

THE STATE OF THE SHORT STORY IN ETHIOPIA:

AN UNEXPLOITED GENRE

A Thesis

Presented to

The School of Graduate Studies

Addis Ababa University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in English Literature

by

Olga Yazbec

June 1981

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE STATE OF THE SHORT STORY IN ETHIOPIA:
AN UNEXPLOITED GENRE

by
Olga Yazbec

Institute of Language Studies

Approved by: _____

Hailu Araaya Hailu Araaya
Advisor

TIMOTHY WAINWRIGHT Timothy Wainwright
Examiner

DAVID APPLEYARD D. Appleyard
Examiner

Examiner

Examiner

A B S T R A C T

The main purpose of this research is to introduce the Ethiopian short stories to the Ethiopian public, a work that has not been attempted so far. The research examines why the short story, which is a recent genre, is unexploited and unfamiliar to the Ethiopian public.

The Ethiopian short stories have been analyzed from the thematic and technical point of view. During the progress of the study, an attempt has been made to look into the conditions which have hindered the development of the short story in Ethiopia, and have made it an unexploited genre. Finally, recommendations have been suggested in order to familiarize the public with the short story, and to encourage writers to use this literary medium.

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	
INTRODUCTION	i
PRONUNCIATION KEY	viii
1. MAJOR THEMES IN AMHARIC SHORT STORIES	1
1.1. Religion	1
1.2. Love and Marriage	3
1.3. Social Criticism	10
2. A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED AMHARIC SHORT STORIES	23
2.1. The Narrative Style	23
2.2. The Slice-of-Life Style	26
2.3. The Confessional Style	30
2.4. Tight Plot	34
2.5. The Surprise-Ending Style	37
3. WHY IS THE SHORT STORY IN ETHIOPIA AN UN- EXPLOITED GENRE?	41
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	56
NOTES	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY	64
APPENDIX	66

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

My heartfelt thanks are due to Dr. Hailu Araaya, my advisor, without whose assistance and encouragement, I would never have been able to complete this research work.

I am also indebted to Ato Asfaw Melaku and Ato Mesfin Habtemariam for their invaluable assistance in lending me some useful materials.

Thanks are due to Ato Debebe Seifu, Ato Tesfaye Gessesse, Ato Amare Mammo, Ato Assefa Aregahegn and Ato Sibhat Gebre Igziabher for the precious time they sacrificed in enlightening me on the state of the short story in Ethiopia.

I also convey my heartfelt gratitude to W/t Roman Damena whose efficiency, cooperation, and above all, endurance in the typing of the research has won her my greatest admiration.

Financial support from the Swedish Agency for Research cooperation with the Developing Countries (SAREC) obtained through the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission and from the Addis Ababa University which was used to cover the expenses incurred in the research work undertaken and in the preparation of this dissertation is gratefully acknowledged.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this research is to study the state of the short story in Ethiopia. The scope of this survey is limited to the Amharic short stories only.

In the introduction, the nature of the short story and its development in the world will be dealt with.

In chapter one, the major themes reflected in the Ethiopian short stories will be analysed.

The second chapter will consist of a critical study of some selected Amharic short stories with the view of delineating the major literary techniques used by Ethiopian short story writers.

In the last chapter, an attempt will be made to discover why the short story is an unexploited genre in Ethiopia.

Finally, a summary of the general findings and recommendations will be given.

The short story is generally defined as a "form of short prose fiction, carefully constructed, compact and unified."¹ Contrary to the long held view that the short story is an inferior literary piece, it is one of the most elaborate and condensed literary forms.

Although many short stories are usually less than ten thousand words long, this cannot, however, be used as a yardstick to distinguish the short story from the other genres. Some short stories written by Henry James, Maupassant and Flannery O'Connor, for instance, are longer than ten thousand words.

The short story belongs to the nineteenth century. It has shown to be so flexible in the hands of various writers that H.E. Bates is impelled to make the following observation:

... the short story can be anything the author decides it shall be; it can be anything from the death of a horse to a young girl's first love affair, from the static sketch without plot to the swiftly moving machine of bold action and climax, from the prose poem, painted rather than written ... to the solid tale in which all emotion, all action, all reaction is measured, fixed, puttied, glazed and finished like a well-built house In that flexibility was the reason why the short story was never adequately defined.²

This, indeed, is an attempt to describe how variable a form the short story has demonstrated to be in those hundred and twenty years of existence.

Edgar Allan Poe, considered to be the father of the short story, distinguished the form as a piece of writing short enough to be read at a single sitting. He further added that it should convey a single effect the writer has chosen to impart to the reader. He, thus, made of the short story a concentrated literary form. What mattered for Poe was that a short story should have a unified, well-constructed plot.

Plot is one of the essential elements in a short story. Rust Hills maintains that plot is one of the characteristics which differentiate a short story from a sketch. He says:

To a reader who doesn't understand the nature of the contemporary short story form, that aspect of fiction known as plot may seem equivalent to the whole of the story. It is inconceivable to have a story without plot;³ for as we have seen, what we then have would be a sketch.

Some writers, however, consider plot as unimportant. H.E. Bates makes the following observation about Tchekhov, "For Tchekhov, the craftsman, beginning and end do not matter ..."⁴ Similarly, for Sherwood Anderson, plot has to be loose. As quoted by Mark Schorer, Anderson says, "A man keeps thinking of his own life, and life itself

is a loose flowing thing. There are no plot stories in life ... what is wanted is a new looseness ..."⁵

For Sir Hugh Walpole, the short story "... is a record of things happening, full of incident and accident, swift movement, unexpected development, leading through suspense to a climax, and a satisfying end or denouement."⁶

For Ellery Sedgewick, on the other hand, "A short story is like a horse race. It is the start and finish that count most."⁷

Elizabeth Bowen observes that there is a strong urge behind a writer's wish to write a short story. As noted by H. E. Bates, she asserts that "the first necessity of the short story at the set out, is necessariness. The story, that is to say, must spring from an impression or perception pressing enough, acute enough, to have made the writer write."⁸ That is to say, a writer produces a short story because he feels a strong need to do so.

All these attempts to define the short story do show how difficult it is to define the medium which is affected by the subjective perception of various writers.

As put forward in An Introduction to Literature, Brander Matthews maintains that "The short story ... deals with a single character, a single event, a single emotion, or the series of emotions called forth by a single situation ..."⁹ Brander Matthews' statement is applicable to many short stories; however, Mary Rohrberger and her colleagues contend that exceptions do occur as there are short stories which deal with more than one important character, and often contain more than one situation.¹⁰

The short story usually deals with a single episode that occurs within a limited span of time with the consequence that the incidents and characters need to be quickly described. The economy of words that is required from the short story also impels the writer to speed up the action concentrating on the most revealing details only. As some short story writers say, the number of characters should not exceed four. The setting of a short story should also be confined given that there is no room for insignificant elements.

A successful short story is the working out of the interaction between character, plot, setting and conflict. Conflict plays a crucial role in a short story as it provides the story with pattern and direction.

The short story is often compared to the novel, novelette, drama and poetry although it seems that there is no connection between the short story and poetry.

The scope of the short story is narrower than that of the novel. It also deals with less characters and episodes than does the novel. The span of time in a short story is very limited although it can cover several days or weeks. In a novel, we can see a character grow from birth to death. In the short story, on the other hand, character is depicted during a given moment in his life.¹¹ Incidents in a short story are limited and swiftly described. The novel, on the other hand, offers a wider view by giving detailed background information bringing forth the causes and effects which work to produce change in the protagonist. As incidents in the novel are not restricted in time and place, we can see characters moving

from place to place. In a short story, the reader may also encounter characters who never speak a word; besides, characters may be unnamed. This, however, is inconceivable in a novel. Short stories with no location of place and time are commonly found although this would be impossible in a novel.¹²

In its use of action, the short story is more similar to drama than to the novel.¹³ Many writers think that it is easier to transform a short story into a play. Unlike the novel, drama is primarily intended for the spectator. Characters in a play are not described as in the short story, but they are embodied by actors. The events in a play are enacted in front of the audience. On the stage, events are enacted in the present although they may have occurred in the past. This is what distinguishes drama from the novel and the short story. Unlike the short story, the scope of drama is wider, and drama can manage time freely.

There is a certain resemblance between the short story and the novelette. The novelette is said to stand between the short story and the novel. Like the short story, the novelette presents a unity of structure, and the number of characters is also limited. The scope of the novelette is, however, wider. It also allows more room for character development and scenic description; besides, it can manipulate more than one situation.¹⁴

There is also a certain similarity between the short story and poetry. Both the short story writer and the poet condense their material, but poetry is more highly condensed than the short story. The poet's process of selection is much more rigorous because the

words and imageries used by the poet have to bear more depth of meaning than the short story writer's. It seems that plot and characterization are the essentials of the short story, yet poetry may use these elements as, for instance, in narrative or epic poems.

The modern short story started during the nineteenth century, whereas the novel dates back in the eighteenth century. In the United States, it is the "growing preference for journalistic sketches"¹⁵ which favoured the development of the short story. Edgar Allan Poe in America is said to be the first man to distinguish the short story as a literary form.¹⁶ Edgar Allan Poe is also said to have contributed to the development of impressionistic and mystery stories. He is famous for the Tell-Tale Heart, written in 1842, and The Cask of Amontillado.

Gogol in Russia is said to have introduced poetic realism in the short story. "In his use of indigenous material, Gogol marks the beginning of realism and objectivity in writing."¹⁷ He is famous for the Overcoat, written in 1842, the story that has influenced Russian short story writers.

The short story became popular in France through the influence of Tolstoy, Turgenev and Gustave Flaubert in the salons of Paris.¹⁸ Flaubert is well-known for his novel, Madame Bovary, in which he is said to have added a touch of realism.

Anton Tchekhov was another famous short story writer in nineteenth century Russia. He introduced objectivity in his works. He also possessed the gift of simplicity and precision with his ability to condense into the fewest words the main ideas of a story.¹⁹

in outlook of the emerging educated elite through its contact with the Western world and education. He describes marriage culture among various nationalities in feudal Ethiopia. The reader is hereby made to observe that even though marriage practices among these nationalities are similar to a great extent, they differ in some ways. In the Gurage society portrayed in "Čeg" (Engagement), for instance, the bride Kerwoqe is invited to feasts at her relatives' two weeks prior to the wedding. This is done to allow her to blossom for the wedding. The Gurage custom also requires that the bride's nails be cut off before the wedding day. In the feudal society, the bridegroom's party was required to pay a dowry to the bride's party in proportion to the bridegroom's wealth, but in the Tigrai society portrayed in "Bāleṭa Ahiya" (On an Unloaded Donkey), it is the bride's party which presents the dowry to the bridegroom's party. This element distinguishes the Tigrai marriage custom from that of the other nationalities portrayed in Birr Ambar Sābbārālāwo.

Birhanu Zārihun has also attempted to show that marriage in feudal Ethiopia meant an alliance between two equally wealthy families. Parents were, therefore, very scrupulous over the choice of partners for their children. Negotiations for a marriage contract were carried out through elders in the community, who approached the family of the future bride. Care was taken to see whether the future son-in-law could measure up to the wealth of his wife's parents. The bride's parents, therefore, refrained themselves from giving their assent right away. In "Čeg," for instance, Gamali intentionally delays Kerwoqe's engagement in the hope that a better match could appear at the last

moment, thus, making Gamali regret his decision.

In the feudal society, it was customary that marriage contracts were signed even before the bride and bridegroom were born. In "Bāletā Ahīya," for instance, Azmač Asgādom had promised Azzaž Iqubānikel to give his son Zārai in marriage to Iqubānikel's daughter before the young people were born. This was done on a battlefield with the Italians in recognition for the great service rendered by Azzaž Iqubānikel who had saved Azmač Asgādom's life.

In the feudal society depicted in Birr Ambar Säbbārāliwo, the writer demonstrates that young people had no say over whom they would marry because the choice of partners belonged to their parents. The bride and bridegroom did not have the opportunity to know each other before their wedding. In "Čeg" (Engagement), for instance, the young man Teli is made aware of his approaching marriage when he observes that a house is being erected in his father's compound. He sees Kerwoqe for the first time one day while she is returning from church. Kerwoqe knows that her wedding is approaching when she is invited to meals by her relatives sometime before the wedding.

Birhanu Zarihun has also tried to depict the oppression of the woman in the feudal society. In "Bāletā Ahīya," for instance, Azmač Asgādom's son, Zārai, is compelled by the society to return the bride to her family because she is found not to be a virgin. Similarly, in "Wāyne Māwzāre" (O! My Rifle) Balambaras Kīnfu's daughter is returned home for the same reason.

In the short story "Birr Ambar Säbbārāliwo," on the other hand, Birhanu Zārihun depicts the change in social values as the school began to liberate young people from their traditional shackles. The

young man Hiruy, for instance, had known Qás'ála for eight years at school before they decided to marry. We notice how co-education has lessened the influence of the old values which restricted the relationship between young men and women who had no opportunity to acquaint with each other before wedding. In the story, Qás'ála's conservative father, Fitawrari Taddágá, strongly opposes his daughter's marriage to the grandson of a weaver; nevertheless, he is made to comply to the will of the young people. Bírhanu Zārihun has, consequently, tried to depict that the influence of parents on the choice of partners for their children was not as strongly felt at the time when he wrote the story as it used to be in the past.

On the other hand, Bírhanu Zārihun does not deny the reality that the young generation cannot completely rid itself of tradition; likewise, Hiruy is forced to avoid smoking during the wedding ceremony in the church, and to unwillingly participate in the long ceremony, which he thinks is not necessary. He again cannot help kissing the knees of his in-laws before departing with the bride because this is part of tradition.

In the collection Birr Ambar Säbbārāliwo, Bírhanu Zārihun has tried to depict the gradual change in outlook that occurred in the Ethiopian society as education and Western culture began to be felt among the young generation.

Platonic love is not common in Ethiopian literature, as put forward by Thomas Kane in the book entitled Ethiopian Literature in Amharic. The only writer who raises this subject is the playwright Tāsīfaye Gāssāssā in the collection, Mātākkāža.²⁵

In the short story entitled "Rābu" (Wednesday), the character

Aklilä reflects his platonic concept about love because he compares his girl-friend Síge to a flower that should be admired, but never touched for fear that it would be spoiled. Aklilä is worried about this flower because he thinks that it might be plucked and scattered by the wind unless he takes good care of it. In this story, the writer attempts to depict that Aklilä's ultimate failure in his relationship with Síge is due to his wrong attitude towards love. As shown in the story, Aklilä's wrong attitude is caused by certain elements. It was a period when co-education was not widespread in Ethiopia, and the relationship between boys and girls was expected to be in tune with the tradition so that a young man was not to establish intimate friendship with a lady openly before they were legally married. University boys and girls were, consequently, careful to conduct their love affairs hidden from the eyes of both the Jesuits and other students. Therefore, this social attitude affected negatively some young men like Aklilä, who was an introvert compared to the character Alämu, Síge's former boy-friend and a decisive extrovert. The writer reflects Síge's preference for Alämu by revealing her jealousy at the sight of Alämu walking by the side of Qäläm Wäraq.

Platonic love is also one of the themes reflected in "Mäbratu Sitäfa" (When the Light Goes out). The purpose of this short story is to show that bourgeois education has a negative effect on the individual in that it makes him unfit to live in the particular community he belongs to, for bourgeois education is not geared to make the individual realistic and practical.²⁶ If bourgeois education is given as one of the causes for Mäbratu's psychological depression and eventual death

the main cause, however, is an emotional problem. Mábratu was suffering from loneliness because his mother died while he was a child; consequently, he needed a girl-friend to fill that vacuum, but Mábratu could not establish friendship with a member of the opposite sex because he was too timid to approach a lady.

The society, on the other hand, had a strong impact on Mábratu's behaviour. Being the son of an important government official, he was expected to avoid night-clubs in order to safeguard his family's dignity. He was, therefore, brought up to suppress his feelings so that when he met Máqdás at the university, he was too shy to express his love. On one occasion, he wrote a letter to Máqdás, but he immediately tore it into pieces. In consequence, his daydreams about Máqdás led to an unnecessary wasting away of his energy. He made a second attempt at winning a Jewish girl in America; here too, he failed because he was indecisive. The writer solves Mábratu's conflict by allowing his suicide in the precipice of the Intóto Mountain. As depicted in the story, the main cause for Mábratu's nervous break-down is his platonic notion of love. Bourgeois education had a part to play in Mábratu's failure because it had made him too unpractical to substitute the love he could never obtain with something else.

We also distinguish among Ethiopian short stories those which reflect the society's tendency to condemn vice, and to establish a healthy family where harmony reigns. In some short stories, as in "Wuṣawuna Māngádōcu" (The Dog and his Ways) by Taddāssā Libān, the unfaithful party is the man while in others, as in "Yā Sāsät Dims"²⁷

(The Voice of Repentance), the unfaithful party is the woman.²⁸ The protagonist in "Yá Sását Dims'" is an unnamed wealthy character who condemns his wife to death because he discovers that she had been unfaithful to him.

These short stories have a social purpose. They are meant to discourage infidelity in the society by demonstrating the due retribution the unfaithful party receives at the end. In "Yá Sását Dims'," for instance, Gännät, the wife of the protagonist is condemned to die in the swimming pool with the man she has been having affairs with.

1.3. Social Criticism

The third and most common theme reflected in Ethiopian short stories is social criticism, an attempt to depict the various social evils that resulted from the former feudo-capitalist regime in Ethiopia.

Two writers, Taddássá Libán and Hailá Iyásus Fiqadu reflect nepotism in two of their short stories. Taddássá Libán wrote "Lelaw Mángád"²⁹ (The Other Way) and Hailá Iyásus Fiqadu "Lämmañu Ainásiwur"³⁰ (The Blind Beggar). Both stories refer to the period in which people with limited education could obtain a job provided they were backed by influential relatives.

In the short story "Lelaw Mángád," Taddássá Libán relates the story of the character Fälläqä, who drops out from grade six to look for a job in order to support his family. The story is narrated from the point of view of a minor character who is Fälläqä's former classmate. He reports the five trying years of Fälläqä's existence in which Fälläqä's perseverant effort to find a vacant post turns out to

The short story emerged in Ethiopia towards the second half of the twentieth century. The first collection of Amharic short stories was published in 1949 E.C. (1956 - 57) by Taddässä Libän under the title of Mäskäräm. No short stories were published prior to that date. Taddässä Libän is, thus, Ethiopia's first short story writer. His short stories are distinguished from the traditional folk-tales, in that he, for the first time, applied the techniques of the modern short story to Ethiopian material.

PRONUNCIATION KEY

Vowels

a	täsfa	ተሰፋ
a	abbat	አባት
u	kurat	ኩራት
i	ilama	ኪላማ
e	bet	ቤት
i	ingida	ከንገዳ
o	qoda	ቆዳ

Consonants

l	lam	ሊም
m	mamar	ማማር
s	sānga	ሰንጋ
r(flap)	arawit	አራ ዊት
r(trill)	bärr	ቦር
s	širiširr	ሻር ሻር
q	qu'ta	ቆጣ
b	bota	ቦታ
t	tämč	ተምቸ
c	čär	ቸር
h	hamet	ካሜት
n	nug	ኑግ
n	tämäñä	ተምጎ
k	kätäma	ከተማ

w	wälawai	ዋላ ዋይ
z	zängada	ዘንጋዳ
z	räzim	ረዥም
y	yirga	ይርገ
d	dingay	ዲንገይ
j	jajjä	ጃጃ
g	gämäd	ገመድ
t	tänkarra	ጠንካራ
c	čäw	ጭጭ
p	p'ap'p'as	ጸጸስ
s	sīdat	ሶዳት
f	färäs	ፈረስ
p	polis	ፖሊስ

N.B. For gemination, the consonants have been doubled.

<u>Examples:</u>	säbbärä	ሰበረ
	käffaw	ከፋው

CHAPTER I

MAJOR THEMES IN AMHARIC SHORT STORIES

The common themes reflected in the Ethiopian short stories may be divided into three major categories: religion, love and marriage, and social criticism. Out of the one hundred and forty-six short stories I have surveyed, about sixty percent deal with social criticism, thirty-five percent have love and marriage as their subject, and only about five percent deal with religion. One can, therefore, assume that the main issue the Ethiopian short story writers were trying to reflect in their works was the social evils of the old Ethiopian regime. One can also observe that religion is not a subject widely treated in Ethiopian short stories though it used to be the tradition for writers to reflect the devotional attitude of the Ethiopian society. This indicates that with the emergence of the educated elite in the society, religion gradually ceased to be the preoccupation of the educated people who were eager to instill the new values acquired through Western education in the minds of the Ethiopian people.

1.1. Religion

The only short stories that we find written on religion are "Abelin Fillāga"²⁰ (In Search of Abel) by Sibhat Gābrā Igziabher and Yā Iwnāt Billiçita,²¹ a collection of seven short stories by Amarā Mammo.

"Abelin Fillāga" is a short story adapted from the Bible, written for a community whose faith is deeply ingrained in its religion. The story is didactic in the sense that it induces the community to fear God and to avoid his wrath. Adam disobeyed God;

in consequence, he was expelled from the Garden of Eden. He was condemned to live on his sweat; besides, God took away his son Abel. The story's interpretation is left to the reader, who is led to infer that man's sin incites God's anger. Plot in this short story is very loose, and the cause-and-effect relationship of what happens is not established. It is a mere description of Adam's distress foreshadowing Abel's death. As Abel is late to come home, Adam goes in search of his beloved son to find only his corpse, which he buries with great sorrow.

Yá Iwnát Billičíta by Amará Mammo is a collection of seven short stories based on the Bible and religion. "Moto Alqārām," for instance, relates the story of the life and resurrection of Jesus-Christ, "Mádošaw" (The Hammer) is the story about the rise of the Lutheran faith in Germany.

"Yá Iwnát Billičíta" (Spark of Truth) reflects the conflict faced by those christians who forsake the traditional Orthodox religion for the new doctrine preached by foreign missionaries. In the story, the character Kábbádá is placed in a dilemma as his wife Abbábáč and his friend Zārfu constantly remind him that unless he repents for his deed, his life will be endangered. The court, on the other hand, threatens Kábbádá that serious measures will be taken against him. Kábbádá, however, chooses the prison, a decision which turns out to be fruitful because the spark of truth glowing on Kábbádá's face impresses Abbábáč very much. According to the author, an important message is hereby transmitted to the reader, namely, that christianity is truth and light which nothing can destroy. A

drastic measure was taken to suppress Kābbādā and his friends, but being the bearers of truth, nothing could shake their happiness which was the source of Christianity. The theme of the story is that true Christian religion is the one based on the teachings of the Bible preached by the missionaries.

The short story entitled, "Yā qaličaw Kaddami" (The Attendant of the Sorcerer), on the other hand, reflects the conflict between traditional witchcraft and the new evangelical faith. The author attempts to show that the traditional belief in witchcraft is groundless. The attendant of the spirit Dulana, the character Wārasa, is made to question the reliability of Dulana's power.

One day, Wārasa remembers, Dulana had predicted that he would destroy his rival, the evangelist Ballo, with lightning. This, however, was never fulfilled because Ballo was still safe. Wārasa, then, concluded that Ballo's God was the true God. The conflict between witchcraft and Christianity is demonstrated as Wārasa is placed in a position where his wife and his mother-in-law constantly remind him about the past by entreating him to take his ill daughter to Dulana for healing. The conflict is resolved when Wārasa decides to take his daughter to Ballo's chapel. It, therefore, becomes evident that this short story is written in order to discourage the society at that time from practising witchcraft by showing that Christianity is the answer to its fear of the unknown.

1.2. Love and Marriage

In the short story entitled, "Māto Shih Bīrr"²² (Hundred Thousand Bīrr), Pāulos Nōñño attempts to portray marriage concept

in the feudal society, and how that concept has affected the future of many a young lady. In the story, Sara, a twenty-six year old lady is frustrated because she is still unmarried. This is not due to the fact that she could not find the ideal husband, but to her father's insistence that his son-in-law be a descendant from a respectable family. In the story, the writer shows that beauty has no significance in a society where parents stick to time-honoured concepts. He also depicts the conflict between the old and new generation as personified in the character Ato Žāmanāh, who rejects the current view that knowledge is a means to help a man rise in the society. His daughter Sara, on the other hand, gives priority to education and decency. We hereby notice the gradual change of values in the new generation, which is affected by the influence of education. The story is also an attempt to show that education has liberated young people of the opposite sex as they began to have better access to each other. Ato Išāte, for instance, knew Sara before he claimed her hand though this was kept secret to the conservative Ato Žāmanāh. The writer uses irony to show that the hope of many young men wishing to marry the daughter of a wealthy aristocrat lay in the possibility of being the winner of a lottery lot, which was by the time worth hundred thousand birr. Ato Išāte, when asked to prove whether he is a wealthy man, produces a series of tickets meaning that he hopes to become the wealthy son-in-law Ato Žāmanāh wishes to have.

In Birr Ambar Säbbārāliwo²³ (The Breaking of the Silver Bracelet),²⁴ Birhanu Zārihun attempts to portray the gradual change

be fruitless because of the widespread nepotism in the society. We are told that Fälläqá finally obtained a white-collar job through the intervention of his brother-in-law, an eminent person in the society, after the narrator, Fälläqá's former classmate, completed grade eleven. The objective of the writer, therefore, is to show that during the period referred to in the story, education had no significance because of nepotism, which rewarded the few and condemned the majority to hunger and poverty.

In "Lámmanu Ainásiwur," Hailá fyásus Fiqadu presents nepotism as the cause for the widespread beggary and unemployment in the Ethiopian society. The unnamed character who completed grade eight is compelled to accept a blind beggar's offer to become his guide. This is due to the fact that job opportunity was open only to those whose relatives occupied the high posts in the country. We are, thus, shown that in the old regime there was a waste of manpower, as the practice of nepotism had led many healthy members of the society to share the fate of the handicapped people like Aláqa.

Fiqre Tolossa in "Yä Barinātu Tábassa".³¹ (The Stigma of Slavery) and Tásfaye Gássássá in "Yä Immete Čínina Yá Mákinawa Anjät"³² (Immete's Thigh and the Intestine of the Car) reflect the effect of slavery in the feudal society. We, thus, distinguish between active and passive dehumanization of the individual slave.

In "Yä Barinātu Tábassa," for instance, we realize how active dehumanization humiliates the supposedly freed slave Igzer Sättáñ. In the story, the aged slave supplies unpaid labour for her mistress because a slave was regarded as being less than a human being. In

spite of her old age, Igzer Sättāñ is asked to do all the hard work in the house. Her mistress does not need to hire a porter to carry a heavy jar, or grains to the mill. One day, the heavy jar carrying dregs is broken as the exhausted old woman falls down from a hill. The merciless mistress, who is aware that Igzer Sättāñ is no more useful now, sends her away, thus, breaking the heart of the homeless slave. Fiqre Tolossa tries to show that a dog was better treated than a slave, for it was allowed to die in peace in the house of its masters unlike Igzer Sättāñ, who was mercilessly dismissed.

Tāsfaye Gāssāssā, on the other hand, depicts the passive dehumanization of the slave. In "Yā Immete Činina Yā Mākinawa Anjāt," for instance, the slave Louis Darato, who realizes that the love demonstrated towards him by his masters is a pretended one, resents that attitude of his masters. Louis Darato was never ill-treated by them; nevertheless, he was dissatisfied with his condition, especially, after he knew that they did not love him in the real sense of the word. Tāsfaye Gāssāssā, hereby shows the deep effect of passive dehumanization on the individual slave. The accumulated effect of frustration, for instance, leads Louis Darato to the murdering of a postman, whose car reminds Louis of the artificial, lifeless love of his masters manifested towards him, especially, after a boy is born to them.

In "Yā Barānātu Tābassa," Fiqre Tolossa tries to show that the stigma of slavery is an evil that can never be removed. In the story, Igzer Sättāñ is a supposedly freed slave, but her mistress Amālāwārq continues to oppress her because the abolition of slavery

cannot change Igzer Sättān's condition. She has been branded for ever. What the writer here intends to show is that nobody in the society was willing to recognize the human rights of the freed slaves.

Fiqre Tolossa also shows that for slaves who have lived for many years under the yoke of slavery, freedom is insignificant. An Amharic proverb which illustrates this idea is "Yalayut agār ainafiqim" (We never miss a country that we have never seen). Likewise, the world of freedom, though beautiful, did not appeal to Igzer Sättān who, after the abolition of slavery, decided to continue serving her mistress.

Prostitution is the theme reflected in Tadāssā Libān's "Abbonāš" in the collection Lelaw Māngād, and in Tāsfaye Gāssāssā's short-story "Ai Idile" (O! What a Destiny is Mine!) in the collection Mätākkāža. In both stories, lack of education is presented as the contributory cause for prostitution. In "Abbonāš" for instance, the character Abbonāš resorts to prostitution because she has no other means of supporting her two children. In "Ai Idile," Atitāggāb practices prostitution because being a divorced and an uneducated woman, she cannot take up any other trade. Both writers condemn the oppression of women in the feudal society. Women had no opportunity for education, for they were thought to be destined for household activities with the consequence that when their husbands died, or they were divorced, they had no other outlet than to practice prostitution.

In "Ai Idile," Tāsfaye Gāssāssā intends to show that the

situation of prostitutes in Ethiopia is even worse than that of slaves, for the only thing slaves required was a freedom certificate from Menelik II's building, whereas it is very unlikely that Atit'agg'ab will ever abandon her degrading profession. The writer compares Atit'agg'ab's destiny to a lottery lot which depends on chance and is obtained rarely; likewise, there is very little probability that Atit'agg'ab will ever rid herself of prostitution.³³

The urbanization theme is not as common in the short story as it is in the Ethiopian novels; however, some short stories are based on this subject. This is an attempt to criticize the feudo-bourgeois regime by showing the backwardness of the rural areas with the implication that development was concentrated in urban areas. A typical short story reflecting the urbanization theme is the short story, "W'ay Addis Ab'aba W'ay Arada Hoy!"³⁴ anonymously written. This short story is written in a letter form with the protagonist narrating it in the first person. The setting of the story is the former regime. It is a realistic and vivid rendering of a countryman's reaction to Addis Ab'aba, which he sees for the first time in his life. The character Awgic'aw finds Addis so beautiful that he compares it to a heavenly city, the domain of saints and angels, not of human beings. Neon and electric lights are new to Awgic'aw, who had nothing else, but torches at home. He wonders whether the multi-story buildings are really man's achievement.

The design of this short story is to reflect the disorientation and frustration experienced by countrymen confronted with a totally new environment. Countrymen wear the funny "D'ab'alo," a maxi-cape

made of sheepskin, which is a subject of mockery to the city people. Awgičáw gives us a humorous account of an incident that occurred to him in a night-club after he had accepted a blind beggar's offer to become his guide. He was, thus, ridiculed by an aged man enjoying himself with a prostitute in mini-skirt, something that appalled Awgičaw. He comments bitterly saying:

አንድ ሰው የሚሰጠውን የሰበሰቢትን ቁጥጥ ስራ አይቶ ጭኑ ላይ
 አስቀምጦ የሚያዳራትን ሴት ዩ አጭር ቀላሲን አየገለጸ
 "አንተ ደግሞ ፋሽን ማድረግህ ነው ይህን አርባ. 3 ዶላር
 ጥምህንና ጭንህን በየቦታ ቤት የምታስመር ቀን . 3

These were the shorts Awgičáw had bought with the meager income he shared with the blind beggar Wubáte.

Rural migrants are deceived when what they actually experience in the towns is different from what they expected. They come in the hope of acquiring remunerating jobs, or better living condition only to find out that the alternative they have is to turn into beggars like Awgičáw, or into pickpockets. They also resent the suspicion the city people reflect towards them.

This short story is also an attempt to show the complete isolation of the rural people under the old regime. This was caused by the lack of communication between the towns and the rural areas. There is a humorous touch in the story depicting Awgičáw's ignorance of his country's history. One day, Awgičáw seized with curiosity inquires about the statue of Menelik II's Square asking a gardner whether that is not the statue of Ahmäd Grañ, to which the gardner flushes water on the countryman saying that he would immediately call the police for the blunder committed.

It is amazing to note that it is the beggar Wubäte, who informs Awgičāw about the current events in the country. Awgičāw, thus, learns about the extermination of beggars and loafers who were herded at Lambárát in order to keep them out of sight during the African delegates' visit to Addis Abāba to which Awgičāw makes a sarcastic remark saying, "ያፍሪካ ነገሥታት ገብኛት ያን ይህል ሕዝብ ያስጠረሰ የፈረንጅኛ ገገሆች ቢጠመሩ ነገር አጻሰ አበባ ምን ይጠብቅ ነበር ይሆን?"³⁶

Awgičāw is also informed about the students' role in putting an end to this murder done in order to hide the squalid life of the homeless people from the African delegates. The writer, hereby criticizes the social injustices under the old regime. Addis, with its immoral citizens and cruel emperor, is thus, compared to the lusty inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The writer strongly condemns the social inequality under the feudo-capitalist system:

መኪንን ተና ሴት ወይዘሮ ተ የመልካቸው ማጣር፤ የልብሳቸው ገጽሐና፤ የመኖሪያ ቤታቸውና የመኪናቸው ቀንጅና ያንን አይተህ ሸፈር የመሰለውን የደህኝን ፊትና የለበሰኩትን ቡት ትስታይ ታንዶ አገርና ታንዶ ወንዝ የበቀለን ያንዶ አገር ሰዎች አንመሰሉም፡፡³⁷

If this short story appears to be a criticism of the former regime, its major purpose is to depict the disparity between the cities and the rural areas. The people in the cities are compared to the Faranjis, and the ladies, Awgičāw tells us, look more like the pictures of the Virgin Mary he was shown in the country. The city priests, he says, are so corrupt that they behave like the pharisees. In short, the city is a place where we witness corruption and social injustices.

The writer has also tried to depict the psychological conflict rural migrants are faced with in the towns as they start to hate the backward countryside with its tukul, torch and maxi-cape.

The theme of acculturation is not commonly found in the Ethiopian literature, and the only short story which treats this problem is "Yá Täbbätásá Fire" by Taddássá Libán in the collection Máskáram.³⁸ The story depicts the total assimilation to European culture of the young lady Roman, after eight years abroad. The writer does not explain the process of Roman's acculturation, and the only thing we are told is that she comes back to Ethiopia completely transformed through her contact with European culture. Her readaptation to Ethiopian culture is, therefore, disappointing. This leads Roman to break with her family, as the story ends.

In this story, Taddássá Libán treats a universal problem experienced in various degrees by every African after spending several years in an environment totally different from his own.

Another sub-theme of social criticism found among Ethiopian short stories is "over-indulgence of the child by parents who are invariably wealthy," as put forward by Thomas Kane in Ethiopian Literature in Amharic. These short stories are didactic in that they are meant to make the society aware of the negative effects of over-indulgence on the child in making him a useless member of the society unable to stand on his own two feet, or a delinquent. Over-indulgence is the subject raised in Páulos Nōñño's "Mákontaw," in the collection Misqáqil and in Alámayáhu Fättáná's "Dur Adariw," in the collection Yá Simmet Mástawát. Both writers depict the negative effects of over-indulgence on their characters.

In "Makontaw," the character Makonin, a boy pampered by his wealthy mother grows up to hate education. Instead, he wastes his time by drinking in night-clubs with men who could be his fathers. He becomes a difficult boy unable to get along with other people. Not infrequently, therefore, is he involved in quarrels, and comes back home at night with his teeth knocked out. Being the son of a wealthy aristocrat, he acquires a job in spite of his grade five education. Over-consumption of alcohol gradually destructs Makonin's health as he contracts tuberculosis. After his mother's death, Makonin wastes the inherited money so that he cannot afford to pay for medical treatment. He is, nonetheless, admitted to hospital free of charge, and after he is discharged, shame compels him to move to a new area. He starts earning his living as a porter and years later, he dies in a pitiable condition. In this story, the writer condemns the up-bringing of children in the feudal society. As shown in the story, children were not strictly controlled by their parents. They were allowed to do whatever they liked so that their character was once for all spoiled. In short, they were unable to lead a constructive life.

In "Dur Adariw," on the other hand, Alamayahu Fattana presents over-indulgence as the cause for delinquency in the Ethiopian society. Here again, we see the character Assafa, who, as a youth, refuses to go to school and indulges himself in stealing from his relatives. Later on, as an adult, Assafa is unable to earn his living. He, therefore, decides to obtain shelter and food by committing all sorts of little crimes. After several attempts, Assafa succeeds in mixing himself with a group of wrong-doers passing by. He, thus, replaces a criminal. To

his utter dismay, he realizes that he is among criminals awaiting their trial. Fortunately, Assäfa escapes from death, and learns that the outcome of wrong doing is not shelter and food, but death.

It becomes apparent, therefore, that this short story has a social purpose. The writer's aim is to discourage the committing of crimes in the society by showing the tragic consequences of delinquency.

Some short stories have been written during the post-revolutionary period. These are few in number. Some of these short stories reflect the class contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie on the one hand, and between the peasantry and the feudal lords, on the other hand. Some of these short stories appeared in the magazine entitled Goh, now defunct, while others have been issued in the newspaper Yezareyitu Ethiopia, or in the magazine Yekatit, which has started publishing short stories.

A short story reflecting the struggle among the working class and the bourgeoisie is the short story entitled "Tullu Forsa," an anonymously written short story issued in Goh in 1968. In the story, the character Tullu is a representative of the oppressed working class, and Sir Galeb, a representative of the exploiting bourgeoisie. We are told that Sir Galeb did not possess a single cent when he came to Ethiopia. He, however, enriched himself later on, by exploiting people like Tullu, who are employed for very low wages. Sir Galeb is now the owner of a big macaroni factory and many houses, whereas Tullu, after six years, is still a man struggling for subsistence. The writer depicts the disparity between the working class and the bourgeoisie by placing Tullu in a critical condition: his son is very ill, and

Tullu cannot afford two birr for medical treatment.

In the story, the Labour Union is presented as the organization which struggles to safeguard the workers' interest. It is the Labour Union which comes to the rescue of Tullu's son by advancing a loan of twenty birr.

As reflected in the story, there is a conflict between the owners of the means of production like Sir Galeb and the Labour Union, which is supposed to fight for the working class. We are told that Sir Galeb and his homologues wish the Labour Union to dissolve because they think that production has suffered due to the workers' continual meetings. Tullu, as a representative of the working class, pledges that he won't allow the dissolution of their Union as long as he is alive.

The writer of this short story is justified in showing that the workers will triumph over their oppressors through their Union, but he also reflects the interest of the reactionaries in the Labour Union. The Labour Union was made up of reactionaries who made the semblance of struggling for the workers when they actually strived to defend their own selfish ends. This is the reason why the C.E.L.U. or the Labour Union had to break up. Tullu and the workers, however, mistakenly thought that the C.E.L.U. was the workers' organization which was ultimately going to triumph over the oppressing bourgeoisie. Although this short story seems to deal with a universal phenomenon in implying that unity is the vital factor which will lead the working class to its ultimate victory over the oppressing minority, it actually reflects the reactionaries' attempt at suppressing the working class;

consequently, the Labour Union had to be replaced with the progressive Trade Unions.

The short story entitled, "Yä Immet T'aye Ingurguro"³⁹ by Sälämon Lämna, on the other hand, reflects the bitter struggle between the peasantry and the feudal lords. The story is rendered mainly through the narrative method, and the writer presents a situation without adding his personal comments.

The story begins with Lady T'aye mourning for her son, the hero Bällätá Boggalá, who had taken to the forest after murdering the oppressor Näggadras, a merciless landlord. In the story, the past is connected to the present through a flashback. The reader is, thus, allowed to witness the conflict between Näggadras and the tenant Ato Boggalá, as the latter was incapable to pay his tribute to Näggadras. It was a heartbreaking experience for the young boy Bällätá to see his father live in a miserable condition, but he knew that he would one day destroy his father's enemy. When Bällätá grew up, he took over the tenancy to replace his father. It was then that he had decided to take revenge on behalf of his dead father. It appears that the writer's purpose in writing this short story is to show the rebellion of the peasantry against the feudal lords before the outbreak of the Ethiopian Revolution.

The condition of peasants after the outbreak of the Revolution is also depicted by the writer. The hero Bällätá Boggalá comes back home after four years of exile, thus, putting an end to Lady T'aye's sorrow. We are, thus, shown that the oppression by the landlords has been put down by the Ethiopian Revolution, and

that the peasants have become masters over the tracts of land they are cultivating.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to give a bird's eye view of the major themes reflected in the Ethiopian short stories. We have seen that religion is not broadly treated by Ethiopian short story writers. It has also been shown that the design of the early short stories on love and marriage was to promote fidelity by condemning vice, and to reflect the cultural aspects of marriage and love in the feudal society. The Ethiopian short story writers have also attempted to reflect the change in love and marriage that occurred as modern views began to emerge in the society. The purpose of the short stories which deal with social criticism is to reflect the social injustices that were prevalent in the old regime. It has also been noted that some short stories written during the post-revolutionary period focus on the victory of the Ethiopian Revolution after a bitter struggle between the masses and the feudal minority.

CHAPTER II

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED AMHARIC SHORT STORIES

The short stories in this chapter have been selected for the uniqueness of style that they manifest. The Amharic short stories can, thus, be divided into five categories. We distinguish: the narrative style, the slice-of-life style, the confessional style and in the fourth category, short stories with a tight plot. In the fifth category, we find surprise-ending short stories.

2.1. The Narrative Style

In this category of Ethiopian short stories, the literary method used to handle the theme or plot is the narrative method, as distinguished from dramatization of the events in the plot. Though it is true to say that every story is a narration, the uniqueness of these stories, however, lies in the fact that the writer uses assertion rather than suggesting the theme, or plot through action and dialogue. Mark Schorer describes such stories saying that "the events are organized only in terms of time, with a simple chronological coherence, one thing happening after another."⁴⁰ Mark Schorer calls these stories "primitive fiction," for modern fiction emphasizes the dramatization of incidents in the plot, and considers both assertion and dramatization as a means to carry out the plot. Short stories in which the narrative style is used may be narrated from the point of view of the protagonist-narrator as in "Ärä Sintu Alläfa"⁴¹ (How Many Things Have Gone By!) by Abärra Lämna, the short story discussed herewith, or by the author-narrator as in the short

story entitled "Qān Iskialf Yalāfal,"⁴² anonymously written. Plot in these stories is a chronological arrangement of events rather than a pattern of objective action following the sequence of complication, crisis and solution. Chronology, therefore, fails to create suspense in "Ārā Sīntu Allāfā."

The writer's intention in "Ārā Sīntu Allāfā" is to show that the protagonist-narrator and his family had to face many unpleasant situations in their struggle for survival before they were able to lead a happy life. The first part of the story consists of childhood reminiscences seen at a distance by the narrator, as these are passed on to him through his mother. We are, thus, told that the outbreak of an epidemy had caused the mother to migrate to the town with the protagonist after the funerals of her eldest daughter drowned in a well. A stress is laid upon the adverse circumstances faced by the narrator and his family, the overall effect of which is to convey an atmosphere of tragedy. Later in the story, we are told that the protagonist's mother had to live on alms before she could make herself a living by baking bread in a small room shared with an old woman. Years later, twins are born during the worst season of the year to add to their misery; nonetheless, the family survives this distressing condition. In the middle of the story, a significant incident occurs which is to give a different turn to events. This is the accident which occurs to the protagonist on the trip back home after he has joined the military service for some time. The protagonist loses one leg, and receives some money as compensation. He is, thus, given the opportunity to buy a mill, and to bring an end

to the constant suffering of his mother. Some elements in the plot seem to be exaggerated, or unrealistic. As the theme in the story is happiness after tragedy, the blind mother is made to recover the sight of one eye after treatment abroad. The protagonist's leg is replaced with an artificial one. To make his happiness complete, he is made to marry a beautiful young lady at the end of the story. These elements give the story a romantic touch and a tone of sentimentality.

In "Ärä Sintu Alläfä," the reader notes the blurring effect of characterization; consequently, the mother of the protagonist, his brother and his sister who has runaway to the town come with the shadow of haziness around them. The stress seems to fall on highlighting the plot and the theme of the story, and we see a very extensively treated narration of the various incidents with a cumulative effect which is obtained by a chronological piling of events and recollections.

The narrative technique has enabled the writer to cover events evolving over several years. In "Ärä Sintu Alläfä," the writer has handled events dating from the birth of the narrator to his wedding. In short stories where the narrative method dominates, the lack of dialogue and action slows down the pace of the story. This short story reminds the reader of Sherwood Anderson's "The Egg." Unlike Abärä Lamma, however, Sherwood Anderson combines a bit of dialogue to reveal the character of the father in the story. This makes "The Egg" more lively.

In the story, the first person point of view where the "I"

is the protagonist - observer - narrator has an advantage in giving the story a personal nature, an air of reality, and in allowing the reader to take part in the story, as he is more likely to identify with the narrator and be interested in what happens to him. The protagonist, however, is revealed only through what he tells us about him. Our knowledge about the narrator is, therefore limited.

In the short story "Ará Sintu Alláfá," the reader observes a unity in the plot structure, a sense of totality derived from a story that has a beginning, a middle and an end, a concentration on the relevant details contributing to the overall effect of the story, a limitation in the number of characters and an economy of expression.

In this story, the writer presents a philosophy of life, namely, that human beings face obstacles in their struggle for survival. They struggle with nature, or with difficulties arising from circumstances outside their control. As depicted in the story, the writer's outlook on life is one of optimism. His purpose in writing this story is to show that every obstacle faced by human beings is ultimately overcome through perseverance.

2.2. The Slice-of-Life Style

The slice-of-life technique is aimed at utter objectivity in recording and portraying the phenomena of life. The writer refrains himself from making any value judgment very often. The slice-of-life style focuses on a very limited area of life. Short stories in which this literary method is used have neither a beginning nor an end, for the writer's aim lies not in the presentation of a plot, but on the objective depiction of a given situation in life. If characters are

presented in the story, they are simply used to represent ordinary individuals in their day-to-day activities.

The short story writer who makes use of the slice-of-life technique in Amharic literature is Ato Sībhat Gābrā Igziabher. The subject-matter in Ato Sībhat's stories is derived from daily life depicted as simply as possible. His characters are mostly common people speaking an ordinary language: tālla sellers, taxi drivers, clerks, students, or craftsmen. He has written "Zār Kā Līguam Yīsibal,"⁴³ "Fraš Addaš"⁴⁴ and "Elin Dingay Yarākk"⁴⁵ among others. "Fraš Addaš" is the short story selected for discussion in this chapter.

The underlying theme in "Fraš Addaš" (Mattress-Mender) is left to the reader's interpretation of the story. The purpose of the story is to teach the young boy Azbite, the son of the mattress-mender Wāndafraš, how to acquire audacity and become a decisive person who is proud of being the son of a toiling mattress-mender belonging to the lower social stratum. Azbite is, therefore, taught how to withstand those who would like to take advantage of his apparent physical weakness, which is no other than a sign of inferiority complex. Though the underlying tone of the story is serious, it seems to be written primarily for entertainment purpose. On the surface, "Fraš Addaš" seems to be a casual description of a mattress-mender's job. It is a holiday and Azbite is helping his father, Ato Wāndafraš. Azbite is, therefore, instructed how to do the job properly. Ato Wāndafraš, who is also a humorous person, entertains his son in order to relieve the monotony of the work. A comic

dialogue, therefore, ensues between the father and the son. The pillow Azbîte is working on is made to represent the cruel big boy Mákoniñ, who beats Azbîte and the other small children and snatches their possessions. Azbîte is told to smash Mákoniñ in order to prove that he is the brave son of the mattress-mender. As we note here, the dialogue seems to be a childish conversation between father and son. The father wants the job to be done well, but he also wishes to entertain his son, who is still a child. The names Azbîte and Wändafraš add a touch of humour to the story. Azbîte connotes a naive, foolish boy who is easily cheated by shrewd people. Wändafraš, on the other hand, implies a proud bold man, who is not afraid to challenge his enemies. But a close analysis of the following piece of dialogue helps the reader realize the serious meaning of the story, for Ato Wändafraš's desire is to teach his son how to rid himself of his fear and indecision:

"እውነት አዘጠጤ ጠንጻፍራሽ ፍራሽ አባዳሽ ከሆንክ" ይሉታል
ትራሱን አያሳዩት "ይኸጠፍ አመጥኛው ወኩንን ትንንሽ ልጄን
አየደበደበ ያስለቀሳል መጫጫቸውን ይነጥቃል:: ንሱ ደበደ-
በው ይህን አመጥኛ የት የት አንደጣመታ ታቀቀ የለ?46

It appears, therefore, that the writer's intention in writing this short story is to convey his message to fathers, who have the responsibility to teach their sons how to be proud of their identities, and how to overcome their fear of men who like to display their superiority.

"Fraš Addaš" is an instance of a mattress-mender's job. It, therefore, deals with a glimpse of ordinary life depicting men in their daily activities rather than with what could sometimes happen.

It is simply an objective presentation of a situation where the author does not comment on the characters and action. This contributes to make the theme subtle and capable of numerous possible interpretations.

Like many of Sibhat's other stories, "Fraš Addaš" reminds the reader of Alex La Guma's "The Lemon Orchard," a short story which relates a particular instance of social violence in South Africa. Plot in this story lacks a tight pattern because it has neither a beginning, nor an end. In "The Lemon Orchard," Alex La Guma limits himself to the objective presentation of an instance of social injustice in South Africa, placing himself at the background of the story rather than being the central observer, who presents a situation at the same time commenting on it. It is an instance of racial discrimination in which a coloured man is arrested in the middle of the night for being rude towards a white church minister.

Likewise, the emphasis in Sibhat's short stories falls on objectivity. Plot in Sibhat's stories lacks a tight pattern and direction. It fails to convey that sense of totality the reader will notice in short stories which have a beginning, a climax full of suspense and a denouement showing the outcome of a story.

Characters in "Fraš Addaš" as in many of Sibhat's other stories are presented to form part of a given situation, to illustrate, to explain a situation, and not to control the action. The writer is not interested in depicting what happens, but to present a situation objectively. The characters Azbāte and Wādafraš are, therefore, types representing other individuals in a similar situation.

The objective point of view in which the writer is an outside

observer, who reports but does not interpret, allows the reader to participate more in the story. This point of view also contributes to making the theme subtle, as the reader is not told why characters behave the way they do.

In "Fraš Addas," the writer reflects a philosophy of life which can be inferred from the objectivity observed in his short stories. Speaking about his philosophy of life, Sibhat says:

My philosophy is to see things as they really are in life, and I believe that my role as a writer should not be to impose my personal philosophy on the reader. If I do so, I will fail to be objective.⁴⁷

2.3. The Confessional Style

The confessional method of narration is one of the styles Thomas Kane has distinguished in Amharic literature. Short stories in which the confessional style is used are written in a letter form with the central character relating the story from the first person point of view. Mulatu Gábru is the short story writer who has used this literary technique. He has written "Yá Káffaw Abbat Dábdabbe,"⁴⁸ "Ká Wáhni Bet Yátáǵáǵná Dábdabbe"⁴⁹ and "Yá Bíríktait Dábdabbe"⁵⁰ among others.

Plot in these short stories is carried mainly through the narrative method. Shift in point of view is used as the story may open with the introduction presented by the author. This is what we observe in "Yá Káffaw Abbat Dábdabbe" (The Letter of a Grieved Father), for instance. This is done in order to establish the background of the story. Sometimes, however, the story may open with the final episode related by the author. This happens in the case where

the narrator dies with the consequence that he cannot inform the reader about the outcome of conflict. "Ká Wáhni Bet Yatáǵáñá Dábdabbe" (The Letter Discovered in Prison), or "Yá Biríktait Dábdabbe" (Biríktait's Letter) are written in this way. After the introduction, or the presentation of the final episode, follows the letter narrated by the central character. The narration by the protagonist establishes the cause-and-effect relationship of what happens in the story. Though the plot has a beginning and an end, it is loose because incidents are narrated, and we don't see that forward movement of action leading towards a climax. Action in these stories is for the most part mental because characters are revealed mainly through their thoughts. The conclusion in the story consists of advice forwarded by the narrator as an impetus to promote good ways of living, and to discourage vice in the society.

The writer's aim in "Yá Biríktait Dábdabbe" is to condemn parents' negative attitude towards their inexperienced daughters who conceive before marriage in a critical stage of their development, that is, adolescence. He blames Biríktait's parents because he feels that what has happened to their daughter is caused by their failure to avert their daughter about the dangers of sex, on time. He feels that parents have the responsibility of instructing their daughters about sex when the latter reach the age of puberty. This story is also a warning to adolescents who might become the prey of dishonest men who seek only a temporary pleasure in their friendship. The writer, thus, warns such adolescents that they should not trust every man they might come across with.

"Yā Biriktait Dābdabbe" opens with Biriktait's death. We see an anxious father rush to the hospital in order to save his dying daughter. We are thereby informed of Biriktait's death on reaching the hospital. The denouement of the story is, thus, presented by the author because the narrator is dead, and she cannot tell the reader about the final outcome of her conflict. The opening sentences which form part of the final episode arouse suspense in the reader anxious to know the cause of Biriktait's death:

የቦርክታይት አባት ጠራት ወይን ሌሊት ላይ አንደዚያ አገር ገ
 ሸለሰባ ገና ተጠጋ ሲያባረ ለተሰለከታቸው ከአቅሙ በላይ
 ጠጥቶ በሌይውቱ ላይ የፈረደ ገረጎባ ይመሰሉ ነበር:: ከአላ
 ገዳቸው ወቅጣጠር ከአንደታቸው አየተሰወቀ በዓይኖቻቸው የሚገር
 ፈው ፀንባ ለጣ የት ተጠጣሪ መሰናከል ሁኖአቸው የሚከናወኑ አ ነ
 ዓይ: "አባት አባት" የሚያሰጉ ነበር::... የአባቱ ወቅጥሶ
 ሆነ የአናቷ መቼ ለቦርክታይት አልጠቀሟት:: ያልታደለች ዋ
 ከሌሊት ተረኛ ሆስፒታል በቃራዛ አንደገባቸው በረሃ ህግግ
 ወጥታለች::51

The cause of Biriktait's death is revealed in the confession forwarded in her letter. She tells the reader that the motive for her suicide is her father's blind trust in his daughter because he believed that Biriktait would never dare to dishonour her family by conceiving outside marriage. Biriktait was, therefore, placed in a dilemma where she had to choose between life, or death. She chose death because her parents were unwilling to accept her condition.

Characters in "Yā Biriktait Dābdabbe" are types. Biriktait represents all those adolescents who conceive before marriage because of ignorance and inexperience. Her father and mother stand for parents who might have to face dishonour as their daughters become the victims of ignorance about sex and its dangers. In the

story, characterization is subservient to theme, for the writer's objective is primarily to educate rather than to present a plot. The character-narrator is revealed through her thoughts in the letter. Her parents are depicted partly through her reflections, and partly by the author, who describes their distress at the death of their daughter.

"Yá Biríktait Dábdabbe" is narrated from the point of view of the protagonist. This has an advantage in giving the story an air of reality. Shift in point of view occurs to inform the reader about the denouement of the story, that is, Biríktait's suicide. In this way, the different parts of the story are made to be knit together, and to convey a sense of totality.

"Yá Biríktait Dábdabbe" has a social purpose. It was written in revolt against the tradition which considered sex as taboo, and prevented adolescents from knowing about sex. The writer tries to show that in a modern society where young ladies do not marry at an early age, and are more often exposed to the opposite sex at school, or outside their family circles the traditional outlook on sex has its own disadvantages. He condemns the parents' lack of understanding and tactfulness when they discover that their daughters have committed the error of conceiving before marriage. As a matter of fact, the purpose of this short story is didactic, and the writer concludes the story with his invaluable advice forwarded to both parents and adolescents through the protagonist-narrator.

2.4. Tight Plot

In the fourth category, we observe short stories with a tight plot though these are very few in number. The short stories written by Taddässá Libán and Amará Mammo fall into this category. I shall deal with one of Amará Mammo's short stories "The Hammer," which I think will suffice to make my points clear.

In short stories with a tight plot, the focus is on the piling up of episodes leading to a cumulative effect. In "Mádošaw" (The Hammer), the focus is on the pattern of events centering on the character Fritz who has helped Luther nail the edicts on the door of Winterberg's church in Germany. The writer magnifies the character Fitz because his plot is concerned with showing that an uneducated, insignificant man like Fritz can play a vital role in a universally recognized event as the Reformation.⁵²

The story begins with a description of Fritz returning home after a day's work. He finds Luther in a difficulty because the latter does not know what to do in order to nail the edicts. The intellectual Luther seems to be in a moment of indecision. Fritz, who has a hammer in the hands, offers to do the job for Luther. This is the incident around which the plot of the story is tightly woven. Suspense is achieved in the story as the writer uses the technique of foreshadowing to prepare the reader for the great act that will be accomplished by Fritz. This is what we observe in the dialogue between Fritz and the barman Herr Hofman at the coffee-house Lindon:

“ዛሬ ደግሞ ጌን ሆነህ ተከዘሃል” አለ ሸር ሆኖግን
ፍሬትዝ በተቀመጠበት በኩል ሲያልፍ፡፡
“እንዲያው ለሰብ ይዘኝ ነው፡፡”
“ስለ ወደፊት ነው ስለሌላው”
“ስለ ወደፊት ጌን ተስፋ አለኝና አስባለሁ፡፡”
“ስለሌላውስ ቢሆን ጌን የገደለበህ ነገር አለና ታግርራለህ”
“ጌን የረባ ነገር ሠረቻለሁ ብለህ ነው” አለ ፍሬትዝ
ቫቫራ ወዳፋን እየተሰለከተ፡፡53

In this dialogue, Fritz expresses his motive: his wish to achieve something great. A week after he has nailed the edicts, Fritz is informed about the sound of the "Hammer," which has brought about a radical change in the church of Europe. Fritz hears the people comment on the Reformation. Some individuals are happy because they will not have to buy their salvation by paying for the indulgences any longer. Others rejoice because salvation is effected through justification by faith, and not by works.⁵⁴ After what has happened in the church because of the "Hammer," Fritz realizes the solemnity of his gesture in having offered to help Luther. Fritz is moved by the significant event, and he tells his wife Gisella to call his son Hans. Fritz's face is glowing with happiness as he accomplishes a symbolic gesture in presenting the "Hammer" as the sole invaluable property Hans will inherit from the common man Fritz. This marks a climactic moment in the progression of the plot. The presentation of the "Hammer" is, therefore, a symbolic gesture of the passing on of the spirit of revolution from one generation to the other. After this act, the story ends with a crescendo effect. In giving the "Hammer" to Hans, Fritz wishes Hans to continue the tradition of the common man in the participation of a historical event.

In the story, the fictional character Fritz plays an important

role. The writer creates Fritz by moving in and out of the character's mind. The writer appears to be the omniscient narrator of the story. Besides dialogue and exposition, he uses the "stream of consciousness" technique to reveal Fritz's state of mind. There is a detail in the story which depicts Fritz preparing himself to go home after a day of hard labour. His forehead is sweating, and he is tired of doing all the work by himself. His wish is to hire an assistant to put order in the carpenter's shop, but this is something that he cannot do, 'a wish that will never be fulfilled' as he utters to himself, "እንዲያው የማይፈጸም ዎኛት ነው።" አለ ፍሬትዝ በረን እየቀረቀረ።⁵⁵ Fritz's desire to elevate himself socially is revealed in the already mentioned dialogue between him and the bartender Hofman. Fritz looks at his hardened hands. This is a symbolic gesture showing that if the common man cannot contribute to significant events intellectually due to his lack of education, he can do this with his hands. Fritz is a fully developed, individualized character. His psychological transformation as a result of his victory at the end is revealed in the symbolic act of presenting the "Hammer" to Hans:

"ሌጌ" አለ ፍሬትዝ ሰንሰን በእኛ እየጻጸሰ "በሕይወቴ አንድ የረባ ነገር ለመፈጸም ብዙ ይከፍላለሁ። ነገር ግን እስከ ዛሬ ያንን አላሁ ነገር። ይህ ወይን የዐለት ገርባቸንን የጻወት ልብ ሰጥንን እንደናገን እስከ ዛሬ ረድተናል። ይህ የጻጸት ወይን ከጥቂት ቀናት በፊት አንድ ትልቅ ተገባር ፈጽሞ አሳ ለግለት አደፍራለሁ። እርግጥ ነው፤ እነዚህን ቃላት እኔ አላጸፍኩባቸው። ይሁን እንጂ በዚህ ታሪካዊ ድርጊት ድርሻዬን እንደፈጸንኩ ይሰማኛል። ...⁵⁶

"The Hammer" is written from the point of view of the omniscient narrator. Point of view allows the writer to move in and out of the character's mind. Characterization in "The Hammer" forms a

part of the general plot pattern of the story because the omniscient-narrator is guiding and coordinating the activities of his characters in such a way that the story becomes a well-plotted analysis of the vast repercussions of the Reformation. It is the artist's controlling purpose which makes the story tightly knit, and the author seems to project the final impression of a well-knit plot.

"The Hammer" has a social purpose. It was written in revolt against the traditional belief that Luther is the hero in the Reformation.⁵⁷ In doing this, the writer tries to show that in great historical events a significant role may have been played by the common man, but the vital participation of the common man is not acknowledged. In making Fritz contribute to the Reformation, the writer attempts to show that both the common man and the educated, distinguished person can contribute equally to a historical event.

2.5. The Surprise-Ending Style

In surprise-ending short stories, the author artistically misleads the reader in such a way that the outcome of the story happens to be different from the one the reader has been expecting. In this way the reader is surprised at the end of the story. In "Iwnät,"⁵⁸ we have an example of an Amharic short story in which Taddässä Libán has successfully used the surprise-ending technique.

In the short story "Iwnät," the author attempts to show that there are women who accept the friendship of men, or marry them just for their money. In the story, the character Almaz stands for women who care more for luxury than for love. In the character Admasu Ayyälá, we recognize those positive-minded men, who blindly trust every

woman only to realize at the end that they have fallen into a trap. By placing the character Admasu in an awkward situation, the writer intends to show that men should not always trust women as there are ladies who are not sincere.

The opening incident is the circumstance in which Admasu Ayyälä makes the acquaintance of Almaz Dämisse, the daughter of a wealthy man. The young people then decide to further strengthen their friendship. In "Iwnät" as in every surprise-ending short story, the plot develops through casually mentioned hints. The general public opinion about Almaz's real character, which Admasu fails to believe, is that she is a woman with a bad reputation. Admasu's friend Däbbäbä, on the other hand, warns him that Almaz actually loves another man by the name of Tässämma. In order to prove that Däbbäbä's assertion is true, Admasu is advised to watch Almaz carefully during the ball held at her school. This is a moment full of suspense in the progression of the plot. The reader is anxious to know whether Admasu is going to discover the truth. Admasu, however, fails to see Almaz in the company of Tässämma, for she had covered her face for the occasion. The reader hereby observes that the covering of Almaz's face is only a technique used by the author to add to the sense of mystery, that is, to contribute to the surprise-ending. Tension gradually decreases in the story, and the relationship between Almaz and Admasu continues. They fix their wedding day, but an accident compels Almaz to undergo an operation. This is the circumstance which gives a different turn to the events in the story. After Almaz has been operated, we are shown that

Admasu is anxiously waiting for Almaz to recover from the effect of the anesthetic when to his dismay, he hears Almaz call Tássamma. The mystery is now revealed. In "Iwnát," Taddássá Libán twists the ending of the story at a point where the reader expects the wedding of the couple. The character Admasu is at the end bewildered by the unexpected turn of events. The surprise-ending in "Iwnát" is, therefore a culmination of the hints mentioned casually during the progress of the story.

Characterization plays a significant role in "Iwnát" because it contributes to the surprise-ending and builds up the sense of conflict. Characters in "Iwnát" are revealed through contrast. In the story, the character Admasu Ayyälä is from a poor family background. Almaz, on the other hand, is the spoiled daughter of a wealthy man. Admasu is also one-sided and credulous. He trusts Almaz completely, and he stubbornly refuses to believe any gossip about Almaz's bad reputation. Almaz, on the other hand, is shrewd and takes advantage of a man she thinks will never discover the hidden part of her character. In "Iwnát," both characters behave consistently throughout the story. Almaz, for instance, behaves as the ideal wife Admasu is looking for to the end of the story, until her actual personality is revealed. One of the elements which contribute to the successful use of the surprise-ending technique in "Iwnát" is, therefore, the consistency in the characters. Characters in "Iwnát" are representatives of typical men and women in life. They are not individualized.

"Iwnát" is narrated in the third person, from the objective point of view. The author simply reports what happens in the story,

and does not make asides on the characters or action.

In this story, the author seems to be primarily concerned with the exposition of the incidents to give rise to the underlying notion of suspense. The reader's curiosity is aroused by the gradual presentation of the events. Surprise, mystery and suspicion seem to form the basic elements of the story, and the writer's main preoccupation appears to be to acquaint us with the subtleties of the riddle of life.

The objective of this chapter is to delineate the major literary techniques used by Ethiopian short story writers. We have distinguished the narrative method which emphasizes the assertion of the events that are chronologically arranged in the plot structure. In short stories where the slice-of-life technique is used, on the other hand, the focus is on the objective presentation of a situation that has neither a beginning, nor an end. The third method of narration used by Ethiopian short story writers is the confessional style. The plot in these stories consists mainly of confessions communicated by the protagonist-narrator. The background or the outcome of the story, however, are given by the author himself. We also find short stories with a tight plot in which the incidents and the activities of the characters are coordinated in such a way that all the elements interact to build a tightly woven plot. Ethiopian short story writers have also attempted to adapt the surprise-ending technique. We have seen that in these short stories plot is woven around a mystery revealed towards the end of the story through a culmination of the hints mentioned casually in the progression of the plot.

CHAPTER III

WHY IS THE SHORT STORY IN ETHIOPIA AN UNEXPLOITED GENRE ?

In this chapter, the writer intends to look into the various reasons which are thought to have hindered the development of the short story in Ethiopia.

A careful analysis of the Ethiopian short stories indicates that this genre is quite an unexploited literary form. Though this applies to all literary forms in Ethiopia, it appears more obvious in the short story.

Ninety percent of the Ethiopian population is uneducated with the implication that only a minority can have access to literature.

Ethiopia is also a nation where various nationalities speaking different languages congregate; besides, most of the languages do not have a written form. For quite a long time, therefore, the Amharic language, which was also the literary medium, was the only official language.

Another hindrance to the literary development in Ethiopia is the shortage of publishing houses. This implies that a writer is also his own publisher. Publishing is costly; consequently, many intellectuals have to abandon their prospect of writing.

Ethiopia also lacks professional writers who have a mastery of the literary form they are dealing with, and devote their full time to their literary work; consequently, as put forward by Thomas Kane:

The lack of technical skill on the majority of writers in Amharic means that they are few who are aware of the different types of prose literature current in modern literatures, or if aware, lack the requisite skill or understanding needed to write them.

If these various conditions apply to all literary forms in Ethiopia, there are, however, specific reasons pertaining to the short story in particular.

The writer of this paper has come across one hundred and forty-six short stories. As a matter of fact, if one is allowed to make a rough estimate, the number of Ethiopian short stories may hardly exceed three hundred. There are a number of reasons which explain the present condition of the short story in Ethiopia.

The short story is only about twenty-four years old in Ethiopia. This shows that it is the last genre to have emerged in the Ethiopian literary scene. As mentioned earlier in the introduction, sources indicate that the pioneer of the Ethiopian short story, Taddāssā Libān published his first collection only in 1949 E.C. Taddāssā Libān is one of the few best short story writers together with Amarā Mammu. The other Ethiopian writers whose works have been published are Hailā Iyāsus Fiqadu, Birhanu Zārihun, Alāmayāhu Fāttānā, Fiqrē Tolossa, Paulos Nōñño and Sibhat Gābrā Eḡziabher. Most of these writers, however, stopped writing after publishing their first collections. This indicates that we lack professional short story writers. One of the reasons, therefore, which adversely affected the development of the short story in Ethiopia is the fact that writers are amateurs who are inspired by their readings of foreign short stories and lack a pre-knowledge in writing techniques.⁶⁰

Professional writers, however, do not emerge by miracle. They need to be trained. The only center where educated people may have the opportunity of being acquainted with the techniques of short story writing is the University where students may be offered a preliminary course on the short story. This course, however, is not intensive enough to equip them with a thorough knowledge about the medium that will enable them to write short stories. On the other hand, no creative writing workshop has been set up in the University or elsewhere to train future young writers who might make of the short story their future profession. Creating an environment where young writers can learn and grow from the literary point of view should be the task of the University.

The lack of writing workshop centers in colleges is not the only condition which hampered the formation of professional short story writers in Ethiopia. There are no school magazines to publish some of the works that may be produced by talented students and, thus, encourage them to write. If the number of short stories is growing in America or elsewhere today, it is because colleges have their own publications, and students are invited to contribute short stories.

Out of the one hundred-and-forty-six short stories I came across in my readings, only a very limited number can be said to fulfil the requirements of the short story. Being a recent literary genre, the short story is not familiar to the Ethiopian public. It is not surprising, therefore, that the technique of short story writing be unknown in Ethiopia. The bulk of Ethiopian short stories consists, as a result, of badly written literary pieces.

The method of narration applied in some of the short stories is that of telling rather than showing, which is the traditional method of story-telling. As shown in the second chapter under "A Critical Analysis of Selected Amharic Short Stories," the narrative method gives these stories the impression of accumulated facts rather than dynamic short stories. As depicted in the short story "Árā Síntu Alláfá," the narrative method enables the writer to trace the characters through various stages in their life. The design in using the narrative style might be an attempt to satisfy the need of the general Ethiopian public whose tendency is to despise stories which give the impression of being incomplete unless they deal with a long story giving a full picture of the different aspects in the life of characters. These short stories, however, lack something, for "... the mere retelling of an interesting physical event is strangely unsatisfying ... because if the writer sticks to only the facts-he may fail to generate suspense In short, he uses no art."⁶¹ In other words, such stories are unrefined.

We also distinguish short stories which are anecdotal with little or no plot. Characters in these stories are not treated in depth. These are the product of writers who, for the most part, have very little knowledge about the short story. They deal with a single incident which has no beginning nor end. Their setting is very limited, and they lack details explaining the behaviour of characters.

Some of the short stories the reader encounters are simply sketches about a given situation or a character. These are "... a

static description of a character or a place or whatever."⁶² Nothing happens in these short stories as the outcome of the conflict is not revealed. A situation is presented in these sketches, but it is used by the writer as an illustration of an idea, or a message the writer wishes to impart to the reader. Because these short stories are a static description of a character or a situation, the character does not change as he would do in a dynamic short story. To cite some examples, the short story entitled "Sigābgibu Nāggade"⁶³ (The Greedy Merchant) or "Yan Yā Dāsta Minā Layyāw"⁶⁴ (To the one who would have tasted that source of joy), both by Wubišāt Alāmu, are written in this way. These are in reality sketches although the writer calls them short stories.

"Sigābgibu Nāggade" illustrates a greedy merchant named Ato Zi. Ato Zi is worried because his accounts show that he has not made a maximum profit. His wife, however, reproaches him saying that his anxiety is unreasonable given that his present wealth would enable him to live for thirty-five years without having to labour hard. She further adds that his profit is unjustly obtained by exploiting his customers. The dialogue between Ato Zi and his wife, and that between Ato Zi and his daughter is used to show how stingy Ato Zi is. Nothing else happens in the story, and the situation is used merely to illustrate a greedy merchant, blinded by love of money. This short story lacks pattern, for it is a sketch. No change is effected in Ato Zi because he is at the end of the story the same character he was at the beginning. The writer has used the situation to criticize those merchants who dishonestly exploit their customers. The form suffers

in this short story, and it appears that the writer has given priority to the theme, the message of the story.

Similarly, the short story entitled "Yan Yǎ Dǎsta Mǐn' Layyāw" is also a static description of the situation after the Ethiopian Revolution. It depicts the rebirth of the countryside through the hard labour of the peasants, who are now liberated from the subjugation by their feudal lords.

The writer's purpose is here to criticize the oppression of the masses under the former regime, and to appraise the value of work as the sole means to rid the country of the evils that resulted from the feudo-capitalist system.

What the writer here calls a short story is simply a descriptive presentation of a situation. Characters are simply used as a tool to convey the writer's thoughts, but no change occurs in them as a result of what happens because "Yan Yǎ Dǎsta Mǐn' Layyāw" is not a dynamic story. We see two young peasants enjoying the idyllic countryside. The youth of the peasants is blended with the exuberant vegetation of the countryside. They are overjoyed to see the fruit of their toil.

The writer uses an exaggerated pompous language in order to impress the reader. The golden mattock is presented as the key to land resources. Tradition and pride, he says, are the outcome of laziness, which he compares to a throw up of the intestinal content, "Yǎ Anjāt Lábāq." The sky, on the other hand, is compared to a blue ocean, "Sāmawayi Wīqianos." At times, there is a tendency in the writer to appear poetic. He, thus, compares the two peasants to

moving flowers, "Lä Sifraw Yäminqäsaqäsu Abäboç."

In spite of the pompous language, this short story fails to move the reader, for it is not a dynamic story full of action. If characters are used as shown in both stories, they are simply made to utter the writer's thoughts, and not to reveal their transformation as a result of what happens. Consequently, both "Sigibgibu Näggade" and "Yan Yä Dästa Minc' Layyāw" are sketches in which a situation is described in order to illustrate an idea of the writer.

All the instances mentioned earlier show that the short story is only at its beginning stage in Ethiopia. This explains why most of the short stories lack technical refinement. Speaking about the situation of the short story in Ethiopia today, Ato Amarā Mammo says: "... But generally speaking the form suffers. The content is substantial, but the technique is unrefined ... The writers do not seem to have mastered the technique of short story writing."⁶⁵ He goes on to say that many short stories are rejected by publishing houses because they are not well written. Ato Amarā Mammo's view is also shared by Ato Paulos Nōñño, who asserts that the Ethiopian short stories lack technical refinement.⁶⁶ If we don't find many short stories in Ethiopia today, it is because the short story is not familiar to Ethiopian writers, who still have a lot to learn about this new literary medium if they are to meet the demands of the reading public .

If we compare the condition of the short story to that of drama and poetry, poems and plays seem to be more abundantly produced. This is because the Ethiopian society is better acquainted

with poems and plays; consequently, writers prefer to exploit these literary forms which they think find acceptance in Ethiopia.

Poems can be recited to the audience, that is, they need not necessarily be published; likewise, plays are designed to be enacted in front of an audience. In other words, a playwright may not necessarily be involved in the trouble of publishing his plays.

Plays and poems are accessible to every type of audience endowed with the ability to see and hear. The short story, on the other hand, cannot reach those who are unable to read, for one cannot visualize the incidents in a short story unless one reads it. The short story, which is a more concentrated form, requires that the reader have the discipline and the habit of reading short stories which would otherwise be a bore.

The playwright Tásfaye Gássässá points out that publishing short stories is not as financially rewarding as publishing plays.⁶⁷ As poems and plays are older genres in Ethiopia, they are more readily accepted by the society for whom the short story is unfamiliar.

Another important factor which affected the development of the short story in Ethiopia is the negative traditional concept held against the short story. Like translation work, short story writing was not considered as a literary contribution. Translated works were looked down on by the Ethiopian society, which maintained that such works were not original literary productions. The short story was, likewise, not considered as a significant literary work. It was viewed as a story that the writer had failed to complete. This, however, seems to be a universal phenomenon, for in An Introduction to Literature, Mary Rohrberger and her other colleagues assert that "For

a long time the short story was assigned a somewhat inferior status, being popularly thought of as some little piece an author tossed off between productions ..."⁶⁸

Many Ethiopian readers think, likewise, that the short story is an incomplete work of art that fails to satisfy the reader's needs. Writers, on the other hand, feel that "they can't say all they have to say or express themselves in a short story the way they can in a novel or a piece of personal journalism."⁶⁹ This indicates that writers need to understand the nature of the short story before they can produce interesting short stories that will satisfy the readers. Both readers and writers, therefore, have to rid themselves of the mistaken traditional notion that the short story is an incomplete literary work. The traditional wrong attitude held against the short story has, consequently, hindered many writers from discovering the useful qualities of the short story.

A book was traditionally considered in Ethiopia as a work rendered with perfection and containing stories which enfold the different aspects of the society; consequently, a literary piece treating only a fragment of life was not viewed as a literary achievement. Failure to see that the short story is a complete work of art has, therefore, affected the development of this recent literary medium in Ethiopia.

No effort was made by the mass-media and the Ministry of Culture to counteract this traditional concept against the short story. A regular transmission of interesting short stories could have helped the society to familiarize itself with this new and

dynamic form. Measures should, therefore, be taken to help the society develop an interest in the short story if we want the short story to flourish in Ethiopia.

The short story could not flourish as well as the other literary forms in Ethiopia because it was an unfamiliar literary form, and lacked demand in the society. Commercial opportunity is one of the prerequisites for the development of a literary form within a given country.

If the development of the short story was enhanced all over the world during the twentieth century, this was because there was a great demand for it. John Hadfield, for instance, mentions that "by the beginning of the twentieth century, therefore, commercial opportunity and the development of fictional technique had conspired to give exceptional encouragement to the short story."⁷⁰ John Hadfield substantiates his view with Sommerset Maugham's that no form of art is produced unless there is a demand for it.

Like John Hadfield and Sommerset Maugham, Täsfaye Gässässä's opinion is that a literary form is exploited when there is a demand for it.⁷¹ He, therefore, attributes the shortage of short stories in Ethiopia to the lack of a market to buy the works produced by a writer. The fact remains that a writer is induced to write short stories only if he is certain that there will be readers to buy his literary pieces. Due to the shortage of publishing houses, a writer is often his own publisher. Publishing is costly; consequently, a writer will not dare to spend a considerable amount of money on something that will not bring about financial rewards.

There is no doubt that the traditional bias against the short

story has put a pressure on the publishers, who are inclined to refuse a literary piece if they think that it will not be readily accepted by the society. Before publishing any material, publishers have to assure themselves whether it will sell or not; in other words, they have to predict the reaction of the readers towards a certain work of art. It then seems logical to assume that publishers, who would not like to incur any financial loss, do not give equal importance to the short story as they do to the novel, for they know that a short story will find little acceptance in the society. Many Ethiopian writers, therefore, avoid the short story because they say it is an extremely demanding genre which brings very little financial rewards to the writer.

One important factor which also hindered the development of the short story in Ethiopia is the shortage of magazines and newspapers that would buy short stories from writers and, thus, encourage them to write. Nowadays, the only magazines that publish short stories are Yekatit and Sādāy. There is only one newspaper which publishes short stories, Yezarayitu Ethiopia.

If we look at the condition of the short story during the second half of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century in the world, it is the availability, in the number, of magazines and newspapers that enhanced the development of the short story. The short story became a necessary commodity during the twentieth century world because newspapers and magazines published them in great numbers. As noted by John Hadfield in the book entitled Modern Short Stories, Sommerset Maugham contends that if newspapers and magazines did not publish short stories, they would not have been written.⁷²

In other words, the availability of newspapers and magazines is of paramount importance to the development of the short story within a given country.

Ato Dābābā Seifu of the Addis Ababa University attributes the shortage of short stories in Ethiopia to the lack of magazines and newspapers to publish them. He says, " ... Another hindrance to the development of the short story in Ethiopia is that there are no magazines to encourage people to write short stories."⁷³ This view is also shared by Ato Sibhat Gābrā Igziabher, who says that the condition which favoured the development of the short story in England, in France and in the United States was the abundance of magazines.⁷⁴ As a matter of fact, the development of the short story in Ethiopia has been hampered because the condition itself was not conducive to short story writing, namely, the shortage of newspapers and magazines to buy the short stories as a commodity for the market.

Speaking about the condition of the short story in Ethiopia, Ato Paulos Nōñño says that the shortage of short stories is also caused by the nature of the short story itself which, he says, is a difficult genre.⁷⁵ This refers to the intricate structure of the short story which limits our amateur writers, who lack a thorough knowledge about the form. The short story is a demanding genre.

First of all, the length of the short story, which should not exceed fifteen thousand words, limits a writer who, unless very well acquainted with this genre, thinks that he cannot say all he would like to say within this limit. It is not only the length of the short story which limits writers, but also the fact that it cannot deal with

more than one major incident or aspect of life he would like to depict. Rust Hills comments on this major aspect of the short story saying that "... No writer can expect to celebrate his friends, destroy his enemies, push his predelictions and prejudices, air his grievances, propound his theories of sociology or psychology or politics or religion or whatever-all in one short story ..."⁷⁶ In other words, what Rust Hills implies is that the limitation of space in the short story compels a writer to select the particular moment of time he would like to depict, and this requires discipline and skill.

The short story is a compact literary form which is not easily manageable in the hands of our amateur writers who lack the training in the genre. Choosing the particular moment of time the writer would like to reflect in his work is not the only requirement. Another essential prerequisite is careful planning on how best he can render it. Narrative skill is, therefore, required from the writer, for "... Unlike the novelist, the short story writer cannot rely on the cumulative effect of chapter after chapter ..."⁷⁷ A short story writer cannot simply content himself with reporting the particular event in which he is interested. He must arrange the major episode into a plot the various parts of which should fit together to create harmony, for the attractiveness of the short story emanates from this harmony. The short story writer cannot afford to include superfluous elements in his literary piece; consequently, "... his writing must be more taut, highly charged and rigorously controlled."⁷⁸ This, however, is an exacting task for our inexperienced writers who lack a mastery of the genre. Condensation is, therefore, one of the essentials of short

story writing. While condensing his material, the writer should be careful not to make the story appear incomplete by over-pruning of significant details. The plot should be woven in such a way that every element in the story should help the writer to bring out the single effect he wishes to impart to the reader.

A writer can successfully achieve the single effect only if he has controlled his thoughts in such a way that he has stuck to the significant details. The single effect is the element Edgar Allan Poe stressed in the short story. It is this element which gives the short story the appearance of a finished work of art. If a short story lacks this essential quality, it will fail to satisfy the reader. This is one of the reasons why many readers believe that the short story is an unsatisfying literary piece. In the book entitled Great British Short Stories, Edward and Elizabeth Huberman assert, "... But to succeed as a work of art, it cannot seem broken off, incomplete; it must give the impression of a whole, rounded and finished; that moment of time in which the characters move must illuminate their lives."⁷⁹ Unity is, therefore, a vital quality that short story writers should achieve in their works.

Difficulty is also involved in delineating characters in a short story. The details about the characters must be revealing in spite of the limitation of length in a short story. Many writers, however, mistakenly believe that characters cannot be fully developed in a short story. The illumination of the characters' lives depends, however, on how selective writers are in providing the significant details.

The short story is, therefore, a complex literary form requiring a discipline and deep knowledge about the form. Many of our writers, however, lack these qualities. We can, therefore, assume that one of the factors which limited the number of Ethiopian short stories is the elaborate structural organization of the short story, which is beyond the capacity of our amateur writers.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this research work is to introduce the Ethiopian short story to the public by highlighting some of its major characteristics. Although the short story is about one hundred and twenty-five years old, it was introduced to Ethiopia only during the nineteen fifties. Therefore, this literary medium is unexploited, and little known to the Ethiopian society.

Being an elaborate literary form, the short story is said to be the most demanding genre. Its scope is limited to the presentation of a situation centering around a major incident and a few characters. If writers avoid the short story, it is either because they think that its length prevents them from exploring the different aspects of life, or because it is a difficult genre.

The themes reflected in the Ethiopian short stories mirror the Ethiopian society through its various stages of dialectical development. Generally speaking, religion is not emphasized in Ethiopian short stories. The early short stories reflect the traditional aspect of love and marriage in the feudal society. Young people were under the strict control of parents in matters concerning love and marriage. We also observe that as time went on, young people began to be liberated from the restraining traditions of the feudal set up. The main emphasis in Ethiopian short stories is on social criticism, that is, the criticism of the old regime and the social injustices that resulted from the feudo-capitalist system, namely, nepotism, slavery, prostitution and urbanization problems. Post-revolutionary short stories reflect the victory of the Ethiopian Revolution through class

struggle between the working class and the bourgeois minority. If love and marriage sometimes appear as dominant themes, they are treated with a new revolutionary insight; the feudal setting is no longer there to control the lovers.

Though the Ethiopian short story is only at an early stage, writers who have been influenced by foreign literature have attempted to adapt some of the literary techniques used by foreign writers such as the slice-of-life technique or the surprise-ending technique. Some short stories on the other hand, follow the style of primitive fiction with an emphasis on the narrative method. Common also among Ethiopian short stories is the confessional style. In the confessional style, the narrative by the central character is presented in the form of a letter containing the confessions of the narrator. We have also distinguished short stories with a tight plot though they are not numerous.

It has been shown that the short story is the least exploited genre in Ethiopia, and that writers do not appear to be fully familiar with its requirements. We have seen that the traditional bias against the short story has been a hindrance to both writers and publishers whose tendency is to reject a literary work which is not a source of income. Finally, the conditions have not favoured the development of the short story in Ethiopia where magazines and newspapers are lacking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The short story is an unexploited genre in Ethiopia; consequently, the magnitude of this problem should be studied, and measures should be taken to create a favourable condition for its development.

An intensive course on the short story should be offered at the University. This course should be supplemented by extramural activities in which young writers should be engaged. Therefore, a writing workshop center should be established, and the proper environment should be created for the formation of future short story writers. Initiating publications of literary magazines and encouraging young writers to produce short stories is an urgent task.

Steps should also be taken to deal with the traditional bias of the society towards the short story. The elimination of this bias requires the joint effort of the Ministry of Information and National Guidance and the Ministry of Culture and Sports in the preparation of short story reading programmes through the mass-media.

The translation of well-known foreign short stories should also be encouraged in order to help the society realize the power of the short story.

NOTES

¹"Short Story," World-Book Encyclopedia (Chicago: Field Interprises Educational Corporation, 1964), XVII, p. 354.

²H.E. Bates, The Modern Short Story: A Critical Survey (Boston: The Writers Inc., 1965), p. 15.

³Rust Hills, Writing in General and the Short Story in Particular (New York: Bantam Books Inc., 1979), p. 66.

⁴H.E. Bates, p. 17.

⁵Mark Schorer, The Story: A Critical Anthology (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1964), p. 3.

⁶H.E. Bates, p. 16.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Mary Rohrberger, Samuel H. Woods and Bernard F. Dukore, An Introduction to Literature (New York: Random House Inc., 1968), p. 20.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹H.E. Bates, p. 19.

¹²Ibid. p. 20.

¹³Ibid. p. 21.

¹⁴James R. Frakes and Isadore Trashen, eds., Short Fiction: A Critical Collection (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1959) p. 2.

¹⁵Encyclopedia Britannica, 1976, XVI, p. 714.

¹⁶H.E. Bates, p. 29.

- ¹⁷Ibid. p. 26.
- ¹⁸Ibid. p. 34.
- ¹⁹Ibid. p. 78.
- ²⁰Sibhat Gäbrä Igziabher, "Abelin Fälläga," VI (Säne, 1966), pp. 45-48.
- ²¹Amarä Mammo, Ya Iwnät Billicita (Addis Abäba: Commercial Printing Press, 1967), pp. 47-58.
- ²²P'aulos Nonnō, Dibliqliq (Addis Abäbä: Birhanina Selam Printing Press, 1957), pp. 54-76.
- ²³Birhanu Zärihun, Birr Ambar Säbbäräliwo (Addis Abäba: Commercial Printing Press, 1960).
- ²⁴Birr Ambar Säbbäräliwo refers to the sexual act between the virgin bride and the bridegroom.
- ²⁵Täsfaye Gässässä, Mätäkkäža (Addis Abäba: Artistic Printing Press, 1967).
- ²⁶Appendix A, p. 69.
- ²⁷Alämayahu Fättänä, Yä Simmet Mästawät (Addis Abäba: Commercial Printing Press, 1961), pp. 70-92.
- ²⁸Thomas Leiper Kane, Ethiopian Literature in Amharic (Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), p. 86.
- ²⁹Taddässä Libän, Lelaw Mängäd (Addis Abäba: Commercial Printing Press, 1952), pp. 43-53.
- ³⁰Hailä Iyäsus Fiqadu, Kä Ingidih Wädih Adära Indaydaggäm (Addis Abäba: Commercial Printing Press, 1953), pp. 129-142.
- ³¹Fiqre Tolössa, Wälälä (Addis Abäba: United Printing Press, 1964), pp. 185-194.
- ³²Täsfaye Gässässä, Mätäkkäža, pp. 97-118.

- ³³Appendix A, p. 66.
- ³⁴"Wäy Addis Abäba, Wäy Arada Hoy!" Yekatit, III and IV (Miazia - Ginbot, 1972).
- ³⁵Yekatit, IV (Ginbot, 1972), p. 24.
- ³⁶Ibid. p. 28.
- ³⁷Ibid.
- ³⁸Thomas Kane, Ethiopian Literature in Amharic, p. 144.
- ³⁹Sälämon Lämna, "Yä Immet T'aye Engurguro," Yekatit, II (Tiqämt, 1973), pp. 23-26.
- ⁴⁰Mark Schorer, The Story: A Critical Anthology, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1964), p. 113.
- ⁴¹Abarra Lämna, "Ärä Sintu Alläfä," Qum Nägär, VI and VII (Miazia - Ginbot, 1967 and Mäskäräm, 1968).
- ⁴²"Qän Iskialf Yaläfal," Goh, VII (Säne, 1967), pp. 27 - 29.
- ⁴³Sibhat Gäbra Igziabher, "Zär Kä Liguam Yisäbal," Mänän, I (Hidar, 1966), pp. 40-42.
- ⁴⁴_____, "Fraš Addaš," Qum Nägär, V (Miazia - Ginbot, 1967), pp. 30-32.
- ⁴⁵_____, "Elin Dingay Yaräkk," Qum Nägär, VI (Hamle - Nähasse, 1967), pp. 10-11, 19, 24.
- ⁴⁶Qum Nägär, V (Miazia - Ginbot, 1967), p. 31.
- ⁴⁷Appendix F., p. 79*
- ⁴⁸Mulatu Gäbru, "Yä Käffaw Abbat Däbdabbe" Mänän, VII (Ginbot, 1965), pp. 40-41.
- ⁴⁹_____, "Kä Wähni Bet Yätägänä Däbdabbe," Mänän, III (Tirr, 1965) pp. 40-41.

50 _____, "Yä Biriktait Däbdabbe," Mänän, II (Tirr, 1966), pp. 34-35.

51 Ibid. p. 34.

52 Appendix C, p. 71.

53 Amarä Mammo, Yä Iwnät Billicita, pp. 41-42.

54 Ibid. p. 43

55 Ibid. p. 37.

56 Ibid. pp. 45-46.

57 Appendix C, p. 71.

58 Taddässä Libän, Lelaw Mängäd, pp. 15-31.

59 Thomas Leiper Kane, Ethiopian Literature in Amharic, pp. 16-17.

60 Ibid. p. 17.

61 James R. Frakes and Tsadore Traschen, eds., p. 11.

62 Rust Hills, Writing in General and the Short Story in Particular, pp. 1-2.

63 Wubišät Alämu, "Sigibgäbu Näggade," Yezareyitu Ethiopia (Miazia-Ginbot, 1970). p. 7.

64 _____, "Yan Yä Dästa Minc Layyāw," Yezareyitu Ethiopia (Yekatit 17, 1971), pp. 7, 9, 11.

65 Appendix C, p. 72.

66 Appendix D, p. 75.

67 Appendix A, p. 68.

68 Mary Rohrberger, Samuel H. Woods and Bernard F. Dukore, An Introduction to Literature, p. 20.

⁶⁹Rust Hills, Writing in General and the Short Story in Particular, p. 141.

⁷⁰John Hadfield, ed., Modern Short Stories (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1964), p. VI.

⁷¹Appendix A, p. 70.

⁷²John Hadfield, ed., Modern Short Stories, p. vi.

⁷³Appendix B, p. 72.

⁷⁴Appendix F, p. 80.

⁷⁵Appendix D, p. 74.

⁷⁶Rust Hills, Writing in General and the Short Story in Particular, p. 146.

⁷⁷John Hadfield, Modern Short Stories, p. vii.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Edward and Elizabeth Huberman, Great British Short Stories (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1968). p. ix.

⁸⁰The Interview with Ato Tās̄faye Gās̄sās̄sā was conducted on February, 1980.

⁸¹The Interview with Ato Dābbābā Seifu was conducted on February, 1980.

⁸²The Interview with Ato Amarā Mamma was conducted on April 11, 1980.

⁸³The Interview with Ato Paulos Nōñño was conducted on April 23, 1980.

⁸⁴The Interview with Ato Assāfa Arāgahān was conducted on May 3rd, 1980.

⁸⁵The Interview with Ato Sibhat Gābrā Igziabher was conducted on August 21, 1980.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abärra Lamma. "Arä Sintu Alläfa," Qum Nägär, VI (Miazia - Ginbot, 1967), pp. 37-39.
- _____. _____, Qum Nägär, VII (Mäskäräm, 1968), pp. 36-37.
- Alamayähu Fättänä. Yä Simmet Mästawät. Addis Abäba: Commercial Printing Press, 1961.
- Amarä Mammo. Yä Fwnät Billičita. Addis Abäba: Commercial Printing Press, 1967.
- Bates, H. E. The Modern Short Story: A Critical Survey. Boston: The Writer Inc., 1965.
- Birhanu Zärihun. Birr Ambar Säbbäräliwo. Addis Abäba: Commercial Printing Press, 1960.
- Frakes, James R. and Isadore Traschen. eds., Short Fiction: A Critical Collection. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1964.
- Figre Tolossa. Wäläla. Addis Abäba: United Printing Press, 1964.
- Hadfield, John. ed., Modern Short Stories. London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1964.
- Hailä Iyäsus Fiqadu. Kä Ingidih Wädih Adära Indayddägäm. Addis Abäba: Commercial Printing Press, 1953.
- Hills, Rust. Writing in General and the Short story in Particular. New York: Bantam Books Inc., 1979.
- Huberman, Edward and Elizabeth. eds., Great British Short Stories. New York: Bantam Books Inc., 1968.
- Kane, Thomas Leiper. Ethiopian Literature in Amharic. Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975.
- Mulatu Gäbru. "Kä Wähni Bet Yätägäñä Däbdabbe," Mänän, III (Tirr, 1965), pp. 40-41.
- _____. "Yä Käffaw Abbat Däbdabbe," Mänän, VII (Ginbot, 1965), pp. 40-41.
- _____. "Yä Biriktait Däbdabbe," Mänän, II (Tirr, 1966), pp. 34-35.
- Paulos Nöñño. Dibliqliq. Addis Abäba: Birhanina Selam Printing Press, 1957.

"Qān Īskialf Yalāfal," Goh, VII (Sāne, 1967), pp. 27-29.

Rohrberger, Mary, Samuel H. Woods and Bernard F. Dukore. An Introduction to Literature. New York: Random House Inc., 1968.

Sälāmon Lāmma. "Yā Īmmet T'aye Ingurguro," Yekatit, II (Tiqimt, 1973), pp. 23-26.

Sibhat Gābrā Igziabher. "Abelin Fāllāga," Mānān, VI (Sāne, 1966), pp. 45-48.

_____. "Elin Dingay Yarākk," Qum Nāgār, VI (Hamle-Nehasse, 1967), pp. 10-11, 19, 24.

_____. "Fraš Addās," Qum Nāgār, V (Miazia - Ginbot, 1967), pp. 30-32.

_____. "Zār Kā Liguam Yisibal," Mānān, I (Hidar, 1966), pp. 40-42.

Schorer, Mark ed., The Story: A Critical Anthology. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1964.

"Short Story," World-Book Encyclopedia XVII (Field, Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1964), 354.

"Short Story," Encyclopedia Britannica, 1976, XVI, pp. 712, 714.

Taddāssā Libān, Lelaw Māngād. Addis Abāba: Commercial Printing Press, 1952.

Tāsfaye Gāssāssā. Mātākkāža. Addis Abāba: Artistic Printing Press, 1967.

"Tullu Forsa," Goh, IX (Nāhassa, 1968), pp. 26-27, 22.

Wubisat Alāmu. "Sīgibgibu Nāggade," Yezareyitu Ethiopia, (Miazia 28, 1970), p. 7.

_____. _____, Yezareyitu Ethiopia, (Ginbot 12, 1970), p. 7.

_____. "Yan Yā Dāsta Minč' Layyāw," Yezareyitu Ethiopia, (Yekatit 17, 1971), pp. 7, 9, 11.

"Wāy Addis Abāba, Wāy Arada Hoy!" Yekatit, III (Magabit, 1972), pp. 26-29.

_____. _____, Yekatit, IV (Ginbot, 1972), pp. 23-27, 30, 32.

APPENDIX A

Interview with Ato Täsfaye Gässässä⁸⁰

INTERVIEWER: What is the theme in the short story entitled, "Ai Edile"?

ATO TÄSFAYE: In the short story entitled, "Ai Edile", I have tried to show the colour prejudice that existed in the feudal society. I have also tried to depict the mutual sympathy that exists between people who belong to the lower social stratum. Being herself looked down upon by the society, the prostitute Atitaggab cannot refuse the client Awkašo Irporu, a dark-skinned boy. Awkašo Irporu pays Atitaggab's service with a lottery ticket because he is broke. This detail is used to show that it is improbable whether Atitaggab will ever get rid of her present hated occupation as it is improbable whether she will ever win the lot.

INTERVIEWER: What is the theme in the story entitled, "Rabu"?

ATO TASFAYE: This story is an example of platonic love. Aklilä fails to win Sige because he never demonstrated his love outwardly. In the 1940's, when co-education was not common, the relationship between boys and girls was condemned by the society; consequently, love was not something well-known to young men and women, who were not yet liberated in this respect.

INTERVIEWER: What is the theme in "Mäbratu Sitäfa"?

ATO TASFAYE: This is another instance of platonic love. Mabratu fails to win Maqdas because he is too timid to approach her. Later on, he goes abroad for education where he meets a Jewish lady; how-

ever, he once again fails in his attempt to win the love of a lady for the same reason. In this story, we also notice the effect of bourgeois education on the individual. Mábrātu put an end to his desperate life because he was not able to make up for his emotional failure. The influence of bourgeois education is such that it does not enable the individual to be practical and realistic. Instead, it led Mábrātu to waste his life in daydreams about a lady he could never win.

INTERVIEWER: What is the theme in "Yá Immete Činina Yá Mákinawa Anjät"?

ATO TÁSFAYE: This is the story of a slave-boy, Louis Darato, who resents the emotional change manifested towards him by his masters after a baby is born to them, for Louis used to be pampered by his masters prior to the birth of Mammuš. Louis, therefore, concludes that his masters never loved him in the real sense of the word. This leads to his frustration and eventual madness. And in a moment of temporary madness, he murders a postman, the owner of a car because the car, a man-made object, reminds Louis of the artificial love his masters used to manifest towards him.

INTERVIEWER: What is more appealing to you, drama or the short story?

ATO TÁSFAYE: Drama is more appealing to me, and I have written many plays. There is also the question of which genre fits best for a certain theme; besides, drama brings financial rewards, it is a source of income whereas short stories are less rewarding financially.

INTERVIEWER: It is said that the short story is an unexploited genre in Ethiopia. How far is this true? What do you think the reasons for this are?

ATO TĀSFAYE: The short story is not the only unexploited genre. This applies to the other genres too. The short story is an unexploited genre. This is something related to the economic and educational level of the society. A literary type becomes exploited when there is a demand for it. There is a widespread illiteracy in Ethiopia; therefore, a limited number of readers. There is also the financial question: publishing short stories is not as rewarding as publishing plays.

APPENDIX B

Interview with Ato Dababa Seifu⁸¹

INTERVIEWER: What do you think are the general themes reflected in the Ethiopian short stories?

ATO DĀBĀBĀ: Ato Amara Mamo's short stories are based on religion. Sibhat Gābrā Igziabher's short stories, which are sophisticated, are based on religion, marriage, prostitution and social inequality. In "Mābratu Sitāfa", Tās faye Gāssāssā treats the case of an educated young man who becomes useless, and his end is tragic. In one of his short stories, Taddāssā Libān depicts the alienation of an educated young lady resulting from contact with Western civilization.

INTERVIEWER: Under what socio-political context did the short story start in Ethiopia?

ATO DĀBĀBĀ: The short story was introduced in Ethiopia during a period when civilization was becoming widespread, and the old social values were beginning to be replaced with new ones.

INTERVIEWER: It is said that the short story is an unexploited genre in Ethiopia. How far true is this? If so, what could be the possible reasons?

ATO DĀBĀBĀ: It is true to say that the short story is an unexploited literary type in Ethiopia. This is because the short story is the last genre to have been introduced in Ethiopia. The short story was not considered as an important genre; besides, the public is not familiar with short stories. There are no publishing houses in

Ethiopia, and very often, a writer is his own publisher. This, of course, involves him in heavy debts. Another hindrance to the development of the short story in Ethiopia is that there are no magazines to encourage people to write.

INTERVIEWER: What will the content of Ethiopian short stories be after the Revolution?

ATO DĀBĀBĀ: As depicted in the short story entitled, "Tullu Forsa," written in 1968, the Ethiopian short stories written after the Revolution will reflect the economy and culture of the proletariat class.

APPENDIX C

Interview with Ato Amará Mammo⁸²

INTERVIEWER: What is the theme reflected in the short story entitled, "Mādosāw"?

ATO AMARÁ: This short story was written for an international competition. The winners were myself and a South African. The setting of "Mādošaw," is Germany. This short story is based on the Reformation. The principal characters are Luther and a carpenter, who is a fictional character. My aim in introducing the carpenter, Fritz, in the story is to show that it is not only a renown person like Luther, who can take part in a historical event, but also an unknown and uneducated carpenter. This story was written in revolt against the traditional conception of Luther, the hero. In this story, Luther would not have become famous for his edicts if it were not for the carpenter, Fritz, who helped Luther hang the edicts at the church door.

INTERVIEWER: What is the theme reflected in the short story, "Yá Iwnāt Billičita"?

ATO AMARÁ: This short story reflects the conflict between the traditional christian religion and the new evangelical faith in Ethiopia. The character, Kābbādā, is converted to the new religion. His wife, however, who believes that there is no other true religion than the orthodox faith entreats him to come back to the old faith. She fails to understand Kābbādā's deed. One day, however as she perceives Kābbādā in the prison compound, she is amazed by the happiness reflected in her husband. Therefore, she wonders whether

Kābbādā does not have the truth in him.

INTERVIEWER: What is the theme in the short story entitled "Yā Qaličaw Kaddami"?

ATO AMARĀ: I wrote this short story as an attempt to depict the conflict between the traditional belief in witchcraft and the new missionary religion.

INTERVIEWER: Your short stories are good from the technical point of view. Do you think that the Ethiopian short stories fulfil the requirements of the short story?

ATO AMARĀ: Taddāssā Libān's short stories are good short stories. Sibhat Gābrā Igziabher has his own method of writing. His short stories are rather tales. Paulos Nōñño has also written good short stories. But generally speaking, the form suffers. Although the content is substantial, most of the Ethiopian short stories lack a plot. The writers do not seem to have mastered the technique of short story writing.

INTERVIEWER: It is generally believed that the short story is an unexploited genre in Ethiopia. How far applicable is this statement regarding the Ethiopian short stories? What do you think the reasons are?

ATO AMARĀ: The short story is an unexploited genre in Ethiopia because it was introduced only recently, and writers are not familiar with this literary type. Many pieces of short stories come to us, but these are rejected because they are not well-written. To say that the lack of short stories is due to the shortage of publishing

houses is wrong. A good short story should have a style that attracts the reader. Ethiopians do like to read stories based on their country and tradition. There is no doubt, therefore, that if there were good short stories, there would be a large market.

Another reason why the short story is unfamiliar is that high-school students are not encouraged to read and analyze short stories. It is only at the university level that they are introduced to the short story.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think the content of the Ethiopian short stories will be in the future:

ATO AMARÁ: The Ethiopian short stories in the future will be based on the Revolution.

APPENDIX D

Interview with Ato Paulos Noño⁸³

INTERVIEWER: What is the theme reflected in your short story entitled "Mato Shih Birr"?

ATO PAULOS: Many people say that if they win 100,000 dollars at a lottery, they will do such and such things. At the time this story was written, a lot was worth 100,000 birr. The other aspect of the story is that time came when the traditional concept of blood could be replaced with money so that money became a means of social advancement.

INTERVIEWER: Humour seems to be the dominant characteristic in your short stories. What do you think is the role of humour in short stories?

ATO PAULOS: A good fictional writing should incorporate three things; otherwise, it cannot be called a good writing. The style should be good, it should educate, and finally, it should either amuse, or arouse sympathy in the reader. Similarly, I have used humour in order to entertain the reader.

INTERVIEWER: The short story is an unexploited genre in Ethiopia. Do you agree with this? How would you explain this situation?

ATO PAULOS: It is true that the number of Ethiopian short stories is small. We have to bear in mind that the short story is a difficult genre requiring precision and economy from the writer. It is not a reading public that we lack, but the question is what will

the readers read. Readers like to read materials that arouse interest. They don't find such materials. What is written is poor from the point of view of technique. We have a publishing house; however, there is nothing to be published.

APPENDIX E

Interview with Ato Assáfa Arāgahān⁸⁴

INTERVIEWER: What do you think are the general themes reflected in the Ethiopian short stories?

ATO ASSÁFA: During the pre-revolutionary period, the most common themes reflected in the Ethiopian short stories were love and marriage, and conflict between the educated and the uneducated people. Most of these short stories were didactic. After the Revolution, the Ethiopian short stories reflect class struggle, that is, social criticism.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the Ethiopian short stories fulfil the requirements of the short story?

ATO ASSÁFA: Some of the Ethiopian short stories are good from the literary point of view. If we take European literature as a measuring stick, the Ethiopian short stories may not fulfil the requirements of the short story. I don't think it is justifiable to take European literature as a measuring stick. We have to take into consideration the situation under which Ethiopian literature developed. Amharic literature is a developing literature. Technically, the Ethiopian short stories may be unrefined, but this is manifested in all genres.

INTERVIEWER: Under what socio-political context did the short story start in Ethiopia?

ATO ASSÁFA: It was a period of stable political situation in which the central government had consolidated itself. There was no overt political activity apart from the students' movement and Mángistu Naway's attempted coup. Bureaucracy was highly consolidated. The feudal system manifested itself socially, economically and politically. It was a time during which education was acquiring importance as it was used as a means for social advancement. Old values such as the "Atint" concept were beginning to be replaced with new ones.

INTERVIEWER: It is generally stated that the short story is an unexploited genre. How far do you think this applies to Ethiopian short stories? If so, what do you think the reasons are?

ATO ASSÁFA: The short story is an unexploited genre in Ethiopia. Prior to Taddássá Libán's short stories, no short stories were written, whereas we find a bulk of poetry as well as novels. In South Africa, however, most of the writings consist of short stories. The reason for this being that South Africa is a country of turmoil where writers cannot afford the time to produce long literary works. In Ethiopia, on the other hand, the period after the Italian war and before the Revolution, was more or less a period of social security, and the Ethiopian writers who could afford the time to produce long works wrote novels which can accommodate many aspects. Another reason would be that the short story is a new genre all over the world, and it started much later in Ethiopia.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think the content of the Ethiopian short stories will be in the future?

ATO ASSÁFA: Ethiopian writers always felt the need to bring about change in the society. Some writers were reformists whereas others wished a radical change. After the Revolution, the Ethiopian writers reflected the radical change that took place in the society. Literary works in the future will be used to show the socio-political contradiction that exists in the society.

APPENDIX F

Interview with Ato Sibhat Gábrá Igziabher⁸⁵

INTERVIEWER: Your short stories seem to be based on the slice-of-life technique. Was it your particular aim to use the slice-of-life technique?

ATO SIBHAT: I do not have any idea about the slice-of-life technique. I have read Tchekhov, and I believe that a short story writer should try to represent reality as it is. I believe that no one equals Tchekhov in doing this. My aim as a writer is to represent a given situation in life, but not to interpret it, thus, imposing my meaning on the reader.

INTERVIEWER: Your short stories seem to be based on a given philosophy. Would you please like to express your philosophy if you have any?

ATO SIBHAT: My philosophy is to see things as they really are in life, and I believe that my role as a writer should not be to impose my personal philosophy on the readers. If I do so, I will fail to be objective.

INTERVIEWER: It is said that the short story is an unexploited genre in Ethiopia. Do you agree with this? If so, what do you think the possible causes are?

ATO SIBHAT: Only very few short stories have been written in Ethiopia. The cause for this is the censorship which discouraged talented people from exploiting their urge to write.

The second reason would be the lack of magazines in Ethiopia. In England, France and in the United States, the condition which favoured the development of the short story was the abundance of magazines. If we had magazines, those who possess the talent might have been pushed to write short stories.

D E C L A R A T I O N

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

Name: Olga Yazbec

Signature: _____

Place: Institute of Language Studies, A.A. University

Date of submission: June 12, 1981.