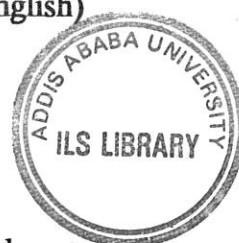


**THEME AND STYLE IN KEBEDE MIKAEL'S
CREATIVE WORKS**

**A Thesis Presented to the School of
Graduate Studies
Addis Ababa University**

**In Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements of the Degree
Master of Arts in Literature**

(English)



by

Mekonnen Minda

January, 1995

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

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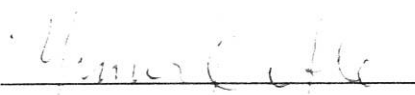
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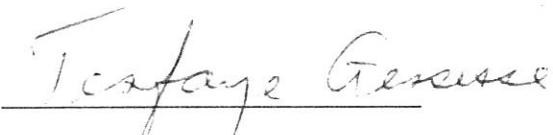
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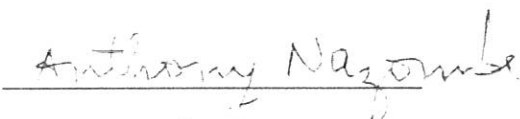
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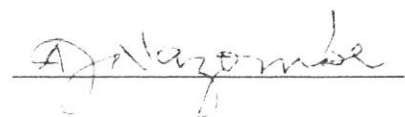


Examiner





Examiner



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ABSTRACT

Kebede Mikael is one of the prominent literary figures in the history of Amharic literature. As he is a prolific writer, his works deal with various aspects of the life of the society such as love of motherland, education, art and others. He is also one of the pioneers who attempted to bring to the level of perfection the 6/6 metre of Amharic versification.

The objective of this research is, therefore, to study the works of this writer and place him and his works in historical perspective: to be specific, it is to examine the theme and the style and to evaluate his contribution to the development of Amharic literature. At the beginning a literature review and a brief biography of the poet-playwright are given in order to find out what research has been done so far and to provide some background information to the reader of this thesis.

In the first chapter an attempt has been made to categorize and analyze how the poet-playwright presents his themes. He deals mainly with the love of one's motherland, religion, art, time, life, death, chance and fate, morality, money, and education. An attempt is also made to show how his up-bringing and his reading of classical works influenced his writing and how these are reflected in his creative works.

The investigation of the style of the selected poems and plays is what the second chapter consists of. Here the features of Kebede's dramatic monologue are fully elaborated. In the poems singled out for this study he uses the styles that Cicero identified as "plain", "middle", and "vigorous". In his versification, particularly in his rhyming, two points stand out clearly. First, his special use of sounds such as consonance and assonance which create special effects to amplify the themes. Second, unlike Thomas L. Kane's observation, the research reveals that Kebede also makes use of the ab ab pattern of rhyming scheme in his poetry.

The last chapter presents the overall contribution of Kebede Mikael. His contribution to Amharic versification, his experimentation in Amharic play-writing, as well as his production of teaching materials are all examined and commented upon; followed by the conclusion which summarizes the main findings of the research.

INTRODUCTION

I. THE AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research aims at investigating the themes and style of the creative works of Kebede Mikael, one of the famous Ethiopian poet-playwrights. Kebede Mikael has published his collected poems in three volumes. He has also published seven plays and eleven non-fiction works. He has also written various essays. According to Asfaw Astmat (1976E.C), he has seventy unpublished creative and non-creative works dealing with different subjects.

A number of research works have been done on Kebede Mikael's creative works which include two seminar papers, two senior essays for a B.A. degree, one M.A. thesis, and many articles in newspapers and magazines. (The focus of each work is presented under review of literature). Besides, Molvaer in his Ph.D thesis and Albert Gerard in his Four African Literatures have chapters dealing with Kebede's creative works.

In this research an attempt is made to examine most of his original poems and plays. There are two main reasons why the study is limited to the original works. First, the works adapted by Kebede Mikael from other sources have been treated by various critics both abroad and at home. Second, the adapted works do not

indicate the themes and the characteristic features of Kebede's style of writing as do the originals.

The thesis consists of three chapters. Chapter one deals with the thematic aspects of Kebede Mikael's creative writings. Kebede brings various themes into his creative works; particularly the themes dealt with in his poems are multifarious. In this chapter, therefore, an attempt is made to categorize and discuss the themes of his poems and plays. The themes are grouped into ten sub-topics. These are: the love of mother land, life, death, time, money, human behavior, religion, morality, education and his view on art.

The second chapter examines his style. The chapter consists of three subdivisions. First, the theoretical background is presented. Second, Kebede's style of versification is investigated. Here an attempt is made to bring out the principal features observed in Kebede's poem: his use of dramatic monologue, his techniques of versification; rhyme, diction and figures of speech are dealt with. Then his style of play writing is investigated.

The last chapter looks into the overall contribution of Kebede Mikael. We examine his contribution in producing teaching materials for the teaching of the Amharic language, and his contribution as a critic. The study then winds up by giving a summary of the findings.

The problems the researcher faced in conducting this research were many and varied. The first problem encountered was that of translating the artist's works in general and his poetic works in particular. The translation of poems is a most difficult task, and it requires a great deal of patience as well as a good command of the two languages. It is only proper to remind the reader at this point that only the central ideas have been expressed in the translations.

The second problem is related to obtaining M.A. theses of the last three years. I came to learn that Tena Shale did his M.A. thesis on Kebede Mikael's creative works entitled Major Themes in Kebede Mikael's Creative Works. I came to know of the existence of this thesis at the last minute. I found this to be very embarrassing on the one hand and disappointing on the other. It was very embarrassing because the subject I wanted to deal with, as the title suggests, had already been dealt with and it was disappointing because I learnt of the existence of the research after I have exhaustively done my study.

But the source of the problem lay in the School of Graduate Studies, which kept the thesis in the store instead of getting it bound and deposited in the library. However, thanks to my friends Daniel Abera and Melakneh Mengistu, I got a copy of the unbound thesis and made sure that there was no duplication of analysis.

The third problem I encountered is related to the people whom I wanted to interview. Initially they agreed to give me firsthand information as they were Kebede's close friends and contemporaries. But later on they refused to be interviewed, a response arising perhaps from the poor mental flight in which the author finds himself at the present. Despite these and other obstacles, the research has managed to assume its present form.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kebede Mikael's career as a writer began immediately after the evacuation of the Italian invaders (1941G.C) and extended up to the overthrow of Haile Sellassie's regime (1974G.C). Various critics examined his works in one way or another. For a systematic presentation, first I shall concentrate on works done by foreigners, and then I shall look into what Ethiopian researchers have done.

Among the studies made on Kebede Mikael's poems and plays up to 1980G.C Molvaer's is one which examines his themes of religion, education, and his desire for the betterment of his country. Since the aim of Molvaer's research is to show tradition and change in Ethiopian literature, he deals with the creative works which have some elements related to this topic only. Albert Gerard is another scholar who has made some general comments on Kebede Mikael's creative works. He does not deal with any specific work or topic as such.

Thomas L. Kane also has dealt with the religious themes as presented in Kebede Mikael's creative works. Kane's study is significant in that he attempts to identify the adapted plays and poems of the author. He writes: "Ka ba da Mikael who has taken many of his subjects from the writings of European literature, has dealt with the Faust theme in his 'Ato Balaynah'..., but in his hands it becomes just another Ethiopian morality tale..."(1975:39)

Kane also says something about the collection of poems published in "yaqane azamara" (harvest of poetry) and "Barhana hallina" (The Light of the Mind). He states that much of the material which appeared in this collection is "derived from western religious writing." He cited the poems የክርስቶስ ባለሙዋል (Disciple of Christ) "የእንባጠብታ" (A Tear Drop) ሙሴ (Moses) and "ሶስት ሌቦች" (Three Thieves) as the ones adapted from western literature. According to Kane, these were originally presented in western literature, for instance "The poem on Moses is, based on Alfred de Vigny's poem" (Ibid.70). As far as I know these are foreign writers whose works so far I have had access to because they have used the English language. (There might be works done by other scholars written in other foreign languages which I could not have access to).

Now, I shall try to review what Ethiopian researchers have said on Kebede Mikael's works. The very first comment is found in the article written by Professor Tamrat W/Amanuel dated 1936E.C . Professor Tamrat states that Kebede has a promising

career as a poet. He recognizes Kebede's ability to adapt foreign material to the Ethiopian context and to use the Amharic language with ease.

Ato Tesfaye Gessesse is also one of the Ethiopian scholars who has done much on Kebede Mikael's creative works. In his first research work, "A Short Study of Ethiopian Theatre" (presented to the 3rd International Conference of Ethiopian Studies) Tesfaye discusses Kebede's plays. In this study, Tesfaye argues that Kebede Mikael is one of the renowned poet-playwrights "who saved us from literary colonialism". Tesfaye admires the simplicity of Kebede's language both in his poems and plays. He also adds that it is to Kebede's credit that he has introduced a new style in verse dialogue:

...ከሁሉ አስቀድሞ አቶ ከበደ በጭውውት ግጥም የጀመሩት አዲስ ዘዴ አለ። ይኸውም አንደኛው ተናጋሪ የጀመረውን መስመር ሁለተኛው መጥታት ነጩ።...

...First of all Ato Kebede started a new style in verse dialogue. That is, a verse line started by the first speaker is completed and rhymed by the second.

Tesfaye also confirms Kebede Mikael's excellence as a master versifier. He is noted particularly for his use of the method of versification known as "**ተራ ወይም ደምበኛ ቤት**" (literally ordinary or a common method of versification). Tesfaye says "**በዚህ የግጥም አይነት አቶ ከበደ የላቁና እንከን የሌለባቸዉ መሆኑ የተረጋገጠ ነጩ**" "It has been proved that in this method of versification Ato Kebede is outstanding and faultless".

The next research paper presented by Tesfaye Gessesse for the 3rd Annual seminar of the Institute of Language Studies (ILS) focuses on Kebede Mikael's long poem "Irroro". Here Tesfaye analyzes the poet's diction, his use of onomatopoeia and the dialectical development of the theme. Tesfaye also admires the dramatic presentation of the poem, the simplicity and economy of the language.

Shifaraw Mengesha (1973) interviewed Kebede Mikael and wrote the latter's brief biography. Shifaraw states that Kebede is a voracious reader. Above all what Shifaraw attempts to present in this article is Kebede's opinion of literature and himself. The other person who conducted an interview was Gorgoriyos (a pseudonym). Gorgoriyos presents Kebede's brief biography. In the biography he relates some memorable incidents in the life of the poet playwright. This article appeared in Yekatit (1983E.C). It has more information than any other written document on the poet. Whenever one starts to present a study of Ethiopian literature, particularly Amharic literature, it seems impossible not to mention Kebede Mikael. It is also important to note that Doctor Amsalu Aklilu in his work A Short Study of Ethiopian Literature (1970 E.C.) gives an explanation as to why Kebede Mikael is one of the great post-war writers. Other people who wrote different articles on Amharic literature such as Seyoum Wolde and Asfaw Damte don't leave out Kebede's name in any discussion they engage in.

The last part of the literature review deals with B.A and M.A theses written on Kebede Mikael's creative works. All in all there are two B.A and one M.A. theses. The first B.A. theses is Asfaw Astmat's, entitled Kebede Mikael and His Main Theatrical works (1976E.C). The thesis deals with two of his seven published plays, **የትንቢት ቀጠሮ** (Prophecy Fulfilled) and **አኒባል** (Hannibal). Asfaw treats these plays from the point of view of dramatic techniques and he makes a few points on how Kebede is influenced by the style of Neo-classic writers such as Racine, and

Corneille. Even though his research is an important step one doesn't fail to see that he has left out a greater number of the plays produced by Kebede Mikael.

The other B.A thesis is by Nebiyu Yohanis (1973E.C), entitled Poems of Kebede Mikael; it examines the poet's use of diction, figurative speech and presentation of theme in 11 poems. It is to be remembered that the poet has 110 poems. Nebiyu left 90% of Kebede's poems and dealt with only 10% which shows that there is still a lot to be done.

Tena Shale (1990) in his M.A thesis Major Themes in Kabada Michael's Creative Works, tries to identify the main themes observed in Kebede Mikael's creative works and categorizes them into three divisions: "Religious and Biblical Themes, Didactic Moralistic Themes, and Historical Themes". He repeatedly refers to Hannibal, Kaleb and Romeo and Juliet. As can be seen, the last play is an adaptation of Shakespeare's play which my study will not deal with. But he makes occasional references to the two religious plays. What is common to all the researches done is that every one of them suggests that their lines of inquiry need to be pursued by future researchers. And it is in this light that I have undertaken the research.

III A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF KEBEDE MIKAEL

Asfaw Astemat (1976E.C) states that Kebede was born in November, 1907E.C, but Gorgorious (1983E.C) asserts that Kebede was born on December 4, 1909E.C. However, at present I haven't got a document or any other source that confirms which of the two is his exact date.

Kebede had limited formal education. He started with traditional church education. He got a chance to join a modern school at the time when his mother moved from

Ankober to Arusi province (as it was called then). His mother left Kebede in Addis Ababa with his uncle Ato Seifu Mikael who helped him to join a boarding school known as Alliance Francaise, a French School, established by missionaries. Here Kebede got the chance to have a good command of the French language. It is this knowledge of the French language that laid the ground for his career as a writer. At that time, we are told, he was reading materials written in French and was narrating the stories in Amharic to his classmates and friends. He completed grade seven in 1925E.C and this was the end of his formal schooling.

Since Kebede had a good command of French, his teachers recommended him to go to France for further education. However, due to his illness he could not make use of the opportunity. After this, he was appointed by the Emperor to teach French (Giorgorios 1983) with two French teachers who came from France to teach Prince Mekonnen (Asfaw 1976E.C).

It is after the completion of his formal education that he got a chance to be introduced to western literature. However, Asfaw also states that Kebede got basic education about literature from his school master. "...የት/ቤቱ ዲሬክተር የነበሩት ሙሴ ግልሐቤ ድርሰት መግር ለሚረዱት ተግራዎች በመኖሪያ ቤታቸው በፈቃደኝነት ያስተምሩ ስለነበር እቶ ከበደ ሚካኤል ለመግር ፈቃደኛሆኑ..." (1976:3). "The director of the school, Monsieur Malhabe, was teaching composition in his residence on a voluntary basis. Ato Kebede Mikael also volunteered to learn...". On the other hand, in the interview conducted by Shiferaw Mengesha, it is stated that he acquired the skill of composition through his own effort. The quotation below shows the question raised by Shiferaw and the response given by the artist:

ስመጥር ደራሲ ለመሆን እንዴት በቁ ... "ደራሲ ለመሆን ...ወሳኞቹ ተፈጥሮና ፍላጎት ናቸው። እኔ ደራሲ ለመሆን ከመነሳቴ በፊት ማንበብ ነበረብኝ። በመጀመሪያ ያነበብኩት ያገራን መጻሕፍት ነው። ከዚያም የውጭውን እነበብኩ። ደራሲ ለመሆን የአንድ መጽሐፍ ንባብ በቂ አይሆንም። ስለዚህ ከግሪክ ስልጣኔ ጀምሮ ማንበብ ግድ ሆነብኝ። አጀማመራ ከዚያ ነው። ከዚያ ወደ ሮማዊያን ታሪክ በሁዋላም የሕንጻዎችን

የምስራቃዊያንና የእንግሊዞችን የጀርመንን የፈረንሳይን የኢጣሊያንና የሩሲያንስመጥር ድርሰቶች አነበብኩ። አጠናቀቀው።... የኔ መምሕራን እነዚህ ናቸው።..."(1973: 20)

How did you come to be a famous author? ..."...to become an author... natural talent and interest are decisive factors. Before I attempted to write I had to read. First, I read indigenous books. Then I read works from abroad. To be a writer reading one book is not enough. Therefore, it was a must for me to start my reading from the ancient Greek. Then I read Roman history, after that I read the famous works of the authors of India, Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Russia and the Eastern countries. I studied them... These are my teachers."

Kebede Mikael can read and write French, English and Italian. Tena says, "Including English, which he learned later on by himself. He was an avid reader of Western literature, history, philosophy, economics and books of other disciplines (1990:11).

His access to the books he read was created when he met the Geez teacher of Prince Mekonnen. Asfaw explains the historical accident as follows:

... የአቶ ከበደ ሚካኤል የድርሰት ፍቅር እንዲጎለብት ከረዱት ሰዎች አንዱ አለቃ ወልደገዳኝ የሚባሉ ልዑል መኮንንን ግእዝ ያስተምሩ የነበሩ ናቸው። እኒህ ሰው ፈረንሳይኛ ቁዋንቁዋለመግር ይጣጣሩለላነበርና አቶ ከበደም አስተዋጽኦ ስላደረጉላቸው በዚያን ጊዜ የትምህርት ሚኒስትር የነበሩት ክቡር አቶ ሳህሉ ፀዳሉ የአለቃ ወልደገዳኝ ወዳጅ በመሆናቸው አለቃ ወልደ ገዳኝ ብዙ መጻሕፍትን ከሚኒስትሩ በግግኝት ለአቶ ከበደ ሚካኤል ይሰጡዋቸው ነበር...(1976:3)

Aleka W/Tstadik, who was teaching prince Mekonnen Geez, was among these people who fuelled the interest of Kebede Mikael for composition. Ato Kebede helped Aleka W/Tsadik in his attempt to learn French, in turn Aleka, who was the

friend of Ato Sahlu Tsedalu, the then Minister of Education, borrowed books from the Minister and gave them to Ato Kebede Mikael to read.

Whatever the reason and the coincidences may be, one can see that Kebede Mikael is acquainted with western classical literature mainly through his own effort. One can also observe that Kebede's acquaintance with western literature has highly influenced his creative writings, and it is this influence that makes it difficult to differentiate the style of his original works from his adapted ones. Besides this, in the preface of Akeab, one of his religious plays, he describes how his mother influenced him to learn biblical stories that became engraved in him :

መፅሐፍ ቅዱስ ማንበብ በጣም ይወዱ ስለነበር እኔ አድጌ አእምሮዬ ፀንቶ ጥቅሙን እየተረዳሁት በራሴ ትጋት ለማንበብና ለመመርመር የበቃ አስተዋይነት እስከ አገኘሁ ጊዜ ድረስ አብዛኛውን ታሪክ በቃላቸው እየነገሩኝ ዋና ዋናውን የመፅሐፍ ቅዱስ ታሪክ እንዳዉቀዉና በመንፈሴ እንዲቀረፅ ያደረጉልኝ እሳቸዉ ናቸዉ...(1960)»

My mother was highly interested in reading the Bible. Till I grew up and was able to read and understand by myself, my mother narrated to me the main Biblical stories orally. She was the one who inculcated the stories in my mind.

Kebede, as confirmed in an interview conducted by Shiferaw Mengesha, has read more than 3,000 books. He has also written more than 71 books on different subjects. But most of these books are unpublished. The list of books is included in the B.A thesis of Asfaw Astmat, who has covered the life of Kebede Mikael better than any other person.

Kebede's family life was a very happy one as expressed by himself and other people who had close relations with him. Kebede's mental health started deteriorating after the death of his wife, W/o Yeshe Engeda. They had lived together for 35 years. Kebede had no child by Yeshe nor by any other woman.

Kebede also served as a civil servant in many government offices in different capacities. (Shiferaw Mengesha 1983). In all the offices he held, Kebede discharged his duties competently. His contribution in building new schools and preparing language teaching materials while he was at the Ministry of Education is among his significant contributions. He was also one of the first news casters when Radio Ethiopia started to function.

On the whole, Kebede is one of those Ethiopians whose names are always mentioned for their contributions to Amharic literature and the significant roles they played in enhancing the development of their country.

1. THEMES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A theme is what an artist conveys to his audience as a central message of his work. A writer may convey his theme(s) directly, that is, by stating the theme(s) in a straight forward manner so that it may easily be identified in the first reading. A writer may also present his theme indirectly so that it may be identified after careful readings and rereadings of the work. Everything written is believed, at least in principle, to contribute to the development of the main idea presented.

In this chapter the concern is therefore to try to investigate the themes Kebede Mikael tries to present in his creative works. Here, not only the major themes presented in his works are identified, but the ways they are presented are also examined and commented upon.

Kebede Mikael treats various themes in his creative works. For instance, his poems pick up very different subjects as themes. The love of the motherland, religion, death, life, time, education, morality and his views on art are some of the recurrent themes which this chapter deals with.

1.1.1 THE THEME OF LOVE OF THE MOTHER-LAND

The theme that deals with love of one's country has different manifestations, such as showing concern about its freedom, technological development, better living standards of the people and others. An author may concern himself with the theme of nationalism in his writing for various reasons such as when his country is invaded by an external enemy, when he wants to show the importance of education and when his country's underdevelopment gnaws his conscience. When such conditions occur the author may try to stir the present society by bringing historical figures, particularly past heroes, and renowned leaders of the country whom he would like the society to emulate.

Kebede, being an eye witness of the 1936-1941 Italo-Ethiopian war, is compelled to write about what is meant by a country of a free and independent people. He tries to show the importance of freedom as well as education and the hidden interest of colonialists. Thus he provocatively writes poems and plays which magnify these central themes.

Among these poems dealing with the theme of love of one's country is "የኢትዮጵያ ትንሹ" (The Resurrection of Ethiopia). It relates the massacre, the tyrannic and brutal acts committed by the fascists. Its purpose is to alert the young generation

to protect their country from foreign invaders and to underscore the importance of freedom.

The poet explains how the enemy, in his attempt to rule by force, burnt churches and cottages, slaughtered young and old alike. These powerful and emotionally charged descriptive passages are meant to instil hatred towards aggressors and a sense of nationalism in the young generation.

Kebede's well known poem which exposes the secret motives of the colonialists is "እርሮ" (Remorse). This long narrative poem raises a strong argument between the colonialist and the colonized. The exposition of the hidden interest of the Italian fascists is what makes the poem famous and widely read. The poet also raises issues that are significant both nationally and internationally. Nationally the poet shows how dangerous it is to stick to traditional values and how wise it is to give emphasis to education and change because it paves the way for development and promotes a better standard of living. In addition the poet states that to be civilized means to have the capability to protect one's country from invaders. However, here, it is not clearly stated what kind of civilization is needed. But we can imply that by civilization the poet refers to the type of European Civilization where nations seem to be well equipped with weapons and have various technological means which make life simple and enjoyable for their citizens.

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The poem's central theme is narrated as the poet reports the argument in the poem as follows:-

ለፖለቲካ ሥራ መንግሥት የላካቸው
የነሱ ሰባኪዎች ሹማምንቶቻቸው
እኛ ባበሻ አገር ሥራ ለመሥራት
ሕዝቡን ለማሠልጠን አገር ለማልግት
ልጆች ለማስተማር ዕውቀት ለመስጠት
ለመልካም ዐሳብ ነው የመጣን እያሉ
በጣም አስመስለው ይቀባጥራሉ
ሐቀኛው ቅሊ ግን እውነቱን አፍርጦ
እኛ የመጣነው አበሻን ቀጥቅጦ
በዚያም ሆነ በዚህ ሰበብን ፈልጎ
እንደ እንስሳ ሁሉ እናንተን ጠራርጎ
ባዶ መሬት ብቻ እንዲቀርነው ብሎ
ይህንኑም ደግሞ መፈጸም በቶሎ
የሚጣጣሩበት መሆኑን አስረዳ
(ከበደ ሚካኤል 65)

The government officials
Who were sent on political missions
Preach that they came here
To civilize the people
To train the people, to modernize the primitive
To develop the country
To teach the children and to do what is good for the country and the
people
But the frank fascist, Chuli
Once told the truth:
"We have just come to hammer blacks like wild beasts and wipe them
out
For we need the land, not the people."

The poem reveals the hidden motives behind their invasion. It is not as such to educate the children, develop the country, or introduce civilization to the people. The truth is that they came in search of free land, cheap labour, abundant resources and better weather.

The poet clearly states that unless a country has got both power and knowledge, at least to defend the national interest, the idea of "sovereignty" of a state becomes fake because those who have power and knowledge will invade the powerless and the less developed. Therefore, poor and underdeveloped countries will surrender and lose their sovereignty. This is what the following lines state:

መሬት የሁሉም ናት ባለቤት የላትም
ኃይለኛ እየሄደ ያስገብራል የትም
(የቅኔ አዘመራ ገጽ 63)

Land belongs to all, has no proprietors
The powerful go everywhere,
To subjugate and collect tribute.

So Kebede argues that if we remain weak and ignorant we will be robbed not only of our freedom but also of our natural resources and other belongings.

The other poem that explains how Italians in particular and whites in general see the black race as inferior is "ጥቁሮችም እንደ ሰጧ" (Blacks like Human Beings). This poem shows the wrong assumption of whites that blacks do not think, act and not even eat like the whites themselves. The racists do not consider blacks to be better than animals. This narrative poem relates the remarks made by an Italian soldier, watching an Ethiopian prisoner eating. He was shocked when his preconcieved ideas clashed with what he saw and he was forced to ask "Do blacks eat like human beings?".

ይገርግል ይደገቃል እንደእኛ እህል ኅርሰው
ሲበሉ አየኋቸው ጥቁርችፍ እንደሰው

It is surprising and astonishing
I saw blacks eating food, like us human beings.

The soldier's astonishment comes as result of the contradiction between what he has been told while he was at home and what he saw abroad. The poem reveals how the invaders inculcate wrong notions into the minds of their soldiers in order to attain their objectives.

In the poem "ያዚኖራ እስረኛ" (The Prisoner of Azinara) one reads about the ruthless deeds of Italians. The prisoner, in his conversation with an Italian soldier, reveals his confusion as to why Italians behave against the will of God and in an anti-Christian manner, when they claim themselves to be Christians. The Italian tells him the true cause of the war. The main reason according to him is the economic problems they face in their country. The Ethiopian in turn enumerates the inhuman and brutal deeds of the Italians on his people, and also how they are sacrilegious. In the end, the Italian discloses that as long as they solve their economic problems, civilization or religion means nothing to them.

እኛን ያደረገን ልክ እንደአረመኔ
ይህ አዲስ ክፋት ይህ አዲስ ጭካኔ
የሀያኛው መቶ ይባላል ሥልጣኔ

This new evil, this new curse
Which made us cruel and brutal
Is called Twentieth Century Civilization.

The poem shows the poet's dilemma. On the one hand, the poet has a positive attitude towards civilization. He wishes his country to be civilized. On the other hand, he seems to denounce civilization, particularly its negative and destructive aspect.

In relation to this Reidulf Knut Molvaer in his doctoral dissertation says:

Ethiopian self-confidence is expressed by Ka"bba"da" Mikael in poems about the Italians in Ethiopia during their occupation of the country. Here we encounter some very early notions of what has been termed black consciousness or negritude. Instead of an angry riposte, the author can afford to make fun of Italian superciliousness and feelings of superiority. His possibly most famous and influential poem, in which he ridicules Fascist ideas and extols Ethiopian values, is Eroro. This may be the proudest expression of the Ethiopian personality and of Ethiopian values in Amharic language... (1980, 167-168)

Molvaer here confirms what has been said earlier and shows the attitudes Ethiopians have towards themselves as well as the poet's level of enlightenment regarding inter-racial politics.

The other poem which describes what the motherland expects from every citizen is " እጅ መገኛ" (Token Gift). Every citizen in order to fulfill the call of his motherland, must work hard in his/her profession. The effort made in every direction and profession is crucial to the development of one's country. An extract from the poem reads:

አገር ከፍ የምትል በጉልበት ጠንክራ
 በጥሩ ተግባር ነው በልጆች ሥራ
 ሲያበለጽጓት ነው በገጸበረከት
 እያንዳንዱ ዜጋ ይህን ሲመለከት
 ተግቶ ሲሠራ ነው በመሆን አስተዋይ
 ዕድገት የሚገኘው በጥበብ በሲሳይ
 በነሱ ሥራ ነው በልጆቹ ዋጋ
 አገር የምትሆነው ሀብታም ባለጸጋ

 እያንዳንዱ ዜጋ ትጉ ተጣጣሪ
 ሠራተኛ ሆኖ የነቃ ታታሪ
 እጅ መንሻውን ያቅርብ አንድ ሙያ ወልዶ
 መዋጮ ሲጠየቅ እጁ እንዳይሆን ባዶ
 (የሕልም አበባ ገጽ 37-38)

A country can only develop
 By the effort the people exert
 Every citizen should contribute to the process of development
 Every citizen should be creative and innovative
 And hence should give his share of a "present"
 Since development is the result of the cumulative effort of all
 Every citizen has to participate actively in every endeavour
 Every citizen should contribute something
 Not be empty-handed when asked.

The poet doesn't specify the professions that are vital for a nation's advancement. He rather advises all professionals to work towards the goal of bringing the country onto an equal footing with developed countries. It is only when every citizen discharges his duties properly, the poet argues, that he fulfills his obligations towards his country.

Kebede in his poem "ስለተግባረእድ" " On Handicraft" which brings to focus modern technological advances, also deals with the theme of hard work as a factor which makes one's country rich. Here by personifying the motherland, Kebede makes her

tell us of her envy of civilized countries. The fruits of modernization, such as the production of planes, ships, cars, telephones...etc. are the objects of her envy.

በመርከብ ሲጓዙ በጣም እያግረኝ
ባይሮፕላን ሲበሩ በጣም እያግረኝ
የግግኝቱ ነገር ብልሀቱ ቸገረኝ
ሠርታችሁ ልይና እናንተ ልጆቼ
እኔም ወግ ይድረሰኝ እንደጓደኞቼ
ሥሩልኝ ልጆቼ እናንተ ወጣቶቼ
እየተሣለቁ በኔ ላይ ሊተቹ
መቼም አያልፍልሽ አይበሉኝ ሌሎቹ
(የቅኔ አዝመራ ገጽ 48-49)

I long travel by ship
I wish to fly by plane
But I lack the skill with which to make them
I can't afford the means to *develop* such technology
I am longing to see the young generation
Develop the means, and acquire the technology
So that like my friends of the developed world
I can fly and float so that
Others no longer call me primitive
I have faith in the new generation
It will achieve technological advancement.

The concern Kebede has for his country, specially after the invasion by fascist Italy, disturbs his soul and gives him no rest. He advises the young generation to start working hard. Since the future of the country depends on the younger generation, the country begs her children to save her from degradation and the danger of being forgotten.

The love of one's motherland is an inborn character of human beings. Authors like Kebede Mikael to reinforce such innate feelings treat the theme of love of one's country in their creative works. Understanding this universal truth, Kebede carries

this theme further in his poem "አጼ ቴዎድሮስና ሁለት የውጭ አገር ሰዎች" (King Tewodros and Two Foreigners). King Tewodros who sacrificed himself to unite the country is taken as an ideal hero. The poem narrates how foreigners tried to cheat the king, disguising themselves as tourists. The king, who understand their hidden interest, tells his people to follow attentively every move the foreigners are making. On his part he shows the foreigners great hospitality. But, when they are ready to leave, he gives them various precious gifts, but he doesn't allow them to take away even the dust of his country sticking to their shoes. Therefore, he orders his guards to wash the shoes of the foreigners before they board ship. The soil is symbolic of the motherland. He promises to give everything the foreigners need but not his country or a portion of it.

Kebede has also treated the theme of patriotism in his play Hannibal (one of his historical plays). The play depicts the importance of development, freedom and independence of one's country. The story is based on the war that was waged between Carthage and Rome. In history these two countries fought three times and the wars are known as the "Punic wars". The play presents the second one.

The play starts with a dialogue between two servants. The first talks about the destructiveness of war, while the second expresses how he prefers fighting to cleaning a floor. In the meantime, a messenger comes and breaks the news about

the war. He tells them that the negotiation started earlier to resolve the conflict peacefully has failed and that war is imminent.

Hannibal crosses the Alps and terrifies the Romans. While he is fighting against the Romans there, he is sabotaged by Hanon, who envies him. Because he is warned by his friend that if Hannibal returns victoriously he will take revenge against him, Hanon collects money and starts lobbying against Hannibal. Hanon, who has money and is a good rhetorician, convinces members of the senate not to send additional reinforcements and logistics to Hannibal.

Although Hannibal, with his heroic deeds, causes havoc on the Romans, he can not subdue them. The Romans, who have understood the dangerous situation, call their senators to a meeting and discuss if there is any mechanism by which they can drive away Hannibal from Rome. One of the senators suggests that the only mechanism is to leave Hannibal there, and go to Carthage and open a battlefield there. All members of the council agree on this plan.

As soon as the senators of Carthage learn that the Romans have decided to invade Carthage, they request Hannibal to retreat from Rome and return home as soon as possible, which he does. Nevertheless, Carthage is defeated and Hannibal escapes to Persia where the Romans pursue him. Hannibal realizes that Persia is no longer powerful enough to protect him, and takes poison which he has kept in his ring.

Kebede, in this play, asserts that the motherland demands of every citizen to rise in unison, because all efforts made by a few individuals do not bring satisfactory results. Unless there is mass support from behind, the forces at the front may be defeated not only militarily but also morally, resulting in the fall of the motherland.

This is what happened to Carthage and its people. The senators recognized later on that they should have given more attention to Hannibal and taken matters more seriously. But at the time they were wrangling among themselves, some got tricked with a little money while others were misled by the smart rhetoric of Hanon, who had a hidden motive. In one way or another the lack of unity among the Carthageans enabled their enemy to be victorious. As it is observed in the play, the problem of one's country is the problem of every citizen. Therefore, to build one's country and make her strong in all spheres, cooperation and unity are essential.

Hannibal states this fact as follows:

አኒባል- አለመተባበር የሚያመጣው ዕዳ
 መንግሥት እንደሚያፈርስ ሕዝብ እንደሚነጻ
 ላለም ሰዎች ሁሉ ዞራችሁ አስተምሩ
 መስማት ለሚፈልግ ለቅን ሰው ንገሩ።
 ሁሉ እንደ ካርታጎ ባጉል ድንቁርና
 ጥበብን ሲያስተምሩት እምቢ አይልምና
 ሰው ካላገኛችሁ ይህን የሚሰማ
 ንገሩ ለብርሀን ለሌሊት ጨለማ
 ለፀሐይ፣ ለኮከብ፣ ላየሩ፣ ለጉሙ

ለጨረቃ፣ ለዛፍ ለጠል ለዝናሙ
 ለወፎች ለእንስሶች ለፍጥረተ ኃለሙ
 ጠፊ ነው በሷችው ሕዝብ ካልተሰማማ
 ዐይን ያለው ይመልከት ዠር ያለው ይሰማ

Act (2)

Hannibal:

Go and tell the world
What disunity brings
Tell honest men who want to listen
Not to be ignorant like the Carthagians
Who shun wisdom
If you do not get people to listen to this
Tell it to the light of day, the darkness of the night
Tell it to the sun, the stars, the air, the mist
Tell it to the moon, the tree, the clouds
Tell it to the birds, the animals of all creation
Tell them that unless people unite they will vanish
Let those who have eyes see, those who have ears listen.

This soliloquy of Hannibal's is a powerful oration on the theme of unity. Kebede warns fellow citizens not to be deceived by material gifts as well as by the smart rhetoric of leaders who have secret motives and ambitions. The play becomes more significant when one takes into account the historical period when the play was written, that is, in the aftermath of the Italo-Ethiopian war.

1.1.2 RELIGIOUS THEMES IN KEBEDE MIKAEL'S POEMS

Kebede's concern with religion, specifically Christianity, arises from his cultural and educational background. Kebede, who comes from a tradition-bound Christian family can not escape from its influence. Moreover, his traditional church education reinforced it. Although he attended modern schools, he is not free from the impact of traditional church education. As a result of this education and

upbringing, he deals with religious themes in a number of his poems. In relation to this point Molvaer states the following:

---the religious climate in Ethiopia may also account for the overriding moral concern that can be discerned in all Amharic writing. Many authors have attended church schools, and much of Amharic literature has benefited from this influence (1980, 10).

As Molvaer's general statement indicates, Ethiopian authors, specifically those writing in Amharic who are the product of church education, are not able to get out of this tradition, and Kebede Mikael is one of such writers.

The central ideas of Kebede's poems which have religious themes are based on stories from the Holy Bible. Kebede, as shown in the introductory part, considers the Holy Bible a source material for creative works and he exploits this source material to perfect his knowledge of versification. His traditional church education and culture as well as the creative works he read from abroad influence the religious themes in his poems. The poems that deal with religious themes are selected and treated in this part of the study.

The first poem which deals with religion is fully based on the miraculous deeds of God "ትገቢተ ዮናስ". Here, the story of Jonah is presented. The only difference between "The Book of Jonah" and "Timmibita Yonnas" is that in the Bible the story is presented in prose. The story is aimed at showing that everything in this world is under God's control and that nothing is impossible for Him. Jonah's futile

attempt to flee to Tarshish was blocked and he spent three nights in the belly of a fish. Lastly he accepted his defeat as well as weakness and prays to the Lord. God teaches him through example by growing a vine overnight which protects Jonah from the sun's heat. But later on He dries the vine and tells Jonah that, while He is bothering about hundreds and thousands of people of Nineveh, Jonah is angry about a simple tree. In this way Kebede is attempting to show that no matter how hard man tries to disobey God, he cannot succeed.

We also find this concept in "የሰው እምቢተኝነት" (Man's Disobedience). The inability of human beings to investigate what God has created is also seen in the poem "የዱባ ፍረኖ የሸላ ፍረ" (The Fruits of a Figtree and a Pumpkin). The poem tells of a tired man who is resting under the shade of a fig tree. The man notices the disproportion between the fig fruit and the pumpkin and begins to philosophize that God has made a mistake in interchanging the places of these fruits. No sooner has he made this comment than he falls asleep under the figtree. In the meantime a blowing wind causes a fruit of the figtree to fall and the fruit hits the nose of the man and he bleeds. He soon realizes that, it is he, not God, who made the error. This incident is immediately followed by what looks like a religious sermon moralizing:

በምትሠራው ሥራ መቼም አትሣሣት
 የለብህም እንተ መታለል ወይ መርሳት
 እኛ ግን ሰዎቹ ጥንቁን ስንፈጠር
 ጠባይ ሆኖብናል ሁሉን መቀባጠር
 እያደር ይታያል ጥራቱ ሲያበራ
 እንከን የለበትም በምትሠራው ሥራ
 ሰዎች ተሳስተው ትክክል ሳይፈርዱ

ይጠረጥሩህል እየዘላበዱ
 ዘላለም እንተነህ የፍርድ መምህር
 ስህተት የለብህም ሕያው እግዚአብሔር
 እንተን የምገተ ተሳሳተ ብሎ
 ብዙ ጊዜ አይቆይም ይረታል በቶሎ
 (የኃይ ውበት ገጽ 133)

There is no erring in what You do
 You are neither forgetful nor can You be deceived
 But us human beings
 Ever since our creation
 Blubbering has become our habit
 It is gradually that the quality of Your work brightens up for us
 There is no mistake in Your work
 But people are mistaken and don't do justice to Your work
 They rattle and tattle about You
 You are the everlasting instructor of justice
 The immortal God!
 He who argues that You are mistaken
 Doesn't take long to be proven wrong.

The essence of the concluding lines is that God created everything as He wished it to be. Therefore, it is not necessary to contemplate, to alter or to make further investigations and to raise various questions about Him or His deeds, as there is no error in whatever He does. The arguments man advances and the questions he raises are the reflections of his weaknesses. The poem, therefore, attributes perfection to God in all His creation and decisions.

This absolute perfection and omnipotence of God made the poet consider Him the only Saviour of this world, Protector of the poor, Master of the tyrants, the wisest of the wise, ruler of all the leaders who administer every act of creation with

absolute authority. The poem "አንድ አምላክ" (One God) confirms this point. God himself speaks in this poem about his Almightyness.

Furthermore, patience is mentioned in the poems as one of the qualities of God and His forgiveness as infinite. He always forgives those who ask for pardon.

God as a ruler of the world is beyond human imagination and His works are abstract though human beings attempt to investigate them. In one of his poems Kebede remarks that even kings order that their secrets be kept and that their commands be respected. They will punish any one who leaks them out. Likewise, God is offended when man tries to pass beyond his limit.

የምድር ንጉሥ እንኳን ምስጢር ያስጠብቃል
የሚያወራውም ሰው በብርቱ ይቀጣል
ሕያው ሥላሴማ ምሥጢሩ የሰፋ
ሲመራመሩበት ምንው አይከፋ።
(የቅኔ ውበት ፲፰ 87)

Even earthly kings order secrets to be kept
One who leaks information will be punished
The eternal Trinity whose secrets are limitless
Why are They not offended when Their secrets are investigated.

Kebede compares man with the Creator and states that the former is insignificant. Man may gain honour and fame on earth but this doesn't spare him from death. Man's wisdom and creation of wealth are minute when compared with those of God. The poem "ፈጣሪና ኢምንት" (God and The Particle) reveals this.

ፍጡርን ሲያስተውሉት በፈጣሪ ፊት
ምንኛ ትቢያ ነው ምንኛ ኢምንት
ብርቅ ድንቅ የሚሉት እጅግም ያማረ
የሚታየን ሁሉ መስሎ የከበረ

የምንቀናበት አድርገን እንደአዲስ
 ፊጽሞ ይጠፋል እንደጉም እንደጢስ።
 (የሕልም አበባ ፲፮ 26)

When the creature is compared with the Creator
 How even man is mere dust and unworthy of mention
 Rare and beautiful things
 That seem precious to us
 And compel our envy
 Will all vanish like cloud and smoke

After showing how insignificant human beings are before God, the poet discusses in "የሕጢያት ፍሬ" (The Fruit of Sin) that every human being is innocent at birth. But later on, as he develops mentally and physically, his wrongs multiply and he becomes sinful. The artist in this poem who wishes to draw the picture of Jesus at different ages first searches for Christ-like qualities in man and finds them in a baby and draws from them a picture of innocence. Then he goes on to search for a man that resembles Jesus. Whatever his attempt, he fails to find anyone with such qualities. Finally, he discovers the innocent baby to have grown into an excellent portrait of the devil. In this poem the poet tries to explain that as people grow they become more sinful.

የሰው ሁሉ ታሪክ እንዲህ ነው ነገሩ
 መጀመሪያ ጊዜ ሰዎች ሲፈጠሩ
 የተዋቡ ናቸው በኋላ እያደፉ
 በኃጢአት ሲረከቡ እየሆኑ ክፉ
 እየተበላሹ ጌታን ሲበድሉ
 አስጠያፊ ሆነው ይሁዳን መሰሉ።
 (የሕልም አበባ ፲፮ 70-71)

The history of mankind proves this:
 In the beginning they are handsome.
 Later on they get soiled.
 And become wicked and defiled with sin
 Turning ugly like Judas.

Kebede gives his injunction that man should emulate the lives of saints in the poems, "ኪዳነ ጽሁፊት", "The Lady of Perpetual Help", and "ለእመቤታችን ጽሁፊት" (Praise for St. Mary). He calls on the mother of Jesus to save us from the malicious sin of the serpent who led Adam and Eve to eternal damnation.

1.1.3 RELIGIOUS THEMES IN KEBEDE MIKAEL'S PLAYS

One also finds the theme of religion in Kebede Mikael's plays. However, it is necessary here to make clear at the outset that to say a play has a religious theme doesn't necessarily mean that it is religious drama. In defining what is and what is not religious drama Ehrensperger writes:

Drama is not religious because it uses material that comes from religious books or from Judaeo-Christian sources in the Bible. It is not religious because it dramatizes so-called religious themes. These may give religious significance to the material, but they are not its only sources. Drama is truly religious when it shows meaning and purpose in life that grow from the revelation of the highest values conceivable. When these values are translated into living situations which cause conflicts with lesser meaning and purposes, religiously effective drama may occur...

Religious drama, furthermore, deals with characters, situations, and themes that are clarified by means of religion, by man's relationship with his God, with himself, and with his fellow man because of the nature and meaning of his God. It derives its meaning from man's struggle to fulfill his destiny to the best of his ability. It communicates life on its deepest level (1977:67-68)

These are the yardsticks set by Ehrensperger to identify a religious drama from other types of dramas. Therefore, it is important to keep them in mind when we consider Kebede Mikael's plays. Among his plays there are three which are

religious. These are "ትዳስ ገብርኤል በጾድረ ገነት" (The Angel Gabriel in Eden), Kaleb and Akeab (Ahab).

The first play attempts to show the struggle between good and evil. It is the struggle between the Angels and Satan. The play shows how Satan (changing himself into a bird) enters heaven after he has learned that there is a place where God keeps Adam and Eve in luxury. He becomes very eager to learn about this place and the creatures who live there. The Angel Gabriel, knowing of his coming to Eden, orders other angels to search for him. They interrogate and dismiss him from heaven.

The play also suggests another heaven which is going to be created. In order to live with joy in the heaven which is going to be created. The Angel Gabriel warns Adam not to be deceived by Satan. However the coming of the second heaven becomes doubtful because the fulfillment of the prophecy cannot be absolutely ascertained. This is seen when Adam asks The Angel Gabriel about the prophecy of the second heaven and The Angel Gabriel answers that it is known only to God. Yet, the playwright gives advice to follow the path of Christianity, in order to be blessed and live joyfully in the coming heaven.

The historical play, Kaleb, focuses on the attempt made by an Ethiopian king to save Christians. The play also contains a minor theme on the civilization of ancient Ethiopia. Since the actual historical event on which the play is based took place

one thousand and four hundred years ago, the playwright tries to recreate and re-glorify Ethiopian civilization and nationalism. If Ethiopians had not possessed the ships and the skill of building them it would not have been possible for them to navigate along the Red Sea and the Mediterranean to reach Constantinople.

As already pointed out, the main theme of the play deals with how Ethiopian rulers endeavoured to protect their country and to spread the Christian religion.

So the Ethiopian King Atse Kaleb wages war as soon as he receives a message for his collaboration to save Constantinople. He defeats the enemy in the glorious name of the Ethiopian navy but we are not told where or how the engagement took place. After his victorious return to his country, Kaleb turns into a hermit and the play ends there.

Here, we notice that even though Kaleb goes to fight in support of Christianity, he also seeks peaceful co-existence. In act II, Scene IV, Kaleb makes the following speech:

ኢትዮጵያ ሰላምን እዚህ ስታስፋፋ
ሌላውን ሀይማኖት አትልም እናጥፋ
ሰላም አግኝቶ ተጠብቆ መብቱ
ይከበርለታል ሁሉም ሀይማኖቱ
(ካሌብ ገጽ 66)

Here while Ethiopia maintains the peace!
However, she doesn't claim to abolish other religions.
Once peace is established
All rights of citizens, including that of religion, shall be
respected.

The third play of Kebede that deals with the theme of religion is "የትንቢት ቀጠሮ" "Prophecy Fulfilled". The play presents the argument that whatever attempts man makes, there is nothing in this world that can alter the actualization of his fate. Man's ultimate end is determined by God.

The play begins in the evening when the king is out for a walk wearing ordinary clothes for camouflaging. While the king is bypassing an ordinary house, he hears a certain astrologer vow to God in a mischievous manner. Watching the position of the stars, the astrologer prays to God that his laboring wife should give birth to a child. When the position of the stars changes he prays that she should not give birth. The king listens to the contradictory prayers of the astrologer and asks him why he does this. The astrologer tells the king that the baby is fated to marry the newly born daughter of the king and to become the future Christian king if born when the stars assume a definite pattern. The astrologer further tells the king that there are some predetermined events that can never be averted by the will of man.

ወራትና አመታት ሕጋቸው ቢናጋ
አውደ ስርአታቸው በውሉ ባይረጋ
ቀኑም አልመሽ ብሎ ሌሊቱ ባይነጋ
ጨረቃና ፀሐይ ብርሀንን ቢነሱ
ሰግይና መራት ተጋጭተው ቢፈርሱ
የተፃፈ ነገር አይቀርም መድረሱ

(የትንቢት ተጠሮ ፳፭)

Even if the seasons are interchanged
Even if the whole system is disrupted
Even if night doesn't fall, and day doesn't dawn
Even if the moon and the sun shed their light
Even if the earth and the sky collide and collapse
There is nothing that can stop the written word from
happening.

Kebede strongly argues in this play that Christianity is the only religion that teaches the truth. Secondly, once God has willed as to what the fate of a person will be, there is no force that can change it. The astrologer's child is miraculously saved from death twice. The miracle is intended to show that man has no power to alter or shape destiny, as it is determined by the will of God. And so the child becomes a Christian king.

1.1.4 KEBEDE'S VIEWS ON ART

Kebede the poet and playwright is also a critic in his own right. I shall discuss here how Kebede sets up his outlook on art, particularly on poetry and music because these topics surface in his poems as themes.

His poem "ሙዚቃ" "Music" explains his spiritual belief about music. In the poem Kebede says that music is an envoy sent from God to entertain the human soul. It is the one means bringing relief to our sufferings, a pleasant scent that gives us

good odour and pleasure. He compares music and the soul as two identical phenomena whose sources cannot be traced. He also refers to music as an indescribable thing which simply gushes out of the mind of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, and the Ethiopian Yared.

ባህሪሽን እንዲያውቀው የሰው ልጅ አእምሮ
 መመርመር አለበት የነፍሱም ተፈጥሮ
 ነፍሱና ሙዚቃ ተመሳሳይ መንታ
 ባሕሪያቸው ረቂቅ የምስጢር ሁኔታ
 ቢሹት ያልተገኘ የመጡበት ቦታ
 (የቅኔ ውበት)

The human mind to know your nature
 Should search for the soul
 Soul and music are identical twins
 Abstract in nature and untraceable in source.

In one way or another, Kebede regards music as a religious element whose origins are heavenly.

The poem "ባለቅኔና የገደል ግግረቱ" "The Poet and the Echo" explains his desire for the poet (and by implication himself) to be taken as someone loyal, honest, free of wickedness and other evil deeds. He symbolizes the echo as a replica of the poet, because it reverberates his ideas without distortion. He personifies the echo and addresses her thus:

መከዳትም መሸፈጥ ለክፋት መቸኮል
 የለም ባንቺ ዘንዳ ሐሰትና ተንኮል
 (የህልም አበባ ገጽ 35)

Neither betrayal nor haste to malice
 Are known to you

This poem gives a hint of Kebede's attitude towards the critic. The degree of interpretation varies between the critic and the poet. Complete communication is not always attained. But what is required is a sincere response to the work of the poet. In his attempt to criticize the work, a critic may not always be able to perceive what the poet perceives. Rather he surmises what the possible meanings could be. In so doing, the criticism made might be subjective, that is, based on feelings of envy, wickedness, malice, or mischief rather than on objective interpretation. So, Kebede admonishes the critic that he should cast away his negative attitudes and base his analysis on objective yardsticks.

In his other poem "ባለወርቅ ክንፍ" "The Golden Wing", Kebede tries to show the power of poetry in uplifting the realm of the imagination.

ትጉህ ባለ ቅኔ ባለወርቅ ክንፍ
 ከዳመና በላይ ሰማይ ነጫ ጠረፋ
 በነፋስ በስሜት ባሳብ ሰረገላ
 ምድራዊ አለምን ከተወ በኃላ
 ተጉዞ በመሄድ ተጉዞ ዘለቃ
 ከፀሐይ የሚደርስ አልፎ ከጨረቃ
 ከዚያም ተወርውርፍጦር ከማያውቀው
 ርቆ ይሄዳል ማንም ካልዘለቀው
 (የሕልም አበባ 18 39)

The diligent poet who has the golden wing
 His boundary is the blue beyond the clouds
 Travelling on wind, by the chariot of thought and passion
 Leaves this world in his imagination
 And goes beyond the moon to reach the sun...
 Onward onto where no creature has ever been.

According to Kebede, the power of imagination is a very useful means of composing a poem. It is not limited within worldly territory. It can go beyond. The power of imagination inspires the poet to explore the whole universe. It enables him to reach where he wishes, and watch and narrate what he has seen. The wing is a golden one because it transports him beyond the point where an ordinary wing can take him.

The other point worth noting Kebede's belief that art should be educative. In the poem, it is stated that the reason why the poet is wandering around the universe is to explore it in order to instruct, to guide, to explain, and to advise on what he has seen and understood. In short, his major purpose is to educate the reader. Although this is a common feature of his works, it is emphatically articulated here.

Besides, it is also important to note here the attitude Kebede has towards poetry (Kine). He seems to believe that "Kine" is superior to all forms of literature.

ዕውቀት ቢገኝም ሙጽሐፍ ቢጸረጸር
ሁል ጊዜ ቅኔ ነች የድርሰት ጀምበር
(የቅኔ ዉበት)

If knowledge competes in tomes of books
Nothing compares with Poetry (Kine) Which is the
light of inspiration!

Kebede's belief that poetry is the queen of the arts is perhaps a reflection of the influence of traditional church education. In Ethiopian church education more emphasis is given to "Kine" than to arthematics.

1.1.5 LIFE

Kebede treats the theme of life in different ways. He presents life metaphorically.

The following poem analogically compares a snowflake with life:

የበረዶ ፍሬ ናት የኛ ሕይወት
ደመና ከሰማይ የወረወራት
ሥጋ ከለበሰ ሰጧ ዓለም ላይ መጥቶ
በረዶም ከሄደ ከደመና ወጥቶ
ወደ አፈር መግባቱ አይቀርም ከቶ
(የቅኔ ዉበት ፲፰ 88)

Our life is a snowflake
Thrown down from the sky
Man is likewise
Thrown down from Heaven
And clothed in matter...
Later to evaporate...

Although it is very difficult to express in English, Kebede beautifully emphasizes in this poem that life in this world is very brief. In his poem, "ጥልቅ ጸላቦች" "Deep Thoughts" the poet tries to show the two sides of life, sadness and happiness. Both are phenomena that a man can not escape. Therefore, it is wise to keep them in balance.

ደስታና ሐዘን ወርቆና ፀሐይ
 ሆነው ይመጣሉ በሰውነት ላይ
 ሰው ደስ ባለው ጊዜ ገዘትን ይረሳል
 ገዘንም ሲይገኘው መውነቅ ያበዛል
 እስቦ ሁለቱም አላፈ መሆኑን
 ሲከፋው ደስታን፣ ደስ ሲለው ገዘትን
 እስቦ በመጠን ሁሉም የወሰነ
 ብልህ ሰው የባላል የተመሰገነ
 (የቅኔ ዉበት ፲፰ 93)

Happiness and sadness when they befall man
 Are like frost and the sun's warmth.
 While happy man forgets sadness
 When sad he forgets happiness
 Not knowing that both are transient
 He who balances the two
 Deserves to be called wise.

In his poem, "አይወት እንቅልፍ ነች" "Life is Slumber", Kebede explains how life is full of paradoxes. There are always bad and good events in one's life. Whatever may happen one should not give up hope. The struggle for survival should always continue with great zest.

ዓለም ዓለም ሲሉሽ ስምሽ ደስ ያሰኛል
 ግን ካንቺ የከፋ ምን ነገር ይገኛል
 ሕግሽ ጠግግ ነው ዘመንሽ ጠቁዋራ
 ክብርሽ ልክሰክሰ ነው ደስታሽ መራራ
 ስንቱ ተታለለ አንቺን የሚመኝ
 እውነትሽ ሐሰትሽ በዉል አይገኝ
 ቃልሽ ወላዋይ ነው ግዝትሽ ይከብዳል
 ብይንሽ እውር ነው ፍቅርሽም ይጎዳል
 እኔን የሚገርመኝ አወይ አንቺ ዓለም
 ይህ ሁሉ ሲሆን የሚጠላሽ የለም
 (የቅኔ ዉበት ፲፰ 56)

Worldly life, your visage is pleasing
 But nothing is more wicked than you.
 Your law is twisted, your age besmirched
 Your dignity trash, your happiness bitter.
 Lots have been misled desiring you

Your truth, your falsehood... cannot be truly deciphered
Your words are uncertain, your vow unreliable
Your justice blind, your love hurtful...
Yet, no one hates you
This is what surprises me

Kebede sees worldly life as something that can not be determined according to the wish of the individual but it simply happens because its law is crooked and deformed. The harshness of life, the difficulty to differentiate between its useful and useless aspects is what makes life so problematic. The poem elaborates the paradox of this world's happenings. A person who is expected to act in a good way behaves otherwise. According to the poet, man has not yet discovered the answer to the riddle of life. He restlessly wanders in his daydream. The fulfillment of his wishes is always under a question mark. Ambition makes human beings enemies of each other.

The poem, touching on various aspects of human nature, deduces that there is no justice in this earthly world. The philosophy and the basic questions raised by the poet in this particular poem are resolved by showing the ruthlessness of earthly life.

Again in relation to life, Kebede talks about some events and phenomena that are universal, such as hunger and love, which may occur to any one at any time and anywhere.

ራብ በእህል ያልፋ ጊዜ በተረት
ጭንቅ በላቅ ይረሳል ፍቅር በቀረት
(የትኔ ዉበት 96)

Hunger may be assuaged with food, time with tale
Hardship with Laughter, love with ha-ha-ha...
They all pass.

This poem is intended to address those who lose hope when they face hardships. For every calamity there is a means of overcoming it as suggested in the poem. The best thing to deal with misfortune is with patience and firmness which are very important in life. Kebede's view of life tilts towards philosophy which can be enriched through education as we shall see next.

1.1.6 EDUCATION AS A THEME

Kebede in his poems raises the theme of education frequently because of his belief that education is a means by which the development of a country will be achieved. His devotion to promoting education is not observed in his creative works only. His attempt to introduce the history of civilized nations in his non-creative works is part of his effort to advance the importance of education.

Kebede believes that to defend one's country from external invaders one should be civilized in every sense of the word. Therefore, to realize noble objectives practical

education is the basic instrument. Kebede in, the following poem, makes a comparison between ignorance and wisdom.

የደንቆር መንፈስ ምንኛ ታደለ
ብልጥነት አያጣም ጅል እየመሰለ
እንካን መጻፍ ማንበብ ፈደል ሳያጠና
ሁሉንም ያወቀ ይመስለዋልና
(የቅኔ አዝመራ ገጽ 153)

How fortunate is the mind of the ignorant
It seems silly but in its "cleverness"
Before it identifies the letters of the alphabet
It considers itself the wisest of the wisest.

The poem suggests that one should read more, otherwise, he foolishly overrates himself, not knowing his ignorance. The more he reads, however, the more he gains knowledge and the more his reasoning power gets sharpened. Redult Knut Molvaer in his book Tradition and Change in Ethiopia has the following to say about the theme of education in Amharic literature in general:

One of the most persistent themes in Amharic literature is the great importance attached to education. The authors may not be specific in stating what they want education for, or what results they expect it to lead to, but there seems to be a belief or a hunch that if only people are educated, they will find their own way to a better society, may be on the model of Western countries. (p.235)

In line with the general comment made by Molvaer, the poems of Kebede Mikael, too, underscore that education is the means that could bring betterment to the society. Kebede, personifying ignorance, makes it run blindly and make endless mistakes. The analogy is with a blind man who cannot see what is in front of him.

An uneducated person, as Kebede tries to show in his poems, is one who has lost this vital organ.

He believes that education can inject new life into the society and bring about modernization to his country. The following two lines elaborate this:

**ትምህርት ካልጨመረ በተረገፀ ዕውቀቱ
ሕፃን ልጅ ይሆናል ሰጧ ከነሽበቱ
(የቅኔ ጧበት ገጽ 97)**

If a man does not add education to his natural ability
He shall turn into a baby even when gray-haired

Education, for the poet, is what brings maturity. He argues that modern technology which can facilitate development and ease the life of the society is achieved through education. Resistance to education is what Kebede denounces as the most insalubrious deed. Drawing an analogy with deafness, he writes:

**እይገኝም ከቶ ቢረዳኑ ዞሮ
መስግት ከግይረሉግ የባሰ ደንቆሮ
(የቅኔ ጧበት ገጽ 98)**

No matter how one wonders
There is no greater deafness
Than not wanting to learn.

In another poem "ዕውቀትና ክፋት" Knowledge and Wickedness" Kebede states that education by itself cannot create the ideal person. The educated man can bring about destruction as well as construction. The determining factor for disruption or for development is not only knowledge but conscience as well. Conscience is the

judge of our actions. He presents the invention of devastating weapons as examples of the negative result of education. The following two lines of the poem from "ዕውቀትና ክፋት" "Knowledge and Wickedness" clearly state what the poet desires to convey:

ሰጧ ስለተማረ የሚያገኘጧ ዕውቀት
ሊያደርሰጧ ይችላል ክፋት ከልማት
(የቅኔ ጠበት ገጽ 63)

The knowledge a man gains through education
May turn him into a developer or a destroyer

A man who is educated might wreck or develop a country. Conscientious actions, as asserted in the poem cited above, are basic instruments to decide the correctness of our practice. In this poem Kebede makes the crucial point that education alone can not create civilized citizens, but that it is an important ingredient of the process. Time is the other theme Kebede is concerned with in his poems which we shall look into next.

1.1.7 TIME

The concept of time is treated in various ways in Kebede's poems. Time is considered as an important factor for environmental, social, and behavioral changes. The poem "ዓለምና ጊዜ" "The World and Time" explains how one setting is changed to another through time.

ትውልድ ፈላጎት ወጋ መራቀቅ ሻረት
 መሆኑን ዘንግቶ ይህ ሁሉ ፍጥረት
 ስትመለከቱት በሰልፍ ተገዞ
 ሁሉም በየተራው ያልፋል ተያይዞ
 (የቅኔ ውበት ገጽ 25-26)

Generations stream along
 And so does the land
 Man forgetful of such happenings
 Overlooks his passing away as well

Philosophizing about time, particularly about its two facedness, he admirably comments in his poem, "ዛሬና ነገ" "Today and Tomorrow", thus:

ዛሬ ጊዜያችን ነገ ሥልጣን አለን ሙሉ
 እናዝቦታለን ያሰኘንን ሁሉ

 ሳንሻ ሳንወድ በገድ የሚመጣ
 ነገ የሚባለው አለን ባላንጣ

 Today is our day
 We can order and use it as we wish

But we have an enemy called tomorrow
 Over which we have no control.

It is our responsibility to use the present time effectively; otherwise tomorrow may turn against us.

The other point indicated in this poem is the mortality of man. Whatever he does, he cannot escape death. So it is well to be advised to try to utilize our time appropriately as tomorrow may bring misery or joy. In the following poem "ሁሉም የሆነ ነገ" "Everything Has Happened" Kebede describes how foolish it is to live by adhering to custom without giving thought to what one may encounter in the future:

የታሪክን ጉዞ ያልተገነዘበ
 ሁሉንም ያደንቃል እያወበወበ
 ለመወወደ ሳያስብ ላላፈወ ሳያዝን
 በልግድ ይኖራል ጅል ሳያመዛዝን
 ብልጥ ግን ያስተውላል አይደናበርም
 መሄድ መመለሱን አይጠራጠርም
 ጊዜ እየለወጠዉ የልግድን አዋጅ
 ጠላት የነበሩ ይሆናሉ ወዳጅ

(የቅኔ አዝመራ ገጽ 87-88)

The one who doesn't understand the flow of history
 Praises and applauds everything.
 He doesn't care for the future nor does he think about the
 past
 He leads the traditional way of life without analyzing anything
 But the clever one is attentive, he is not so easily excited.
 Tradition changes through time
 Even enemies become friends.

The poet realizes that change is a natural phenomenon. What changes through
 time is what keeps life going. The death of one person is followed by the birth of
 another. When the old is destroyed the new is built. Everything is in motion.
 Understanding this natural law is the course of wisdom.

We have poems which describe the two stages of life - youth and old age. Kebede
 treats the characteristic features of the two different ages of man and tries to
 explain them. He seems to perceive time as an educative process. Youth is an age
 of dreams, as the piece below, <<ወጣትነት>>, <<Youth>> suggests:

ያማረ ጥሩ ዕቃ
 ትርኢትም ሙዚቃ
 ብልፅግና ንዋይ
 የዓለም ሁሉ ሲሳይ
 አልግዝ ወርቅ ብሩ

(የሕልም አበባ ገጽ 59)

Precious items:
A stage show
A piece of music
Wealth and money
Gold, Silver, diamonds
All are for me...

On the other hand, old age is a period of life where ambition and desire evaporate and man starts to live on his memory. Old age might come before one is prepared for it, physically, psychologically or economically. Kebede, in the poem, "እርጅና" "Old Age" thus treats this theme:

ብዙ ነገር ገና
ለግዥ ስዛና
ድንገት አጣሁ ጤና፤
ዐይኔ ተዳከመ
ጊዜውም ጨለመ
ስኖር ሳለሁ ደህና
መጣብኝ እርጅና።

(የሕልም አበባ ገጽ 59-60)

While I am yearning
To enjoy still a lot
Suddenly I lose my health
My sight becomes weak
The day becomes dark
Old age settles on me.

1.1.8 DEATH

Death is a natural phenomenon, that happens to all living beings. Because of its universality, authors present the theme of death in many ways. It is a key subject treated by philosophers and poets alike. Its mysterious and dark nature has puzzled them all.

Kebede is a poet who repeatedly tackles this theme of death. His concern for the human soul and his quest for a religious answer make his poems on death touching. One of his very well known poems is based on King Solomon's adage on time:

ለሁሉም ጊዜ አለፈ ይላል ሰለሞን
እጠይቀው ነበር በተገናኘን
ሞት የምሞትበት ጊዜው መኝ ይሆን?
(የቅኔ አዝመራ ገጽ 88)

"There is a time for everything says Solomon
If ever I get the chance to meet him
I will ask him "when is death going to die"

At first, it seems that the question is tossed foolishly, but its paradoxical nature alerts the reader and makes him continue philosophizing.

ሰው ከኖቱ ግህፅን ሲወለድ ተረገዞ
በሞት ኅዳና ላይ ይጀምራል ጉዞ
ፊት ለፊት እያየው ትልቁን አደጋ
ልቡ ሲያፈገፍግ ዕድሜው ግን ሲጠጋ
ሲያጠቀው በመሞቱ በጣም ይዉነቃል
መሸሻ በግጣት ቆሞ ይጠብቃል
(የቅኔ ዉበት ገጽ 87)

A man's life from conception to birth
 Is a voyage towards his end
 Aware of the imminent danger
 He suffers and worries ceaselessly
 But finding no refuge
 He stands and waits for his final days.

His novel way of expression projects a clear image of death to our mind.

Advancing in age is viewed as moving towards death.

Death does not discriminate. It places every human being on an equal footing. It does not measure him by his social status or wealth. This is expressed in the following poems: <<ጥት ሁሉን እኩል ያደርጋል>> "Death Makes Everybody Equal" and <<ጥልቅ ሀሳቦች>> "Deep Thoughts".

1. ጎበዝ አይል ፈሪ ድኃ ባለጠጋ
 ሁሉን አስተካካይ ጥት የሚሉት ፀጋ
 (የቅኔ ዉበት ገጽ: 144)

It does not discriminate between the courageous and the cowardly, the poor or the wealthy
 Death is impartial.

2. አደገ ከበረ፣ ነገሠ ገነነ፣
 ተቀዉ ደሽየ፣ ተሰዶ በነነ
 አጣ በለጠገ ችገረዉ ተመቸዉ
 ሰዉ አመሰገነ አግ ጠላ ተቸዉ
 ታደለ ዘመነ ተሾመ ታወቀ
 ታረዘ ተጋዘ ተራቢ ተናቀ
 እንዱ ምን ጎሎበት እንዱስ ምን ያተርፋል
 ችግርና ተድላ ሁሉም እኩል ያልፋል
 ሰዉ ሁሉ ትክክል ይሞታል ይረገፋል
 (የቅኔ ዉበት ገጽ: 87-88)

Be he mature, prosperous, crowned, or renowned
 Be he impoverished, exiled or ostracized
 Be he humbled, glorified ...
 Be he ragged, disgraced or starved
 Hardship or luxury, all pass equally
 All men die and perish eventually
 What does it matter?

And in the following lines:

ገና ነጠ እያሉ ካልሸፋፈኑት
ግን ሊያየጠ ይችላል ሞትን ፊት ለፊት
(የቅኔ ጠበት ገጽ: 96)

Unless we fool ourselves by saying our time is not yet up.
We dare not see death face to face.

Even if a man knows that his days are numbered, he tries to cheat himself by not trying to think about death. In these two lines the poet presents man's wish to gain eternity on the one hand and the unavoidable course of nature on the other. Kebede presents death from two aspects: its inevitability, and man's attitude towards it.

1.1.9 THE THEME OF MONEY

According to Kebede, the desire to obtain material benefits is what makes society discard its traditional values and run after money. He considers money as a social evil. The poems which raise this theme revolve around this central idea.

The narrative poem "**የገንዘብ ፍቅር**" (Love of Money) demonstrates how a certain shop-keeper degrades his humanity for the sake of money. The first few lines define money as "the wound of religion, the cancer of love". For Kebede religion

is the social foundation, the pillar of society. He explains how money becomes an evil when it causes social disruption, thus:

የሀይማኖት ቁስል የፍቅር ነቀርሳ
ገንዘብ ሆነ ምንጩ ለሰው ልጅ አበሳ
ስለ ገንዘብ ፍቅር እየተናነቀ
ሰው ወዳጁን ጠላ ከዘመዱ ራቀ
ሰው ተሰገበገበ ክብሩንም ረሳ
(የቅኔ አዝመራ ገጽ : 99-100)

The wound of religion the cancer of love
The source of all human troubles
Money robs man of his human dignity
It makes him indulge himself in lies and flattery...

Love of money is the evil that brings about the degradation of human beings. Therefore, he advises his reader, not to adore money which may vanish at any time.

In "አንድ ሐብታምና አንድ ድኃ ሰው " "A Rich Man and a Pauper" he narrates how richness by itself doesn't bring joy. The two characters in the poem, the poor shoe maker and the rich man, exchange their belongings. The rich man gives the poor man gold while the latter gives the former joyful songs and sleep. After the exchange, the poor man becomes sleepless because of fear of theft. Lastly, he goes to the rich man's house and returns the gold. The poet concludes:

ደስ ያለው መስላችሁ ገንዘብ ያለው ሁሉ
እስኪ ባለማወቅ እንዳትታለሉ።
(የቅኔ አዝመራ ገጽ : 126)

It is naive to think that money can bring about peace and tranquillity

The problem arises from the mistaken assumption that money is the source of joy. That is why people try to obtain it by deceitful means. According to the poet, it is destiny or fate that provides happiness and wealth. This is the point I shall discuss in the following section.

1.1.10 FATE AND CHANCE

Kebede Mikael treats the theme of fate and chance repeatedly in his poems and plays. Since fate according to the Coptic Church is predetermined by God, man doesn't have the power to alter it.

The poem, "አገኝቶ ያጣ ሰዉ" "A Rich Man Who Turned Poor", confirms the point just raised. A fated person, as told in the poem, loses a large amount of his wealth unexpectedly. The reason for the loss cannot be accounted for because it is the work of God and it is beyond the capacity of a human being to alter it.

እመት መልካም ዕድል አመለ ቀብራራ
 እጅግ ያስገርግል የወረታ ሥራ
 መላዉ አይታወቅ ጠባይዋ ፈሊጣ
 ድንገት ትሄዳለች በዚያዉ በአመጣጣ።
 እንዴት እንደምትሄድ እንዴት እንድትመጣ
 አይመረመርም የግረስጢርዋ ጣጣ።
 (የቅኔ አዝመራ ገጽ : 102)

Her excellency, Good Luck is capricious.
 It is difficult to identify her trait
 Impossible to investigate her secret
 Her sudden appearance or disappearance.
 Is an all time mystery.

The fated man, at his death, asked the following epitaph to be engraved for him:

ሰሄድ እያያችሁ እንዲህ ተነድቼ
እዘኩልኝ በጣም አወይ ወዳጆቼ
አልቅሱልኝ በጣም አፍስሱልኝ እንባ
ባርባዓመቴ ሞቼ ስቀበር በሰባ።
(የቅኔ አዝመራ ፲፰ : 103)

Oh! my friends, mourn for me
Shed your tears for me.
I died at forty and was buried at seventy

The reason why he wrote "I died at forty" is that forty is the age when he lost his wealth. An opportunity once lost, may never be regained. Therefore, one should be very alert to use the chance one gets. Being unaware of the existence of chance is one of the main factors for losing it. The poem "አንድ ገበሬና አንዲት አይጥ" "A Farmer and a Rat" describes how ignorance makes one lose the chance one comes across. The rat unknowingly chooses a seed of pea from a variety of precious things. The poet concludes metaphorically that the same is true of a man who chooses minute things because of ignorance or the desire to satisfy his immediate needs.

The poet's firm belief in pre-determined fate is clearly seen in "የሰጧ ዕድል" "A Man's Fate". In this narrative poem, a king presents before his servant two identical boxes, one filled with gold the other with soil. The servant is ordered to choose between the two. The unfortunate servant picks up the box that is filled with soil. The poet concludes that man cannot gain what his lot has not given him.

1.1.11 MORALITY

Why human beings behave in one way or another is often difficult to answer. Sometimes their motives are apparent, sometimes not, sometimes dubious. In his poem "የሉዥና ስልጣን" "(The Culture of Being Conscientious)", Kebede indicates how man's animalistic nature dominates him. It is the brutal action of man which exhibits his animalistic behavior. For instance, the killing of another person for material possession can only be eventually stopped when man's spiritual consciousness grows.

The poem satirizes man who possesses all technological devices but who can do nothing to tame himself and is unable to change his evil deeds.

ከጥንቶቹ ሰዎች በባህሪ አልበለጠም
ለሱ ተሻሽሎ ገና አልተለወጠም
እንደብረት ሁሉ እንደእንጨት መጠን
የሰው ልጅ አልቻለም እራሱን ግሰልጠን
መደሻና ሞረድ ይፈልጋል ገና
ድንጋይ ነው ብረት ነው የሰዎች ሉዥና
መደሻው ተግሳፅ ነው ሞረዱ መመከር
የሚመራባቸው ሕዝብ ወደ መፋቀር
ሰው ባሕሪው ጎደሎ ጠባዩ አንካሳ
ባንድ ወገን መልእክ ነው ባንድ ወገን እንስሳ

His nature hasn't improved from that of his predecessors
Nor has his conscience
Unlike metal or wood
He has failed to carve or shape his conscience.
Yet he needs the hammer and file to smoothen his coarseness
Dumb is man's conscience like stone or wood
Both angel and devil
He needs to be rebuked and remolded

Kebede marvels at man's nature. His creation of instruments to ease his life doesn't bring change in his internal behavior. He cannot do away with his inherent evil traits such as envy, jealousy and covetousness.

The two instruments, according to the poet, which could be used as a hammer and file to improve his character are admonition and advice . The former one is represented by the hammer and the latter by the file.

The poem **"ከፋ ሰው"** "Wicked Man" also focuses on man's evil character, on how he gets pleasure from evil deeds. The wicked man is a mentally poisoned person whose aim is always to create misunderstanding among people and obtain satisfaction from leading them astray.

Greed is another theme of Kebede's poems. A greedy person, he maintains, may fulfill his desire for a given time, but the joy he gains through meanness doesn't last long and the result may be more devastating for him. Because those ill treated by this greedy fortune seeker may take revenge when situations permit. This theme of revenge is clearly presented in two poems: **"ሁለት ወንድማማቾች"** "Two Brothers" and **"ሁለት አፍ ያለው ወፍ"** "A Bird with Two Mouths".

These two narrative poems explain what responses greed generates. In the poem "Two Brothers" a rich man mistreats his poor brother. One day the poor brother

catches his rich brother's children eating his beans. He demands for his own beans to be returned from their bellies. There is only one way to get them out and that is by opening the children's stomachs. The poor brother arrives at this decision because of revenge.

When negotiations fail the poor brother decides to burn both his hut and his brother's which are in the same compound. But the consequence of such a vindictive action hurts both parties.

The other poem "A Bird with Two Mouths" expounds how egoism brings about death. The self centered mouth, as it is seen in the narrative poem, eats everything edible without sharing it with the other. One day the bird lands on a tree with poisonous fruit. The mouth which is underfed snatches the fruit to eat it. Although the greedy mouth asks the other one not to eat it, the underfed one swallows the poisonous fruit and as a result both die. The lesson Kebede wants to draw from these allegoric poems is that the desire to revenge as a result of recklessness is very dangerous.

ክፋ ልሰራ ብሎ ቂም ይዞ ሲነሳ
ሰው እንኩዋን ለሌላ ለነፍሱም አይሳሳ
(የቅኔ አዝመራ ገፅ 122)

When a man decides to do evil because of a grudge,
He puts at risk his own life as well as the life of others.

Therefore it is wise for man to curb his excessive self interest and rationally share his possessions with others. It is clear that this idea of sharing with others comes out of the tenets of Christianity.

Kebede likens the depth of human motives to that of an abyss.

ባዘቅት ይመስላል የሰው ነፍስ ጠባይ
ጨለማ እየሆነ ስሩ የማይታይ
በጥልቀቱ መጠን ወደታች ሲሰጥ
ያላሰቡት ነገር ይገኛል በጫሰጡ
(የቅኔ ውበት ፲፱ 108)

Man's hidden motives are similar to an abyss
Impossible to decipher in their darkness
The deeper one penetrates
The stranger they become.

Although it sounds realistic, the poem's religious overtone is apparent as it implies that God's doings are beyond human understanding.

Kebede repeatedly deals with the theme of wickedness in order to expose man's evil behavior. Poems like "**ደግነትና ክፋት**" "Kindness and Wickedness" clearly reflect this view. Although Kebede recognizes the existence of both evil and good in human nature, he moralizes by showing that failure is the result of evil while happiness and prosperity are the result of virtue. This is true, he claims, not only in religious life but also in the secular one.

He further argues that laughing at others' defects is due to lack of self knowledge.

No one is born without a defect. To laugh at the ugliness, ignorance, or natural

deformity of a human being means laughing at oneself. His final conclusion, it seems to me, is that as it is impossible to find perfection in this world, it is best to aspire for the next one.

2. STYLE

This chapter focuses on the style of Kebede Mikael's creative works. Kebede Mikael has published many books of poetry and drama. We shall treat his style of writing in these two genres taking each at a time. However, before we start analyzing his works, we will present first a theoretical discussion to pave the way.

2.1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Style is one of the controversial issues among scholars of literature. The issue raised in relation to style can be seen from two different perspectives. The first one is based on the definition of the concept itself. The second is rooted in the subject matter on which style focuses. Some scholars argue that style should give more emphasis to linguistics. Others argue that the exploration should mainly be based on literary theory and that linguistics should come as an auxiliary.

Our aim is to have a bird's-eye view of the concept of style. Let us start with the definition given by Harry Shaw:

The manner of putting thoughts in words.; ... a characteristic mode of construction and expression in writing and speaking,... a literary selection that concerns form of expression rather than the thought conveyed (1972:360).

Here the emphasis is on the literary work presented. Chesterfield describes style as "the dress of thought" (qtd. in Shaw, 360). While Newman considers style as a "thinking out into language" (qtd. in Shaw, 360). Swift proposes that "proper words in proper places make the true definition of style" (qtd. in Shaw 360). Buffon, on the other hand, says "style is the person himself" (qtd. in Shaw, 360). Hugh on his part gives the following definition:

The arrangement of words in a manner which at once best expresses the individuality of the author and the idea and intent to the author's mind. The best style for any given purpose is that which most nearly approximates a preface adaptation of one's language to ones idea. Style is a combination of two elements: the idea to be expressed, and the individuality of the author... (1985:432).

So far it has been seen that different scholars have attempted to define style in different ways. Their common point tends to fall on language usage. The definitions explain that style is an expression of ideas which gets meaning in the arrangement of words. In relation to this point of arranging words in an unusual manner which reveals more vividly the common subject, Schapiro says:

...the style is a system of forms with a quality and a meaningful expression through which the personality of the artist and the broad outlook of a group are visible. It is also a vehicle of expression within the group, communicating and fixing certain values of religious, social and moral life through the emotional suggestiveness of forms... (qtd. in Cunningham:20).

This definition indicates that style can also be seen as belonging to a group, not only to an individual. Schapiro sees the style of a given period as a positive

achievement. "...the same style in a wide range of arts is often considered a sign of the integration of a culture and the intensity of a high creative moment..." (qtd. in Cunningham:20) Schapiro argues that when an artist shares the same style of writing with the writers of a given period that can be identified, for example, as Elizabethan, Realistic, Romantic, Naturalistic and so on, the writer can be considered as the product of the period.

Lucas explains that "word order is the most important thing in style." Lucas continuing his discussion states that "Literary style is simply a means by which one personality moves others. The problems of style, therefore, are really problems of personality of practical psychology..."(1955:48).

Most of the definitions tend to relate style to individual usage of language in a given text. However, when there is a trace of the usage of the same expression among literary men or during a given period of time that style is referred to as the style of the age. Emblar in his essay makes the following point about the style of an individual and that of an age:

The origin of a style, personal or communal, is a mysterious thing, not easily analyzed or identified. When the origin is in a writer, we say that the style is the man. When the origin is in communal tradition, we say that the style is the age...(1967:447).

Here, we note that style is the intermingling of the two: the individual and the age. I believe that the points which Leech and Short make can summarize what has been said so far.

- i. Style is a way in which language is used, i.e, it belongs to parole rather than to langue
- ii. Therefore, style consists in choices made from the repertoire of the language.
- iii. A style is defined in terms of a domain of language use (e.g what choices are made by a particular author, in a particular genre, or in a particular text).
- iv. Style is relatively transparent or opaque: transparency implies paraphrasability; opacity implies that a text cannot be adequately paraphrased, and the interpretation of the text depends greatly on the creative imagination of the reader (1981:38-39).

So far an attempt has been made to define the term style. The next attempt is to answer the question why style is studied. Style is mainly studied for two reasons. First to analyze how the author conveys his theme and secondly to analyze style as a quality. The first one deals with the idea which presupposes the inseparability of style from content. Emblar describes this point as follows:

... The study of style is significant because there is meaning in it; and we, the readers or listeners, respond to the meaning that is in the style as well as to the words that make it up...(1967:448)

The means by which the author conveys his theme, the mechanism he uses, his arrangement of words to address his message to the reader need to be studied for a full understanding of the work. This is the first reason for the study of style. Since,

according to Embler, "the style and meaning cannot be separated" (1967:450) the importance of the study of style is beyond question.

The second reason why we study style is related to its quality. One is expected to identify the quality (ies) of a given writer or quality (ies) of a given text. Therefore, to study the style of an author means to identify his qualities of writing which include his language usage, his figures of speech, his idiomatic expressions, his diction, and so on. The investigation of such qualities has multiple purposes.

To begin with, it helps to place the strength and weaknesses of the text. Above all it helps to determine the degree of excellence of the language, and to reveal the author's status. As Embler (in the article quoted above) puts it :

...style is the full account - the man, the manner, the age, the content, the context, the purpose, the words, and the meaning in concert for the ear, the eye, and the mind. When each blends perfectly with the others, the effect, as we know, can be supremely beautiful (454).

Embler concludes that a style is the whole thing related to a piece of writing; the author himself as an individual and a member of the society, the subject matter and the form he uses, all in all the totality of the author and the work is what may be identified and studied as a style.

It has been attempted to define what style is, and what it means, as well as its significance in the study and understanding of a literary artist and his work. Are there other points to be considered? According to Holman, in studying style there are some "personal details" to be considered "abstract or concrete, rhythmic or pedestrian, sincere or artificial, dignified or comic, original or imitative, dull or vivid diction, sentence structure and variety, imagery, repetition, coherence, emphasis, and arrangement of ideas "(1985, 432).

Kebede Mikael has his own features of literary style, which distinguish his writing from that of other authors. An attempt to identify his style is made in relation to the genres he used to write because the genres he is dealing with have their own unique features and styles. Therefore, his style is investigated from the point of view of his poems and plays. Since the yardsticks used to measure these genres are different, we will examine each separately, starting with his poetic works and then treating the style of his plays.

Kebede Mikael has his own literary style, which distinguishes him from other authors. We shall attempt to identify this style of his in the two genres he used, in his poems and plays. Since the yardsticks for these genres are different, we shall examine each separately, starting with his poetic works first.

2.2. STYLE IN KEBEDE MIKAEL'S POETRY

Kebede believes that the primary objective of any literary work should be educative. A writer should have a lesson to teach in his writing. Upholding the educative objective of literature, Kebede composes his poems thus : first he narrates, a story (tale), then he deduces a lesson or a moral out of it. This is one of his characteristic features we are going to investigate in his poems with dramatic monologue.

Next we shall examine his figures of speech and diction. We shall investigate the poet's language use and his imagery, what effect they have on the reader, their impact and vividness in a given poem.

2.2.1. DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

Langbaum (1963:76) writes that "...dramatic monologue must have not only a speaker other than the poet but also a listener..." Kebede's dramatic monologues fulfill this criterion. Langbaum adds, "... the dramatic monologue is unprecedented in its effect, that its effect distinguishes it in spite of mechanical resemblance from the monologues of traditional poetry;(Ibid77).

Dramatic monologue also has its advantages in locating meaning. That is, we get the meaning from the dramatic monologue itself rather than from related subjects. The meaning is within the "poetic material itself rather than from an external standard of judgment ...the fact that a poem is a monologue helps to determine our sympathy for the speaker, since we must adopt his view point as our entry into the poem, the monologue quality remains nevertheless a means, and not only means, to the end - to establish the reader's sympathetic relation to the poem, to give him 'facts from within' "(ibid 78).

Kebede's dramatic monologues most of the time follow two of the styles among the three mentioned by Cicero for rhetoric. These are the "plain" and the "vigorous". His dramatic monologue using these two techniques include : "**የክርስቶስ ባለግላ**" (A Disciple of Christ) "**የእንባ ጠብታ**" (Tear Drop), "**የአዚናራ እስረኛ**" (The Prisoner of Azinara), <<**እርሮ**>> (Remorse), "**ጥቁሮችም እንደ ሰዉ**" (Blacks Like Human Beings), "**የገንዘብ ፍቅር**" (Love of Money).

The poems "**የክርስቶስ ባለግላ**" (Disciple of Christ) and "**የእንባ ጠብታ**" (Tear Drop) are religious in theme conveying the message that nothing is impossible provided one has a firm belief in one religion - Christianity. The stories presented in plain style try to prove how firmness in one's belief can be miraculous.

In the first poem "**የክርስቶስ ባለግላ**" a poor man go to the rich man's house to beg for food. The mean, rich man shouts at them to leave the area. Nevertheless

they stay there and continue their begging. As they have not had food for the last three days, they have no alternative but to stay there. Finally, the rich man loses his patience and throws a dry loaf of bread at them. The hungry poor scramble over that piece of bread, eat it and thank him. The very same day the rich man dreams that he is presented to God to be judged according to his deeds. His wrong deeds outweigh his good deeds, and he is about to be handed over to Satan. He trembles for fear of being taken to hell. In the meantime an angel brings a dry loaf of bread and puts it on the scale; soon the direction of the scale changes and he is saved. Upon waking, he analyzes the whole dream. He then decides to give all his belongings to the poor and gets employed as a servant for another rich man. One day merchants come to his lord's house and suspect his identity. He also recognizes them and attempts to escape before they identify him. But the guard at the gate who is deaf does not allow him to get out of the compound. He begs the deaf man to open the gate for him in the name of Jesus. The deaf guard gains his hearing capacity. When the guard recognizes that he is able to hear, he unconsciously opens the door and the man escapes.

This narrative poem fulfills the criteria stated for dramatic monologue. The situation is created when the poor are begging for food to save their lives. The characters speak and listen to each other. We see the interplay of characters with one another; and the story is resolved when the guard gets cured.

The other criterion for a dramatic monologue is also found in it. The meaning can be derived from the narration itself and there is no need for an auxiliary character to explain it.

The style of this poem is both "plain" and "vigorous". It is "plain" because it proves how a believer is able to get whatever he wishes with the help of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, it also persuades the reader to believe in miracles for the salvation of his soul. The reader is moved by the deed of the rich man and is persuaded to follow his example. This makes the poet's style of narration "vigorous".

Regarding this role of the poet, Abrahams elaborates it thus; "... Most theorists agree with Cicero that in order to persuade, the orator must conciliate, inform, and move the minds of his auditors..." (qtd in Lodge 1986:12).

Kebede's effective use of these features is also observed in his poem "የሸጥ ፍሬና የዱባ ፍሬ" "The Fruit of the Fig Tree and the Pumpkin". Here too is found a character and the narration is very persuasive. It convinces the reader to conclude that it is a mistake in the first place to try to challenge the work of God, for He is non-erring.

ዘላለም አንተ ነህ የፍርድ መምህር
ስህተት የሌለብህ ሕያዌ እግዚአብሔር
አንተን የሞገተ ተሳሳተ ብሎ
ብዙ ጊዜ አይቆይም ይረታል በቶሎ
(የቅኔ አዝመራ : 133)

You are the everlasting Instructor of justice
The eternal God !
He who argues that you err
Will be proven wrong in no time

The two poems we have examined display the poet's strong belief in God and his attempt to convince others to believe as well.

2.2.2. VERSIFICATION

Every language has its own rhythm. A rhythm is a repetition of pattern like in music, swimming, dance and so on. The pattern of repetition determines the regularity and irregularity of the rhythm. Rhythm has more value in poetry than in prose.

The rhythm of verse is measured by metre, a system by which we establish the relationship between accented, or stressed, and unaccented or unstressed syllables.

The pattern of rhythm created by stressed and unstressed syllables creates the different forms of versification. In Amharic there are more than thirteen types of versification. However, the three commonly known and assumed to be the basic ones are 'Yawal bet', 'buhhe bellu' and 'Sango Maggan' (Mengistu Lemma 1963).

Yawal bet in which Kebede Mikael composes his poems has a 6/6 metre. The first six geminated sounds are called "harrag". 'Yawal bet' versification has two "harragoc" which means the time gap taken to read the first six stressed sounds i.e, 'harrag' and the next six stressed sounds are equal. The poet is expected to compose carefully in order to keep equal time gap. This method of versification when compared to the others, is a bit more difficult. If the duration taken to read the first 'harrag' and the second 'harrag' varies the rhythm will be "broken", When reading 'yawal bet' verse one should not feel any irregularity in the flow of the rhythm and the rhyme.

Kebede composes most of his poems and verse dramas in 'yawal bet'. Out of his 110 published poems more than 100 are in 'yawal bet'. He is a grand master of this form of versification and handles the 6/6 metre with perfection.

Kebede's poems composed with other forms of versification include: "መጽናናት" (Consolation), "ወግት" (Youth), "እርጅና" (Old Age), "ቢራቢሮ" (Butterfly) and "እኝኝ ብላ" (Continuous Rain). These were published in the collection የሀልም አበባ (The Dream Flower) (1965). In his other collection የትኔ ዉበት (The Beauty of Poetry) (1964) is found. "ገፋስ ይዞት ሄደ" (Gone With The Wind) is also composed in a different form of versification.

2.2.3. RHYME

Rhyme is a musical quality of a poem created by same sounding words. The rhyme the poet creates according to Scott (1971:59) serves two purposes. The first "basic value of rhymes as well as other musical elements of poetry is that they afford pleasure". The second purpose of rhyme is that it gives "the sound of the sense" (Ibid). The rhyme created by the poet not only gives pleasure alone, but also appeals to the reader's senses and rings in his mind the point that the poet desires to convey.

Rhyme is the bringing of syllables with the same sound at the end of the line of a poem. However, in the musical quality of a given poem, the other sound effects, such as assonance and consonance, are also included. Assonance, Scott says, is "the repetition of vowel sounds in the stressed portion of several words" (1977:59). Here one should point out the fact that only simple repetition alone doesn't bring the desired effect. Kruezer warns: "It is important to remember that the same vowel may have one sound in one word and a different sound in another word, bate-mate, for example, ...does not constitute an assonance pattern. Assonance is the repetition of sound, but not necessarily of a letter" (1955:61); it is the vowel sound that brings about the needed quality.

A poet also uses consonant sounds. This is called consonance which is defined by Kruezer as "the repetition of consonant sounds within different words in proximity" (1955:62). As in assonance, here again it is the recurrence of the consonant sounds in close range that produces the musical quality. The repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of the words is called alliteration. "Alliteration", says Scott, "is a special division of consonance used when the repeated consonantal sounds occur at the beginnings of the words... But also, in the middle of some words a consonantal sound is repeated: as "p" in "piper" and "peppers", the "k" in "picked", "peck" and "pickled". Here we have consonance" (1977:58).

Kebede uses the aa bb cc rhyming pattern in his poems, but occasionally also the abab pattern. In Amharic one should take care of the geminated syllables, specifically those which are called "saddis's" (literally the sixth form of a letter). Most of the time the "saddis's" are not geminated and their occurrence at the end-rhyme has a depressing effect. Therefore, it is often argued that it is not wise to use "saddis's" for rhyming: However, Kebede's verse utilizes various sound patterns to create a pleasant rhyming scheme.

ባለፉት ዘመናት ጥንት በጊዜያቸው
 ወሰን ያልነበረው ኃይልና ክብራቸው
 አፈርሆነው ዛሬ ትቢያ እየለበሱ
 ስንቶቹ ንጉሶች ቀሩ እየተረሱ
 ባቢሎን ከተማው የት እንደነበረ
 ቢፈለግ ሳይገኝ እንደጠፋ ቀረ
 ትልቁ እስክንድርም መታብሩ ፈርሶ
 ከከተማው ጋራ ጠፍታል ተደምስሶ

However, the dominant rhyming pattern in Kebede's poetry is aa, bb, cc and so on. Aside from rhyming, Kebede uses the other methods of assonance and consonance for sound effects in his poems. For instance, his use of assonance in the following lines emphasizes the meanness of the rich man.

**አይረዳም አይሰጥም ላጡ ችግረኞች
አያስገባም ነበር በግቢጧ ለማኞች**

The words "**አይረዳም አይሰጥም አያስገባም**" "Ayredam" "Aysetem" "Ayasgebam" indicate the miserliness of the rich man. The recurrence of the (a:) vowel at the beginning of the words is sonorous and at the same time exploits the meaning of "**አይ**" "**አይ**" (ay ay) (which literally means "no" "no").

The first line of "**ጥልቅ ሀሳቦች**" "Deep Thoughts" where he expresses the fraudulent behavior of human beings uses alliteration as follows "**አስቀይሞ አኩራሬ አስለቅሶ አዛኝ**" (Askeymo akurafi asslekso azzagn) The poet's use of assonance gives a musical quality to the poem. The first phrase of the next line explains the wrong behavior of man. "**አስለቅሶ**" literally means to cause somebody to cry. But here as it is used by the poet it means making a person suffer i.e. the suffering may be caused in different forms for example by not assisting a person economically. Yet the one who is mourning the result of the evil deed is the doer himself.

The line uses contradictory terms to explore the fraudulent behavior of human beings who display a false mask on their face hiding their evil intent within.

The examples illustrate two basic skills of Kebede. The first one is his creation of a musical quality by using sonorous vowel sounds, thereby emphasizing the theme. The second is his ability to use words economically and in such a way that they also have additional meanings.

When one deals with the rhyme schemes of Kebede Mikael's poems it is impossible to by-pass his use of consonance. The following examples show how he uses alliteration and makes the rhyme of the poem harmonious.

**ቢሰፈር ቢቆጠር ቢገመት ቢለካ
እምዩ ዉለታሽ አያለቅም ወይ ለካ**

*bissəfar bikk'ot'ar biḡḡamət billakka
ḡimīye wiLLətə፩ payalīk'k'īm way Ləkka*

**ቢሥራ ቢሙያ ቢጥበብ ቢዉቀት
ቢገይል ቢጉብዝና ቢትልቅ ዠገንነት**

*basstra bammuya bət'ēfbāb batwīkk'ət
bahhaytL baḡḡubizīna bətētlik jəḡḡīninet*

The purpose of the alliteration here is not only for sound effect but also for increasing the intensity of the idea expressed. In <<ጥልቅ ሀሳቦች>> "Deep Thoughts" Kebede uses alliteration for the same purpose:

**ታደለ ዘበነ ተሾመ ታወቀ
ታረዘ ተጋዘ ተራቦ ተናቀ**

*taddala zabbāna təssoma tawwak'a
tarraza taḡḡaza tarraba tannak'a*

Both lines contain alliterative sounds. The first line shows opportunity, promotion, joy and fame in an increasing order of intensity while the sounds and the words used in the second line show poverty, wretchedness, exile, hunger and humiliation, in the same order of intensity. The description goes from the minimum to the maximum by using short punch words effectively.

2.2.4. DICTION

It is clear that the writer's proper use of words to achieve his aim is of great importance and a sign of excellence. The selection and arrangement of words must be done cautiously. The arrangement should bring the desired effect and elaborate the message the poet intends to convey. The selection of words should also take into consideration the formal and informal usage as well as society's attitude toward the word (s). In this connection Holman identifies the following points as qualities of diction:

...(1) the apt selection of the words accepted for the particular meaning to be conveyed, (2) the use of legitimate words accepted as good usage (excluding all solecisms, barbarisms, and improprieties and (3) the use of words which are clear-cut and specific. The manner in which words are combined constitutes style rather than diction since diction refers only to the selection of words employed in the discovery (1980:339).

What we understand from the quotation is that the words chosen by the poet reinforce the poet's message. Since words are the only means by which the poet communicates with his audience the importance of selecting them carefully is beyond question.

The meaning of words differs according to their cultural context. One has to search for their connotation beyond their dictionary definitions. The compactness of poetry hinges on this principle. The correct understanding of the meaning of words and idiomatic expressions in a given context is essential to understand and enjoy the meaning of the context.

Let us examine these qualities in some of Kebede's poems. To take two lines from *Iro* (Remorse):

የናገተ ሕዝባችሁ የሚሄደው ለብሶ
የቤት ዕቃዎ ሳይቀር ሁሉም የተዉሶ

Not only what your people wear, but also
Their household items are borrowed.

Here the word <<የተዉሶ>> (literally meaning borrowed) is pregnant with different meanings. The word has the meaning of an object borrowed from or lent to others. This is the denotative meaning. But what the poet aims at is to explain that most things Ethiopians use are not indigenous; they are imported from other countries. Even their basic utensils and clothes are brought from abroad. Now

what is it that they are so proud of? Boasting about a great tradition is not enough. The word <<የተጠሰ>> whose root word ጥሰ gives special colour to this idea.

After the fascist's embarrassing comment the Ethiopian character expresses his bitterness with expressions such as <<እያንገበገበ እንጅቴን ሲያጨሰጧል>> (which literally means "burning my intestines"), which are colloquial and very effective. We observe in the phrase "እንጅቴን ሲያጨሰጧል" how deeply hurt his feelings are.

Notice also how Kebede builds up the "Iroro", the shame and despair of the Ethiopian with the following line composed from two phrases elaborates the anger of the "I" line. In <<ከላት የሚያቃጥል + ከራት የሚመር>> (Literally burning more fiercely than fire and tasting more bitterly than aloes) Kebede galvanizes the attentions of the reader.

In his descriptive poem <<እኝኝ ብላ>> Kebede's choice and arrangement of words reveal his command of the language. The phrase <<አዝጋሚ ዳተኛ>> (The slowcoach and plodder) personifies the rainy period of early September. The negative connotation of the words intensifies the darkness of the days beside the coldness of the weather.

Look at the arrangement of the following words; <<አደገ ከበረ + ነገሠ ገነነ>> (grew up, prospered, crowned, & glorified). What we observe here is that the first word <<አደገ>> "grew up" has various meanings. For example, if we take the

physical aspect, it could mean the process of growing up or increasing in size, whereas if we take its social aspect it could also mean getting wealth or promotion.

The three words that follow <<ከበረ + ነገሠ + ገነነ>> are short three letter words with the same 'Geez' sound (First order in the Amharic alphabet) perfectly balanced in stress and accent; they very economically build up the image that the poet wants to create. They follow one another in their logical progression to convey the forward growth and development of an individual to richness and fame.

The decline (in wealth) is also shown with the same pattern. The words that come one after the other manifest the person's deteriorating state. It goes thus <<ተቀፈ + ደኸየ + ተሰዶ በነነ>>. The sequence shows the backward movement of a bankrupt person. A perfect expression of a lost identity.

Kebede's economic and accurate usage of words is the hall mark of his style. He chooses suitable words that quickly project an image to one's mind. The proper arrangement of words and their precise usage is what is remarkable in Kebede Mikael's poetry.

Unlike other poets he neither brings in Geez words, phrases or expressions nor uses complex terms. Kebede's simple language originates from his view that the role of literature, particularly of poetry, is to instruct, teaching the reader. Therefore, he

argues in his prefaces to his works that in order to teach the masses, it is necessary to use the simple and day to day language of the common man. Undoubtedly he achieves what he claims. His purposeful and conscious usage of words is one aspect of his style that makes Kebede renowned in the history of Amharic literature.

2.2.5 PERSONIFICATION

To give non human things or objects the behavior of human beings is allegory or personification. Scott says "When the subject is non-human and the analogue is human and capable of human thought and emotion the image is said to take the form of personification... (1977:159). This helps the writer to magnify his idea or concept.

Kebede Mikael in his poems uses personification for different purposes in various ways. In his poem " **ሰለ ተገባረ ዕድ**" (About Handicraft) he personifies his country and makes her speak like a mother. The inanimate land expresses her backwardness and her desire to be developed like other civilized countries.

The effect of personifying the motherland in this case makes the poem very powerful and touching because, first and foremost, no human being wants to see his mother suffer. The reader gets inspired when he hears the call of the motherland.

Kebede personifies his country also in the poem <<እጅ መንሻ>> (A Present) and the same effect is achieved as in "About Handicraft".

Among such allegorical poems we find <<የብረት ድስትና የሸክላ ድስት>> "Metal and a Clay Saucepan" where he makes the two objects chat like old friends. They are out together for a picnic. While walking the clay saucepan accidentally clashes with the metal one and breaks into pieces. The poem is meant to teach the moral that unless friendship is established on equal status, the result will be disastrous.

The other poems Kebede has written in allegory are: ቢራቢር፣ (Butterfly) መጽናናት፣ (Consolation) እኝኝ ብላ፣ (Continuous rain) ባለ ቅኔና የገደል ግግቶ፣ (The Poet and the Echo) አለግስተዋል፣ (Non observance) የራስ ቅል፣ (Skull) አንድ ሰውና አንድ ዝንጅር፣ (A Man and a Monkey) አዉራ ዶር፣ ድመትና ያይጥ ገልገል፣ (A Cock, a Cat and a Mouse) ፅጌረዳና ዳመና፣ (A Rose and a Cloud). In Kebede's poetry personification is seen ^{frequently.} This influence may be traced to religion. Kruger's statement: "primitive religions relied heavily on personification, the forces of nature, winds, storms, lightning, sunshine, frost were personified as gods and goddesses friendly or inimical to man. The urge to personify has continued to the present both in poetry and in every day speech and thought. (1955:100) may be aptly applying to Kebede.

In the poem " የሰው ጠባይ " (Traits of Man) different wild animals tell their discontent to their creator. God promises to reshape them if any animal declares

any one single deformity. And no animal finds any weakness in its nature. The poet then applies logically the same truth for human beings, for no one is willing to accept his/her deformity or shortcoming.

The other poem <<የሀብት ትዕቢት>> (Conceit in Wealth) deals with two pack horses. They are on their way to the market. One is loaded with silver, and the other with wheat crop. The one loaded with silver boasts that she is greater than the other because she is loaded with silver. In the meantime robbers arrive and kill the pack-horse loaded with the silver and spare the other one. The poet's message is quite clear for those loaded with silver.

The other poem "አንበሳና ጦጣ" "The Lion and the Monkey" indicates that power is useless. The poem presented in personification shows the quarrel between the lion and the monkey. The lion, confident of his strength, lurks in the "house" of the monkey. The monkey is suspicious of his presence and calls for help. When no response is forthcoming, the monkey concludes the lion is there and forces him to respond-thus outwitting him.

In Kebede's poetry abstract concepts and objects are also personified. For example in the poem <<የደስታና የገዘን ትልቅልነት>> (The Blend of Happiness and Sadness) the world is given human character. In another poem <<ትሕትና>> (Modesty) a drop of rain is given human traits and it speaks to God.

2.3 STYLE: KEBEDE MIKAEL'S USE OF NEO-CLASSICAL RULES IN HIS PLAYS

It is obvious that Kebede's reading of classic literature has highly influenced the style of his plays. There are discernible features of the neo-classic French style, especially those of Corneille and Racine. Therefore, it becomes necessary to investigate his plays using the characteristic features of Neo-classicism.

Kebede explains in his preface to Yetinbit Kattaro that the playwrights and authors who won universal fame wrote their creative works based on biblical stories. He mentions Dante's Divine Comedy or (Divina Commedia), Milton's Paradise Lost, Leta's Jerusalem Liberated (Jerusalem Liberate), and Racine's Athalie.

Kebede, influenced by his mother's religious teaching, and by French classic drama, has written two plays fully dealing with religion: Akeab and Kiddus Gabriel Bemdre Gennet. Kebede states in the preface of Akeab, that he learnt his style from Racine's Athalie. However, Racine's play deals with the history that follows after King Ahab is passing, whereas Kebede's deals with the story of King Ahab himself. Regarding Racine, Vinaver says:

Racine enters the literary life of his time with the determination to respect its conventions and usages, for thirteen years he participates in it as a disciple rather than as an innovator, his language and art seem to conform to a type

already consecrated, as if his one concern were to do what others have done before him and to match his production with principles firmly established...(1955:1).

What Vinaver has said about Racine can also be true of Kebede because many of his works are adapted from earlier works.

The other style Kebede has picked up from the French classicist, is the separation of "tragedy from daily life". To quote Vinaver again "instead of being a transcription of everyday reality with its accidents and its impurities, they will present the spectator with an idealized image of human sentiments at their highest degree of intensity" (1955:6). Similarly Kebede's plays do not reflect everyday life but an idealized one.

One of the neo-classical rules is that a play should be constructed on a single plot, that the action should revolve around one restricted plot. Kebede applies this rule in his plays Hannibal, Yetinbit Kattaro and Akeab. In these plays every action of the characters facilitates the fall of the hero, which in turn clears the ground for the end.

In Hannibal the refusal of logistic supplies for Hannibal by the Cabinet of Carthage gives victory to the Romans and brings about the tragic end of Hannibal. We also observe in Akeab the action revolving round the plot constructed by his wife

Elizabeth which brings about the tragic death of King Ahab. The plots in these two plays run smoothly towards one goal.

The other feature of Neo-classical style is that writers take their plots from history. In this respect Kebede Mikael's plays Akeab, Kaleb and Hannibal are good examples. Selecting the leading characters from the higher ranks of society is also another feature of this period. All the heroes of Kebede Mikael's plays are kings and generals.

However, Kebede doesn't strictly adhere to the neo-classic rule of the three unities of time, place and action. In Yetinbit Kattaro the duration is twenty years. The same is true for Hannibal where the locations for the actions vary widely. The only unity that Kebede observes is that of action.

The other feature that makes Kebede Mikael smack of Neo-classicism is that he writes his plays in verse. He has only one play written in prose: Kiddus Gabriel Bemdre Gennet (1965E.C). This is the last one among the published plays. The other four plays are written in verse. The method of versification Kebede uses in his plays seems also similar to the Neo-Classicalist-hexameter. Wallace Fowlie writes the following in relation to this: "In the tragedies and tragi-comedies of Corneille and Racine there is often considerable formalism in the dialogue, and it is made

especially apparent by the strict syllabic versification of the rhymed hexameter couplets...." (1968:3). As we have seen earlier, Kebede's versification is almost perfect and most of the time strictly composed in hexameter, the Amharic 'Yawal bet' which has the 6/6 meter pattern. Kebede's scene division seems to follow also the "French scene" style. Black defines the French scene as follows:-

...It is all talk: nothing happens, but the people emote to each other in very formal terms. A may then say to B Ah, but I see X approaching and leave, because X is hateful to him, X does indeed approach, and you are in the next scene, X may then be left by B for some other carefully explained but natural seeming reason and X may then soliloquize, saying what he feels about what he has just heard; this is scene iii. When these successive entrances and exits lead to an empty stage, that is the end of the act. The next act takes place on the same set and has the same general strategy(1977:93).

It seems that Kebede follows the formula mentioned in the above quotation. For example, in Kaleb, the Roman captain arrives at Axum and admires the castle and the act ends as soon as the captain finishes his soliloquy. Then Act II starts. He meets by chance one Axumite chief, they exchange a few words, and the chief promises to take him to the King. Here Act II(1) ends and next Act III Scene I is seen in the palace; all the scenes and acts go like this.

The other feature of neo-classism is the absence of action. Every happening is reported, rather than seen on the stage. In Hannibal the arrival of Hannibal is reported not seen. Also the battles are not seen, only announced and their outcome reported.

In Kaleb the attack on Christians by pagans is told to the audience by the Prime Minister in Act I Scene II. The victory of Kaleb is also reported in Act II Scene IV by a messenger.

From the examples cited above, it is possible to justify the influence of Neo-Classicalists on Kebede's style.

3. GENERAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF KEBEDE MIKAEL

Kebede is a renowned literary figure in Ethiopia. He ranks among the few who dedicated their energy and time to matters of education and the production of literary works. We have dealt so far with the themes and styles of his poems and plays. Kebede's other contributions to Ethiopian literature will now be examined.

As an eye-witness of the Italo-Ethiopian (1936-1941) war, Kebede has always regretted his country's backwardness. To rectify this Kebede worked hard to institute formal education in the country. He wrote poems in praise of education and he tried to enlighten the youth through his textbooks. He focused particularly on the Italian invasion, and on Fascism and tried to teach the people to be prepared to protect themselves from external invaders, specifically from those armed with modern weapons.

He took education as the basic instrument of modernity, as well as the torch and power that can rescue the country from backwardness and underdevelopment. Thus he concentrated his energy on preparing teaching materials, particularly those for the teaching of the Amharic language.

These teaching materials include አንደኛ የምንባብ መግሪያ (Reading Lesson I), ታሪክና ምሳሌ (Story and Tale book 1-3) ታላላቅ ሰዎች (Great Men) (used as supplementary

reading material for elementary schools) which were used up until the Derge regime came to power. Generally the themes of these textbooks emphasise the love of the motherland, loyalty to the emperor, the importance of education, the significance of Christianity and the value of morality. The texts contain Ethiopian folktales, biographies of famous men and translations of some works of great thinkers of the world.

Kebede, besides preparing the textbooks and translating the works mentioned above, produced original works of his own. His non-creative works which contain general knowledge also have similar themes as the ones mentioned above. His books ሥልጣኔ ግለት ምንድነች (What Does Civilization Mean?) ጃፓን እንደምን ሠለጠነች (How Did Japan Develop?) clearly indicate his ambitions for his country to follow the path Japan followed. He takes Japan as a model because of the similarities these two countries have. Both are monarchical and neither had been colonized. He also advocates loyalty to the emperor as the Japanese have for theirs.

His other researched writing includes ታላቁ እስከንድር (Alexander, the Great), ታላላቅ ሰዎች (Great Men), ኢትዮጵያና ምዕራባዊ ሥልጣኔ (Ethiopia and Western Civilization), የዓለም ታሪክ (World History), የሥልጣኔ አየር (The Atmosphere of Civilization). All are aimed at informing the reader about the world and familiarizing him with what is going on outside Ethiopia. In one way or another Kebede tries to share his knowledge and experience with his fellow citizens. In doing so he has played a

significant role in the history of Ethiopian education, particularly after the Italian invasion.

Kebede expresses his views towards different genres of art and shows a clear preference for 'the Queen of the arts' "Kine" (poetry). His concern for art is shown in his article "Old Ethiopian Paintings" (1961 E.C) published in three different languages Amharic, English and French.

Kebede in this short but significant work indicates three basic points in relation to Ethiopian paintings. First he expresses his view, though in general terms, on Ethiopian paintings that the ancient paintings were related to religion. The main reason for this, he argues, was that the painters were clergymen and "debteras" who had no modern ideas of painting; however, they were among the very few people to get traditional education. Due to the impact of traditional education and lack of exposure to Western works their paintings gravitated towards religion. Kebede in relation to this kinds of painting states:

--- Actually the painters were priests or "dabtaras" and their works were destined for the church. If we look at the copies which foreign historians have had printed in order to give an idea of Ethiopian painting, we are not satisfied with the movement of the lines, as well as the colors are not pleasant. These paintings often look like naive works of children--- (Old Ethiopian Paintings, no page).

Here, we see that the paintings were drawn by priests or "debteras" (since they were drawing without acquiring the basic skill of drawing and general knowledge of the

field) their works were poor in quality. They were drawing for religious purposes such as painting angels and The Angels. Kebede also indicates the major weakness of combining colors. But I will leave this part to an art critic for he is in a better position to deal with the meanings of these concepts and the idea they flash in the professionals. What could be said at this point, however, is that Kebede paves the way for the fine art critics on Ethiopian paintings. If one wants to study the ancient paintings, Kebede indicates the whereabouts of the paintings and the hardships that may be faced by the researcher. He writes:

The Ethiopian arts are rooted in the Christian faith, and one must wander from convent to convent, tiring travel since large areas are still inaccessible by modern methods of transport if one desires to see and study ancient traces of history and civilization--- one has to recognize that if we want the historic relics of Ethiopia to be known to the world, great efforts are still to be made (Old Ethiopian Paintings).

The third point he raises in reference to ancient Ethiopian paintings has a historic perspective. Since Ethiopia has had a relation with Byzantium, he wonders if its civilization had made an impact on the Ethiopian painters. He expresses his hope that researchers would study the paintings in relation to Byzantine art and specifically in relation to the Renaissance in Europe.

He further comments on Wallis Budge's collection of old Ethiopian paintings:

Wallis Budge, the historian, did much to make Ethiopian painting known abroad. In voluminous tomes he showed to the public reproductions in color, printing nearly three hundred pictures. But, due to his limited purpose, instead of drawing them from many

sources, he necessarily confined himself to very few documents. Therefore, his reproductions show little variety, a characteristic exaggerated by the crude technical methods used fifty years ago. On the other hand, Abbe-Leroy's book printed a few years ago in Italy, offers a more eclectic selection. As to the book published by UNESCO, we may say about it what we have said about Budge's book, an expensive work but with little variety in the documentation (Old Ethiopian Paintings).

His criticism of the works done by foreigners, indicating their weaknesses, helps to rectify many misconceptions about Ethiopian paintings.

Kebede, though not a painter, is concerned about Ethiopian art. He raises basic issues in his essay. Above all, this early article of his can be said to have stimulated critical studies to be pursued.

Kebede Mikael's hope for the advancement of art in Ethiopia is seen in the prefaces of his creative as well as non-creative works. In Ethiopia, until recent years, artists were given a low social status. Kebede, realizing that artists were not respected as they deserve to be attempts to change the society's wrong attitudes. In so doing he preaches how important art and artists are for the spiritual development of a country. Kebede in one of his non-creative works የሥልጣን አየር (The Atmosphere of Civilization) explains how artists are respected in civilized countries and condemns people who consider artists as inferior to other professionals:

--- የዘረን ወይም የሙዚቃ ወይም የዳንስ ሙያ ላለው አንድ ትልቅ አርቲስት ሥልጣኔ ከፍ ያለ ክብርና ዋጋ የምትሰጠው መሆኑ ደህና አድርጎ የታወቀ ሲሆን በዚህ መሠረት ያገራችን አርቲስቶች በሀዘቡ ዘንድ የሚገባቸውን አስተያየት እንዲያገኙ እንመኛለን።

It is well known that the civilized ones give a high respect for a vocalist or musician or a professional dancer and a renown artist. In this respect we wish that our artists get due regard from our people (PP10-11)

Furthermore Kebede advocates that artists are the naturally gifted people who are depicting beauty in their works. Explaining how they do this, he says:

ዳንስ ውበትን በመንቀሳቀስ ሲገልጥ ሙዚቃ ውበትን በድምፅ፣ ስዕልና ቅርጽ ውበትን በመስመር አጣጣልና በቀለም አግካይነት እንዲታይ ያደርጋሉ። ቅኔ ውበትን በንግግርና በኃሳብ እንድትገልጥ ያደርጋል። ስለዚህ ዳንስ፣ ሥዕል፣ ቅኔና ድርሰት ዋና ተግባራቸው ለውበት አገልግሎት መግሪያ ሆኖ መገኘት ነው። ይህም ሲሆን ውበትን ለመገለጥ የመፍጠር ሙያ እንዲኖር ያስፈልጋል። ይህ የመፍጠር ሙያ (...) የሚገኘው በአርቲስቶች ዘንድ ብቻ ነው....

Dance expresses beauty through movement, music through sound, painting through lines and color combinations. Poetry enables one to express beauty in speech and thought. Therefore, the main function of dance, painting, poetry,... is to serve as a means to reveal beauty. To do so there must be talent. And talent is found only among artists,--- (Ibid p.80).

He does not only state the importance of art in a country. He practices it himself. He is a devoted professional producing many poems and plays.

Kebede also introduces renowned artists and some of their great works together with his comments on their contribution to their countries in particular and the world in general. We see this in ታላላቅ ሰዎች (Great Men) where he presents the

brief biographies of Homer, William Shakespeare, Goethe, as well as synopsis, and brief historical backgrounds of their works, their major themes and critiques of the Iliad, Macbeth, Faust. He also gives an account of how the authors of such great works wrote them.

Besides in ታላላቅ ሰዎች (Great Men) he explains how man's interest in art develops. In this book he argues about the importance of oral literature and how it helps the development of written literature.

---ትኔ የግራም ሰዎች አጭቶችና አዝግሪዎች ተብለው ቀድሞ ይናጸነበር። ሰው አዋቂ በሆነ ጊዜ ግን ከሐዘንና ከደስታ ከፀሎትና ከጀግንነት የተነሣ ክልቡ መንጭተው የወጡት ቃሎች ከፍ ያለ ዋጋ ያላቸው ሆነው ተገኙ በሕዝቡ አንደበት እየተዘፈኑ ከትውልድ ወደ ትውልድ በመተላለፍ ተያይዘው ሲወርድ ሲዋረድ የመጡትን ግጥሞችና ተረቶች በመጻፍት እየተሰበሰቡ በክብር ያስቀምጧቸው ጀመር።

--- At first men who created poetry were called entertainers, minstrels and they were looked down upon. But as knowledge developed the words used to express man's inner feelings of sadness, happiness, his prayers and heroic deeds were found to be of great value. Those poems, tales, that were sung by the people and that were passed from generation to generation orally got to be collected and recorded respectfully. (pp.18-19)

It is important to note from the paragraph cited above how Kebede has been keen on oral literature and its importance for writers of fiction. He explains how authors have used it in their fictional works. Kebede was the first critic and writer to show the significance of oral literature for modern writing and the second to note that this property of the people should be collected and published in book form.

Kebede, as a moralist, argues that the purpose of art should be to instruct and to help stop the decline in the standard of morality. He considers 'money' to be one of the causes that brings about moral degeneration. Regarding the interconnection of money and artistic output he has this to say in የሥልጣን አየር (The Atmosphere of Civilization):

---ቴያትርና ሲኒማ ሲሰናዳ ዋናው ዓላማ ትምህርት ለመስጠትና የሕዝቡን ጥራት ከፍ ለማድረግ ነበር። ነገር ነገር ካን ከተመልካቹ ሕዝብ የሚፈለገው እንዲግር ብቻ ሳይሆን ገንዘብ እንዲከፍል በመሆኑ ገንዘብ እንዲከፍል ደግሞ ደስ የሚያሰኘውን ነገር ማቅረብ አስፈላጊ ሆነ። ደስ እንዲለው ለማድረግ ደግሞ ስሜቱ የሚፈትደውን ነገር ማቅረብ ያሻል። ምስጢሩ የረቀቀና ከፍ ያለ አስተያየት የሚጠይቅ ነገር የቀረበለት እንደሆነ ሊገባው አይችልም። ስለዚህ ወይም ምስጢሩን ትርጉሙን በሕዝብ የዕውቀት ደረጃ መጠን ዝቅ ማድረግ አለዚያም የሕዝቡን የዕውቀት ደረጃ በዚያው መጠን ከፍ ማድረግ ያሻል---

--- Initially the main objective of the art of the theater and the film was to educate and to raise the moral standard of the people. But the spectator is not only expected to learn but also to pay. In order to make the public pay there must be something that it can enjoy. Therefore it is necessary to do what pleases the public. If a highly subtle work is presented the public may not understand or value it. Hence, the dilemma of whether to lower the standard of the work or else the need to raise the knowledge of the people--- (pp.67-68)

Harmonizing the degree of high level art and the tastes of the public is the problem tackled by Kebede. The options are either to lower the standard of the art or else wait until the people's ability to appreciate good works of art is attained.

Therefore, it is necessary to have critics as mediators and interpreters of the real value and meaning of a work of art. What Kebede wants to emphasize is that art that is intended for commercial purposes results in the lowering of standards. When we gauge the works he produced, it is obvious that Kebede, the poet-

playwright, essayist and critic has contributed a lot to the development of Ethiopian literature.

Professor Tamrat W/Amanual, in his article(1936), praises Kebede as a translator:

ቅኔ፣ ምሳሌ፣ ተረት፣ ከውጭ ደራሲ ከፈረንሳይ በሚተረጎምበት ጊዜ አገባቡና
ንግግሩ አግራ ሆኖ ከተረጎመበት ቋንቋ ጋር ሲያስተያየት አንዳንድ ጊዜም አርሞ
ያቃናው ሆኖ ይገኛል---

When he translates a poem, a tale, from foreign authors, particularly from the French, it seems as though he had done it originally in Amharic, at times his translations are found to be an improvement on the original ones--- (p.20).

Professor Tamrat's comment was made fifty years ago when Kebede was beginning his career as a writer. His talent had seemed evident even then.

✓ Kebede's poems and plays are written in very clear and simple language, that can be easily understood by the average reader. The words he chooses are simple but their order of arrangement, combination, and the rhyme schemes he uses make them very powerful. This helps him to communicate his themes easily to his readers. To be able to use a common man's language and at the same time attain sophistication in arrangement and thematic concern requires extraordinary skill. Unlike his predecessors or successors, for that matter, he doesn't use difficult words or phrases. Above all he doesn't employ Geez words and phrases a style which is still fashionable with some poets even today. Thus Kebede's works are spared from obscurity. His poems are often cited as models of "yawal bet"

versification. In this regard, it is believed, they are unparalleled and will withstand the passage of time.

Kebede has played a significant role in introducing classical plays such as Romeo and Juliet, particularly through the formal education system. He is the first playwright to have extensively used students for the production of plays and thus creating awareness of the importance of the art. At time when there was limited access to modern art and literature, he gave valuable guidelines in the introductions to his works. He is considered a pioneer in this regard.

Kebede's contribution to the development of Amharic literature is seen evidently every where. He was the first author to be awarded the Haile Selassie I Grandmedal for literature and remains till today the country's poetlaureate. His endeavours to inspire his fellow country men to build up their nation will endear him to the hearts of the people for a long time to come.

CONCLUSION

To sum up the foregoing discussion, this study has shown that Kebede Mikael is one of the most popular men of letters in the history of Amharic literature. His glory stands sparkingly high in many areas: teaching material production, versification and play writing. The role he played in preparing teaching material for the Amharic language at elementary school levels is very significant. His poems, tales and adapted materials were widely read, particularly after the Italian war, among the students of the 1950's and 60's. His translations adapted from classic and other creative works helped his fellow countrymen to be acquainted with western literature. Kebede's self initiated move to learn western literature resulted in advancing the consciousness of his countrymen as reflected in his creative works.

Kebede notably contributes to the history of Amharic poetry and playwrighting. Most of Kebede's poems are didactic as they are projected to teach moral values. In addition, he deals with various subjects and themes as has been shown in the discussion of the themes of Kebede Mikael's creative works.

Kebede Mikael has his own style of composing poetry. His simplicity and rhyming are of very high quality. His usage of assonance, consonance and alliteration has a dual purpose. It gives musical quality to the poems and also enhances the elaboration of the theme. Another quality of Kebede's poetry is his diction. The

language he uses in his poems is simple, fits the day to day conversational style, but its arrangement suggests powerful meaning and reflects great beauty. It is this usage that has made Kebede's poems popular.

The presence of the ab ab style in his poems goes against Kane's statement: "Recurring patterns of the type aa bb, abab, etc., are not known to the writer" (1975:23). The researcher has observed the recurrence of the patterns in the published poems of Kebede Mikael which Kane had overlooked.

The other point that this study has illustrated is the influence of Neo-classicism on Kebede's form and content, although, the influence is quite restricted.

Kebede Mikael's published plays are five. Two are translations. The themes or his original plays fall into two categories: those which principally treat religious themes and those which deal with history as well as with the love of one's mother land.

As in his poems, Kebede's style in his plays also tends toward Neo-classicism; in particular, he follows the style of such French playwrights as Corneille, Racine and Moliere; for one can easily observe in his plays the characteristic features of Neo-classicism.

Kebede Mikael stands first among the literary men of his time. One can say that he is a man of letters who paved the way for the development of Amharic literature. He is not only confined to producing literary works but also provides theoretical backgrounds for the genres he treats.

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- ነቢዩ ዮሐንስ። የከበደ ሚካኤል ግጥሞች። አአዩ፣ ዲግድ፣ 1973።

አምሳሉ አከሊሉ። አጭር የኢትዮጵያ ሥነጽቅፍ ታሪክ። አአዩ ያልታተመ። 1970።

አስፋዉ አፀግት የከበደ ሚካኤል ሕይወት ታሪክና ዐበይት ቴያትራዊ ሥራዎች። አአዩ፣ ዲግድ፣
19፣ ።

ጎርጎሪያ ። <<ከበደ 'አይታገድ' ሚካኤል>> የካቲት። ቁጥር 11-12 1983።

DECLARATION

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

Name : Mekonnen Minda

Signature : _____



Place : Institute of Language Studies

Addis Ababa University

Date : January, 1995