Thematic and Technical Analysis of Oral Poetry in and around Debre Tabor

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, and has not presented for a degree in any other University.

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Abstract

Oral poetry is a means of expressing ideas and recording history, culture and belief, especially in illiterate societies. It is also a means of teaching ethics in societies where there are no modern educational institutions. It is called oral poetry, because it's mode of existence and transmissions oral.

However, this valuable resource seems at dangerous state now, due to the expansion of modernization, which puts the oral artist to the backward position. Similarly the researcher found oral poetry in and around Debre Tabor at the verge of extinction. So, this paper aims as preserving some thematic and technical patterns for the coming generations.

Six hundred oral poems are collected from oral artists and community elders of the area. From these, hundred poems are selected, based on thematic inclusiveness and recurrence, and classified under five thematic categories and six technical groups. Of these 36 poems are discussed thematically and 27 poems are analyzed technically to meet the purpose of the study in two separate chapters, and the others are appended to the paper, with their English translations.

According to the discussions in the analytical chapters, hard work as a recommendable task, sexual love as a powerful agent in affecting people's activities and feelings, heroism as a socially recommended value, death as a source of grief, and social comments as a means to teach moral lessons are the prominent thematic issues in oral poetry of Debre Tabor and its environs. And the prominent techniques are: indirect expression, direct expression, figurative expression, symbolism, pun, and analogy.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Oral poetry is one of the means that people use to express, and communicate, their ideas, feelings, emotions…etc. Oral poetry is also a means of recording, and preserving peoples history, culture, belief, and way of life, especially in societies where there is no written literature, which is its most acknowledged function according to Okpewho (1992 :106). Okpewho further explains that oral poetry is a means to delight, and to teach ethics and conduct in societies where there is no modern educational institution. Therefore, researchers and students of literature should give due attention to the collection and study of oral poetry.

It is called oral poetry, because its mode of existence and transmission is oral. So, it is usually handed down, from generation to generation, with some modifications and adjustments, so as to suit the contemporary society best.

However, this valuable and priceless heritage seems at dangerous state now. The reason for this as Okpewho (1992:39) suggests is the introduction and expansion of modern technology, which relegated the oral artists to the backward position. As a result the artists are being removed from opportunities for practicing their art. Because, now these oral artists are engaging themselves on other activities, as they lost their charismas they had in their original profession (reciting and performing oral poetry).

Similarly, the researcher has observed oral poetry in and around Debre Tabor, and found it at the verge of extinction. The reason is that people especially the youth purposely avoid enjoying and appreciating oral poetry and its performances due to the introduction of modern and western styled music. So, this colorful, precious, and age-old heritage is shaded purposely. Hence the researcher planned to conduct his study

under the title “Thematic and Technical analysis of oral poetry in and around Debre Tabor”; as, an attempt to preserve some thematic and technical patterns for the coming generation.

1.1 Objective

The main objective of this research is to preserve, and hand down the endangered oral poems in and around Debre Tabor. The research also aims at introducing and promoting the age-old experience belief, history, and general world out look of people in the target area. The paper will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Through what historical and socio-political conditions, the people in the area have passed?
2. What thematic and technical aspects are prominent in the oral poems of the area?

1.2 Rationale

Debre Tabor and its environs are selected because, the area is rich in oral poetry. Moreover the researcher is native to the area, and he believes, he has better knowledge of oral poems recited there.

1.3 Scope and limitation of the study

It is true that a result from any research can be reliable and representative when it includes more samples, and is conducted in wider scope. However, due to time, material, and financial constraints, the researcher limited his domain to oral poetry in and around Debre Tabor.

The first limitation in the course of this study was unavailability of informants. Some informants (oral artists) were unable to arrive on the appointed time. Some were absent and some others arrive late. And this created some difficulties to complete the data collection process on time as scheduled, though it was solved with the help of assistants.

The other limitation was difficulty to translate poems with their original components into the target language i.e. English, because translating everything is hardly possible in poetry translation. However, attempts have been made at least to translate concepts, with the help of colleagues and the advisor.

1.4 Significance of the study

The paper may help to:

- understand the historical backgrounds cultural values and the psychological make up of people in the area.
- understand the thematic and technical patterns of oral poetry in the area.
- lay the base for people who want to study the oral literature in the area in depth.

1.5 Methodology

The purpose of this section is to introduce, and describ the methods, techniques, and procedures used in collection, classification, and analysis of the oral data used in this paper.

1.5.1 Method of data collection

Careful data collection and recording is mandatory for any research, so as to arrive at a reasonable conclusion, and reliable findings. So attempts have been made to collect the data skillfully and carefully.

The major sources of data for this paper were oral artists of the target area. They were selected, because they have age-old experience in reciting oral poems in various occasions, like marriage ceremonies, funeral ceremonies, farming activities…etc.

According to Finnegan (1970:111), “oral literature is by definition dependant on a performer, who formulates it in words as a specific occasion, there is no other way in which it can be realized as a literary product”. Likewise OKpewho (1992:20) suggests that the artistic and literary merit of African oral literature resides on its performance. So, it seems fair and necessary to collect data from such sources; as they have better knowledge and experience of oral poems of the area than any section of the society.

Hence the researcher went to the target area (in and around Debre Tabor) to collect oral poems from such oral artists, while they recite and perform poems in their natural contexts. The popular oral artists were identified with the help of friends and assistants. Then after informants (oral artists) were informed, and introduced to the case and negotiations were made to get their willingness and cooperation. After that, appointments were made at ‘tella bets’, and ‘tej bets’ (places where local drinks are sold). These places were selected because, they are favorite places for the oral artists; they spend most of their free time there drinking, joking, singing, dancing, and reciting oral poems.

Then informants were invited to eat and drink local food and drinks for sometime, before getting into the main task. Then the researcher asked every artist turn by turn to recite and perform any oral poem he/she knows. This time the researcher took down notes along with his friends and assistants, making critical observation especially to the paralinguistic features as they add something to the meanings of the poems. This process continues till every artist could get the chance to recite poems of his/her memory.

Here after discussions were held with the artists and elders who were found there in the local beer house enjoying and observing the performance. The discussions were on the messages and meanings the

poems communicate in the society. So, poems were recorded with the meanings they convey, and the purpose they serve, with the help of the artists, their performances /the paralinguistic features/, and elders found there in the local beer house.

Many poems were also collected from elders who have better knowledge of oral poems of the area from their observation and experience, making private contacts at their homes.

At the end of the day six hundred poems were collected from both sources, i.e. from oral artists and elders, through interview, observation (especially the paralanguage features) and discussions.

1.5.2 Method of data classification and selection

After collecting the poems from the oral artists and community elders, two types of classifications, were made. The first was thematic classification. Poems that deal with the same thematic issue were grouped under the same category. And the second was technical classification. Poems that employ similar technical device and mode of expression were grouped together. However, these classifications are not totally exclusive. A poem may have more than one message to communicate, or may employ more than one technique of composition. But they are classified based on the overtly observed thematic issues, and technical features.

Hence selection of poems for the final analysis was made using two criteria. The first was thematic representation. Poems that were thematically inclusive were selected. And the second was recurrence, poems that are recited by many oral artists and community elders were selected. The rational behind this was that poems that were repeated most are shared voice of the society. These criteria are used to select poems for thematic analysis.

Hence hundred poems were selected for the final thematic analysis using the criteria mentioned above, i.e. representation and recurrence. Again these poems, (those selected for thematic analysis) were also selected for technical analysis. Because the purposive sampling method (selecting poems based on their representative nature and recurrence) used for thematic analysis is a pure random sampling to select poems for technical analysis. So poems selected for thematic analysis were also selected for technical analysis, just to save time and energy.

Of the hundred poems selected for the final analysis, 36 representative poems are analyzed thematically and 27 poems are analyzed technically; and others are appended to the paper, as it would be difficult to analyze all the selected poems.

1.5.3 Method of Data Analysis

Poems selected for final analysis were treated in two separate chapters. The first chapter deals with thematic issues that the poems deal with. So poems were described and explained under their thematic category to unravel the central messages that they carry. The explanation includes description of social, historical and political backgrounds, in addition to explaining words on the surface of the paper. Poems are also described and discussed under their technical categories to identify the technical devices used in oral poems of Debre Tabor and its surroundings. So, the method used for data analysis in both chapters is text analysis.

1.6. Research context

The town Debre Tabor is located at $11^{0}3'$N and $38^{0}1'$ E in North West Ethiopia. It is named for the biblical mount Tabor to mean mountain of Tabor, since the Amharic word 'Debre' means mountain.

Authorities agree that Debre Tabor is one of the oldest towns in Ethiopia next to Axum and Harar. It is believed to be founded at the end of the thirteenth century by Emperor Seyfe Yarad. Scholars differ on the fact of it's foundation at its present site. Mordechai Abir (1968) suggests that it was founded by Ras Ali III in the 1830s *Ethiopia:Era of the princes.* (s.a),available on the internet at:http//www.en wikiepedia.org/ Debre-Tabor(11 June 2007. Rechard Pancrhest on his part argues that it was founded by Ras Gugssa Wolle in the first half of the nineteenth century, *History of Ethiopian Towns*.(s.a) (wikipedia) .Available on the internet at http://www.en wikipedia. *org/wiki/ Debre-Tabor (11 June 2007).*

In either case Debre Tabor has served as a seat for regents and district governors for many years, especially to those who descended from the Worasheh dynasty. It was also a capital for the former Debre Tabor Awraja (district) until recently, and now it is the capital of south Gondar Administrative zone. It is also a seat for the Farta woreda (a rural administrative unit around the town).

The town is found at the altitude of 2945 meters above sea level. Climatically it is cold and mid- temperate, and receives its main rain fall in summer though there are rains in autumn and spring.

According to the report from the central statistical Agency in 2005, Debre Tabor has an estimated population of 39,052 peoples of whom 20,078 were males and 18,974 were females. Most of the people in the town are civil servants and merchants, though there are few farmers engaged in both crop production and animal husbandry. But people

around the town are farmers except very few weavers, carpenters and other professional who use such professions as supplementary jobs to farming.

People in and around Debre Tabor are dominantly Christian Orthodoxies, although there are very few Muslims, Protestants, Adventists and Jhovats.

Infrastructural development in Debre Tabor is among the poorest in the country. There are no universities, industries, high class hotels, asphalted roads... etc. There are only one senior secondary school, one referral hospital, one private and one government colleges, and twenty four hour electric power supply.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Oral poetry

In their long history of social existence people leave different heritages that indicate their level of civilization, power and production relations, understanding of nature, etc to the coming generations. The next generation also usually receives such heritages, modifies them and creates its own whenever necessary and passes them down to its successors. Oral poetry is among such social heritages that are continuously handed down in the chain of human generations.

According to the Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (1993:863), oral poetry differs from written poetry in that its mode of existence and transmission is oral; each generation receives it and passes down as long as the thread lives. Okpewho (1992:3) also defines oral poetry as "literature delivered by words of mouth".

Okpewho identified terms used by various scholars and their rationales for using such terms. Terminologies like oral literature, orature, traditional literature, folk literature, and folklore are used to refer to the same thing, i.e. oral literature, which is most commonly used as Okpewho suggested.

He further explained that people who use orature are those who give more weight to its oral nature. And people who prefer traditional literature emphasize on the fact that this form of literature comes from the past and is handed down from one generation to another. Again people who termed it as folk literature believe that the creators of this literature are folks, which usually means the common, uneducated people, mostly in villages or rural communities. And again people who preferred folklore view it much more than literature and underplay its literary aspect.

In conclusion, oral poetry is one of the heritages of human society that is usually handed down from generation to generation orally. It is referred by various terminologies due to differences in outlook of scholars. Those who give more emphasis on its oral character referred to it as orature, and others termed it as traditional literature to indicate its relation with culture. Others also refer to it as folklore to imply its relation with traditional attitudes and beliefs of societies, and yet some others call it folk literature to refer to the creators are folk societies in rural areas.

These differences in terminology of scholars shows that oral poetry is a wider concept and has various characteristics which differentiates it from other genes like written poetry. However, this paper uses oral poetry and oral poems interchangeably. Because these terms directly refer to the concept they carry; they express both of its oral and poetic nature.

2.2 Characteristics of Oral Poetry

The major distinctive features of oral poetry are orality, communality, fluidity and improvisation. As the qualifying term 'oral' indicates, oral poetry is transmitted and communicated orally. In line with this, the *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1993:863) defined oral poetry as "a poetry composed and transmitted mainly, but not exclusively, by people who can't read or write." From this it can be inferred that oral poetry mainly functions among people who are illiterate. So its mode of transmission is oral. Awoonor (1975:90) on his part describes oral poetry as follows: "Poetry in Africa generally expresses itself in the songs, rituals, incantations, prayers to gods, praises, or salutation to gods and men. In short, it covers all that ordinary everyday speech does not express". Here Awoonor, seems to show that oral poetry, especially in Africa, is transmitted orally accompanied by performances.

The second distinctive feature of oral poetry lies in the concept of ownership. By their very nature, oral poems have no specific composer. They are simply societal properties. This is not because the poems are created or composed by the whole society at a time; but because they are representative in nature, and that they become societal wealth through time. This is clearly put by Toelken in Oring (1986:147) as follows:

> *A folk song begins its life like any other song: as a musical and poetic expression of some person's feelings or ideas. A song becomes a folk song when it begins to be passed along and rephrased or used by others for whom it also functions as a way of articulating shared attitudes or feelings. Because the song's ability to trigger a group's feelings is more important than the practical matter of who the composer was, a folk song usually loses its direct connection with its maker and becomes the word of those who sing it. It becomes a folksong not simply because a lot of people like it or thousands have listened to it, but because some have persisted in singing it among themselves, and in their own ways.*

This observation shows that the main thing in oral poetry is not who composes the poem. What is important is the song's ability to represent societal attitudes and feelings. The quotation also shows that the poem should have a persistent existence within a society, so as to be a folk song. Similarly, Frazer in Awoonor (1975:73) suggested that "due to the collective action of the multitude oral poetry cannot be traced to the individual influence of great men". So Frazer refers here that the original composer of oral poems is usually anonymous.

The third characteristic of oral poetry is variability of the text. According to the Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (1993:863), variability or fluidity is the most distinctive feature of oral poetry. It further states that word-for-word memorization is impossible except in few shorter forms. Otherwise, repeating a poem, especially, the longer forms like the epic would be a difficult exercise. Oring (1986:147) also states that oral poetry is seldom memorized word for word, as the way we do in school

songs. Therefore, it seems safe to conclude that oral poetry passes through continuous changes and modifications. This in turn leads to its third feature i.e. improvisation.

According to Awoonor (1975:90) "… it is in the art of poetry that individual talent flowers." .Here Awoonor indicates that the fluid nature of oral poetry (its variability),gives a chance to individuals to use their talent and to improve a poem so as to make it suit the existing situation. Toelken in Oring (1986:147) too clearly stated it as follows:

> *…a folk song becomes a folksong not simply because a lot of people like it or because thousands have listened to it, but because some have persisted in singing it among themselves, and in their own way. It picks up the colorations, nuances, and styles of the group among whom it circulates, and gets continuously rephrased to suit their response to time, place, rhetoric and performance. …*

Hence, Toelken seems to say that oral poetry is in continuous change and modification, so as to function best in the contemporary society. As the Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetic (1993) states, improvisation of oral poetry can be manifested in both form and content of a text.

To sum up, oral poetry has about four distinctive features that differentiate it from other genres. These are; orality, which shows that its mode of existence is oral, communality (referring to the fact that it is societal property), fluidity that shows its dynamic existence and lastly improvisation indicating the continuous modification and reshaping of poems by a society. Having said this much on the nature and characteristics of oral poetry lets, move on to the importance of studying them.

2.3 Value of Oral Poetry Research

In the previous section, it has been said that oral poetry is a means of expressing shared feelings attitudes and beliefs of a society. Therefore,

it can be inferred that collecting, analyzing and interpreting such poems helps to understand a society better. Kofi Awoonor (1975:73) defined oral poetry as a compendium of beliefs, customs and culture of a society. Finnegan (1970) also writes that society cannot be fully understood without understanding its oral poetry. In a similar fashion, Fekade (1984) discussed the importance of oral poetry research as follows:

> *The history, culture, literature … etc of the people and the society are found in the folklore and oral poetry and various forms of oral literature. These are also important sources to the study of the attitudes of the peasants to, life, death, work, development, etc and their responses to man-made and natural disasters. Studying these untapped sources will help to better understand the society and the people.*

In general, understanding oral poetry means understanding the society at large. Because, oral poems are warehouses of societies' world view, psychological make up, and understanding of nature. So oral poetry research is a valuable activity for a better understanding of a society.

2.4 Oral Poetry Research in Ethiopia

According to Fekade (1984:52) Ethiopian oral poetry research began by foreigners and began to appear in European journals in the first half of the nineteenth century. Collection and publication of oral literary materials by Ethiopians started with the publication of *Mesehafe Qene (book of Kene)* by Belaten Geta Heruy in 1918. The second work appeared after twenty five years by Haji Yusuf Abdurhaman *Yamaregna Mesalena Tarat (selected Amharic proverbs),* and the works of Wolda Giyorgis Wolda Yohannes and Mahatema Silassie Wolde Meskel were published in (1942), as Fekade further explained.

He also indicated that more than one hundred essays were written on oral literature from (1955-1976). And this may show that there was a growing interest by Ethiopian scholars, in the area. So, compared to

earlier periods, (1970s) could be designated as a golden age of oral literary research by Ethiopians.

The first most comprehensive research in the area was Haylu Araya's Ph.D dissertation under the title “Ethiopian folk poetry recreated” in (1978). According to Daniel Legesse (1998), most of the works done before Hailu were simply thematic approaches. But, Hailu collected Amharic poems through out Ethiopia, and internalized the content they carry, and modified and rephrased them with out changing their messages, so as to make them convenient for analysis. That is why he entitled his dissertation “Ethiopian oral poetry Recreated”. He said “Recreated” because he added his own creativity on the forms of the original poems.

There are also some recent works done in the area. To mention, Mesfin Messel’s MA thesis under the title *“Abawude”* in (1982) around south Wollo, Daniel Legese's *Thematic approach to Red terror inspired poems in Gojam and Gonder* (1998), Dereje Seyum’s *An analysis of funeral dirges in Debre Tabor and its environs,* in (1995). *Oral poetry of the Tamari: thematic analysis,* in 1996, by Messeret Kebede are among others.

However, oral literary research dates back to the first half of the nineteenth century, and, many amateur and professional works have been done, it can be said that it is in its infancy yet as Fekade (1984) stated. So, the need for further work in the area seems mandatory. That is why the researcher needs to conduct this study under the title *Thematic and Technical Analysis of Oral Poetry in and around Debre Tabor.*

This work is different from those mentioned above in many aspects. To begin with, this work differs from Hailu Araya’s *Ethiopian oral poetry Recreated*, in that Hailu conducted his work at a national level, and he didn’t see thoroughly oral poetry of any particular area. This work is also different from Messfin Mesele’s *Abawude,* because Mesfin’s work was

exclusively conducted in southern Wollo.Again this paper differs from Danel Legesse's *Thematic approach to Red Terror inspired Amharic oral poems in Gojjam and Gondar* in that his work dealt with only red terror poems and did not include poems with other themes . And again this work is different from Messeret Kebede's "oral poetry of the tamari: thematic Analysis", because the two are conducted in far apart places, and from Dereje Seyum's "An analysis of funeral dirges of Debre Tabor and its Environs" in that Dereje analyzed only funeral dirges . So, this work hopefully will add something on our knowledge of oral poetry research in Ethiopia.

Chapter Three

Thematic Analysis of oral poetry in and around Debre Tabor

This chapter is devoted to the thematic analysis of oral poems collected in Debre Tabor and its surroundings. Theme in literature, as Cuddon(1982:695) defines is "...the central idea which may be stated directly or indirectly". Harry Shaw (1972: 378), also defined theme as "The central, and dominating idea in a literary work". Similarly Chris Baldick (2004: 258) stated theme as "A salient abstract idea that emerges from a literary work's treatment of its subject matter, or a topic recurring in a number of literary works". Again Hudson in Messeret (1992:10) described theme as "a central idea which reveal the author's belief or his criticism on life".

As we can see from the above definitions, all scholars agree that theme is the core message in a literary work. So it seems safe to conclude that thematic analysis of a literary work is identifying or unraveling of the crucial message (theme) which the author wants to communicate to his audience. It can also be inferred that thematic analysis of oral poetry understands the salient messages that they communicate.

Hence the oral poetry collected in and around Debre Tabor are classified under five major thematic categories, based on the central idea (message) they convey. These are: hard work as a socially recommendable task, the powerfulness of sexual love in affecting people's feelings and activities, heroism as socially commended value, death as a source of grief, and social comments as a means to teach moral lessons.

Of all thematic categories mentioned above, the theme of hard work as a recommended task took the largest share of the oral poems.. Around 31 percents of the oral poems collected in the target area fall in this category. The second largest share went to the theme of the powerfulness

of sexual love in affecting people's feelings and activities, which accounts 22 percent of the data collected. And the third is heroism as a socially accepted behavior followed by the theme of death as a source of grief which accounts 19 and 15 percents respectively. And the last thematic category, social comment as a means to teach moral and ethics shares 13 percents of the total collection see table one below. And in the subsequent sections sample oral poems from these themes will be analyzed.

Table 1:the percentage distribution of prominent themes in oral poetry of Debre Tabor and its environs.

No	Title	Percentage
1	Hard work as a recommendable task	31%
2	Sexual love as a powerful agent in affecting people's feelings and activity	22%
3	Heroism as a socially recommended value	19%
4	Death as a source of grief	15%
5	Social comments as a means of teaching moral lessons	13%

3.1. Hard work as a socially recommendable task

Many oral poems of Debre Tabor and its environs uphold the value of hard work. Such oral poems reflect the theme of hard work as a solution to the problem of poverty, laziness as a source of poverty and praise as a means to boost work morale.

3.1.1. Hard work as a solution to the problem of poverty

The poems (1-4) below describe the importance and consequence of hard work. All of them are about positive out comes of working hard like, getting out of poverty, leading independent life, accumulating enough wealth, leading prosperous life…etc.

1. አርሳለሁ እንጅ አልመረርም፣

ችግር በወንጭፍ አይባረርም።

I plough with pleasure, I complain not,

Poverty can't be chased with a sling.

2. ምነው በባል ቢያርሱ ምነው በእሁድ ቢያርሱ፣

ከባለፀጋ ደጅ ከመጎናበሱ።

What if one ploughs on Sunday, which is forbidden,

It is better than bowing down at the gate of a riche.

3. በሐምሌ ጎልጉዬ፣ መስከረም አርሜ፣

መክሩን ሰብስቤ፣ እበላለሁ እኔስ ነጭ ጤፍ አብቅየ።

Cultivating in July, and weeding in September,

Harvesting in autumn, I will produce and eat white 'teff'.

4. መንጥሩ እንመንጥር በቆሎ እንዝራ፣

ከርሞ ሁላችን በቅሎ እንድንገዛ።

Let's clear the bush, and sow maize,

So that all of us will buy mule next year.

Poem one above tells us the farmer's decision to plough with pleasure, realizing that poverty can't be chased with a sling like a flock of birds, understanding the only means of getting out of poverty is hard

work. So its central message is hard work enables people to get out of poverty and lead a better life.

Poem (2) also recommends people to plough on Sunday, which is not common, even impossible for the farmers of the target area, i.e. farmers around Debre Tabor. Because it is strictly forbidden to do anything on Sunday; as the population is mainly follower of the orthodox faith.

However, the poem advises people to do so, since it avoids bowing down at the gate of riches in search of certain concessions. Hence the crucial message of this poem is hard work enables people to lead independent life. So nothing can be compared with it including religious orders.

Again poem (3) shows a farmer's commitment to carry out the back breaking tasks of white 'feff' production: cultivating in July, weeding in September, and harvesting in autumn which are the most difficult activities of crop production in the area. He committed himself to do these tasks, however, because he knows that the end result is producing plenty of 'teff'. Then the ultimate message of the poem is be ready to work hard, though the tasks you carry out are difficult, as it enables you produce much, accumulate enough wealth, and lead a better life.

Likewise the persona /in poem 4/ advises his fellow farmers to clear bushes, produce much maize and buy mules. Clearing bushes /mintaro in Amharic/ is among the hardest tasks of farmers in the area. Because it includes tasks like clearing bushes, pulling out their roots, and plough the land to make it ready for sowing.

But farmers, who cultivate such plots of lands, are usually productive. Because they are fertile due to the decomposed plant

remnants, and animal dung, as such lands are usually reserved as grazing areas.

And mules are best means of transportation in the district. So, if farmers cultivate a land which is covered by bushes, they will produce much. If they produce much, they can sell the surplus, and have enough money, that enables them fulfill their material needs, and live a better life, like going on animal backs. So the underlying message is work hard, and don't be afraid though the work is difficult, as it enables you lead a prosperous life at the end of the day. In short, poems (1-4) above underscore the value of hard work to get out of poverty. Now, let's move on to poems dealing with laziness and its consequences.

3.1.2. Laziness as a source of poverty

Oral poems in this section uphold the value of hard work through criticizing laziness. They all describe the various problems people face, especially poverty when they fail to work hard.

1. **ማረስ ነው እንጅ እርፍ ነቅንቆ፣**

   እራብ ክፋ ነው ይገድላል አንቆ።።

   Plough well shaking the handle of the plough,

   As hunger is an evil, that kills throttling.

2. **ሐምሌ መባቻ ያልጎለጎለ፣**

   ታህሳስ መባቻ ልጁን ገደለ።።

   A farmer that didn't cultivate at the beginning of July,

   Killed his child at the beginning of December.

3. **የሠው ቤት እንጀራ የተገመገመው፣**

በልቸው ሰወጣ ጉልበቴን ደከመው።።

Bread from others' house is a scaled one,

So, I feel tired soon after a meal.

Poem one describes one of the problems people faces when they fail to work hard, i.e. hunger. If a man is unable to work hard, failing to win bread is inevitable. So the poem recommends people to work hard so as to win bread. A man in poem (2) also killed his child in December because he is unable to provide him with enough food, since he didn't work hard in July. Because July is the coldest and the rainy season in the area .It is also a season to work hard (especially to cultivate and weed crops). But the lazy man, described in the poem, sat idle, and his land remained uncultivated. Then he has nothing to collect and harvest in autumn (December). If that is so, it is inevitable that his child will die in hunger. However, the content of this poem is not the death of a child in December, as his father did not cultivate in July. Rather it is the problem (especially poverty), that one faces when he is unable to work hard fearing different minor difficulties, like colds and rains.

Poem (3) on the other hand sees laziness from the point of view of dependency .If a man is lazy and spends his time without work, then failing to win bread is inevitable. If that is so, going to others house in search of bread is also a must. And people give bread to others after calculating and weighing their families share. Especially, if the man is a lazy one, they feel not happy inside, though they may give him the bread, which gives a moral pain for the person who eats that bread. So the poem tells us that laziness leads to a life of dependant, which creates great moral crises, especially when the hostages are unhappy.

3.1.3. Praise as a means to boost work morale

Many oral poems of Debre Tabor and its surroundings also uphold the value of hard work through praising hard workers. These poems reflect the meaning of how praise can boost work morale of the farmers in various farming activities.

1. በሬ እንደአንተ እሚዞር የሚሸከረከር፣

   እንዝርት አይገኝም በፈታይ መንደር::

   Oh! my ox, there is no spindle, in the village of spinners,

   That revolves like you.

2. የጠመቀች እንደሁ አስመስላ ቢራ፣

   የጋገረችእንደሁ አስመስላ ሞራ፣

   ወጥ የተሠራች አንደሁ ሽታው የሚያበላ፣

   የፈተለች እንደሁ አስመስላ ጭራ፣

   ማን ይስተካከላል ከእንትናዬ ጋራ::

   When she brews, it is like beer in a factory,

   When she bakes, it is like a 'Mora',

When she spins it is like a hair from a horse's tail,

When she cooks, it can make tasty with its odor,

So, who can be compared with 'entina'.

(mora=a very white cloth)

(Entina=Mis y)

3. አጨባበጡ የሚናፍቀው፣

   የማጭዱ እጅ ከእጁ የሚደቀው ::

The way he handles the crop yearns,

The sickle's handle gets pounded at his palm.

Poem (1) above praise s oxen for their better performance while threshing crops. Since agriculture in the region is in its primitive mode yet, there are not modern farming equipments, like combiners, the use of animal hoofs is a must for farmers to separate the grain from the rest of the plant. Then oxen, which are well trained in this activity revolve very fast, and the poem is an appreciation of them.

And this appreciation is expressed in terms of the circular movements of a spindle when spinners make thread from cotton to make a very white cloth. Because oxen also move in a circular motion while threshing a crop like spindle. So, the movement of oxen is even faster than the circular motion of a spindle according to the poem, which is a hyperbolic, just to praise them for their role in separating the grain from the chaff, which is almost impossible with other means. People praise their oxen this way, just to encourage themselves to work hard.

Poem (2) also appreciates a woman who is skilled in many household activities. She is skilled in brewing, cooking, baking, and spinning. Because, she is skilled very much, her 'tela', (a local alcoholic drink), tastes like beer from a factory, the 'injera' she backs (a most common food item in Ethiopia) seems 'mora' a very white (shema) cloth, which is the best criterion the society has set for an 'injera' to look like. Because, the sauce she cooks is very good, it can even make tasty food with its odor. The thread she spins looks a hair from a horses' tail.

The four skills mentioned in the poem (brewing, cooking, baking, and spinning), are expressed in a much exaggerated manner. Normally, a sauce can't make a food tasty with it's odor, a thread can't be as thin as a hair from the hors's tail, a local beer (tela) can't taste like beer from a

factory, and 'injera' can't be as white as 'animal fat' (a white cloth). But the poet uses this figurative expression (simile), just to encourage people to work hard, and to be skilled and experienced in any activity. Poem (3) is also an appreciation for a strong farmer who is well known in mowing crops. Because he is well experienced in mowing**,** the way he handles the crop makes others enjoy. And the sickle's handle gets pounded from his palm, while he ismowing, as he is too strong, and his strength reaches to the extent of pounding (breaking) the sickle's handle while mowing. So the poem is praise for his strength and skill.

To sum up, all the three pomes above encourage hard work, and boost work morale through appreciation and praise. They praise experienced oxen (1), skilled woman (2), strong farmer, especially, in mowing crops (3). In doing so, the poems encourage people to be hard workers. Now let us move on to poems that deal with love issues.

3.2 The powerfulness of sexual love in affecting people's feelings and activities

Oral poems in this group describes sexual love as a powerful agent in affecting people's feelings and activities. And such poems view sexual love from three major aspects. The first is that sexual love involves hardship; it creates great sorrow and mental pain from the lover especially when the beloved is not around. It also creates confusion, and discomfort from a lover.

The second aspect of love as expressed by many oral poems in this section is that love creates great pleasure from lovers, especially, when both sides respond positively. And the third aspect shows the powerfulness of love through praising a beloved with beautiful expressions.

3.2.1. Love involves hardship

Poems below express the various hardships and problems people face when they fall in love with somebody. People lack sound sleep, weep, and face great danger…etc when they are in love with somebody as the poems analyzed below show.

1. **አለቅሳለሁ በአይኔ አብሳለሁ በእጄ፣**

   እንደሰማይ ኮከብ እርቃኝ ወዳጄ።።

   I weep with my eyes and wipe with my hands,

   As my beloved is far apart from me,

   Like a star in the sky.

2. **ወዳንቺ ስመጣ ነደፈኝ እባቡ፣**

   አስታመሽ ቅበሪኝ አንቺ ነሽ ሰበቡ።።

   The snake stung me when I was coming to you,

   So attend and burry me as you are the cause for my death.

3. **እንቅልፍ ይባላል ወይ ሲነጋ ቢተኙ፣**

   እስከ ዶሮ ጩኸት በሐሳብ እየዋኙ።።

   Can it be a sleep if one sleeps in the morning?

   Spending the night swimming in the ocean of thought, till mid night.

4. **መሄድ እንዳንተ ነው መከተል እንደኔ፣**

   የውሃ ስንቁን ይዞ ይከተልህ አይኔ።።

   A journey is like yours, and accompanying is like mine.

   Let my eyes follow you equipped with water.

Poems (1-4) above are all about various problems and hardships that one faces when he/she is in love with someone, and when

that person is not around or doesn't respond positively in one way or another. One may lack safe sleep (poem 3), weep continuously (1and 4), and face great danger like a sting of a snake (poem 2).

"The snake stung me" in poem (2) is not about the real sting of a person by a snake. Rather it impliedly expresses the sacrifices that one made to get his beloved. The poet chose the sting of a snake, just to magnify the problem he faced, because, snake is regarded as the most evil creature by the society. And its sting too is considered as one of the most fatal dangers people incur. So, he (the persona in the poem) is saying that I am confronted with the greatest dangers, (paid the greatest price), to win your love.

And finally he says that "attend and burry me as you are the cause for my death", to mean please get informed that I made the greatest scarifies as great as the sting of the snake, to win your love. So he is telling her that she is the cause for his disastrous ending. In short the poem is an expression of sacrifice made for love.

Poem (4) also expresses the agony that a woman feels when her beloved departs from her. Departing from a beloved due to a number of reasons is a universal phenomenon. Lovers may depart for work, education, or with quarrel etc. And it creates grief and sorrow on a lover especially when the time to return is longer. And people usually cry and drop their tears, when they depart. So the statement "let my eyes follow you equipped with water" describes the moment of departing from a beloved with eyes dropping tears as water symbolically represents tear, and "eyes equipped with water" means eyes filled with tear.

Similarly, poem (1) describes, the hardship that a man faced, due to the departing of his beloved. He weeps continuously, since his beloved is at a very distant place, which is as far as the distance between the star in

the sky and the earth. And this intensifies the degree of the grief that one feels from departing of his beloved. Because, as the distance increases, the possibility for the lovers to meet again decreases. So the central message of the poem is departing from a beloved makes people weep continuously, especially when the distance is greater.

The question raised in poem (4), whether it can be a sleep or not when one sleeps in the morning after spending the night swimming in the ocean of thought is not a question that seeks information. Rather it is an expression of a problem that one faces when he fall in love with somebody. It is true that a person lacks sound sleep when he/she is in love with somebody as he /she should analyze, and calculate every possible means, and ways that can lead to a positive response from a beloved. So the surface message (whether it can be a sleep or not when one sleep in the morning) is a side issue. The crucial message is a person who is in love is restless as he spends the night finding solutions to problems and obstacles that stands on his /her way that leads to a positive response from a beloved.

3.2.2. Love involves pleasure

Poems listed below clearly show the pleasure that one enjoys when he/she fulfills his/her desire for love. They suggest that every inconveniences and discomforts are side issues, as far as one gets what he/she loves.

1 **እኔስ የመሰለኝ አልጋ ወራሽነት፣**

ፍቅሬ ካንተ ጋር የተገናኘሁለት ።።

I feel that I am an heir to a throne,

When a sought beloved comes seeking.

2. ከድንጋይ ላይ ድንጋይ ከዚያ ላይ ቢተኙ፣

መች ይጎረብጣል ደና ልጅ ካገኙ።

If you are with your beloved

You feel comfort, though you sleep over a stone hill.

3. ያሰኛል ባለ ዕድል ያሰኛል ባለዕጣ፣

የሚፈልጉት ሰው ፈልጎ ሲመጣ።

It can be said lucky ,

It can be said fateful,

When a beloved asks for love.

Poem (2) above says “you feel comfort, though you sleep over a stone hill" if you are with your beloved, which seems unlikely in reality. But its implication is true; a person who gets his /her beloved has a greater capacity to beer inconveniences and difficulties. And this capacity is the result of pleasure gained from love.

Poem (3) on the other hand states that a person can be said lucky and fateful when a beloved is in love with him/her lover. Again poem (1) expresses the greatness of the pleasure that one enjoys when he/she is in a successful love. It is as great as the pleasure one feels, when he/she is an heir to a throne in a given dynasty /royal family/.In short the central messages of the three poems, is that the pleasure created by love is great, and powerful in affecting people’s feeling.

3.2.3. Praise as a means to express love

Poems in the following section praise and appreciate a beloved. They appreciate different aspects of beauty, like eyes, teeth, hair, clothes…etc; just to express their powerful feelings for sexual love.

1. ዓይንህንም ባየው ብር አስጎልለሃል፣

ጥርስህንም ባየው በረዶ ቅመሐል፣

ፀጉርህንም ባየው ሐር ጠምጥመሐል፣

ካንተ ጋር የዋለ ካንተ ጋር ያደረ፣

ከፈጣሪው ጋራ የተመካከረ::

When I see your eyes, you domed silver,

When I see your teeth you chewed snow,

When If I see your hair you put on silk,

A person who spends a day and a night with you,

Is a person who councils with his creator.

2. እራሷን ብናየው ስብራት የለው፣

ደሙነው ያች ልጅ የተቀባችው::

There is no fracture when we see her head,

So, that girl has painted her head with blood.

3. መቀነቷ ረጅም የነብር ጅራት፣

ጥርሷ ጉራማይሌ የበቆሎ እሸት፣

ከሷ ጋር አድሬ ሲነጋ ልሙት፣

ላፈር አይደለም ወይ የተሰራሁት::

Her belt is long a tiger's tail,

Her teeth are fresh maize grains with her gum striped with tattoo,

May I die in the morning spending the night with her,

Because, I am created to die.

The phrases “you domed silver”, “you chewed snow”, and “you put on silk’ (poem 1) are best criteria that the society has set for eyes, teeth

and hair to look like. Normally, a man does not dome silver at his eyes, and chew snow, and put on silk, on his head. But, the lover is praising her beloved metaphorically. His eyes look a silver domed (big and white), which is the most appreciated type of eyes by the society, his teeth are as white as snow (they made him look chewing snow), and his hair is as black as a silk cloth, which made him look putting silk on his head. All these are praises to a beloved, as he is endowed with different qualities (big and white eyes, white teeth, and black hair), which made him handsome. Because he is the most handsome person that spending a day and a night can be considered as counseling God; proving how much powerful love is.

Likewise, poem (3) appreciates a beloved using metaphorical expressions, like “her belt is a tiger's tail", and "her teeth area fresh maize grains”. Woman in the area (in and around Debre Tabor), especially old ones tie their waist with a string called ‘mekenet’ in Amharic. It is made by local weavers, with threads of different colures. The number of colors of threads used, and the skill of the weaver to decorate it with different designs, increase the quality of the belt (mekenet) made. If the weaver is the best artist, he can make it long and many hued like a tiger’s tail, as it is mentioned in the poem.

The poem also appreciates the woman for her best teeth. It says that “her teeth are fresh maize grains", with the gum striped with tattoo. Fresh maize grains are white and well arranged when they are with their corn. So the metaphorical expression used "her teeth are fresh maize grains” express the whiteness, and well arrangement of her teeth.

A tattooed gum was also one criterion that beautifies a woman, especially in the previous time. So the woman described by the poem possesses all these qualities i.e. long and many hued string, which looks like a tiger's tail, white and well arranged teeth, like fresh maize grains

and the gum striped with tattoo. Because she is endowed with such natural and artificial beauties, she made him (the man who appreciates her) committed to die, getting the chance to spend a night with her; proving the powerfulness of love.

Poem (2) also praises a beautiful woman, though it doesn't site specific criteria like poem (3). On the surface level, the poem seems to be talking about physical injury. It says, "there is no fracture when we see her head". And it concludes that the blood seen on her head is just a mere painting, with blood from other sources. But it underlyingly means she is beautiful. Because the Amharic word 'dem' is a homonym, which means blood and beauty. So it conveys its second meaning (beauty), though it is put in the context of the first (blood).

Generally, poems in this thematic category deal with three major issues. These are: love involves hardship, love involves pleasure and praise as a means to express the powerfulness of love. Then let's move to poems that encourage heroism and heroic activities.

3.3. Heroism as a socially commended value

The crucial messages of poems in this group are encouragements to be a hero (brave) and to do heroic activities through praising heroes of the area who performed heroic deeds in the past and recommending such behaviors. They all advise and recommend to say no and to use force as a solution to conflicts

1. **ኸረ በዚያም ዘልቆ በዚያም ዘልቆ ካላሉ·ት· ሐይ ሐይ፣**

   ጀንዲዉ ቀዳዳ ነው· ያስበላል ተባይ::

   If you don't chase at every corner,

   The tan is torn and the bug will bite you.

2. **ኸረ ግዛ ጥይት በወገብህ ደርድር፣**

አልተደላደለም ገና ነው በጌምድር።።

Buy bullets and arm yourself,

Since Begemdir insecured yet.

3. **ኸረ አገሬ መና መቀጣዋ ሞፈር መቁረጥ ያውቃል፣**

ካልተለበለበ መቼ ይታረቃል።።

My country Mena and Meketawa knows how to prepare 'mofer',

It can’t be straightened before it is warmed.

“If you don’t chase at every corner, the tan is torn, and the bug will bite you”, poem (1) for instance is an advice to say no, and an encouragements to use force, rather than looking for peaceful means. Because the bug symbolically describes enemy and mattress stands for one's territory. So the central message communicated is one can’t live peacefully, unless he chassed his enemies with force at every corner of his personal and social territories, as he can’t sleep safely with out chasing bugs from his tan (bed).

Similarly, poem (2) recommends people to arm themselves, especially at the time of insecurity. Because, powerless and armless people are usually victims, whenever there is insecurity. So the poem advises to arm oneself and to be powerful in order not to be victims at a time of insecurity. Because no one attacks a powerful person as he can react accordingly.

Poem (3) also encourages bravery, and intolerance, though it seems talking about preparation of traditional farming equipment called, 'mofer', in two districts, Mena and Meketawa. People in these areas heat a fresh wood so as to straighten it, and take the required shape.

However, the crucial message is not preparation of a 'mofer' it rather advises to afire enemy's village, so as to make him agree to live in peace. Because the two words 'Kaltelebelebe' and 'yitarekal' are homonyms, which means, if not heated and if not faired, and will be straightened and will agree to live in peace respectively. So the underlying message is your enemy will not agree to live in peace, unless you afire his hat, though it superficially says a 'mofer' can't be straightened if it is not heated. Hence it is an encouragement to use force as a means to resolve conflicts.

The following poems on the other hand encourage heroism through praising heroes.

4. **ፈረንጅ ወረቀቱን እሮማ ሠደደ፣**

አንድ ዘገልሞቃ ሠባ ሰው ታረደ፣

አንድ እያዳ ማርያም ሠባ ሰው ነደደ፣

አልተቻለም ብሎ እንግዳ ከበደ።።

ተስቦ ተስቦ እንደ ወንጭ አገዳ፣

ነጨን በነጭ ወጋው ያከበደ እንግዳ።።

ከበደ ተወልዶ ባያነሳ ጋሻ፣

እኛ ላይ ነበረ የአይሁድ መናገሻ።።

Whites sent their documents to Rome,

Seventy people were slaughtered at Zegelmoka,

Seventy people were burnt at Eyada Maryam,

Realizing, that fighting with Kebed is impossible.

Crippling continously like a 'serdo' limb,

Kebede fought whites with a white.

Had Kebed not risen the shield of ancestors,

Ajja would have remained a center for pagans.

(Serdo=a type of grass that grows side wise)

5. **የገብርየ በሮች አወይ መከራቸው ፣**

አዘውር ላይ ጠምዶ ደራ ላይ ፈታቸው።።

How hard Gebre's oxen are troubled?

Beginning at Azawr , he untied them at Dera.

6. **አገሩ ተጨንቆ ሰማይ ሰማይ ሲያይ፣**

ማተብ አሳሰረው ፈረደ በላይ።።

While people were looking the sky with tension,

Ferede Belay tied a thread at their necks.

Poems (4) on the other hand praises a hero for the role he played during the anti-Italian guerilla war. The Italians burnt seventy people at a place called Eyada Maryam. They also slaughtered seventy people at a place called Zegelmoka. Again they sent their documents to Rome. They did all these things, because they realized that fighting with the force of Kebede is impossible.

Deiazmach Kebede Engida was one of the prominent guerrilla war leaders in the district during the second Italian occupation (1935-1941). Italians began to burn, and slaughter people when the magnitude of the guerilla war lead by Deiazmach Kebede was increased.

The second stanza of the poem, also described the way Kebede made an attack on Italian troops at a place called Keyafer Amba. It says "Crippling continuously like a 'serdo' limb", to describe the soldiers' approach to the Italians' camp. A grass called 'serdo' grow, side ways, rather than growing up like other grasses. Similarly soldiers lead by Dejazmach Kebede Engida approached Italians, just crippling, in order not

to be seen by their enemies. Again the poem says “Kebede fought whites with a white” to mean he attacked whites (Italians) with a white bullet (a type of bullet captured from Italians).

And the last stanza says “Ajja would have remained a center for pagans, had Kebede not raised the shield of his ancestors”. Since Italians were anti-orthodoxies (burnt churches, massacred priests ---etc), they were considered as pagans, by indigenous people, as the natives were dominantly orthodoxies. So had Kebee not led the guerilla war, Ajja (a rural market place around Debre Tabor), would have remained a center for Italians, because they had built a great camp their. So the poem praises this hero, Dejazmach Kebede Engida for his role in attacking, and chasing Italians, and in helping the indigenous to retain their original faith, i.e. orthodox Christianity.

Likewise poem (6) praises another hero for the role he played in securing Christianity, (orthodoxy) to the indigenous people. The poem says Frede Belay tied a thread at people’s necks while they were looking at the sky with tension, to mean he enabled them to remain Christian orthodoxies, because a thread at one’s neck symbolically represents Christianity. Ferede did this by killing an Italian major, while he was on the way to rape his nun mother, which is strictly forbidden in orthodox faith. Then after people learned a lesson from Ferede and began to shoot Italians every where, as the fighting takes a religions shape. As a result, Italians were chased out of the area, and people retained their original faith. That is why, the poem says Ferede tied a thread at people's necks, to mean he enabled them retain their original faith(Orthodox).

Similarly, poem (5) praises another patriotic leader called Dejazmach Gebre. At the surface the poem seems to talk about a farmer and his oxen. But it is about the war from Azawr (a village around Debre Tabor) to Dera (a place around Bahir Dar), which was led by Dejazmach

Gebre. He led this war successfully, and chased the fascists from the area, though he died at the end (around Dera). So the oxen in the poem symbolize the soldiers of this war lord, and their farmer stands for the leader himself. Now lets move ahead to poems that reflect the theme of death as a source of grief.

3.4. Death as a source of grief

Poems in this group are expressions of people's mental and physical pains, caused by death of children mother, soldiers, great men…etc.

1. **እረ ለምንድን ነው ልጅ አንጀት መብላቱ፣**

   የበቀለበት ነው የቀድሞው እርስቱ::

   Why a child eats intestine?

   Because, it is its previous lawn from where it was seeded.

2. **ከዱር አውሬ ሁሉ አሞራ ነው ክፉ፣**

   የበላውን በልቶ ይሰቅላል ከዛፉ ::

   Crow is the most evil wild creature in the world,

   Because it hangs its left over on the tree,

   After feeding its fill from the human corpse.

3. **በሮቹ ወይፋፍን ጉልበት ሲሰማቸው፣**

   አወይ የእድል ነገር በጊዜ ፈታቸው::

   His oxen are youth, and they felt power,

   But as a matter of chance he untied them before dusk.

The question "why a child eats intestine?" poem (1) for instance expresses the great sorrow that one feels from the death of a child as the phrase "eating intestine" is a homonym, which means consuming flesh from one's intestine and feeling great sorrow. So, it means death of a child

creates great grief and sorrow on his parents, especially on his/her mother.

The poem also says “a child eats intestine, because it was its previous lawn from where it was seeded”, to show that the first place where a child can be situated is his/her mother's womb, to mean it is fair if a mother feels sorrow from the death of her child (if the death of her child eats her intestine). In short the main message that the poem communicates is death of a child is the worst of grieves that one feels.

Again poem (2) describes crow as the most evil wild creature. The reason is that it hangs its left over, on a tree after eating its fill from the human corpse. However, the main concern of the poem is not showing the evil nature of crows. Rather, it is showing how harsh the death of the soldiers is.

Normally dead body of a man is buried with great care and respect. But when a soldier dies at the battle field, no one can go there, and burry him. So the only creatures found there are crows, and scavengers, that feed on human corpse and hang their left over on trees, especially when the battle is hard and the dead are many.

So it means that death of soldiers is the worst and the grief that it creates on their relatives is great. Because, even they don’t get the chance to be buried with respect. In fact they are crows who clear their corpse from the battle filed.

Similarly, poem (3) tells us that the farmer untied his oxen before dusk, though they are youth and powerful to pull more than that. But this is not a message that the poem wants to convey. The crucial message intended to be disseminated is the farmer who has youth and powerful oxen died early since, "untied before dusk” means, stop farming early and

died at young age. Then it is the second meaning that is communicated, though it is covered with the context of the first.

4. **አገሬ በጌምድር ሆነ ጎዳ ለም፣**

ቀንደኞቹ ሳሉ የነበረ አለም።

My country Begemdir became a hornless cow,

How joyful it was ? when there were the horny ones.

5. **እናት የለውና የወንዝ ዳር ዛፍ፣**

ሁልጊዜም ይኖራል አበባው ሳይረግፍ።

A man whose mother is alive,

And a tree around a river'

Live forever with out shading their flower.

Poem (4) too, expresses the disappointment and sorrow of people that they feel from the death of great men. It says “My country Begemdir became a hornless cow”, to mean, great mean in the district passed away as the word horny symbolizes great men, and hornless stands for the least important ones. So becoming hornless or not is not the concern of the poem. Its main concern, however, is expressing the death of death of great men in the former Begmidr (the current south Gondar).

Poem (5) on the other hand indirectly expresses how grievous death of a mother is. "A child whose mother is alive and a tree around a river lives forever with out shading their flower which impliedly means a child whose mother has no mother looses his /her beauty because a mother takes care of her child in every aspect and she enables to retain his/her beauty as a river helps a tree around it to be ever green with continuous water supply. The following category on the other hand deals with poems that teach different moral and ethical lessons.

3.5 Social comments as a means to teach moral lessons

According to Okpewho (1992: 115) oral poetry is a means to teach conduct and ethics in traditional Africa, where there are no modern educational institutions .Similarly poems in this thematic group are comments and recommendations to follow and respect moral and ethical rules of the society. They convey do and don't do kind of messages based on the rules the society has set to be good and bad.

1. **የምሐሉ ሲያለቅስ የዳሩ ይሰቃል፣**

   ሐዘን ቅባኑግ ነው ለሁሉም ይደርሳል::

People at the edge laugh when the middle cry,

Grief is a nigger seed oil and will affect every body.

2. **ማረሰ ነው እንጅ እጅ እስኪቆስል፣**

   መስረቅ ምንድን ነው ውሻ ይመስል::

It is better to plough till hand gets wounded,

What is stealing like a dog?

3. **እናቱ ትልቅ ናት አባቱ ትልቅ ነው ማለት በከንቱ ነው፣**

   ሰውን የሚያኮራው እንጀራ ደጉ ነው::

My mother is great and my father is great is a nonsense idea,

As it is bread that makes people proud.

4. **አንድም ገድሎ መሄድ አንድም ሰምቶ መቻል፣**

   ሁል ጊዜ አገላግሉኝ ዘመድ የሠለቻል::

Live patiently with your enemy or kill and leave,

Otherwise continuous request for mediation will fed up

relatives.

5. **የሠማዩን ኮከብ ማን ቆጥሮ ይዘልቃል**

አባት የረገመው ዘላለም የለቅሳል ::

Who can count the number of stars on the sky?

A man who is cursed by his father cries forever.

"People at the edge laugh when the middle cry", (poem 1) means, people don't feel and share others' problems and hardships. And "Grief is a nigger seed oil and will affect everybody" means, you will be in problem at a time, as it is a must to face difficulties in life. So the total message is feel and share others pain, so you will get the return whenever you face the same situation.

Poem (2) on the other hand condemns thieves and theft. It recommends ploughing till hands get wounded rather than stealing, like a dog. Stealing is normal for dogs in the society. As a result, they are least respected and least appreciated animals. Likewise, people become downgraded and disapproved of when they become thieves. So the central message that the poem communicates is don't steal, if you need to have a better place in the society; otherwise you will be least respected and disregarded by your colleagues, and by the society at large, if you engage yourself in stealing like a dog.

Again poem (3) advises to work hard, and have one's own property, and not to sit idle**,** just thinking the greatness of the family. It also comments not to feel proud of descending from the great families. Because it is only bread (supporting oneself) that enables people feel proud. Then it means work hard, be independent and be proud of yourself, rather than your families' greatness and history.

"Live patiently or kill and leave" (poem 4) seems a piece of advice to kill one's enemy or live with tolerance. But, it has nothing to do with

leaving or killing. However it is a comment for those who failed to decide (choose) whenever they face comparative life difficulties; so it means don't be indecision, or don't hesitate to decide.

Poem (5) on its part describes the moral obligation that a son has to take care of his parents, especially when they get older. Otherwise, he will cry forever, or it is impossible for him to get out of difficulties, as it is impossible to count the number of stars in the sky. Hence, it states the moral and ethical obligations set by the society; taking care of parents at old age, as it may result in endless hard ships if they put their curse.

CHAPTER FOUR

Technical Analysis of oral poetry in and around Debre Tabor

The purpose of this chapter is identifying and describing the major technical devices and modes of versifications used in oral poetry of Debre Tabor and its surroundings. Technique in literature, as Harry Shaw (1972:372) defined, is the manner and ability with which the writer employs the skill of his arts. Shaw further outlined that the technique of a novelist involves characterization, building of conflicts, developments of suspense, the writing of dialogue…etc. And the technical performance of a poet is judged by his knowledge of diction, meter, rhythm, and rhyme.

The last three techniques of poetry (rhyme, rhythm, and meter) refer to the syntactic arrangement of sounds and words on lines of a verse. Rhyme is a sound oriented poetical feature in which the last word in a line (lines) of a poem has the same sound as the last word in the following lines. Rhythm on the other hand is a regular periodic iteration (repetition) of features (elements) in poetry. And meter as Manfred Jahn (2003:3) defined is "a syllabic rhythm of poetry"; repeating equal number of syllabic units (groups) in a given poetry.

The other technical element (feature) in poetry, 'diction' however is more of semantic than syntactic. It involves the choice and use of words to produce a particular effect or meaning. Poets use analogical, symbolic, and figurative expressions to communicate a special messages; a meaning that is different from the usually meanings of words (phrases) through the technique of diction or choice of words.

Poets also use indirect expressions like, irony, pun, periphrasis, hyperbole, and litotes that convey messages other than words on lines say. Irony is a technique in which usually a meaning opposite to what the words in a literary work say is conveyed. And pun is a system which

employs word (words) with double meanings, and conveys one of the meanings putting it in the context of the other. Periphrasis (circumlocutory) on the other hand is a technique that uses more words than required, it uses many words instead of saying directly with right number of words. Again, litotes as a technique of indirect expression emphases on negative statements to enforce the positive one. Hyperbole (over statement) on the contrary exaggerates or over states an idea beyond what it is in reality. However, due to time and other constraints, this paper doesn't deal with all these technical aspects.

So, techniques related to syntax (rhymes, rhythm, and meter are not included in this study and it only treats techniques related to diction (choice and use of words). So the oral poems collected in the target area were classified in to six categories based on the techniques, and systems of composition they employ (techniques related to diction). These are: pun, symbolism, figurative expressions, analogy, indirect expression and direct expression.

However, this classification is not totally exclusive; more than one technical device or system of versification may be found in a poem. But for the sake of convenience, a poem is categorized only within a group, based on the overtly observed feature used in it.

According to the result from the classification, 27 percent of the oral poems collected were composed in a system called indirect expressions where as 20 percent of the oral poems were versed in direct expression. And 22 percent of the poems were figurative expression, poems that employ metaphor, simile and personification. Then 16 percent were symbolism followed by pun and analogy which accounted for 8 and 7 percents of the oral poems collected respectively. See table two below.

Table two: the percentage distribution of literary techniques in oral poems of Dbre Tabor and its environs.

No	Title	Percentage
1	Indirect expression	27%
2	Figurative expression	22%
3	Direct expression	20%
4	Symbolic expression	16%
5	Pun	8%
6	Analogy	7%

4.1 Analogy

According to Harry Shaw (1972:18) “analogy is a partial similarity of features on which a comparison may be based”. Similarly Chris Baldick (2004:10) defined analogy as “Illustration of an idea by means of an idea that is more familiar or parallel to it in some significant features” Baldick further suggested that analogies are often presented in the form of extended simile like “The caterpillar chooses the first leave to lay its eggs on, so the priest lays his curse on the first joys”; the comparison is not limited to particular word (pares). But it goes to the extent of comparing sentences or the over all ideas in a given text to the other like the caterpillar example given above.

Likewise poems in this category express ideas by comparing with another which is similar in one way or another. And the comparison is in the form of what Baldick called extended simile; they compare ideas of a sentence with another, rather than comparing ideas of two words. Poems analyzed below are typical examples of this technique.

1. **እናት ያለው እና የወንዝ ዳር ዘፍ፣**
   ሁልጊዜም ይኖራል አበባው ሰይረግፉ።።

A child whose mother is alive,

And a tree around a river,

Live forever with out shading their flower.

If a tree grows around a river, its leaves will never shed as it has a reliable water source. Likewise a child whose mother is alive will never lose his/her beauty as his/ her mother takes care of him/ her. So, the two things, a child with a mother and a tree around a river have a similarity of retaining beauty (they are analogues).

2. **የከፋው ወንድ ልጅ ለምን ሞት ይመኛል?**

ድንጋይ ተንከባሎ ደልዳላ ያገኛል።

A stone rolling downhill rests at a level land,

Then why a boy in problem wishes to die.

The two ideas compared here are rolling a down hill of a stone and a boy in problem. The similarity between the two is that both will be at different situations after a time being. A stone rolling downhill stops rolling as it arrives at a level land after sometime. Similarly a boy in problem will get out of it, since a person will never be in problem through out his /her life. Hence the two ideas, rolling downhill and being in problem are parallel or comparable; both are temporary. And hence the temporariness of being in problem is expressed in comparison with the temporariness of rolling downhill of a stone, and it is selected to make clear the message (being in problem is temporary), as it is more familiar and easier to understand than the message itself.

3. **እኔስ የመሰለኝ አልጋ ወራሽነት፣**

ፍቅሬ ከአንተ ጋር የተገናኘሁለት።

I felt that I am an heir to a throne,

When I think of the day I met you.

This poem expresses the pleasure gained from love in terms of the pleasure that one feels when he/she becomes an heir to a throne. It is true that a person feels great pleasure when he/she becomes an heir to a throne in a given royal family, because he/she is becoming the most decisive person or the top executive in a nation. Again a person feels great pleasure when he/she gets his /her beloved. Hence the two occasions are comparable, because both create great pleasure on people. Being an heir to a throne is selected for comparison, because it is a universally accepted fact that succession to a throne creates great pleasure from the successor. Hence expressing the pleasure from love by comparing with the pleasure from being an heir to a throne enforces the message, and makes the concept clear.

4. **አረ ለምንድን ነው ፈሪ ማጥንጦኑ?**

ቅጠል አይበጠስ ከልደረሠ ቀኑ::

Why a coward gets disturbed easily?

Because a leaf can't be cut off unless the time

for it to be cut off arrives.

The theme of this poem is that don't be afraid of anything, because you don't die unless the time for your death arrives, as a leaf can't be cut off unless the time for it to be cut off arrive .Hence two things are compared here, the time for one's death and the time for a leaf to be cut off because these occasions are analogues, as both signifies the ending of something. So the poem expresses the time for one's death in comparison with the time for a leaf to be cut off as they share some similarities (signifying the ending of something). Now let's move on to poems that employ words with double meanings.

4.2 Pun

The oxford dictionary defines the word pun as “the clever or humorous use of a word that has more than one meaning, or of words that have different meanings, but sound the same” Harry Shaw(1972:308) on the other hand defined pun as “A play on words, the humorous use of a word emphasizing different meanings or applications” .So, the central mechanism in this method of versification is employment of at least one homonym word so as to convey one of its meanings covering it with the context of the other, which usually creates humor and surprise from audiences, because the messages of such pomes are usually understood very lately, as they require careful analysis of words especially the homonym ones, and this makes the system a word play (a gymnastic with words).

This system of versification is common in Amharic oral poems of Debre Tabor and its surroundings, and it is called ,’kine’ and the meanings of the homonym words are called ‘sem ena work’ (gold and wax) where ‘sem’ stands for the surface meaning and gold represents the under lying meaning of the homonym word. Now let’s see some pomes versed in this system.

1. **እረ አገሬ መና መቀጣዋ ሞፈር መቁረጥ ያውቃል፣**
   ካልተለበለበ መቸ ይታረቃል።

   My country Mena and Meketawa knows haw to prepare a ‘mofer’,
   It can’t be straightened before it is warmed.

This poem has employed two homonym words. These are ‘Kaltelebelebe’ and ‘Yitarekal’, which literally mean if not warmed and will be straightened respectively. So the poem superficially means a traditional farming equipment called ‘mofer’ can’t be straightened and take the required shape unless it is warmed with fire. But, the poem underlyingly

means an enemy won't agree to live in peace unless you afire his hat. Because the two words 'kaltelebelebe' and 'yitarrekal' also means if not afired and will agree to live in peace respectively .Hence they are these secondary meanings that the poem communicates, though it seems to teach a lesson about preparation of a 'mofer', superficially

2. ማሻለ ጠባቂ ሆነሻል መሠለኝ፣
እሸ የምትይበት አፋፍሽ ደስ አለኝ።።
I think you became a sorghum keeper,
The hill on which you sit and chase birds pleased me.

Like poem (1) this poem also used two words that convey double messages. These are 'afafish' and 'esh'. 'Afafish' means your hill and your mouth, and 'esh' means a sound that uses to chase birds from a farm land and 'yes'. So, the poem totally means your mouth with which you say yes when I ask you for love pleased me, though it seems to say the hill on which you stand and chase birds pleased me.

3. እኛ መች ፈልገን የጎረቤት ጠጅ፣
እየበጠበጡ ይጠሩናል እንጅ።።
We don't need our neighbor's 'tej' mead
But, they brew and invite us.

Like the two poems discussed above, this poem too bears a homonym word, i.e. 'eyebetebetu'. It means they brew a local drink called 'tej' and they disturb or annoy. So at the surface level the poem means, that our neighbors brew their 'tej' and invite us to drink though we are not interested to drink.The hidden message however, is we don't need to fight with our enemies, but they annoy and invite us to quarrel with them.

4. **እራሷን ብናየው ሰብራት የለው፣**
ደሙን ነው ያች ሠው የተቀባችው።።

There is no fracture when we saw her head,
So, that girl has painted her head with blood.

The word that conveys double messages in this poem is 'demun' which literally means the blood. Because, it also means beauty metaphorically. So, the conclusion made by the poet "That girl has painted her head with blood" means that girl is beautifulful as decoration with blood metaphorically means endowment with beauty. Where as the literal meaning, that girl has painted her head with blood from other sources, as there is no fracture at her head is a context fabricated to cover the underlying message.

In general, poems in this technical category use a word play mechanism. They employ a sound, word (words) with more than one meaning, put them in the context of one of the meanings, and convey the other meaning.

4.3 Figurative Expression

Figurative languages are deliberate and intentional departures from normal word meanings and orders, so as to gain freshness and strength of expression, Harry Shaw (1972:159). Similarly Baldick (2004:97) defined figurative languages as expressions that depart from the accepted literal sense or from the usual word order.

The most important figurative expressions according to Ballick are metaphor ,simile, metonymy, synecdoche, personification and irony; others include hyperbole (overstatement), litotes (understatement) and periphrasis (circumlocutory).However, the prominent figurative expressions in oral poems of Debre Tabor are simile, metaphor, and personification. Of these, simile is the most prominent one. About 59 percent of the oral poems versed in figurative expression employ this

technique. Metaphor and personification on the other hand account for 22 and 19 percent respectively.

4.3.1 Simile

Simile is one of the figurative expressions that makes an explicit comparison between two different things, actions, or feelings. It takes similar features from both things that are compared, and compares them using words as and like.

1. እስኪ ወዲ..ያ ሒደሽ ወዲህ ተመለሽ ፣
   ለእኔም ደስ ይበለኝ ሠወቹም ይዩሽ፣
   እንደ ዳንግሌ በግ መዳህኒቱ ነሽ።
   Let you move here and there
   So that I will be happy and others will see you,
   Because, you are my cure like a red sheep.

There was a belief in the society (in and around Debre Tabor) that having a red sheep will cure from certain ailments. The presence of a beloved too gives a relief of some kind, as it is one of the most pleasant situations (occasions) in the world. So, the two things compared are similar; both are pleasant and can cure an aliment. Hence the figurative expression “like a red sheep” is used to enforce the message; to make the concept clear and to make the communication fresh.

2. ማረስ ነው እንጅ እጅ እስኪቆስል፣
   መስረቅ ምንድን ነው ውሻ ይመስል።
   It is better to plough till hand gets wounded,
   What is stealing like a dog?

This poem compares a thief and a dog, taking a common behavior of the two i.e. stealing, since stealing is normal for dogs and accepted by the society, and a person who engaged himself in stealing is also regarded as

a dog. So, the poem compares the two (a thief and a dog) by drawing or identifying the common behavior of the two; stealing. That is why it says that cultivating a land till hand gets wounded is better than stealing like a dog.

3. አለቅሳለሁ በአይኔ አብሳለሁ በእጅ
እንደሠማይ ኮከብ እርቃኝ ወዳጅ::
I weep with my eyes, and wipe with my hands,
As my beloved is far apart from me, like a star in the sky.

This poem expresses the distance between a lover and his beloved in terms of the distance between the star in the sky and the earth. The similarity that the poem draws between a beloved and a star in the sky is that they both are situated at a very distant place. The poet chooses the distance between the star on the sky and the earth to express the extreme distance between him and his beloved, because the society believes that the distance between the star and the earth is the farthest distance in the universe.

4. ዘመናችን አልቆ አለን በሠው ዘመን፣
አንገታችን ደፍተን እንደጤፍ ዘመመን::
Our age is finished, and we are living in others' age,
Turning our necks down like heaped 'teff'.

The grain part of 'teff' a common food crop in Ethiopia turns down when it is cut off during the harvesting season. Likewise a man who feels a social discomfort turns his head down waiting the time for his happiness to come. So the poem expresses this sad situation of a man in terms of the heaped up 'teff' which turns its top part down. As they share some features; both turn down their top parts.

In general, this technique of versituication the use of simile, is a system of expressing idea by comparing with an other which has similar

feature (quality) using words like and as, which are the most common means of expressing similarity. Now let's proceed to an other figurative expression that substitutes one's feature to the other.

4.3.2 Metaphor

As Baldick (2004:153) described, metaphor is a figurative expression in which one thing, idea or action is referred to by a word or expression that normally denotes another thing, idea, or action, so as to suggest some common quality shared by the two. Abrahams (1986:63) also defined metaphor as "a word which in standard (literal) usage denotes one kind of thing, quality or action is applied to another in the form of identity in stead of comparison"

Hence metaphor is an expression of idea, in terms of another as a substitution rather than as a comparison. So, words (phrases) serve unusual purpose substituting other words or phrases based on the implied similarities drawn between them. See poems analyzed below.

1. **መቀነቷ አረጅም የነብር ጅራት፣**
   ጥርሷ ጉራማይሌ የበቆሎ እሸት፣
   ከእርሷ ጋር አድሬ ሲነጋ ልሙት፣
   ለአፈር አይደል መቸስ የተሠራሁት።።

Her belt is long a tiger's tail,
Her teeth are fresh maize grains with the gum striped with tattoo,
May I die in the morning, spending a night with her,
Because, I am created to die.

Women in and around Debre Tabor especially old ones tie their waist with a string (mekenet in Amharic) which is made from threads of different colors by local weavers; it is decorated with different and

attractive designs, especially when it is woven by a weaver who is well skilled in the art. Again, fresh maize grains are white and well arranged while they with their corn. So the society set them as a best criterion for best teeth to look like. A person who is endowed with white and well arranged teeth is usually referred as he has teeth of fresh maize grains.

Hence the poem substitutes these two things, a woman's string, and her teeth with a tiger's tail and fresh maize grains respectively, because, they shares some similarities with objects they substitute. By nature a tiger's tail is long and many hued like a string decorated with different colors. Aging maize grains are white and equally arranged like a person who is endowed with best teeth. So they are selected for their quality (feature) they share with the features they substitute.

2. አይንህንም ባየው ብር አስጐልለሐል ፣
ጥርስህንም ባየው በረዶ ቅመሃል፣
ጠጕርህንም ባየው ሃር ተምጥመሃል፣
ከአንተ ጋር የዋለ ከአንተ ጋር ያደረ፣
ከፈጣሪው ጋራ የተመካከረ::

When I see your eyes, you domed silver,
When I see your teeth, you chewed snow,
When I see your head you put on silk,
A person who spends a day and a night with you,
Is a person who councils with his creator.

The phrases "you domed silver", "you chewed snow", and "you put on silk" in this poem are selected to substitute eyes teeth, and hair respectively, which the society has set as best criteria for eyes, teeth and hair to look like. They substitute, because they share some similarities with the object they substitute.

Domed silver for example looks like an eye which is big and white. A person who has white teeth seems chewing show. Again a man who has

black and smooth hair seems putting on a silk clothe at his head. So it is because they do have these similarities, that they stand substituting the object they refer to.

3. **ከአንተ የምልከው የማዘው ሠው ባጣ፣**
   ከሳሁ መነመነኩኝ ውልቅ እንጨቱ ወጣ::
   Because I couldn't find any one to send to you,
   I have got withered and emaciated, and became a bare wood.

A bare wood in this poem stands for a woman who is withered and emaciated unable to find a person to send to her beloved. A bare wood is selected to substitute, a love sick woman because they do have some common features; both loose their weight and beauty due to the harsh condition they face. Woman gets troubled, confused, withered and emaciated and looses her beauty when she is in love with somebody, and especially when that person is not around or respond positively in one way or another. Like wise a wood gets, shirinked and misshaped when its bark is taken off. So, it is because they share this similarity that the poem used a bare wood as a substitution of a woman who is withered with love. Now let's move ahead to another figurative expression that gives a human character for non-humans.

4.3.3.Personification

According to Abrahams (1981:65) personification is a figure of speech in which abstractions, animals, objects can be endowed with human behaviors characters, and qualities. This system gives typical qualities of human being to things, which do not possess such qualities in reality. Poems analyzed below are composed in this technique.

1. **ማረስ ነው እንጅ እርፍ ነቅንቆ**
   እርሐብ ክፋ ነው ይገድላል አንቆ

Plough well shaking the handle,
As hunger is an evil that kills throttling.

Killing, a person throttling is a human character otherwise hunger can't kill a man throttling, though it may kill making skinny, and emaciated. So the word throttling is unusually used, just to make the communication fresh and the message strong. So hunger is endowed with human behavior here i.e killing throttling.

2. የእኔስ ማጭዴ ተበሳጭታለች ፣
ሌሊት ተነስታ ሳር ትበላለች።
My so sickle has got angry,
It wakes up at night and eats grass.

Like poem (1) this poem also gives a human behavior (feeling angry) to a sickle, which is unlikely to happen. Because they are living beings especially people who feel angry; otherwise sickles can't feel angry. The poem also says my sickle wakes up at night and eats grass. Waking up at night and eating grass too is impossible for a sickle to do so, as they are animals mostly herbivorous which wake up at night and eat grass. So, both words angry and eating are deviantly used, as it is impossible to feel angry, wake up at night, and eat grass for a sickle. The actual meaning here is the farmer wakes up at night and mows his crop to finish harvesting on time.

3. **በሬው ጥቋቁር ገበሬው መ·ጫ፣**
ማን ይለቀዋል ሠርዶ ቢንጫጫ።
The oxen are black, and the farmer is young,
Who will leave it if the grass cries ?

Again poem (3) gives a human behavior (crying) to grass. People cry when they feel sorrow and grief, but it is unlikely and totally impossible for grass to cry. Because, first and for most crying requires producing sound and uttering words, however grass is not endowed with such quality and capacity. So the word crying is placed in a very unusual place. In short poems in this category employ words deviantly; they mostly give a living quality for non – livings. Having said this much on poems with figurative expressions let's proceed to poems that employ words with symbolic functions.

4.4 Symbolism

According to Abrahams (1981:195), symbolism in literature refers to a word or a phrase that signifies an object (event) and has a range of reference beyond itself. Harry Shaw (1972:367) also defined symbolism as "a practice of representing objects or ideas by symbols or of giving things a symbolic (associated) meanings and characters". So it can be inferred that symbolism is a system of composition using words that symbolically stand for ideas (things) other than their denotative meaning. Poems analyzed below best exemplifies this technique .

1. **አገሬን ገረመው ፣ በጌምድር ገረመው ፣**
   ጥቁሬውን ዝንጀሮ ጭላዳ አባረረው ::
   My country Begemdir is surprised,
   When chilada chased the black monkey .

According to the source from community elders and oral artists, this poem was composed during the second invasion of Italians to Ethiopia. In this invasion, Ethiopians were unable to defend the Italian force, unlike their previous histories. Because Ethiopians were victorious over their enemies including Italians at the battle of Adwa, but Italians were almost successful in their second attempt, especially at the first

phase, and it was impressing and surprising for Ethiopian freedom fighters of the time. So the black monkey and Chilada (white monkey) are symbols that stand for Ethiopian guerilla fighters and Italian invaders respectively. There two species of monkey are selected, because the black monkeys are always victorious over the whites (chiladas) as Ethiopians were victorious over invaders. Hence it was surprising when the reverse had happened; chasing of a black monkey by a white which symbolically means the defeat of Ethiopians by Italians is impressing and surprising.

2. የገብርየ በሮች አወይ መከራቸው ፣
አዛውር ላይ ጠምዶ ደራ ላይ ፈታቸው ::

How hard Gebre's oxen are troubled,
Beginning at Azawr he untied them at Dera.

This poem is also a symbolic expression of a war between Italians and a guerrilla war leader called Dejazmach Gebre. The oxen who were troubled hard symbolizes soldiers of Dejazmach Gebre who fought firmly with Italians and chassed them from Azawr (a village around Debre Tabor) to Dera a place around Bahir Dar.

3. አገሩ ተጨንቆ ሠማይ ሠማይ ሲያይ ፣
ማተብ አሳሠረው ፈረደ በላይ ::

While people were looking the sky with tension,
Freed Belay tied a thread at their necks.

Again this poem symbolically expresses the role of a hero in helping people to retain (secure) their religion i.e. orthodox. The hero by the name Fered Belay shot an Italian major while he was preparing himself to rape his nun mother. This time people joined the guerilla ware in mass learning a lesson from Ferede and continued shooting Italians every where, and Italians were pushed out of the area. So Ferede Belay tied a thread at people's necks means he enabled them retain their

religion. Because a thread at one neck signifies Christianity for the people in the district (in and around Debre Tabor) as it is a religious order for Christian orthodoxies to tie a thread at their necks. In a nut shell poems versed with this technique primarily used words which has symbolic or representative functions. Now let's move a head to poems that indirectly communicate their messages.

4.5. Indirect expression

Knowingly or unknowingly, people express their ideas in an indirect manner. Knowingly they choose to state their ideas indirectly for a number of reasons. They may choose it as a escaping mechanism from danger. Or they may use it to make their communication fresh, strong, and attractive etc . Again people may choose to speak or write indirectly to convey secret messages. In any case communicating indirectly is common in human communication.

Indirect expression of ideas in literature is referred by various names. Irony, litotes, and circumlocutory are the most common ones. Irony as Harry Shaw (1972:208) defined is " A figure of speech in which the literal or denotative meaning of a word or a statement is the opposite of that intended " . This definition of irony seems the most widely accepted. People usually understand irony as a technique of indicating an intention or attitude opposed to what is a actually stated.

Baldick(2004:130) on the other hand defined irony as " a subtly humorous perception of inconsistency in which an apparently straightforward statement or event is undermined by its context so as to give it a very different significance. Similarity Cicero in Harry Shaw (1972:208) defined irony as "the saying of one thing and the meaning of an other".

Baldick and Cicero seem to say that irony is the saying of one thing and meaning of an other, but not necessarily its opposite. So, indirect expression does not necessarily mean saying one and meaning its opposite. In fact poems classified as indirect expression in this paper say one thing and mean an other , but they don't mean the opposite of what they said. That is why they are referred by indirect expressions rater than irony. See poems analyzed below.

1. አንድም ገድሎ መሐድ አንድም ሠምቶ መቻል፣
ሁል ጊዜ ሽምግሉኝ ዘመድ ያሠለቻል ::

Live patiently with your enemy or kill and leave,
Otherwise continuous request for mediation will fed up relatives.

This poem seems a piece of advice to a person to kill or live patiently. But it does have nothing to do with killing and living patiently, rather it is a comment for people who faille to choose when they face comparative life difficulties. So, saying live patiently or kill and leave to mean don't be indecision is very indirect way of expression. Because there is no relation between the words in the poem and the meaning they convey.

2. ብልባላ ነው ብዬ ሐድኩ ላሊበላ ፣
የተፈረደ ነው ጅብ እኔን ቢበላ::

I went to Lalibela, in my plan to go to Bilbala,
So, it is fair if a hyena eats me.

Again the persona in this poem seems talking about loosing the right path to Bilbala, (a rock hewed church around Lalibela) and went to Lalibela. But the message it conveys is totally different from the words that constitute the poem. The message (the theme) of the poem is

expression of confused life of a person because he/she is in love with some body and the denotative meanings of the words in the poem is loosing the right way to Bilbala and going to Lalibela. So saying I went to Lalibela unable to find the right path to Bilbala and meaning I am confused, because I am in love with somebody is very indirect. And the indirectness is not attributed to a particular word or phrase, but it is attributed to the whole words in the poem.

3. እንቅልፍ ይባላል ወይ ሲነጋ ቢተኙ ፣
እስከ ዶሮ ጩኸት በአሰብ እየዋኙ ።።
Can it be a sleep if one sleeps in the mooring?
Spending the night swimming in the ocean of thought till mid-night.

Similar to poem (2) this poem says one thing and means another which is very different from the meanings of words in it. It asks whether it can be a sleep when one sleeps in the mooring after spending the night swimming till mid night in the ocean of thought. But it is not a question that requires a response from the hearer. Because, the poem totally is an expression of restless life as a result of falling in love with some body. So, the poem (the meanings of words in the poems) and the meaning it conveys is entirely different. It asks whether it can be sleep when one sleeps in the morning and means I am becoming restless, because I am in love with somebody. In short opens versed in this mode of expression say one thing and man another.

Having said this much on indirect pomes lets move on to poems that plainly express the message they intended to communicate.

4.6 Direct expression

Unlike the previous technical categories, poems in this section state their messages directly. They don't compare, substitute, or give one's character to another like figurative expressions. They don't say one thing and mean an other like indirect excretions. Again they don't use homonym and symbolic words like pun and symbolism. But rather they straightforwardly state the messages they intend to communicate, with out any means to cover overstate understate, etc They describe things ideas, actions as they are. See poems analyzed below.

1. **አዳባባይ ባትሔድ ብትውል ከማጀት ፣**
ጠመንጃ ባትገዛ ጥይት ባይኖራት፣
ሴትም ትዋጋለች የቸገረ እለት።
ከቶ አይተን አናውቅም ሴት ቀሚስ ለባሽ ፣
ገዳይ ከጥጉ ስር ቀኛች በላይነሽ ፣
በከንተሮ ገዳይ መትረየስ ተኳሽ።

Though she doesn't go out and spends her time in the kitchen,
Though she doesn't buy a gun, and have no bullets,
A woman fights when there is difficulty.
We have never seen, a woman with military rank,
Geday at the foot of the mountain " kegnazmach" Belaynesh,
Killer of a machine gunner with a stick.

This poem is a direct narration of a woman's history made during the anti-Italian guerilla war. An Italian machine gunner went to a village to drink water at the middle of a battle with the local freedom fighters. Then he met a woman called Belaynesh, and he asked her to give him water with a sign language as he can't speak the local language (Amharic). But Belaynesh didn't give him water. Rather, she invited him to sit down and she diluted a powdered pepper in a large cup and gave him and the soldier drank it all with out distinguishing its taste, as he was running out

of water, and food for many days in the war. Then the soldier fails to the ground in a dead faint. This time, Belaynesh hit him hard on his head with a stick and captured his machine gun. So that Belaynesh was promoted to the rank of kegazmach (leader of the right front) after liberation, which is unusual and the poem narrates, all these things directly. It says a woman fights when there is problem though she doesn't have a gun, and bullets and spends her time in the kitchen. Because, Belaynesh, who has no gun and bullets and who spends her time in the kitchen fought and killed a machine gunner with a stick. It also says we have never seen a woman with a military rank, which is true. Woman in the area even in Ethiopia had no the chance to be promoted to a military rank. In short the poem describes the history of Belaynesh straightforwardly; the words on lines and their meanings are the same.

2. በሐምሌ ጕልጉየ ፣ መስከረም አርሜ ፣
መከሩን ሠብሰቤ እበላለሁ እኔስ ነጭ ጤፍ አብቅየ::
Cultivating in July , weeding in September,
Harvesting in autumn, I will produce and eat white 'tef

Similar to poem (1) this poem describes the activities and tasks to be carried out in white 'tef' production. White 'teff ' requires cultivating in July, weeding in September, and harvesting in November (autumn) and the persona says, he is committed to do these tasks and means that; there is no any discrepancy, between the words on the lines, and the meaning they convey, it says what it means.

3 ሌት ከቀን ብለህ ጠንክረህ እጨድ ፣
በረዶ ሲጥል እንዳትሠደድ ::
Mow your crops day and night,
In order not to migrate when the snow destroys it.

Destruction of crops by snow is a common problem for farmers around Debre Tabor. So, they mow their crop from dawn to dusk even some times they cut down at night, to collect before it is destroyed by snow. Hence, the poem is a piece of advice for farmers to collect their crops as soon as possible; just to escape from destruction by snow. And this message is stated directly; it says one thing and means the same thing.

In conclusion, this chapter has identified and described the techniques and systems used by oral poems of Debre Tabor and its surroundings. So, six major techniques of composition (systems of versification) were identified as prominent features of the oral poems of the area. These were: analogy, pun, figurative languages, symbolism and direct and indirect expressions.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

On the basis of the discussions in the foregoing chapters, the following conclusions are made. The major themes of oral poetry of Debre Tabor and its surroundings are: hard work as a socially recommendable task, the powerfulness of sexual love in affecting people's feeling and activity, heroism as a socially commended value, death as a source of grief, and social comments as a means to teach moral lessons.

Of these, the theme of hard work as a socially recommended task is the dominant one. About 31 percent of the oral poems of Debre Tabor and its surroundings reflect this theme. The second dominant theme is the powerfulness of sexual love in affecting people's feeling and activities, followed by heroism as a socially commended value which account for 22 and 19 percent of oral poems of the area respectively. And the other 15 percent of the oral poems reflect the theme of death as a source of grief. And lastly, the theme of social comment as a means of teaching conducts shares 13 percent of oral poems of Debre Tabor and its surroundings.

And the major techniques of versification employed by oral poems of Debre Tabor and its environs are analogy, pun, symbolism, figurative expression, indirect expression and direct expiration.

Of these, indirect expression is the most widely used. About (27%) of the oral poems of Debre Tabor and its surroundings are versed with this technique. And the second dominant technique is figurative expression (metaphor, simile, and personification) followed by direct expression, which account for 22 and20 percent of the oral poems of the area respectively. And the other dominate technique of versification in Debre Tabor and its surroundings is symbolism in which (16%) of the oral poems are versed. Pun and analogy on the other hand are least exploited

techniques which share only 7 and 8 percent of oral poetry of the target area compared to other techniques mentioned above.

And the major figurative expressions employed by oral poems poetry of Debre Tabor and its surroundings are: simile metaphor and personification. Of these simile is the most prominent one. About 59 percent of the oral poems versed in figurative languages in the area employ simile as a technique of versification. Metaphor and personification on the other hand account for 22 and19 percent of the poems composed in figurative languages.

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Appendix 1
Poems with thematic classification

Poems that uphold the value of hard work

1. **አጥርተሽ አርሚው ሁሉንም አዝመራ፣**
   አንድታከማችው በመልካም ጎተራ::
   Pleas weed well every farm land,
   So, you will store your produce in a large container.
2. **እሰኪ ዘር ዘራ አምለክን አምነህ፣**
   የሚሠጥህን አንተ ምን አውቀህ::
   Please sow your seeds, believing God,
   As you don't know what he will give you.
3. **አድርገው ድቅቅ ድቅቅ አድርገው ገለባ፣**
   ቤታችን እሩቅ ነው በጊዜ እንድንገባ::
   Crush the crop and make it straw ,
   Our house is far we should get home early.
4. **ከሁሉም ሁሉም ማረስ ይበልጣል፣**
   ፎጣ መጠምጠም እራስ ይመልጣል::
   Ploughing is the greatest of all the professions,
   Putting on a scarf makes a head bald.
5. **ከላያያዙት እንደግራር ፍም፣**
   የአባት እንጀራ ለልጅ አይተርፍም::
   If you don't glow your work, like acacia embers,
   A father's wealth won't be enough for a son.
6. **ማረስ ነው እንጅ እርፍ እስኪለመጥ፣**
   ያስደነግጣል ሞሰብ ሲገለጥ::
   It is better to plough, till the handle gets bended,
   As it feels frightening, when the meal is served.
7. **ሲያርሱ አትረስ እና ሲዘሩ አትዝራና**
   ሰው ውሎብኛል በል ከጥላው ዋልና::

Let you sit idle while others are ploughing and sowing

And say, that people enchanted on me

8. **ሌት ከቀን ብለህ ጠንክረህ እጨድ፣**

በረዶ ሲጥል እንዳትሰደድ።።

Harvest your crop day and night’

In order not to migrate when the snow destroys it.

9. **ኽረ ተው ሳበኝ አታርገው ዋዛ፣**

እራብ ክፉ ነው ያጠፋል ለዛ

Please pull me, don’t take it as a simple matter,

Since hunger is an evil that destroys beauty.

10. **በግንቦት እንደያርስ ፀሐይ እየፈራ፣**

በሐምሌም እንዳያርስ ብርዱን እየፈራ፣

ልጁ ቢያለቅስበት በጅብ አስፈራራ።።

He is afraid of the sun’s heat to plough in May,

He is afraid of the cold to plough in July,

Hence he threatened his child with a hyena

When he asks him bread.

11. **የሠው ቤት እንጀራ የተገመገመው፣**

በልቸው ስወጣ ጉልበቴን ደከመው።።

Bread from other’s house is a scaled one,

So I felt tired soon after a meal.

12. **ሀብታም እንደ እግዚአብሔር ቢኖረው መብት፣**

ድሐን ይለው ነበር በእኔ ፈንታ ሙት።።

Had a rich the privilege like God,

He would have said to the poor “die for me”.

13. **እኔ እና ኮልባ የምንመኘው፣**

ደልዳላ መሬት ሰርዶ የዳኘው።።

What I and my ox wish

Is a level farmland covered with grasses.

14. **አልፈጨኝ አለ አልደረመስ፣**

ሞንሟናው ገበሬ ያመራተው ገብስ።።

The barely produced by a strong farmer,

Has given me a hard time to grind.

15. አየ ማጭዴ ስለት ነው ጥርሷ፣

ማንም አይገባም በህዳር ከአፏ።።

Oh! My sickle has sharp teeth,

No one gets in to its mouth in November.

16. የእኔስ ማጭዴ ተበሳጭታለች፣

ሌሊት ተነስታ ሳር ትበላለች።።

My sickle has got angry,

It wakes up at night and eats grass.

17. በቻይና ማጭድ በአፈ ሰለት፣

ያጭድ ጀመረ የሁሉን ፊት።።

With the Chinese sickle,

Which is sharp mouthed,

He began to mow others' share.

18. በርየ አንተ እና እኔ እንሂድ ምናኔ፣

ከሌለበት ሀገር ሞትና ኩነኔ።።

My ox let you and me go to a hermitage,

Where there are no death and damnation.

19. በርየ እኮ ነው ያቀናው ቤቱን፣

እንኳን ጥሬውን ይብላው ዱቄቱን።።

My ox is the base for my house,

So, let it eat not only the grain but also the flower.

20. በሬው ጥቋቁር ገበሬው መ·ጫ፣

ማን ይለቀዋል ሰርዶ ቢንጫጫ።።

The oxen are black and the farmer is youth,

Who will leave if the grass cries.

21. የጠመቀች እንደሁ አስመስላ ቢራ፣

የጋገረች አእንደሁ አስመሰላ ሞራ፣

ወጥ የሠራች እንደሁ ሽታው የሚያበላ፣

ማን ይስተካከላል ከእንትናዬ ጋራ።።

When she brews, it is like beer in a factory,

When she bakes, it is like a ‘Mora’,

When she spines it is like a hair from a horse’s tail,

When she cooks, it can make testy with its odor,

So, who can be compared with ’entina’.

(Entina=Mr.x)

22. አጨባበጡ የሚናፍቀው፣

የማጭዱ እጅ ከእጁ የሚደቀው::

The way he handles the crop yearns,

The sickle’s handle gets pounded at his palm.

23. በሬ አለም በሬአለም ያኑርህ ዘላለም፣

እንደ ቅዱስ ገብርኤል እንደመዳህኔአለም::

My ox, you are my joy in life,

May God give you eternal life,

Like st. Gabriel and the savior of the world.

24. በሬአለም በሬአለም አንተው ነህ ወገኔ፣

የምትጠብቀኝ ከምድር ኩነኔ::

My ox, you are my relative

Who saves me from the earthly damnation.

Poems that show the powerfulness of love

1. በል እሲኪ አደረሀን አደራ ክፉ ነው፣

ልቤን ከአንተ ጋራ ትቸው መሄዴ ነው::

Please take care of my heart,

Since I am leaving it with you.

2. አለቅሳለሁ በአይኔ አብሳለሁ በእጄ፣

እንደሰማይ ኮከብ እርቃኝ ወዳጄ::

I weep with my eyes and wipe with my hands,

As my beloved is far apart from me,

Like a star in the sky.

3. ወዳንቺ ስመጣ ነደፈኝ እባቡ፣

አስታመሽ ቅበሪኝ አንቺ ነሽ ሰበቡ።

The snake stung me when I was coming to you,

So attend and burry me as you are the cause for my death.

4. አትታመምብኝ ልታመመው እኔ፣

አንተ አትከፋብኝ ልከፋልህ እኔ፣

አንተ አትሙትብኝ ልሙትልህ እኔ፣

ያጣሁህ እንደሆን ይባዝናል አይኔ።

Don’t feel ill, let me feel ill instead of you,

Don’t feel sad, let me feel sad instead of you,

Don’t die let me die instead of you,

Because I will squander if I loose you.

5. ካንተ የምልከው የማዘው ሰው ባጣ፣

ከሳሁ መነመንኩኝ ነጭ እንጨቱ ወጣ።

Because I couldn’t find any one to send to you,

I have got withered, and emaciated and became a bare wood.

6. **በሉ እናንተ ተኙ እኔ ሥራ አለብኝ፣**

ስገነባ አድራለሁ ፍቅር ተንዶብኝ።

Let you sleep, I have a job to do,

I spend the night in construction,

As my love is dismantled.

7 የመኪናው መንገድ ሰፊው ሳለልሽ፣

ምነው በጠባቡ በልቤ ገባሽ።

Why do you come trough my heart? Which is narrow,

While you have a wider street to go through.

8. እኔስ አንቺን አንቺን ሌላ ሰው ለምኔ፣

የምትላወሽው እንደ ሽል ከሆዴ።

Why do I wish another for me?

I wish only you, who move in my belly as a fetus.

9. **ብልባላ ነው ብዬ ሄድኩ ላሊበላ፣**

የተፈረደ ነው ጅብ እኔን ቢበላ።

I went to Lalibely, in my journey to Bilbala,

So it is fair if a hyena eats me.

10. ጥብቅ አድርገህ ያዘኝ እንደስንዴ በሶ፣

ትዳሬ ጎጆዬ ቤቱ በአንተ ፈርሶ።

Hold me tight, like wheat porridge,

Because my maternity is dismantled for you.

11. አስደግመሽብኝ አለቃ ፈንቱን፣

ሳር ቅጠሉ ሁሉ መሰለኝ አንቺን።

Because you enchanted on me from magician Fente,

Everything in the world seems me you.

12. እስቲ ወዲያ ሒደሽ ወዲህ ተመለሽ፣

ለኔም ደስ ይበለኝ ሰወቹም ይዩሽ፣

እንደ ዳንግሌ በግ መዳህኒቱ ነሽ።

Let you move here and there,

So that I will be happy and others will see you,

Since you are my cure as a red ship.

13. ማሽላ ጠባቂ ሆነሻል መሰለኝ፣

እሺ የመትይበት አፋፍሽ ደስ አለኝ።

I think you became a sorghum keeper,

I feel happy when I saw your hill,

Where you sit and look the farm.

Heroism as a socially commended value

1. ቁልቁለቱን ወርደህ ቀና አርገው ብረቱን፣

ማን ይነካኝ ብለህ ከለቀቅከው ቤቱን።

Point your gun after traveling the downhill,

Who will touch you if you leave home.

2. ከጠራው ሰማይ ላይ ይንዛል ደመና፣

አባት መሳሪያ እንጂ አይሰጥም ልቦና።

The cloud travels over a clear sky,

A father can buy a gun but not heart.

3. ኽረ ሾላ ሞኙ ሳያብብ ያፈራል፣
ንዱን ካልገደሉት መች አንዱ ይፈራል።
Oh! Shoal is a fool, it bears fruits with out flowering,
If you don't kill one the other won't fear you.
(Shola=a big deciduous tree)

4. እምም አለ ንቡ ቀፎውን ጨነቀው፣
ማር ብቻ መስሎታል ጠቡን ላላወቀው።
A swarm of bees are buzzing,
And the hive is troubled,
But it seemed only honey,
For those who don't know the quarrel.

5. ኽረ ለምንድን ነው ፈሪ ማጦንጦኑ?
ቅጠል አይበጠስ ካልደረሰ ቀኑ።
Why a coward gets disturbed easily?
Because a leaf can't be cut off unless the time arrives.

6. ወይ እነሱ አይመጡ ወይ እኛ አንሻገር፣
ብቻውን አደረ የሁለት ፈሪ አገር።
Neither they come nor we go there,
It remained uninhabited,
As it is a place of two cowards.

7. ወንድ ልጅ ተወልዶ ካልተባለ አጅሬ፣
ላይ ብለህ ስደደው ሳር ይብላ እንደበሬ።
If a son is not a hero,
Let him go and graze like an ox.

8. በታች ቢረገጠው በላይ ደፈረሰ፣
የከፋው ወንድ ልጅ መሄጃው ደረሰ።
The upper has got polluted when he trampled the lower,
So the time for a begrudging man to go is approaching.

9. እኔው ተበድዬ መልሼ እኔው ክሼ፣
እርቁ ውሽልሽል ነው ላፍርሰው መልሼ።

I was wronged, and I indemnified,

So the agreement is nonsense, I am going to leave it.

10. **እረተው አንተ ሰው ስሮጥ አታባረኝ፣**

አንተንም ደክመህ እኔንም መረረኝ።።

Please don't chase me when I run away,

Because you felt tired and I lost my patience.

11. **እኛ መች ፈልገን የጎረቤት ጠጅ፣**

እየበጠበጡ ይጠሩናል እንጂ።።

We don't need our neighbor's 'tej',

But they brew and invited us.

12. **አደባባይ ባትሄድ ብትውል ከማጀት፣**

ጠመንጃ ባትገዛ ጥይት ባይኖራት፣

ሴትም ትዋጋለች የቸገረ ለት።።

ከቶ አይተን አናውቅም ሴት ቀሚስ ለባሽ፣

ገዳይ ከጥጉ ሰር ቀኛች በላይነሽ፣

በከንተሮ ገዳይ መትረየስ ተኪሽ።።

Though she doesn't go out, and spends her time in the kitchen,

Though she doesn't buy a gun and have no bullets,

A woman fights when there is difficulty.

We have never, seen a woman with military rank,

Geday, at the foot of the mountain keganzmach Belaynesh,

Killer of a machine gunner with a stick.

13. **ተኩሶ ተኩሶ ጠመንጃው ሲግል ፣**

ገባው በጎራዴ ሽምየ ጓንጉል።።

When his gun gets glowed after a continuous firing,

Shamye Guangule began to fight with a sword.

Social comment as a means to teach moral lessons.

1. **ዘመዶቼም ጠሉኝ እኔም ጠላኋቸው፣**

የአጣ ሰው አያገኝ እየመሰላቸው።።

My relative hate me, and I hate them too,

Because they feel that a poor will never be a rich.

2. እናቱ ትልቅ ናት አባቱ ትልቅ ነው ማለት በከንቱ ነው፣

ሰውን የሚያኮራው እንጀራ ደጉ ነው።።

My mother is great and my father is great is a nonsense idea,

As it is bread that makes people proud.

3. ችጋር እብድ አይደለም ዘሎ ሰው አያንቅም፣

ሰነፍ ከአገኘ ግን ከጨበጠ አይለቅም።።

Poverty is not a mad that catches a person from the blue,

But it never depart a lazy if itdoes get one.

4. በመኪናው መንገድ ይነዳል አህያ፣

መዳህኒት የለውም ኤድስና ጓያ።።

A heard of donkeys marches through a motor way,

AIDS and “Guaya” have no cure.

(Guaya=a crop that paralyses muscle when eaten in excess)

5. ከመርጋ ከመስከን ከትግስት የቀረ፣

ወተቱን ብገፋው ሽፍታ ሆኖ አደረ።።

Because it was not well refrigerated,

The milk remained butter less, when I shook.

6. አካል ይመዘናል ልብ አይመዘንም፣

እየሠሙ መቻል የዛንም የዛንም።።

Body can be scaled, but courage can’t be,

It is better to listen patiently everything.

7. የከፋው ወንድ ልጅ ለምን ሞት ይመኛል፣

ድንጋይ ተንከባሎ ደልደዳላ ያገኛል።።

A stone rolling a downhill arrives at a plain,

Then why a boy in problem wishes to die?

8. የቆለላ መሸላ አልፎ ጉል አልፎ ጉል፣

ሁለት የምደደ ይቀራል በአንጉል።።

Sorghum in lowland blows up here and there,

A man who falls in love with two ladies remains confused.

Death as a source of grief

1. **አወይ እኔ አፈሩ ከአፈሩ ላይ ቁሜ፣**
   ለግማሽ እንጀራ ለቀን እኩል እድሜ::
   Oh! I am a soil and standing up on the soil,
   For half a bread, and for half a day's age.
2. **አገሩን በሙሉ ብዞረው ብዞረው፣**
   ድንጋው ብቻ ቀርቶ የማይናገረው::
   I have moved through out the country,
   The only thing I found was a stone, which
   Can't speak.
3. **ምድር ለምድር ስሄድ መሬት ለመሬት፣**
   የሰንቱን ጀግና አንገት ፈርሶ አገኘሁት::
   When I was going in side the earth,
   I found many heroes' necks decomposed.
4. **የላይኛው አገር ተለማጅ ነው አሉ፣**
   የሚመጣ የለም ከሚሄደው ሁሉ::
   People say the other world is a adaptable,
   Because, no one gets back, of those who went there.
5. **ስጡኝ ያንን ዋንጫ በአንባ እሞላዋለሁ፣**
   በሞቱ እየተባልኩ ጠጥቸበታለሁ::
   Give me that goblet, I will fill it with tear,
   As I was invited to drink much with it.
6. **የሚሊሻው እናት ታጠቂ በገመድ፣**
   አሞራ ነው እንጅ አይቀብረውም ዘመድ::
   You, mother of the militia man, tie your waist with a rope,
   Because, it is crow, which burriers him, not relatives.
7. **አዳም እና ሔዋን የተፈጠሩ እለት፣**
   የዛን ጊዜ ነበር ሰው አልሆንም ማለት::

The right time to refuse not to be man,

Was, the day when Adam and Eve were created.

8. እናት ያለው እና የወንዝ ዳር ዛፉ፣

ሁልጊዜም ይኖራል አበባው ሳይረግፍ።

A man whose mother is alive,

And a tree around a river,

Live forever with out shading their flower.

9. ኸረግ አያ እገሌ ልርዳህ በምላሴ፣

ወንድም እንዳልሠጥህ የለኝም ለእራሴ።

Oh! 'Aya egele' let me help you with my tongue,

I won't give you a brother, since I have

no one for my self. (Aya egele=Mr.x)

10. በሬ ሰጠኝ እንጅ ገበሬ ለምኔ?

ዋ! እያሉ መከተል አይጠፉኝም ለእኔ።

Give me oxen, but I don't need a farmer,

Following them saying 'wa!' is simple for me (Wa!: a sound used to control oxen and to express grief).

11. **አገሬ በጌምድር ሆነ ጎዳ ላም፣**

ቀንደኞቹ ሳሉ የነበረ አለም።

My Country Begemdir is becoming a hornless cow,

How joy full it was when there were the horny ones.

Appendix II

Poems with technical classification

Analogy

1. ችጋር እብድ አይደለም ዘሎ ሰው አያንቅም፣
   ሰነፍ ከአገኘ ግን ከጨበጠ አይለቅም።።

   Poverty is not a mad that catches people from the blue,

   But it never departs a lazy if it does get one.

2. የዳገት አባሎ ነፍስ ያዘመመው፣
   ያንቺ ልብ እንዴት ነው? የኔስ ግራ ገባው።።

   Like a tree blown by wind on a top of a cliff,

   My heart is confused what about yours?

3. የምሐሉ ሲያለቅስ ያዳሩ ይስቃል፣
   ሐዘን ቅባኑግ ነው ለሁሉም ይደርሳል።።

   People at the edge laugh when the middle cry,

   Grief is a spice and will affect every body.

Pun

1. በሬ ስጠኝ እንጅ ገበሬ ለምኔ፣
   ዋ! እያሉ መከተል አይጠፋኝም ለእኔ።።

   Give me oxen, but I don't need a farmer,
   Because following them saying 'wa'! is simple for me.

   (wa!: a sound used to control oxen while pulling. It also expresses heart felt grief)

2. ከመርጋት ከመስከን ከትግስት የቀረ፣
   ወተቱን ብገፋው ሽፍታ ሆኖ አደረ።።
   Because it was not well refrigrated,
   The milk remained butter less, when I shook.
3. ኾረ ለምንድን ነው ልጅ አንጀት መብላቱ፣
   የቀለበት ነው የቀድሞው እርስቱ።።
   Why a child eats intestine?
   Because it is its previous lawn from where it was seeded.
4. በሮቹ ወይፋፍን ጉልበት ሲሰማቸው፣
   አወይ የእድል ነገር በጊዜ ፈታቸው።።
   His oxen are youth, and they felt power,
   But as a matter of chance he untied them before dusk.

Symbolisms

1. ኸረ ድመቲቱን አይጢቱ በላቻት ፣
   እም ብለ ቀረች ሳፍራው ባይመቻት፣
   Oh ! the rat ate the cat,
   But the cat kept quite as the place was not ok to react.
2. ውሃ ስጡኝ ብየ አለምንም ሠውን ፣
   ቀድቸ እጠጣለሁ ከአይኔ እሚፈልቀውን::
   I won't beg people to give me water,
   Because I will drink the water that springs prom my eyes
3. አገሬ በጌምድር ሆነ ጎዳ ላም፣
   ቀንደኞቹ ሳሉ የነበረ አለም::
   My country Begemdir become a hornless cow,
   How joyful it was? When there were the horny ones.
4. ኸረግ አየ እገሌ ልርዳህ በምላሴ፣
   ወንድም እንደልሠጥህ የለኝም ለእራሴ::
   OH! 'Aya Egele' let me help you with my tongue,
   I won't give you a brother, since I don't have for myself.
5. አገሩ ተጨንቆ ሰማይ ሰማይ ሲያይ፣
   ማተብ አሳሠረው ፈረደ በላይ::
   While people were looking the sky with tension,
   Ferede Belay tied a thread at their necks.
6. ከጠራው ሰማይ ላይ ይጓዛል ደመና ፣
   አባት መሳሪያ እንጅ ከይሠጥም ልቦና::
   The cloud travels on a clear sky,
   A father can buy a gun but not heart.
7. ቁልቁለቱን ወርደህ ቀና አርገው ብረቱን፣
   ማን ይነካኝ ብለህ ከለቀቅከው ቤቱን::
   Point your gun after traveling the downhill,
   Who will touch you, if you leave home.

8. **ኸረ በዚያም ዘልቆ በዚያም ዘልቆ ካላሉት ሃይሃይ፣**
ጀንዲው ቀዳዳ ነው የስበላል ተባይ።
It you don't chase at every corner,
The tan is torn, and the bug will eat you.

9. **በታች ቢረገጠው በላይ ደፈረሠ፣**
የከፋው ወንድ ልጅ መሐጃው ደረሠ።
The upper has got polluted when he trampled the lower,
So the time for a begrudging man to go is approaching.

10. **እምም አለ ንቡ ቀፎውን ጨነቀው ፣**
ማር ብቻ መስሎታል ጠቡን ላላወቀው።
A swarm of bees are buzzing,
And the hive is troubled,
But seemed only honey for those who don't know the quarrel.

11. **በል እስኪ አደራህን አደራ ክፋ ነው፣**
ልቤን ከአንተ ጋራ ትቸው መሔዴ ነው ።
Please take care of my heart,
Because I am going away leaving it with you.

12. **መሔድ እንደአንተ ነው መከተል እንደ እኔ፣**
የውሐ ስንቁን ይዞ ይከተልህ አይኔ።
A journey is like yours, and accompanying is like mine,
Let my eyes follow you equipped with water.

13. **የመኪናው መንገድ ሠፊው ሳለልሽ፣**
ምነው በጠባቡ በልቤ ገባሽ።
Why do come through my heart? Which is narrow,
While you have a wider street to go through.

Figurative expression

1 **ማረስ ነው እንጅ እረፍ ነቅንቆ፣**
እራብ ክፋ ነው ይገድላል አንቆ

Plough well, shaking the handle,

As hunger is an evil that kills throttling.

2 ካላያያዙት እንደ ግራር ፍም ፣

ያአበት እንጀራ ለልጅ አይተርፍም::

If you don't glow your work, like acacia embers,

A father's wealth won't be enough for a child.

3 **አየ ማጭዴ ስለት ነው ጥርሷ ፣**

ማንም አይገባም በህዳር ከአፏ ::

Oh! My sickle has a sharp teeth,

No one gets in to its mouth in November.

4. በሬ በእንደአንተ የሚዞር የሚሸከረከር ፣

እንዝርት አይገኝም በፈታይ መንደር::

My Ox, there is no spindle in the Village of spinners

That revolves like you.

5 . የእኔስ ማጭዴ ተበሳጭታለች፣

ሌሊት ተነስታ ሳር ትበላለች::

My sickle has got angry,

It wakes up at night, and eats grass.

6. በሬው ጥቋቁር ገበሬው ሙጫ፣

ማን ይለቀዋል ሠርዶ ቢንጫጫ::

The oxen are black, and the farmer is youth,

Who will leave it if the grass cries?

7 የጠመቀች እንደሁ አስመስላ ቢራ፣

የጋገረች እንደሁ አስመስላ ሞራ፣

የፈተለች እንደሁ አስመስላ ጭራ፣

ወጥ የሠራች እንደሁ ሽታው የሚያበላ፣

ማን ይሰተካከላል ከእንተናየ ጋራ::

When she brews it is like a beer in a factory,

When she bakes it is like a 'mora',

When she spins it is like a hair from a hors's tail,

When she cooks it can make tasty with its odor,

So who can be compared with ‘entina’.

(Entina=Miss y)

8. **በሬአለም በሬአለም የኑርህ ዘላለም፣**

እንደ ቅዱስ ገብርኤል እንደ መደህኔአለም።።

My ox, you are my joy in life

May God give you eternal life,

Like st. Gabriel and the Savior of the world.

9. **አለቅሳለሁ በአይኔ አብሳለሁ በእጄ፣**

እንደ ሠማይ ኮከብ እርቃኝ ወዳጄ።።

I weep with my eyes, and I wipe with my hands,

As my beloved is far apart from me,

Like a star in the sky.

10. **ከአንተ የምልከው የማዘው ሠው ባጣ፣**

ከሳሁ መነመንኩኝ ነጭ እንጨቱ ወጣ።።

Because I couldn’t find any one to send to you,

I have got withered, and emaciated and became a bare wood.

11. **እኔስ አንተን አንተን ሌላ ሠው ለምኔ ፣**

የሞትለወሠው እንደሽል ከሆዴ።።

Why do I wish another form me?

I wish only you, who move in my belly like a conception.

12 **ጥብቅ አድርህ ያዘኝ እንደ ስንዴው በሶ፣**

ትደሬ ጉጀየ ቤቱ በአንተ ፈርሶ።።

Hold me tight like wheat porridge,

Because my maternity is dismantled for you.

13. **አይንህንም ባየው ብር አስጎልለሐል ፣**

ጥርስህንም ባየው በረዶ ቅመሐል ፣

ፀጉርህንም ባየው ሐር ጠምጥመሐል ፣

ከአንተ ጋር የዋለ ከአንተ ጋር ያደረ፣

ከፈጣሪው ጋራ የተነጋገረ።።

When I see your eyes, you domed silver,

When I see your teeth, you chewed snow,
When I see your hair, you put on silk,
A person who spends a day and a night with you,
Is a person who councils his creator.

14. **ወንድ ልጅ ተወልዶ ካልተባለ አጅሬ፣**
ላይ ብለህ ስደደው ሳር ይብላ እንደ በሬ::
If a boy is not a hero,
Let him go, and graze, like an ox.

15. **ፈረንጅ ወረቀቱን እሮማ ሠደደ ፣**
አንድ ዘገልሞቃ ሠባ ሠው ታረደ ፣
አንድ እያደ ማርያም ሠባ ሠው ነደደ ፣
አልተቻለም ብሎ እንግዳ ከበደ::
ከበደ ተወልዶ ባያነሳ ጋሻ ፣
እኛ ላይ ነበረ የአይሁድ መናገሻ::
ተስቦ ተስቦ እንደወንጭ አገዳ ፣
ነጩን በነጭ ወጋው ያከበደ እንግዳ::
Whites send their documents to Rome,
Seventy people slaughtered at Zegelmoka,
Seventy people burnt at Eyada Maryam,
Realizing that fighting with Kebede is impossible.
Crippling like a ‘serdo’ limb,
Kebede fought whites with a white,
Had Kebede not risen the shied of ancestors,
Ajja would have remained a center for pagans.

16. **ሐብተም እንደ እግዚአብሐር ቢኖረው መብት ፣**
ድሐን ይለው ነበር በእኔ ፋንታ ሙት
Had riches the right like God,
He would have said a poor die for me.

Indirect expressions

1. **በመኪናው መንገድ ይነዳል አህያ ፣**
መዳህኒት የለውም ኤድስና ጓያ።
A heard of donkeys marches through the street,
AIDS and “Guaya” have no cure.
(Guaya = a food crop that paralyzes muscle and tendon, when eaten in excess.)

2. **እንደልከው ሆኖልህ እንደተመኘኸው ፣**
በአንድ ቀን ንግግር ልቤን አገኘኸው።
If became as you said and as you wished,
You have got my heart in a single quest.

3. **አገሩን በሙሉ ብዞረው ብዞረው፣**
ድንጋው ብቻ ቀርቶ የማይናገረው ።
I have moved through out the country,
The only thing I found was a stone, which can’t speak.

4. **ምድር ለምድር ስሔድ መሬት ለመሬት ፣**
የስንቱን ጀግና አንገት ፈርሶ አገኘሁት።
When I was going in side the earth,
I saw many heroes’ necks decomposed.

5. **አዳምና ሔዋን የተፈጠሩ እለት ፣**
የዛን ጊዜ ነበር ሠው አልሆንም ማለት።
The right time to ignore not to be a man,
Was the time when Adam and Eve were created.

6. **አጨባበጡ የማናፍቀው ፣**
የማጭዱ እጅ ከእጁ የሚደቀው።
The way he handles the crop yearns,
The sickle’s handle gets pounded at his palm.

7. **የሠው ቤት እንጀራ የተገመገመው ፣**
በልቸው ስወጣ ጉልበቴን ደከመው።

Bread from others' house is a scaled one,

So I feel tired after a meal.

8. **ወደ አንች ስመጣ ነደፈኝ እባቡ ፣**

አስታመሽ ቅበሪኝ በአንች ነው ሠበቡ።።

The snake stung me when I was coming to you,

Attend and burry me as you are the cause for my death .

9. **በሉ እናንተ ተኙ እኔ ስራ አለብኝ ፣**

ስገነባ አድራለሁ ፍቅር ተንዶብኝ።።

Let you sleep, I have a job to do,

I spend the night in construction,

As my love is dismantled.

10 **አስደግመሽብኝ አለቃ ፈንቱን ፣**

ሳር ቅጠሉ ሁሉ መሠለኝ አንቺን።።

Because you enchanted on me from magician Fente,

Everything in the world seems me you.

11. **ከድንጋይ ላይ ድንጋየ ከዛ ላይ ቢተኙ ፣**

መች ይጉረብጣል ደህና ልጅ ካገኙ።።

If you are with your beloved,

You feel comfort, though you sleep over a stone hill.

12 **ሽረ ግዛ ጥይት በወገብህ ደርድር ፣**

አልተደላደለም ገና ነው በጌምድር።።

Buy bullets, and arm yourself,

Since Begmdire is insecured yet.

13. **ወይ እነሱ አይመጡ ወይ እኛ አንሻገር ፣**

ብቻውን አደረ የሁለት ፊሪ አገር።።

Neither they come, nor we go there,

It remained un inhibited,

As it is a place of two cowards.

14. **እኔው ተበድየ መልሼ እኔው ክሸ ፣**

እርቁ ውሽልሽል ነው ላፍርሠው መልሼ።።

I was wronged, and I indemnified,

So, the agreement is nonsense, and I am going to leave it.

15. **ኸረ ተው አንተ ሠው ስሮጥ አታባረኝ፣**

አንተንም ደክመህ እኔንም መረረኝ::

Please don't chase me when I run away,

Because you felt tired and I lost my patience.

16. **ከዱር አወሬ ሁሉ አሞራ ነው ክፍ ፣**

የበላውን በልቶ ይሠቅላል ከዛፉ::

Crow is the most evil wild creature in the world,

Because, it hangs it's left over on the tree,

After it feeds it's feel from the human corpus.

17. **አምጡልኝ በሮቼን አርጄ ልብላቸው ፣**

ደግም እንደመሬቱ ሳይካፈሉአቸው ::

Bring me my oxen, and let me slaughter and eat them,

Before they share them like my farm land.

18. **አከል ይመዘናል ልብ አይመዘንም ፣**

እየሠሙ መቻል የዛንም የዛንም::

Body can be scaled, but mind can't be,

It is better to listen patiently everything.

19. **አንድም ገድሎ መሔድ አንድም ሠምቶ መቻል ፣**

ሁልጊዜ ሽምግሉኝ ዘመድ ያሠለቻል::

Live patiently or kill and leave,

Otherwise continuous request for mediation will fed up relatives.

20. **የቆላ ማሽላ አልፎ ጉል አልፎ ጉል ፣**

ሁለት የወደደ ይቀራል በአንጉል::

Sorghum in lowland blows up here and there,

A man who falls in love with two ladies remains confused.

21. **ሠው በሠው ቤት ገብቶ ከንፈሩን ሲያወዛ ፣**

ለፍቶ ጦም አዳሪው ስራ ፈቱ በዛ::

When people shine their lips talking about others,
The number of poor and unemployed, increased.

22. **ሐምሌ መባቻ ያልጎለጎለ፣**
ታህሳስ መባቻ ልጁን ገደለ።
A farmer that didn't cultivate in July,
Killed his children in November.

23. **በግንቦት አንድያርስ ጽሐይ እየፈራ ፣**
በሃምሌም እንዳያርስ ብርዱን እየፈራ፣
ልጁ ቢያለቅስበት በጅብ አሰፈራራ።
He is afraid of the sun to plough in may
He is afraid of the cold to plough in July,
Then he threatened his child with a hyena,
When he asks for bread.

24. **በርየ እሹሩሩ አንተው ነህ ወገኔ ፣**
የምትጠብቀኝ ከምድር ኩነኔ።
My ox, you are my relative,
Who saves me from the earthly damination.

<u>Direct expression</u>

1. **አርሳለሁ እንጅ አልመረርም ፣**
ችግር በወንጭፍ አይባረርም።
I plough with pleasure, and I feel not sorry,
Since poverty can't be chased with a sling.

2. **አጥርተሽ አርሚው ሁሉንም አዝመራ ፣**
እንድታከማችው በመልካም ጎተራ።
Weed every farm land well,
So you will store your produce in a large container.

3. **ምነው በባል ቢያርሱ ምነው በእሁድ ቢያርሱ ፣**
ከበላጠጋ ደጅ ከመጎናበሱ።
What if you plough on Sunday, which is forbidden,
Because it is better than bowing down at the gate of riches

4. እስኪ ዘር ዝራ አምለክን አምነህ፣
የሚሠጥህን አንተ ምን አውቀህ::
Please sow your seeds, believing God,
Since you don't know what he will give you.

5. በሐምሌ ጉልጉሌ፣መስከረም አርሜ፣
መከሩን ሠብስቤ ፣ እበላለሁ እኔስ ነጭ ጤፍ አብቅዬ::
Cultivating in July, weeding in September,
Harvesting in autumn, I will produce and eat white 'teff'.

6. አድርገው ድቅቅ ድቅቅ አድርገው ገለባ፣
ቤታችን እሩቅ ነው በጊዜ እንድንገባ::
Crush the crop, and make it straw,
Our home is far, and we should arrive before dusk.

7. መንጥሩ እንመንጥር በቆሎ እንዝራ፣
ከርሞ ሁላችን በቅሎ እንድንገዛ::
Let us cut down the bush, and sow maize,
So that all of us, will buy mule next year.

8. ሲያርሱ አትረስ እና ሲዘሩ አትዝራ እና፣
ሠው ውሎብኛል በል ከጥላው ዋልና::
Let you sit ideal, and spend the day under the shade,
While others plough and sow,
And say, people enchanted on me.

9. ኸረ ተው ሳበኝ አታርገው ዋዛ፣
እርሐብ ከፋ ነው ያጠፋል ለዛ ::
Pleas pull me, don't see it as a simple matter,
Since hunger is an evil, that destroys beauty.

10. በቻይና ማጭድ በአፈ ስለት፣
ያጭድ ጀመረ የሁሉን ፊት::
With the Chinese sickle,
Which is sharp mouthed,
He began to mow,

Including others' share.

11. **አትታመምብኝ ልታመመው እኔ፣**
አንተ አትከፋብኝ ልከፋልህ እኔ፣
አንተ አትሙትብኝ ልሙትልህ እኔ፣
ያጣሁህ እንደሆን ይባክናል አይኔ።
Don't feel ill, let me feel ill instead of you,
Don't feel sad, let me feel sad instead of you,
Don't die, let me die instead of you,
Because I will squander, if I loose you.

12. **የሠኛል ባለ እድል የሠኛል በለ እጣ፣**
የሚፈልጉት ሠው ፈልጎ ሲመጣ።
It can be said lucky, it can be said fateful,
When a sought beloved comes seeking.

13. **ተኩሶ ተኩሶ ጠመንጃው ሲግል፣**
ገባው በጎራዴ ሹምየ ጓንጉል።
When his gun gets glowed after a continuous firing,
Shumye Guangule began to fight with a sword.

14. **ከሁሉም ከሁሉም አይነ እውር ይብሳል፣**
እራቱ ቀርቦለት መሬት ይዳብሳል።
Of all people who are in problem,
Those who faced the worst are blinds,
Because they rub the ground, while their dinner is around.

15. **የሆዴን መክፋት ጥርሴ እየመለሠው ፣**
አለመኛ ኗሪ እመስላለሁ ለሠው።
Because I usually laugh, keeping my sorrow inside,
I seem a person who leads a joyful life.

16. **ዘመዶቼም ጠሉኝ እኔም ጠላኋቸው፣**
የአጣ ሠው አያገኝ እየመሠላቸው።
My relatives hate me, and I hate them too,
As they feel that a poor will never be a rich.