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

**THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF AMHARIC ORAL LYRIC POETRY
OF
WEST GOJJAM ZONE**

**BY
ZELALEM ZEWDIE TAYE**

**ADVISOR
BERHANU MATTHEWS (PHD)**

**MAY 2010
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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN
LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE (GRADUATE PROGRAMME) IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN LITERATURE**

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APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS

ADVISOR

EXAMINER

SIGNATURE

SIGNATURE

Acknowledgements

First and for most, I would like to express my heart – felt gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Berhanu Matthews, for his enlightened, genuine and constructive comments and suggestions through brotherly approach in the course of conducting the study.

Very sincere gratitude also goes to Hailemariam Tesfaye for his significant suggestions on the thesis.

Besides, Ato Ahmed Mohammed, Ato Tarekegn Melese and Ato Mesfin Deferessu deserve my deepest sense of gratitude for the transparent and genuine cooperation they gave me during my graduate study.

I am very much grateful to my wife Wagaye Bushura for her invaluable assistance in every aspect of my endeavor. Similarly I also thank all of my family members, especially W/ro Ethiopia Mahari, Ato Zewdie Taye, Suze Zewdie, Weheba Zewdie, Samuel Zewdie, Selamawit Zewdie, Hiwot Zewdie and Kalkidan Minwyelet for their overall support throughout my career.

Likewise, all of my friends, particularly Etagegnehu (Mimi) Duguma, Mezemir Siefu, Worku Alemu, Sileshi Beyene, Melkamu Teshome, Demeke Fekadu and Yohannes Tekele in due position to be acknowledged for their unreserved help.

My special word of gratitude goes to Almaz W/mariam for her encouragement and patience in typing the paper.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the research assistants and the study participants for their willingness.

Abstract

This thesis aims to examine the major themes of Amharic oral lyric poetry of West Gojjam Zone.

Since the oral lyric poetry of the Amhara people in West Gojjam Zone is an unexplored genre, one finds only few studies in such a widespread and most functional category of literature. This is the foremost reason for conducting this study.

The basic method is qualitative analysis and the instruments that were used to gather the data and to solve the problem were observation, interview and note-taking, tape recording and photographing.

The study revealed that the recurrent themes of Amharic oral lyric poetry of West Gojjam Zone are declaring the feel of discontent about various social issues, expressing the grief and consolation of mourners, reflecting the very and related concept of work, showing the multifaceted nature of matrimony and marital ties; and exposing the various issues of love affairs.

Key to Transliteration

The following symbols have been used for the transliteration of Amharic sounds in English.

Amharic	English
አ	I
ኃ	N
ጀ	Je
ራ	Ra
ኮ	Ko
ሶ	So
ጣ	Ta
ና	Na
አ	A
ባ	Ba
ይ	Y
ረ	Re
ቂ	K'ii
ጠ	T'e
ላ	La
ሊ	Li
ቤ	Be

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

West Gojjam Zone, where the present study is conducted, is located in the West Part of the Amhara National Regional State. It is surrounded by Awi Zone in the West, Oromiya Region and East Gojjam Zone in the South, North Gonder Zone in the North, and East Gojjam Zone in the East.

The study area consists of 15 Woredas; i.e. Gonji, Yilmana Densa, Bahir Dar Town Administration, Mecha, South Achefer, North Achefer, Womberma, Sekela, Burie Town Administration, Burie Zuria, Jabi Tahinan, Finote Selam Town Administration, Quarit, Dembecha, and Dega Damot.

Although the study area has 15 Woredas, the researcher believed that Bahir Dar, Burie and Finote Selam can represent the whole culture of West Gojjam Zone due to the fact that the people share similar mode of life. Proximity to the town of Bahir Dar and the availability of resourceful informants in the chosen Woredas were also taken as criteria for selection.

The study area covers about 12,748.87 square kilometers. According to the Amhara National Regional State Finance and Economy Development Office, the estimated population size of the Zone in 2007/2008 GC was 2,714,017.

Besides, the people of Amhara in West Gojjam Zone have an agriculture based economy: and most of the people are followers of Orthodox Church and Islam.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The people of West Gojjam Zone are rich in oral literature. Nevertheless, as could be gathered from the review of studies done on the area, adequate research has not yet been done on their oral lyric poetry.

On the other hand, the oral poetry of the Amhara people in West Gojjam Zone is an unexplored genre. One finds only few studies in such a widespread and most functional genre. This is one of the reasons why this study needs to deal with the topic.

Secondly, the fact that my previous field experience (as a journalist) has provided me access to make a sort of bird's-eye-view assessment of the people and to have a memory of their oral lyric poetry. With it, I pointed out that any study had not yet been conducted on the topic. Hence, I am very much eager to examine the major themes of the oral lyric poetry of the Amhara people in the already cited Zone.

Last but not least, as Berhanu (in a class lecture) states and many papers indicate, much emphasis has not yet been given to the study of the nations and nationalities oral lyric poetry in our country, Ethiopia.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

i) Main Objective

- To examine the dominant themes of Amharic oral lyric poetry of West Gojjam Zone.

ii) Specific Objectives

- To identify and analyze the lyric poems according to their central ideas and contexts.
- To describe the nature of their performance and composition.
- To investigate the meanings, beliefs, feelings, artistic reactions of the lyric poems to different incidents in their area.

1.4. Research Questions

- i) What is lyric poetry?
- i) What are the major themes of the oral lyric poems?
- ii) What is the relationship between oral lyric poetry and the social, economic, political, etc. life of the people?

1.5. Research Methodology and Procedures

1.5.1. Methodology

The basic method used in this paper is qualitative analysis. The instruments used to gather the data were participant observation, interview, audio recording, note taking and photographing.

When Goldstein (1974:77) is talking about the importance of the participant observation and interview methods he states that of the several methods and techniques which may be used by the collector in the field work, the two methods will serve to supply him/her with practically all the data necessary for the solution of field problems. Thus, exploiting these two methods, vigorous attempts have been made to gather the oral lyric poetry of the people of Amhara in the Zone.

Several intellectuals in the field believe that participant observation enables a researcher to collect the oral lyric poems of the people with their emotions in the natural contexts. According to Goldstein (1974:77) those methods used by the field worker in obtaining data by direct observation is not limited only to visual aspects of the situation, but also involves a full range of sensual experience including hearing, feeling, smelling and tasting.

The second method of data collection was interview. The use of the interview method is to produce rich and detailed information that can be

used in the analysis. Considering the importance of the interview method of data collecting, Goldstein (1974:104) declares that the information which may be obtained through observation by the collector is limited to situations and performances which are external to the inner man. As to him, interview is a vital method to investigate the like types of inner information from informants.

He further stated that if certain events might never occur during the collector's stay in the community, data could be gathered through interview with those in the society who have experienced /practiced/ the events. Based on this fact, the researcher collected some seasonal songs using the interview method.

Besides, the watched performances and recorded poems were again strengthened /confirmed/ through interviews of chosen informants, those who were observed during the events showed above and other informants who were not included in the observation.

The study consists of 15 informants for interview and observation from different walks of life in three Woredas. That means five informants from each Woreda using judgmental /purposive/ sampling method. The foremost consideration in sampling was the judgment of the researcher as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study. The researcher only went to those people who in his opinion were likely to have the required information and volunteer /willing/ to share it.

1.5.2. Procedures

1.5.2.1. Interview

Primarily, in collaboration with woreda administrators, nine data collectors who have completed their secondary education and resided for a fairly long period of time in the respective woreda were recruited to properly fill the questionnaire. All of the data collectors were experienced in collecting data for both government and non-government agencies in the area. In addition, the recruited data collectors were those who can properly understand the language of their respective interviewee.

Secondly, the recruited research assistants were given one-day training on the way of data collection. Besides, the trainees were informed about how to establish rapport with their interviewee, which was believed to generate a relatively genuine response.

Thirdly, data collectors were assigned to three woredas based on their residence whereby close supervision by the main researcher was made. Furthermore, data collectors were told to handle or, if not, report problematic encounters to the supervisor. Eventually, the collected questionnaires were checked for completeness and accuracy.

1.5.2.2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

- A) In selecting the participants for Focus Group Discussion, the nine data collectors were asked to screen and prepare fifteen, each five, elderly mothers and fathers who had not participated in the earlier interview and representing the three woredas under study.
- B) In collaboration with data collectors, the researcher searched for place for the FGD and decided to be held at the Municipalities Resort Centers, located at the center of the woredas.

- C) Thereafter, the main researcher established a rapport with the discussion participants by introducing himself and a sound recorder, and by clarifying the purpose of the study.
- D) Next, the researcher elaborates all the guiding principles for the participants as to generate genuine responses. Then, volunteerism was ensured.
- E) Lastly, the readily available discussion issues had been forwarded to the participants by the researcher turn by turn in a smooth transition fashion.

Eventually, to come to the method of data analysis, the data had first been cleaned, edited, coded and validated; secondly, transcribed and translated (i.e. Amharic to English); and then, qualitatively analyzed.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

Translating a poem from a source language to a receptor language was of course a challenging task. In the translation process, linguistic and non linguistic properties created serious difficulties. Translating the lyrics from Amharic to English has not been easy: translated poems are likely to lose their original local beauty, depth, rhythm, and sounds.

Problems also refer to difficulties relating to logistical aspects of the study too.

Furthermore, since it is challenging to cover the whole society of the Zone in the study the researcher has chosen the representative areas i.e. Bahir Dar, Bure, and Finote Selam.

Bahir Dar has been selected as one of the study areas for it represents places of West Gojjam Zone under the Amhara Regional State. It is also

convenient for transportation as it is near the other study area, Bure and Finote Selam.

Bure and Finote Selam were also taken as part of the study area for the oral lyric poetry collected would be representative to the rest of the places of West Gojjam Zone.

Accordingly, because of financial and other resource constrains the study was limited only to 30 sample informants for interview, observation, and Focus Group Discussion. However, of them, only ten were volunteers to tell their names.

1.7. Significance of the Study

As the foremost thought, it may fill the gap of the former studies in the area of oral lyric poetry in the West Gojjam Amhara context (if there are any).

On the other hand, the result of the study shall assist the policy makers at the time of policy /strategy/ preparation; i.e. cultural policy, family law, women's policy etc.

The out put of this inquiry may also inform and initiate literary scholars, folklorists, anthropologists, sociologists, musicologists and historians to examine oral literature for various purposes.

Studying the oral lyric poetry of the Amhara people is of paramount importance to appreciate the creativity of the Amhara people themselves and the process of creating oral lyric poetry and transmitting it.

Eventually, the study can be a contribution to the documentation of Ethiopian Literature, specifically Ethiopian oral literature. Furthermore, it can be serving as a spring board for the coming researchers.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to make a theoretical framework for the study and to watch some of the studies conducted in the field of oral poetry.

The chapter shall discuss on oral literature, oral poetry, oral lyric poetry and related studies in general, and its characteristics and significances in particular. And, there will be an endeavor to explain the nature of performance and composition of lyric poetry.

2.1. Oral Literature

The homes to diverse ethnic groups, like Ethiopia, have their own histories, cultural experiences and unique traditional values. And, these have been reproduced and transmitted from generation to generation orally through their languages and oral literature.

Oral literature is thought to be quite vital nowadays as it was many years before. People of a variety of social groups are expected to have a reaction on various social, political, historical and economic events. So, it is believed that it is an effective instrument through which these variety of social groups could provide a way to manifest their reaction.

Since oral literature is usually not exposed to censorship, it could indicate the moods, sympathies and oppositions that the bearers of oral literature have experienced towards the prevailing political, social and economic conditions. Hence, searching for oral literature can be useful in making an essential insight into a given societal creative imagination and living conditions.

According to Fakada (1994:10) the history, culture, literature, etc of the people and society are found in the folktale, oral poetry and various forms of oral literature. These areas are also important sources to the study of the attitudes of the peasant's life, death, work, development, etc. and their responses to man-made and natural disasters. Studying these untapped sources will help one to better understand the society and the people.

2.1.1. Characteristics of Oral Literature

Oral literature has different characteristics. Among them, as to Melakneh (1990), the following can be noticed: unscientific world outlook, volatility /fluidity/, conformism, performance, cumulative creativity, formal simplicity, universality, absence of concrete time and place in the action, prevalence of trickster animals or characters, and the victory of good over evil. To discuss these:

Oral literature displays a non-scientific outlook. Because it is based on pure imagination and it develops in a healthy way in the lack of scientific knowledge.

Almost all the materials have a quality of volatility. That means it changes from time to time, experiences modification and passes/transfers/ from place to place /society to society/. Again, through time, space, and cultural interaction, it loses its originality.

Oral literature has also a quality of conformism. The whole material directs at preserving and keeping the existing states rather than challenging it.

The much known feature of oral literature is its nature or that of its transmission by word of mouth. It is again depended on dramatic presentation and the imaginative interaction of the audience. Besides, it is not remote as that of written literature.

The creator of oral literature is usually anonymous and thus, it is designated by group genius rather than that of an individual.

Oral literature is mostly short in form and experiences simple linear plots and conflicts.

Oral literature is universal because no society, be it literate or preliterate, is without oral tradition. Furthermore, the action usually takes place in an unclearly expressed setting.

The other feature of oral literature is the victory of the weak over the strong, moreover, the victory of good over evil. A competition takes place between good and evil, truth and lie, virtue and vice in which a great victory of good over bad is brought forth.

2.1.2. Significances of Oral Literature

Oral literature, in developing countries like Ethiopia, even now plays a significant role in declaring the society's life, practices, and values. Besides, it plays an essential role in the culture of a variety of groups in the world. This is because, as Berhanu (2009:16) asserts, it is impossible to commit to writing the totality of a society's experiences and creations.

To strengthen the above, Bukenya et.al (1994:97), as cited in Berhanu (2009:16), states that if literature is the expressions of a society's values, its art, both material and moral, its aspirations and frustrations, its songs of joy and sorrow, its tragedies, in short the sum total of a society's

reality and creations, then a lot of that literature is oral and only a part of it is written even in the societies that have a long tradition of writing.

The knowledge and experience of the people in the developing world like Africa, on the whole, is transmitted through their oral literature rather than the written one. Therefore, the position and function of oral literature in the developing world is till now quite vital more than of the developed world that the written world causes to public opinion. Specially, here in our country, Ethiopia, the idea of oral tradition is very strong because many of the languages of Ethiopia are still unrecorded.

Oral literature is used as a tool by which the illiterate community of people makes artistic expression to their deepest thoughts, feelings and concerns. Therefore, searching for oral literature is important to cope up the social values and to preserve the verbal art of the illiterate societies in Ethiopia.

It is also possible to say that oral literature is the basis of written literature of every society. According to Berhanu (2009:17) this is true because oral literature is the soil in which written literature germinates. For instance, it has been influencing and still continues to influence written literary forms in Africa. The abundance of proverbs in Chinua Achebe's novel **Arrow of God** and Sahle Sellassie's novella **Shinega's Village** would be good examples of this.

Finally, since an oral poetry shares a range of relationships with the other folklore items, it is characterized by all or most of the already mentioned features (both in characteristics and significances of oral literature). Hence, oral lyric poems of the West Gojjam Zone are also no exception to those general rules.

2.2. Oral Poetry

Oral poetry is one of the oldest forms of folklore, and it is transmitted, memorized and preserved orally. It has different songs, recitals and lamentations. According to Finnegan (1970), Andrzejewski (1985), and Okpewho (1992); the day to day activities of most African rural societies have been reflecting through their oral poetry. Besides, the themes of oral poetry reflect the peoples' way of life in general.

A semantic macro – structural category or frame extractable from distinct textual elements which illustrate it and expressing the more general and abstract entities (ideas, thoughts etc.) that a text or part thereof is about (Prince, 1987:97).

This is to mean that theme is the central idea of a text by which the society's way of life is reflected.

Many scholars in the field emphasize that oral poetry in African context is used in the description of cultures, the recording of historical events, building traditional values, teaching socialization and norms of the society to the coming generation.

2.2.1. Distinctive Features of Oral Poetry

Since it is a verbal art, it is brought and handed over through word of mouth in a context where the creator and the audience actively interact.

Oral poetry has dynamic nature. It is generally likely to experience changes if played or recited in various occasions of performance though some kinds of chants like divination poetry and dynastic poetry are thought to have a fixed text.

Oral poetry has also a nature of accompaniment. As is shown in Finnegan (1970:265), accompaniment has many different forms, depending, among other things, on the geographical and its resources, on the genius of the particular people, and on the different genres within a single culture. To mean that there are some songs that have clipping and /or dancing as accompaniments and some others that have a variety of instrumental accompaniment.

In the same way, Okpewho (1992:46-47) watches that during performance, movements of different parts of the body like the face, the hands or any other parts are served as accompaniments. Therefore, they could play a role in making the performance attractive.

Scholars in the field also believe the existence of a solitary performance although the audience and the social contexts are taken into solemn consideration to perform oral poetry. To confirm the idea, Finnegan (1977:215) and Okpewho (1992:107) announced the existence of solitary performer where there is no audience. In addition Deng (1973:78), as cited in Finnegan (1977:215), declares a person may find entertainment in singing to himself while walking along the road or herding in the forest.

No matter what the kind of performance is a group or a solitary one, according to Fekade (1998:10), the history, culture, beliefs and practices of the people are found in the folktales, oral poetry and the various forms of oral literature. This is to say that focusing on the social contexts and the real performances are important to search for the thoughts and experiences of the society that are exposed through oral poetry.

According to Alembi (2002:37) and Okpewho (1992:71-104), the poetic devices, i.e. repetition, rhyme, alliteration, parallelism, piling and association, tonality, idiophones, imagery, digression, allusion, and

symbolism are also vital features that could be useful to make oral poetry easy and interesting.

Training, as indicated by Alembi (2002:37), is the other feature of oral poetry. The oral poet is needed to learn how to compose or recite oral poems in various occasions. Oral poets as a whole learn these skills through observation and doing in various occasions of performance like working, drinking, weeding and cattle herding.

2.2.2. Typical Functions of Oral Poetry

Scholars in the field, who have made research on oral poetry, believe that oral poetry has a variety of functions.

Oral poetry is used to entertain /relax/ people who have various pressures and tensions both physically and mentally. Okpewho (1992:107) describes that oral poetry provides relief after the day's work is over. Besides, people recite the poems during their work and motivate themselves to avoid boredom.

Furthermore, it serves a given society as a whole or individually to express its outlooks about itself or about the world. It is known that a society or an individual tend to watch and develop a common interest about the world or about them. Thus, they can protect these common interests and outlooks through a piece of oral poetry. Okpewho (1992:110) declares it as to protect the common interests, they often tend to develop and circulate pieces of oral information (whether in songs or in stories) that assist them feel a certain sense of security in the face of other contending groups within the society.

Oral poetry could also be used as a means of expressing nationalistic attitudes, views and standpoint. As is stated in Okpewho (1992:11), the sense of rivalry is even keener between communities. Here, oral literature serves the purpose of asserting patriotic or nationalistic feelings.

In the mean while it assists generations to learn about them or their ancestors' way of living, their identity, their culture and about how to acquire these ways of life, as oral poetry encloses the different ways of living or cultural values. But, how is it possible for the citizens of a society to acquire, on a general or collective basis, information about themselves: who they are, their origins and connections, and the peculiar ways of living and behaving that identify them as a people and that must be preserved for the sake of cultural continuity? Okpewho (1992:115) has already answered it as; obviously, such information is contained in the various forms of oral literature practiced in the society-songs, narratives, proverbs, riddles, and so on-which are delivered either privately (e.g., mother to child, artist to apprentice) or publicly (e.g., in moonlight entertainment or in open performances by skilled artists). Through these media the younger member of the society absorbs the ideas that will guide them through life and the older ones are constantly reminded of the rules and ideas that must be kept alive for the benefit of those coming behind them.

Oral poetry performs a role of recording the historical practices of states and state heads. Moreover, it serves as propaganda in persuading a given community. Praise Poetry, as Finnegan states (1970:141), is used to record the praise names, victories, characteristics, and exploits (or expected exploits) of chiefs. Furthermore, "Praise Poetry is also a vehicle for recording of history as viewed by the poets". And, as an instrument, Praise Poetry is used to record "the great deeds and characters of earlier

heroes which are commemorated rather than their mere names or ancestry, and national glories and thus recounted and relived”.

Oral poetry has also a function to please the desire or to keep one’s fame in a given society. According to Finnegan (1970:141), the desire for fame and praise was something considered relevant not only in life but after death: a man’s memory was kept alive in his praises.

2.3 Lyric Poetry

2.3.1. Concept and Nature

The word lyric, etymologically speaking, derives from the Greek ‘lyre’; and thus, a lyric in ancient Greece was a song provided to the accompaniment of a lyre.

The term, according to Berhanu (2009, 99), is now served for any fairly short, non narrative poem presenting a single speaker who expresses a state of mind or a process of thought and feeling. However, the term also includes extended expressions of a complex evolution of mind, like in the long elegy and ode. The process of observation, thought, memory, and feeling in a lyric may be organized in a variety of ways. For instance, in ‘love lyrics’, as shown in Abrams (1981:99), the speaker may simply express his state of mind in an ordered form; or he may gallantly elaborate a compliment to his lady; or he may deploy an argument to persuade his mistress to take advantage of opportunity and fleeting youth.

In other kinds of Lyric, (Ibid), the speaker manifests and justifies his particular disposition and values; or he expresses a sustained process of observation and meditation, in which he analyzes and tries to resolve an emotional problem; or he is exhibited as making and justifying the choice of a way of life.

Lyric Poetry is mostly a form of poetry with rhyming schemes that express personal feelings. It needs not, however can, be set to music. Aristotle as cited in Wikipedia-Lyric poetry-2/8/2010 merely mentions lyric poetry along with drama, epic poetry, dancing, painting and other forms of mimesis. The modern concept of a lyric poem, dating from the Romantic era, does have some thematic antecedents in ancient Greek and Roman verse, nevertheless the definition was based on metrical criteria, and in archaic and classical Greek culture presupposed live performance accompanied by a stringed instrument.

Therefore, a variety of definitions for the term have been brought forth: Like Abrams and Di Yanni's.

A lyric poem, according to Abrams (1981:99), is a brief expression of mood or state of feeling.

Again, Di Yanni (1990:425) defines lyrics as: "Subjective poems, often brief, that express the feelings and thoughts of a single speaker who may or may not represent the poet."

The definition draws attention to the brevity and emotional intensity of lyric poetry. And hence, as shown in Berhanu (2009:99), it can be inferred from the definitions that lyric poetry is characterized by brevity, melody and emotional intensity.

Furthermore, as indicated by different scholars in the field, lyric poetry is almost always accompanied by singing in different occasions (Barnet, 1985:451; Finnegan, 1970:241; and Gordon, 1978:464).

Berhanu, in his book on Fundamentals of Literature (2009:99), has also indicated that lyric poetry includes elegy, ode, song, epigram and sonnet. And, he defines them as:

Elegy:- is a religious song or praise.

Ode:- is a long stately poem in stanzas.

Song:- is a set of words set to music; or singing.

Epigram:- is a brief witty poem that is often satirical.

Sonnets:- are usually written in two basic patterns: i.e. Italian (Petrarchan) and the English (Shakespearean). The former sonnet is composed of an eight lines Octave and six-line sestet. The latter sonnet is composed of three four-line quatrains and a concluding two-line couplet.

Eventually, lyric, in the sense of a short poem which is sung, is probably the most common form of poetry in Sub Saharan Africa. Indeed, lyric, in its original form of a poem in a musical setting, is one of the quiet vital kinds of African oral literature.

2.3.2. Contexts and Features

Lyrics and/or songs appear in an almost unlimited number of contexts. As stated in Finnegan (1970:242); we sing when we fight, we sing when we work, we sing when we love, we sing when we hate, we sing when a child is born, we sing when death takes a toll.

Lyric, as indicated in Finnegan (1970:241-242), is believed to be played in different contexts. It is played if one is in battlefield. In addition, it is habitual to watch lyrics played during birth, initiation, betrothal, wedding ceremonies, funeral and memorial celebrations. Besides, in agricultural and pastoral activities where there is no instruments to accompany the song, or workers at a farm, playing lyric poems using the voice alone. Barnet (1985:453) observes that in work songs where there

is no audience, the singers sing for themselves, participating rather than performing, they really are singing about the way they feel inside.

Furthermore, lyric poems that are sung in a variety of contexts deal with various subjects. Lyrics, as announced in Finnegan (1970:247), are seen to discuss issues of love, wives, husbands, marriage, animals, chiefs, this year's tax, the latest football match, a recent intrigue, the plight of a cripple dependent on his family, an amusing incident, a friend's treachery or an enemy's vices, the relationship between variety in the human and natural world, etc.

The people, in the context of death, compose songs to declare their deep feeling in the sense of sadness and loss. Here, the funeral ceremonies, the kind of lyric poems they compose and the length of time they perform, according to Okpewho (1992:119), vary depending on factors such as the age of the deceased, his status in the society, his profession or cult affiliation, etc.

In the context of marriage, lyrics include topics like how it is attractive, or how it is difficult or absurd. For instance, they address appreciations, wishes of making a marital relationship with a beloved woman, or it may raise topics of premarital and marital conflicts, and partings (Finnegan, 1970:252-254).

Moreover, Okpewho (1970:107) describes that cattle songs are a wide spread tradition in rural areas. The peasant composes different songs to expose the role of an ox during the time of plowing and even after a hard day's field work with animals. And, songs in admiration of cattle, especially the ox, are usually sing in cattle camps and even if the singer is accompanying his ox and the cloning of its bell and the bellows of the ox provide accompanying music for the words of the song.

As stated in Finnegan (1970:252); although lyrics, especially African lyrics, often deal with human issues, people engaged in pastoral and agricultural activities usually play lyrics in praises of their “individual beasts”. Cattle come to mean for more to their owners than mere economic sustenance are accepted as emotional and evocative topics for deeply felt expression.

There are also different contexts that permit an individual to reflect on his emotion through poetry. A man shall sing alone in the forest, in the farming land, or he composes poems to express his appreciation of his cattle. In the same way, a woman, to refrain from tediousness, shall compose poems if she is fetching water or grinding crops.

On the other hand, lyrics have distinctive features. They are thought to be brief. Finnegan (1970:254) describes that lyrics are characterized by extreme brevity-it usually consists of only two lines. Gordon (1978:464) also notices that lyrics are frequently brief, melodic poems in which the writer /composer/ is expressing an emotion aroused by some scene or occasion.

Again, lyrics are usually antiphonal. Songs in Africa are quite frequently in antiphonal form: i.e.

“There is response of some kind between soloist and chorus, and the song depends on the alternation between the two parts. The role of the soloist (or ‘cantor’) is crucial. It is he who decides on the song, and when it should start and end. Even more important, he can introduce variations on the basic theme of the song, in contrast to the part of the chorus which is more or less fixed. In other cases, the soloist has complete scope to improvise his part of the verse as he chooses (a part perhaps from the very first line). This type of composition results in many impromptu and often ephemeral lyrics” (Finnegan, 1970:259).

Lyrics are played in the form of interaction of performers and audience. According to Finnegan (1970:270-271), a composition of songs in societies where there is an accompaniment by chorus, instruments, or dancing, and where, as so often in African lyrics, there is an emphasis both on performance and participation by the audience.

Eventually, oral lyric poetry has distinctive features like brevity, musical accompaniment, and participation of audience. Besides, it has a characteristic/feature/ in that it is performed in different contexts reflecting different topics.

2.3.3. Composition and Performance

Oral lyric poetry, for some scholars in the field like Babalola (1966), Olajubu (1977) as cited in Alembi (2002:40), is believed to have no specific composer. They think that the authorship of a given piece of oral poetry is the community as a whole in which it is played or recited.

Nevertheless, these views are thought wrong. Any piece of poetry is obviously believed to have a composer even though the specific poet may not be known (Ibid). And, the poets are considered to have undergone a process of training before they attempt to compose and perform in front of a given audience.

To strengthen this, Lord (1960:32-33) suggests that there is an unconscious process of assimilating formulae a young singer has to go through before he becomes a singer. As a boy he attends different performances made by different singers. There he commences to learn and assimilate the formula. When Lord (1960:34) further points out the process of learning, he says that for a considerable time, a young singer will listen to his elders with more attention to the lines and phrases. He

will pick them up from any singer whom he hears. As he practices singing by himself he realizes the need for them and he uses them, sometimes adjusting them more or less consciously to his own needs, sometimes unconsciously twisting them. They are not sacred, but they are useful. In this way he acquires the formula of his elders and establishes his own formula habits. He is doing what all singers before him have done.

In the same way, it is observed that there are a variety of occasions in which a performer could learn to compose and deliver his song. Amid such occasions, boy's initiation, war, hunting, work, the victories by the chiefs, the advent of distinguished visitors or at the installation of a new chief, wedding, funeral or remembrance ceremonies, can be mentioned as the exemplified ones.

Consequently, performance and occasions of performances are basic means of oral lyric poems compositions, recitations and understanding the meaning of a given piece of oral lyric poetry.

2.4. Studies on Oral Poetry

In the Ethiopian context oral literature has not been searched adequately. In spite of the fact that there is a promising interest of research work in the area, still enough researches have not been done. Oral poetry, one of the genres of oral literature, has not been provided due attention.

Amid them the following BA theses; i.e. Balkachew Chernet (1974). An Analysis of Funeral Poetry; Yaze Worku (1984). Thematic Analysis of Work Poetry in Dembia; Ewnet Aragie (1986). Thematic Analysis of Love Poetry; Taddesse Mekonon (1986). An Analysis of Wedding Ceremonies and Oral Poems in Dembia; ኑርሁሴን መሐመድ (1986):: በፎንጎ አካባቢ.

የሚሰሙ የአዝማሪ ግጥሞች ይዘታዊ ትንተና; አምባቸው አለባቸው (1987):: የሴት ጣውንት ግጥሞች ይዘትና ቅርፅ ትንተና; can primarily be mentioned.

The foremost concern of the already cited researchers is content analysis. Nevertheless, they have not given much focus to the poems in the context of performance.

To proceed with the MA theses;

Daniel Legesse (1988). A Thematic Approach to Amharic Oral Poems Association with Derg's Red Terror in Gondar and Gojjam; has attempted to gather and examine the major themes by naming as physical experience, emotional experience and resistance. He has exposed that those themes mirrored the grief, pain and danger of the Gondar and Gojjam peoples have faced. But the research has not paid due attention to the performance situation that may be because of the time difference between Derg's Red Terror and the time of the research conducted.

Moreover, Shibeshi Lema (1996). Famine Inspired Amharic Oral Poetry; has shown the psychological suffering of the drought victims in South Wollo. Besides, Hailu Araaya (1979). Amharic Folk Poetry Recreated; has made a translation on some oral poems.

On the other hand, the following theses have tried to examine oral poems in the context of performance. In addition, they have paid much attention for generic classification.

Berhanu Gebeyehu (1998). Islamic Oral Poetry in Wollo: A Preliminary Descriptive Analysis; has focused on examining the contextual meaning of the poems by grouping them into different genres. His investigation has specifically dealt with the Islamic oral poetry in Wollo. However, his collection, classification and analysis of poems do not deal with whole society of the study area.

Furthermore, Mesfin Messele (2000). *Abbawudde Oral Poetry in South Wollo: A Descriptive Analysis*; made a descriptive analysis of the poems of Abbawudde in terms of the social aspects of performance. His thesis, once more, dealt with the oral poems of the Abbawdde only, it does not focus on the whole society of the study area.

Tesfaye Messele (2007). *Subject Matter Analysis of Amharic Oral Lyric Poetry in Raya*; has also paid much attention to performance situation in his research. And, the research has restricted itself to lyric poetry.

Eventually, as it can be observed from the above discussion, there is no any research conducted in West Gojjam Zone. The present thesis is, thus, organized and carried out to fill the gap. The study is concerned more on the thematic analysis of the oral lyric poems that are recited in the area by gathering information on their meaning, context and performance.

CHAPTER THREE

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF AMHARIC ORAL LYRIC POETRY OF WEST GOJJAM ZONE

In this chapter attempts are made to deal with the major themes of Amharic oral lyric poetry of West Gojjam Zone.

Based on the already gathered lyrics, and their central ideas and contexts; the study will make an attempt to analyze the lyric poems under the following themes: reflecting the feel of discontent about various social issues, expressing the grief and consolation of mourners, declaring the themes related to the concept of work, showing the multifaceted nature of matrimony and marital ties, and exposing the various issues about love affairs.

3.1. Lyrics Reflecting Discontent about Various Social Issues

Using lyrics, people, according to Finnegan (1970), have been reflecting their happiness, grief, political notions, working conditions, social comments etc.

A society expresses its disgruntlement through a variety of lyric poems. Amid them, the major discontent themes about stepmother, beggary and human troubles are going to be discussed here after.

3.1.1. Discontent about Stepmother

One way or the other those who lost their mothers would likely live with stepmothers. Stepmothers, in most of the Ethiopian society, are

considered to be cruel. So, there are different lyric poems that are to be sung by the society like:

1. ከእንጀራ እናት ኑሮ ዱሩ ይሻለኛል፣
ቀጋውን ሾላውን እንጆር ይሰጠኛል።

Better to live in a forest than with a stepmother,
As it gives me yew and berry.

2. የእንጀራ እናትና የምድጃ እሳት፣
አመድ ይነፋሉ በሰው ሰውነት።

Stepmother and a stove fire,
Blow ash on a human body.

The first lyric declares that instead of living with a stepmother it is better to live in a forest. This is true because a forest gives its resource in large quantity and quality naturally. The second lyric poem also symbolically announces the disenchantment. Even though there is plenty and variety of drinks and foods, a stepmother doesn't satisfy her stepchildren. She makes them hungry.

3. በሰታቲ ወጭት ሥጋ ወጥ ተሰርቶ፣
እንጀራ ተጋግሮ በሞሰቡ ሞልቶ፣
ለኔ ጓዶ ቆሎ ለብቻ ተቆልቶ።

Though delicious food with meat is cooked with a big pan,
Though, a lot of 'injera' baked,
A roasted grain separately prepared for me.

Here, the lyric points out that there is a discrimination act against the readily made food in the home which is prepared by a stepmother. She discriminates her stepson against her own child. The implication is that she provides all the best to her children.

Moreover, to show the critical level of her cruelty the following lyric poem is usually to be sung.

4. አንቺ የእንጀራ እናት ያለብሽ ከካኔ፣

ለምለሙን ለልጅሽ ደረቁን ወደእኔ።

How sinner a stepmother is,

The soft to your child the dry one for me.

Thus, regarding the punishment stepmothers deserve, the society puts forward the thoughts through lyric like:

5. የእንጀራ እናትስ የምመኝላት፣

እፍን ባለች ጎጆ በደጃፏ እሳት፣

ጭንቅ ያለች ውጋት እፍን ያለች ሞት።

I wish to a stepmother,

A deplorable death.

As indicated above deserving a punishment in a shockingly bad death is really unbearably painful. According to the persona this is a kind of measure that should be taken in a stepmother. From this, it can be understood that how the perception of the society to a stepmother is worse and unmerciful.

3.1.2. Discontent about Beggary

Beggary lyric poems are another form of disgruntlement lyrics.

6. መስጠት ያባትህ ነው፣ መለሙን ያባቴ፣

ፎክራብህ መጣሁ ስነሳ ከቤቴ።

Charity is your father's; as beggary is my father's,

I have surely visit you to give me alms.

The above lyric is sung by a husband and his wife; and culturally known as 'Lalibela'. 'Lalibela' is a person who begs with his wife or alone. According to the Amhara culture specifically in West Gojjam Zone, there is a belief that unless a 'Lalibela' beg once in a year they will be sick to death. They beg because not to die or lost their property. It is a traditional belief that is experienced in the society. The donor is considered as if he gets his charity from his birth; and, for the beggar his poverty too from heredity.

Admiring and mentioning this traditional belief, a beggar begs the donor and gets his means of subsistence as it is already indicated in the lyric.

Again, if a donor doesn't feel a beggar's voice and shows negligence, a beggar disparages a donor through a lyric poem like:

7. ስጦችና ልሂድ ከባለ ተርታው፣

ላንተ ዋዛ ቢሆን ለኔ አዳሬ ነው።

Give me alms and let me proceed to the other, whose turn has come,

Though it looks simple to you; it is my livelihood.

The disabled, who think that they can not work, satisfy their need through begging. In towns they get their needs in the form of left over food, cash and clothes. Nevertheless, in rural areas they get their daily desire in the form of crops and very rarely in the form of left over foods. To obtain their means of subsistence they should beg using a variety of ways. Among them, oral lyric poems of the following types can primarily be mentioned.

8. አርሶ ያበላኛል ስትለኝ እናቴ፣
 አርሶ ያበላኛል ሲለኝ አባቴ፣
 እንክት እርግፍ አለ የሰራ አካላቴ።

When my father and mother expect me to farm and feed them,
 Their hopes are dashed because I get disability of my whole body.

9. እናት አለማመን፣ አባት አለመማን፣
 እንዲያው ዝም ብሎ ጤናን ነው መለመን።
 Don't trust mom and dad,
 But pray to get blessed with good health.

10. ከሁሉ ከሁሉ ዓይነስውር ይብላል፣
 እንጂራ ቀርቦለት መሬት ይዳብላል።
 Of all the impairments, visual impairment is the worst,
 Because thinking of a plate rather he touches a land/soil/.

The above three lyric poems advocate the loss of expectation, the importance of health and the worse of blindness respectively.

The one who gives alms to the needy; wears and feeds the poor is thought in the society as if he has been blessed by the almighty God. Remembering this, beggars pity the donors through various lyric poems to earn their means of subsistence. Of the many poems the eleventh is the very common one.

11. አረ ስጡኝ ለኔ ላስቀምጥላችሁ፣
 ከላይኛው ጌታ ታገኙታላችሁ።
 Give me alms to keep it for you,
 In order to have blessing from the almighty God later.

A human being faces a variety of sufferings throughout his life. He is the carrier of trouble, agony, destitution, famine, sin, harmful deed, jealousy, theft, evil doing, addiction etc. He has hated his presence as of the creation of his father Adam, and Eve. A human kind inherits all the sins from Adam and Eve. To declare these human suffer and tragedy, the society has exploited different lyric poems. Such as;

12. ቀድሞ ነበር እንጂ ሰው አልሆንም ማለት፤

አዳምና ሔዋን የተፈጠሩት።

It was before to hate being a human,
When Adam and Eve created.

13. አዳምና ሔዋን ጠፍቶአቸው መንገዱ፤

ለሰው ልጅ መከራን ጥለውለት ሔዱ።

Adam and Eve lost their way,
They left troubles behind the humankind.

Playing the above lyric poems, the beggars recognize the donor that all human beings are sinful; and inform the society that “all are sinful”. Through these lyric poems the beggars win the heart of others to get their alms.

14. አምስት ሳንቲም ለኔ መስታወቱ ነሽ፤

የማንንም ግንባር ታሳይኝአለሽ።

Five cents is a mirror to me,
I could watch with it humans' behavior.

15. ባለቅሰው ባለቅሰው እንደህፃን ልጅ፤

እራቴም ምሳዬም ሆነ በሰው እጅ።

I cry like a baby,
Because my supper and dinner came from a handout.

To the beggars to seem that it is hard to get their subsistence from the charity. The donors' face fires the poor personality. When the donors frown their hostile faces the beggars would frighten. The beggars always earn their food through charity /alms/. This is by itself painful. However, since this is the only possibility they make it routinely. Of such type of lyric poems the above are seen to be sung repeatedly.

3.1.3. Discontent Related to Human Troubles

Most of the lyric poems, which are graffiti, are anonymous. When critically observed the lyric poems announce the human's bitterness, jealousy, cynicism, ignorance, betrayal, poverty, suffering, hatred, cruelty, etc.

16. እህቴ ስትከብር ለኔ እየመሰለኝ፣

ወንድሜ ሲከብር ለኔ እየመሰለኝ፣

አውጥቶ ይሰጣል እኔን እየራብኝ።

When my sister becomes rich; I think it is mine,

When my brother becomes rich; I think it is mine,

When I am hungry my brother gives /donates/ to the other.

17. ወንድምና ሳንቲም አንድ ላይ ወድቀው፣

ሳንቲሙን አነሱ ወንድምን ትተው።

If cents and brother were fell together,

The people took care of the cents leaving their brother.

Both the above lyric poems are played because of the worst outcome of poverty. The 16th lyric indicates the cruelty of relatives among themselves. It implies that people are usually running after their advantage. They love money and the rich. Instead of helping each other

the relatives help the stranger. Besides, the 17th lyric poem expresses the rudeness of human beings. When a brother and cents are found fall together the money would be picked up first by ignoring the brother.

18. ሁለት ውሾች አሉኝ የማላድጋቸው፤

ሰምቶ መቻልና ክፉን ችላ ናቸው።

I have two dogs; whose names are,
Patience and positive mindedness.

19. አሙኝ አሙኝና ፈተጉኝ እንደገብስ፤

አሁን ይተውኛል የልባቸው ሲደርስ።

They have repeatedly backbite me and scrubbed me like barely,
They would leave me alone when they get satisfy.

From the already cited two lyric poems in the above, it is possible to understand about patience and positive mindedness. Even though there are plenty of challenges in a social interaction it is better to handle them patiently and trustfully. In addition, since every hardship would pass through time it is advisable to tackle each and every obstacle smoothly. Patience and positive mindedness can solve and settle every challenge.

Moreover, the former lyric poem (18th) is declared through personification and the later (19th) through figures of contrast. As it can be observed here figurative languages do clarify the message of lyrics and add their beauty.

20. ከሁሉ ከሁሉ ሁለት አሉ ምቹ፤

እናትና እንጆራ የማይሰለቹ።

Above all, there are two comfortable things,
Mother and ‘injera’; those can not be boring.

Here are two comfortable things; the biological mother and ‘injera’. Both won’t be boring. It is a universal truth that a mother can not be bored (hated). She is a sign of love and kindness. As that of mother; ‘injera’, a cultural food of Ethiopians wouldn’t also be bored though it is consumed by citizens of the country now and again. This is the very truth that is announced by the 20th lyric poem. Thus, the disgruntled are seen to recite such kinds of lyric poems in order to expose their inner feelings.

21. እዩት ተመልከቱት እዩት ይህን ወራት፣

ሳይዘሩት ይበቅላል አረምና ጠላት።

Look! Watch! These seasons,

You would have enemies and weeds unexpectedly.

When failure happens everybody would be enemy /rude/ as that of weed, during a rainy season, is grown any where. The 21st lyric poem is observed to be sung by most of poor as cited in the above.

22. ከስዬ ጠቁራ በሰራሁት ቤት፣

አላኖረኝ አለ ክፉ ገራቤት።

Though I tiresomely built my residence,

The worst neighbor can not allow me to live peacefully.

23. የጣት ቁስልና የዘመድ ምቀኛ፣

እየነዘነዘ እንቅልፍ አያስተኛ።

The sore on a finger and jealous relative,

Won’t let you sleep by giving you pain.

Jealousy is usually created in a human social interaction. It is watched amid friends, relatives, neighbors, workmates etc. The poor envies the

rich. The failure spites the successor. Both the above lyric poems are discussing about jealousy. As it is very known that a sore on a finger and jealousy among family members are very painful matters which won't be forgotten easily. Hence, through such type of lyrics human beings expose their dissatisfaction thoroughly.

24. አረ ተወኝ አገር አረ ተወኝ መንደር፣

እየሰማህ አውራ እያየህ ተናገር።

Leave me alone home; leave me alone village,

Listen and watch carefully; then talk and speak out faithfully.

Gossip unties and destructs marriage, village, social interaction, country, etc. The one, who bored with it, is observed to lose his many golden qualities and wealth. Hereby, he is forced to recite the above (24th) lyric poem to warn the windbags as well as to make relief for him.

25. ጨንፈና ጉበት ጥሩ ምግብ ነው፣

ሆድን የሚያሻክር ምላስ ብቻ ነው።

Liver and gastric made dishes are delicious but,

Dishes made of tongue are not.

As shown in the above lyric poem, tongue speaks both the bad and goods; the constructive and destructives. However, belly keeps secrets. Therefore, instead of speaking all, it is better to keep it in a belly. Means, in order to make life peaceful don't vent the ugly matters as a whole. To be restrained is advisable and admirable. The advantages of verbal interaction should be encouraged through caring and avoiding of the challenges.

26. እንዴት ያደርጉታል የእድልን አንካሳ፣

አይደል አርጌ ቤት በባላ አይነሳ።

What one does about an impairment fate?

It is not an old house that can be lifted up with a fork of a branch.

27. ምንም ብትበደል ምቀኛህ ቢበዛ፣

ቀስ ብለህ ንገረው ለአምላክ እንደዋዛ።

Even though you are the wronged person and have many envious,

Whisper to God gently.

28. አንድ እንጀራ ቢያድር ይሆናል ግማሽ፣

ከሰው ሀገር መኖር ያደርጋል ትንሽ።

When an ‘injera’ spent a night it lessens its size by half,

Living abroad belittles an individual.

According to the 26th lyric poem though a man whatsoever be good and hard worker he may not be thanked, prized and admired. Since he is unlucky he would be condemned for all his favorite deeds. Besides, the lyric declares that on the contrary a man who is the worst of all, as a matter of chance, would be famous. This is because, fate is predestined. Nobody can change it.

The 27th lyric also announces that while envious get many and commence hurting; whisper to God gently because he unties all the challenges. Everybody would only be judged according to his deeds by the almighty God.

To say “ሰው በሀገሩ ወይራ ነው!” (Man is Olive in his land!), a man is respected in his land. Being a foreigner mean depriving right, respect, and influence. This is the very message of the last lyric poem (28th).

3.2. Lyrics Expressing Grief and Consolation

In this part, there shall be an attempt to examine how death is expressed in West Gojjam through dirges. Death is truly an inevitable cycle of human nature. If birth is there, death shall definitely exist.

If a person dies it is to be wept. Weeping doesn't only (simply) mean spilling out tears. Since weep is natural it may or may not have tear. Here the very vital thing is that the lyrics which are recited as accompany by mourners. These lyrics influence the mourners to be more touched. The lyrics can have a variety of substances; such as for personage, persona grate, mother, father, wife, husband, sister, brother, uncle, aunt, son, daughter, grandmother, grandfather etc.

To begin with mothers lyrics:

29. እግዚአብሔር ከሰራው ከዘረጋው ምድር፣

አሁን ምን ሰው አለ እናት የሚያበድር።

On earth that God creates,

We can borrow then but mothers.

30. እንኳን ጤፍ እንጀራ የተሞናመነው፣

ኮሶ እንኳን ይጥማል የእናት እጅ ሲይዘው።

Leave alone a soften 'injera',

'Kosso' would taste sweet in the mother's hand.

N.B.: 'Kosso' is an extremely bitter traditional plant medicine for tapeworm.

31. አረ ጅቡ ጮኸ እኔ ነኝ እራቱ፣

እናት ያለውማ ገባ ወደ ቤቱ።

Oh! The hyena screams; it is me that is to be eaten,

Nevertheless, those who have mothers can safely go home.

32. እናት የሌለው ልጅ ከሩቅ ይታወቃል፣

ሳይመቱት ያለቅሳል፣ ሳይገፉት ይወድቃል።

A child who has no mother is easily identified,
Crying untouched; falling without being pushed.

33. ኧረ እናትስ ትኑር ትሒድ አጎንብሳ፣

ተባይ ትገላለች በጨለማ ዳሳ።

Whatever a mother is old; she has to live,
She kills bug within a dark.

34. በጠፍጣፋ ድንጋይ ከተዘጋ በሩ፣

እናት አትገኝም እንደወፍ ቢበሩ።

Once a mother is in a grave; shut in by a flat stone,
She won't be found even flying like a bird.

The personas in the aforementioned lyrics seem to have felt that the departure from their dying mothers is quite touchy. They have felt strong loneliness for they shall not visit their mother again in person. The first dirge lyric indicates that once a mother is lost, she is lost forever. No one lends a mother. The second mourning song given above, besides portraying the sweetness of every foods and drinks, even the extremely bitter traditional plant medicine ‘Kosso’ sweets if mother holds. The third lyric shows absence of security if a mother died. The fourth mournful song also declares about indications of loneliness in which a child who has lost his mother experiences. The mother’s thoughtfulness and kindness at any time and anywhere is expressed in the fifth lyric. Through the sixth analogy, the persona has exposed his helplessness and deep sorrow about the death of his mother. Hence, the loss of the personas’ beloved mothers seems to be expressed with high sounding effect.

As that of mother's, father's death also grievous.

35. ቢያለቅስ፣ ቢተክን፣ ቢከፋው፣

ልጅ አድማጭ የለውም አባት ከሌለው።

Being crying, angry, sorrowful,

A child has no caretaker if he doesn't have a father.

Dirge 35 indicates that a father is a person indeed in the time of need. Father is a shield. When a child, who has lost his father, is being cried, sad, and angered nobody helps him. A child feels proud if and only if his father alive. Unless and then he loses all the respect from his society.

Again, when a baby gets die a special elegy that laments his end is chanted him as follows:

36. የጨቅላ ሞትና ጥጃውን መሸጥ፣

አቻውን እያዩ ሁልጊዜ ፀፀት።

A death of a baby and a sell of a calf are similar,

There is always a remorse seeing the equals.

A child, who has died in his early age, is unforgettable like a calf that is to be sold in its early stage and disappoints the owner. The family and the owner seeing the equals of the baby and the calf respectively they regret. Because can do a lot if they were alive. Hereby, it is possible to say that the death of a baby is extremely miserable.

37. ወንድም ተገንዞ ሲወጣ በተራ፣

የዚያን ጊዜ አይደለ ጠላት የሚኮራ።

If a brother passes away,

The time comes for an enemy to feel proud.

To proceed with brother's death, the lyric on number 37 shows how one who has just lost a brother is badly treated and wanted to be killed by sworn enemies. They could kill him even before his brother's corpse isn't yet buried.

Furthermore, the lyric put below highlights that how unendurable the loss of a sister to a brother. When a death of a sister is being sudden it shall be worse especially for a brother who is in need of her help.

38. አስለቅላኝ ዋለኝ ወቀስኳት እህቴን፤

ባልተሳለ መቀስ ብትቆርጠው አንጀቴን።

My sister made me mourn and I condemn her,
When she cut my intestine with a blunt scissors.

The lyric poems below show unbearable the death of a husband to his relatives.

39. አንተ የኔ ወዳጅ የዘንድሮው አልፎ የወዲያኛው በጋ፤

ከብቶችህ ከሰው በረት ሚስትህ ከሰው አልጋ።

My friend; by next year,
Your cattle and wife would be on the stranger's cowshed and bed respectively.

40. ሚስትህንም ሌላ ሊያገባት ነው ወይ፤

አይኔ በፈሰሰ ይህንን ሳላይ።

The stranger shall marry your wife,
Better to die before I see it.

The people of Amhara in West Gojjam Zone have a custom to make another marriage when one of the couples has passed away. So, as shown in the 39th and 40th dirge lyric poems both the widow and her property which are gained as inheritance from the dying husband would transfer to the stranger (a new husband) because of a second marriage. And this makes the relatives of the late husband angry. That is why they felt discomfort and were forced to lament those songs.

41. አረ አያ አገሌ ታጠቃት ነበረ ዛሬስ አጠቃችሁ፤

ደግሞ ብላ ብላ ልጅ እዘል አለችሁ።

Mr. X you were accustomed to tackle your wife, however now she tackles you,

To look after a baby she commands you.

Yet in West Gojjam Zone, as indicated in the 41st lyric, a wife observed to all the domestic work while a husband labors in the field. However, after a death of a wife all the home responsibility including child care is left for a husband.

42. ቢጥላ እንደጣና ቢተርፍ እንደአባይ፤

ያንዱ ወገን ላንዱ ይሆነዋል ወይ?

Though filled like “Lake Tana” and “Abay”,

Can one’s relative be a relative to the others too?

The elegy on number 42 shows the unfriendliness of one’s family line relatives to the others family tree relatives. One’s family tree can only be relatives among themselves even though they are many in number.

In the Zone, bravery has been thought one of the best qualities one needs to have. A hero is a sign of pride to his family, to his wife, to his village

and to Amharas specifically in West Gojjam. To admire bravery, Amharas have set cultural norms that are kept by the whole society. A hero's wife has been provided priority to fetch water ahead of other women. Moreover, his cattle drink before others. When a hero dies distressing shall be the sorrow to the society he belongs to. This is viewed in a lyric below.

43. ዛሬ ገና ሞተ ጀግናው ባለውኔ፣

እስከ ሁላችሁም በሉ ወይኔ ወይኔ።

It is to day that a hero of his time, has died,

Weep all of you together.

The song in the above recites the death of a hero and adding up the general excellence of the departed bravery. This urges mourners on to wail, weep and express their grief.

44. ምን አይነት ዘመን ነው እሳተ ገለባ፣

የታመመው አይድን የወጣው አይገባ።

What an era that is worse,

The ill could not recover and the immigrant could not return.

The lyric above indicates the killing and wounding of people had reigned at that time. It advocates the recurrence of death is claiming a greater damage as the gutting down by fire of chaff.

3.3. Lyrics Related to the Concept of Work

So far in the above section, an attempt has been made to discuss how society in Amhara perceives the causes of death through their oral lyric poetry. It has also been tried hard to indicate how they describe their

grief over the deceased and what a noticeable effect and/or influence death can have on relatives, friends and families of the dying.

In this section, there shall be an attempt to examine the central themes raised in lyric poems that are related to the concept of work. In Amhara, there are co-operative songs for plowing, hoeing, mowing, harvesting, weeding, threshing and hanging up beehives; there are domestic and solitary songs for women grinding grain and fetching water. It is a much known truth that manual workers usually sing such songs to accompany their hard physical labor and to make it less painful. Thus, to substantiate these let us have some parable work lyrics:

45. ሆ፡በሬ ሆ፡በሬ አንተን ያጣውማ፤

ተሻግሮ ይሄዳል አርባ አራቱን ውሃ።

Oh, ox,! Oh, ox! The one who losses you,
Would go far away by crossing forty four rivers.

46. አንድ በሬ ለምኔ ይላል የሞላው ሰው፤

እንኳን ለዘላለም ለአንድ ቀን አግኝቼው።

What good does an ox do says the rich,
Leave alone forever if I get it for a day I would do a lot.

The above two lyrics are recited by farmers. The former song adduces the strong bond of an ox and a farmer. An ox is a considerable wealth of a farmer. Those who have not ox are forced to go far away from their residence by crossing a number of rivers to be a daily laborer or an immigrant.

The later also views the importance of a single ox though it doesn't have a pair. The rich may not need a single ox while the poor need it eagerly to pair it among them. They make a pair one to the other. Thus, an ox is a

vital wealth for poor farmers. Hence, it is possible to say that the strong bond of an ox and a farmer, and the mutual help among poor farmers are thoroughly and beautifully revealed in the above two lyric poems. Moreover, those lyric poems underline the economic significance of farmers' agreement to their oxen.

47. ሰርቆ ለምንድነው ውሻ ይመስል፣

ማረስ ነው እንጅ እጅ እስኪቆስል።

Why theft like a dog,

One has to cultivate hard till a palm gets wounded.

The dog that keeps its owners compound may steal if it doesn't regularly given its food. However, human beings should work and eat. The one who doesn't work has produced nothing. If there is no production there won't be any food to be eaten; and theft will take place. Therefore, a farmer has to plough hard till his palm becomes wounded. This is the main concern of the 47th lyric poem. To this point, in Amhara it is common to create an analogy between a dog and a lazy farmer.

It is also the custom of the society of Amhara in West Gojjam Zone to chant elegant lyric poems to encourage a hard worker and to disgrace farmers who are poor in farming. A lyric of this nature as an example is cited below:

48. ያረሰማ ጉበዝ እርፍ የነቀነቀ፣

ወፍጮው እንዳንራ መስከረም ዘለቀ።

The one who cultivates hard,

His mill is operational throughout the year.

49. በኮሳሳ ጅራፍ በቆራጣ በሬ፣

እንዴት አርጎ አረሰው ያ ጀግና ገበሬ።

With a piece of lash and a weak ox,
How that brave farmer plows.

The 48th and 49th lyric poems show that the farmer under discussion is a successful person in his farming activity. The lyric poem 48 admires the farmer's dexterity and the vastness of the farming land. To mean that the farmer can use his product as he wants he likes throughout the year. And, lyric 49 expresses a message that using a piece of lash and a weaken ox how a brave farmer plows successfully.

To come to shepherds' lyrics, the following can be illustrated as exemplars:

50. ፀሐይ ግቢ ግቢ በግራ ጎንሽ፣

ከብት እረኛው ሁሉ በራብ ሞተልሽ።

The sun shall quickly set its heat and light,
Because shepherds feel hungry.

51. እኔ መረረኝ የከብቱ ጥበቃ፣

እንግዲህ አባባ ሌላ ልጅ ይተካ።

I am fed up with cattle herding,
Thus, dad shall substitute me with another shepherd.

During fasting shepherds are staying without food till 3:00 pm and extremely feel hunger. Then, they condemn their profession and beg the sun to set urgently to have their food. It is accustomed to sing a song (like the 50th) at a period of fasting in West Gojjam Zone. This could also be because they are bored with cattle herding during fasting.

On the other hand shepherds are observed in the 51st lyric poem as if they are fed up with cattle herding, and beg their fathers to substitute them by others.

The Amhara society has kind of lyrics that are used to console a crying baby. A baby may cry for a variety of cases. One of the most common is departing from her/his mother. A baby who is departed from his mother is consoled through the following oral lyric poem.

52. የማሙሽ እናት፣

ውሀ ሄዳበት፣

ገበያ ሄዳበት፣

ቶሎ ነይለት።

Baby's mother,

Has gone to fetch water,

Has gone to market,

Come urgently.

The babysitters are usually seen to sing a song of the above type to stop a crying baby. When they sing the song the crying babies feel comfort and get calm.

There are also different lyric poems to be recited by women at a time of grinding crop.

53. ዱቁት ውረድ ውረድ ቋቱ ሙላ ሙላ፣

የሰው ቤት እንጀራ አይገኝምና።

Flour get down and fill a sack,

As others wealth can not be found easily.

The 53rd lyric poem is sung during traditional crop grinding. Formerly, a traditional mill, which is made of stone, was in use to grind crops in the area. Meanwhile, as declared in the already cited lyric poem that without sweating a lot no body's wealth can be found. Therefore, it is a must to sweat a lot.

There are also lyrics to be recited during the guardianship of a harvest. They are advocated for the betterment of production both in quality and quantity. The main opponent of a harvest is a bird and hence, it is politely begged not to glean a harvest as follows:

54. ወሬቱ ወሬቱ አትብይብኝ፤

ታስገድይኝ አለሽ ዘመድም የለኝ።

A bird! Please, don't glean the harvest,

Because I would be killed.

When birds glean harvests and the product becomes lessen or destroy the guardians would be blamed, even worse, treated badly by their employers as shown in the preceding lyric poem.

Eventually, work-related lyric poems focus on the bond between an ox and a farmer, the appreciation of hard workers and the censure of idle farmers, the shepherds' disgruntlement, and the console of a crying baby. Besides, praises are showered to the brave farmers and to their cattle.

3.4. Lyrics Reflecting the Multifaceted Nature of Matrimony and Marital Ties

As is in any other place, according to informants, matrimony in West Gojjam Zone is thought to be an institution that a family is built up on. The couples are hoped to make love, trust, devotion, and cooperation with each other to strengthen their marital ties. Besides, there are sets of traditional beliefs that have been experienced in the Zone.

To commence with a practical story that was told by one of the informants, Chalachew, 55, once upon a time there were two fathers: the bride's and the bridegroom's. They were agreed to get married amid their son and daughter. As usual all the ceremony was accomplished and the couples were left alone for sexual intercourse. However, the bridegroom couldn't able to attain (take) her virginity due to his impotence. And then, covering his weakness, he got back her to her family saying that she was not virgin. Therefore, since the bride's father knew the sabotage he has recited the following lyric poem:

55. ዝናቡ ዘነበ መሬቱም እራሱ፣

ማረሻው ተሰብሮ ዘሩ ተመለሰ።

It has rained and the soil has become wet,

But then, the plow is broken and the seed is returned.

And, the father of the bridegroom responded as follows:

56. ዝናቡ ቢዘነብ መሬቱም ቢርስ፣

ጭንጫ መሬት ልከህ የማይታረስ።

Though it rained: wetting the land,

You sent me sterile land that can not be cultivated.

Virginity, in the Ethiopian context especially in Amhara, is a sign of respect. That is why girls in the Zone keep their virginity till their marriage. Likewise, to take the girls' virginity is considered as a mark of showing the boys' strength. As revealed in the above both lyric poems that due to his importance the bridegroom has lost his dignity and his family's' too; however, on the other hand, the bride has kept her dignity as well as her family's as she keeps her virginity.

A variety of lyric poems are also being sung on the wedding day to admire the bride. Of them, the followings are noticed as such:

57. የኛ መሽራ ባለ ፎጣ፣

አልሰጥም ፈረስ ካለመጣ።

Our bride who has a towel,

We don't give her unless the bridegroom brings a horse.

In the Amhara society particularly in West Gojjam, it is a custom to give a reasonable gift to the bride. Unless the bridegroom has provided numerous and expensive gifts to the bride he has not been given her as simple as an ordinary matter. To show this, the relatives from the bride side sing a song like the above one in order to command /force/ the bridegroom to bring a horse as a gift which is a sign of high wealth and respect in the area.

58. ደግሞ ለመሽራት ካልሆንኩኝ አዝማራ፣

እከሰስ የለም ወይ በነገረ ሰሪ።

I should be a singer for the bride,

Otherwise I would be accused by a plotter.

In the above lyric poem the persona has sung to brighten the wedding day of the bride and to add to her happiness. If he hasn't done that he would be accused (accused in a sense to mean that condemned).

Again, to express her extreme beauty the persona has recited like:

59. እስከ ወዲያ ሐደሽ ወዲ ተመለሽ፤

እኔም ደስ ይበለኝ ዘመዴም ይይሽ።

Walk this way and that way,

Let me enjoy seeing you and my relatives too.

To say here that as the persona has already watched and enjoyed the bride's beauty the others should also taste and admire it too. The lyric advocates the righteousness of the choice of the bridegroom.

60. የሳቸ አሽከር አንገት 'ሚወረወር ቢሆን፤

ወርዶ ከበረሀ በገደለ ዝሆን።

If her neck were thrown like a spear,

It would kill an elephant in a desert.

The persona in the above song appreciates how the bride's dance is beautified and her neck is harmonically swung through a strong figurative language by considering her neck as powerful as a spear that can kill a strong wild animal, elephant.

The 61st lyric poem is observed to be recited now and then during a wedding day in order to give recognition to the skillful home economics of the bride's mother.

61. የመብረት እናት ቁሚ ተመረቁ፤

የጠመቅሽው ጠላ ነው አረቁ።

The bride's mother, stand up and let you blessed,
Is the brewed, 'T'ela' or 'Arek'ii.

NB: 'T'ela': a local traditional beer.

'Arek'ii': local traditional hard liquor.

Using the above song the persona encourages the bride's mother to enjoy more, and with this the bride feels proud.

62. አውቶቡሱ መጣ አቧራው ቦነነ፤

ተገሽ ያገራ ልጅ ትሄጅ እንደሆነ።

The bus has come and the dust is raised,
Let my home mate stand up if you would go.

Lyric poem number 62 in its part announces the leave of the bride far away with her partner; and/or, it declares the arrival of the bridegroom at the bride's residence.

On the other hand there are lyric poems which are sung to recognize the handsome of both the bridegroom and his best man like;

63. የመብረው ማማር የሚዜው ውበት፤

ልቤን አደረገው ዘርዛራ ወንፊት።

The appealing appearance of both the bridegroom and the best man,
Dispersed my attention.

Here, the persona reveals that as if the handsome of both the bridegroom and his best man has captured his/her attention. Besides, the lyric is

sung by the relatives of the bridegroom to inform the arrival of him at the gate of his partner.

64. እኔ ለተዳረው ለሙሽራው ብዬ፣
እወዛወዛለሁ ይሉኝታዬን ጥዬ።
Ignoring my shame,
Dancing for the bridegroom.

65. ለምን ታይዋለሽ አንገት ደረቱን፣
ወደሽው እንደሆን ለምኒ እናቱን።
Why do you watch his chest?
If you love him, ask his mother.

Ignoring shame the persona in the 64th lyric poem has sung and danced a lot to make the bridegroom happy. In addition, lyric poem 65 is chanted to praise the handsome bridegroom; and it is made between the best men and best women of the couples.

66. ሙሽራት በአንድ አልጋ፣
ሙሽራው በአንድ አልጋ፣
ይመስላሉ መላክ ክንፉን የዘረጋ።
The bride is on one bed,
The bridegroom is on the other,
Like an angle who stretches his wing.

The aforementioned lyric poem attempts to expose the grace of both the bride and bridegroom in comparing with that of angel. As known very well angle is a mark of respect, grace and holiness. Thus, the attractiveness of the couples is admirably expressed through the already cited lyric.

On the contrary, there are also lyric poems to be chanted in order to blame the bride. Among them the two lyrics below can be presented as examples.

67. አሮጌ ቆርቆሮ አያገለግልም፣

ሒጂ ወደናትሽ የወለደ አይጥልም።

An old tin doesn't serve,

So go to your mother that she doesn't reject you.

68. ወይ አልፈጩሽበት ወይ አልፈተልሽበት፣

ደግሞ ለማብጨብ ምነው ኮራሽበት።

Used it for neither spinning nor grinding,

Why not use your hand for clapping.

Lyric poem 67 expresses that the lazy woman is only carried by her mother but not by her partner. The mother would carry her because a mother is very kind by nature to her children and can cover all their shames patiently.

The 68th lyric poem is also sung when the relatives of the bride dance dully. To encourage and make them alert the lyric is recited.

To sum up, an attempt has been made to observe the recurring issues through lyric poems about matrimony. An effort has also been made to watch into lyrical pieces that focus on impotence, gift, beauty, choice, home economics skill and role of parents in marital life.

3.5. Lyrics Dealing with the Theme of Love

Love is a spice that sweetens life. Love touches, changes, arouses and cools the feeling. It is a vital human quality and a tying social force between both sexes; and it is practiced in a variety of ways in West Gojjam Zone. As to the lyrics gathered, love is on the whole exposed in terms of pity, lament, devotion, longing, beauty, worry, blame, sarcasm, and anger.

Performing lyrics of anger for love is common way of expression in Amhara. This can be illustrated as:

69. ትመጭልኝ እንደሁ ነይልኝ ዘንድሮ፣

የሰው ዕቃ ፈጀሁ ልቤ ተሸብሮ።

If you come: just come this year,

Since being disturbed I have destroyed others furniture.

In this piece of lyric poem, the singer expresses his anger that his patience is over. He tries to warn and brings his lover. He wants to capture her with love. He needs to win her heart and to make his own.

70. አበደኝ ይሉኛል ከነፈኝ እያሉ፣

እንደኔ በፍቅር ነደው አልከሰሉ።

I am caught by love: they call me she has gone mad,

For they did not get burnt by love and turn into charcoal.

Using figures of contrast, the above lyric poem declares the power of love pain which blacken the human heart as a charcoal. The one who is caught by love knows how the pain feels. However, those who are not caught by it entertain with and laugh at it.

71. በጊዜ እንተኛ ተቃቅፈን በሰንድ አልጋ፤

ጊዜ እንዳይሄድብን ብዙ እንድናወጋ፡፡

Let us sleep early together in bed,

Not to loose time so that we talk a lot talk a lot.

72. ኸረ መውደድ መውደድ መውደድ አስጨናቂ፤

እንኳን በወጣት ላይ ይብሳል ባዋቂ፡፡

Oh love, love, love the tormentor,

Leave alone on the young it rather presses more the old.

As indicated in the above two lyric poems, several lovers spend more of their time talking, watching and thinking about each other. Though they pass the whole time in bed they don't feel even they have stayed for an hour. They are quite eager till the time arrives for sleeping. Because, the talk the play, the embrace and the warm up are endless and insatiable to them. Besides, love is in discriminatory of sex, age, race, and education. It treats the whole equally. Nevertheless, when it exaggeratedly happens on aged ones it may be surprising.

The persona on poem 73 is a woman who gets married. She recites her deprived love to a concubine. A hidden love arouses her to climax and makes unable her to be free as she wants she likes. That is why she begs for his amulet to kiss it and sends back to him. Because she would be satisfied by licking it with her lips in which the seal of his love is stamped on.

73. ስደደው ማተብህን ስሜ ልመልሰው፤

እንደልቡ አይሆንም ሰማንያ ያለው ሰው፡፡

Send me your amulet so I kiss and send it back,

The one in wedlock can do no more.

Men's heart is like meat in a butcher shop for prostitutes. It only fills a belly; can not make love. However, would it be possible for prostitutes to love all their customers? Not at all! And, if concubines taste sex workers once, they can not easily be departed from them. They love them very much. They provide all their wealth to the sex workers as a payment to their sexual services. The prostitutes, however, don't have true love for their customers. Therefore, to express his anguish the persona recites the lyric poem below.

74. የዳንግላ ሎሚ የዘጌ ቡናነሽ፣

ሲታመሙ አይጠይቅ አክስር እንደምነሽ።

The lemon of Dangla: the coffee of Zege,

You who do not visit the patient, you only send one bankrupt.

Of course, he loves her and at the same time he hates her. Because when he was sick he wasn't visited by her though she was benefited from him a lot. That is why he condemned her through the above lyric poem.

75. ሲሄድ አውራ ዶሮ ሲቀመጥ እንገዳይ፣

እርሱም ባል ሆኖ ሊመታኝ ነው ወይ።

He walks like a rooster; sits like a mushroom,

Shall the so called husband beat me?

As that of the good times, the bad ones are also there in the world of love. The lovers may sometimes quarrel each other. So, they are forced to despise one another using a variety of lyric poems like the above one. Even though she is still with him and loves him very much, she may disagree once a time and then looks down at him as shown in lyric 75.

Again, there are songs to be recited by females who are in a deep love with males.

76. ደጃም አይዘጋ እንዲያው ክፍት ይሁን፤

እሳቱም አይንደድ እንዲያው ፍም ይሁን፤

የምወደው አሽከር ይመጣ እንደሆን።

Don't shut the door let it be open,

Don't ignite the fire let it be ember,

Perhaps my love may come.

Here in the above lyric the woman is in a deep love. She flies like a bird with his love. And, she usually takes care of him in every aspect to feel him comfort. When her love comes in the night, in order not to be watched by the neighbors she would facilitate that not the fire flames instead being ember. Besides, not hearing the sound when opening and shutting the door she would left the door open to enter him inside furtively. This indicates how a woman's love is deep.

Eventually, in Amharan oral lyrics, devotions, laments and love praises in terms of beauty are the dominant recurrent themes. Usually these lyrics express these issues with interesting figures of speech that could create unforgettable memories to everybody's mind.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In the study an endeavor has been made to examine the oral lyric poems of Amhara in West Gojjam Zone. Based on the theoretical framework discussed in the second chapter and using the contexts in which the lyric poems are recited and their central themes, they are analyzed into five dominant themes as follows: Reflecting the feel of discontent about various social issues, expressing the grief and consolation, declaring the themes related to the concept of work, showing the multifaceted nature of matrimony and marital ties, and exposing the various issues about love.

Using oral lyric poems, the people of Amhara in the Zone have been reflecting their grievances. The dominant themes under the disgruntlement lyric poems consist of the disgusts upon stepmothers, the pity recitations of beggars and the critical issues that indicate human troubles. Through these powerful lyric poems Amhara society whisper their bitter experiences.

One of the human events is death. When a death occurs the people of the Zone play undeniable role in the burial of the deceased. Whoever a member of a society has died, the residents of that society gather at the home of the dead and participate in his lamentation. Besides, they console the bereaved and pray for the dead. Thus, many of the lyric poems are observed to demonstrate the departed quality of character, position, wealth, life, participation in various activities. Generally, all his/her virtuous deeds during his/her life time are thoroughly illustrated in the selected lyric poems. However, his/her obscene things are unseen to be raised.

Furthermore, the Amhara society believe that death is an inevitable cycle of life. Death is as a whole considered as an excursion to the existence after died out. However, it is always unbearable. In terms of their attachment, their quality, and their later impact on the bereaved family the people of Amhara in the Zone mourn the death of their family member, relative, intimate friend etc.

There are also a variety of work lyric poems that are recited during different working activities. The lyrics include the themes of farming, cattle herding, childrearing, grinding of crops, and guardianship of a harvest and praises of the oxen. To this effect, they are seen to provide much relief for the already tired workers.

Amharic oral lyric poetry in West Gojjam Zone includes a topic of matrimony too. The thematic analysis of the collected lyric poems consist of the issues of sabotage, admiration, gift, devotion, beauty, departure, home economics skill and the role of parents in marital life.

As to the love lyric poems gathered, it has been brought forth the themes that indicate love is pity, lament, sacrifice, longing, beauty, distress, blame, sarcasm and anger. All the aforementioned issues are genuinely chanted in the lyric poems. Hence, possible to conclude that love is a spice that sweetens life.

Eventually, the identified themes of the lyric oral poems can authentically reflect the people's way of life in the Zone. The oral lyrics faithfully declare the society's world out look, socio-cultural norms, socio-economic values and life philosophy.

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Appendix 1 Unexplored Amharic Lyric Poem

77. ውሽማ፡ እራቱን አብልተሽ፣ እግሩን አጣጥበሽ ስደጅው በጊዜ፣

እኔ እሻለዋለሁ ለመኝታ ጊዜ።

ሚስት፡ እራቱን አብልቼ እግሩን አጣጣቤ የምስድልሽ፣

እማማ ዘራጢት ቡሀቃ የለሽ።

78. ንፍሮ ቀቅዬ እንብላ ብለው፣

ዛሬስ አመዶ ሊመታኝ ነው።

79. እንጨት ለቃሚ፡ አንተ ላም እረኛ አትጥራኝ በፋጨት፣

እመጣልሀለሁ እሁድ ቅዳሜ እንጨት።

እረኛ፡ እሁድ ቅዳሜንስ አላስለቅምሽም።

ሰኞና ማክሰኞ አልከለክልሽም

80. አህያ መጣች ተጭና ቋንጣ፣

እርጥቡ ሔዶ ደረቁ መጣ።

81. ረሀቡ በሆዴ በቅሎ ዘረዘረ፣

ወላጅ እናት ብትሆን ትቆርጠው ነበረ።

82. የሰፊድ እንጀራ ትንኝ የወረሰው፣

ይህን የሚበላ እናት የሌለው ነው።

83. አረ ሰነፍ ሞኙ ይውላል ከጥላ፣

ወርቅ የመሰለ ብር ከመሬት ሲፈላ።

84. ካፋፏ ላይ ቆሞ ይታያል ሀገር፣

እጅ እግር ይዞ መቸገር።

85. ይህንን የሰው ቤት ብለው ቤቴ ቤቴ፣

አይከተለኝም ካለመቀነቴ።

86. እንጨቱን ስለቅመው እርጥብ ነው ይሉኛል፣

ውሃውን ስቀዳው ድፍርስ ነው ይሉኛል፣

ወፍጮውን ስፈጨው ሽርክት ነው ይሉኛል፣

ተነሳ ወንድሜ እንሂድላቸው፣

ገረዱና ሎሌ ካላስወደዳቸው።

- 87. እስከዛሬ ድረስ የሰው ውሀ ጠጣሁ፣
እንግዲህ አገራ ተቀበለኝ መጣሁ።
- 88. ከመሞት መሰንበት ይሻለኛል ብዬ፣
ፈጨሁ ባቁላዬን ድመቴን አዝዬ።
- 89. አግኝቶ ማጣትን፣ ተሹሞ መሻርን ሆዱ ባይጠረጥር፣
ድሀን ባለፀጋ በተከለው አጥር።
- 90. ለምን በችኩላ ለምን በፍጥነት፣
ውሎ አድሮ ይገኛል መቼም ያንተ ቤት።
- 91. ባልንጀራ ብዬ ምስጢር ብነግረው፣
የእኔን ሰምቶ ለዚያ ነገረው፣
እኔ እንጂ ነኝ ሞኙ፣ እኔ እንጂ ነኝ ጅሱ ለርሱ የነገርኩት፣
እርሱ እንዴት ይቻለው እኔ እንኳ ያልቻልኩት፣
እንግዲህ ነገራን ከከንፈሬ አለቅም፣
አለ የሰው ዶሮ ታፍ ታፍ የሚለቅም።
- 92. ቤቴን እሳት በልቶት እቃም አላወጣሁ፣
ይችን ልነግርዎ ብር ብዬ መጣሁ።
- 93. ሰው አካሉን አጦ ከዋለ ቤት፣
እንኳን ባልንጀራ አትወድም እናት፣
- 94. እራቁቴን ሄድሁኝ ከሰው ቤት ብደፍር፣
እራሴን ታዘብሁት ወየው አለማፈር።
- 95. ሞት ይቅር ይላሉ ሞት ቢቀር አልወድም፣
አፈርና ድንጋይ ከሰው ፊት አይከብድም።
- 96. እባብ ሰለክላካ እግር የለው እጅ፣
ያጣን ማን ይወዳል ያገኘን ነው እንጅ።
- 97. ታምቼ ታምቼ ጉታ ሞልቻለሁ፣
ዘር አልሆንም እንጂ ቀለብ እችላለሁ።

- 98. የዛሬ ዘመን ሰው አለው አብነት፤
ሲጫወቱ ውሎ ሲለዩ ማማት።
- 99. ወንዝ ሲጎል ተሻገር፤
ዳኛ ስታገኝ ተናገር።
- 100. ሽውከኛ ሰውና ስጦታ ቃሚ ፍየል እንዳሉ ከመንደር፤
ፍየሊቱን አርዶ ሰውየውን መግደል።
- 101. የሰው ነገር በዝቶ በሆዴ ውስጥ ሞላ፤
ምን እንስሳ ልዋጥ ጠርጎ የሚበላ።
- 102. የሆዴን መከፋት ጥርሴ እየመለሰው፤
ደስ ብሎኝ አዳሪ እመስላለሁ ለሰው።
- 103. የባህርዳር ሎሚ ወደ ዘጌ ዘሟል፤
እንኳን የወደደሽ ያየሽ አይኑን ታሟል።
- 104. አምና ቡሬ ቡሬ ዘንድሮ ዳሞት፤
አብሬሽ አድሬ በነጋው ልሙት።
- 105. አንገቷ ይመስላል የጌሾ ግልገል፤
እሷን ይስጡኝና ዓመት ላገልግል።
- 106. የሚያፈቅራትን ልጅ የሚጠብቅ ወጣት፤
ረዝሞ ይታየዋል ደቂቃና ሰዓት።
- 107. ከዚህ ተቀምጬ ባስብሽ አንቺን፤
ኩታዬ ታቃጥሎ በላው ገላዬን።
- 108. አጭር ናት ይላሉ ትሁን መዳመጫ፤
ደረቷ ሰፊ ነው ለመገላበጫ።
- 109. ስጋ ስደጅልኝ ባዲሱ አገልግል፤
እኔ ልብ አልበላም አንቺን ይመስል።
- 110. የልጅ ወዳጅና የምስር እሸት፤
ቢበሉት ቢበሉት ጠብ አይል ካንጀት።
- 111. ጉም እግር የለውም ይወጣል ተራራ፤
ሰውነቴ ከዚህ ልቤ ካንተ ጋራ።

- 112. ትብቃኝ አንድ እንጀራ ነጠላ ልልበስ፤
ከምወዳት ጋራ የልቤን ላድርስ።
- 113. አባይና ጣና መገኛው ዳሞት፤
ምን ትጠቅሚያለሽ አንቺን ብዬ ብሞት።
- 114. ኸረ ጠላ ጠላ ቅራራ ቅራራ፤
እሞትለታለሁ ለአስኳላው ተራ።
- 115. ዝፈኝ ዝፈኝ አለኝ ደልቂ ደልቂ፤
ቀን ይወጣልሻል ብሎኛል አዋቂ።
- 116. የሰኔው ገበሬ የሐምሌው ጎልጓይ፤
ጅራፍህን ጠቅለህ መንዝህ ነው ወይ።
- 117. አሳድጋኝ ነበር ኮትኩታ እንደ በርበሬ ፍል፤
ጥላኝ ሄደች እንጂ ብድራን ሳልከፍል።
- 118. ኸረ ሄዱ ሄዱ፤ ሄዱ ተማምለው፤
በኋላ የቀረ ዕዳ ጠቅላይ ብለው።
- 119. አባት የሌላችሁ እንሂድ ምናኔ፤
አባት የሚሰራ ብናገኝ ሽማኔ።
- 120. አገራ ምን ነካው አገራ ምን ሆነ፤
እያደረ ያንሳል እየመነመነ።
- 121. አባትሽንም ቀብረሽ እናትሽንም ቀብረሽ ሒጂ ወደ ዳሞት፤
አንዱን አታጭውም ከእንጀራና ሞት።
- 122. የእናትን አሮጌ ቢያኖሯት በሙዳይ፤
የቸገረ ለት ትሞላለች ጉዳይ።
- 123. አልቃሽ ሆኜ ቀረሁ ክፉ ቀበጥባጣ፤
አይዞሽ እኔ አለሁልሽ የሚለኝ አባት ባጣ።
- 124. 'ሚያበላው 'ሚያጠጣው ደህና ደህናውማ ሞተ ተቀበረ፤
ይሄ ልክስክሱ ምናምኔው ቀረ።
- 125. ዶሮ እንቁላል እንጂ የላትም ወተት፤
አሁን ለስንቱ ነው ዋ ብዬ ምሞት።

- 126. እኚህ ኮተኔዎች ምንኛ ቀነጡ፤
 አርብ ተቀብለው ለሰኞ ቁርስ አጡ።
- 127. ሚስት፡ ታለብሰኝ እንደሆን ቲትሮን አልብሰኝ፤
 ወይ እሪ በል ወንዱ ፍቅር ሳይዘኝ።
 ባል፡ ዘንቢል ዘንቢል ዳቦ መቀርደድ ለምደሽ፤
 በየትኛው ብርሽ ቲትሮን ላልብሰሽ።
- 128. የሰኔል ግድግዳ ያፈር ጉልላት፤
 አንዲት ቤት አለችን የማንቀርባት።
- 129. ስጡኝ ያንን ዋንጫ እኔ አውቅበታለሁ፤
 መልሽ መልሽ ጠጥቸበታለሁ።
- 130. አንችን አልሁኝ እንጂ ሌላማ መች አጣሁ፤
 እንደ ዳንግሌ በግ ፈልጌሽ የመጣሁ።
- 131. የታደለ እንስራ ዳሌዋ ላይ ወጣ፤
 አሁን እኔ ብሆን ሰው በተቆጣ።
- 132. የጎበዝ ዱላ ትታወቃለች፤
 እንደ አዘንተኛ ፈቷን ፈጅታለች።
 የፈሪ ሽመል ትታወቃለች፤
 እንደሸርሙጣ ተኳኩላለች።
- 133. የተራራ ድንጋይ ሳይነኩት ይናዳል፤
 ልጆች ተቀምጠው ሽማግሌው ያብዳል።
- 134. ሲነግድ አትነግድ ሲያርሱ አትረስና፤
 ሰው ውሎብኝ ነው በል ከጥላ ዋልና።
- 135. ጎበዝ ጠመቀና ጎበዙን ጠቀሰው፤
 ሰነፉ ጓዳውን ሸረሪት ወረሰው።
- 136. ጎበዙ አጫጅ ሄዶ ቆልቁሎ፤
 ሰነፉ አጫጅ ቀረ ተንጣሎ።
- 137. በጌቱ ወለደች መንታ መንታውን፤
 አባባ እንድትሰጠኝ ከሁለት አንዱን።

138. አባይ ጥቁር ነበር ከሰል የመሰለ፤
እየቀላ መጣ ደም እየመሰለ።
139. ሰኔና ግንቦት ሲገባ ክረምቱ፤
ነቃ ብለህ ጠቅብ ባለመንጋ ከብቱ።
140. አባይን በዋና ጣናን በጉልበቴ፤
እንዴት አርጎ ሰራሽ ንገሪኝ በሞቴ።
141. ሁለት ዙር መቀነት ባለው ፍንሽንሽ፤
ግጥም አርገሽ ያገርን በመቀነትሽ፤
ምንድነው ሲሉሽ እጣን ነው እያልሽ፤
አጭሽው ሲሉሽም ገል አጣሁ እያልሽ፤
ፍቅር ይጨረሳል አንቺ ከለገምሽ።
142. ከባህር ላይ ሆኖ ይደንሳል አሳ፤
ፎቶሽን ላኪልኝ እንዳንረሳሳ።
143. ደፋ ደፋ አታርጊኝ እንደቡና አተላ፤
እሔድልሻለሁ ቅርብ ነው ዳንግላ።
144. ሽጋ ልጅ ከባሏ ተጣልታለች አሉ፤
ገፋ ገፋ አድርጋት እባክህ ሰይጣኑ፤
ሽማግሌዎችም ትሂድ ትሂድ በሉ።
145. ባላገር ሲጠግብ ይማታል በድግር።
ጥለሽው ነይና ቂጣውን ይጋግር።
146. አውራ ዶሮ ታርዶ ይለዋል ብርድ ብርድ፤
ባክህን ያገር ልጅ ሰማኒያህን አውርድ።
147. ሽረ ተው ተከርቸም ወደ አገርህ ግባ፤
እንዳትለበለብ በፊሶ ገለባ።
148. አሳ አለብርብራ እንደምን ይያዛል፤
ያንቺ ልብ እንዴት ነው የኔው ይቧገዛል።
149. ጠጅም እንዳያምረኝ ድሮ ጠጥቻለሁ፤
ስጋም እንዳያምረኝ ቋንጣ ሰቅያለሁ፤
ቢሻኝ ከወንድሜ ከአባቴ እበላለሁ።

150. አባይ ውሀ ሞልቶ በዘንግ ይለኩታል፤
የዘመድን ጠላት እንዴት ያደርገታል።
151. ወንዱን ወንድ የፈራው ምንድነው ዘንድሮ፤
በልተናል መሰለኝ ሴት ያረደው ዶሮ።
152. ኧረ ጊዜው ዞሮ ጊዜው ተዘዋውሮ፤
ፍየል ገብቶ ላሰው የነብርን ጉሮሮ።
153. አባይ ታረሰ አሉ በጥቁቁር በሬ፤
እናጅሬ መጡ እነሞት አይፈራ።
154. በሉ ጨምሩበት በበደል ላይ በደል፤
ወተት ይሸፍታል እንኳን ሰው ሲበደል።
155. ሸዋ ላይ እሳት ነዶ ጉጃም ላይ ደምቋል፤
ተራው እስኪደርሰው ሰው በሰው ይስቃል።

Appendix 2 English and Amharic Version Questionnaires

Addis Ababa University School of Graduate Studies Department of Foreign Languages and Literature

Here are the interview questions that are designed to gather information on the meaning, context and performance of oral lyric poems recited in West Gojjam Zone.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Part – One Informant’s Data

101/ Name _____ Age _____ Sex _____

102/ Woreda _____ Kebele _____

103/ Education _____ Occupation _____

Part – Two Text and Meaning

201/ Text _____

202/ Meaning /Theme/ _____

203/ The meaning of different expressions of objects and concepts in the lyric poem in their environment. (Like, Symbols, figurative speeches, analogies, details, words, events, etc)

204/ Date of Collection _____ Place of Collection _____

Part – Three
Contextual Data

301/ Why does the oral lyric poem recite? (Reason)

302/ When does the oral lyric poem recite? (Occasion)

NB: List of Occasions: love, marriage, funeral, hunting, topical, work, war, holidays, birth, grinding, shepherd etc.

303/ Where does the lyric poems recited

Part – Four
Performance and Composition Data

401/ Who are the performer and/or the composer of the oral lyric poem?

Performer _____

Composer _____

402/ In what condition (circumstance) and how did the performer and/or composer perform and/or compose the oral lyric poem?

◆ The condition (circumstance)

◆ The how _____

403/ What materials, actions and gestures to be used during performance as accompaniment? _____

Data Collector's Name _____	Age _____	Sex _____
Woreda _____	Kebele _____	
Education _____	Occupation _____	
	Signature _____	

Appendix 3 List of Informants

Ser. No	Name	Age	Sex	Woreda
1	Ato Derbew Tilahun	48	Male	Bahir Dar
2	Ato Shitaye Temesgen	58	Male	Bahir Dar
3	Ato Gebeyehu Tirusew	51	Male	Bahir Dar
4	Ato Mola Demeke	45	Male	Bahir Dar
5	Ato Chalachew Abeje	55	Male	Finote Selam
6	W/ro Yemnegrish Taye	46	Female	Finote Selam
7	Ato Girma Engdaw Wale	38	Male	Burie
8	W/rt Elabetel Mulat Kassa	30	Female	Burie
9	W/ro Tirualem Mulusew	70	Female	Bahir Dar
10	Ato Zewdie Taye Mebrate	73	Male	Bahir Dar

Appendix 5 Photographs



Ato Shitaye Tilahun



Ato Chalachew Abeje





W/rt Elbetel Mulat Kassa



Ato Girma Engdaw Wale



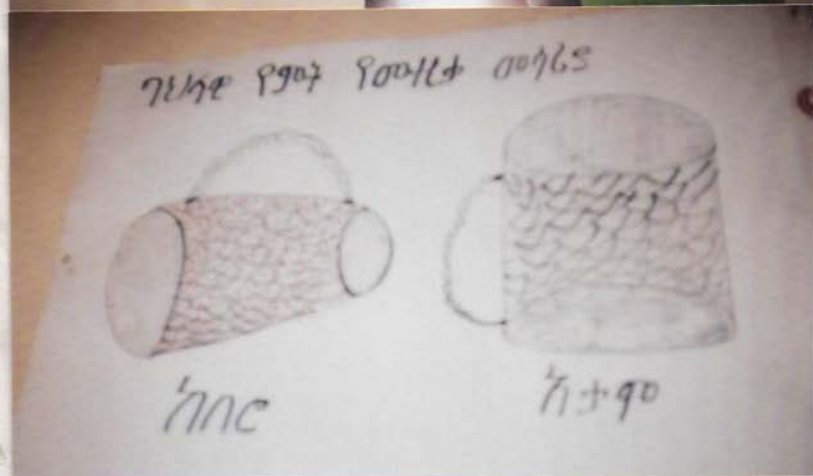


W/ro Yemnegrish Taye



W/ro Tirualem Mulusew





DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university. And, all sources of materials used for the thesis have been dully acknowledged.

Name _____

Signature _____

Place _____

Date of Submission _____