

AN
ANALYSIS
OF
AMHARIC FOLK ANECDOTES
FROM ARSI -ROBE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is intended to examine some possible social issues and literary features of Amharic folk anecdotes collected from Arsi- Robe areas. In my undertaking attempted to discern some significant social impulses embedded and literary techniques employed by making sample- based and global analyses.

In the activity of sample analysis communicative events of the narrative performances are treated to some detail. Consequently, the analysis in this perspective revealed that, during the actualizing of the stories both parties, narrator and narratee, have almost equal participation. The narrator relates his stories being aware of the cultural system (respect, politeness, referring to reverend sources, for example) and with democratic freedom. The narratees, on their part, not only listen to the narrator but also argue, comment and add subordinate oral arts.

Stylistically the majority of the punch lines of the anecdotes are composed in verse form particularly using Amharic quine. Nearly all anecdotes have introductory parts and punch lines. In the introductory parts, the characters and preliminary events are introduced. Then the amusing part (the punch line) follows. In the anecdotes one can view different literary aspects: selection of materials, arrangements of selected elements and surprise endings being the prominent ones. Figures of speech such as irony, hyperbole, paradox, symbol and the like are widely employed.

In the anecdotes varieties of social issues are reflected. Economic backwardness, violating injustice, sex inequalities, mutual tolerance of different ethnic groups can be pointed out as significant focuses of the anecdotal stories.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Statement of the Problem

A teacher once asked his students to do an assignment. He asked them to interpret the Amharic proverb.

አህያ በወለደኝ አረፈኝ

Maternity relieved a female donkey of drudgery

A considerable number of students attempted to scrutinize the text with regard to human experiences. That is, the students proposed the analogical significance of the proverb in order to show its central idea or the implied meaning of the text. They associated it with the facts of desires of the society in bearing offspring. They said that donkey symbolizes people who bear children and consequently gain high relief particularly in their old age, as their children become their supporters..

However, the attempt of the students seems closely related to their straightforward or book-learning knowledge. In other words, their encyclopedic knowledge of the proverb fails to incorporate some other facts of the primary orality in it. The implication is that the students' understanding of their native oral creativities lacks persistent exposure to the genuine traditional sources. That is why, I think, their perception of the donkey's existing nature is deviant from the meaning given by the society, the owner of the proverb. The interpretation provided by the traditional knowledge examines the allegorical function of the donkey synoptically as follows.

It is not easy to separate the female donkey from its young , because it is extremely sensitive to its colt. If one tries to separate it forcefully, the situations causes the donkey uncontrollable grief and bitterly refuses to move even a step.

Hence, the owner has two options: either he should drive the donkey with its young or he sets the jennet free for some months. The former option is impractical because of the fact that the colt is too young to travel a long distance accompanying its mother. As a result, the owner is obliged to leave the female donkey idle until the young grows stronger. This short term leave makes the donkey benefit from maternity, which analogically becomes important in the social philosophy

This detailed reflection of the originator of the proverb, in which truth and analogy produce a sound effect, was not probed thoroughly by the students. The students went on to assume that a female donkey would not be used for transportation services after it passed on its laborious duty share to its offspring. This evidently ignores the existing truth of the female donkeys in our indigenous society. In short, their wrong interpretation of the living reality put the students out of logic. The existing reality is that , as my interviews try to justify, a female donkey is never allowed to retire for the colt substitute for it. Hence, the proverb should be interpreted in accordance with the existing social and environmental contexts.

The above instance, indeed, stirs one's curiosity. After I came across this experience, an idea clicked my mind. It is evident that in the heart of the students' error there lies unsettled problem with respect to oral arts and the new generation. In simple terms, there is signal of generation gap. When the gap goes wider and wider, we lose, I guess, tremendous amount of collective treasures in the course of time with valuable social features, and with peculiar

native literary aspects. The loss might have different features. Some antiquities, undoubtedly, have been completely forgotten, which is serious, others are misunderstood, like the above example, and still the rest remain debatable to tell their exact social meaning or literary values.

In case of some oral arts, we are left with only portion of them. For example, in the appendix an * 20 has an anecdotal narrative. But we usually hear only the last saying of the anecdote, “ መያ ከጎረቤት ” i.e “ Skill is aquired from neighbours”

Our difficulties to understand oral arts in their full sense or our unwillingness to make use of their flavor and wit in our day-to -day languages may result from insufficient exposure to their practical origin. We hear them casually but without their native color. This makes our understanding deficient in utilizing the fresh materials of old creativities from the fertile core. If the situation continues in this way, the consequence will worsen in the coming generation: we will lose innumerable native values and treasures embodied in oral creativities unless they are studied and documented and handed down by means of literacy.

* an= when it comes preceding any number, it stands for the word anecdote.

1.2. Research Objectives

The research is carried out to investigate the social issues and literary techniques as reflected in the anecdotes. In exploring an amenable answer for the question “what distinct social issues are reflected in the anecdotes? ” ,the researcher has given emphasis to socio- cultural features of the society. Emotions, feelings, philosophies etc. of the people about themselves, their environment, their national identity and their ancestors are discussed in the analysis.

In addition, prominent literary features and communicative events are detected . Here, the research has to deal with:

- (a) narrative features (selection of narrative elements, arrangements of materials, and events, fabrication of story telling etc.) and performances (when, where, how and why inquiries)
- (b) poetic elements (condensed nature of anecdotal structures, rhyming techniques, use of Amharic quine, etc.) and techniques of imagery

By making these efforts, I believe, I can provide some hints at Amharic folk anecdotes in general and anecdotal creativities of Amharic speaking people in Arsi - Robe area in particular.

1.3. Significance of the Research

The contemporary situation of Arsi-Robe area seems threatening for the future existence of Amharic folk literature. Because the new generation is being advised to incline only towards Oromiffa because of the contemporary socio-political condition. In other words, there is a tendency of assimilating Amharic oral treasures. In addition to this, the youth getting out of reach of indigenous treasures orality due to modern education and tendency of interests towards alien cultures. My assumption, therefore, is that, unless the anecdotes are recorded along with their present collective feelings, they may be unnoticed, if not dried up from the root in the near future. However, if we collect and preserve them, by disclosing their social themes and literary techniques, at least some of the materials will be saved and made accessible to others who want to conduct further investigations in this particular area. In short, the research plays its own role in providing some inviting insights for further study.

The significance of the research with respect to literature students and literary studies should be emphasized. As it is observed in many cases, the contemporary literature classes have been focusing on written creative works, mainly of foreign imported readers and texts. The situation causes certain embarrassment among students unless they have sustainable preliminary introduction with basic literary styles, starting from their primary school level. Particularly for students of lower classes folk creativities can be helpful in the sense that they are culturally intimate and linguistically closer to the students. While they read and appreciate the native folk literature, their capacity of finding literary insights for a given work can be gradually established and they will have clear images of approaching artistic works in their further career.

1.4. Research Methodology

Two broad activities have been indispensable in the total framework of the study: field work and data analysis.

1.4.1. Data Collection and Problem Encountered

The field activities, mainly of data collection, were based on interviewing and observation. The interviewing method was helpful to acquire more anecdotal narratives. I collected about thirty-two anecdotes by interviewing informants, particularly elders. I faced no trouble in screening informants. Before starting data collection, I consulted my purpose to elders of the community (ያገር ሸማገሌዎች). Consequently, some of them, like Bädada and Endalä for example, told me a number of narratives though most of them were complete tales and fables. I recorded or wrote all stories and later on selected only the anecdotes. Other elders also helped me in finding people who are regarded as more efficient in memorizing and more skillful in narrating stories.

However, it posed its own limitations. In the first place, people usually fail to recall such oral creativities without contexts as one of my interviewees once said , ሰቀመጥ ይነፋኛል፤ ሰቆም ይጠፋኛል ” meaning when I seat it inflates me; but when I rise, it eludes my memory. In the second, since the English word anecdote has no equivalent in Amharic, it was difficult for informants to understand what my distinct desire was. I asked them to tell me አጫጭር ተረቶች (short tales), which was a confusing demand for my interviewees. When I asked them to tell me tales, they resumed narrating very long and complex tales. This was, to be frank, time and material consuming. Thirdly, unless people are motivated by certain contexts, they are reluctant to narrate attractively- they merely tell the narratives for the sake of information - without colorful techniques. This in turn minimizes, if not adulterates, the

literary beauty and the thematic effects, of the anecdotes to a certain degree. In order to overcome, or at least to reduce these negative effects. I should employ certain mechanisms. The first obstacle is resolved, to some extent, by providing some sample anecdotes that I have gathered at other times casually. When people were perplexed by my request አጭር ተረቶች, I tell them from my previous samples, and then they remember the like ones to narrate.. Otherwise, when informants fail to recall, they give me an appointment to come with anecdotes either by remembering or by collecting from other people.

When people were less interested to tell narratives without context, from their deep interests, I tried to create some conducive and stimulating settings. For example I might raise hot local issues, which provoke debates and arguments with themes of unequal marriage, negative /positive effects of fertilizer on agricultural activities, danger and benefits of wild beasts, causes of erosion, etc. When people are engaged in such arguments, they become, I have observed, excitedly active to produce and relate anecdotal or other forms of oral arts. In other times, I take them to local inns and as they sip few tots of local alcohol they become more interested to tell stories. But still the problem exists. The employment of anecdotes in their topics is accidental and a matter of chance. Even when they are told, the situation demand high level of efficiency and patience to record using machines. When I face such critical circumstances, I asked the narrators to repeat the anecdotal part only. If this was impossible, due to various reasons, I made all efforts to capture the narratives and contexts using my pen and notebook, being loyal to the contextual atmosphere as well as to the textual materials.

In the observation activity, however, only three anecdotes were obtained: a single from a peace- making occasion and two from leisure talks. From these three contextual texts the anecdote entitled as " THE ETERNAL CURSE" is noted down without the help of recording machine. I did this with great intent and

watchfulness in collaboration with one of my informants, T'enaye Endalä . Tenaye has completed grade 12 and has become a farmer owing to his low result in Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination. His help was indispensable to capture every relevant facts of the context which likely to be lost if his co-operation was lacking. He took relevant facts of the elders' activities while I was writing the narrator's share in the storytelling. The rest two contextual narratives are recorded in cassettes during performance.

1.4.2 Procedures in Data Analysis

The other and the major task, which determines the effectiveness of the study, is concerned with data analysis. The work at this level required two primary considerations: *sample based* and *global analyses*. The sample based analysis denotes the endeavor devoted to treating social themes and literary techniques of individual anecdotes. I selected three contextual texts and three bare texts and an attempt is made to discuss some details of each sample anecdote .

In the analysis attempts are made on texts obtained from both sources: performance (contextual narration) and interview (texts without contextual applications- bare texts). The focus on contextual narration takes into account the “ Who tells the story, when, where and how” (Miruka, 1994, 152) communicative aspects or "Principles of performance", as Toolan (1991: 227) calls it. Here, we examine the natural circumstances of the narrator, the narratee, the performance and the relation of the story to that particular occasion. In short, the cultural and situational context of the transactional and interactional mutuality will be viewed without the interference of the researcher. This kind of approaching oral artistry is obviously distinguished as “ natural context “ analysis (Dorson in Sahlu, 1996, 20). But in the bare text I am primarily interested in the intrinsic literary techniques (linguistic structures,

metaphorical features, etc) of the anecdotes because of the fact that they are obtained without natural settings.

Two basic reasons made the selection necessary. In the first place, an attempt at discussing each of the collected texts makes the research extremely bulky and tiresome. And, furthermore, genuinely speaking, such an effort would be time and resource consuming. In the second, the samples are assumed to be able to provide some key information about the general features of the creativities and their owner, the society. I believe, any one who desires to look at the research will catch, at least, a glimpse of Amharic folk anecdotes from the analysis made on limited samples.

As regards the sampling techniques, I have my own devices. All texts taken from actual performance are included in the discussion. I have two reasons for this: Firstly, the contextual data are not many to make me weary. Secondly, examining all materials increases our knowledge of the society. As far as the bare text selection is concerned, I chose anecdotes of different nature. Sample one is taken so that it implies the geographical aspects of the area; sample two retains historical elements; sample three shows technique of Amharic quine.

In the global analysis, I devoted efforts on reviewing/ surveying the general or/ and common features of the anecdotes in summarized form. Here, the issue of classification has been raised. In the first attempt of the analysis, the major social themes reflected in the anecdotes are assessed and classified, though the classification is hardly absolute. In the second subdivision of the summary, the prominent literary qualities of the narratives are emphasized as a whole. By accomplishing these two activities, as a form of summary, I could show, I believe, the significant common features of the anecdotes in general. Besides, it

has been important to throw light on issues of authorship, performance and diffusion in order to make things more vivid as much as possible.

For the analysis of the contextual narratives Voight's approach is employed. I have summarized his three principal focuses as follows:

1. distinctive features of the narrator

- does he tell the story creatively (for example applying speech devices like changing voice, purposeful pause etc. and gestures)?
- does he create a new story or recount what is imitated?

2. distinctive features of the addressee (in my case listeners)

- what kind of contact does he make with the narrator?
- is he a participant or a passive observer?
- does he accept what is told or furthers the issues or expresses any sort of feelings?

3. distinctive feature of the narrative

- poetic or didactic/variative or prescriptive?
- informative or agitating?
- understandable or cryptic?
- homolingual or translation?
- individual or mass product?

what kind of plot does it have?

For the convenience of the discussion and for the sake of better understanding (for readers of the research), I have provided the anecdotes before proceeding to the primary task, the analysis. I have given them their own titles so that the overall glimpse of each material might become plain from the beginning. The title enables one to have preliminary hints at the main focus of the anecdotes.

When I suspect the translation may spoil or fail to radiate the genuine impulses and colours of the original material, I have provided the idiomatic expressions, poems, and

1.5. Literature Review

In the Ethiopian situation, it seems to me, folk narratives in general and anecdotes in particular have received scant attention from researchers. This is evidently observed from the available research output. We have only few research products conducted on narratives in general (let alone anecdotes in particular) at tertiary level. Among these Ingda W/Semayat's BA thesis,

“በጭላሎ አወራጃ በአማርኛ ሲነገሩ የሰማንያቸው ተረቶች ” and Yihnew Jenbere's MA thesis, " A Generic Classification of Amharic Oral Prose Narratives of West Gojjam" are carried out on Amharic oral narrative. The researchers conducted their researches on treasures of languages other than Amharic. Abdulkadir Hajji in his MA thesis entitled " Some Cultural Elements as Reflected in Somali Folktales" treated his materials with respect to culture and tradition of the the Somali people. Melakneh Mengistu , on his part, as his MA thesis topic suggests (" The Major Themes and Motifs of South Agew Folktales") gives emphasis to Agews rather than Amharic speaking people. Sahilu Kidane (his MA thesis topic is " Oral Prose Narratives of the Borana Oromo") is the other researcher who endeavoured to explore the contextual features of Borena people folktales. Täsfaye G/Mariam, too , made attempts on folktales in his MA thesis " Folk Narratives of the Jeblawi People".

All these researchers have basic similarities: all of them focus on folktales in general, but non of them confine themselves to anecdotal narratives in particular. As a result, my study seems to be an eye-opening attempt with regard to one of the subgenres of simple tales, anecdote, specifically in Amharic. To be more clear, my research is different from those which made investigations on other Ethiopian nations and nationalities for various reasons. First of all, I attempted to explore different cultural features. Though Ethiopian nations, and nationalities and peoples commonly share tremendous integrated feelings and emotions, it is evidently true that, each society has relatively

peculiar local colours. Hence, an investigation made on Amharic speaking people of a given area, (Arsi- Robe) has to do with identifying its cultural and local identities in detail.

In addition to this particularly works of Abdulkadir and Melakneh mainly engaged in treating the thematic aspects of the narratives neglecting contextual backgrounds. Where as in my research contextual analyses are included. The reason is that the contexts are highly valuable to add colours and thematic foregroundings for analysis of meaning. Beyond the contextual aspects, my research depends upon information provided by informants for analysis of bare texts. This makes the research more credible and convincing because of the fact that it includes the collective impressions as obtained from the original sources, the informants, rather than revealing my own comments and judgments.

Sahilu and Täsfaye focused on contextual information than the others. In this case we have similarities. But both of them gave consideration to the general features of the narratives. They tried to classify their materials into groups. And provided their discussion on overall characteristics of the narratives depending upon the topics of classification such as theft, jealousy, etc. They didn't worry to pursue social issues and literary techniques of individual narratives which is my basic concern. I took some sample anecdotes and treated their social issues and literary features individually. The approach helps one to detect each element of the sample anecdotes in depth and enables us to grasp the full senses of emotions and feelings depicted in the distinct text. By doing so, we can preserve not only the narratives but also their true meanings as they are acquired from the native origin

Ingda particularly focused on Amharic folk narratives and conducted his research in Amharic. He collected 43 complete folktales from C'ilalo (Arsi) by interviewing people. Then, he tried to classify the tales on the basis of their

forms and contents. This method of classification has similarity with Sahilu and Tesfaye. However, his study does not incorporate contextual investigations which is one of my primary focuses. In addition, my attempt is different from his in the fact that I tried to analyze contextual and textual samples.

Yihenew Jenbere also conducted his research on prose narratives. He based his analysis mainly on classifications of folk narratives. He tried to treat features of fables, humorous tales, proverbial tales, etymological and etological legends, historical legends, religious legends and genealogy of Amharic folk narratives. Besides, his thesis throws light on overall features of performance and thematic focuses. But mine is different from his study for one reason or another. My study aims at bringing forth views and motifs of people who live in Arsi area. On the other hand, his study is devoted to highlighting the general features of subgenre instead of making discourse analysis on sample narratives. Above all, my research particularly examines anecdotal stories.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

The term *anecdote* was brought into the literary world after the French concept “biographical incident; a minute passage of private life” (George, 1957: v). Nowadays the term has become an interesting area of emphasis particularly in the fields of oral arts: it covers undeniable ranges of human focus in detecting sociological, historical, anthropological etc. evidences.

As the present perception of the concept *anecdotes* denotes, the term refers to short but brief, precise but illustrative, amusing stories about memorable incidents. Most of the anecdotal substances have historical origins. In other words, the social themes reflected in anecdotal creativities, in most cases, derive from “fractions of factual human experiences which took place some time in identified historical periods” (Leach, 1949: 56). Of course, such creativities may spring from some interesting local particulars as well. It is to say, certain anecdotes have originated without attaching themselves to well known/ recorded accounts of past events as such. The basic characteristic that distinguishes anecdotes from similar narratives is that their unified effect lies upon unique utterances or special uses of words. The special and amusing nature of words becomes effective either by unique meanings of words or by their purposeful arrangements. As a matter of fact, except in rare cases direct quoting or/ and serious observation of arrangements of utterances may be decisive to grasp the full senses of anecdotes. As Scott (1977:2) thoughtfully noticed, a narrator of anecdotes should be careful and tactful to include only the selected components of the narrative and not to overlook every significant materials from the text.

Though anecdotes are assumed to be short in length and rudimentary episodes in nature, it doesn't mean that they are inefficient to incorporate significant details of fragments of facts. When Leach (1949: 56) suggested that an

anecdotal narrative is “. . . a single incident or motif, found separately, in cycles, or as components of longer narratives” she meant that only quite important elements of social truths are presented and transmitted with the help of anecdotes. Anecdotes, in short, aim at conveying well- chosen impressive events and ideas, intending to communicate single messages. The most effective and fascinating potency of anecdotes, in transmitting their message, is achieved by the power of their “comical, witty and cryptic endings” (Degh, 1972,80). Churchill seems attentive about their literary and thematic values: he calls them “ the gleaming toys of history “ (Churchill in George, 1957: V). Gleaming may refer to their beauty. But they incorporate also facts of society. Churchill’s view of anecdotes in one way or another confirms that anecdotes have great values in bridging events of earlier generation with the new one. The idea agrees with Leach’s that anecdotes are “ attached to different individuals in different places and times”. This validity of anecdotes makes them not to be considered as merely rudiments of ordinary gossip. Johnson, on his part, implied their effective literary contribution thus: “ Anecdotes are among the luxuries of literature. . . they stimulate the appetite for reading and create it where deficiency” (Ibd. p.v). Johnson’s speculation, additionally reminds us how anecdotes are significant as well as prominent in creating artistic mood and in enriching even other literary works. Therefore, the brevity of anecdotes doesn’t make them into a dwarfish in nature.

As far as their origin is concerned, anecdotes are usually ascribed to kings, local leaders, eloquent or foolish people etc. In the case of Amharic folk anecdotes in Robe area, for example, kings such as Tewodros (an 19), Menelik Haile Selassie and some renowned officials like Abba Jifar, Ras Hailu, are considered as originators of some anecdotal stories. Nevertheless, we can not be sure about this assumptions unless we are able to produce concrete written documents. But the primary thing is that people use them, without restriction, in

a traditional and communal sense because of the fact that the stories reflected in the narratives enable the society to disclose its collective values and customs.

Anecdotes are categorized under narrative genres. We classify them under narrative category having some distinct criteria devised by Toolan (1991: 4).

Toolan inspected five features of narratives thus:

1. There is "artificial fabrication"- which is not apparent in ordinary and factual discourses. In the fabrication process related events should be able to establish situations which stimulate senses of "anticipation, suspense, emotion, . . ." and, in the end, artistic satisfaction (Hallie Burnett, 1975:34). This aspect of narratives is observed in many anecdotal materials.
2. It enables the audience associate the artificially fabricated materials with factual situations. Accounts of events; desires, strategies of struggle for survival, and final destinies of characters and flows of thoughts should match with social and environmental realities.
3. Chronologically developed events are apparent in it. In some cases of narratives, however, serious arrangements of sequences of time may not be obligatory. For example the artist may bring the last part of the story at the beginning and vice-versa. But the addressee always keeps his listening or reading in hopes of coming to a certain finality which Aristotle describes "inevitable and unexpected" feature of narratives (Aristotle in Burnett, 1975, 34).
4. No matter how he/ she is invisible or backgrounded, there should be one who gets information to our feelings through the medium of language. Either the internal activities or the inner thoughts or both situations of "people" are served by good spokesmen who can observe and report standing between the

imaginative world and the audiences. This is reflected in anecdotal narratives, too

5. One of the language features, displacement, is apparent in any narrative. Any information that can be revealed by means of language can be carried from place to place and from time to time without much loss of message. This is quite true for anecdotal narratives as they are told out of the actual time and places.

Degh (1972: 58-80) devoted much effort to show the places of anecdotes in narrative genre . According to him, the broader term *folk narrative* encompasses about three genres: tale genres, legend genres, and true experience stories. The tale genre, again , is redivided into types: complete tales (includes fairy tales/ magic tales, religious tales and romantic tales)and simple tales (embraces animal tales; jokes, anecdotes and formula tales (novella).

Sometimes jokes and anecdotes share some characteristics in common and people are inclined to use them interchangeably. Both sub genres are short and precise, but with sensible effect. Both have no well- developed plots and do not involve unnecessary episodes. However, the artistic quality of jokes is intended to move the audience to a “ playful judgment”, as Degh views it (Ibid p. 69). Kuno Fischer’s perception of the term jokes may be worth mentioning here. As to him, jokes are “. . . always short, built on a double meaning of words and therefore, not open and obvious to everyone”. Fischer observed that source of humorous effects of Jokes “. . . is in the speech itself, not the narrative, explanatory portions are added only to enhance sudden surprise of the punch line “ (Ibid). Jokes, in addition, deal with uncommon occurrences. As far as their function is concerned, they are mostly used on social occasions such as get- together and irregularly employed in casual entertainment.

Anecdotes, however, usually raise serious social issues, especially of fragments of historical events and local particulars. They are not limited to arousing laughter, rather their primary emphasis is directed to communicating social motifs and attempting to reform people- their ultimate goal is didactic . Beyond creating senses of humor and hilarity, anecdotes tend to present themes of human frailty especially utilizing the last fate of ridiculous and trickster characters.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIO-CULTURAL SETTINGS OF THE RESEARCH

Arsi-Robe Wäräda, is located south- east of Addis Ababa in the Oromia Region. Robe wäräda is one of the densely populated and agriculturally rich areas in the Arsi zone. Due to its conducive climatic conditions as well as some related geographical attributions, the area provides a substantial amount of grains and animal products for the central market. Wheat, barley, oilseeds, beans and maize are major cereals produced in the wäräda. Domestic animals such as oxen and pack animals are the main beasts of burden and sources of income. Cows support the food supply because of the fact that they provide milk and its products. Whereas sheep and, in rare cases, goats are reared mainly for the purpose of earning income.

2.1. Religion

As the 1994 census document indicates it is estimated that above 65% of the population are Muslims. Locally the Muslims are known as the Arsi-Oromo (or simply the Arsi People) .The Arsi-Oromos assume themselves, (also the Christians accept the assumption) as the indigenous people in the zone as a whole. The Christians, on the other hand, are believed to have settled there after the expansion of Menelik II in the late 19th and early 20th century. The Christians tell that the original homeland of their forefathers was in northern Shoa and Wällo area.

As Hailu Tägaw, one of my informants (a respected elder of the community ያገር ሸግገሌ) believes, the earlier ancestors came there for “civilizing”

(አገር ለማቅናት) purposes and the latter in search of land for agricultural activities.

The Christians can be grouped into two depending upon ethnic origin: Amharas and Oromos. But this grouping has no sense for the Amharas and the Oromos. Neither the Amharas nor the Oromos identify themselves ethnically, because nowadays they established common psychology, attitude and social philosophy taking their Christianity as the root cause of their unification and solidarity.

Concerning this point and other related issues I had an exhaustive discussion with Bädada Aräga (a Christian Oromo) and Hailu Tsägaw (a christian Amhara). According to these respected elders, in the area the sense of Oromo identity is not significant in identifying the members of Christian people. For that matter, the Christian Oromos mainly refer themselves to Amhara in the sense that they understand the meaning of Amhara purely as a brand of Christianity. That is why, I think, as most of the Christian Oromos are evidently observed, attach their origins not to sentiments of Oromo, rather to minor social groups such as Sälalie, Gida, Abichu etc. In addition, both ethnic groups (the Christians as a whole) have established common social norms and conventions and communal rules. The contemporary Christian cultures available in the area, are high - breeds of both ethnic groups. Social norms such as *walesa*,* for example, are treasures of Oromo culture. Deep-rooted Amhara traditions, too, for instance food items such as *doro wot*, are highly deffused in the day- to -day- life of the Christian Oromo people. Above all, there are no, genuinely speaking, feelings of ethnic segregation or impulse of social discrimination or problem of identity crisis in any form of social intercourse

* Walesa= temporary collective means (during disasters, pressing business, high level of merry - making,) in organizing man power and contributing financial and material support for those who are in urgent need of these things.

and any level of social acts. As Bädada Arega puts it, Christianity laid the basis of social ground in the area.

In the area the gap between the Christians and Muslims seems broader. The two groups have less social interaction between themselves. The Muslims and the Christians, however, have been living together peacefully over the years, despite their religious and cultural differences.

2.2. Marriage

I interviewed Kädir Abdo and Endälä Wädäre on the issue of marriage in the area. In the tradition of both religions, marriage is encouraged and its stability is valued. For this reason, parents of the male are involved in choosing wives for their sons. In the case of the Christians, the selection of the girl to be married is carried out by mothers of boys. After the mother investigates the parental as well as the personal background of the girl, she provides her proposal and the father chooses elders to contact the parents of the girl. In the cases of the Muslims, however, women have a very limited role either in proposing or in deciding such serious social practices except the duties of preparing food and drink for the wedding ceremonies.

Polygamy is the common feature of the Arsi-Oromo tradition. Most Muslim men prefer to have at least two, if not more, wives and give high concern for begetting many children and maximizing the number of their *gosa*, tribesmen of relatives. In the recent years, this tradition seems to dominate the Christian husbands' attitudes, too. Though the church strictly is opposed to polygamy, some Christian men are showing a tendency towards having more than one wife. As the researcher observed, there are certain men who have even three wives. On the contrary, the tradition seems unbearable by the Christian women, they are against this practice.

2.3. Forms of Social Gatherings and Rituals

As compared to the Christians the Muslim community observes few holidays. The common ones are religious holidays like Maulid and Fetir. Even on these occasions there is no habit of merry-making, no splendid meals or exciting musical and dance performances. Rather, the Arsi-oromos are very interested in funeral and wedding ceremonies. This is because such ceremonies enable Muslim elders to hold discussions on social or/ and environmental issues. These discussions locally called *mäko*, which relatively means intimate secrets need special attention. Social affairs such as detecting theft, peace-making, fund raising for special community members (for example individuals suffering from natural disasters such as illness, loss of property etc.) and so forth are dealt with by *mäko*.

On the part of the Christians, however, various forms of social gatherings are prevalent in the area, religious as well as secular. **Timikäät**, **nigis**, **mabär shengo**, and some seasonal holidays (such as *inqut'at'ash*, for example) are some of the social occasions accompanied by a high sense of community participation. Either the national (like *timikäät*) or the local holidays are greatly affected by traditional feelings rather than religious disciplines or any historical interpretations. For example, in the case of *timikäät* and *nigis* we observe the involvement of youngsters with feeling of secular merry-making. People incline to singing and dancing as well as enjoying food and drinks rather than spiritual activities. But some forms of social gatherings such as *shengo*, *wärka* and *mabär* have special concerns to cultivating feelings of social ties and solving community problems, beyond physical and temporal satisfaction. To give some vivid picture of, at least, some forms of social gatherings, passing highlights would be helpful, as attempted below.

nigis:- Nigis is a common practice of Orthodox Christians in Ethiopia. In Robe area too it has its own impact among christian people. It is usually observed three times, including timket, a year in a given church. It is concerned with anniversary of an angel or a saint who underwent physical and mental sufferings for sacred purposes. From angles Mikael and Gäbrael receive high attention of people in the area. The nigis day of Mikael is observed on every Hidar 12 (Nov.20) and Sene 12 (June,20) and “tirr” 12 (Jan20) too . The two nigis occasions of Gäbrael are celebrated on Tahisas 19 (Dec.27) and Hamle 19 (July.27) the former day being the most revered one. Saints are considered as outshining figures and banners of Christianity among the people. Saint Mary , Abunä Gäbirä Mänfäskidus and Abunä Täklä Haymanot are the three widely known saints in the area and the people celebrate the nigis days twice a year for each individual saint.

Mabär:- there are two different pronunciations of this word. The native people delete the sound “h” and say *mabär* . Whereas literate people pronounce it as its geez origin mahibär. I preferred the non-lettered enunciation to the literate one. Because my main emphasis usually goes to the native cultural and linguistic features.

Mabär is a monthly religious gathering in memory of saints or/ and angles. The members, as I experienced it, prepare food items, mostly *injära*, *tälla* and *k’olo* in turns and come together in the church compounds or at either of the home of one member to feast themselves. Wizero Mästawat Wädäre, my informat, has especial assumption for mabär. The mabär tradition has to do with enhancing feelings of brotherhood and sisterhood among the members. They consider themselves as members of the same family owing to the meaning of the *t’iwa* (sacred drink drunk only by members of that particular mabär). According to the old aged belief, the t’iwa has spiritual powers to influence the overall psychology of the mabär members and the ever existing fate of the soul. This

belief is ascertained by the devotion of each member for every good deeds in the community (for example helping fellowmen, hosting guests, etc.). Especially, when one of the members of the mabär encounters difficulties, each of the members has moral and religious obligation to offer every help he possibly can. Ato Atilaw Aklilä says, “ We think of each other (the members of the mabär) just as we are brothers”.

Shengo:- The term has been highly adapted in modern political organizations too. It is concerned with any higher form of council possessing the last and effective legitimacy to give decisions on general laws at a particular level of authority. Nevertheless, when we examine its notion and function, in relation to the Arsi-Robe wäräda areas, it is a local social contract which is highly influenced by cultural values. It is a collective means of solving social problems. People establish such social institutions in order to facilitate conditions to provide financial and material assistance and consultation during any serious social events: wedding, funeral, loss of fortune, etc. The social and environmental situation oblige each individual, and the society itself, not to be found in isolation. On the contrary, well founded unity among social groups, with certain forms of social structure like shengo, for example, enables the society to be successful in its struggle against natural and man- made disasters. That is the basic principle, as one of the community elders , Indalä Wodäre, mentioned, which brought the society under the protective social umbrella, shengo.

Every individual, male or female, usually married, is advised to join the shengo. The members meet once in a month, mostly under the shade of a tree. The meeting is chaired by a person called *dagna*, which means a judge . First, they pay the monthly contribution what they call *zero*, meaning money deposited for future use. Then local bread called *difo* , *tella* and *k'olo* are served . In the end they discuss social problems, if any, or issues concerning their shengo

Men and women are involved in shengos according to their sex. Except in rare cases women don't enroll as a member of shengos of men and vice-versa. The shengos of the women are responsible for organizing the members to contribute and serve food and drink during mourning at the home of bereaved people. Whereas the shengos of men engage in managing all duties during burial ceremonies. Activities like announcing death, preparation of burial material, transportation of the dead to the place of burial, taking care of the mourners, etc. are accomplished by the operation of the shengos of men. In addition to this the shengo organizes people during accidents . For example if an ox falls into a ditch, a shengo orders its members to cooperate in withdrawing the ox. Or if an ox dies in any case the shengo pays the approximate amount of money for the owner. Any disaster facing the members is considered and attempts are made to solve by the shengos of the men.

Wärka:- the literal meaning denotes a kind of large tree, sycamore. It is valued for its multi-dimensional uses. Furthermore, in the Oromo tradition it is regarded as a symbol of prosperity, peace and unity, as Bädada suggests. The connotation that is deep-rooted in Oromo sentiment seems, to still be thriving and influencing the traditional features of the Arsi-Robe wäräda Amharic speaking people too.

Nowadays the word wärka represents the concept of social institution which includes many shengos under its authority. It is socially and traditionally empowered to control the activities of shengos. Its decisions are accepted even in front of governmental bodies let alone in the society, as Tenaye Indale (one of the committee members) told the researcher. If people feel any sort of resentment caused by any practices of the society or if they are dissatisfied or disappointed by services of their shengo, they appeal to the wärka for justice. The wärka investigates such cases seriously and passes the last decision

2.4. Language

Not only in Arsi - Robe but also in the bordering wärädas many people speak both Oromiffa and Amharic as their mother tongue . As one can clearly observe, all Arsi-Oromos, except in towns and except for the cases of lettered Arsi- oromos, are Oromiffa speakers. When we come to the Christians there are two language features. In some places such as Indäto, Sädika, Gädämisa, Ari'a and Abuali as well as in towns we have Amharic speaking dwellers. Though these people speak Amharic as their mother tongue, they are also good conversants, or at least, good listeners of Oromiffä. We have only few christian people who cannot communicate in Amharic or / and Oromiffä . I interviewed Ato Bädäda on this issue. He mentioned that a lot of Christian people speak both languages side by side. For example Ato Bädada himself is from the Oromo ethnic group but he is fluent in Amharic, too, as one can listen from his recorded interview. Generally speaking, there is no serious language problem during communication even among individuals. Surprisingly enough, sometimes we encounter two people discussing ideas together using their own languages one of them Amharic and the other Oromiffä. This implies that even though certain people lack good command of Oromiffa / Amharic, they can understand what is told. Furthermore, there are no negative attitudes towards one another despite their language differences.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF THE ANECDOTES

Under this chapter two activities are carried out: sample - based analysis and global discussion.

3.1. Sample - based Analysis

This part of the study is devoted to analysing sample anecdotes on the basis of two broader speculations: social issues embedded and literary techniques employed in the chosen anecdotal materials. By making further investigation on selected anecdotes, though they have their own distinctive nature, I endeavor, hopefully enough, to throw some lights on the collective motives and tradition of local artistry.

3.1.1. Analysis of Contextual Texts

3.1.1.1. Sample I

I captured the narrative while the elders of the community (ያገር ሸማገሌዎች) were trying to reconcile a father and a son. The elders are “appointed” by the shengo. They are entrusted with a task settling disputes that arise among individuals or among social groups and have the right to pass sentences on wrong doers. They deal with such social issues sitting under the shade of a tree. Shades of trees (Particularly a big native tree) have socially established psychological impact in the sense that lies are not told and other sacrilegious acts are not practiced under them. Any one who comes with complaints or any sort of personal and social dissatisfaction has full right to be entertained, with a high sense of discipline, respect and order. Hence, presumably, the situation may be taken as a local council where social affairs are managed with collective rules.

Before the peace making discussion was held, the elders made a short secret meeting in order to devise the necessary major procedures and to share ideas on preliminary issues. Then they began their actual mission, solving the cases of quarrel. The first to be summoned was the father. He was made to wait a bit away from the scene. He was asked to present the causes which drove him to quarrel with his son. He poured out a deal of details with anger and grief. The peace makers listened with serious concern, in order to investigate the source and courses of the trouble.

Now the father was made to leave the place and it was the turn of the son to come and tell his own feelings. He, too, listed down sufferings caused to him by his father. He left. While the father and the son were sitting at a distance, separately of course, the elders have got time to make further investigations on the matter, having the hints provided from both sides, the father and the son. This is quite an important time for the elders because they may be able to point out and identify the wrong - doer and the wronged (በዳይና ተበዳይ) . Furthermore, the short interval has its own meaning on the internal situation of the two individuals, who were not on good terms. They think over what they have done, what they said on the day and what was reflected from the general atmosphere, when they presented their stories to the elders. As a result, they would analyse things seriously before they are called for the case again.

Traditionally it is believed delaying passing verdicts after some dialogue lessens stress and helps to create positive moods in the people concerned. There is the general tendency that unless cases are exceedingly serious, like murder for example, people never go to the police or the court to seek justice. Elders have social power, with strong moral values to solve however difficult the dispute is . Their words (of advice and reproof) are valued. This is because people take for granted that elders are filled with the fear of God and, consequently, treat people impartially. Furthermore, the community believes

that elders can easily understand the root causes of problems and their best solutions. It is due to this assumption that every man or every woman rushes to elders whenever he/ she is offended either by individuals or by social acts.

Having this strong public sentiment, I think, the peace-makers discussed, analysed and evaluated the resentments told by both individuals and, then, arrived at a certain conclusion for themselves, full of confidence, They decided: the son was the wrong - doer. And therefore, he was made apologise to and to pay indemnity for his father for hurting his feelings.

Then, they beckoned the father to come. They advised him to cool down and become soft hearted and avoid ill- feelings / grudges against his son. He flared up, refused to comply with their advice. After long entreating words they understood his seriousness/ refusal and so rose from their seats some of them stretching their gabi* (a sign of beseeching). He could not refuse that, because he would be blamed by the society as an II attests. Lastly, he narrated, fortunately enough, the following anecdote.

3.1.1.1.1. The Natural Context

THE ETERNAL CURSE

1. nr⁺ (the father): Dear elders (with deep feelings of love and respect),. . . you know. . . sons with evil conduct always cause trouble in the life of their fathers. One can not avoid the outcomes of the deeds of his wicked son. The outcome transmit from children to grandchildren- their effects produce a vicious circle. With regard to this, my father, may God rest his soul in peace (a pause, eye lids became narrower),. . . yes, my father used to tell a story,. . . a story with respect to the destiny of unlucky father.

* *gabi = local upper cloth made of cotton threads. It is worn by men mainly on public occasions

⁺ nr = narrator

2. lr* 1: (One of the elders) I am usually eager to hear stories,. . . particularly of your father's. Yes. . . yes, indeed, your father was an eloquent and wise man, a righteous person as well .What to do. . . ! Not only his family; children and grand - children but also the community lost a banner of peace and a mainstay of poor people (the elders as a whole showed their support in words, gestures and facial expressions and it is read on the face that the narrator's bosom filled with joy)
3. lr2: (with strong desire) Of course. . . no exaggeration, we have the memory of your father not only because of his limitless social roles but also because of his surpassing and unforgettable, sayings, stories. . . Now he has gone to a place of truth (አሁን እውነተኛው ቦታ ሄዷል) (he raised his eyes up wards to heaven) . Please go to your story
4. nr: It was during earlier times , a son did wrong to his father. The wronged father tried, repeatedly of course, to rebuke the son. However, the son was reluctant to give ears to his father's reproof. All his efforts were exerted in vain. . . were to no avail. . . (turned his head down in grief)
- 5 lr3: Unless the Savior of the World (መድኃኔዓለም) gives the blessed one, men cannot make sons well - mannered by floods of advice or by reproof. . . it is, you see like, flogging a dead horse. . . pounding water (ውኃ መውቀጥ ነው).
6. nr: Yes, God made you speak the truth; this is reflected in the story I am telling you now and similar in my own case (lapse of time).
7. lrs* : (demanded the progression of the story, expressing their desire of hearing the narrative in different forms of gestures, sounds, etc.) Please come to your story. . .
- 8 nr: Then the father grew impatient due to perpetual immoral acts of the son. As a result, he began calling down a great deal of curses upon his own offspring. . . what shall one do? He only this option a saddened father (አንጅቱ ያረረ አባት)!
- 9 lr 2: No, no. . . (with signs of retort) he is absolutely mistaken. He might not have heard the saying፣ "ልጅን መርገምና ራሱን መሸናገ፣ በአናት ጉዳት። " "Cursing one's son and urinting at the head of one's bed, ultimately harms oneself."
- 10 lr 5:The father has a troublesome fate. . . circumstances obliged him to do that. . . (nodding of grief) . . . a wicked son!

* Lr. = Listener

* lrs - Listeners

- 11 nr: This is what I have been experiencing. . . (after a short silence he resumed). I wish he had become water in his mother's womb.
- 12 lr 1: No. . . you are wrong (calling him by the traditional way, abba Kātāma, meaning the father of Kātāma), your son is not such a wicked one. Occasionally sons commit mistakes, like your son vexed you now. Have you ever seen a son without faults? (all listeners echoed his idea, in different non- verbal signs)
- 13 lr 2: A faultless person and a road without a stumbling block are unthinkable. (ከሰው ጥፋት ከመንገድ አንቅፋት)
- 14 lr 4: Please, let's come back to the story. What were the curses the father called down upon his son?
- 15 nr "": I wish" he said" May God give you a wicked ox" But the son responded in a graceless manner, " I will sell or slaughter it"
- 16 lr 5: (faint laughter)
- 17 nr: Why, you laugh? It is deplorable
(ምን ያስቃል.. . ያስለቅሳል አንጂ!
18. lr 4: And then. . . ?
- 19 lr 2: How disrespectful he was! Then what happened?
- 20 nr: The father realized that the son did not take the curse seriously thinking that having a wicked ox is not something troublesome (He took time to think the order of the account). The father searched for another one, " May God make you neighbor of troublesome people."
21. lr 3: This should disturb the son since terrible neighbors make one's life miserable ! God forbid.
- 22 lr 4: Please , listen, something surprising may be told.
23. nr: You think that he would feel sorry for his defects? Never. . . he didn't feel any sort of mental pain.
- 24 lr 4: It would be wrath of God !Is he crazy? Any way,. . . what did he respond for this one?
- 25 nr: Rather, with a giggle " I will change my residence" he said.
- 26 lr 1: It is not as easy like talking is.
- 27 nr: . . . If things get worst, this might be possible also (he meant changing residence), one can change even his abode when he feels something harmful is to happen to his life.
- 28 lr. 1: Then, what was the father's measure , as their relationship went from bad to worse?
- 29 nr: He happened to renounce his son.. . He found another curse which he thought was frightening (he frowned. . .) he said to him, " May God give you a naughty wife" but the son hasn't been touched still.
- 30 lr. 4: If the son was a good observer, this indeed,. . . causes mental pain.
- 31 lr 5: Yes, of course. How can one lead a happy life if one has a troublesome wife? There is a good saying, "

የሚያፈስ ቤትና ጨቅጫቃ ሚስት ያለው፡ ሲያስቅስ ይኖራል” i.e “ A man who lives in a dripping house and a husband who lives with a nagging wife, both, bemoan their fate for life.”

32 nr : He was not such a creature (shaking his head with smile of resentment) to be defeated easily . He said, “ I will divorce her unless she behaves properly”

33 lr. 5: Didn't he hear the saying, “ የደገመ ተረገመ? ” i.e “ He who repeats marriage is accursed.”

34 nr: But, in the end, he received quite damaging curse. . . accurately similar to my situation (he was deeply touched and narrowed his eyes) I don't know why God gave me such a fate, I do believe, I haven't , even on a single day, offended my father. .

35. lr: (approved in different non verbal signals)

36. lr 2: You wouldn't dare do such thingsአረ ምን በወጣህ ! We know you, we have lived together.

37. nr: I was always obedient to my father's words

38. lr 1: Please, don't take / feel your experience in that way.

39. nr: Any way. . . let me tell you the last curse (his audience became eager to listen to the last curse, as it was reflected when they heed him). The father was deeply hurt due to the ingratitude and incorrigibility of the son, and lastly pressed by anger. . . said,” May God give you a wicked son.”. . . a wicked son- a wicked son. . . (a deep frown to show his strong aversion)- God save you from a wicked son, it is a wicked son who caused a miserable situation in my life and made you tired today.

40 lr 3: What was the reaction of the son?

41 nr: He was extremely sad now “ Oh, father, this is a horrible curse” said he. Similarly, what option do I have to escape the acts, even the eyes of my son? The story became real on my own life, I justified how my father's story is full of truth.

42. lr 2: If the son were wise enough, even the first curse has damaging effects on his life. Due to his rudeness, however, he received a disastrous paternal curse to himself and to his grand children. God save us from such immoral offspring.

3.1.1.1.2. Analysis on the Natural Context

It is advisable, I believe, to divide the above narrative performance into three stages in order to explore details systematically. These are facilitating/ stimulating stage (from No 1-3), the presentation (the full narration) stage

(from No 4- 41) and the recapitulating stage (No . 42).In the first stage, both parts, the narrator and the listener, stimulate feelings of one another. The narrator's kindly feelings, respect and affection, are put forward in his words, " Dear elders. . ." (No 1, line 1). In other forms of interaction situations, (gestures, facial expressions, low and soft tones, etc.), too he attempted to display feelings of honour for the elders and for the atmospheres as a whole. He does this,I assume, primarily intending, that the elders may understand the level of his disappointment and consequently become sympathetic with his unhappiness - feel pity for him. To arrive at such an ultimate goal, he had to establish fertile ground of communication, the secondary intention. As the listeners developed positive as well as happy mood towards his deliberation owing to his high opinion for them, they are reinforced to hold the narrative with great concern and honour.

The facilitating stage involves the listener's contribution as well. When the narrator shows his interest in telling a story, they radiate a rewarding and encouraging mood sufficiently. Ir 1 (No 2 Line 1 - 3) expressed the state of his feelings by mentioning the virtuous qualities, social role in peace making and in helping poor people , for example, of the dead father. The others also echoed this fact (No 2 line 5). The atmosphere is conducive for the narrator.

The other feature we observe in the facilitating stage is that emphasizing the abstract, " a pre-story summary" (Labov in Toolan, 1991, 49). The narrator indicated the ultimate effect of the narrative, with regard to immoral sons, saying" . . . sons with evil conducts always cause trouble in the life of their fathers." (No 1 line 1- 2). He knows that this proposition should be supported by collective evidence so that his case is appreciated by the listeners. To accept or not to accept the premise the audience expects the narrator to draw concrete and credible association. That is one reason made the audience attentive. Hence, bringing the short argumentative topic, "sons with evil conducts always cause trouble. . ." at the initial stage is quite a

helpful technique to capture attention. His approach instigates the listeners, consciously or unconsciously, to involve themselves in the topic posing why and how questions. The effect is arousing interest to explore answers from the forthcoming narrative. The issue of finding convincing answers usually demands high curiosity, deep investigation, sharp argument and unprejudiced evaluation which enable the narrator achieve his initial purpose - creating moods and awareness.

The other technique the storyteller employed (in arousing interest) is strengthening generation ties. He said, "with regard to this. . . my father used to tell a story" (No. 1 line 4 -6). His father is cited as a genuine source of belief or fragments of social facts handed down through the narrative. Now, we can judge that the beliefs, attitudes and philosophies of the past generation are quite influential in the new one. In this portion of the context the narrator also tried to exploit the spiritual treasures of the society (No.1, line 5) in order to produce meditative moods in the elders and he seems successful as it is exhibited from the conditions of the listeners (No. 2 line 3 and No 3. line 4)

The presentation stage, where the narrative is fully displayed, makes the narrative- narrator - narratee relationship vivid. The narrator, being the influential figure in the narrative performance, played the prominent role in bringing the story into the context by selecting that distinct text. He selected the story that suits the main topic and his dissatisfaction. Though we have a handful evidence to entitle him as a narrator, still he confirms his possession of artistic work by introducing time, : "during earlier times,"(No 4 line 4), characters " a son. . . father. . ." (No 4 line 1) topic of narrative ". . . did wrong to his father" (No 4 line 1) etc. This introductory part tells us that the story teller owns the narrative, and he is deeply touched by it. He chose it deliberately to depict his internal reflection. His purposeful choice signifies

the critical complaint he heaped upon shamelessly rude sons, including his own offspring.

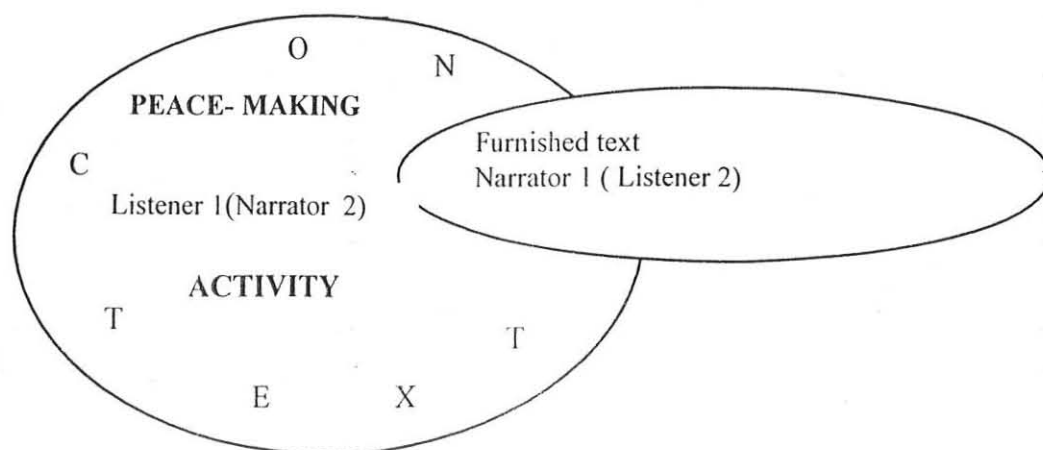
Then we come to the performance situation. He narrated it skillfully. No adulterating futures are exhibited. We never notice lengthy descriptions, rather he was careful not to block or prevent the listeners from suggesting on matters. Neither extra elements are brought into his narration nor outshining accounts are overlooked. Generally speaking, he is a good raconteur.

The narrator did not communicate only a bare story. There are certain tools he employed to create additional moods and emotions by throwing new light on the atmosphere in terms of performance. Gestures, purposeful pause, rising and falling tones etc. are some of the mechanisms he used to cultivate relaxed moods and exciting feelings. Moreover, he invites the contributions of his audience, by provoking , feelings. For example, as he spoke, “All his efforts. . . were all in vain. . .” and turned down his head (No.4 line 3), Ir 3 suggested his feelings of rude sons (No . 5 line 3). He strengthened the argument of the storyteller by citing effective idiomatic expression.

In other situations the narrator moves the listeners into a debatable topic. When he argued that his favorite character, the father (which he equates with himself, most probably), was correct to heap curses upon the son (which he equates with his own), saying “. . . what shall one do? He has only this option “(No 8 line 2- 3), Ir2 objects to the measure by citing the proverb “ cursing one’s son . . .” (No. 9 line 2). This in turn begets a dilemma in Ir5: he views the fate of the father (by implication similar fathers) as a challenging fact - no good option to suggest or no good reason to judge for such experiences. The narrator shared Ir5’s view by “ ... had become water . . .”(No. 11 line 2) . It is Ir1 (No 12 line 1-4)who throws optimistic light on the gloomy feelings of the storyteller, “ Nay, you are wrong. . . your son is not. . .” Ir1, moreover, calles the narrator using the name of the son, Abba Kätäma. It seems that he

did this intentionally to soften the narrator's heart. This is the general picture that the two parties, narrator and narratee, involved themselves in the contact. To make the point more vivid and tangible, the following simple diagram may help us.

Narrative - Narrator - Narratee situation in sample 1.



In the context we have two agents: the elders and the father. The elders are the major agents of the main discussion because they have full authority in the context, the reconciliation undertaking . By the same time they are listener 1 with respect to the narrative and narrator 2 with regard to subordinate stories, for example the proverbs.

The narrator, one the other hand, brought the text and enriched it with narrative flavours. He is narrator 1 and listener 2 in the sense that he is the owner and guide of the main story and the receiver of the subordinate creativities.

major roles of the narrator

- ◆ presenting the story
- ◆ adding colour to the narration
- ◆ controlling the narrative topic
- ◆ listening the subordinate oral arts

major roles of listeners

- ◆ listening to the major story telling
- ◆ encouraging the storyteller.
- ◆ enhancing the effect of the story by adding adversaries

The recapitulating stage, from No 41- 42, is mainly attached to the thematic aspect of the text. On turn taking number 40 Ir 3 inquires the response of the cursed son. The question bridges the presentation and the concluding parts. It related the two because the answer is provided with a coupled sense: unexpected ending and thematic association. As the story is completed, Ir2 (No 42 line 2) relates the two ends (the beginning and the ending) to magnify the effect of the last curse as compared to the rest. Then, Ir 2 proceeds to a prayer. This implies there is no earthly solution. In any case, the narrator and the listeners have hand in glove closeness in culminating the effect of the story.

3.1.1.1.3. Analysis on the Literary Quality of Sample 1

The next endeavor is devoted to analysing the organizational technique of the anecdote . In scrutinizing this aspect selection of text elements, arrangement of materials and technique of ending seem prominent.

A. Selection of Text Elements: characters, topic of interplay and items of curse

Characters: father and son

Significant social elements are chosen as characters: father and son. Why not, we may ask, father and daughter or mother and daughter or mother and son? Because cases of mothers and daughters are given less consideration in that society. Both are powerless and insignificant in the family affairs or

generation ties. In addition, as the society assumes, mothers have no heart (**አይጨክኑም**) to curse their offspring, and daughters are considered temporal members of the family who will mix themselves with their husbands' relatives.

In the narrative, surprisingly enough, the two figures, father and son, are portrayed having the two extreme behavioral traits: kindness and rudeness respectively. This is deliberate, I argue, for various reasons. For example, to remind the remarkable patience of fathers in enduring the roughness of their sons. Or, on the contrary, it might be considered with respect to repeated and intolerable acts of impolite sons. Beyond these, the selection may designate the superstitious fear of the society, the negative consequences of curses upon children, grand children, grand- grand- children, etc.

Topic of interplay: curse

Curse is relevant to the traditional attitude of the society about wicked sons. The originator of the narrative had to choose several things with which the wrong - door might be punished or made to suffer: beating, imprisonment, renouncing etc. may be mentioned. But all these fail to create powerful impression to instigate deep emotions as the curse does.

Items of curse: ox , neighbor, wife and son.

These things are employed within conscious consideration of their economic, social and family as well as generation significance. Their significance reminds their psychological impact on the society's day-to- day life. In other words the society easily senses what their wickedness causes to one's life.

Every aspect of life of the peasantry is primarily affected by the ox, particularly in the Ethiopian situation, one typical example being Arsi-Robe area. Among domestic animals ox is the most useful to the farmer, in Robe

wäräda. It is the main source of income, of wealth, source of food item (especially protein and fat) and source of hide and leather for household materials such as sleeping mat, (ቁርባት/ነት), loading strap etc. Moreover, ox is the remarkable , if not matchless, labour force. It is a beast of burden in that it pulls heavy loads during ploughing and harvesting etc. A bad ox, therefore, causes limitless trouble on the day- to - day agricultural activity.

Neighbor denotes the lower level, but important, closeness in terms of residence. Neighborhood signals intimacy and co-operation for the sake of social welfare and peaceful co-existence. Neighbors offer help for one another during hardtimes. In the Robe area neighbors organize themselves governed by social rules and establish sustainable harmony so as to manage natural and man- made disasters.

But if neighbors are not in good terms there is always a chance of attacking one another, as the Amharic proverb suggests “አሳት ከቤት፣ ጠላት ከጎረቤት” “Fire from home, foe form neighbor)” . This was why the father used the nearer social member as his material of curse.

Marriage is important in Arsi Robe wäräda as is true almost everywhere . This is depicted in Amharic proverb “ባልና ሚስት ከንድ ባህር ይቀዳል” which is to say “A husband and a wife are drawn from the same spring (source).”

However, this optimistic view of marriage sometimes seems ideal due to the fact that couples get into terrible conditions. Particularly when wives become discontented or happen to be grouchy, husbands face extreme dissatisfaction and, consequently, get into psychological tension and physical misery. The effect can be divorce, which causes additional worst damage to what they possess and to their children.

The father (the character of the anecdote) chose the wife because he examined and found out what a nagging woman means , she intimately digs

out minor errors and complains on pointless issues, which makes the husband suffer .

I posed some questions to Ato Bädada one of my interviewees concerning the attitude of the society towards sons . He said that having a male child is highly valued, as it is related to multi-dimensional aspects. During their childhood sons serve their parents in many ways as compared to female children. They pasture herds (rare in the cases of daughters), gather fire wood (more effectively than daughters), fetch water from distance etc. When they grow stronger, they are engaged in farming activities such as tilling land harvesting crops, building huts, fencing compounds, preparing granaries and the like. Such labour support reminds us of the Amharic proverb, “ አህያ በወለደች አረፈች” meaning “A female donkey is relieved of drudgery for bearing a young one”.

Beyond their labour significance , sons are considered as potentially and physically capable of providing protection for members of their family. Fathers or mothers, brothers or sisters usually rely on male children to be defended from any form of man- made harm. A son is always expected to revenge the injury that his father or brother received. Otherwise people mock at him regarding him as a coward.

The other ,but the most significant factor for sons to be preferred to daughters is that they look after their parents in their old age. This is because sons remain close to their parents and have decisive role over their properties which is not true in the case of daughters.

As a result, when a parent has a wicked son, the consequence will be grim . In other words deviant sons create feelings of dismay in parents, or in the society as a whole, which is contrary to the usual exception, especially when the son is cursed by his father. There is a collective impulse, as my

interviewee underlined, that curse is (particularly of father upon his son) transmitted from generation to generation ruining traits, destiny and life of people who are available on that same line of heredity. Therefore, the case of accursed son doesn't stop on its first subject unlike the ox, the neighbor or the wife. Its destructive effect continues begetting hereditary defects. The matter is dreadful and inescapable, as Ir2 (No. 42 line 3) goes to the only option-prayer, unless God sends down his merciful blessings.

B. Arrangement of Materials

In the narrative things are employed, we feel, in their best order so as to produce special sense of literary effect. The foregrounded effect of the arrangement arises from depicting the magnitude of the character's (father) internal situation as it goes from bad to worse. Ox, neighbor, wife and son are designed in this very order reasonably. As my informant, Täsäma suggested, the order shows change and development of emotions (occurred in the father) starting from the orientation level, "... a son did wrong to his father, . . . (No 4 line 1) to the denouement of the story, ' Oh, father, you found inescapable curse now" (No 41 line 1). The father's condition, I think, lies between anger and frustration. The sum total of the situation involves annoyances (initially there was disobedience), anger (at the given response to the first curse) molestation (owing to the impertinent reply for the second curse), bitterness (due to the unceasing misbehavior of the son) and frustration (because of inability to reprove one's own son).

C. Technique of Ending

The ending is so far worth discussing. It ends with the undeniable failure of the antagonist, the son. Such a technique is one of the prominent folkloric traditions. It features the moralistic force of oral narratives in general (Honko, 1980, 23). In folk narratives characters who deviate from the culturally valid norm are made to find themselves in unbearable trouble and

in sorrowful conditions. This is realized in the above anecdote. The deviant son, received punishment, (indeed he sensed it,) though he tried to find solutions with the remaining three curses. He felt anguish and humiliation for his own misbehaviour. The final capitulation of the son, therefore, is highly significant to yield the impressive and meaningful denouement of the story.

It is proper to assume, the son became sad for certain reasons. It is indirectly disclosed that the curse would fall upon him. If he had the courage to neglect the curse assuming it, for example, as a mere superstition, he would not be worried by its estimated damage and should not retort “. . . Oh, father, this is a horrible curse. ” (No. 41 line 2). He might have , let us guess, observed in his personal experience people of bad destiny in the society ascribed their bad fortunes to paternal curses. On the other hand, any father of a rude son is, usually , condemned in the society. The reason is that, as the view of the society, rudeness results from poor handling during childhood. If, incase, misbehavior is exhibited in a family , it is not the mother or any family member that is to be blamed but the father.

As the story depicts, the father became victorious over his rude son. The victory magnifies the embedded moral theme because it reflects people of modest, tolerance and potential of observation achieve their final goal whatever challenging elements affront their genuine progress. It is in this way that the collective attitudes towards iniquitous sons is manifested. The implication may hold a view that let alone virtuous people, even wicked ones have fear and hatred of illmannered sons owing to its damaging effect on the coming generation.

3.1.2. Sample 2

The following anecdote was recorded while the narrator was relating his story of the affairs of his brother's death during occasional. Endalä Wädäre lost his favorite young brother, Getachew Wädäre, in 1987 E.C. As the whole family presumes, Getachew was murdered by supporters of OLF, being classified as *näfitgna*^{*}. His body was thrown in the jungle and found after four days without being devoured by wild beasts. Police were unable to find the traces of the murderers.

The situation has remained miraculous as well as an unforgettable nightmare for his family and the community as a whole. It is miraculous because the body was found intact and clean. On the other hand, it is feared that his fate might occur to others in the future since there is no sustainable security in the area and police unable to detect such serious cases.

I arrived at Endalä's home carrying my tape-recorder while the family was attending coffee ceremony with some commonplace guests. I didn't expect that the story might be told. As a result the recording process was started just when the actual narrative was to begin.

The main topic, the affairs of Getachew's death, was raised accidentally. As I met the family, we exchanged greetings with considerable affection and respect. I held some ordinary talks with the head of the family (አባወራ), Endalä. He spoke some words to tell me that I am growing older recently. I agreed with him and substantiated his supposition claiming that the contemporary generation grows older before the appropriate age level. For my suggestion I had to bring specific instances. I told him that he is younger and robust as compared to me. At this moment he proceeded to his ever

^{*} *näfitgna* = in the earlier times it meant armed person; recently, however, it connotes people, particularly descendents of Amhara ethnic groups who settled in Oromo regions after expansion of Menelik.

serious topic, the death of his brother. “ You perceived me in a wrong way” he retorted . “ I think, you know me before, physically vigorous and morally strong. But now days all of my conditions are deteriorating because I lost my mainstay and have become hopeless.” His eyes became filled with tears and started groaning in distress.

Now the mood of the family changed into dark and heavy atmosphere. I felt uneasiness myself in my bosom. However, I attempted to comfort the family uttering a few words of sympathy. “ You cannot do anything. . . except hurting yourselves. It is once decided by God.” The following anecdote was related by Endalä at this moment. It seems that he brought the story for consoling (his family and himself) purpose. Nevertheless, only few people were enthusiastically active in the narration activities. As I understood later on, it was because the anecdote has lost its freshness particularly for the family. In any case, the narrative with its contextual mood was as follows:

3.1.2.2. The Natural Context

WHAT GOD HAS FOREORDAINED WILL HAPPEN

1. nr.*: In older times, a gallant hero paid a visit to an ascetic, who lived in a cave, in order to be told what his heroic destiny would be.
2. Ir+. Ok. . . then. . .
3. nr: The hero was very contented but asked another question. “ Would you tell me how I would die ? I mean the weapon with which I would be killed?
4. Ir: Why does he ask such an awful question?
5. nr.:Pointlessly! (The listener encouraged the narrator to continue. He resumed) “ Please [said the ascetic] let me alone,. . . don’t tempt me against my will. . . what do you benefit from knowing the means of your death? [inquired the ascetic]. The hero was obsessively interested in knowing the thing and pestered the holy man with his desire of

* nr = narrator
+ Ir = listener

knowing. “ You holy man, I know that heavenly and earthly knowledge’s are in your grasp - you are capable of telling me the answer. So, I beseech you in the name of God to tell me.”

6. Ir: (laughter and astonishment due to the importunity and insistence of that hero.)
 7. nr: The ascetic said, “ If you call upon God’s name, I shall tell you. You will be killed by a lid of milking pail.” He was stunned and excited as well (The narrator laughed). How can it be? You blessed one, how can it be. . .? Please, would you willingly help me by making it a gun?
 8. Ir: Did he wish the determined destiny to be changed (with feelings of astonishment)?
 9. nr: (. . . continued the narration without noticing the listener’s “ question”). “ It will not be possible in mortal power. . . [for that matter] who shall die by the lid of a milking pail? (a short pause) “ When it will be? “ [asked the hero.] “ In this month and on such a day” [replied the ascetic.] “ Please,. . .”, [the hero still begged. . .] , “ find some deliverance for me to pass that day and month.”
 10. Ir: Did he mean the date?
 11. nr: Yes. . . he requested, “ Move the deadline to some other time” (unnecessary break followed and the narrator rearranged the order) “ Make it before that day.” “ Who will consume what is yours?” [said the ascetic].
 12. Ir: (light laughter but strong surprise)
 13. nr: “ Postpone me the date.” [the hero asked]. “ Whose portion you want to eat?” [assured the ascetic]. (laughter and astonishment followed from both sides)
- (The narrator introduced that the story was over using the traditional concluding technique)

ተረቴን መልሱ

አፌን በዳቦ አብሱ ።

Give my tale back;

Wipe my mouth with bread.

(He continued) you see, the way of one’s death is in the hands of God. The time and circumstance of one’s death is once specified. Getachew could not save himself, rather his destiny made him to rush to the snare. For that matter, if there is wiser than Getachew, if there is more methodical than him. . . he should be extremely astute person. If fate were determined by the wisdom of people, he could escape that dreadful death. But as the fact is one the contrary, he rushed and entered and died.

3.1.1.2.2 Analysis on the Natural Context

In discussing the natural context of the anecdote, we may divide the narrative into two major levels. The first level is concerned with the discourse features held between the narrator and the listener. This mainly focuses on their mutual interactive situations. The second level, on the other hand, is treated depending upon the communication features of the two characters, the ascetic and the hero. In the narrative context, the first level, the narrator and the listener are the influential participants of the performance. It is important, now, to investigate their narrative function with respect to contextual atmosphere and textual reflections.

The narrator:

Toolan (1991:77) identified any narrator as an 'authorized source'. The concept suits my discussion too. Because it indicates the role of the narrator: *choice* and *presentation*. He chooses an effective story for the main topic being discussed. The above narrator has been successful in this respect. He could stir certain moods and feelings in the listener so that the latter could express his views persistently. The implication is that the listener has easily and enthusiastically observed feelings of the addresser with the help of the chosen narrative. Such an effective choice is not always possible. Our casual experiences reveal that people fail to relate relevant folkloric elements in their discussion of burning topics and spoil the total context. And some other time, people pour out bare discussions and make their talk colorless and boring. But in the case of the above storyteller, we observe that he could produce brighter mood on the natural context by skillful selection of story.

The other significant issue needs to be discussed is presentation. In his presentation, the narrator used varieties of moving techniques. After he introduced time, characters and place, vaguely of course, he proceeded to a

free indirect discourse technique. Toolan (1991: 122) asserts that such a technique is a “ fascinating style” in order to create positive contextual moods during communication.“. . . to be told what his heroic destiny would be” (No. 1 line 2) is an example of a free direct discourse technique. It does not only bear the original idea but also reveals some linguistic and psychological features of the narrator. These features , in turn, create new colours in the totality of the performance. When we say *psychological* we mean that the narrator shapes the ideas of the first speaker according to his internal situations. The linguistic elements, too, retain the narrator’s feelings and emotions.

But the storyteller is not limited to a single technique. In most cases he quotes the “direct speeches” of characters rather than reported speech: the dialogues (between characters) are presented from their sources. However, it is hardly possible to accept the dialogues as original ones. We may take them as *assumed dialogues*. In fact, the technique has certain implications to tell about the native story composition and narrative techniques. The point is that, the native narrators and listeners have the awareness of the fact that there is exchange of ideas among characters in their own ways of communication. In addition, narrators are curious in involving the assumed dialogue to produce certain literary effects, for example freshness of thoughts and dramatic point of view. Here, we can stress that though there is clear pretense, there is an evidence that the local narrators attempt to entertain feelings and emotions of characters in their own rights.

In addition to these two techniques, free indirect discourse and assumed dialogues, the narrator involves self expressions. His own feelings, attitudes and judgments become vivid especially in the introductory phrases. His inclinations towards characters and issues of debates throw light on the natural context. Because self expressions strengthen mutual understandings and indicate the level of differences / similarities between the attitudes of two

parties, the addresser and the addressee. Some of the narrator's self expressions are the following.

- "Pointlessly!" (No 5 line 2) (judgment)
- "The hero was obsessively interested. . ." (No 5 line 4)
(perception)
- ". . . pestered the holy man with his desire of knowing (No 5 line 4-5) (attitudes towards the two characters)
- " He was stunned. . ." (No 7 line 2) perception).

In these expressions of the narrator we can observe that his choices of words by themselves tell something about the inclination of the narrator.

The other aspect which should be pointed out, concerning the narrator, is overflow of personal mood. This is expressed in his laughter (No 7 line 3) . At that particular point, it seems, the narrative has provoked essentially some uncontrollable emotions in the narrator himself .People told me that he uses this narrative repeatedly. As a matter of fact, it should come stale for him. But he is still touched by it. That is why he laughed. His laughter may be caused by the absurdity of the hero. Because he acted foolishly when he heard his despicable death - the forthcoming irony of life. This has great attachment with the main topic as we will see it later on. For the time being we conclude the significance of the laughter saying that it has to do with pursuing the narrator's inner-being (personal mood) and creates fertile ground for the contextual mood by enhancing the listener's attention.

Pauses (No 9 line 3) repetitions (No 7 line 3), negligence of the listener's question (No 9 of line 1), unnecessary break (No 11 line 1-3), rearrangement of accounts are, too, signs of overflow of moods in the narrator. When he made mistakes, he never bothered even to ask pardon. The

question, perhaps, for the sake of stress to heighten the magnitude of the character's act of great folly. The situation seems to satirize the "foolishness" of the hero. In any case, this personal reflection has effective role on the natural context because it make the narrator think that he is with interested partner in his storytelling. All in all, we can judge that, the performance yielded high sense of narrating- listening interests and satisfaction in both parties which is the ultimate goal of literary works and their performances as well.

The issue of satisfaction can be directly or indirectly associated with the effect produced when the anecdotal theme merged into the topic at hand. This is noticed in the last part of turn taking 13. No 13 becomes important particularly when one is interested in observing the effectiveness of the native narrators in relating their stories in accordance with the topic at hand. There is usually a tendency of providing summaries in any forms of talks. Particularly in purposeful and coherent dialogues, people give high emphasis to the issue of recapitulation. They raise chief points and try to grasp the general theme of their discussion. There is a tradition of repeating chief points. They say "ይህን ጨዋታ በምን ነበር ያነሳነው?" it is to mean "On what topic have we posed this issue?"

This fact is reflected in Ato Endalä's *narrative - topic* relationship attempt. He told the theme of the narrative by making analogical judgment. He tried to develop his analogical argument prepossessing a general statement, ". . . the way of one's death is in the hands of God" (No 13 line). Then he provided an evidence for his argumentation, " could not save himself . . . rather rushed to the snare ". As he elaborates things deeply, it seems, he replaced the character of the narrative, the hero, by the character of the topic, Getachew. This implies that he shifted his focus from the narrative to the actual major point/ topic. Now, we can assume that he equated the two subjects: the hero and Getachew. They are similar because of the fact that both bear socially

valid qualities: bravery and wisdom. On the other hand, both received pessimistic fates though they are people of appreciable qualities, which is irony of life. The situation is considered as an ironical technique because there is “a discrepancy between an expectation and its fulfillment or between the appearance of a situation and the reality that underlies it” (Beckson and Ganz, 1990, 132-133).

3.1.1.2.3. Analysis on the Literary Quality

Under this sub topic we try , at large, to examine the literary aspects of the narrative. When I attempt to discuss the literary attributes of the story my focus is mainly directed to details of the literary beauty. In discussing the textual nature of the narrative, characters, topic of interplay and ending technique are quite important to be emphasized. Before getting in to my present major task, however, I would like to remind the boundaries between the contextual and the textual analysis of this anecdote. The natural contextual analysis typically depends upon the interaction situation of the narrator and listener and the thematic significance of the story with respect to that identified topic. The textual analysis, on the other hand, turns to the distinctive literary elements which build up the tale by creating flesh - and - blood unity within the narrative itself, without forgetting the second level context elements too.

A. Characters:

Here we do not give emphasis to physical appearances of characters which is irrelevant to our analysis. Because their significance lies on their "superhuman" internal qualities rather than physical features. The ascetic and the hero are considered, as superhuman subjects for religious (in the case of the ascetic) and secular attributes (in the case of the hero) when viewed in terms of the Arsi- Robe Amharic speaking people beliefs and attitudes. The

selection for the ascetic may need due attention in investigating the religious projection of the society. It is evident that the foretold matters/ incidents are seriously impossible to be justified without spiritual attributes. It is due to this fact that the presence of the ascetic becomes decisive and relevant for the effectiveness of the story. As it is usually observed from the deeprooted Christian norms and values, the society tends to perceive ascetics as mouthpieces of God who have foreknowledge of the universe, including fates of individuals. Their words are received without suspicion or refusal because they are sufficiently trustworthy to receive mystic merits from Heaven. The narrator reflects his attitude towards the ascetic in different ways. For example, he characterizes him as a person who gave up the worldly life. The expressions, "lived in a cave" proves the fact. In addition, the words that the teller gave to his two characters show that the narrator inclined to identify the ascetic as a holy and spiritually virtuous element, which is the communal reflection of the area. All in all, without exploiting this collective fact it would be difficult to produce the available artistic expression meaningfully as well as beautifully. The argument is that, shortly, fates of every individual/ event is predetermined by God. God, in order to accomplish their activities, has representatives in this physical world, like ascetics for example. The ascetics, therefore, know everything and have ability of changing or improving things because of the fact that they are surrounded by spirit of God.

We have definite points to be raised while showing the literary effect of the ascetic. In the story the hero totally relied on the virtues of the ascetic to know his future life and to have things reformed. It is due to this fact that his moods vary from time to time following the words of the fortune-teller. When he was told that he would become a king and rule without any trouble for several years, he was joyful beyond telling, content (No. 1 line 1). Because, he believed that it would happen. When he asked the future happenings (of his death) however, the reverse is true, frustrated (No 5, line

4 - 5) (No 7, line 2). In both cases, joy and sadness, the hero insisted on knowing future things and on substitution of bad luck for better ones believing that what the ascetic said was absolutely true and inevitable. The expression “ I know that heavenly and earthly knowledges are in your grasp” asserts the hero’s presumption about the other character. The hero represents the attitude of the society in this context as he reflects the collective feelings concerning such special fellows.

When we come to the hero, he is not viewed as an ordinary man. We have been told that he is a “ gallant hero” (No.1, line 1). The choice made with respect to this hero reminds us that the originator of the anecdote, and the user as a whole, has observed some views of the society about *heroic qualities* and *their inescapable mortality*. As it is reflected in the story the two things, valued qualities and mortality, are the two things which make the use of the “ gallant hero” remarkable. The society has high respect and admiration for people of bravery. He who possesses high level of moral and physical strength, quality of spirit, as well as skill of taking noble action in the face of danger, hardship etc., specially during war times is accounted as a superior figure among the society. He receives honours and praises. This assumption is the underlying raw material for the anecdote. Because it facilitates certain circumstances for the latter impression produced in the story. This is the implication of secular and religious life as they co-exist in the society. The latter impression, the inevitability of the predetermined destiny, becomes meaningful when it is considered in relation to people of bravery. The “ gallant hero” being a noble and admirable person went to the insignificant person (insignificant only in relation to heroic deeds) to ask his future fate. The implication is that though one is a famous brave, he doesn’t forecast what will come to his life. The discourse situation between the two characters, too, reveals how the hero undermined himself in front of the aseptic. He seems timid, modest and craven. We say this, having his ways of communication (in presenting his earnest desires) as remarkable evidences.

“ Would you tell me. . .”, “ you holy man,.. ” “ I beseech you in the name of God. . .”, “ Please, would you willingly help me. . .” and the like are good indicators of his inferior acts (these expressions are found in No. 3 line 1, No. 5 line 4, and line 7, ; No. 7 line 4, respectively). These linguistic features minimize, certainly of course, the qualities of determination, courage, pride and self confidence in the sense that they retain, at least to a certain degree, senses of subordinate conditions, if not feelings of inferiority. Now the hero deviates from the paradigm: the assumption of bravery or nature of facing dangerous circumstances is violated. Here, then, the literary effect is vivid. The implication is that, even people possessing virtuous qualities like bravery become fearful in thinking of their future fate and the way they will die. It is here that the selection of the character, the “gallant hero ” becomes relevant, captivating and effective. Generally speaking, it is evidently clear that the society ceaselessly exists in uncertainty, anxiety and distress when it thinks of his future events, especially of death, whatsoever mechanisms or struggles being thought of. The impulse looks right with/ match with the usual expression of farsighted people.

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Grant me a better death.

B.Topic of Interplay:

The characters exchanged ideas on a basic topic that holds two important features: destiny of good fortune and threatening fate. The first one, the destiny of good fortune, to become a king, can be considered as an initial topic. It took minor share in the discussion may be for one reason: no deviation. No break of paradigm (deviation) because any hero may deserve kingship. This is the true experience in the Ethiopian condition, for instance in the cases of Thewodros and governors of Zemene Mesafint. In addition, there is no violation or disagreement due to destiny of kingship. But, though

it is considered as minor one, it has high literary contribution for the story as a whole. We may guess that the tension and stress of the hero becomes evident and meaningful after knowing that he would be crowned. “ How it can be? “ he asked this question two times (No. 7 line 3). Because things become full of absurdity. The expectation is that, we assume, a king should die a solemn death or should be granted for better death. But the foretold phenomenon makes him a commonplace person as opposed to the expectation. It is in this sense that the primary point of discussion, news of good fortune, becomes helpful to produce fascinating literary colour in the latter conversation.

The latter point of discussion retains some tone of disturbance from both sides, the hero as well as the ascetic. The hero is eager to know what would happen to his life. But the ascetic refused to tell. The hero was thrown into deep anxiety because he might suppose that there would be something unpleasant that only the ascetic knew. Lack of knowledge about the future happenings and events is a universally serious concern of life as it is examined from the hero's point of view. The ascetic, too, felt an uneasiness because foreknowledge could damage internal feelings of the subject. He took the question as a temptation and refused to tell the answer (No.5 line 2) Mental situations of both characters, eagerness and secrecy, make the topic more magnificent. We understand its significance as the hero craved the fortune-teller obsessively (No. 5 line 7). And when the ascetic was besought in the name of God, which made him submissive to the inquiry, we feel that his mental pain increased (No. 7 line 2).

The situation of their inner disturbance increased especially when the hero attempted to escape what is predetermined once. This throws light on the hidden fear of people about their ultimate life. The indirect refusal reaction of the hero brings forth the other major aspect, fear and hatred of dreadful death (አጉል አግግት). These two significant issues, eagerness of knowing future fate

and anxiety of dreadful or contemptible death constitute the main topic of the interplay in the narrative.

The reason is that the topic can create effective response being the major source of the light plot progression. The eagerness causes a scary answer, the alarming answer drives the subject into a more sorrowful situation and, as a result, inquiry of improvement (in the coming destiny) follows. Here we sense that the topic produced fascinating literary feelings in the cause - effect progression as far as the tying and untying the literary knot is concerned.

C. Ending technique:

Generally speaking, the structure of the anecdote can be described in this way:

- (1) first inquiry (about future career) - good news
- (2) second inquiry (obtaining information about the ultimate destiny) - unexpected and scary news.
- (3) third inquiry (earnest desire of improvements)- cryptic questions.

Though the discourse situation made the narrative somewhat lengthy, the story has got its ending after two steps. For the first and the second steps there are no crypto- effect because they are prefiguring stages, the second step covering the main share. At the third level (No. 7- 11) the hero stopped desire of obtaining information and directly shifts to insistence of improvement. It is at this step that three amusing *answer - like questions* were thrown by the ascetic. The ascetic's questions are taken as *answer - like* questions because he was not in need of exploring answers. Rather the linguistic tone holds, presumably, a sense of emphasis. The ascetic told three answer - like sentences, but the listener never attempted to provide answers. The implication is that he understood the meaning came through the speakers tone. His way of saying things implies that there is no one who dies in place of the fellow, the hero.

3.1.1.3. Sample 3

Woyzero Mästawat is a lonely aging lady. She rears three children of her departed daughter. The old lady has no sustainable sources of income even to support herself let alone to care for her grand - children of tender age. When she fails to provide food and clothing for the orphans and as the children suffer from effects of poverty, she becomes embittered and bemoans her fate.

Gradually, she grew frustrated and happened to disperse the children to different relatives who have the potential of raising them. Nevertheless, she was unable to set her mind on such a decision because she considers the children as substitutes of her lost daughter.

This psychological tension took her to her elder brother whom traditionally she calls Wändim T'ila* . She told him her internal dilemma saying. “. . . a bastard of life (ምናባቱ)! Wändim T'ila, I am tired of seeing the misery of my grand - children. . . I should give this one [she means the youngest] to her aunt. . . this one [she means the oldest] to her father. . .” Then she proceeded with telling the story that her brother related to their topic . We have discussed the issue, her disturbance in raising the children, in our leisure talks. Fortunately, I had my recording machine while she was telling the story and , consequently, the story was recorded from its contextual use. But only portion of it is missing due to lack of recording efficiency from the beginning.

3.1.1.3.1. The Natural Context

CHILDREN GROW UP ON WHAT THEIR FATE PROVIDES THEM (ልጅ በዕድሉ ያድጋል)

1. Ir: On what context did Wändim T'ila tell you this story?
2. nr: I was disturbed. . . that is it . . . you see . . .
3. Ir: Ok. . .

* Wändim T'ila = traditional way of calling elder brothers which connotes respect, affection and sense of dependability; relatively meaning *protective brother*.

4. nr: " Why did you make your grand-child depart from your family? " he asked me (she reflected in her situations that he was showing compassion).
 " Please, Wändim T'ila. . . I am forced even to give this one to relatives." I told him.
5. lr: You meant. . . which one, Mit'u?
6. nr: Sintayehu [a six years old girl]
7. lr: Ok. . .
8. nr: " You became foolish! (ተሞኝሽ)" he said sadly " You know, they feed on what their luck gives them. You put yourself in unnecessary trouble, my sister. . . my dear sister. . . why do you worry? You disturbed yourself without any reason." he said to me. Please. . . I can't afford in my circumstances to resist the problems, I have no capacity. . . I can't. . . I can't." I said.
9. lr: eerh. . .
- 10 nr: " Have you heard what the man said?" he asked me." A couple had nine children; but without sufficient sources of income to make the family living. As their economic situation grew from bad to the worst, they proposed begging as an ultimate solution."
11. lr: Because of the steadfastness of their poverty?
12. nr: Yes, of course. . . (she continued rehearsing her brother's narrative)
 "Having an agreement on. . . [on the idea, begging], both, husband and wife, went out to different directions carrying their begging pouches " he said.

" At night, fortunately enough, they came back with nine qunnas* (ቁና) of grains, which made the family excitedly happy. They have regularly practiced the activity as their permanent possession and earned the same amount on every day."

"After some days, the husband suggested another idea. He said to his wife, ' My darling, now we are getting rich. But I want to tell you a means which makes us more rich. Isn't it better to hire two of our children in wages [to other people as shepherds] in order to save their consumption for ourselves and accumulate more wealth?' She agreed and the two children were employed outside the family. The couple went out as usual for begging. On that day, they returned with only seven qunnas of grain."

13. lr: It means that the shares of the two children were reduced. . .?
- 14 nr: It should be that. " They were astonished by the matter. And decided to hire other two children in order to compensate for the missing two qunnas. They did what they intended "he said . On the morrow, they begged but got only five qunnas. They were annoyed and, consequently took the same

* qunna (pl. gunnas) = medium hollow basket, made of straw used for purpose of measuring grains. A gunna of grains approximately equals 5kg.

measure, hired other two children. The consequence was terrifying- they earned only three qunnas.”

“ In the end when they were left only with one child and returned with one qunna, the husband realized the implication of the situation/ deterioration of the income, worse luck! .Then he said to his wife, ‘ My darling, you see, our supposition was a mere fantasy. We should collect our children. She too, accepted his proposition. First, as a trial, they brought two of their children, they got two additional qunnas of grains. Then, they doubled the number of children, the amount of grain also doubled. . . . After they collected their nine children, they began possessing nine qunnas of grain in their begging activities.” He narrated the story in this way.

15 lr: Now I understood that the saying “ children grow up on their destiny” derived from this story.

16. nr: " It is not you who feed the children " said he, “ you dispersed the children mistakenly.”

17. lr: He told you a great thing.

18.nr: He told me in this way and I am touched . Now , I began to analyze the matter. What was that I had when I was living with Tilahun (her previous supporter, a relative)? I got only my daily food from him. . . . Rather, after these children had come to my home, I had sheep, cattle in the barn. Serious, what Wändim T’ila said is correct and acceptable. I will never be foolish after this. Since I am alive, I should gather the children around myself. Wändim T’ila told me such a story. . . Oh, God forgive me!

3.1.1.3.2 Analysis on the Natural Context

The contextual aspect in the above storytelling has quite interesting characteristics: in that it involves a dual nature. The duality of the context has resulted from reduplication of the performance. We have two performers, simultaneously: one in the former context and the other in the second. Shortly, the second context is the reduplication of the first one. We have two narrators, the brother (the first and the “ reported” narrator) and the lady (the “ reporter” of the first narration). The first narrator told the story using his own ways of narrating the anecdotal material. And, hence, we can consider him as the first narrator. Whereas in the case of the lady, the second narrator, we observe imitation of performance. She tries to present the story using the

direct speech technique: she repeatedly says “ he asked “ (No 4. line 1), “ I told him “ (No 4 line 3) etc. The implication is that she visualizes her brother’s (first narrator) performance with the moods, codes of interaction, emotion and the totality of the previous atmosphere and attempts to portray it now. In her attempt she makes us imagine and sense the earlier performance as though it is happening now. Generally speaking, the sum total picture of the past context is memorized and is displayed in the lady’s *story - presentation or performance imitation*. The other big issue to be remembered is that the first and the second narrators are involved in performing the same story on the same topic of discussion. What make the latter narrator different are change of place, time and receiver . As it can be understood from the latter narration (second narration), the effects of these things, place , time and receiver, are minimal to influence the reduplication context.

On the other hand, however, we sense that still there is art of performance even in the second narrator. We judge this having certain clear facts. In the first place, there are narrative colours applied by the lady. Purposeful pauses, facial expressions, and, most probably, attempts such as pruning or/ and elaborating etc. can be mentioned. In the second place, as far as the first performance is concerned, it is proper to think, we have only the overall nature of the context. Otherwise, it is difficult to generalize that the second narrator exactly recited without missing each detail or without distorting patterns and orders of events etc. There fore, it is natural and sound to suggest that the second narrator created certain contextual moods, emotions ways of expressions etc. of her own in order to communicate additional messages, though she tries to adjust herself with the first contextual situations.

The assumption that there are primary and secondary contexts appears in the performance above move us to an important task: making discourse analysis on double - aged contextual aspects. One goes to the narration carried out by the former narrator, addressed to the latter narrator. This attempt of analysis

mainly gives emphasis to a brother- and - sister interaction situation. The second attempt is made on secondary narrator - and - listener narrative relationship.

To be genuine we have hardly many details on the primary narration situation. We should not, however, ignore the available traces of the previous facts. There are, however slight they are, summarized clues which enable us to notice the glimpse of the discourse features and the contextual atmosphere maintained in the earlier context. The totality of the mood reminds us brother - and - sisterhood affection, respect, compassion and advice. There is a sense of self-displaying (telling one's intimate secrets without reservation / restraint). When the elder brother asked her, a serious and psychologically disturbing indeed, what reason made her to be separated from her grandchildren (No. 4 line 1), she showed him her deep and pathetic feelings (No 4 line 3). We assume that both were quite frank with one another. Frankness, in the case of the above context, may help us to tell about their closeness, the implication being mutual affection.

She called him, as implied above, Wändim T'ila, meaning my protective brother. It radiates feelings of respect, with regard to the tradition, and simultaneously senses of intimacy with respect to that particular context. Now, feelings of respect and readiness to sharing ideas were primarily reflected from the lady and then the response is encouraging (No 8 line 1-3) . The brother said, "You became foolish!" The Amharic usage of the word " foolish" is not derogatory as it appears in its English denotation. Rather, colloquially it produces, usually, polite and mild criticism. Particularly in the context above it informally connotes compassionate and sympathetic impulses. It makes the listener (the lady) calm, peaceful and settle. This in turn facilitates a conducive atmosphere for the coming narration. It seems indeed the narrator (the brother) achieved his ultimate goal - quietened her and listen the story and agree on its thematic implication. She didn't interrupt

mainly gives emphasis to a brother- and - sister interaction situation. The second attempt is made on secondary narrator - and - listener narrative relationship.

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his performance nor debate on the unified theme . Ultimately she made it her ever lasting motto. (No. 18 line 4).

3.1.1.3.3. Analysis on Literary Quality

The primary device that this simple narrative involves is *suspense*. A couple has nine children but no source of income excitedly captivates every body's attention. Now we are under an expectant uncertainty concerning the outcome of this terrible circumstance.

But immediately the story provides a temporal solution, begging. Nevertheless, the solution still exerts uneasiness in our bosom . Our tension may arise from two angles. Firstly, begging is a despised act in the society. Secondly, internally we may ask ourselves a crucial question, " Really, is it possible to feed nine children by asking for daily bread?" Both situations create feelings of uncertainty.

Surprisingly enough , our assumption is denied when we are told that the couple could make their living just by earning a good deal of grains and, at this point, the narrative begins ostensibly to contradict the expectation, which is a feature of ironic device. This agrees with definition of irony given by Peck and Coyle (1993:135), " a way . . . in which what is meant is contrary to what the words appear to say literally".

In the case of this story, the ironical device is employed repeatedly, which is an interesting thing in magnifying the thematic aspect. As opposed to the assumption of two fellows, the husband and the wife (because they assumed that they would soon become rich by saving the share of their children), the situation " differed from the appearance", as Holman (1975-468) defines irony. At last, when all children were dispersed, the couple came back to home having no qunnas of grains. The story displayed their wisdom by

showing that they were curious to understand the irony of life. As a result, they gathered their children in order to restore their loss. This last effect of the story is devised for the moralizing purpose, as it becomes successfully effective with respect to the lady in the natural context.

3.1.2. Analysis of Bare Texts

3.1.2.1. Sample 1

Textual analysis on sample one has been important because the anecdote incorporates the geographical particulars of the area. Rainfall may not be as such significant for other regions of Ethiopia in October. In the cases of many parts of Arsi zone, however, the drier autumn usually begets famine and vice-versa. Ofcourse, the area receives its rain during Summer and Spring. As my interviewee told me, there is no serious scarcity of rain in these wet seasons. It is in autumn that peasantry life regularly faces shortage of rainfall. This affects the agricultural activities as a whole. The situation puts the farmers in anxiety as it is depicted in the following anecdotal narrative.

RAIN IN OCTOBER

A son urged his father to marry him as soon as he possibly could. The father responded, " Oh, my son, certainly you reminded me of a good thing. Indeed, now you are old enough to get married." He proceeded, " But the condition of the weather will determine the possibility of your marriage. If it rains in October, your request will be granted and, furthermore, I will add another wife for myself. Nevertheless, if October becomes a dry month, the situation will compel me even to divorce your mother let alone bringing a new bride for you."

3.1.2.1.1. Social Issues Reflected

I may suggest two basic social issues embedded in the above anecdote.

1) rights (power) and responsibilities of fathers in the family affairs

Fathers are regarded as powerful subjects in deciding practicality of marriage in the family. This is revealed in two ways. On the one hand, the son presents his request to his father recognizing that his marriage life (ገጽ) is unthinkable

without the *willingness* and *readiness* of the father. On the other, the words of the father are good evidence to tell about his limitless powers to decide on such big issues. “ I will add another wife” and “ [I will] divorce your mother” make the point clear. In both cases, hence, it is proper to suggest that women are powerless or may have minimal share in such social issues. This is reflected in two ways. Firstly, in deciding the marriage affairs of the son the role of the mother is ignored. Secondly, the story depicts the fact that wives are totally submissive to their husbands’ measures. For example, the father speaks of the continuity or discontinuity of his own marriage ties devoid of his wife’s ideas. He says confidently, “ [I will] divorce” and “ I will add another wife”. This reminds of the issue of “ male - chauvinism”.

As I put above, the father’s role in deciding marriage affairs is double - edged. On the one hand, he has absolute power to take any measure concerning the issue. On the other, he is responsible for preparing the festive meal for the wedding and providing properties of marriage life for the son (*ገጅ መውጫ*). Both things demand his psychological and, moreover, the economic readiness. The traditional wedding ceremony require a great deal of money which is necessarily covered by the father. The banquet usually consumes the maximum amount of the annual grain production. In addition, the money for clothing and ornaments of the groom and the bride make the father suffer in his pocket.

Furthermore, there is a moral and social obligation imposed upon the father: he should give economic assistance until the son establishes relatively sustainable economic ground for his marriage life. For instance, as Endalä Wädäre told me, a father is expected to provide at least a pair of oxen, a donkey and a horse with their corresponding materials. A milk cow, sheep, goats and provision (for certain months) are also granted for a newly married son. This is traditionally called *ገጅ መውጫ* (economic support provided for a newly married son).

2) Signals of technological backwardness

This is directly associated with the environmental impact exerted upon the peasantry. Obviously, the south east facing regions of Ethiopia, including many parts of Arsi, receive autumnal rainfall (Mesfin, 19). The regions such as Ogaden, Bale, Arsi and, rarely, some parts of Shoa benefit from the autumnal rainfall. Bädada (my informant) too, agrees with this geographical explanation. According to him the autumnal rainfall (the peasants identify it as October rainfall) helps the fresh grain to thrive properly. In addition to this the rain moistens fallow lands for tilling. The peasant's perception of the autumn rainfall, as a result, displayed in the saying “ የጥቅምት እርሻ የእናት ተርሻ” meaning, ‘ tilling in October is similar to a mouthful of food given by one's mother.’”

From our short review of autumn rainfall we have the general glimpse of the influence of weather condition on agricultural activities. In other words, if there is sufficient rainfall in that particular season, the farmers produce a good deal of production. However, if the opposite is true, they fail to prepare their farm land for the coming seasons of cultivation. And, moreover, their fresh crops happen to droop or wither due to the dry autumn. The implication is that, in one way or another, peasantry life is a victim of nature. This is embedded in the duality of hope and anxiety of the father. Because he feared to give promise of marrying his son. The general feature of victimization of the peasants may be concluded into three major aspects.

- ◆ lack of meteorological technology to forecast the forthcoming weather condition.
- ◆ absence of technological facilities and scientific mechanisms to compensate for what is lost due to climatic fluctuation, like irrigation for example.

- ◆ clinging upon a limited means of existence: farming and livestock activities are fully dependent only on charitable role of nature.

3.1.2.1.2. Literary Technique Employed

Basically, the anecdote is intended to heighten the significance of rainfall in October. To achieve this goal, the father employed a deliberate exaggeration, hyperbolic expression. We have two hyperbolic expressions. One is connected to the son's request. As the social experiences of the area show, the inclination of sons for marriage life is not presented straightforwardly as it is put in the above anecdote. Rather it is suggested from some indirect signals. For instance, when boys reach adolescence, they build their own small sleeping huts, have minor economic sources (ጉልማ) such as incomes from saling sheep, goats or grains. Beyond these facts, they begin to display behavioral changes like beating their young brothers/ sisters, disobeying family orders, fighting with teenagers, and the like. On the other hand, if these symbols of their internal manners are not given emphasis, sons may secretly inform their mothers about their consent and whom they want to marry. Otherwise, it seems out of reality to think that sons present their marriage request to fathers because of the fact that they are shy to express the matter to their fathers.

The originator of the anecdote, however, created a literary interest by producing exaggerated communication between the son and his father. Because the desire of the son is directly addressed to the father which is not true in the normal circumstances. Shortly, the deep and hidden feelings of the son are disclosed in words in direct contact with the father. We expect that the father acquires information about the inclination of his son from the mother or he suggests from the general conditions of the son. But in the case of the above anecdote, his ears are made to pick up the inquiry as being addressed. This retains some features of "conscious exaggeration" (Cuddon, 1978,310).

The other exaggeration is reflected in the father's words, "I will add another wife" and "[I will] divorce your mother" are hyperbolic expressions. They helped the father to elevate the degree of his optimistic and pessimistic feelings respectively. Both, *additional wife* and *divorce*, are not thinkable unless serious disagreement is occurred or naughtiness takes place. Because it is sinful to divorce one's wife even owing to physical or mental misery. The father understands these facts. Thus, we can conclude that the issues of divorce and marrying an additional wife are brought into the narrative in order to indicate that the magnitude of anxiety or the level of happiness come simultaneously into the mind of the character with respect to the effect of rain in October.

3.1.2.2. Sample 2

The anecdote below retains fragments of historical facts. Due to this reason, we may take it as a piece of legendary narrative. It is true that, as Leach (1949:56) noticed, many anecdotes are attached to different individuals who are essentially considered as historically significant figures. Here a question may be posed, “ what characteristics make a given narrative legendary”. The question will be important to discern some peculiarities of legendary narratives in order to trace those elements in the following anecdote. Hence, let us heed some key points that scholars provided in their definitions of legendary narratives.

- “. . . has more historical truth.. . less of the supernatural”
(Holman and Harmon. 1988, 273).
- “. . . a traditional narrative, frequently involving kings, heroes, or other important persons and presented as true”
(Encyclopedia Americana, VII P. 169)
- Natural heroes or model persons are commonly involved as characters and also imaginative materials are incorporated, according to Bekson and Ganz (1990: 141)
- “. . . at least partial expression of racial or national spirits. . .” are available in legends (Cuddon, 1978, 356).
- Legends “ are not historical records, but they may include historical personages and facts” (encyclopedia Americana VII P. 169).

Having the above insights as guides, to conceptualize the term *legend*, we can directly proceed to examine the anecdote below. Our examination begins with scrutinizing the legendary elements in the anecdote. In doing so, we should

primarily focus on the characters and their historical significance in the country.

Historically speaking, both Menelik and Abba Jifar, can be considered as important figures in the Ethiopian socio-political context. This truth makes the anecdote fit to certain criteria of legendary narratives, taking the above key points as a framework of legends.

As far as the socio-political role of the two figures is concerned, I had an exhaustive discussion with Dr. Mekonnen Dinko and Oljira Tujuba (Historians at KCTE). According to the two scholars, Menelik is understood as a wise, a tactful leader and a diplomatic and, consequently, a successful emperor in Ethiopian history. He achieved his ultimate goal, expansion-dream of unification of Ethiopia, by means of diplomacy and, when necessary, by military campaigns. In addition to his national significance, Menelik has received global attention. Typically black people consider him as symbol of freedom because of the fact that he gained a glorious victory over the white invaders- he defeated the Italian aggressors at Adwa. Thirdly, Menelik is known as a forerunner king of Ethiopia to introduce modernization. With regard to Menelik's national significance Banks and Overstreet (1983:15) agree with the above scholars. They wrote:

After centuries of medieval isolation, Ethiopia began its history as a modern state with the reign of Emperor Menelik II (1888-1913) who established a strong central authority and successfully resisted attempts at colonization by Italy and other powers.

Basing myself on these facts, I can argue that Menelik is a national, if not continental "hero".

Abba Jifar, on his part, has won high popularity, especially among the Oromo people. Dr Mekonnen has a view that Abba Jifar was an influential local

leader in Jima area. As compared to the other five contemporary Gibe States (Hailemariam Goshu, 1970, 11), the Jimma Kingdom (Abba Jiffar's kingdom) was the most powerful and relatively civilized and created commercial relationship with merchants outside the kingdom (Pankhurst, 1990, 212). This implies, at least to a certain degree, that the personal quality and talents of that local leader had got great emphasis in Ethiopia during that period.

It is evident that traces of Abba Jifar's personal qualities (of bravery, wisdom, diplomatic cleverness etc.) and legendary facts of his kingdom embedded in sayings, songs, riddles. . . are still existing with his descendants and permeated in many parts of the country. Owing to these facts, it is proper to consider Abba Jifar as an essential legendary hero.

The other issue that one should consider, in maintaining and identifying the following anecdote as a portion of legend, is associated with the relationship between the two figures. It is historically true, Olijira indicated, that Menelik and Abba Jifar created a close political and administrative links after Menelik had subdued the south west region of the country.

Abba Jifar showed no resistance to Menelik's expansion. Rather, unlike the south and south east oromo headmen, Abba Jifar became submissive to Menelik's kingship. Consequently, Menelik recognized the kingdom of Jimma as an autonomous administrative region. Here we can suggest that the two persons had mutually consented sort of relationship. Having this general understanding, let us proceed to our major task, textual analysis of the anecdote " Tolerating satiety".

TOLERATING SATIETY

Menelik asked Abba Jifar “ How strong are your people?”. Abba Jifar replied .“ My people tolerate satiety, let alone difficulty.”

3.1.2.2.1. Social Issues Reflected

Three things appear to be considered with regard to the social - cultural issues in the anecdote above. The first, may be the prominent one, is the regard paid for the people of Jimma kingdom, the Oromos. But the feelings of respect are not limited only to that particular people. It may have horizontal and vertical extension. Horizontally it covers the character of the same ethnic groups inhabited out of Jimma area too. The vertical assumption indicates the generation ties, descendants found on the same ethnic line.

As it is uttered by Abba Jifar, the people had appreciable quality, tolerance. And this quality is attested by endurance of excessive pleasure. The proposition also matches with understandings of other Ethiopians. Many Ethiopians, even other than Oromos, believe that satiety has uncontrollable impact than hardship in ruining human character. When people indulge themselves beyond the limit, they happen to reveal immoral traits. They usually develop senses of unfairness, violence, and injustice. When the consequence gets worse, people are internally pressed to commit atrocious acts such as crime, adultery, and the like. The ultimate effect ruin not only innocent people but also those who commit the atrocity themselves.

Due to this perception of satiety, people have great respect for those who are well- mannered in times of excessive pleasure. Because , people who can control their emotions, resulted from too much proud or arrogant manners, have behavioral excellency. Anecdote 25 too seems to be important in respect of this point.

The second thing to be noticed is associated with desire as well as readiness of people in sharing experiences, views, opinions, philosophies etc. of their neighbors despite their ethnic difference. The anecdote above, for example, is ascribed to the Oromo people. Nevertheless, it is widely spread through out the country. The implication is that other peoples also appreciate the thematic and the literary interests of the anecdote. The situation may be considered as a signal of mutual understanding and tendency of creating conducive socio-cultural atmosphere for further friendship and, consequently, for national integration - establishment of common identity.

The third point that needs to be examined is the issue of diffusion. Jimma is too far from Arsi-Robe. On the other hand, facilities of communication are at their lower level of development. Now , one may pose a question". . . how could the anecdote reach the ears of people in Arsi area?". For that matter, not only this but also there are plenty of sayings and songs ascribed to Jimma Abba Jifar. For example when I was a child, my father used to tell me folk songs like:

ትናንትና ማታ፤ ዛሬ ሌሊት በልሜ
 አባ ጅፋር አገር ጅማ ተሻግራ
 ምጣዲ ተሰብራ ከባህር ላይ ቆሞኝ
 ምጣዲም እኔ ነኝ ባህሩም አንቺ ነሽ

Yesterday, in the evening; today in the night:
 in my dream;

I went to Abba Jifar's Country , Jimma:

I thought, the *mit'ad* * was broken and I was standing on the sea.

The mitad is me, the sea is you.

Olijira suggested two mechanisms of diffusing information in the earlier times: military campaigns and domestic trade. The first assumption of Ato Olijira seems credible when we examine the personal experiences of my interviewee, Ato Täfära Wäldä Arägay. He is a patriot, who participated at Maychew war front in 1935 against the Italian invaders. He has collected may

A* mit'ad - a round clay plate used for baking injera.

anecdotes including the above one. He told me that he heard the anecdote from one of the patriots.

The domestic trade, too, contribute its own share for the permeation of oral narratives through peoples of various areas. R . Pankrhust (1990:212) indicated that Jimma was a known center of trade in the earlier times, slave, coffee, civet and gold being the common commodities of the area. Merchants from Gondär, Shoa and eastern Ethiopia came to Jimma for trading.

3.1.2.2.2. Literary Technique Employed

One can observe that there are not many indications of contextual aspect or interaction situation which enable us carryout deep analysis on the discourse features. In other words, the interactive process held between the two people, Menelik and Abba Jifar, is not fully displayed on the scene of the narrative. For that matter, questions such as “ On what primary topic did they raise the strength of the Oromo people?”, “ What kind of feelings and emotions were reflected during their conversation?” and the like are not discernible from the available anecdote. In fact we may not take the anecdote as incomplete and defective for it is lacking such pieces of information. Because, anecdotes usually have such characteristics as they employ portions of episodes by exploiting only the greater merits or clever ways of expressions from the extended narratives. In our discussion of literary beauty, too, we should explore the merits and the gripping ways of expression rather than pursuing the techniques employed in the narratological exchanges.

In examining the literary aptness of the anecdote, one may emphasize on the statement told by Abba Jifar. The statement concentrates our attention because the way of saying the intended message, praising the people for their valid quality, tolerance, involves peculiar language technique, paradoxical expression. In ordinary thinking or in shallow argument, the statement seems

irrational and illogic in the sense that it bears self-contradictory elements. The initial tone of the statement produces a bit puzzling, if not absurd, feelings in the listener's mind. To put it in a simpler way, the speaker tries to tell us, and reinforces us to accept, that *excessive pleasure* demands the great capacity of endurance as compared to hardship. This violates the usual paradigm of logic. Naturally, tolerance co-exists/ matches with *hardship* not with pleasure and pleasure, on the contrary, suits happiness not difficulty. For the speaker breaks this rule, we say that the expression exhibits allowable deviation from the standard.

Gradually we realize the further meaning of the statement and we accept what is said as an existing fact. Because we begin making a close inspection to investigate the negative effects of excessive pleasure. This means that we are pursuing the other facts of pleasure in order to reconcile the conflicting opposite aspects. Then the question posed on rationality is resolved as one gradually understands the destructive effects of satiety, things such as unfairness, injustices, superiority complex, etc.

In addition to the literary effect of the anecdote, we should not overlook Abba Jifar's capacity of observation because the sensible feelings of the anecdote mostly radiate from his wits. We appreciate and make use of it in our daily similar experiences as we be able to notice how the effects of excessive pleasure are damaging human nature.

3.1.2.3. Sample 3

Before I proceed to the analysis, I should discuss the term Amharic quine.

The term *quine* is mainly related to Ge'ez literary tradition, mostly of works of poetry (Getachew, 1995: 15). Alämayehu Mogäs, too, seems in agreement with this fact. According to him quine "was begotten and fostered" by Ge'ez. And when Ge'ez grew old, it was introduced into Amharic language (Alämayehu, 1952: 8). In any case, nowadays people conventionally use the term *Amharic quine* when an expression holds two or more meanings, one is vivid and the other is hidden. The surface meaning (the literal) is *säm*, whereas, the hidden one, where the message is meant to lie, is the *wärq* (gold). In *Amharic quine* tradition the *säm* and the *wärq* are found in the same word/ phrase. Alämayehu says, "If a word has one or two meanings in an utterance and be able to express a unified idea it is known as *quine*" (1954:52)

It seems to me it is difficult to find words of equivalent double meaning in two or more languages. So an attempt made to translate quine into any other language, for example into English, with a view of providing an equivalent seems to be a task next to impossible. Hence, it is preferable to put the surface meaning (the *säm*) and the concealed meaning (the *wärq*) using different words of the target language. That is why I attempted to show the *säm* and the *wärq* side by side using "/".

A BEAST OF BURDEN / A DOMINEERING MAN

There was a poor farmer who was suffering from unjust practices of a local headman (ጭቃ ሹጭ). One day, the farmer lost his donkey. As a result, he was lamenting sitting by the dead body of the donkey. Seeing this, the headman said to the farmer, "Do you lament just as if you lost one member of your family?" . The farmer answered the question using this cryptic poem.

አለቅሰለታላሁ ምንም ባይቀበር

አጥብቆ ተጋራ በጣም ተጫኝ ነበር።

I lament for it, though it doesn't deserve a
burial ceremony;
It was vigorously shoving / maltreating
and very good beast of burden/ a very
domineering
one.

3.1.2.3.1 Social Issues Reflected

In discussing the social issues reflected in the anecdote above, the economic significance of donkeys, people's high concern for the well-being of their family members and grievance over the local administrative system seem prominently important. It is quite common that in Ethiopia donkeys are widely used as pack animals. This is, no doubt, true also to Arsi - Robe area. The wäräda's transportation system is still among the worst in the country. Hence, donkeys are unequaled as beasts of burden in transporting goods from place to place. It is due to this fact that the farmer lamented for his lost donkey. The farmer had a lot of things to be carried by the donkey regularly. For example local commodities are taken to distant market areas on donkeys' backs. Sheaves of grains, wood, etc are transported from afar to the compound by the help of donkeys. It is quite clear to imagine that how life is difficult without donkeys in peasantry life. Now he has no option except carrying goods on his own shoulders which will make his life bitter.

People give due emphasis to their families. Sometimes they have exceedingly high sentimental and emotional attachment. Especially mothers and fathers feel deep sadness when they see their children facing physical or mental pains. The disappointment becomes beyond telling if they are departed by death. This general assumption is disclosed in the words of the headman. " Do you lament just as if you lost one of the members of your family ."

In fact, the conflicting details of the two characters are not fully displayed in the story. Nevertheless, we cannot blame the anecdote for this. Because, as Leach (1949: 56) underlines, most anecdotes consist single incidents or motifs. This anecdote, too, provides some background information however small it may be about the antagonistic relationship between the farmer and the local headman[“. . . a poor farmer . . . suffering from unjust practices of a local headman. . .”] It gives a clue to judge that there was power difference in the social structure. We have two apparent representatives from the contemporary social pyramid -the oppressed or and the oppressed. Here, the social consciousness by itself is not escapable. The farmer, the one who represents the peasants, is aware of the unjust treatment of the local administrator and reflects his violation indirectly rather than accepting the oppression as a matter of fate or as a thing descended down from heaven. Generally speaking, the cryptic words of the farmer tell us about the class struggle existing among the peasants and their local leaders.

3.1.2.3.2 Literary Technique Employed

The genuine artistic quality of the text concentrates on skillful choice of words. There are two significant words. ጥጋፊ (tägafī) and ጥጋፊ (täc'agn) with which the poem is be able to create literary pleasure. The words are quite conspicuous elements because they are capable of producing double meanings in themselves and, consequently, of interest in the audience. The *double meaning* situation helped the farmer in two ways: expressing his deep disappointment and escaping danger which could be possibly caused by the headman. The dual interest, which is important in literary satisfaction, makes the audience gain artistic pleasure. Let us treat these essential roles of the words separately.

The word ጥጋፊ (tägafī) is an adjective derived from an action verb ገፈ (gäffa). It holds two separate meanings without any linguistic changes (in

the anecdote above). One is the literal meaning which conceals the second one, the literary meaning. With regard to the context of the anecdote, the English equivalent phrase for the literal meaning (ተጋፊ), 'may be, *showing* This meaning directly suits the topic discussed in relation to the donkey. It merely tells that the donkey used to pass by, pushing people/ things aside, whatever heavy loads it carried, and this is quite true for strong donkeys. They move and pass forcefully, just carrying heavy things, even when they are obstructed by crowds of people. The farmer used this very word purposely and intentionally. Because in its *primary purpose* (we may call it initial goal) it has escapist function. The headman might understand the word relating with its contextual meaning, the strength and importance of the donkey. However the listener understands the gist of the message (the secondary goal), the speaker has the right to deny it.

The literary meaning of ተጋፊ (tägafi), with regard to the text above, may be translated into English as *oppressive*. This meaning doesn't have unity or coexistence with topic at hand, the strength and importance of the donkey. It is directed to disclose the farmer's deep embitterment caused by the local government. In other words the concealed meaning has an ultimate goal of showing the farmers judgment and attitudes as far as the headman is concerned. We gain the literary pleasure when we arrive at this cryptic meaning of the word.

The word ተጫኝ (täc'agn), similarly, has one literal (pretending) and hidden (intended) meanings simultaneously. It is derived from the verb ተጫኝ (täc'anä). According to the context of the anecdote, the literal meaning equals the English word loaded (beast of burden). This direct meaning either, if possible, deceives the hearer or gives way (for the speaker) to escape damaging consequences. Because, it simply implies the function of the donkey in bearing a heavy weight. The significance of the word becomes more vivid when we notice its second meaning which is employed out of the

context. It is out of the context because it has no contextual relation with the issue of the strength and importance of the donkey. Its second meaning (which is hidden for the present context) is equivalent to the English word domineering or oppressive or over - powering . This directly refers to the nature of the headman, according to the farmer.

These two significant words, ተጋራ and ተጫኝ are preceded by evaluative adjectives: *vigorously* and *very*, respectively. They, too, to provide, a certain extent some guide to infer the degree of the embetterment of the farmer.

To sum up, in the anecdote we observe a high level of literary effect produced by distinct word employment: words with two or more meanings. The choice demands not only rhyming and patterning effects but also technique of Amharic quine: employing words for their surface (initial goal) and underlying goals.

3.2. Global Analysis: highlighting some overall features of the anecdotes-

3.2.1. Recurrent Themes

V. Propp (1985: 43-44) clearly noted that in carrying out a task of classification, the folklorist is primarily expected to find out a “ selected feature” with objective “ criteria”. Then, Propp reminds, the selected feature should be examined on the basis of the following considerations.

- “The selected feature must reflect relevant aspects. . .” of material under investigation.
- “The selected feature must remain the same through out the classification; it can not vary.”
- “The basic feature must be formulated clearly, so as to preclude the possibility of different interpretations.”

When I come to my investigation, I have of course a selected feature, *the themes of the anecdotes*. However, the application of the three criteria to the themes of my anecdotes may run into certain difficulties, because the principles are obviously violated when we come to the actual categorization activities. Therefore, it appears to me that providing a complete framework for thematic classification is problematic for various reasons. First and for most, the day- to- day experiences of the society are horizontally vast and vertically deep. In actual fact, people meet with immensely multi-dimensional phenomena in their routine activities. Their social, environmental, spiritual, administrative, economic and other innumerable life features reinforce them to produce and/or to acquire and use many anecdotes with varieties of contents. This is one fact that makes categorization difficult.

Beyond this fact, particularly some texts happen to mirror multifarious aspects of human life and cosmic views. As one can examine from the attempted analysis of this chapter, layers and layers of meanings are dug out from a single narrative. For instance from textual sample analysis sample 1, we were able to propose two separate impressions: *role of fathers in family*

the overall impulses, judgments and inclinations of the society in a summarized way.

In providing the overall thematic glimpse, *reactions to injustice, feelings of uncertainty, attitudes towards women and attitudes towards other ethnic groups* may be given priority.

3.2.1.1. Reflections of Grievance

Reflections of grievance are commonly shown in many anecdotes. The woman slave is made to choose either her doom or unbearable torment. She is put under matchlessly serious conditions. The relentless measure reminds miscarriage of justice and total negligence of humanity. Her fear of death obliges her to receive horrible and shocking phenomena. The poor farmer, who lamented for his dead donkey, too, repeatedly suffered from class oppression. Sheh Jibril (an 12) was embittered because of unequal treatments of religions in the country. Many of the Muslims were forcefully converted to Christianity during Yohanness IV's and partly during Menelik's era. This angered the Muslim society. In addition to these, an, 13 an 15, an 27, and an 28 are witnessed as reactions to unjust actions. In other words, they show us the reactions of the society to oppressive people or situations of the society whenever it faces maltreating people or situations.

These anecdotes reveal something in common: in each of the texts we observe the consciousness and the rebellious actions of the society with respect to injustice. First and for most, the society is not ignorant of maltreatment, hurt, oppression, tyranny, etc. But it waits with tolerance. In fact , when things become its patience, when it burns with rage, it displays by the help of folk creation that is not perpetual receiver of unjust actions.

3.2.1.2. Feelings of Uncertainty

As I mentioned earlier, the Arsi-Robe agrarian society is found at a low level of development: it uses traditional methods and techniques of production and, furthermore, it is still influenced by primitive cosmic views. Because, the peasants are living in a less stage on their ascents towards the mastery of nature, even in our technological age, their total outputs are noticeably smaller as compared to the human labour and material wealth devoted to breeding of crops and domestic animals. Beside this fact, their understandings of their universe in general and their environment in particular have affected their physical and psychological being. They submit themselves entirely to the will of nature. If nature fails, to provide its generosity, they ascribe their misery to fate, rather than seeking scientific solutions to get out of the influence of nature and its attendants.

The miserable effects of nature particularly become evident and unbearable when the society encounters environmental catastrophes like drought, floods, epidemics etc. The people have no sustainable scientific or technological mechanisms / capacity to avoid or at least to minimize the dangers of such natural disasters. The perpetual occurrences, of such awful phenomena drive the society into ceaseless anxiety. Because its environment and its welfare are under the absolute control of nature and, moreover, it does not know when nature becomes open- handed or closefisted.

The anecdotes under the titles " RAINFALL IN OCTOBER", " A HIDDEN CURSE" " I DO NOT KNOW MY NAME " etc. can attest the apparent facts of social anxiety. In " RAINFALL IN OCTOBER", for example, the father cannot be sure to give promise of marrying his son because of the fact that he usually has faced hardship caused by shortage of rain in October and he is not sure, again, whether it would rain or not in that particular year . From the father's uncertainty , we notice the society suffers from deep fear of relentless weather condition.

as an 3 reveals, husbands may not be able to tend their wives if they give birth during summer because of the fact that there is shortage of provision. As the women cannot plan their time of pregnancy, husbands live in the state of tension as opposed to their strong desire of having many children.

Other anecdotes such as "WHAT GOD HAS FOREORDAINED WILL HAPPEN" and "REASONABLE DEBT", too, show some collective anxieties. Anecdotes of such anxieties are closely related to failure of man in determining his own destiny and consequently disclose his perpetual existence in terror of unexpected death.

3.2.1. Attitudes towards women

As it is evidently observed, there is a formidable assumption that women are physically weak, mentally shallow and emotionally excited. As a matter of fact, their social and economic role is given less attention. They have virtually no right over property though they , have similar positions and responsibilities with their husbands. For example in "RAIN IN OCTOBER" we may have indications to tell that women are not thought to be active (in the affairs of their family) as men are. To add one more thing, as we shall see later on, women are not users of anecdotes in public open places such as meetings of shengos and wärkas. Still some texts seem to be mirroring that social equality between the two sexes is somewhat far from the contemporary motto - like feminist saying ". . . woman has many qualities as man . . ." (Andersen, 1978:2).

Even though we lack many anecdotal narratives which enable us to contemplate the negative assumption of the society (with regard to women), an 1, an 8 and an 10 can be mentioned as good evidences. In the case of an 10, for example, we can witness that the king tries to explore the source of his dishonor. In other words, the king, who ought to deserve honour and respect,

gracelessly made to lose his noble social standards owing to having a daughter. When he identified the source of the embarrassment to be his daughter, he happened to grumble his fate of having a female child, which brought dishonor to his life. The implication is that femininity is the cause of humiliation or similar deplorable state for a family. The reason is that she is the chattel of men in general and her husband in particular. Men have no fear of legal reprisals to beat or commit any psychological harm on their wives.

We may add two other anecdotes. When we come to an 8, though it was the man's impotence which caused the humiliation, the lady has been an object of ridicule. Shortly, the society tries to project high concentration on her sexual discontentment rather than the initial reducing efforts and later defectiveness of the man, which appears to be unfair judgment of the society with regard to gender inequality. In an 7 we discern that men are usually victims of greedy wives because they have no knowledge of preparing food and lack awareness in understanding women's selfish nature. The husband observed the deeds of his wife accidentally. At first, he thought that, it seems, she might give him. But she was not willing to do so. When she understood that he was conscious of the matter, she decided to spoil the broth instead of sharing it with her husband. We may conclude that she is deceptive and miserly as well. Generally speaking, the thinking of the society, as far as women are concerned, seems to be eclipsed by vague and biased assumption rather objective realities.

3.2.1.4. Attitudes towards other Ethnic Groups

As I mentioned in chapter two, the socio-cultural behavior of the society is formed by the practices and outlooks of two ethnic groups- the Oromos and the Amharas. Even if we fail to tell the exact time, these people have lived together in that particular area. As a result, though there are certain traces of cultural and/or spiritual differences, they have already established unified

socio-cultural views. Particularly in the cases of the Christian Oromos and Amharas no one can point out a sign of difference- there is complete cultural and ethnic mixing. In general, there is a high sense of mutual understanding among the two societies and this in turn brought about a mixed social behavior.

We have about three anecdotes which reveal this general assumption. In an 9 wicked immoral individuals, having wrong impressions about the other society, have tried to provoke ethnic conflicts. However, their ideas were welcomed with ironic reproof. We sense that the elder's careful statements are not intended or directed to warn the Oromo people. Rather he aimed at scolding the instigators by telling them how catastrophic their awful feelings were. This indirectly reminds us of the tendency of fostering and encouraging tolerance among one's society which, consequently, reinforces people to create friendship and lay down the foundation of integrated co-existence/unity. If that elder, was likely to be disappointed by the settlement of the so-called Amharas , he had to suggest other and better alternatives to avoid them from the era. But he did not do that, rather scolded the elements of his own society.

Though I lack a good reason to suggest that an 6 and "TOLERATING SATIETY " conceal themes of mutual co-existence, it seems that there is a logic to argue that there are some indications which imply the positive psychological readiness of different ethnic groups to share experiences with one another. The Amharic speaking people, as Hailu Tegaw (one of my interviewees) told me, locally translated these anecdotes (and other oral creativities too) into Amharic and vice- versa. These informal acquisitions of views, philosophies, norms, and other cultural elements inturn promote, no doubt, intimacy. Ultimately, as the exchanges of views philosophies and norms become deeper and wider, the two societies willingly establish common out looks, which is the basis of integration.

3.2.2. Highlighting the Prominent Features of Forms

Under this sub- topic we may raise the dual features of the anecdotes (Proverbial/ narrative and prose/ verse) and technique of Amharic *quine*. Most of the anecdotes have proverbial characteristics in their forms and functions. I propose this assumption basing my argument on the “ salient features of proverbs” summarized by Miruka (1994: 37).

- short, terse or brief

This seems quite true for an 6, an 13. and the like in the sense that they are precise and just to the point.

- indirect, obscure and gnomic

An2, an 9, an12 and some other anecdotes may be mentioned as good examples. Their presentation of message is not literal and direct, instead one should think for a while to enjoy their literary meanings.

- relatively invariable/ fixed

This is true in the case of most of the anecdotes. any narrator should be intent on using each element of the an, 16,27 and an 8 so as not to ruin their contents and their flavours. A change of a word may spoil the whole thing.

- full of wisdom, truth or meaning

The anecdotes are mainly told for the sake of their wisdom as well as for the social facts they mirror.

In their function, too, anecdotes have similarities with proverbs. They are essentially employed to elaborate particular topics of discourse. In this case they are somewhat different from other forms of narratives, riddles, folk songs etc, in the sense that they are not performed for the sake of entertainment unless they are related in accordance with conversational

songs etc, in the sense that they are not performed for the sake of entertainment unless they are related in accordance with conversational contexts. This assumption is agreeable to Leach's (1949:56) proposition. She says the proverbial quality of anecdotes make them suitable for use in discourse.

On the other hand, the anecdotes are different from proverbs. Proverbs are usually "statements" (Miruka, 1994: 37) and they "speak of regular occurrences, rules of customs" (Pemykou, 1979: 10). But most of the anecdotes focus on particular characters and specific events. Moreover they provide, unlike proverbs, preliminary narration before they proceed to the concluding (amusing) part. For example, in an 13, the concluding part the Amharic quine, is presented after miniature story is related about the characters and the events took place before the actual quine was versified. We can observe this feature in most of the anecdotes shown in the appendix.

The other duality is reflected in their techniques of using prose and verse forms simultaneously. an 1, an 4, an 8, and an 13 can be good examples. In an 16, for example, we are provided with the traits and personalities of the characters in prose form, it can be taken as an introductory passage. But the main text, the dialogue between characters is marked by rhyme and metrical features. This may help us to witness that Ethiopians have a long tradition in poetry, particularly of Amharic quine versification.

3.2.3. Issues of Authorship

As far as authorship is concerned, the total anecdotes may be divided into two: some are anonymous and few are ascribed to specific individuals. an 1 an 2, an 10 and an 29, are for instance, told without identified originators. Whereas an 9, an 13 and an 26, are assumed to be creativities of certain people.

However, in the cases of the latter ones, we may lack credible evidences to confirm whether the anecdotes are attributed to the assumed originators or not. But the ascription may tell us some facts about the assumptions and attitudes of the community regarding the pseudo -originators. Especially the anecdotes taken as properties of kings or headmen can assert our argument. With respect to this point, the following considerations are of importance:

- significant assumptions, values and regards of the people, for the previous social elements is reflected
- interests of the native people in investigating fragments of historical issues is observed.
- desire of assessing legendary roots of stories seems apparent in the society, which is the indication of fact investigating habit in the society.

3.2.4. Performance

I agree with Miruka (1994:57) in my understanding of the term performance: “. . . the delivery or rendition of an item, usually to an audience”. It is an essential aspect in folk narrative activities. Anecdotes too are performed or told with great intent and interest. As my observation exhibited, narrators make every effort for their narratives to be attractive, comprehensible and meaningful. They are serious in choosing and try to be skillful in narration. As my informants told me, selection is made on the basis of the significance of the anecdote for the topic at hand. In performing a narrative, the contemporary interests and concerns are given emphasis. The narrator may shape the anecdote in accordance with his own interest or with the existing circumstances.

other argued,” It should be incense of the church”. The king would not accept this too. The officials tried many answers, but they were unable to find the exact answer that the king expected to be. Lastly, the king told them the answer smell of a baby.

When I asked the woman who that king was, she guessed it was Haile Sillassie. . . and told me to ask her husband. I asked the husband and he told me it is Menelik.

In fact, it is still difficult to know the exact originator of the anecdote since we have no tangible documents. But the interesting thing is that, there is certain differences between men and women in using such stories. The women told the anecdote just for its thematic effect. On the contrary, the husband added more historical elements when I asked him some background information about the anecdote. The implication is that (in fact it needs more investigation) men are not only interested in the motifs the anecdotes embody, but also they try to detect their folk sources and apply more elements to decorate their stories. The reason is that, I guess, the women are taken to be weak enough in their public roles as compared to men. Hence, they should not bother about the artistic presentation of the creativities since they are not invited to respected social scenes. But the men are curious to performance to achieve acceptance and popularity in their skillful use of language.

When we come to the actual practices of performance, the following things are widely observed:

- a) mentioning sources or previous contexts: most narrators mention individuals or occasions from where they acquire the anecdote.
- b) direct speech techniques: narrators, in most cases, try to present their stories using the direct words of the characters instead of reported speech.

- c) including subordinate oral arts: either narrators or listeners have habits of inserting sayings, or other anecdotes while an anecdote is being related
- d) strong tendency of interpreting the anecdotal stories in accordance with the topic at hand; I had no narrator who left his narrative without giving its significance in the discourse
- e) involvement of listeners in initiating, the narrator and in producing enriching materials (arguments, subordinate stories etc).

3.2.5. Reasons for Diffusion / Circulation and Transmission

To tell about the diffusion of the anecdotes we may need further investigation. The point seems interesting and researchable, since the society has some information about previous events and people. They mention their names and time of occurrences and enable us to know about attitudes of people towards the earlier headmen and situations. Some of the historical and social facts that took place in the remote past are transmitted from generation to generation. *by word of mouth*. The transmission of the anecdotes is made possible because of their literary nature and because of custom influence of elders and to some extent mass media, as my interviewee Tadesse Aychiluhm believes. Let us discuss these points shortly as follows:

- literary nature: style of composition and richness

Tadässa once said “Look , how they are precise but sweet! How can I forget them? Moreover, I am responsible to transmit them to my children and grandchildren. . .”. We can judge that their preciseness make the anecdotes understandable, recognized and transmissible with less difficulty. Furthermore, there is no need of extended time or special occasions for their performance. They can even be translated into other languages with less effort as compared to other oral arts.

Their literary elements are moralistic in nature. Due to such and other reasons people become eager to tell these types of stories from time to time in different places. This promotes the permeation of the anecdotes.

- habits

The native people are “addicted” to relating narratives, particularly proverbs and anecdotes, in their daily communication. This tendency, reinforces people to bring fresh stories in order to win interests of audience or to be called as “**ጩዋታ አዋቂ**” meaning “eloquent”. I asked Tadässä the reason for usually using oral arts in their communication. He shortly answered, “**ነገር በምሳሌ. .**” i.e. “ideas become vivid by oral artistry”. All in all, I may suggest, high interests in employing stories in conversation, increases the demand of searching for more narratives which are not stale. This in turn, logically speaking, promotes circulation of anecdotes.

- mass media

Especially in recent times, we encounter oral arts in different mass communication networks. This experience has its own role in permeating anecdotal stories too. Some farmers told me that sometimes folk songs, tales, proverbs and riddle - like creations are transmitted by radio (radio is the only accessible mass media in the area). I have seen that many farmers have small radios and, even some of them, radio cassettes. They receive nationwide and global information from radios. The situation seems to be helpful in the diffusion of oral arts to some degree.

- influence of elders’ attitudes towards earlier lives

Most of the legendary anecdotes in my data are collected from old people, who have strong national feelings. Not only do they have national feelings

but also appreciate the earlier times and the experiences of forefathers. These people receive high respect from the society. What they say and their experiences are highly valued in their community. As a result, when they relate narratives people listen attentively and transmit them to their children. That is, why Tadäsä says, “Narratives are treasures of my forefathers”.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Especially in the experience of non- literate society valuable social issues, historical events, anthropological evidence, etc. are accumulated in orality and the transmission is possible by word of mouth. The implication is that orality, the informal way of documenting and transmitting important information, has to do with bridging the wealth of artistic knowledge with the new generation. Moreover, human elements and environmental phenomena embedded in the folk memory have potency of establishing the full personality of the youth in terms of family responsibility, social ties and national identity.

On the contrary, as the young generation ignores its own native treasures and age-long social experience, and devours only the newly arrived cultures, the gap between forefathers and the latter generation grows wider and wider. In the meantime the new one remains without genuine originality. This in turn begets lack of self- identity and cultural crises. When such social landscapes the generation faces difficulties in forecasting its future existence.

In recent years, however, it seems that oral creations have received high global concern (Ojwang, 1994: 65) Historians, anthropologists, sociologists and other scholars concerned are investing their time and resources on exploring meanings of folk arts. This is because social sensations are brought to the foreground by lively atmosphere of presentation, performance. As Ong (1982: 35) argues, in oral arts collective feelings are communicated not only by means of deeper use of language but also by the help of colorful performances. That is why, I think, noble rank researchers like F.de Saussure called attention to “ the primacy of oral creativities” to written ones (Saussure in Oring, 1980: ix).

The topicality of folklore arts, especially for the past few decades, had aroused interests of researchers in our country too. Many students of literature, history, and the like have shown readiness in collecting and studying different forms of collective literature.

Nevertheless, the present experience shows that only little is carried out with respect to orality. As our country mothers abundant cultural and linguistic wealth, many indigenous oral resources are not fully explored. Moreover, as it is clearly observed from the available research products, researches are conducted on relatively similar oral types and on related social themes. Some of these studies primarily focus on collecting and grouping data, without discerning social issues and literary aspects reflected in the creations. Generally speaking, research on oral literature seems to be in its infancy, vertically or horizontally. All genres and subgenres, need to be closely examined in order to transmit indigenous feelings to the coming generation. In Amharic folkloric arts, for instance, the subgenre anecdote is, I think, overlooked or, at least, not exhaustively investigated in its own right. In other words, social issues and literary aspects reflected in Amharic folk anecdotes, particularly in Arsi-Robe area, have not been exhaustively studied. The implication is that we may lose significant fragments of social facts and literary treasures unless they are collected, studied and preserved. With this in mind, I carried out a research on Amharic anecdotes, taking a particular area, Robe wäräda.

After an investigation of the anecdotes, considerable social and literary aspects have been observed. In the wider sense, the texts and the natural contexts help us to understand the society and its life and literary experiences to some detail. We may relate the aspects discerned in the life of the society with sociological facts because they have remarkable things to disclose concerning the past and present social milieu. They show us how our forefathers had looked at their environment and reacted to it (take RAINFALL

anecdotes agree with the definition given by Holman and Harmon (1982:22), “A short narrative detailing particulars of an interesting episode”.

Whatever they are short and precise, arrangements of materials and significant elements cannot be overlooked. For example, if the arrangement of materials in “ THE ETERNAL CURSE” is destroyed, the narrative may lose its present flavour. Besides, if we change even a word in the anecdotes of Amharic quine, for instance, the aptness of the story is affected.

In some cases forms of archaic thoughts are inherent. In an 4, an 5, an 12, an 13 , an 17, an 19, and an 27 some linguistic and emotional elements appear to be associated with the earlier human experiences.

When we come to the nature of performance, freshness and narrator - narratee relationship become important. Anecdotes can be narrated at any time or/ and any where. From the most interesting contexts I have encountered, the three are worth mentioning.

- family leisure talks
- places of minor peace- making (ordinary reconciliation held at home or on campus)
- “ formal” social gatherings such as shengos, wärkas and the like.

In such and similar actual and immediate situations I found the texts with their captivating moods. Feelings become colorfully vivid and fresh. Having attended few social scenes, I have come to understand that the anecdotes (however they are employed in a limited share) are told with creative moods, aesthetic inspiration and with thematic intent/ interest. The narrator actively involves “multi-media” (Miruka, 1994, 156) narrative technique: an impressive tone, purposeful pause, meaningful break of talk, etc. By making vivid elaboration of the effect of his stories on the topic at hand, he provides the thematic value of his narratives.

The listeners, on their part, are not passive observers of what is being told. Rather they listen attentively and participate freely for the achievement of the aesthetic and thematic values of the anecdotes. They listen with interest, interrupt when necessary, supplement the story with other subordinate information or ideas, express admiration or violate what is said, etc without fear or without restraint. This is how the context of texts become attractive, meaningful and lively in the local / actual practices. This phenomena remind us Miruka's notion of narrative friendly relationship: no discrimination, rather the two parties create mutual co-operations which arouse intrinsic motivation and voluntary participation.

To sum up, as many scholars argue (Propp, 1985:17), from all forms of folkloric works folktales have high attachment to social reality, anecdotal narratives being good instances. True, the Amharic anecdotes dealt with in this thesis retain certain human experiences which attest the existence of Amharic speaking people in the area. Few people may assume that dominant cultures totally assimilate the minorities, as it is thought in the case of Amharic speaking people in Arsi-Robe areas. This has to be a misleading conception. These people still have their own original linguistic and philosophical identities and, as a result, in the newly established cultures and outlooks we can probe their peculiar arm prints. By implication, the society struggles, by every possible means, for the ever existence of its identity. Hence, perpetual investigations can be held to explore further folk treasures in order to document them for future use.

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**አለማየሁ ሞገስ ። 1952 ። መልካዓ ኢትዮጵያ ። አስመራ፤ ኮኮበ ፅባህ ዘማኅበረ ሀዋርያት
ፍሬ ኃይማኖት ማተሚያ ቤት ።**

_____ 1954 ። የአማርኛ ግጥምና ቅኔ ማስተማሪያ ። አዲስ አበባ፤ ብርሃንና ሰ
ላም ቀዳማዊ ኃይለ ስላሴ ማተሚያ ቤት ።

**እንግዳ ወልደ ሰማያት ። 1974 ። “በጭላሎ አውራጃ በአሜሪካ የሰማኋቸው ተረቶች” ለ
ኢትዮጵያ ቋንቋዎችና ስነፅሁፍ ክፍል ለአርትስ ባችለር ዲግሪ ማሟያ የቀረበ
ፅሁፍ፣ አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ.**

APPENDIX ONE

(The Amharic version for Contextual texts)

የዘላለም እርግግን (ናሙና 1)

1. ተራ⁺ : (አባትዬው)፤ የተከበራችሁ ሸማግሌዎች (በከፍተኛ አክብሮት)፤ ስማችሁ፤ . . . ከንቱ ልጅ የወለደ አባት አድሜ ልኩን ሲቃጠል ይኖራል። ማንም ቢሆን፤ በርጉም ልጅ ምክንያት ተሟመጣ መከራ አያመልጥም። አበሳው ታባት ለልጅ ተልጅም ለልጅ ልጅ ሲተላለፍ ይኖራል፤ በዙር ለሁሉም ይዳረሳል። ይህን በተመለከተ አባቴ፤ ነፍሱን ይማረውና፤ (ዓይኑና ጨፈን አድርጎ ዝም አለ)፤ አዎን አባቴ አንድ ተረት ይተርት ነበር. . . እድለ ቢስ አባትን የተመለከተ ተረት።
2. አድ⁺ 1: (አንደኛው ሸማግሌ) ተረት መስማት ደስ ያሰኛል. . . በተለይ ደግሞ የአተ አባት ይተርታቸው የነበሩት አዎን. . . አዎን. . . እርግጥ ነው። አባትህ ጨዋታ አዋቂና ብልህ ሰው ነበር። የእግዚሃርም ሰው ነበር። ምን ይሆናል. . . ! የሱ ቤተሰብ ብቻ አይደለም የተጎዳው። አገርም የሰላም አባትና የደሃዎች አለኝታ አጥቷል። (ሁሉም ሸማግሌዎች አንዳንድ ቃላትን በመናገርና በልዩ ልዩ ምልክቶች የሸማግሌውን ሃሳብ መደገፋቸውን ሲገልፁ፤ ከተራኪው ፊት ላይ ደስታ ይነበብ ነበር)
3. አድ 2: (በትልቅ ጉጉት) መቼም ውነት ነው። ምንም አላግባብ የተባለ ነገር የለም። አባትህን የምናስታውሰው፤ ላገር በዋለው ውለታ ብቻም ሳይሆን፤ ግሩም በሆኑት ተረቶቹና ምሳሌዎቹም ነው። አሁን ውነተኛው ቦታ ሄዷል። ወደ ሰማይ አንጋጠጠ)። እስቲ እማ ተረቱን አምጣው።
4. ተራ: በድሮ ጊዜ ነው አሉ። ልጅ አባቴን በደለ ይባላል። የተበደለ አባት በነጋ በጠባው ልጁን ሊገስጥ ሞገረ። ልጅ ግን ያባቴን መች ቁጣ ሰምቶ የአባት ድካም ሁሉ በከንቱ ቀረ። (በሃዘን አቀረቀረ)
5. አድ 3: አይሄሄ መድኃኒዓለም የተከበረውን ታልሰጠ ማንም ሰው በቁጣና በምክር ልጁን ሰው ሊያደርግ አይችልም. . . አያችሁ፤ ልክ የሞተ አህያ ውሼ እንደማለት ነው. . . ውሃ መውቀጥ ነው።
6. ተራ: ውነት ነው። ይህን እግዚሃር ነው ያናገረዎት። አሁን የምነግራችሁ ተረትም እንዲሁ ያለ ነገር የሚገልጥ ነው። ደሞም በኔ እድል የታየ ነው (ዝምታ)።
7. አድች^{***} : (በልዩ ልዩ መንገድ ታሪኩ እንዲቀጥል ጎተጎቱ)
8. ተራ: ከያ በኋላ አባትየው ተመጠን ያለፈ አረረ። እናም፤ በገዛ ልጁ ላይ የርግግን መዓት ያወርድበት ጀመር። ምን ያርገው? ብድሩ ይኸው ነው። አንጀቱ ያረረ አባት!
9. አድ 2: የለም፤ የለም. . . (በመቃወም ስሜት) በኃይል ተሳስቷል። " ልጅን መርገምና ራስጌ መሸናት ባናት ጉዳት" የሚለውን ተረት አልሰማም መሰል በሉ።

⁺ ተራ = ተራኪ. (ተረት ተራች)
^{*} አድ = አድማጭ
^{**} አድች = አድማጮች

ንካ ያለው አይቀርም (ናሙና 2)

1. ተራ: ድሮ - ድሮ ነው አሉ፤ አንድ አገር የረታ ጀግና፣ ይነሳና በዋሻ ከሚኖር ባህታዊ ዘንድ ይሄዳል፤ የማታ እድሉ ምን እንደሆነ ሊጠይቅ " ን ጉስ ትሆናለህ፣ አገርህንም በሰላም ትገዛለህ" አለው ባህታዊው።
2. አድ: በጄ. . . ከዚያስ. . .
3. ተራ: ያ ጀግና ባያሌው ተደሰተ ። ግን ሌላ ጥያቄም አቀረበ። " እባክዎን ፣ እንዴት እንደምሞት ቢነግሩኝ፤ በምን እንደምሞት ቢነግሩኝ።"
4. አድ: እንዲህ ያለ አጉል ጥያቄ መጠየቁ ምን ይረባኝ ብሎ ነው?
5. ተራ: እንዲያው ! (አድማጩ ተራኪው ተረቱን ይቀጥል ዘንድ ገፋፋው)" እባክህ [አለ ባህታዊው] ተወኝ። ልቤ የማይፈቅደውን ነገር አታናግረኝ። አሁን እንዲህ ያለው ነገር ምን ያረግልሃል?" [ሲል ጠየቀ ባህታዊው]። ጀግናው ግን ሙዝዝ ብሎ ያንን ቅዱስ ሰው ይወተውት ጀመር። " መቼም አርስዎ የእግዚሃር ሰው ነዎትና፣ በምድር- በሰማይ ያለው ነገር ሁሉ በእጅዎ እንደሆነ አውቃለሁ፤ መልሱንም ሊነግሩኝ ይቻልዎታል። እናም፣ በእግዚአብሔር ይሁንብዎት ይንገሩኝ።"
6. አድ: (ሳቅና መገረም፤ ከጀግናው ልምምጥና ሙጥኝ ማለት የተነሳ)
7. ተራ: ባህታዊውም እንዲህ አለ፣ " የእግዚርን ስም ከጠራህብኝማ፣ ምን ገዶኝ፣ እነግርሃለሁ። በኩሬ ትሞታለህ። " ደነገጠም ተገረመም (ተራኪው ሳቅ)። " ቅዱስ ሆይ ይህማ እንዴት ይሆናል. . . ? እባክዎን፣ በጠመንጃ ያርጉልኝ።"
8. አድ: እንዴ የተወሰነው እጣ እንዲቀየር ፈለገ (በመገረም ዓይነት)?
9. ተራ: (. . . የአድማጩን ጥያቄ ከጉዳዩ ሳይጥፈው ተረቱን ቀጠለ ይህማ በፍጥረት አቅም አይሆንም [ለነገሩ] ባንተ መሞቻ ማን ሊሞት?" (አጭር ዝምታ) " መቼ ነው የምሞተው?" [ሲል ጠየቀ ጀግናው] ። " በዚህ ወር፣ በዚህ ቀን" ሲል መለሰ ባህታዊው። " እባክዎትን " [አሁንም ልመናውን ቀጠለ] ያችን ወርና ቀን እንዳልፋት መላ ፈልጉልኝ።"
10. አድ: የሚሞትበትን ቀን ማለቱ ነው?
11. ተራ: አዎና. . . ጠየቀ።" ቀኑን አሳልፋልኝ" (ያልተፈለገ አፍታ ተፈጠረ ። እናም ተራኪው ነገሮችን እንደገና ማስተካከል ነበረበት።) " ከዚያ ቀን በፊት ያድርጉልኝ" ያንተን ማን ሊበላ" [አለ ባህታዊው]።
12. አድ: ግርምት ያዘለ ሳቅ
13. ተራ: " ወደፊት አስተላልፋልኝ" [ጀግናው ለመነ] " የማንን ልትበላ?" [አቅጩን ነገረው] (በሁለቱም በኩል ሳቅና ግርምት ይታይ ነበር) (ተራኪው ተረቱ ማለቁን ያረጋገጠው፣ የተለመደውን የተረት መቋጫ ብልሃት ተጠቅሞ ነው)

ተረቱን መልሱ፣
አፌን በዳቦ አብሱ።

(ተራኪው ቀጠለ) እንግዲህ ተመልከቱልኝ፣ የሰው መሞቻው በእግዚር እጅ ውስጥ ነው። ጌታቸው ራሱን ማዳን አልቻለም። ያቺ የተጣፈችለት እድሉ አንቀሻቅዣ ወደ ወጥመዱ ወሰደችው። መቼም፣ ከእሱ በላይ ብልጥ ከሱ ወዲያ ዘዴኛ ሳሳር ነው ። ሰው እድሉን በእጁ የሚይዛት ቢሆን ኖሮ፣ ጌታቸው ያችን ቀን ያልፋት ነበር። ነገሩ ሌላ ሆነና ሮጦ ሄዶ ገባ፤ ሞተ።

ልጅ በዕድሉ ያድጋል (ናሙና 3)

1. አድ: ነገሩን በምን አንስታችሁ ነው ወንድምጥላ ተረቱን የነገረሽ?
2. ተራ: ከፋኝ . . . እንደዚያ ነው . . . አዎ . . .
3. አድ: አህ . . .
4. ተራ: " እነዚያን ልጆች ለምን ለቀቅሽ? " ብሎ ጠየቀኝ (በንግግሯ ውስጥ ወንድሙ ለአሷ ያለውን ሀዘኔታ ለማሳየት ትሞክራለች) "አባክህ፣ ወንድም ጥላ፣ አልቻልኩም። ይችንም እሰጣለሁ " አልኩት"
5. አድ: የትኛዋን ማለትሽ ነው፣ ሚጡን?
6. ተራ: ስንታየሁን (የስድስት ዓመት ልጅ)
7. አድ: አህ . . .
8. ተራ: " ተሞኝሽ!" አለኝ በሀዘኔታ። " አየሽ፣ እነሱ የእድላቸውን ነው የሚበሉት። እህቴ ሆይ እንዲያው ሳይቸግርሽ ነው እህቴ ሆይ . . . እስቲ ምን አስጨነቀሽ? ያላገባብ ነው ስጋትሽ " አለኝ። አይይ . . . ሁናቴዬን ሁሉ ሳየው የምችል አይደለሁም፤ ችግሩ የትየሌሌ ነው። አቅም የለኝም . . . ሽረ አልችልም . . . የለም አልችልም . . ." አልኩ።
9. አድ: አአአ . . .
10. ተራ: " ሰውዬው ያለውን ሰማሽ?" አለኝ። " ባልና ሚስት ዘጠኝ ልጆች ነበሯቸው። ነገር ግን የአለት ቁራሽም ያጥጣቸው ነበር። እያደር ችግሩ ሲጠናባቸው በልመና ለመኖር ተሰማሙ።"
11. አድ: ከድህነታቸው ጥናት የተነሳ?
12. ተራ: አህሳ . . . (የወንድሟን ተረትና አተራረት እንደተባለው ለማቅረብ ቀጠለች)" በዚህ ተሰማሙና (በልመናው ጉዳይ) ባልና ሚስት ልመና ተሰማሩ ፤ ስልቻቸውን ይዘው።"

የዋሉበት ቀናቸውና፣ ማታ ሲመለሱ፣ ዘጠኝ ቁና እህል ይዘው መጡ። ቤተወጣው አጅጉን ደስ አለው። ይህንኑ ተግባር ስራዬ ሆይ ብለው በመያዝ በየአለቱ ዘጠኝ ቁና ይዘው ይገቡ ጀመር።

" የኋላ - ኋላ፣ ባልየው አንድ ምክር አመጣ። አንቺ ሰው ከበርን፣ ደሞም ተዚህ የበለጠ መክበር እንችላለን። ሁለቱን ልጆቻችንን ብንቀጥራቸውስ? እናም የነሱን ቀሰብ ብናጠራቅም ሃብታሞች እንሆናለን። እሷም ደግ ነው አለችና ልጆቹ እሰው ቤት ተቀጠሩ። ባልና ሚስት እንደልማዳቸው ተልመናቸው ዋሉ። በያ ቀን ግን ሰባት ቁና ብቻ ይዘው ገቡ።"

13. አድ: የሁለቱ ልጆች ድርሻ ተቀነሰ ማለት ነው . . . ?
14. ተራ: መሆኑ ነው። " ነገሩ ከነከናቸው። አሁንም ሁለቱን ልጆች በመቅጠር የተጓደለባቸውን ሁለት ቁና ሊያሟሉ ከጀሉ። ያሰቡትንም አደረጉ።" አለ። " በማግስቱም ለመኑ፤ ግን አምስት ቁና ብቻ አገኙ። ተናደዱና አሁንም ሁለት ልጆቻቸውን ተሰው ቤት ቀጠሩ። ነገሩ አላማረም፤ ይባስ ብሎ ሶስት ቁና ብቻ ይዘው ተመለሱ።

" በስተመጨረሻ፣ አንድ ልጅ ሲቀራቸውና አንድ ቁና ብቻ እንጠልጥለው ሲገቡ፣ ባልዬው ነገሩ ገባውና ሚስቱን አንቺ ሰው አየሽ፣ ነገራችን ሁሉ አጉል ብልጠት ኖሯል። ልጆቻችንን መሰብሰብ አሰብን። " እሷም የሱን

አባባል ተቀበለችው። በቅድሚያ ሁለቱን ልጆች አመጡና ነገሩን አዩት፤ ሁለት ቁና ተጨማሪ እህል አግኝተው ገቡ። ሌሎችንም አመጡ። እህሉም ተጨመረላቸው። ዘጠኙንም ልጆቻቸውን ከሰበሰቡ በኋላ ዘጠኝ- ዘጠኝ ቁና እህላቸውን ያገኙ ጀመር።"

15. አድ: አሁን ገባኝ፤ ለካሰ " ልጅ በአድሱ ያድጋል" የሚለው አባባል ከዚህ ተረት የመጣ ነው።

16. ተራ: " የምታበያቸው አንቺ አይደለሽም፤ " ልጆቹን የበታተንሻቸው አላገባብ ነው" አለኝ።

17. አድ: ወንድምጥላ ትልቅ ነገር ነው ያለው።

18. ተራ: እንዲህ አለኝ እኔም ልቤ ተነካ። ደሞም አገማገምሁ። እጥላሁን ጋ በነበርኩ ጊዜ ምን ነበረኝ (የቀድሞ ደጋፊ ዘመዲ)? የለት ቁራሽ እሱ ነበር የሚጥልልኝ። እንዲያውም፣ እነዚህ ልጆች ከመጡ በኋላ፤ በጎች በጋጣ፣ ከብቶችም በበረት አየሁ። እንዲያው፣ ወንድምጥላ ያለው ነገር ትክክል ነው። ተንግዲህ አልሞኝም። ነፍሴ እስታለ፣ ልጆቹን ታጠገቤ አለኝም። ወንድምጥላ እንዲህ ብሎ ተርቷል። አምላኬ ተውልኝ!

APPENDIX TWO

an 1:UNGRATEFUL LADY

An elder of a community married a daughter to a good mannered and wealthy husband. After sometime, that old man paid a visit to the married daughter to investigate the life she was leading. She told him that she was living a luxurious life with her beloved husband.

The old man was very happy because he contributed a great deal by pairing her with such a good person. Assuming that his choice was accredited with effectiveness, the man said, “ My dear, you should appreciate me for marrying you to a noble husband of good character. The lady rejected this idea , and in her refusal she said, “ No, no, it is once destined to happen by God.” The man was ashamed of his words and left.

In the meantime, the lady lost her husband. The same elder brought the widowed woman a second husband and she got married again. But the second husband was a trying sort to live as she was accustomed to previously. When that elder went to her home to visit her, she resentfully reproached the old man because of the fact that he made her marry such a wicked husband. “ Please, “ said the elder, “ try to comfort yourself, it is determined in advance by your fate.”

“No;. . .” the lass excitedly retorted,: it is you who caused misery to my life, not my fate “ .She concluded by saying the following poetic expression.

ከፋ ለማጭን በጦር
ደግ ለማጭን መጦር

I wish,

He who marries daughters to a wicked husband , should be speared;

He who couples daughters to a well -mannered husband should be cared for (when he becomes aged).

an 2: I DON'T KNOW MY NAME:

A stranger met an elder, by chance, and requested him to show him the residence of the family he was going to visit. The old man helped the stranger in finding the direction. Then the stranger expressed his gratitude and asked the old man what his name was , just for the sake of better acquaintance.

The old man replied, “ I don’t know my name” . The stranger was puzzled. He assumed that the old man was suffering from senility. He tried to investigate whether or not the elder was in his dotage. “ why, you answered my first request properly but you refuse to tell me your name. Do you suspect me of spying into your personal affairs?”

The old man, with attractive composure, “ No sir, it is because I don’t know what my name will be . My future destiny determines my authentic name”. The stranger retorted, “ What do you mean by that, you respected elder?”

“You see” elaborated the elder, “ If I lose my sight people will call me ‘ the blind man’ If my ears fail to function, my name will be ; ‘ the deaf man’, and similarly, if legs become defective, I will be called ‘ lame’ and so forth. Therefore, by what manner of means can I tell my name certainly now?”

an 3: A HIDDEN CURSE

A father intended to test the wisdom of his son by asking the following question. “ Once upon a time, a father said to his son, ‘ May your cow give birth in January and your wife in June’ Did the father like his son or dislike.”

The son thought for a moment, then answered,” It is certainly true that he loved his son , because he blessed him.”

The father felt resentment because the son interpreted the idea mistakenly. then corrected him thus: “ the father said words of curse to his son. Because, if his cow bears in January, he has no fresh grass or sufficient forage to feed it satisfactory.”

“ How about in the case of the wife?” asked the son. “ It is also a curse “ answered the father. “ There are many reasons for this. In the first place, June is a chilly and unpleasant month for the newly born baby and its mother. In the second, the family doesn’t afford to tend the woman sufficiently due to shortage of provision. Thirdly, the husband lacks the help of his wife, while he is so busy, as the time is season of tillage and cleaning ploughed land of weeds.”

an 4: HUMMING A GRIEVANCE

A woman slave was forced either to be killed or to grind dry horse beans carrying a cat on her bare shoulders / back. Neither of them was good option for her. Unwillingly enough, she chose the second. then started her duty.

While she was grinding, moving to and from, the cat scratched the woman with its sharp pointing claws for fearing that it might fall down. The woman received sufferings beyond telling. As her back and shoulders covered with lines of scratches and dripping blood, she hummed the following verse.

**ከመጥት መሰንበት ይሻለኛል ብዬ
ባቄላ እፈጫለሁ ድመቴን አዝዬ**

Assuming / supposing that living is better than death,
I am grinding horse beans carrying a cat.

an 5: REASONABLE DEBT

Once upon a time two men were accused of debt and taken to the king for justice would be given. Before making decision the king asked both individuals their reason to get into debt. One of them said, “ I borrowed the money because I wanted to have good meal (non fasting meal) when I broke the Lent” The other guy replied, “ I borrowed the money to receive the forthcoming fasting days (the Lent)with splendid food ”.

Lastly, justice was done. the king ruled against the favour of the first speaker to pay the debt, with its interest. But the second one was released free. the king gave reason for his judgment. “You, the first respondent, your wrong deserves punishment because eventhough you are poor and unable to break the fasting with good food, you should be patient in spite of the fact that you might eat on the morrow or some other day when you find your own income” . But the second man was not wrong, in the eyes of the king, as he might die before the long fasting period was over.

an 6: UNLUCKY FAMILY

(the following anecdote is locally rendered into Amharic from its native source, Oromifa.)

A man saw a warthog in the forest and wanted to seize it in order to tame it and use as a burden beast. But he was unable to exact what he needed. He devoted his efforts and time, for the whole day, running after the warthog. However, he was unsuccessful. Lastly, he said,” It is absurd of me! I have attempted something nonsense, because my family is lucky to have donkey/ ass”.

an 7: A GREEDY WIFE

A man had a greedy wife. On one evening, she intended to prepare broth and to have it alone. the husband was observing the matter while she was cooking the broth. they stayed for a long time waiting for one another for action. The wife expected that he would sleep soon. the husband, on his part, desired eagerly to share the broth.

In the end, the following dialogue took/ place.

Wife: go and sleep (ተነሰ ተኛ)

Husband: Let the cooking stone sleep (ጉልቻው መኝ ተኛ?)

Wife: Well, warm yourself / it is broth (መቅጥ)

Husband: I have known it exactly (እኔም አውቄ ነህ)

Wife: I will spill it taking outside (አውጥቼ እደፋዋለሁ)

Husband: Food never kill people, I will lick it going there
(እህል ሰው አይገልም፤ ወጥቼ አልሳለሁ)

an 8: WHY ANGRY?

A man besought a lady to practice adultery with him. She willingly accepted the request. when they happened to exact the intercourse, the man was , “Unfortunately” unable to act, lacked the sexual power.

Finally he let her go. she was excitedly angry. starting from that day one, these two people were not one speaking terms.

After sometime, the man lost his child. According to the custom, people, especially neighbors, should go to the bereaved man’s home to sympathize with him on his bereavement. However, the lady was absent from his home because they were in the sulks since he blunted her appetite of sexuality before. But she went to church for the funeral ceremony, not to be isolated from the society. the bereaved observed all these things and expressed his deep feelings in the following way:

**ሲሆን ጎረቤት ነሽ ለቅሶዬ በመጣሽ
እኔን ለሞተብኝ አንቺን ምን አስቆጣሽ**

Since you are my neighbor, you should come to my lamentation;

Why are you angry at my bereavement / at my failure of sexual potency?

an 9: IRONIC REPROOF

In the earlier times, some troublesome individuals attempted to initiate the Arsi -Oromo people to attack the Amharic speaking inhabitants of the area. they said, "These Amharias came to our region to exploit our resources. Before they expand and influence the area, let us exterminate them." Hearing this, Bidu Abdo one of the Arsi elders, responded," I agree with your plan and motives . So let us organize our people and mobilize all of our forces to Shoa because the extermination should be possible by destroying the Amharas from their root, Shoa.

an 10: A KING IS DISGRACED

A young woman, daughter of a king, quarreled with her husband. Her father, along with respected elders, tried to restore her marriage life. when the elders asked her why she was offended, she exceedingly became irritated and refused to tell. Furthermore, she swore that she never dine with that husband from the same meal -table (ማዕድ) and divorce was the only option.

Her situation gave the father and other elders a great trouble. After a long negotiation, however, she told the reason which made her bitter." He insulted me" she said. "What kind of insult did he speak to you?" asked the elders, filled with astonishment.

" I don't dare speak it in front of such noble people, it is just crying shame on myself (ሞኝን አንዴ ስደበው ዓይነት ነው)" said she.

The elders cajoled her into the matter but she still resisted the tempting advice. Lastly, as she became very trying, the king became out of tempter and threatened her to reconcile with her husband. she replied, " do you force me to tolerate him as he insults me calling bastard (የታባሽ) I have been a disgrace to my father" the young woman sobbed.

The king, restrained his anger and said, " It is absurd of you to feel resentment against your partner for he

disgraced me. Because, I incited myself to dishonor when I begot a daughter. . . you, a female child.”

an 11: THE MEANING OF SATAN

A woman became sterile and her childlessness extremely disturbed her because of the fact that she assumed herself deficient and incomplete in front of the society. The situation gradually drove her into serious mental disturbance. To escape her psychological tension she repeatedly cried to God for He would give her a child. But no response was given to her prayer still barren.

At the climax she started beseeching Satan to make her mother of a child and vowed to give a *gabi* as an offering (ሰጸሰት). Luckily, Satan gave her a smart child. She was really happy. But in order to deliver the vow she didn't know the exact address of Satan. She thought of church, it is assumed to be a sacred place of God. Mosques; people believe that it is a place of worship with regard to Allah. For that matter, she didn't know, even what Satan looks like physically.

In the end she went to an elder, to find a solution. The elders, whom she considered as intelligent and farsighted, told her who Satan is: a person who refuses reconciliation with his fellows.

an 12: “NO MANHOOD IN WÄLLO”

There was an eloquent person called Sheh Jibril who lived in Wällo. During Menelik's era, he was caught at a check point as he was crossing to a forbidden area. For the astonishment of the guards, he was wearing clothes of ladies and moreover, acted as though he was a woman. As it usually happens, the guards asked his name “ I am called Wälätä Mariam” he said. The concerned people became more angry and said , “ Do you still try to cheat us supporting that we blindly believe you are a woman?” “ Oh, I think, you are wrong have you ever seen a man (brave) in Wällo?” asked Jibril.

AN 13: HAILU'S GRIEVANCE

Ras Hailu Täklä Haimanot was sent from peace to peace into exile. His last place of exile was thought to be at T'icho, one of old towns in Arsi zone. when he reached Ticho for the first time he versed:

**ሰው በድዩ ኖሮ ሳላውቅ እንደ ዋዛ
ቁናው ቁናዬ ነው ዙሩ የኔ በዛ።**

I certainly offended people, unknowingly and casually;
It is my own basket I deserve the payment but the degree
of my suffering became beyond limit.

an 14: THE TRUTH IS REVEALED

A young woman quarreled with her husband and refused to restore peace. One day the husband came with elders in order to discuss the matter with his touchy wife and passed the night at her family's home, where she stayed after their quarrel. they passed the whole evening coaxing the obstinate woman, but their efforts remain unfruitful. they concluded that it was impossible to restore peace among the couple.

Lastly, the elder and the husband decided to abandon their attempts and leave for their home. But, as it was getting too dark and it was a moonless night, they were made to pass the night at the daughter's family home. In the morning, before the guests left, something took place. When that stubborn woman tried to get up and out on her dress, her dress fell down suddenly and she become naked. when she turned around, shyly, everyone, including her husband and her father, was looking at her. First her naked lap was facing her father. As soon as she recognized that the father glanced at her, she became embarrassed and turned about herself to the husband not to allow her father see her genitals.

As the father observed this coincidence and its effect, obliged his daughter to reconcile with her husband for that she internally loved her husband than her father.

AN 15: "A PUZZLE"

A bandit found an *azimari** while happening to cross a flash flood river. The *azimari* was quite alarmed when he saw the bandit. the bandit , on his part, became happiest in the sense that he found a singer carrying his *masink'o*. Then, threatening to kill, he forced the *azimari* to entertain him by playing the *masink'o* and by singing a sweet song.. He played for a longtime. There was no applause or item reward to motivate him. It was only the bandit alone who was listening sitting on a rock. It is at that particular time the *azimari* said the following verse:

**ለውሃ እንዳልነገረው ይህ ዳል በቶሎ
ለድንጋይ አልነገረው አይሰማ ደንቆሮ፣
እንዴት ያለው ጉዳይ ገጠመኝ ዘንድሮ**

I can not tell the flood , it rushes with violent speed;
I can not tell the rock, it is deaf
what puzzling thing I came across these days!

AN 16: CRYPTIC RESPONSE

Certain thieves once stole a fattened sheep (*መክት*) from their fellow. They thought that the owner was not aware of their bad and despicable act. Furthermore, they took him as a naive one. One day, when they met him by chance, they tried to ridicule him in this way:

**እርስዎም ሳይነገሩን እኛም ሳንፈልግ
የሚያሳዝን የለም እንደ እርስዎ በግ።**

For you didn't inform us in order to help you in searching [for your sheep];
Nothing makes us sorrowful equally to your sheep/ your naivety

the loser immediately understood their veiled insult and challenged thus:

**ዋለ ሰነበተ ከጠፋብኝ በጉ
እስቲ እየጋጣችሁ እናንተም ፈልጉ።**

Many days have passed since it strayed;
Please, you too search for it in your stable / gnawing its bone.

* *azimari* = traditional singer using the native musical instrument, *masink'o*

an 17: THE LION HUNTER

There was a well - known litigant (ተግጋኝ) called Abäbäch Bäze in Ticho area. while she was disputing against her foe (ባላንጣ) - antagonist he blamed, “Why, you become conceited as a hero (a famous hunter) who killed a lion (“ምን አንበሳ አንደገደለ አዳኝ ትጎማለያለሽ!?”). She responded, " Of course, I killed the lion, but I can not find a tanner who tans the lämid* for me “ (she did say this that the man was from the outcast social class, cottage artisans.

an 18. SHOULD I REMAIN STRETCHING MYSELF

When a husband got his home his wife was in bed with her usual lover. He became nervous and pounced vigorously at the lover. The lover had no option except defending himself courageously. After a long fight, the husband wore out and fell down under the antagonist, the lover. Noticing this, the wife said to her husband “Why, are you going to be defeated . Oh you should get up and brave him forcefully!” The husband retorted,

አንቺ ባመጣሽው ጣጣ ተገትሬ ልደር!

Should I remain stretching myself despite the trouble you begot?

an. 19. MIXED BEHAVIOUR

During Thewodros’s era, a cow bore a strange creature, the upper part of which looked like human being and the rest that of a beast. People took this unusual creature to the king and asked him what they should do with it. The king said, “ Slaughter it and give the meat for Christian people who live with pegans”.

an 20. A WISE GIRL

God asked an unmarried girl what her desire was, beauty or skill of home management (ሙያ) . She besought him, “ Please God, give me beauty; I can learn the skill from neighbors” God was pleased and said,” You know what you should ask.”

an 21. THE MALTREATED HUSBAND

A man had a very lazy wife. His usual food items were things like roasted beans and unleavened bread. Surprisingly enough, he was ignorant of the wife’s laziness. He believed that she was diligent and skillful because he knew no other women, except his mother, who

* lämid = lion skin prepared for upper garments of heroes, particularly patriots.

herself was slovenly. After many years he lost his wife. He wept bitterly assuming there was no substitute for her.

As it was difficult to lead life without a wife, particularly for the peasantry, he was forced - to marry a second wife. The second wife was clever and skillful. She got up early in the morning to accomplish household tasks and went out with him to assist him on the farm. He was exceedingly surprised.

One day, she served him a delicious meal. As soon as he tasted the food, he became furious and immediately stood up and started flogging her. She cried and begged him to let her alone . But he continued beating her relentlessly. Neighbors rushed to the couple and intervened . Then the neighbors asked the husband the cause of their quarrel. He, still nervous, said, “ Where was she all of those days when I was maltreated?”

an 22. ESCAPING THE ALIVE MAN

Shimekt, a local headman (ጭቃ ሹም), was publicly known in Ticho area for beating thieves and cowards. Once people brought two men to Shimeket supposing that one of them would receive flogging and the other reward. The man who was expected to be flogged was accused of cowardice. Because he ran away, carrying a loaded gun, while the other was rushing to fight him with a ploughing whip. They proposed that the first should be flogged and the later rewarded.

When Shimekt asked the one who was said to be a coward, he said, “ Sir, is it not better to escape the living man than the dead body?” (ሬሳ ከምሽሽ፣ ሰው ብሽሽ አይሻልምን?) Shimekt understood that the man feared not the person who chased him but the law. That is why he rewarded the “ coward” and punished the “ brave” with the whip he was carrying.

an 23. WHY SLEEPLESS NIGHT?

The event took place during the time the army of EPRDF managed to control Robe town. One evening, some members of the army went to the Bank so as to check whether or not it was guarded strictly. When they got there, the watchmen were fast asleep. The soldiers became excited and asked, “ Are you sleeping rather than guarding the bank watchfully?”. One of the guards answered, “ Why, before we were told to guard the bank not to be robbed by you; but now you have own it, why should we pass a sleepless night?”

an 24. WHOM TO MARRY?

A young man was unable to decide on selecting a wife. Therefore, he went to a monk so that he might get some advice. The monk asked him the criteria the girl should fulfill. The young man listed a lot of qualities: “ beauty, wealth, blue blood, kindness, skill of home management, patience, Christianity, virginity etc.” . Before he finished the list, the monk interrupted him impatiently and said, “ If there is such an accomplished girl , it is not you but me who will marry her.”

an 25. NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF EXCESSIVE PLEASURE

Elders of a community went to God and asked Him, “ do you care for famished people or for those who live in excessive pleasure?” god replied, “ I care fore latter ones. Because, they may rune themselves while acting out of manners.”

an 26. MORE EAGER, BAD LOSER

Shemels Eshetu, a good - humoured man around T'icho area, once came to Addis to visit his relatives. One evening, while he was strolling, he met thieves in the street. Assuming that he is a silly person (because he is a country man), they dropped some money under his feet. They thought that he did not noticed what they did. One of the thieves said to Ato Shemels, “ There is a lot of Birr under your feet, pick up the money and let's share among ourselves.” The countryman refused to do so. Then, the other said , “ Oh sir, why don't you take it? “ Ato Shemels replied, “ My own money may slip out of my pocket when I bend forward for picking the other's property”.

an 27. A MILLSTONE WITHOUT FUNCTION

Some peasants came to the Emperor Haile Selassie and told him their dissatisfaction thus:

ጃንሆይ፣

የተከሉልን ወፍጮ

ወይ አይሰልቅ ወይ አይከረትፍ

ወይ ይውቀሩልን፣

ወይ ይንቀሉልን።

Your Majesty;

The Millstone you planted for us;

Neither grinds finely, nor hews roughly .

Your excellency;

Either carve it for us, or else uproot it.

an 28. A MIXED CAMPANY

During Sägäle civil war, the members of royal families and nobility class, happened to refrain from the actual fighting just pretending that

they were rear of the army . On the contrary, the innocent ordinary soldiers engaged in the battle without fear and ill will.

At that critical moment, one of the farsighted soldiers sang the following war- chant

እናንት መኳንንቶች፣
እናንት ከጭኮአችሁ፣ እኛም ከቁጣችን፣
ቀላቅለን እንብላ፣
በእናንተ የመጣ ዕዳ አይለቀንምና።

You noble men;
Now, let's dine together,
mixing your chikko* and our unleavened bread;
Because, we, too, suffer the adversity that you caused

an 29. THE BLESSED DOG WILL BLESS. . .

There was a woman seemed reluctant to cover her household materials. As a result, a dog always made the utensils impure, by licking them now and then. The woman had to take the unclean materials to her father - confessor day after day. + The priest tired of the matter. Lastly, he said to her, “ My dear, fetch me the dog so that I bless it once and for all. Then, all utensils that it touches will be blessed.”

* Chikko = Food item (in Oromo culture) prepared from roasted barely powder by moistening the powder with only melted butter.

+ Traditionally anything touched by dogs is assumed as unclean unless it is blessed by a priest

LIST OF INFORMANTS

Name	Age	Sex	Address	Occupation
Ato At'law Aklilä	45	M	Gado Jena*	Farmer
Ato Bädada Aräga	79	M	" "	"
Ato Endalä Wädäre	70	M	Gädämisa	"
Ato Hailu Tsegay	80	M	"	"
Ato Kädär Abido	75	M	gado Jena	"
Dr. Mäkonnen Dinko	75	M	KCTE ⁺	Lecturer
Woyzäro Mästawat Wädäre	60	F	Gädämisa	Farmer
Ato Oljira Tujuba	35	M	KCTE	Lecturer
Ato Tädäsä Aychiulum	85	M	Ari'a*	Farmer
Ato Täsäma Yädäg	78	M	Gädämisa	Farmer
Ato Tenäye Endälä	39	M	Jena*	Farmer
Ato Tilähun Dämis	46	M	Gädämisa	Farmer.

* local places in Arsi- robe

⁺ KCTE = Kotebe college of Teacher Education

Declaration

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

Name _____

Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kushan Rosema', written over a horizontal line.

Confirmation by the
Advisor

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Date of submission: June, 2001

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