unlike other types of Arsi songs, the singer of *weelluu* learns to compose the song not by memorizing or composition-in-performance according to Okpewho (1992) theory of performance, but by exercising with their peers. Hence, they learn how to compose the song by exercising within their peers. Regarding this, Baxter says that "most young men acquire a name among their age-mates as skillful and witty singers who have an extensive repertoire song but all they can gain from this is a local and ephemeral reputation" (Baxter, 1974:813).

As it was mentioned in the review part on theory of performance, Okpewho (1992) notes that *weelluu* can be composed mostly by soloist performers and antiphonal performers. If they perform the song in choral group, one group composes the song while the other new group simply waits for their turn. In addition, they chant the song by taking their turn after each other until they complete their composition.

Unlike other Arsi songs such as *ateetee*, marriage songs like *tar-tarii* and *ashoo-ashilaa*, the *weelluu* is not performed with body movement. It can be recited either by sitting in one particular place or by moving from one place to another while people are performing a certain task like weeding, harvesting threshing and collecting fire-wood or the like.

It is possible to infer that the singing groups' can be filled with joy and excitement. Informants also confirm that *weelluu* is composed in solitary places in the fields, not at homestead. This is advantageous for the young men since in *weelluu* songs sexual theme is strongly magnified much more than in any other songs. Therefore, the young men may get the opportunity to express their love including ideas, which are not permissible in the society such as sexuality, taboos freely. This information which is given by the informants is similar to what Baxter says in his article; "The social situation in which *weelluu* is sung out side the settlements by small groups of youths, allows the singers to use outrageous phrases with out creating social outrage" .(1974:820)

According to respondent Aman Usman, most of the time *weelluu* is a song sung by young men to the married women. In Arsi culture, it is common for the married women to have another unmarried spouse secretly even after she is married. Hence, an unmarried young man sings for her through figurative language.

Informants also reported that in previous time, there used to be more love singer than at the present time. In west Arsi in particular, *weelluu* was commonly composed by the time boys become mature but today there are no so many love singers or *weellis*. The informants also said that the reason for the presence of many love singers in the older days is that the Arsi people had had wide pastoral land and large wealth of cattle. That means, they were rich with animal products such as milk, butter, meat and the like. Therefore, they led a happy life and they composed their song after they drank and ate their fill.

In addition to the above reason, the young men were not engaged in heavy duty or they were not busy so they were tempted to compose more love songs very often. The tasks of many young men were to look after cattle and participate in agricultural activities, which were good opportunities for them to compose love songs. However, these days since they do not have too much farmland and pastoral land, young men do not get favorable opportunity to sing the song.

The other reason is that these days the young men, women, girls, boys and all groups of people make themselves busy with education and different kinds of jobs such as carpentry. In addition, many young people are mobilized to town in search of a job. Modernization must have hindered the composition of such kind of poetry. Today, modern musical devices such as walk-man tape, tape recorder and earphone attract young people. Furthermore, they have also begun to publish modern musical album.

All the above influencing phenomena are some of the causes for the gradual disappearance of traditional songs in general and love songs in particular. Besides, the society's indigenous traditional arts such as their folk norms, customs and so on are replaced by modern musical art. Therefore, today it is difficult to meet several oral poets, singers, or (*weellisaas/weellistuus*) as before. This is also the reason why the researcher selected the *weelluu lyric* genre already under extinction in order to capture it in the form of research investigation or documentation. In other words, the intention is to collect record and analyze some of the prevalent types of the genre so that they can be transferred from the present generation to the next. Simultaneously, the essential inspiring message that underlies and describes the owner-community of these lyrics might be rescued through research studies.

To sum up, in the above section, the generic nature and importance of *weelluu* poems has been briefly discussed. In the next section, therefore the researcher attempts to make a thematic analysis of some selected *weelluu* songs.

4.1.1. An Analysis of Selected *Weelluu* Lyric Poems

Out of the 22 collected *weelluu* love poems, about 12 pieces of the oral poems have been analysed in this sub-section. The poems are presented side by side with an approximate translation (English equivalent version) and the poems will be followed by their analysis in each case.

1. Jaafaraa mucaan harma hodhaa	1. A Jafaran tribe boy sucks breast
Waan akka jaalalaa mucaa nama godhaa	Oh love! What a childish act is it!
Barbarreen qoricha daa'imaa	“Chillis, the kids' remedy
Gaggabee qoricha naaf himaa	Cure me I'm fainting already

The above piece of oral poetry presents an anonymous composer's view and feelings of love as it is glorified by him metaphorically. It is compared with powerful illness that needs medical treatment. The singing composer is metaphorically talking about his captivity and imploring for the loved woman's presence with him to cure him from the painful power of the love he felt for her. The anonymous audience is also addressed as advisor or consoler of his deep love for her.

As it has already been found out, Oromo love poetry such as *weelluu* is characterized by least relevant introductory lines superficially thereby appearing to be significant for rhyming while its deeper significance lies in the local color it uses. In other words, mostly the introductory lines may not necessarily have thematic relevance in the poem. It may also result in incoherence. To elaborate on this poetic attribute, different scholars like Claude Sumner (1997) Andrezjewski (1985), Tegegn (2007), Teferi (2006) so on, vividly support the idea that the sound may contain a witty reference to the line of the song. They said that the introductory lines mostly create sound parallelism as well as rhythmic pattern. These lines come either at the beginning or at the end of the poem. The focus is on sound effect and aesthetic form of the poem rather than on its meaning relatively. Most of the Oromo oral love poetry suggests the theme through analogy. In this connection, typically, the first line of the above verse is not thematically related as such, perhaps other than for its sound parallelism or rhyming. In the poem, *Jafara*, name of a clan, for example, is irrelevant to the love topic in hand, whereas the second line about children's breastfeeding and

the lines after that essentially constitute love-glorifying theme of the song under analysis through figurative use of language.

In these love poems, language is used artistically to convey the speaker's love. Pleasant use of the language is employed to express the deep-felt love through metaphor, simile and imagery which are commonly used in most of the lines here and there. In other words, the metaphorical meaning of hot pepper is likened to powerfulness of love. The oral poet uses a man's innocence in falling in love with childhood in the above poem in comparison. Children do not know what should be right and what should not be right for they are innocent or immature. Furthermore, they do not follow the society's norms. Likewise, a young man who has fallen in love may act just like a child regarding management of love affairs. In addition, it is mentioned in line four of the poem that "chillis" is referred to as a punishment administered to punish the child for inappropriate behavior. As burning of chillis corrects children's inappropriate conduct, so does love experience of a novice lover. Moreover, it is compared with love in a sense of punishing and making him calm. Hence, in the last line one can see in contrast the sort of quest for the remedy for the man who is sick from obsessive loving. Therefore, the cure will only be come if they could meet and discuss about it.

As a whole, the speaker laments that love has become sorrow that could worsen his sickness and even fasten his death. He is sick and his sickness needs medicine. Here in the poem he is talking about his remedy to magnify how much pressure of her love he has suffered.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 2. Doole makiinaatu ifaa | 2. It is car that shines from Dole town |
| Si naaf qabatani akka ilmoo | You've been prescribed like sacrificial |
| bifaa | ewe of my own |
| Bitee gabayaa Gunaa | I went shopping at Guna market |
| Dhiitee nagayaan bulaa | Now that the sun is setting on me, Good Night. |

The above second piece of *weelluu* poem conveys the composer's feeling love for the girl. It is metaphorically described as remedy', or implicitly, 'sacrificial lamb recommended by a witch doctor'.



Like in poem number 1, the first and the third lines appear to serve only as the sound rhyming and advancing the stanza. The meaning of the poem lies in the second and fourth lines of the poem. Dole is a small local junction town near Arsi Nagelle where one can get to different farther destinations and where car light is dazzling in and out in the night of the countryside.

Since the lover is suffering restlessness mentally due to her love, he informs that the cure is nothing but getting in touch with her because she is prescribed as a medicine for his unbearable longing for her. This is an allusion to most religious beliefs of cleansing power of the blood of the lamb in case a person's is possessed by evil spirit that is believed to be appeased by the blood of the lamb in exchange for the person's without which the sick one may lose life automatically. Similarly, in the poem, the *weellisaa* (singer) is comparing the loved-women with the so-called *ilmoo biffaa* (a peculiar colored sacrificial ewe or lamb). Hence to appease the spirit that causes 'love-sickness', he needs no slaughtering of sheep, but yearns to meet her. This idea has been expressed vividly in line two of the above poem by saying *si naaf qabatani akka ilmoo biffaa* the meaning of which can be translated as 'you have been prescribed for my cure like a sacrificial ewe.'

Finally, in the last line, the poet tells that he started his journey and before departing, he has to see off his relatives and continued his journey directly to his lover's house since he is the victim of her love, and needs a cure. He expresses this feeling of hopelessness saying *dhiitee nagayaan bulaa* which means now that the sun is setting on him so he would say good night!

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 3. Kurkura moo korma | 3. A bull or a heifer? |
| Kamtu irra bookkisa? | Which one bellows more? |
| Guntuta moo harma | A full-fledged breast or blossoming breast |
| Kamtu irra boochisa? | Which one makes one weep in love most? |

The above third poem expresses the composer's attraction or admiration for her blossoming breast rhetorically and contrastively.

Since it is usual for lovers to appreciate and praise each other's posture. In the above poem, the man in love admires his lover's young breast contrasting to animate attributes like bellowing of a calf and a bull.

This is a hyperbolic expression to one's own best side and intolerant to the other side. Both can sing it. The poem widely uses by metaphorical expressions among other figurative speech peculiar to folklore proper. The speaker is attracted by the woman's breast. Just to appreciate her breast, he compares animal phenomena namely, ox and bull, with human being such as describing the breast in sex-related terms and context.

The poet is comparing two pairs or four sets of love objects. These are a calf with a bull and a blossoming breast with a full-fledged breast respectively. He has just compared the items but has not decided on the answer yet or he has not chosen the best one. Moreover, he has left the unanswerable question for the audience. Furthermore, one can easily try to put items, which have similar features in one group though they are from different categories. Therefore, it is possible to associate blossoming breast with that of a bull from the above metaphorical expression described in line one and three of the above poem.

Generally, he gives animate attributes to her love by comparing human beings with animals just to create a vivid image in the mind of the audience and causes them to choose between a blossoming breast of girls or a full-fledged breast of women.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 4. Yaabbanneen fardumaa | 4. Riding is better with horse |
| Suuta deemsattillee | Even if at slow pace |
| Ijaan si dharra'aa | My eyes are ever longing to see you |
| Tuuta keessattillee | Even among a crowd I desire seeing you |

In the above poem, the poet metaphorically confesses how much he has been obsessed with her love by likening his feeling with horse-riding comfort as well as gently loving her because he cannot help fancying her even among the crowd, may be because she looked gentle. Nothing else other than her love and body could give him relief similar to sitting on horse back when one gets exhausted or restless. This is supplementary evidence of hyperbolic nature of amusing love-appeal verbally as he desires her even among crowd despite the establishment of hushing down love affairs and songs in the tradition-bound Oromo public. This indicates that if one loves girls or boys, then one does not afraid of other people .This is why in the first poem of the above analysis it can be said love is so powerful that it could make an adult man behave like a child.

Generally, the speaker frankly says that he is searching for her even in the crowd of people. He also fancies her or worries about her in all of his life activities such as while he is eating, walking, working and the like. He gives much of his time to seeking her companion and getting hold of her. It is possible to say that he has almost assimilated his life with hers because she is his better half.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>5. Faradoon tee lamaa
Maaf sakaalte dhalaa
Daraboon kee anaa
Maaf jabaatte garaa</p> | <p>5. Just two, your horses are
Why have you chained the mare?
Why do you become hard-hearted
While I am your coeval indeed?</p> |
|---|--|

The above fifth piece of poem carries persuasive request of the composer to his loved one. He is trying to win her love by appealing to her young age as coeval.

As it has been already indicated in the previous poem, the first introductory line and the second one do not have any significant contribution to the central meaning of the poem. The main theme which lies in the third and fourth lines of the poem is an appeal for acceptance of his love request.

The verse refers to one-sided love briefly. It is a reinforcement song to soften the heart of a woman by showing his love for her. In the poem, the persona tells that even though he loves her and he is her intimate friend, she rejects his proposal. He expresses his feelings in line three and four of the above poem by saying ‘why do you become hard-hearted while I am yours indeed?’ As one can infer from this rhetorical question, she is not interested in the young man. However, the singer wants to know why she rejected his proposal. He asks her politely considering him as suitor.

Largely, one can say that the above recitation is a reinforcement song stressing that he does not want to miss her. He is also advising her that she had better be merciful enough to love (marry) him the coeval rather than the common imposition of aged-lover or partner whom implicitly she cannot reject as it is norm of the people there.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>6. Gurraachoon dhagaraa gurguraa
Gurraatti ta afaan bulbulaa</p> | <p>6. Gurraachoo [man named dark-skinned] the
axe seller
The dark-skinned girl’s mouth has honey’s
flavor!</p> |
|---|--|

7. Aliin hin daldalaa
 Dhibba geetti harreen
 Tamorma kee jalaa
 Hin bareeddi calleen
 Callee morma keetii
 Natu hin baafatinii
 Haatee gosa kamii
 Natu hin gaafatinii
 Gaafadhee durba koloobaatii
 Daayee naqabanii
 Dukkana roobaatiin

7. Ali deals, there are about hundred donkeys
 The beads round your neck is gorgeous
 I could have taken off those beads
 I could have asked what your mum's clan is
 But I found out that you're a girl from Koloba clan
 I was held back from running away senseless then
 In your love in a dark night's heavy rain

The above seventh piece of poem contains a set of incoherently differing themes, namely praising her beauty through her jewelry, lucky in winning her love. The other divergent themes include importance of her matrimonial lineage, losing consciousness and running away, being rescued from the dangers of darkness and heavy rain etc.

In *weelluu* love poems, description of physical beauty of the girl or the young man's being handsome, praising of the beloveds lineage, ornaments and jewelry are the usual features of such songs. Likewise, in the above poem the poet appreciates her beads that are worn around her neck. Furthermore, he appreciates her family members or her jewellery and all that belongs to her.

On the other side, the singer or the *weellisaa* regrets not asking her to love and taking out her beads from her neck. This shows his dilemma of loving the girl and how regretful he is for not asking what her mother's clans-lineage is and not taking away her beads when he got the chance first. This reminds the long-standing traditionally established fact that one should first ask for the matrilineal tribal origin of new marriage partner carefully in order not to commit incest unknowingly if the couple are from same or close matrilineal trace or tribe.

He believes that if he asked about her mother lineage she would tell him where she is from and if he asked her to take out her beads; she would be willing to give them to him. Furthermore, asking for her beads and her mother's clan is a means to approach her or to express his love for her. introduction. This condition would enable him to marry her. Hence, one can say that it has a

message of regretting for he did not perform what he had to do. In other words, subconsciously he puts across that he fancies her in love with him at night and people rescue him from nightmarish escape in a rainy and dark night to find her. He is just expressing his obsession with the girl.

This poem can also be analyzed from another perspective. All the character in the poem popular clan who trades besides being engaged in traditional cattle rearing and mixed agriculture. These beautiful beads worn round the neck by women may signify market-related activities. Moreover, the way the colors combine in making the string of beads to be attractive when they are worn. This explains the craft of her mother who often makes some. In fact, the ability of mother in making the traditional ornaments in house utensils shows her place of womanhood and motherhood in the society. This perhaps is the reason why there goes saying among Arsi elders 'be well-informed about your mother before proposing marrying the daughter.' Thus in the verse the beauty of beads and that of the mother identity are compared. Generally, the beads surprise him and he assumes that her mother produced them so that he would marry her and appreciate her mother-in-law's craftsmanship.

In the last two lines, the poet conveys that he left his parents during a dark night under the heavy rain running after his sweetheart. Nevertheless, he also puts across the idea that he came back to his sense as he was rescued from running away to meet her in a stormy night. This is actually imaginary situation of going astray and being rescued aimed at creating the image of love encounters between any partners. In other words, this impact may show how strong tool the *Weelluu* oral verses are in fueling up love between the couple in addition to other personal loveable attributes.

8. Haati aayyaa duutee
Ani akkayoo hin qabu
Warri waljaalate
Akka ta'u hindhabu

8. Since my grandma died I've had no grand mother
Lovers seek all options to give love to each other

Still the above eighth piece of love poem sustains the all-powerful and unfailing nature of the love a young man and young women have for each other.

As it was described in some of the above-analyzed poem, the first two lines of the poem exist simply for the effect of rhyming. They may not have any apparent contribution to the meaning of the poem as such. Yet, the main meaning of the poem lies in the poem's third and fourth lines.

The poem is composed either by the married women or by the unmarried young men. It conveys the message that lovers can love each other if things are impossible or obstacles arise in their way. They can arrange appropriate or secretive moment even if they do not have the chance to meet each other in the absence of their parents. This means that almost nothing stronger than love could stop lovers from meeting in any case. The singer asserts that there is a way to meet or crave for each other so that they can have the privilege to love each other. He is advising her to find a way for them to meet occasionally. The lover wants to chat with her about their mutual love.

On the other hand, the poem carries the message that he or she does not volunteer to meet him or her even though she had the chance to meet a lover. She or he considers the other to be lying to each other by telling false reasons, different difficulties or obstacles. Thus, he or she is strongly asking to make or to arrange favorable appointment to enjoy their love and to find solution even if it is impossible to meet each other.

In this verse, one can understand from the context that once the grandmother died, he does not have a grandmother on the line of his mother. It is something that is lost for ever. There is no way to get her back. It tries to contrast this with the couple's love that 'if there is love there is a means to meet'. The reference is traditional lovers' relationships should be kept in secret in *weelluu* song that is mentioned in the introduction part so that the contact between them should be strictly secret.

9. Gadabitti gala

Gadamsa hin nyaatini

Ta qeerricha didde

Gadaan si hin baatini

9. Never eat antelope as Gadab [Asasa] is its den

Anyone who refuses to marry the young men

May the Gada power curse you to perish then

The ninth piece of the *weelluu* poem forwards the subject matter of men's advocacy of female-submissiveness to a love-request of bachelors. This also implies that coercive love may necessarily lead to forced marriage on the part of the female.

The first two lines of the poem appear just for the sake of rhyme and then it is composed or recited for the girls who rejected suitors' request for love. In the poem, the young men cursed those women who rejected suitors. They cursed the women who refuse a young man's proposal and wish to be ostracized from the socio-political system known as the *Gada* era. Therefore, the male singers denounce young girls who indulge in love and inappropriate sexual relations thereby leaving women subordinate to young bachelors. Such verbal denouncement may empower the male to exercise adultery with married women while exposing both parties to sex-relation and eventually to HIV AIDS. It may even perpetuate inequality between men and women although it has been a once-cherished norm of the society.

Briefly speaking, the composers sing the song to entice the woman psychologically. This could be said to be a kind of negotiation in love-making. Because of this, women who reject the request are compelled to accept the young men's love request for fear of not being inflicted by the power of the curse.

10. Gadamsi saalmalee

Saalaa saddeet maree
 Hirriba kee baree
 Saddeeti garagalee
 Saddeeti garagaruun jaalaumaa
 Dirri lafee hin qabuu aananumaa
 Aannan lafee hinqabuu maal
 alanshee tufa
 Aanaa achii hin qabu maal sababee
 dhufa

10. Fearless antelopes

With horns winding eight times
 I used to sleep by your side
 My back rolled eight times in your fancy in bed
 Turning eight times must be a gesture of love
 A back without bone is milk in itself
 What can I chew off boneless milk and
 what to spit?
 How can I go there where I know no
 one as relatives

The above tenth piece of oral lyric poem forward the central idea that the lover-man is desperate and restless from fancying her beautiful posture. Besides, the man's dilemma of whether to find a pretext to visit her or meet her at her village and fearing that if he goes there, they may not have privacy.

The first two lines are used simply for rhyming building up the background. Besides, the poet also uses words, which have the same sound the next four lines for the purpose of parallelism. These are *saalmalee, maree, baree, gargalee* respectively. From the third lines on wards, one can see the expression of internal emotion of the performer who lies on his bed alone but imaginatively seeing a picture of his lover in his mind, sensing her warm and delicate body and consequently not feeling at ease. This is portrayed by his changing sides eight times turning right to left all through the night. It seems to be a realistic depiction of such behavior is apparent of real life at a certain stage in human growth.

To sum up, the above poem shows that as the speaker cannot do anything in the absence of his love. One can see that, the singer in the poem even cannot sleep without her a single night. Besides, he asserts that he feels comfortable whenever he is with her. He expresses his appreciation metaphorically in lines six and seven saying just as milk does not have bone, her ribs or back are so soft and sweet to kiss.

11. Qululluun na nyaatee
Saalaan na jifatee
Qalbii fuute galchi
Aaabbaan na hifatee

11. A hornless bull threatened me then
The sharp-horned one gored me again
Return my senses you have taken please
Because my dad rebuked me

In the above eleventh piece of poem, the main message is claiming back or wanting back his lost heart or self-control as a result of his being possessed by her love. It also indicates that as a result of being crazy, the lover-man's father was tired of advising him to return to himself.

In the poem, the singer tells that hornless and sharp-horned oxen bit him while he was searching his lover in midst of cattle. Besides, he informs that his father treats him unfairly because he fell in love with her. In other words, he tells that his father that he became impatient about his deeds and forced him to leave his home. He then asks his lover to rationalize.

Generally, in the poem, the singer explains us how much he suffered from her love and he asserts how much was hated and ignored by the community.

12. Weellisaan kararee

Karaa raayyaa bahee
Ani bareeda hindhiisu
Garaa aayyaa malee
Woma diduuf qaba
Garaa aayyaa sanuu
Majadila jombollaa irgi biduu qaba

12. Raya pathway taken by a fanatic singer

I'll never skip beauty but my sister
I have a faint reason to
spare my sisters
'Jombollaa' beads beneath and beauty-
spotted gum

Finally in this last twelveth piece of the *weelluu* love song, the composer conveys the message that he could not spare any girl (woman) except his sister for the reason that he refrains from mentioning perhaps because of the uncontrolled power of his loving.

After all, the first two lines outline the general attitude of sexually active males in the society either married or single. Traditionally, having partner is normally acceptable because of self-assertion of masculine superiority.

Weelluu is naturally performed by the male and less frequently by the female as well. In the first two lines, the male expresses his quest and desire for a lover. In the first line, the young man singer expresses his quest and desire to get a lover. In the final lines, the speaker expresses his appreciation for her beauty. The composer of the song also tells that he does not want to miss a beautiful woman with the exception of his sister. This is a hyperbole to magnify supreme power of love as internal emotional drive.

In another context, the speaker the poet declares that he wants to love his sister. However, he is forced to vow not to love from his clan and relatives in general and his sister in particular. This is because in most cultures cases it is not allowed for one to love and to marry from his/her relative and clan in general. Nobody thinks to have sexual relations with one's own sister because they had fed from the same breast of one mother that is mentioned in the *weelluu* description part. In the last line, he expresses how beautiful his sister is by appreciating her brown skin color and her spotted-gum which are considered to be the best criteria of the beautiful woman.

To conclude the above analysis, the poet expresses his deepest internal feelings towards his lover by appreciating either his lover's physical appearance or her jewelry among others. More over, the poet expresses how much he suffered and went through ups and down of life. In the above part of the analysis, different kinds of subject matters such as painfulness of love, praising (appreciation of love, consequences of love obstacles of love and solutions of loves are mentioned). To convey this thematic message, the composer uses different language expression such as metaphors analogy and deviant language through out the poems, to put a vivid image to the mind of the audience.

4.2. Description of *Baye-Bayee*: Bridal Parting Song

In the preceding section, an attempt has been made to see the overview of *Weelluu*. In this section, *baye-bayee* is going to be explored as the second type of Arsi lyric marriage songs within the oral literary domain.

According to respondents, *baye-bayee* (gone-gone I am) or parting songs is one of the typical–Arsi Oromo marriage songs, which is composed and performed by the bride in turns with her peer friends. This song is more unique than any other types of Oromo marriage songs because it is a song that is performed among the Arsi Oromo only. It is also a song that is sung or composed by the bride and her friends on her wedding day. The message which the song conveys to the listener is ‘I am going, so goodbye to all friends, relatives and attendants. The respondents also said that *baye-bayee* is the occasion in which the bride expresses her emotion or internal feelings such as cultural operations, loneliness, separation from her parents and others. Moreover, she does so sorrowfully and is depressed. In addition, she also wishes to say goodbye to her friends, her parents as well as her relatives at the same time. *Baye-bayee* is also an aspect of cultural practice from time immemorial that will still seem to sustain further. Because of the inherent tone of lamentation of the *baye-bayee* chanting, it is sometimes known in Afan Oromo as *booyicha dubraa*, roughly meaning girls' lamentation that has been passed down orally from generation to generation to come.

Another recurrent theme and main purpose of *baye-bayee* song is to appeal for *geegawoo*. In addition, the songs stimulate the potential givers and soften their hearts so that they will be more generous. *Geegawoo*, according to a well versed informant Injifata Tegegn (2006:10), is a dowry which is collected from relatives for initiating marital economy newly for the couple by in-laws, relatives, peer-friends and anybody who may undergo similar experience in future or whoever had been lent a hand to be paid back now in kind. Therefore, she is appealing to her father to remain as kind as he used to be even later after she has gone away in her composing of the *baye-bayee* verses in order to win his heart for more *geegawoo*. In a way, *geegawoo* is a diplomatic claim to parental share of property especially cattle including household utensils offered by the bridal parents. In this regard, Injifata Tegegn also considers *geegawoo* as Afan Oromo word that refers to the number of cattle a bride brings with her in union with her husband. It is not used to refer to any other form of marriage 'gift'. Thus, it does not mean dowry proper.

In addition to the cattle, a bride will part with such utensils like milk-pots (*xuuxxoo*, *baarree*, *guchuma*, *madaala*) as well as *qorii* (wooden bowl of porridge), *gingilchaa* (sift) *gindoo* (straw-tray), *kooboo* (straw-plate), spare clothes including butter and flour. The amount actually depends on how rich her parents are and how many friends she has as they will give her gifts too. The greater the number of *geegawoos* given, the more respect and appreciation the bride's family will receive in return.

Regarding *geegawoo* respondents also added that the major dowry that is given as a *geegawoo* for the brides are different kinds of animals including a pregnant calf. In addition, her mother or father may give her a special supplementary dowry, which is called *jalkaaya*, a pregnant cow that bears a newly-born calf. This final dowry is supposed to be the only possession of the bride alone that cannot be considered as the rest of the commonly shared property by the bridegroom himself even after union in marriage.

If her parents give her all the above mentioned types of dowry, the bride becomes happy and it will be unlikely for her to chant any more claim nor blame on them. Simultaneously her in-laws also become happy and they respect her and her relatives rather than blaming her or them. Their love for the bride (and her people) is also likely to mount with the quality and quantity of the property she has brought along with herself. Dowry and household utensil therefore often take a central place in oral poetry to mark Oromo people's social and economic prestige since women

should not be dependent on neighbors or should fall back on it in case they end up in divorce in the future. In other words, wealth and generosity are two great features of any ideal family to be favored for establishing wedlock. That is why nearly the whole congregation surrounds the cattle-shed and counts the dowry cattle at the departing minute of the bride to fix the level of marital prestige.

According to the informants, this song has two characteristics. The first outstanding behavior of this song is that it can make the audience sad since it is interrelated with a person's emotion and the other characteristics of this type of song is that it can entertain the participant since it is a type of meaningful song. That means, despite her sad appeal of her audience wants to listen and enjoy the message of the songs. Besides, some enjoy the critical analysis, which emerges out of the discussion in turn to fuel the subsequent pass-time conversation by the gang of the surrounding youth. Informants have also added that since this song appeals much to personal emotion, it can easily cause the crowd of relatives to burst into hysteria of outcry instead of joy. That is the reason why the Arsi Oromo elders rely heavily on proverbs for example by saying *garagalii hamoommotatu intalaaf booyaa?* Translated, this means the same as "should the bride lament in sympathy of her separation rather than the entourage conversely?" From this, it can be understood that the bride herself cause the *hamoommota* or entourage to sob. Normally, it is common in any culture that the bride is the one who could cry on her wedding day because she is leaving or missing all her parents and companions to join a new family and environment.

Moreover, in this type of song not only the bride and her friends but also the participants at the wedding including her parents and the accompanying entourage start to cry due to the message, which is carried in the song which creates a tragic atmosphere.

Informants also assert that in *baye-bayee* tune, the bride and her friends are the first group who are dejected. Because of this particular song, the bride and her friends are saddened by the event because their friends, the bride who is leaving for a new and distant place and themselves feel as if no such relationship with her would be possible thereafter such as having a meeting, playing and the like. In the same way, the bride also feels sad because she is leaving her parents and friends behind. She can express all about her internal feelings such as her pending separation from her family without any fear. In this connection, the fact that one does not need to bother whether the message in her song hurts her friends or her parents is indicative of the inherent

room
bride.
accord
interio
sits de
finishe
takes t

The *B*
twice,
listen

As to
arrival
line by

Unlike
listenir
It has
Beside
sadnes

Accorc
Arsi C
harmoi
means
What i
feeling
marrie
Weddi
the you
baye-b
meanir

also expresses her feelings about the past as a reference to the present. She can also express her suspicion, fear, vision, aim and the like about her future life style (Injifata Tegegn, 2006).

Regarding its performance respondents pointed out that the bride, with her friends, makes a rehearsal or training before her wedding day. Moreover, this song is performed in dialogical turns of prompt and response between two of the girls. Commonly, the bride starts the couplet and then her friends take it in their turns and finish the remaining idea of the stanza, which is composed by the bride.

The bride begins to rehearse the song starting from the last decision day of appointment of the marriage up until the wedding eve. She starts to perform and compose the verse in her every day activity such as while walking, resting in the middle of a journey, grinding, fetching river water, washing clothes etc. All the above mentioned occasions are the times during which the bride can rehearse the poem together with her friends but they do not compose publicly.

The respondents also said that this song is performed either in the form of solo performance if it is performed only by the bride or antiphonal choral group performance if it is performed by the bride's friends step by step.

According to Injifata Tegegn (2006) in most of these songs, the group themselves divide in two where one group starts and the other people are the receivers. When either group feels it is time for them to take over, they signal or prompt the other groups in their songs. This is understood immediately such that the beginner becomes the receiver or performer in so swapping systematically. Informants also prove the afore-stated idea that unlike other Arsi lyric songs such as *ateetee and weelluu*, the first composer (performer) of the song does not finish reciting the whole stanza of the verse. The bride and her companions stop in the middle of her recitation of the couplet. This may help the receiver to remember or to give a clue about the point at which she or they can proceed composing the song so that they keep maintaining coherence from the earlier idea. After that, both the sender and the receiver or the beginner and the next person take part in the accompaniment and composition of the poem.

According to my respondent's response, the *baye-bayee* song is performed at the special bridal room called *gola*, also serving as bridal beauty salon. Then, her companions in the special bridal

To wind up, *baye-bayee* is a means by which the bride and her friends say goodbye and request dowry by winning the generosity of her parents and relatives. Furthermore, it is a means by which the bride can send different messages to different addressees such as her relatives, parents, elders as well as her husband's clan.

So far, an attempt has been made to present a description of *baye-bayee* song. In this section, the thematic analysis of some selected *baye-bayee* bridal songs is presented.

4.2.1. An Analysis of *Baye-Bayee*: Bridal Parting Wedding Song

The selected bridal departing songs to be presented piece by piece below convey various messages that pertain to the bride's past, present and prospective concerns as a whole. They tend to give the impression of imminently breaking attachment between the brides on the one hand and the parents, her companions, her acquaintance or relatives on the other. Some pieces or lines of the song may also be concerned with soliciting more presents in kind or other lines may convey simple teasing of the son-in-laws'. The selected poems are analyzed henceforth.

<p>13. Baye-bayee garanbaan caccaafamee Baasaa geennaan madhumaan Na raafamee Madhumaan gaddeebisii Aabbiyyoo raadatti naa eebbisi</p>	<p>13. Gone-I'm gone, The 'Garanba'* tree grew in coils My belly churns From my imminent isolations Please Dad calm down the belly Blessing for me the heifer really</p>
--	--

The above poetic rehearsal begins with the depiction of the bride's village homestead like houses, bush and background landscape of the impressive villages scenery of her village. She tells listeners what is soon going to happen, that is to say, her inevitable separation from her parents forever to a new place to live with alien people in a new surrounding. She is experiencing and expressively revealing the hurting emotional unrest in the third line by saying 'my belly churns'. Because normally the parents determine daughters' marriage affairs without consent of their daughters, the wedding occasion is likely to involve more challenge for girls.

In the fifth and sixth lines of the song, she pinpoints her failure though the marriage takes place with her father's full consent; she tries to ease what he might feel as a father upon his daughter's

farewell. She also knows that even if it is without her will, what her parents decided is her destiny. It is a common understanding that divorce is hardly acceptable in the society; so for her livelihood, she is heard appealing to her father for a dowry *geegawoo* preferably a heifer because of its reproductive value. She further requests her father to do this full-heartedly and with his blessing so as to get for future success in marriage life.

To sum up, as it has been shown in the above poem, one can deduce that the bride's father loves and much more worries about his daughter. In addition, she also tells that how far compassionate and merciful he is for her. Besides, the speaker noticed that both father and daughter are disturbed about their separation by the time the farewell approaches. For instance, in line three of the above poem, she hints that her belly is churning and twisting from her imminent frustrating isolation of the wedding day. Finally, in the last two lines, she advises her father not to worry much. She also reminds him to bless her and wish her property in her marriage life in her future.

14. Adhallee natuu tissee

Borulle koreen tiyyaa
 Jaalattuu jibbituullee
 Arriyoon kophee tiyyaa
 Arriyoon garaa raadaa
 Aabbiyyoo garaa nyaataa
 Arriyoo* ciisa karraa
 Walumaan karaa tarraa.

14. I have been looking after the cattle

Tomorrow is my own turn still
 Like it or not, the brown one [cow] must be my
 shoes' price
 And in the womb of it [the brown cow's]
 a heifer lay
 My dear brown one lying [cow] on the way
 You must part with me away

In this poem, the words 'now' and 'tomorrow' are used to refer to her experience and inevitable routine of cow herding. She goes back in time to stress her sustaining role of taking care of the cattle until her wedding day. Yet, implicitly she predicts that looking after cattle is unavoidable even as a house wife. The purpose is to persuade her father not to hesitate to give her the most favored cow to match her previous contribution. At the same time, she reveals her suspicion that her father may not give her the pregnant heifer from which a female calf is soon expected because it is generally preferable to other animals and she also insists on asking her father to be generous enough to give her the heifer. In the last two lines, she uses the place the heifer frequents to settle itself in the evening to symbolize that the heifer is ready to part with.

In a sense, the bride reveals that she has suffered a lot in herding cattle. At the same time, she acknowledges that much dowry has been given in recognition of the service she rendered during her past life with parents. The speaker directly asked her father to give her the brown cow so nicknamed 'Arriyoo' that her father loves more than any other cattle. She also tells that her father loves the cow so much because the cow is pregnant so, it is a means of making wealth. However, she insists that her most favored cow be given to her. She further explains that the cow is pregnant and at the same time is lying in the gateway of the cattle enclosure. Thus, it can be said that her strong wish of prospering is expressed in the poem.

In line four of the poem, she insists on urging her father to give her the cow by saying "whether you like it or not, the cow is mine". She also strengthens this idea by saying "Arriyoo is my shoes' price". Here she means that the cow is akin to her own shoes that cannot be separated from her or perhaps valued equally at the price of her shoes. She uses this metaphorical expression of shoes and *Arriyoo* to convince her father that in any case, she has to take *Arriyoo* with herself because of her past care for the cattle. Then, giving the cow to her becomes a simultaneous dilemma and obligation for the father. Hence, she strengthens the message in this unforgettable way. This might necessarily leave the father in a dilemma, as he has to choose between preferring the cow and pleasing his daughter.

15. Eeynutuu wawwaari'aa
 Yoo anaaf aayyaa malee
 Eenyutu tulluu shan qaari'aa
 Yoo anaa fi saayyaa malee
 Saayyallee daayee gala
 Ka dayyee hin gallee ana

15. Who offers to sit up till late night this time?
 Except my poor mum and me?
 Who else is to cross five hills except me
 and the brown one [dowry cattle]
 Even the cattle can run away back to
 original homes [in longing].

The composer in the above poem puts more emphasis on her emotional attachment to her mother. The role of mother in deciding the marital fate of a girl is insignificant. Even then, on the day of the daughters' marriage, mothers are generally happy. However, parting with daughters is a disturbing experience for mothers as well as for brides. This emotional state is expressed by the words "who else is to cross five hills except me and *arriyoo* the brown cow". This line indicates that she will feel lonely during her journey to her new residence. It appears that she will feel homesick or stranger in new place and life-style. Even though she travels with the bridegroom

and with the best man, she will feel lonely or alien among strange people. The grievance is further revealed when she says that even the cattle may elope back to their original place while this is hardly possible for her. Her words imply that she compares her humble position to that of cattle; yet, admitting divorce or eloping back to parental clan is an unacceptable act of breaking a social rule.

Besides, the above lyric poems can be analyzed from gender point of view. In the poem, the bride implies that there is a gender bias which can be seen everywhere in the world. For instance, in the first line of the poem, she reminds that unlike boys, girls stay at home for a long period until midnight with their mother helping with different house chores. Moreover, she also expresses in the above poem that there is a division of work between the two sexes. For instance, staying at home and helping with domestic work are tasks set aside for girls is given to girls whereas staying outside and participating in field activities including going to school is set aside for boys. Such thoughts are revealed as follows, in first and second line of the poems saying “*eennutu wawwaari’aa, yoo anaafi aayyaa malee*” meaning “who offers to sit up until late night except my poor mum and me?” She seems to complain that men and boys rest or go to bed earlier while the miserable mother and her daughter(s) must struggle with the endless household routine even as late as mid-night.

Secondly, she also laments that she does not have the opportunity to return to her parents’ house to share her problems, i.e possible oppression by her husband and his parents because of new relationship. She foresees not only homesickness of missing her parents but she also anticipates future scarcity of household supplies. She desires to lead about generally a privileged life after getting married. In Arsi Oromo culture, it is not acceptable for the married woman to return to their parents’ home as soon as she is married. In addition, the marriage takes place through consent of her parents and relatives, not through the will of the bride. Due to this, she has to stay until her parents prepare the post-wedding visit ceremony and on that ceremony, she has to take a calf as a gift and get back to her new home. After that, she is seldom allowed to pay her parents a visit for fear that “familiarity might breed contempt” on either side.

Moreover, the bride is not allowed to run away from home so as not to cause marital conflict between the in-laws. The poetess in the poem envies cattle in that they are free enough to avoid blame and shame for being able to flee back to their original home; whereas, being a human

only orally but even in writing. In a way, she is also warning him that if he fails to believe her and if he insists on doubting, he would be ashamed in the end. If the girl is proved virgin, not only she but also her parents in particular and relatives in general would regain respect. Otherwise, loss of virginity may end up with immediate divorce including indescribable physical punishment administered on the bride while also resulting in embarrassment on the part of her parents. Such is the underlying feminist poet's suppressed voice echoing against the age-old masculine superiority prevailing deeply in the *weelluu* oral lyric art of the Oromo community.

Like the fear of not being found virgin, an equally obsessing theme of the *baye-bayee* lyric poetry is feeling of loneliness and alienation in her new life among people whom the bride feels are stranger as it is conveyed in the following part of the poem.

17. Arroon dhalee gaadi'uun harkaa
 lukaa
 'Gobbuu' baree akkamiin nyaadhee
 dhugaa
 Gobbuu kessaa na footanii
 Kophaa teettuu maxaqoo na gootanii
 Maxaqoon looniin toltii
 Mamadhattee lafa dheeddii
 Muu maxaqoo durbaa badii
 Mammarattee gola* teettii

17. Dear brown [cow] has given birth
 this moment
 It's worth binding its hand and feet of it
 So how can I drink and eat
 As you isolate me from my large family
 Yet I am not used to being lonely
 Cows can get used to loneliness
 Because they moo and chew grass
 What a pity! Oh, seclusion of girls!
 Destined to end up in bedrooms*!

The first two lines of the above poem refer to the affectionate attachment of the family to their cattle particularly cows. Touching on this life style, the speaker passes to her imminent isolation from a large and thrifty family. She appeals to the audience's emotion by contrasting her strong emotional attachment to the family in her future lonely experience until she fully adapts to a new family's establishment in a new social environment. Her bitter experience ahead is further revealed by contrasting herself with dowry cattle in a place, which is strange enough for both of them. Emphasizing the gloom of her alienation, envying animals' chance of freedom to turn home and consoling herself, she says cattle can forget the homesickness as they graze after mooing for a while which is hardly possible for her to do. Not only this, but animals may also go

back to their original place without being noticed by their owners or herdsman. She repeatedly laments that this is also not possible for her. In general, she complains that she does not have as much freedom as her dowry cattle *Arroo*.

Furthermore, the speaker in the poem asserts that she can't participate in different affairs such as political, social, economic; rather she is imprisoned inside secluded bridal room called *golaa* like her dowry cows in the barn.

In the 18th piece of poem below, the main concern or recurrent theme is the bride's horror of her imminent isolation and absence of true friends she had called out for consolation in time of greatest need and psychological depression.

18. Gara gamaa Osoleen wal'ariitee
Basaaan geennaan mogoleen wal-
nahiitee
Mogolee ima obsaa
Madhumaan nashokossaa
Hirishaan haamee kabee
Daraboo waamee dhabee

18. Over there, squirrels chase each other
As the time of my leaving came nearer
My legs began to wiggle and shiver
But I could bear the wiggling of legs
Worse was my belly's clattering
I reaped tall grass with which I
thatched
There was no one I could call upon no
friend.

In the first line of the above piece of lyric poem, chasing (playing) of squirrels and the freedom the animals enjoy are described in contrast with the right, which she was deprived of when not being allowed to decide on her marriage affairs freely. Lack of freedom is clearly manifested through 'wiggling and shivering legs' and the pain she felt internally due to despair and helplessness when she found no friend to turn to for help or share her grief with..

The song is recited few minutes before the bride is about to leave her parents' house. She explains in the poem that she grew up in a large family but now she is suffering from loneliness. She also explains that even if she called out to her friends for consolation, no relative could come inside the prepared bridal room '*golaa*'. She yearns for company which is expressed in line six and seven of the poem. Traditionally among Arsi Oromo people, it is well established that it is

not acceptable for the bride's relatives to accompany or go away with the bride once the groom's entourage has received her and are about to part with her to her new home. However, it is acceptable for the bridegroom to be accompanied by his friends and relatives when going to the bride's house to take her.

The speaker in the poem is brought up in a large family. Nevertheless, on the wedding day, she suffers from loneliness. Even though she calls out to friends for help, no one is to come in to the bridal room or 'gola'. This is indicated in lines 6 and 7 in the poem. Furthermore, she also tells that she becomes fear-ridden and is much worried by the time she leaves her parents' house, as it can be understood from lines two and three of the above poem. She cannot even walk freely due to frustration and the overwhelming fear of alienation that is created in her heart. Fear makes her legs wiggle. She also comments that no body would share her misery.

Loneliness and fear of the bride are vividly rendered through imagery. She compares herself squirrel to express her loneness. She tells that squirrels play round with their friends. However, she cannot get the chance to play and go out with her friends after her departure from her parents' house or by the time, she starts her journey to the new home. In so saying, she is also waving goodbye to the haunting and happy childhood that is to be replaced by scary pile of family duty (responsibilities) she is about to shoulder soon in her new home.

Other very common themes of the *baye bayee* songs or poems are criticism of poverty and cowardice on the part of the groom. On the contrary, praising her own relatives or clan by referring to their wealth and bravery is the theme of the poem. The same message or value is expressed in poem 19 below.

19. Biyya tiyyaa kan gootaraan
 dawoo marsee
 Biyyaa isaa kan hiyyummaan
 lafee cabsee
 Minishiri dhayee qawwee
 Tiyyaa fixa diinni hawwee

19. My home village is where crop-stores
 surround homes
 His [bride's] home village is where
 Poverty has nearly broken his bones
 'Minishir' [a machine gun] hits
 Even enemies envied my heirs.

It the 19th poem above, a contrastive description of her parents' clan and that of the in-laws is made. As it has already been said, it is customary to praise one's relatives on such an occasion. Usually, the girl praises her relatives to prop up her own status of being wanted for marriage because girls are respected not only for their personality but also due to their family background. Occasionally, the girl tries to assert her superiority over the bridegroom's side in terms of having strong, rich and respected relatives and family background. Yet, whatever she might say by no means can this lead to conflict as this is a necessary cultural flavor meant to entertain. No hostile response is expected since such verbal abuse on such occasion is culturally acceptable and considered as a piece of advice used to inspire the unmarried youth, on important marital facts.

For instance, in the above piece of lyric poem the bride praises her own relatives overlooking with opposition her groom's parents. In the first and second lines of the poem, she tells about her home-village that is a home of abundance that has not been drought-stricken. She also describes her home-village's houses which have with plenty of crop-barns ..

Furthermore, she tells that peace and happiness prevails life in her homeland. Apart from riches, she also asserts her being proud of her tribal heroism by implying that hers are preferred for wedlock by other local clans, as it can be noted in lines 4 and 5 of the poem. So, "*minishirii dhayee qawwee; tiyya fiixaan diinni hawwee*" which means that her clansmen are so sharp-shooting that they are sought-after for marriage and praised so in honor even by their enemy. On the other hand, unlike her parental clan, drought, disease, scarcity of food and the like prevail in the groom's home village. She also teases that his relatives are poor and he is not from well-to do origin. She expresses this in line two of the poem by saying that his people are poverty-stricken whereas her people have plenty of crop storage. To sum up, she prides herself on her own clan as one of the most respected, loved, praised, unique, feared and admired races in the surrounding area.

Regretting feminism at the cost of admitted male supremacy is articulated by the bride as a mainly recurring theme of lyric poetry, which always cuts across various facets of life. This is well described in the 20th piece of poem below.

20. Osoo mukaa kunillee dhaaba golaa
 Osoo dhiiraa anillee dhaabee lolaa
 Ta dhaabdee loltuu mitii
 Ta teetee toltuu mitii
 Ee Shiiree lallabanii
 Waan hiree hindhaqqabanii

20. As wood, this would do to stand as pole
 As a man I would stand to fight like male
 I'm not the one to stand to fight
 Neither am I any better spinster to wait
 Oh, they've summoned from 'Shirey'
 It's impossible to turn one's fate away

In the above twentieth piece of poem, the speaker is trying to admit equality among human race while on the contrary she regrets being a female who is inferior or incompetent in the established work division that men could take part in. This, she expresses through the analogy of some trees being appropriate for different uses. It follows then, that as human being she is also considered an object, which is manipulated in patriarchal system unless she resists domination and oppression, in stead of submitting to every decision. When viewed from gender's point of view, mostly in male-dominated society, males and females do not have equal rights. To this effect, the bride says, "if I were male, I would stand against imposition or forced marriage. However, as a girl I do not have a choice but to submit to the will of my family. Furthermore, she says that she had to also accept forced marriage as irreversible fate of hers.

In the above poem, the bride metaphorically indicates that she cannot perform every type of work like participating in a battlefield, or choosing the types of work she wants to do unless she is male. This is because the society she lives in is male-dominated so, males and females do not have equal rights. She expresses this feeling analogically in line one of the above poem by comparing herself with wood, which can not be selected for building a house.

Furthermore, she expresses her deep grievance, not only by talking about her being confined to house chores but she also laments her being considered inferior to men. Furthermore, she also states that even if she wants to remain unmarried woman, the society will not accept this because it is believed that a girl must marry at her earlier age in the tradition-bound Oromo communities.

Finally, from the last two lines, one can understand that she can be successful by luck. She also admits that a girl may get married and lead a happy life by luck. As a result, she asserts that one can be fortunate by chance. It can not be achieved rather than by work or desire alone. To put it briefly, she explains that the entire secret of a girl's success or failure in such a social set-up

greatly depends on fate rather than nurture. She ascribes her failure or success to fate. She regrets being born a woman for she is unable to change her status.

She also admits the fact that a girl whether married or unmarried will always be suppressed in the male-dominated society. Being a girl, she cannot take independent action like her male counterpart. In line four of the poem she says, “*Ta teettee toltuu mitii, ta dhaabdee loituu mitii*” that is, she humbly admits that she has to abide by the social norms which undermine the mental ability of women.

On the contrary, the theme in the oral lyric poems is exalting the pride of her clan’s possession assertively chanted by the bride herself, as it can be noted in the poem below.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>21. Gosti aayyii Alisoon
Kan manniin rabbaqqanii
Gosti aabbii Urjiyyoon
Kan manniin rabbaqqanii
Kan fardoon balaqqanii
Balaqqaaniin itti bulaa
Hin jedhaa natti furaa</p> | <p>21. My mum’s clan ‘Aliso’ who own big houses
My dad’s clan ‘Urjio’ who own adorned houses
Who also own adorned horses
Long live with your custom of adorned horses
Allow me a moment to say little more in
Praise.</p> |
|--|---|

In this poem, it is possible to know more about the girl’s family background on the side of both her mother and her father. Therefore, she takes advantage of ragging of her mother’s and her father’s clans ‘*Aliso*’ and ‘*urjiyo*’ respectively. It is further given spot-that both clans are owners of fascinating houses and ornamented horses. In *baye-bayee* song of this occasion, the praising of relatives is a highly informative opportunity of getting to know each other as two stranger groups of people.

The main purpose of praising her clan in the above poem is to solicit more dowries by softening their heart. For example, she requests them to give her more opportunities to recite a bit more in their praise. In other words, she knows that the more she sings in lamentation, the more *geegawoo* ‘dowry’ she could get. This idea is depicted in the last line of the poem where she says ‘*hin jedhaa natti furaa*’ which means allow me a moment to chant little more in praise.

She requests for permission to sing because she knows that one has to be polite in order to get favor from the audience. For this reason, the bridegroom's attendants may be tempted to appreciate and respect the bride's parental clan. Hence, she gives somewhat a politico-social hint to them that she is rational and very considerate about the sovereignty of her tribe. To sum up, the song is composed to glorify the tribe of her family. It therefore seems that the poem is not complete yet; had it been complete, much more of what she could say about relatives would have been heard or read in the poem.

An equally remarkable message of the *Weelluu* lyric is the intimacy and attachment of the daughter and the bride because of the gender stereotype. As it can be depicted in the next piece of poem, the bride is identifying her final gloom of separation with her mother in determination and consolation.

22. Haati tiyyaa Aashiyyoo hodhituu

mutaa diraa

Haati tiyyaa Aashiiyoo hodhituu mutaa
diraa

Hatti tiyya ayya morkituu akka dhiiraa

Morka kee gad liqimsii

offirra na dhidhimsi

Waa murre eda murre

Haadha tiyyaan Aashiyyoon

Nu har'aa gargar bulle

22. My mother dear Aashaa the knitter

with needle

My mother dear 'mummy' the knitter
with needle

Resistant is my mum like a male

Swallow down your resistance

See me off yourself at instance

We cut something, we just cut it

So we cut it last night

My mother dear Asha tonight we
sleep

apart

As it has already been mentioned in the above parts of the analysis, every *baye-bayee* chanting girl praises her own clan and that of her mother proudly. In this poem, the bride specifically praises her mother calling by her name that is with no title. In her praise, she reveals that her mother is skillful in making traditional household materials such as *gindoo* [straw tray], *xuuxxoo* [straw-milk bottle] etc. She admires some adorning utensils her (also peer girls) had sewed for her wedding. She usually holds bodkin in her hands, which symbolizes that she is not only a beautiful bride, but also a skillful bride to qualify for enviable marriage. Furthermore, it is also

implied that a mother is also admirable craftswoman who taught her daughter to be hard-working, accomplished, intelligent and superbly strong enough to face any challenge that men do.

This praise has significance because the strength of the mother is judged by the quantity and quality of household materials she gives to her daughter this time so that she could be self-sufficient when she takes up the responsibility of being a house-wife. Furthermore, the bride's knowledge, character, personality and the like are judged in terms of her mother's behavior rather than the father's. Since her community's interpretation of genetic influence or heredity is prototypically gender-oriented or biased, daughters are easily associated with mothers rather than with fathers whereas sons are associated with fathers but not with mothers due to the underlying male chauvinist psychosocial reality. But when it comes to benefit, daughters are only liked and bartered for dowry exchanges by fathers. Likewise, husbands simply value them for housechores and childbearing. That means that if the bride's mother is skillful and beautiful, one can assure that the bride is also skilful and beautiful. The popular proverbial saying '*Haadha laalii intala fuudhi*' which means 'to marry the daughter consider her mother' is a direct reflection of this crafts role-modeling or hereditary attribute as marriage determiner.

On the other hand, like the 15th piece of poem way back, the poetess also remarks that there is a gender bias in deciding about her daughter's marriage. This means that unlike the bride's father, the bride's mother does not have equal rights in deciding her daughter's marriage. The bride in lines 5 and 6 of the above poem vividly expresses this idea where she says, "Now give up your argument once it has been decided."

Finally, in the last lines 6, 7 and 8, the bride consoles her mother to be strong enough and to avoid frustration. She tells her mother not to worry much about her departing or separation from her or from them. She also reminds her that her time of separation is drawing nearer; they are about to see her off to her son-in-law's home. In other words, the mother reminds the bride that the farewell party has approached and that her daughter will depart that night. Therefore, the bride requests her mother to wish her with good luck.

Another instance of very suppressed discontent of the female (the bride) that comes to publicity through lyric poems on wedding occasion is the inequality of age, particularly an older husband's being legible to marry the voiceless youngest female. Her complaint is heard only through such lyric below albeit with no consequence to divert the trend.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>23. Kan moluun gindoo geettu
 Idooten dilgoo hin beektu
 Ka moluun itille'ee
 Idootee sanii billee</p> | <p>23. Tray-wide is his [the groom's] bald head
 Marriage never knows scarcity
 Cow-hide-wide is his [the groom's] bald head
 What a wretched marriage!</p> |
|---|---|

As it has already been mentioned, in the introduction part and in some of the above-analyzed poems, among the Arsi Oromo people marriage usually takes place without the consent of the couple. This means that the bride does not have the right to choose her partner based on criteria such as concerning his age, appearance, talent or wealth. In other words, marriage usually takes place through the agreement of the couple's parents. Because of this, the bride may meet a partner whom she does not love. She may marry someone who is ugly, old, naïve, moody, someone lacking in self-confidence, inloving or unlovable. Therefore, she may hate marrying him; however, she does not have any power to reject the proposed marriage. She cannot choose another partner either. Thus, she marries the man of parental choice to comply with the custom and to please her parents.

In this poem, she expresses her resentment against such custom of imbalance in marriage in which the girl cannot voice her own likes and dislikes concerning the suitor. For instance, in lines 1 and 3 of the above poem, she metaphorically complains that her husband's bald head is tray-wide and cow-hide wide saying '*kan moluun gindoo geettuu, ka moluun itille'ee*' which means that his bald head is equal to that of a tray-size and cow hide to tease him for being bald-headed from old age indirectly. The speaker ridicules her husband is being older than her, implying his inferiority while posing the importance of youth. Thus, she indicates that the wedlock is unfairly disproportionate.

Only on such wedding days through *baye-bayee* song can the bride be allowed to exercise the right to criticize whatever she thinks is contemptible about her husband and his clan too.

However, someone from her clan may come forward to stop her from uttering further contemptuous words of her in-laws.

It is traditionally acceptable for her to insult or to say whatever she feels. However sometimes she may mock or may upset the bridegroom. This is made clear especially when she abuses him verbally rather directly by mentioning his weakness such as being poor and aged as it has been described in the above poem. For that matter, both the bridegroom and his clan may be disappointed to hear this. The paradox of superficially embarrassing the husband through love songs characterizes the indirect expressions of deep emotion in the folk role mainstream among the Arsi Oromo people particularly.

In fact, the insincere and uncouth way of expressing love affairs publicly in such art has never actually led to conflict. Rather it has served instrumental purpose of resolving dilemma apart from getting tip for the singers in the form of money rather than dowry. Hence, some folk men in order to immediately stop mocking the stranger entourage especially as the abusing chant seems to get bitter or serious enough to embarrass could interrupt her. Then she recites so quietly using words that are not loaded with emotion because her parents can possibly interfere just to save face of such newly married couple. In any case, the recitation of the song in itself is sought-after for its entertaining effect by both sides of attendants' mob. To some extent, the verbal critique of either side through such occasional poem is a predictable cultural vehicle that is normally based on mutual understanding of decorating the event itself.

In other words, both the bride and her friends recite the above- mentioned song just to put both the bridegrooms and his accompaniments to challenge them to give money. Hence they compose the song to soften their heart and get more tips or (praise fee) so that the bridegroom and his entourage (accompaniments) stretch their finger from their pocket for being praised.

This money is to be shared later on among the peer-girl singers of *baye-bayee*. Simultaneously, a number of coeval girls sing in a similar tone and dance to demand money for the praising, which will be reversed if not enough money or none is given to them before the bride is seen off.

The prospective bride's fear of being forced for marriage is voiced in the 24th poem below. The bride is heard criticizing or anticipating sudden marriage imposition by parental side or by the side of the groom in a form of sudden harassment.

24. Faradoo Sikkisaa takkottee

bibbiduu

Kan halkanin natti cabse

Diina moo ambituu

Yoo diinaa deemsisaa

Yoo ambaa seensisa'aa

Jalumaa 'zoor' jedhaa

24. Spot-legged 'Sikisa' clan's knight

Who is it that broke in on me at night?

Are they enemies or aliens?

Chase them away if they're villains

Let them enter if they allies, not enemies.

The first line of the poem does not have any relationship with that of the general meaning of the poem. The main message of the poems lies in the other four lines of the poem. As it is already known among Arsi Oromo people, different types of marriage are practiced. Among these *wal-garaa* (exchange of two brides for grooms) *meembeetoo* (substituted-wife in place of a dead one) and *aseennaa* (*upon house-entering or willingly*), *hawataa* (*upon temptation or seduction*), *dhaalaa* (*inheritance*), *irradhabaa* (*accidental*) and the like are some of the interesting different kinds of marriage according to Hussen Badhaso (2000: 214- 234). It should be noted that most of these marriage customs have ever been least popular no longer practised. Consequently, they do not seem to have any apparent literary back-up unlike the popular types such as *wal-garaa* and *gabbaraa* (now abrogated) probably because of the inherent lack of popularity and their illegitimacy among the contemporary broad masses.

As the researcher tried to mention earlier in the introduction part of the thesis and in the analysis of some of the poems among the Arsi Oromo tribes, usually marriage takes place with the consent of the bridal parents rather than with the bride's permission. As a result, the bride does not have the right to choose her partner. Hence, she is subjected to a type of sudden and coercive situation that can be considered kidnapping kind of marriage which is called *irradhabaa* (literally meaning impromptu stop-over). In other words, forced marriage is practiced without the bride's consent. This is indicated in line two of the poem as follows, *kan halkaniin nattii cabse, diina moo ambituu* which means "Who is it that broke in on me at night? Are they from the enemies group or from the allies group?"

The groom's attendants arrive at the bride's house early in the morning even if the bride is not aware that it is her wedding day. Thus, she is surprised by the unexpected arrival of the guests who enter her parents' compound that is the groom and his accompanying men. No fixed date is set for the wedding day. It takes place suddenly. Since it is culturally acceptable that the bride should not reject the marriage proposal, whether it is good or bad, the bridegroom does not fear that the wedding may not take place.

In the last four and five lines of the earlier poem, the bride orders her relatives and the surrounding people such as her coevals to welcome them if they are not enemies or do not belong to another clan. But she is determined to chase them off if they are enemies.

The above mentioned accidental marriage which is cited in the poem is practiced among the people because of different personal and social reasons. The first reason is that the bridegroom and his accompaniment do not want to be seen by other people because this is basically an unlawful practice. The second reason is that both the bride and the bridegroom may not be from well-to-do parents. Therefore, they cannot prepare a marriage ceremony. The third and the main important reason is that the bridegroom may not have '*gabbara*' bride-tax to pay to his in-laws. Another reason for this is that if the wife dies unfortunately in compensation for which the groom should marry soon, etc. Similarly, if the husband dies, his closer relative (including a brother) will have to inherit as compensation alike. Because of the abovementioned reasons, the bridegroom may be forced to marry accidentally according to the so called *irradhaabaa* procedure without the consent of the bride.

The bride has often been eccentrically preoccupied with the theme of female oppression and tends to admit male supremacy in the oral lyric. The bride's consoling words to her father when the wedding day or departure draws nearer also constitutes the poem's recurrent issue. The 25th poem next expresses this common issue or theme.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 25. Shalloo horaa | Swans are hollow under their quill |
| Ka garaan jalli qolaa | Toughness is better today for a father of girl |
| Guyyaa har'aa abbaa durbaa | Never be hard-hearted to me father |
| Garaa-jaabeessaatu tolaa | Do not abandon me either. |
| Garaalee hin jabbatnii | |
| Narraallee hin fagaatini | |

the Bale goats never eat pumpkin', she has never practiced pre-marital sex or she has never given birth to illegal baby because this is believed to be dishonorable case.

Finally, in the last four lines, she confirms that both her husband and his relatives do not doubt that she has remained virgin up to a decent wedlock. She also asserts that not only she, but also her heir will not give birth to an illegitimate child. She is keen to tell the audience that she has always tried to behave like a girl who honors her respectable family.

Another important issue or theme in the *baye-bayee* lyric poem is criticism of laziness and its consequence, namely poverty of the would-be husband [the groom]. In other words, speculation or fear of future poverty is lamented by the bride as it is exposed in the next 27th sample poem.

27.	Kakka roobee baradaan gadi	27.	Over the Kaka hill snow balls of
	xoxaa		rain trickled
	Gurbaan warraa tikaa galee		Their cowherd guy [now bridegroom]
	Hansaara lafaa qocaa		is starved
	Hay biyyee qoci ati		Like chickens picks husk from the
	Gabbayii lafa qotii		ground
	Maarshaan lafa hin dinnee		Shame upon your picking the dust
	Simatu nama hin jirree		Just go out and plough a plot
	Jangallee qalbii tiyyaa		The plough-share couldn't refuse
	Naa nayii rabbi kiyyaa		Not me, you [the groom] are of no use
			How silly my conscience is still
			May God, have pity upon my soul

The first line of the poem is recited simply for the sake of rhyming in the stanza. However, the subject matter of the poem is descriptively laid down in the latter lines of the poem. As it has been mentioned in the introduction part, the bride recites the song not only to request more *geegawoos* from parents and relatives but also to advise them to be considerate or have high integrity and be strong, hard working, cheerful and generous towards her.

down or expressed indirectly in such conventional folks like the Arsi Oromo. Using provocative discourse seems to be peculiar to this socio-cultural group as far as an insider's point of view is concerned. Therefore, it is unusual for the bride to praise her would-be husband in the lyric poem. Both in this unique discourse context and in the inherent nature of investigating emotions like love affairs, one can fairly generalize that the *baye-bayee* lyric themes are deeper and much more subtle than it seems from an outsider's viewpoint.

In conclusion, in *baye-bayee* oral lyric songs the bride herself and fellow girls convey different kinds of messages revolving around loneliness, separation, ambition, advice, rebuking, etc. on her wedding day. These messages leave long-lasting impact on the minds of the audience. Whatever message they may convey, the poems constitute a meaningfully unique social discourse that is embedded in this particular literary genre. This in turn describes the psychosocial, economic, cultural, geographical and spiritual make-up of the individuals within the communal marriage context in a life span.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the preceding chapter, the researcher attempted to make a thematic analysis of some selected Arsi lyric oral poetry, namely *baye-bayee* (bridal songs) and *weelluu* (love song). Accordingly, conclusions have been made based on the analyzed poems followed by the researcher's recommendations in an attempt to show the future trend of poems of the oral lyric poetic art.

In this section it is attempted to find answers to the three key research questions around the basic research problem. These questions are: what kind of social function the oral lyric poems serve, what themes the poem carry and what mode of performance is used in these oral poems. This will be substantiated through the conclusive results accompanied by the recommendations of the researcher.

5.1 Conclusions

After analyzing the 27 pieces of the *weelluu* poems and *baye-bayee* bridal parting poems, a range of insightful findings have been arrived at substantially after analyzing oral poems. These findings have also led to a number of possible conclusions to support the answers to the central research questions. In line with the inherent fragmentary nature of the poems and their themes, the recurrent sets of themes revealed in the two genres may have rarely overlapping themes and wide-ranging or complementary issues related to the individual lyric performers.

As oral generic component, both *weelluu* and *baye-bayee* poems constitute vast and deep account of how and what the young west rural Arsi Ormo people of the contemporary period feel and think in love and wedlock context; that is their feelings of desires, contempt, appreciation, isolation, fear, vision, e.t.c... It is therefore preferable to present the conclusive remarks of the two lyric genres as follows.

One very outstanding subject matter of Arsi bridal parting song is strong desire for wealth or contempt of laziness and poverty. This has also been particularly verbalized in the cattle-praising lines, praising relatives' homes, horses and crop storehouses, etc...

One strong recurring theme in the poem is verbal abuse of the groom by the bride or her composers or companions. It sounds paradoxical because using abusive words of baldness and poverty, for example, to ridicule the would-be husband may be inconsistent with any marriage undertaking or love affair. On the one hand, this may not mean that the couple have no love for each other. It seems customary to make fun or entic provocation that represents self-expression in such highly secretive context like love or wedding which is quite peculiar to Arsi Oromo community. On the other hand, the bride and her companions were in fact trying to voice their grievance, contempt, suppressed or forced marriage partnership and deprivations. It is not very common therefore to encounter direct praise of the bridegroom in any case in the *baye-baye* bridal parting poems.

Another recurrent theme in the analyzed bridal parting poems is recital of pride in the bride's heir or family background, very often by claiming wealthy ancestry and hard work whether it is sincere or insincere. Glorifying the bride's clan for instance is a very strong element of the subject matter in the poems that reflects how binding the social stratum and body of social control is. This subject matter is recited sometimes by contrasting and even abusing the groom's side regardless of his real status so, much concern with economic background of the bride and the groom is a very strongly felt and recurring theme in the bridal-parting song if not in the *weelluu* love song.

Virginity is also noted as another highly valued issue in the poem. The bride asserts its possession while the audience owes her and her relatives a great deal of honour for maintaining it up until the wedding day whereas they would ridicule or disdain her for losing it.

Yet a very commonly chanted issue of the bridal parting poem is the stirring self-conception of gender inequality that forced the bride to self-portray wrongly and submissively while admitting the males' superiority and omnipotence. In this connection, let alone the bride, even her mother is depicted in the poem as if they were equally ineligible enough to make any decision or alteration in the marriage arrangement.



Unlike other lyric types, the Arsi *baye-bayee* lyric song by the bride, for the bride, can convey fragments of stronger factual or permanent message or theme rather than instant and immediate messages. These messages might be homesickness, love, hatred, disappointment, courage, suspicion, fear, vision, loneliness, isolation, pride, diligence, laziness, wealth and poverty of her parents and her parent in-laws.

The main function of most of the bridal parting poems could be to solicit more dowry or gift for the bride, to warn against bridal abuse, to inspire inexperienced spouse or relatives, to reinforce hard-work behaviour or to criticize anti-social behaviour. It is also used to express reputation through wealth in terms of heads of cattle, stores of grain and houses.

Regarding the mode of the performance the *bayee-bayee* bridal parting poem, it is recited for a wedding day in disguise from men or exclusively among feminine audience in a darker interior room in the form of song through exchange of prompt-call-response unlike any other poetry. The possible reason for such a behind-the-curtain performance may be attributable to the value of shying away that is often perceived as girls' decent behavior. *Baye-bayee* is recited exclusively by girls or younger married women but not by male bachelors unlike *weelluu* that is done often by the male. This poem is performed by solo reciters as well as by antiphonal reciters who may be the bride and her friend through call-and-response turns like the *weelluu* love poems.

The major themes of the *weelluu* love song has to do more with emotion, specifically expressing power of love or wanting to share it. The ways of expressing this power of love for each other is revealed in subthemes like mystifying love as painful phenomena and praising or appreciating the beloved one. Furthermore, the theme of this genre also probes into individual life rather than social matters and this makes it different to other types of Arsi oral lyric poetry.

The functional value of the now-disappearing *weelluu* poems is just expressing and initiating deep love and admiration of beauty. It may also serve a secondary linguistic function since a great deal of figurative language is used purposefully to impress or entertain the audience. In other words, the poem bears aesthetic expression of the suppressed feelings and perception of beauty in the eyes of novice lovers, apart from seducing. In other words, since it is a means of expressing a young man's desire such as love, unity, preference, hope, despair and admiration,

Timeliness and unscientific view is another important conclusive dilemma observed in both types of poems. Since it has been observed from some of the verses content that convey out-dated or contradictory views or harmful practices, certain contents of these poems seem incompatible with the current phenomena such as HIV AIDS, gender balance of the day, verbal abuse. Thus, such features of the Arsi lyric texts need very urgent edition or adjustment instead of mindlessly chanting them for ever or instead of totally banning, 'like throwing away the baby with the bath water'.

Taken as a whole, both the *weelluu* poems and the *baye-bayee* can be concluded to typically start with unrelated introductory lines thereby having weaker thematic function, as it is a common practice in most Oromo and other traditional songs. Actually, they may have secondary effects of sound parallelism. However, these introductory verses may be constructed mostly on the basis of analogy unlike other literary forms.

The themes in both genres are mostly foregrounded through the artful use of figurative language for creating vivid image in the minds of the addressees. Accordingly, the strength of the subject matter was discerned by drawing heavily on expressions of analogy or comparison, metaphor, contrast, description, portrait, personal experience etc. which have been mentioned as landmarks of the Oromo songs in general by Sumner (1997-375).

The two types of poetry still share common features in that they are short and accompanied by musical tune as well as their verbal evoking of deeper hidden emotional feelings. The overall function of the two sets of poems can also be concluded to include the social, economic, political and psychological domains. On the contrary, the basic difference between the *weelluu* and the *baye-bayee* poems lies in types of themes, composer, targeted audience's size and gender, setting and type of instrumental function of each set of poems besides other insignificant variations needless to mention.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abas Husen. (1982). *The History of Arsi 1880-1935*. (Unpublished BA Thesis).
Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Abraham Alemu. (2000). *Jimma Oromo Oral Prose Narratives*. (MA Thesis) Addis Ababa:
Addis Ababa University.
- Abrams, M. (1981). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. (4th ed.) New York: Holt, Rinehart and
Winston.
- Addisu Tolasa. (1990). "*The Historical Transformation of a Folklore Genre: the Geerrarsa of
a National Literature of Oromo....*" (Unpublished PHD Dissertation)
Bloomington: (n.p.)
- Alebachew Merka. (2007). *Socio-Economic and Political Issues in Waghimra Oral Poetry*.
(Unpublished MA Thesis). Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Andrzejewski, B.W. (1985). *Literature in African Languages*. Warsaw: W.P. state publishing
House.
- Asefa Tefera. (2006). *Theorizing the Present towards a Sociology of Oromo Literature:
Jaarsoo Waaqoo's Poetry*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University
- Baxter, P.T.W. (1974). *Some Preliminary Observation on a Type of Arsi Song, Weelluu Which
Is Popular with Young Men*. Rome: Accademi Nazionale Dei Lincei IV Congress
International Di Studi Ethiopici. pp 110-118.
- Ben-Amos, Dan (1982). *"Folklore in Context": Essays*. New Delhi: South Asians Publishers.
- Berhanu Gebeyehu. (1998). *Islamic Oral Poetry in Wallo*. (Unpublished M.A Thesis)
Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- _____ . (1999). የአማርኛ ሥነ ግጥም፡፡ አዲስ አበባ፡ ኢትዮጵያ፡፡
- Bukenya, Austin et. al (eds) (1994). *Understanding and Literature*. Nairobi University of
Nairobi Press.
- Cerulli, E. (1922). *Folk-Literature of the (Oromo) of Southern Abyssinia*. (n.p.)
- Coulander, H. (1972). *Treasure and Folk Life*. USA. The University of Chicago Press.
- Dadi Gada. (2000). *The History of Arsi Nagelle Town from Its Foundation to 1991*. (BA
Thesis) Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.

- Daniel Legese. (1998) *"A Thematic Approach to Amharic Oral Poems Associated with Derg's Red Terror in Gonder and Gojjam."* (MA Thesis) Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa University. (Unpublished).
- Desalegn Seyoum. (1986), *"E. Cerulli's Folk literature of the (Oromo) of Southern Abyssinia: A Critical Evaluation"* (Unpublished MA Thesis). Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Dorson, R. (1972) (ed.) *Folklore and Folk Life: An Introduction*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Dundes, A. (1993). **"Folklore"** *The World Book Encyclopedia* Vol. 7F Chicago: World Book. Inc.
- Eshete Gameda. (2007). *African Society and Egalitarian Values: Oromo Folklore Literature and Cultural Studies in a Contemporary Context*. (Huston: Huston University?) (Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation)
- _____. (1998). *Unheard Voices: Drought, Famine and God in Ethiopian Oral Poetry*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press and Norwegian University of Science and Technology.
- Fekade Azeze. (1993). *"A Bibliography of B.A Thesis on Oral Literature."* *Journal of Ethiopian Language and Literature*. No. 3 Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University:.
- Finnegan, Ruth. (1970). *Oral Literature in Africa*, Nairobi-Oxford University Press.
- _____. (1977). *Oral Poetry*. Cambridge. Cambridge University.
- _____. (1992) *Oral Tradition and Verbal Arts. A guide to Research Practices*. London: Chatham PLC.
- Gebi Misha. (2007). *Learner Perception of their Interlanguage of English As a Foreign Language Second Year College Afan Oromo Speakers in Focus*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University. (Unpublished MA Thesis)
- Geda Melba. (1988). *OROMIA: An Introduction*. Khartoum: Sudan.
- Getiye Gelaye. (1994). *"The Social Life of Yetnora Agricultural Producers Cooperative and as Reflections in Amharic Oral Poetry"*. (M.A Thesis). Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.

- _____. (2000). *Peasant Poetics and State Discourse in Ethiopia Amharic Oral Poetry as a Response to the 1996-97 Land Redistribution Policy*. (n.p): (Unpublished)
- Goldston, K. (1964). *A Guide for Field Workers in Folk Lore*. Hatboro: Pennsylvania, Folklore Associates, Inc.
- GQAO. (1993). *Afoola Oromo; Sirba Wardroom Geerrarsa Mararoo. Biroo Adaafi Beersisa Oromiya*. Vol 1 Finfinne:
- Hailu Araaya. (1978). *"Ethiopian Folk Poetry Recreated."* Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Hussein Badhaso. (2000). *The Arsi Oromo Marriage Custom*. Commercial printing Enterprise, Addis Ababa.
- Hussein Indesa. (1980). የሚከተሉ የአርሲ ኦሮሞ ሥነ ቃላት ግጥም (BA thesis). Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University
- Kabara, W. and Mutahi, W. (1988). *Gikuyu Oral Literature*. Nairobi: Heinemann.
- Ketema Jima (1966). የአርሲ ኦሮሞ ግጥሞች (BA thesis). Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University
- Kuwe Kumsa (1997). *The Siqqe Institution of Oromo Women* (Journal of Oromo Study). Vol. 4 NO 1 and No. 2.
- Leach, M. (1950). (ed.) *Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*. New York: Funk and Wagnals.
- Mahdi Hamid Mudde. (1995). *Oromo Dictionary Vol. 1* Atlanta: U.S.A America.
- Melakneh Mengistu (1990). *"The Major Themes and Motifs of Southern Agaw Folk Tales."* Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- _____. (2003) *Fundamentals of Literature for College*. (2nd ed.) Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University
- Mengesha Rikitu. (1992). *Oromo Oral Treasure for a New Generation, Proverbs and Sayings of the Oromo People with English Explanation*. London: England.
- Mesfin Messele. (2000). *Abbawdde Oral Poetry in South Wollo*: (MA Thesis). Addis Ababa University: Addis Ababa
- Okpewho, I. (1992). *African Oral Literature: Back grounds, Character and Continuity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis. Indian University Press.

- Oring, E. (1980). *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction*. Logun Utah: Utah State University Press.
- Ramey P. (2007). *Studies in Oral Tradition: History and Prospects for the Future*. University of Missouri Columbia.
- Sahalu Kidane. (1996). *"Borana Oromo Prose Narratives. A Contextual Study"*. (MA Thesis). Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Shibeshi Lema. (1986). *"Famine Inspired Amharic Oral Poetry."* Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Sumner, C. (1997). *Oromo Wisdom Literature. Songs Collection and Analysis*. Vol II. A.A Gudina Tumsa Foundation.
- Tadese Jaleta. (2004). *A Contextual Study of Guji Oromo Proverbs: Function in Focus*. (M.A Thesis). Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Tegegn Injfata (2006). *Oromo Wedding Songs. Arsi Variety Baye Bayee* Harare. Zimbabwe.
- Tejitu Tegegn (1994). *Suunsuma (war Songs) and Geerarsa (Song of a Hero)*. (BA Thesis) Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Tesfaye Mesele. (2007). *Subject Matter Analysis of Amharic Oral Lyric Poetry in Raya*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Tilahun Gemeta (1987). *Oromo English Dictionary*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Printing Press.
- Vansina, J. (1985). *Oral Tradition as History*. London: James Curry.
- Workineh Kelbesa. (2001). *Traditional Oromo Attitudes towards the Environment; an Argument for Environmentally (Round Development)*. Addis Ababa: Social science Research report series, no. 19)
- Yenealem Areda (1996). የጠ.ቸ አካባቢ ስ.ቶች የስራ ላይ ግጥሞች (BA Thesis). Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Zelalam Benti. (1994). *Elements of Protest in 'Geerasa Oromo.'* Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University (Unpublished)
- Wikipedia, the free encyclopedias <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/oral-poetry> retrived 23 March 2008.
- Wikipedia, the free encyclopedias http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zrsi_Zone.retrived 11th March 2008.

Appendix B

Analyzed *Weelluu* and *Baye-Bayee* poems.

Analyzed Weelluu poems:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Jaafaraa mucaan harma hodhaa
Waan akka jaalalaa mucaa nama godhaa
Barbarreen qoricha daa' imaa
Gaggabee qoricha naaf himaa</p> | <p>1. A Jafaran tribe boy sucks breast
What else leaves one childish at best?
As much as love does, save the rest?
“Chillis, the kids’ remedy
Cure me I’m fainting already</p> |
| <p>2. Doole makiinaatu ifaa
Si naaf qabatani akka ilmoo bifaa
Bitee gabayaa Gunaa
Dhiitee nagayaan bulaa</p> | <p>2. It is car that shines from Dole town
You’ve been prescribed like sacrificial
ewe of my own
I went shopping at Guna market
Now that the sun is setting on me, Good Night.</p> |
| <p>3. Kurkura moo kormaa
Kamtu irra bookkisa?
Guntuta moo harma
Kamtu irra boochisa?</p> | <p>3. A bull or a heifer?
Which one bellows more?
Full-fledged or blossoming breast
Which one arouses lovely-sobbing most?</p> |
| <p>4. Yaabbanneen fardumaa
Suuta deemsattillee
Ijaan si dharra’aa
Tuuta keessattillee</p> | <p>4. Riding is better with horse
Even if at slow pace
My eyes are ever longing to see you
Even among a crowd I desire seeing you</p> |

5. Faradon tee lamaa
Maaf sakaalte dhalaa
Daraboon kee anaa
Maaf jabaatte garaa

6. Gurraachoon dhagaraa gurguraa
Gurraatti ta afaan bulbulaa

7. Aalliin hin daldalaa
Dhibba geetti harreen
Tamorma kee jalaa
Hin bareeddi calleen
Callee morma keetii
Natu hin baafatinii
Haatee gosa kamii
Natu hin gaafatinii
Gaafadhee durba koloobaatii
Daayee naqabanii
Dukkana roobaatiin

8. Haatti aayyaa duutee
Ani akkayoo hin qabu
Warri waljaalate
Akka ta'u hindhabu

9. Gadabitti gala
Gadamsa hin nyaatini
Ta qeerricha didde
Gadaan si hin baatini

5. Just two, your horses are
Why have you chained the mare?
Why do you become hard-hearted
While I am your coeval indeed?

6. Gurraachoo [man named dark-skinned] the axe seller
The dark-skinned girl's mouth has honey's flavor!

7. Ali deals a hundred donkeys
The string of beads under your neck is gorgeous
I could have taken off those beads
I could have asked what your mum's clan is
But I found out that you're a girl from Koloba clan
I was held back from running away senseless then
In your love in a dark night's heavy rain

8. Since my grandma died I've had no grand mother
Lovers seek all options to give love to each other

9. Never eat antelope as Gadab [Asasa] is its den
Anyone who refuses to marry the young men
May the Gada power curse you to perish then

Appendix C

List of Informants

Name	Sex	Age	Woreda	Kebele	Remark
Gebreamlak Guye	M	48	Kofale	01	The head person Library and Archival center of Kofale Cultural Tourism office
Husen Bedhaso	M	58	Kofale	01	Representative of gadaa assembly in Kofale Cultural Tourism office
Hiko wario	M	45	Kofale	Dare Danisa	(Shanee) facilitators of traditional judge) of the Gadaa council in Kofale
Abdulkadir Hajibati	M	55	Kofale	Dare Danisa	Abba alanga (abba Sera) in the Gadaa Council
Butuse Mudde	F	45	Kofale	Dare Danisa	The main performer of siiqqee institution
Ebiso Gamadi	M	47	Kofale	Dare Danisa	A knowledgeable person and a member of Gada assembly
Girja Anota	F	35	Shasham anne	Megada ma	A knowledgeable woman Head of Women's Affair of the Kebele
Mashe Adena	F	45	Kofale	Wego Kanko	She is also the main participant of siiqqee institution who has given me invaluable information on Atete Son and Baye-bayee bridal songs
Kasim Haji	M	24	Kofale	Walbara	Head of Abdi Boru Music club in Kofale Cultural Tourism office who perform weelluu love song
Kedija Tusa	F	20	Kofale	Walbara	Member of Abdi Boru Music club in Kofale Cultural Tourism office who perform baye-bayee bridal song
Shegitu Bedhaso	F	21	Kofale	Walbara	Member of Abdi Boru Music club in Kofale Cultural Tourism office who also perform baye-baye bridal song

Appendix: D

Photographs and occasion

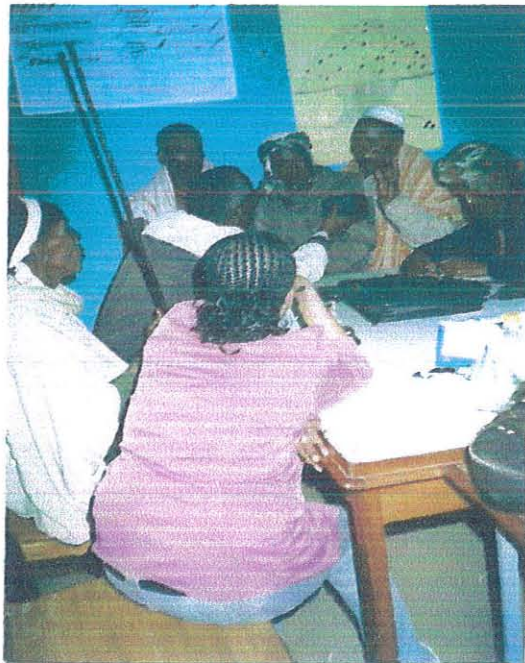


Fig: 1 focus group session

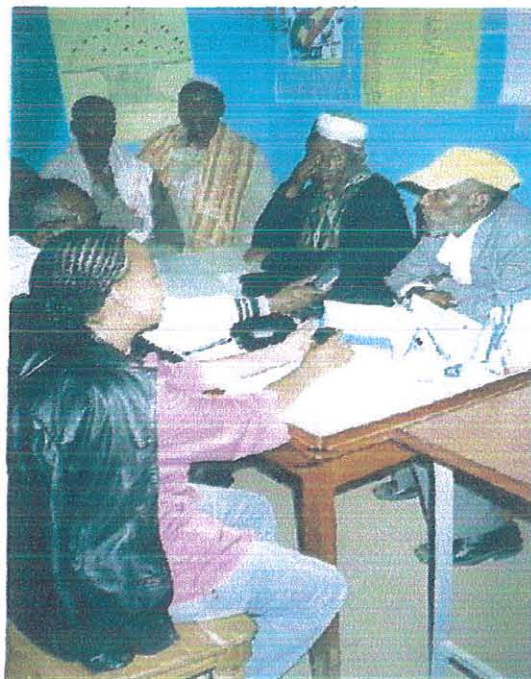


Fig: 2 interview session



Fig: 3 during performance of *baye bayee* (bridal song),



Fig: 4 during performance of *baye bayee* (bridal song),



Fig: 7 during performance of *baye bayee* (bridal song),



Fig: 8 during performance *weelluu* (love song), *farruu loonii*
(cattle praised song)

DECLARATION

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

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____