Political Implications Depicted in the Tigrigna Satirical Speeches of Wedi Fante

Tesfamichael Hailemeryam Yohannes
MA in Literature in English, Lecturer at Adigrat University, College of Social Science and Humanities, Department of English Language and Literature

Abstract: This paper intends to analyze the political implications depicted in the Tigrigna satirical speeches of Wedi Fante (a man who authorized the satirical speeches under discussion). Interpreting the satirical speeches, showing their political implications, and identifying the key depicted political issues are also specific objectives of this paper. Moreover, documentary analysis was employed to come with the addressed findings. Hence, the Derg’s cruelness, the Italian’s entire desire of colonizing Ethiopia, and the Cuban’s military support to Derg are depicted in the satirical speeches of Wedi Fante.

Keywords: Political Implication, Satirical Speeches

1. Introduction

This paper intends to analyze the political implications reflected in the Tigrigna satirical speeches of Wedi Fante (a man who authorized the satirical speeches under discussion). It is clearly known that, people use language to communicate among one another and reflect their feelings, philosophies; cultures etc. for that matter, based on its purposes/functions, linguistic scholars classify language in different categories. Diyanny (2000-436) for example classifies language functionally as follows: “language can be conventionally classified as either literal or figurative. When we speak literally, we mean exactly what each word conveys; when we use figurative language, we mean something other than the actual meaning of the words.” Bonn (2010-62), also states these two categories of language in this way: “figurative language is the opposite of literal language, in which every word is truthful, accurate, and free of exaggeration or embellishment.” In addition, according to Berhanu (2009-194) “Figurative language gives new meaning to ordinary language.” And as to Melakneh (2008-213) figurative language is a type of language that “forces the reader to make an imaginative leap in order to comprehend an author’s point.” Based on the definitions of these scholars, it is possible to say that the figurative language is a type of language in which ideas are expressed through unusual way or opposite to what the words actually say, and expressing and understanding ideas through figurative language is not so easy as in literal/communicative language. The figurative speeches such as, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, and irony (whose inclusive genre is satire) are some types of figurative language.

Childs and Fowler (2006-211), describe satire as: “in it (satire), the author attacks some object using as his some means wit or humor that is either fantastic or absurd. Denunciation itself is not satire, nor, of course, is grotesque humour, but the genre allows for a considerable preponderance of either one or the other.” In addition, Baldick (2001-228) also defines satire as the language that “exposes the failings of individuals, institutions, or societies to ridicule and to scorn.” Similarly, Abrahams (1981:167-8) defines and shows identically satire from the comic speech whose final destination is laughter in this way: “satire derides that is, it uses laughter as weapon, and against the butt existing outside the work itself. That butt may be an individual, a class, an institution, a nation, or the whole race of man.” Besides, As cited in Childs and Fowler (2006-211), Frye (1957) says “satire demands at least a content which the society recognizes as grotesque and at least an implicit moral standard.” Hence, based on the definitions and explanations given to satire, it is understandable that though satire provokes situational laughter, its final product is beyond laughter that is social, political, economical, or even human-racial critique.

As sighted in Childs and Fowler (2006-211), Frye (1957) classifies satire in three phases that are: Horatian, Menippean, and Juvenalian. Hence, Horatian is taken as low-norm satire. This phase of satire stands against the aspects which represent the unjust ruling society like, anomalies, follies, and crimes through the employment of plain, common sense, and conventional eiren.

Minipean satire on the other hand criticizes the setting of ideas, generalizations, theories, and dogmas over against the life that they are supposed to explain through the employment of Minipean cynicism. The third phase of satire is Juvenalian satire. This is taken as high-norm satire. In this phase of satire, the world is presented as stripped of its social conventions and a locus of filth and ferocity. Juvenalian satire abandons common sense with slight shift of vision and perspective.”

Generally speaking, figurative languages as a whole, and satire in specific, require artistic qualities like other works of literature. For this matter, any standard language which has its own speakers is supposed to serve its community figuratively beyond to literally.

Tigrigna language is then one among the languages which are currently in this standard. This language is primarily and widely spoken or used in the east African countries: Tigray regional state of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Hence, these societies have been using this language in oral and written manners through literal and figurative languages. As a reflection to this, in a specific sense, in different times, satirical speeches
have been being authorized with the implications of different socio-political and economic issues of the society in context. Though they aren’t yet documented, recognized, and researched, satirical speeches have been being preferably used by the society to express their opposition during the political instability, to preach about moral values, to attack individuals for different personal reasons etc since ancient times. Speeches of “Wedi Fante” (the son of Fante) for example are taken as satirical speeches with different socio-political and individual implications in Tigray Ethiopia around Adigrat town in 1980s. During those times, the satirical speeches were known around Adigrat for the reason that the author of the speeches “Wedi Fante” was living in that place and presenting them himself orally. However, currently, they have got the opportunity of addressing anywhere since they have been compiled in one book by Selemon in 2008 E.C./2016 G.C.

Who is Wedi Fante?

Yifter Fenta Nigusie was born in eastern zone Tigray, Ethiopia in the specific place of Keshhat in 1923 E.C. He was physically strong and graceful man. Though he was not educated, Yifter had artistic skill of authorizing poems/traditional lyrics. In addition, he was good at performing to the traditional music of his village especially Kebero/traditional type of drum. Besides, he was making the youth of his village fun with his satirical joke speeches. Of those things, Yifter was very known through over his village, and he was loved by many young females of Keshhat.

1943 E.C. was year of love story for Yifter. In that year, he failed in deep love with the girl named Mitslal Halefom who came from other village along with her family. And, she loved him too. But, because of the conspiracy that had been made by the women who loved Yifter, it was a must for Mitslal to leave that village together with her family. At the end of the day, she told her decision to Yifter, and he also told her that he would go with her to Asmara, Eritrea that night. Unfortunately, when Yifter had gone to the place of their appointment late in the next day, he met his love made suicide.

That time after, of the grief of his love, Yifter continued living on the streets of Adigrat town changing his name to Wedi Fante (the son of Fante), and he was viewed by the society with the sense of craziness. Till the end of his life, Wedi Fante was spending all his time in the Siwa (traditional alcoholic drink) houses of the town expressing the abhorrence that he had to the Derg regime (the ruling political party of Ethiopia in 1980s) through his satirical speeches as well as making fun to the society with other joke speeches. Finally, Wedi Fante died on the 14th of January, 1976 E.C at the age of 53 (Selemon, 2008:1-27).

1.1 Statement of the problem

It is not questionable that for the development and promotion of any language, conducting papers on its linguistic structure and literature continuously has invaluable role. For this reason, the researcher has got initiation to contribute his own through carrying out this paper on Tigrigna literature. Beyond to this, as far as the researcher’s searching, the focus of the papers which have been conducted on Tigrigna literature so far is on prose fiction, verse, proverbs, and folktales. He has gotten no paper done on satirical speeches. So, the researcher strongly believes that literature of any language develops safely and fully if all of its genres are equally assessed and analyzed in different angles. As a result, he has decided to put his foot print in filling this gap.

In line to this, unlike to the prose fiction and written verse, satirical speeches are easily addressable to any type of people (young- old, educated, uneducated) since they are commonly presented orally. In other words, most of the time, the addressee of these speeches is the society at the whole. But, the problem is in understanding the implied/implicit theme of the satirical speeches. It is observable that, many persons recognize only to the literal part of the speeches rather than to their connotative language. It is to mean that these persons perceive the satirical speeches as mere joke speeches. So, the researcher strongly believes that analyzing and interpreting satirical speeches could be taken as a practical tool of creating awareness about the functions of these speeches.

Similarly, because of the lack of awareness towards the satirical speeches, the authors of these speeches are perceived as crazy by the society. For example, according to Selemon (2008) and Selemon (2009), the two persons Wedi Fante and Mihere Welihans who were known for their oral satirical speeches in the past times in Tigray were nicknamed as crazy. Beyond to this, this problem by itself has been causing another problem which is lack of enthusiasm in collecting/documenting the satirical speeches. As a reflection to this, it is possible to see the time gap in between the authorization and compiling of the satirical speeches of Wedi Fante. The speeches were authorized and told in 1980s G.C. and they were compiled in 2016 G.C. For this reason, the researcher thinks that if Wedi Fante and other authors of these speeches get artistic recognition and honor by promoting their works through practical analysis and interpretation, their works could have priceless functions in reflecting even restructuring the socio-political and other affairs of the society.

Moreover, the satirical speeches of Wedi Fante were compiled recently in 2008 E.C. or 2016 G.C. then, these years, the compiled book of these speeches is one among the widely readable books. So, the researcher thinks that the practical analysis on these satirical speeches could result original and fruitful findings.

Besides, during 1980s, there was political instability in Ethiopia especially in Tigray including to Adigrat the place where Wedi Fante was living. For this reason, the researcher has decided to focus on analyzing the satirical speeches of Wedi Fante which have political implications with the hypothesis that the analysis could be well contextually supported.
1.2 Objectives of the study

1.2.1 General Objective
The general objective of the study is analyzing the political implications of the satirical speeches of Wedi Fante.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives
The specific objectives of the study are:
- Interpreting the satirical speeches
- Showing the political implications of the satirical speeches
- Identifying the major political issues reflected through the satirical speeches.

1.3 Significance of the study
It is likely to have at minimum the following significances to the following bodies:

Firstly, this paper could be used as a means of addressing the intentional theme or political stand of the author to its readers; in other words, it is a professional reaction to the works of the author. Consequently, it is becoming in a position to encourage the compiler too.

Secondly, it might orient the society how linguistic fight is possible through covert meaning when there is political threat in the country. And being as an example, it could also help to expand the angles of understanding or interpreting the figurative language in general.

Thirdly, it could be taken as a sample of the practical analysis on satirical speeches for those who are learners of literature. In line to this, it could also be a reference for those who want to conduct similar papers on satirical speeches or further studies on the speeches of Wedi Fante.

1.4 Delimitation and Limitation of the study
In the compiled book which the satirical speeches of Wedi Fante are contained, there are also philosophical sayings and traditional lyric poems of the same author. But, these works are not included in this paper. In addition, within that compiled book, there are also joke speeches that contain political issues and satirical speeches that have individual and social implications; however, the paper deals only with the satirical speeches that have political implications.

1.5 Methodology of the study
This paper has been done through the qualitative method of study. Hence, the data for discussion (all of the satirical speeches) have been taken from the book entitled እና ወንጴፋ ከ ይ ከ ወንጴፋ ከ ምን ይ ከ /Meninu kab timininu/ (Be hermit not to be emaciated) compiled by Selemon Gebrehiwot Tesfay. Of the 77 satirical and joke speeches, 15 satirical speeches which have political implications have been purposefully taken. In order to make the discussion accurate and evidence full, necessary descriptions of the contexts have also been taken. To the contrast, some details and sentences which seem unnecessary to the discussion have been excluded.

Beyond to this, since the speeches are written in Tigrigna language, they all have been translated in to English language approximately. And, all speeches have been discussed separately using the titles which have been given to the speeches by the compiler.

2. Results and Discussion

A. ወንጴፋ ከ ይ ከ ወንጴፋ ከ ምን ይ ከ /Meninu kab timininu/ (Be hermit not to be emaciated)

It was during the Derg regime (the political party ruled Ethiopia in 1980s), at the time of the red terror, the time when persons were killed and thrown their corpse on the roads. The day was Monday, the market day in Adigrat town. After having observed the crowd being on the hilly place, Wedi Fante shouted and got attention of the people for a while. Then he said “My country people “Agame (the social setting around Adigrat), the town became the same to the monastery, the place where you offer prayer but not dance. But, the monastery is better than the town since righteousness is gotten there. So be hermit not to be emaciated.”

The attacked object in this speech is the Derg regime, and the political implications depicted here are: the crudeness of the Derg regime and inspiring the youth of the town to fight against that regime. “The time of the red terror” is the context that leads to identify the attacked object (the Derg regime). In addition, the comparison between the town and the monastery helps to recognize the crudeness of the Derg regime. In both the town and the monastery, one can’t dance, rather offers prayer. It is clear that in the monastery dancing is not practiced because the hermits living in that place are far of the world’s joy. The need of those persons is the heavenly life after death. But, if the persons living in the town do not dance, rather offer prayer, the usual reason is absence of peace or lack of instability. As a result, in this speech, the time of the red terror which implies the crudeness of the Derg regime is the reason for the instability in the town.

Moreover, “be hermit not to be emaciated” is to mean fight against the regime because righteousness is not gotten in the town just like in the monastery. It is known that usually monasteries are placed in forest, and the persons live in the monasteries are called hermits. Similarly, force fighters against the government live in forest. So, “be hermit.” In this
speech is to mean go to the forest to fight against the Derg regime.

In one Siwa house which Wedi Fante was accustomed, one day a known scholar was talking on a scholarly issue monopolizing the opportunity to talk, and the persons in the house were attending his talk with appreciation. Consequently, no one was chatting to Wedi Fante. For the sake of beautifying his talk, the scholar begun to quote from the Greek philosopher saying: “Do you know what Socrates said? He said “What I know is as I know nothing.” After that the scholar added “What I know is as I know nothing.” Then the persons in the house clapped to him with appreciation. Soon after, “if you know nothing keep quite. By the way, who told you for you and Mister Italy as you know nothing please?” Wedi Fante made the scholar’s talk stop with this question.

Here, the Italian colonizer government is attacked. The need of the Italian colonizers to control the whole African countries during the colonization period has been implied through the scholar’s entire monopoly of the stage.

In line with this, when any person speaks alone without giving opportunity to other persons, it indicates the need of the person to create influence upon others. Similarly, when Wedi Fante compares the scholar with Italian, it is possible to infer the forceful influence that the Italian colonizers were applying to weaken the fight of the Ethiopian patriots against the Italian colonizers in both physical and psychological attacks.

One day, when the Derg authorities and the scholarly youth of the locality were drinking Mes (the traditional alcoholic drink) sitting on the veranda of the known Mes house in Adigrat town. Wedi Fante was passing through wearing a torn trouser. Then, the Colonel called him and said “Wedi Fante come to the camp then I will give you a trouser.” Then Wedi Fante “Oh! My country people Agame, is there really a trouser in the camp?” replied loudly so that the people around could listen him.

In this speech, the Derg regime is attacked, and its implication is the Derg soldiers are coward. The critical evidence to infer this implication is “is there really a trouser in a camp?”

First of all, when we see the meaning of the word camp, it is to mean the place in which soldiers or other collective people live in, specifically, based on the context of this speech, it refers to the residence where the Derg soldiers were living in. Then, here it is possible to conclude that the Derg soldiers are attacked in this speech.

Secondly, in the society which Wedi Fante belongs, the term trouser in addition to its denotative meaning (the type of cloth), it symbolizes for heroism. You have a trouser means you are hero.

Thirdly, when Wedi Fante asked if there was a trouser in a camp, it was not to get an answer from the Colonel or somebody else, rather it was to imply the cowardliness of the Derg soldiers.

It was during the time when not only the students but also the scholars of Adigrat town were taken to the war field leaving their education and other tasks by the Derg regime. During that time, a friend of Wedi Fante went to abroad for scholarship immediately after he had graduated from university at the time when Wedi Fante and his friends were expecting invitation from his first salary. In that situation, a man who heard about that event asked Wedi Fante “Did that friend of you go to abroad to learn again?” then, Wedi Fante replied “Yes. Of course, he hasn’t got it still.”

Here, the Derg regime is attacked, and its implication is to protest the deeds of the Derg regime. As to the context of the speech, the time is when the Derg regime was taking the scholars to the war field; at the same time, the scholar who is a friend of Wedi Fante went to abroad for scholarship. So, when Wedi Fante says “Yes. Of course, he hasn’t got it still.” It is not about education, rather it is to mean that after coming back, the scholar will be taken to the war field. At this point, it is possible to say that Wedi Fante despairs about the political system of Derg government.
E. የመንግ ፈመን/ Temen/ (A Snake)

One among the soldiers said "stop walking, stop walking". The road.

Unfortunately, the soldier met him and asked why he was walking.

There was a pregnant woman whom Wedi Fante hated since she was a concubine for Derg military officer. Once, on his way, he saw the woman licking a soil. Then, while he was observing her activity standing near to her, she asked him with insult why he was looking at her. After that, Wedi Fante said “You would not lick soil if you hadn’t got married with a snake.”

In this speech, the Derg government is attacked; in other words, it is said that the Derg regime is a snake. To infer this meaning, understanding the following points is necessary:

Firstly, according to the context of this speech, Wedi Fante knew as the woman is concubine of one Derg military officer, so when he said “if you hadn’t got married with a snake” it is not to mean the real animal.

Secondly, the reason why Wedi Fante hated the woman is since she was a concubine for a Derg military officer. As a result, it is understandable that the intention of the speaker is not to attack an individual, rather is to attack the Derg government.

Thirdly, the person who was licking a soil just like a snake was the pregnant woman, but the person who was said a snake is her concubine (the Derg military officer). For this reason, the implication of this speech goes beyond attacking individuals.

F. የመንግ ይግ ደ ፈሬሸ/ Megogo/ (An Ethiopian traditional oven)

During that occasion, the soldiers asked to Wedi Fante whether an oven spoke, he replied “You have already taken our speaking skill off forcefully”. Here, it is possible to say that since the conversation is among Wedi Fante and the Derg soldiers, in his reply, the pronoun “We” stands for the civil people, and the pronoun “You” stands for the Derg soldiers and cadres. Then, this implies that the civil society had no the right of speaking; this right was only given to the Derg soldiers and cadres.

Once there was an honored woman who prepared Siwa to celebrate the day of Abune Aregawi, 14th of a month (one among the holy people of Ethiopian Orthodox church). However, since the Siwa hadn’t been drunk, it had remained as fresh till 23 of a month. So, the woman was in a search of persons who could drink it. Fortunately, she saw Wedi Fante while he was going to Mes house, and she invited him to drink her fresh Siwa. At that time, Wedi Fante asked why it was prepared. Then, she told him that it was prepared to celebrate Abune Aregawi. At that moment, Wedi Fante said “But today is Saint George (one among the holy people of Ethiopian Orthodox Church), and Abune Aregawi and Saint George are in conflict. So I don’t want to drink.” The woman wandered and said “Why for?” then, Wedi Fante replied “It is because Saint George’s killed Abune...
Aregawi’s python; then, they are in severe conflict.” After that, she said “Oh! You are detained by a devil.”

In the Ethiopian orthodox church, the God, the Engels, and other saints have own days of memory in the 30 dates of a month. In other words, followers of the religion celebrate the 1st up to 30th dates of a month in the names of these Saints. Hence, 14th date of a month is celebrated in the name of Saint Abune Aregawi; the 23 date of a month is celebrated in the name of Saint George. So, in the context of this speech, the feast which was prepared by the woman is a reflection of the societal religious belief.

However, the reply of Wedi Fante towards the invitation of the woman is not about the conflict between these two saints, rather it is about the war between the Ethiopian patriots and the Italian colonizers. Moreover, Wedi Fante intended to say that the Italian colonizer force is a python. This meaning is supported with the following interpretation.

During the war between the Ethiopian patriots and the Italian colonizer force, the Ethiopians believe that in 1896 G.C, in the battle of Adwa Saint George helped them to defeat the Italian force being on a horse. In parallel, in the Ethiopian Orthodox church, it is believed that Saint Abune Aregawi was born in Roma Italy and settled in Ethiopia. So, in this speech, Saint George represents to Ethiopia and Saint Abune Aregawi represents to Italy; similarly, the python represents to the Italian colonizer force fought against the Ethiopian patriots in the battle of Adwa, in 1896 G.C.

Wedi Fante was saying “I spent a blessed day.” If he didn’t see any Derg soldier within that day. During that time, he heard that one girl who fell in deep love with one Derg soldier had burnt herself with kerosene gas in the week of Orthodox cross celebration when she had known that the soldier had got married with another girl. At that occasion, Wedi Fante asked to the persons who told that incident “To predict about our future time, to which location did she fall down?”

As to the tradition of Ethiopian Orthodox church, during the cross celebration, which is celebrated once a year (at the 16th of September in Ethiopian calendar), an artificially planted wood is burnt after offering prayer by priests with wish of bright future time for the people. Hence, if the artificially planted wood falls down to the east direction, the future time will be bright, but if it falls down to the west direction, the future time will be doom or disgusting. So in parallel, in this speech, Wedi Fante represented that wood by the girl who burnt herself since the soldier the boy friend of her got married with another girl. And he related the brightness of the future time with the absence of the Derg soldiers and the government (the Derg regime). Consequently, according to the societal belief, at the time of state of emergency, only devils walk on the roads; at the politically declared state of emergency, only the soldiers of the government are allowed to walk on the roads.

In the context of Adigrat society where Wedi Fante was living, 12:00 PM to 3:00 AM in the mid night is known as state of emergency. The society perceives that if a person walks on the roads in those hours, s/he could be detained, slapped or kicked by the devil. Beyond to that, it is known that government of any sovereign state can declare state of emergency if there is political instability in its state. Hence, Wedi Fante presented this speech during the time of state of emergency which was declared by the Ethiopian government (the Derg regime). Consequently, according to the societal belief, at the time of state of emergency, only devils walk on the roads.
disgustiness of the future time with the presence of the Derg soldiers.

As a result, when Wedi Fante asked the person to which direction did the girl fall down, it is to know if the girl had fallen down to the east direction, the time would be bright for him because he wouldn’t see any Derg soldier again; to the opposite, if she had fallen down to the west direction, the future time would be disgusting for him since the Derg soldiers would not be disappear from his sight. So, by implication, in this speech, the Derg soldiers are depicted as disgusting.

J. ከባወ/ Kibo (Dry cow dung)

The implication of this speech is to say the Derg regime is devil. The evidences which lead for this implication are discussed in connection to the interpretation of the society (social setting of Wedi Fante) as follows.

The first one is kicking with legs. If someone kicks a person with his/her legs, s/he is named as a donkey by the society.

Secondly, the phrase “but not with their head” has also similar implication with the first point of discussion. Basically, the term head is to mean connotatively mind; as a result, a person who is intellect less is said a person with no mind. Such person is again symbolized by a donkey in the given society.

K. ከባወ ምት ኣኝ ምት / Ab tirah risu (When he was bare headed)

Once, Wedi Fante heard that the Cuban soldiers had come to train the Derg soldiers; consequently, when he was enjoying in one Siwa house, he said “Information says that the so called Kibo have come. But, how can Kibo (the dry cow dung) remain unburnt when the cattle’s shit is burnt!”

After that, one wealthy man knew as this speech of Wedi Fante had already been addressed to the Derg colonel. So having met to Wedi Fante in one Mes house, the man warned him that he should deny to that speech otherwise they (the Derg soldiers) would kick him. Then, standing up from his seat, Wedi Fante replied “My country people Agame, I don’t care. They can do nothing. They may kick me with their legs but not with their head.”

The Cuban soldiers and the Derg regime are attacked in this speech. Hence, the Cuban soldiers are expressed as dry cow dung; whereas, the Derg regime/soldiers are expressed as cattle’s sheet and donkeys.

Wedi Fante associated the term Cuba with the Tigrigna term kibo which is to mean dry cow dung which is used as fuel. Then, he calls the Cuban soldiers as kibo (dry cow dung) deliberately by giving the characteristic of the dry cow dung to the soldiers with question “how can the dry cow dung remain un burnt when the cattle’s shit is burnt?”. Then, here, the implication is to oppose the Cubans’ military support for the Derg regime.

Similarly, the cattle’s shit stands for the Derg soldiers whom the Cuban soldiers came to train for. Moreover, Wedi Fante said “They may kick me with their legs but not with their head”; here, it is possible to say that Wedi Fante has intended to say the Derg soldiers are donkeys. The two
or speaks bad was met by the devil when he/she is bare belly

L. እታናት / Leyqua/(Sorghum)

If they were not heroes, how could they live heroes. At that time office, and he asked if he had said members of T.P.L.F are heroes. Consequently, the officer made Wedi Fante come to his office, and he asked if he had said members of T.P.L.F are heroes. At that time Wedi Fante replied “Yes. I have said so; if they were not heroes, how could they live in forest?” then, the military officer said “What about we?” Wedi Fante replied “You are also lions.” Finally, the military officer left him free. After that the men who were drinking Siwa with Wedi Fante heard that speech, and then asked him “Is that because you are afraid of the Derg that you said you are lions?” at that occasion, Wedi Fante replied “My country people Agame, I have given their exact names for both; I said heroes for those who eat grains and lions for those who eat raw meat.”

Here, the Derg regime is expressed as murderer. By the society in which Wedi Fante was a member, the term lion has good/positive representation. Connotatively, lion means hero. However, in this speech, lion is to mean scavenger or murderer. When Wedi Fante said members of the Derg regime are lions, it is to indicate as those persons eat raw meat just like lions, and eating raw meat is unusual in the social setting where Wedi Fante lived. Usually, in this society, meat is eaten after it is properly prepared with other spices on the stove. So, still, the intention of Wedi Fante is not to inform the people about the eating preference of the Derg members; it goes beyond that.

Moreover, a raw meat eater is an expression that indicates the meaning of soul eater covertly which is to mean scavenger a murderer.

N. እባርሶ / Kiguasyuna/(Herding us)

In this speech, the Derg soldiers are attacked; they are described as life less objects, or human like objects. Wedi Fante named the soldiers sorghum keepers. As presented in the speech, the persons who were terrified of the Derg soldiers in the market place are farmers. So, the farmers could easily recognize the meaning of sorghum keepers. Sorghum keeper is to mean scarecrow, and an effigy in the shape of a man, to frighten birds away from sorghum or other seeds. Consequently, the characteristic of a scarecrow is given for the Derg soldiers in this speech. Then, the intention of Wedi Fante here is to put the image of scarecrow in the mind of the farmers at the time they saw the Derg soldiers.

M. ከ የሆኔ /Anabis/(The Lions)

Here, the Derg regime is expressed as murderer. By the society in which Wedi Fante was a member, the term lion has good/positive representation. Connotatively, lion means hero. However, in this speech, lion is to mean scavenger or murderer. When Wedi Fante said members of the Derg regime are lions, it is to indicate as those persons eat raw meat just like lions, and eating raw meat is unusual in the social setting where Wedi Fante lived. Usually, in this society, meat is eaten after it is properly prepared with other spices on the stove. So, still, the intention of Wedi Fante is not to inform the people about the eating preference of the Derg members; it goes beyond that.

Moreover, a raw meat eater is an expression that indicates the meaning of soul eater covertly which is to mean scavenger a murderer.

It was on Monday, market day of Adigrat town; when the communities were selling and buying goods, the Derg soldiers with their complete military ornaments were rotating the crowd. Then, an old man who has observed that this means it is abus that speech, and the protest of the speaker towards the ruling system of the Derg regime are lions, it is to indicate as those persons eat raw meat just like lions, and eating raw meat is unusual in the social setting where Wedi Fante lived. Usually, in this society, meat is eaten after it is properly prepared with other spices on the stove. So, still, the intention of Wedi Fante is not to inform the people about the eating preference of the Derg members; it goes beyond that.

Moreover, a raw meat eater is an expression that indicates the meaning of soul eater covertly which is to mean scavenger a murderer.

Here, the Derg regime is attacked, and the speech implies the protest of the speaker towards the ruling system of the Derg regime. Wedi Fante intended to say “We are not under the rule of the Derg regime, or the Derg regime is incapable of leading us.” The textual evidence for this is being near to the Derg soldiers, Wedi Fante said “We have already escaped, they will not meet us again.” Then, this shows that the theme of this speech doesn’t address to the Derg soldiers who had been in the place of speaking, rather it goes beyond. This means it is about the political failure of the Derg regime.

Once, the Derg military officer in Adigrat town heard that Wedi Fante had said that the soldiers of T.P.L.F are heroes. Consequently, the officer made Wedi Fante come to his office, and he asked if he had said members of T.P.L.F are heroes. At that time Wedi Fante replied “Yes. I have said so; if they were not heroes, how could they live in forest?” then, the military officer said “What about we?” Wedi Fante replied “You are also lions.” Finally, the military officer left
Once up on a time, while they were suddenly enjoying, the Derg soldiers were told to get ready for a campaign. As a result, after they had fully got prepared for the campaign, they were altogether taking photograph just for memory. Occasionally, Wedi Fante was passing near to them, and the soldiers invited him to take photograph along with them. After that, Wedi Fante said “No! I won’t, you just take, I will stay more.”

The Derg soldiers are attacked in this speech. This means, Wedi Fante intended to say to the soldiers “you will die: It is known that persons take photograph for different reasons, and one among the reasons is just for a memory. Consequently, Wedi Fante knew that the Derg soldiers were taking photograph because they were about to go to a military campaign. Then, reasonably, death is predictable in a military campaign. For that matter, it is possible to say that he wished the Derg soldiers would die.

Moreover, the reason why Wedi Fante couldn’t be voluntary to take photograph along with the Derg soldiers is because he would stay more/alive. Hence, his reason implies the soldiers would not stay more/die. In other words, its implication is that the Derg regime would be defeated.

3. Conclusion

The Derg regime, the Italian colonizer force, and the Cuban soldiers are the three political soldiers attacked in the satirical speeches of Wedi Fante; the Derg’s cruelness, the Italian’s entire desire to colonize Ethiopia, and the Cuban’s military support to the Derg regime are then the key implications depicted in the speeches.

Of the 15 satirical speech discussed, the 13 speeches attack the Derg regime. So, it is possible to say that Wedi Fante had much hatred to the Derg regime. Hence, to the cowardliness, human right violence and undemocratic treatment of the Derg regime, he symbolically revealed as: snake, oven, devil, donkey, scarecrow, and scavenger.

References


Author Profile

Tesfamicheal Hailemariam Yohans received the BA and MA degrees in Teaching English and Literature in English from Mekelle university (Ethiopia) in 2007 and 2012, respectively. During 2008-2009 he stayed in teaching English in high school. In 2010 he taught English in Woliata Sodo university (Ethiopia) being a Graduate assistant-II. In 2013-2014 he stayed at Woliata Sodo University being a lecturer in Literature in English. Since 2015 he has been teaching Literature in English at Adigrat University (Ethiopia).