Oral Literary Worlds

Location, Transmission and Circulation

EDITED BY
SARA MARZAGORA
AND FRANCESCA ORSINI

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Introduction: Written and Unwritten Literary Geographies

Doing World Literature from the Perspective of Oral Texts

Sara Marzagora and Francesca Orsini

Oral Genres Are Everywhere

'Eccoci qua'. 'Here we are'. Giovanni Paolini begins his dramatic storytelling performance *Il Racconto del Vajont*, which revisits the tragic evening of October 1963, by marking a presence: the here and now and the assembled 'we'. 'Let's try and tell it together', he tells the audience, asking them to imagine how a massive landslide caused 50 million cubic meters to overflow a dam and submerge five underlying villages in north-eastern Italy, killing almost 2000 people. Packed with information and incorporating many voices and reflective loops, Paolini's narrative maintains throughout a high level of dramatic force—'started seven years earlier, the story ended in four, apocalyptic minutes'—and civic pathos.[1] Undoubtedly more powerful as a live performance, Paolini's 'teatro di narrazione'/*Vajont* remains effective even when filmed for TV (and later watched on YouTube), and it has also been published as a book.[2] Like many oral texts, it exists across multiple oral, written,

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1   Marco Paolini, 'Vajont: 9 ottobre 1963' (Rai Due and Moby Dick Teatri della Riviera, 1997).
2   Marco Paolini, *Il racconto del Vajont* (Milan: Garzanti, 2014).

and digital platforms. 'In India and in Southeast Asia, no one reads the *Rāmāyaṇa* or the *Mahābhārata* for the first time', A.K. Ramanujan famously quipped: before one encounters the epics as written texts, one is already familiar with the story through oral narratives or, perhaps more likely today, audio-visual versions.[3]

A few more examples: Pakistani actor Zia Mohyuddin (1933–2023) specialized in transforming written sketches into oral narratives, bringing dialogues and poems to life with his deep, smooth voice full of irony, and helping listeners over tricky passages by means of careful stresses and pauses. For decades, audiences hung on his every word and doubled up with laughter at stage readings; cassette recordings were smuggled across the border into India, jealously held and eagerly copied.[4] By contrast, Moulay Omar Douâmi, storyteller of the square (*halqa*) of Souk Barra in Beni-Mellal in central Morocco, specialises in turning Hindi films into oral narratives in Moroccan Darija. Douami retells the story of the film he watched the day before, changing plot, characters, and places to make the story more interesting and accessible to his audience.[5] Both are examples of the interdependence and the movement between oral, written, and audiovisual modes, mediated by the performer for specific audiences but also made available to disembodied listeners through technological reproduction and digital platforms. In 2010, Francesca watched Mahmood Farooqui and Danish Husain formally sit on a stage in central Delhi dressed in starched white achkans and topis and launch into a performance of an episode of the *Dastan Amir Hamza*, in a performance style they successfully revived, virtually from scratch, from written sources (see Chapter 9 by Sadhana Naithani in this volume). Francesca does not think she was the only one in the audience missing half of what they said in highly Persianized Urdu rhymed prose, but the rhythm of their double-act and what she could understand offered a spell-binding demonstration of the power of voice and rhythm.

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3   A. K. Ramanujan, 'Three Hundred *Rāmāyaṇas*: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation' in *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*, ed. by Paula Richman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 22–49 (p. 46).

4   *Zia Mohyuddin ke Saath Ek Shaam* 2022 (An Evening with Zia Mohyuddin), YouTube.

5   Fatima Zahra Salih, 'L'art de (ra)conter les films; entretien avec le conteur Moulay Omar Douâmi' (unpublished interview, 2008) and Chapter 5 in this volume.

And again: 'Ababa' Tesfaye Sahlu is known by virtually every Ethiopian who had access to a TV in the decades between the 1960s and the 1990s as *YäTärät Abbat* ('Father of the *tärät*', i.e. the fable/story). He was a multi-talented actor, singer, musician, and writer, but what made him famous is his children's TV programme *YäLəjj Gize* ('Children's Time'), a staple of Ethiopian television for decades. With consummated dramatic ability, Ababa Tesfaye played the voices of different characters and mimicked animal sounds. He often used visual illustrations to enhance the story, or sometimes broke into song, or played musical instruments, or performed magic tricks. Watched by children and adults alike, the TV show coined new catchphrases, and retained much of the style of an oral performance: Ababa Tesfaye addressed the children directly, as if he could see them through the screen ('you on the right, stop bothering your sibling'), and they indeed diligently stood up when he appeared on screen at the beginning of the show, as is customary when an old person enters the room.[6] Ababa Tesfaye died in 2017, but the recordings of his TV show are now available on YouTube, and in an internet café in Addis Ababa, Sara saw a woman dropping off her two children in front of one of these YouTube videos to keep them cared for and entertained while she went elsewhere for an errand.

These few examples—which can be multiplied *ad libitum* (slam poetry, hip hop, *jari* and *kobigaan*, etc.)—show the enduring power and attraction of oral genres in the contemporary world, in the Western world as well as in Africa and Asia. Their power lies in the expressive, affective, and somatic power of voice, rhythm, and/or melody. Liz Gunner reminds us that the:

> rendering or realizing oral works involved a body, a voice, a moment in time, and an audience. Attending to the poetics of orality must take into account the somatic, that is, physical and material elements. The possibilities and actualities these variables give rise to are vast, but the fact of a somatic rendering, where body, voice, and movement are part of the textual performance, has to be considered when theorizing orality.[7]

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6   For a first-person account of the impact of Ababa Tesfaye on younger and older generations alike, see Rode Molla, 'Children's Experiences Matter: An Interdisciplinary Approach', *Religious Education*, 118.2 (2023), 113–118, https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2023.2184026

7   Liz Gunner, 'Ecologies of Orality' in *The Cambridge Companion to World Literature*, ed. by B. Etherington and J. Zimbler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

Oral texts become instantiated through the bodies of performers—the timbre and artistry of their voices, their studied pauses, the quality and rhythm of their gestures, their acting out of one or more roles. Scholarship on poetry and song often underscores how music and the singing voice tend to 'drown text' and make short shrift of carefully weighed poetic meters and stresses.[8] In some cases, it is the performer's breath and not the strict syllable count that forms the basis of oral metre (see Chapter 1 by Clarissa Vierke in this volume). But music also makes texts or textual fragments memorable and endurably part of one's body, whether one understands the language fully or only in part.[9] In fact, precisely when one does not understand the words, one can appreciate the power of the voice and the body of the performer on one's own somatic-physical bodily responses.

If singular oral performances can create lifelong memories, what is also important about oral genres, as they are experienced repeatedly over time, is how they become part of and shape our habitus, indeed some of our most visceral aesthetic tastes and responses. We only need to think of our favourite (or most hated) songs to know how deeply in our body their phrases, images, and sounds dwell. In the Indian context, the extraordinarily resilient popularity of Urdu poetry, particularly among non-Urdu speakers, rests on a familiarity with the basics acquired by listening to film songs and *ghazal* cassettes/recordings. Oral texts, in other words, are the first means through which poetic/aesthetic tastes come to dwell in our bodies. Well before reading our first book, each and every one of us spent years consuming (and sometimes producing)

2018), pp. 116–129 (p. 117).

8   See Jahan Ramazani's discussion in 'Poetry and Song' in *Poetry and its Others* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), pp. 184–238 (pp. 185–186).

9   'In performance... music is experienced, not as something given to the body, but as something done through and with the body. Sound penetrates us, engaging us on a bodily level in fundamentally different ways than the visual'; Liora Bresler, 'What Musicianship Can Teach Educational Research', *Music Education Research*, 7.2 (2005), 169–183 (p. 177), https://doi.org/10.1080/1461380050016939. 'Besides, listening is mediated by previous information and expectations, and even 'vocal timbre is not an elementary sound of an essential body, but rather [...] both timbre and body are shaped by unconscious and conscious training that are cultural artifacts of attitudes towards gender, class, race, and sexuality'; Nina Sun Eidsheim, 'Voice as a Technology of Selfhood: Towards an Analysis of Racialized Timbre and Vocal Performance' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of California San Diego, 2008), p. 2.

literature orally and visually. This does not stop after we learn how to read: alongside the genres analysed by the contributors in this volume, many of us know a repertoire of prayers, anthems (national or otherwise), chants for political demonstrations ('no justice, no peace') or sports events, jokes, songs to accompany specific events ('happy birthday to you'), and we add to those repertoires on occasion.

We approached these reflections as scholars of world literature, who saw the almost exclusive focus of the discipline on written literature as a considerable limitation. For literary studies to be really 'worldly', we believe, they must account for the many oral literary worlds around us. Oral literary worlds help us put pressure on the definition of 'literature' in world literature, just as oral texts help put pressure on the definition of 'text' and broaden it beyond written texts to encompass not just visual and aural texts, but also other processes of 'entextualization' that are achieved, to quote Karin Barber, 'through the consolidation of discourse as object of exegesis and as quotation'.[10] It is this broader sense of 'text' that the essays in this book espouse. How does a focus on oral genres and traditions that are still alive and well today—and so do not belong to a pre-print past—help us to revisit and rethink the assumptions that underpin ideas of literature and world literature? What do oral genres have to say about what counts as a (literary) text, and about the power and functions of literature? What do they teach us about how we acquire literary tastes, even somatically, and live and practice them? What light do oral genres cast on some of the main aspects highlighted by world literature studies, namely circulation, location, and scale? Why, despite the interface between oral/written/digital platforms and so much ink spilt rejecting the reductive binary of orality/literacy, is literature in world literature only 'born printed'?

Each essay in this volume explores and develops these points from its located perspective, without seeking to be exhaustive or definitive. We do not aim for general definitions—such as the differences or relationship between poetry and song[11]—but we want to open avenues

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10   Karin Barber, 'Text and Performance in Africa', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 66.3 (2003), 324–333 (p. 332), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X03000223. See also her *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons, and Publics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

11   See Ramazani, 'Poetry and Song'.

for exploration and conversation among scholars of folklore, heritage studies, music, literature, and world literature, and with colleagues belonging to different scholarly traditions (particularly in Ethiopia, India, and Morocco) that have so far been outside European and North American discussions of world literature.

Orature, Oral Literature, Oral Traditions

What's in a name? Scholars have suggested and used several terms to indicate unwritten verbal arts. Each term and definition stresses certain characteristics and sets up relationships (of difference, convergence, or specificity) with the other terms and with written literature.[12] Orature, the term coined in the 1970s by Ugandan linguist Pio Zirimu, defined as the use of utterance as an aesthetic means of expression, forcefully counters the tendency to view oral arts as inferior, less developed, or marginal compared to written literature, and pushes for a paradigm shift in which oral aesthetics do not need to define themselves against written literature to gain validity and value.[13] Instead of qualifying literature—the stable category—with the adjective 'oral', orature creates a hybrid term that destabilises, envelops, and swallows literature. The term orature has been championed by Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, who argues that written and printed literature are but a small part of orature, which encompasses them.[14] Drawing on South African sculptor, poet, and storyteller Pitika Ntuli, Ngũgĩ suggests that orature is a 'fusion of all art forms', greater than the sum of its parts and deeply interconnected.

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12   Literature itself has hardly remained a stable semantic category, of course, whether in the various European languages and cultural areas, or in the Arabic and Persian *adab*, Indian *kavya* and *sahitya*, Chinese *wénxué*, and so on.

13   Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, 'Notes towards a Performance Theory of Orature', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 12.3 (2007), 4–7, https://doi.org/10.1080/13528160701771253

14   This is a view that some verbal and performance artists themselves have taken: transnational *Nautanki* artist Devendra Sharma, for example, writes: 'as I try more and more to bring "lok" [i.e. folk] into sahityik [literary]/cultural "mainstream" (or rather into an elitist narrow circle of legitimate sahitya having almost no audience these days—maybe I am generalizing here), I realize the politics of the powerful urban/mainstream writers and artists who are really determined to keep away the "crowd" (otherwise they will be very quickly overwhelmed by the powerful "lok" or "folk" which is so much closer to people's hearts—equally in cities and villages)'; email communication to Francesca Orsini, November 2019.

By contrast, Ngũgĩ opposes the term 'oral literature' on the grounds that it incorporates and subsumes the oral into the written, implying a dependent position and obscuring the autonomy of orality.[15] By contrast, in Chapter 9 of this volume, Sadhana Naithani uses 'orature' for oral performance genres that have a strong relationship with writing— whether harking back to a missing original text or drawing upon written textual sources to reconstruct and revive a style of storytelling.

Scholars like Ruth Finnegan prefer instead to retain the term oral literature.[16] Finnegan's key realisation was that oral forms must be celebrated for their spoken elements and audience presence, beyond their generic similarities with written forms. Oral performances are multi-sensory and dynamic, creating a 'multidimensional and embodied performance'. But—and this is an example of how centring oral forms casts a fresh light on literature as a whole—for Finnegan *all* literature, whether written or oral, has performative elements. Even silent reading is a performance, as the reader experiences the written word through their 'inner ear'. And writing's multimodal nature can be used to bring performance to the page. All literature, then, has a multiform plurality that must be celebrated. Therefore, Finnegan retains the term literature 'as an umbrella notion that can embrace all those displayed forms and events in which verbal artistry in some way plays a significant part'.[17] This expanded definition of 'literature' as verbal artistry can then be further qualified based on medium, with 'written' and 'oral' literatures as subsets. In her reasoning, therefore, 'literature' does not automatically mean 'written literature'. If the speaker is excluding unwritten literatures, then they must qualify 'literature' with 'written'.

While most of the contributions to this volume stress the continuing vitality, mutability, and adaptability of oral genres to contemporary individuals and societies across the world, a different emphasis can be

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15 Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Penpoints, Gunpoints, and Dreams: Towards a Critical Theory of the Arts and the State in Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 111. Among those scholars who prefer 'orature', see Fiona Moolla, 'When Orature Becomes Literature: Somali Oral Poetry and Folktales in Somali Novels', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 49.3 (2012), 434–462, https://doi.org/10.5325/complitstudies.49.3.0434

16 Another scholar that prefers 'oral literature' is Isidore Okpewho, author of the foundational *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character, and Continuity* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992).

17 Ruth Finnegan, 'The How of Literature', *Oral Tradition*, 20.2 (2005), 164–187 (p. 180).

detected in those using the term 'oral traditions'. The term 'tradition' constructs a temporal continuity between the present and the past that feeds into processes of identity formation. 'Tradition' entails acts of sharing, preserving and transmitting, and is therefore premised on connecting a group of texts or performances with each other and attaching value to that connection. What counts as 'tradition' tends to be a terrain of socio-political struggle and contesting claims, for example between colonial, corporate, or state-sponsored projects on the one hand, and the communities who partake in those oral genres on the other. Vanessa Paloma Elbaz shows how twentieth-century Spanish philologists interpreted Sephardi oral literature in Morocco through the lens of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish *romanceros*, a move that enabled them to identify Sephardi oral literature as part of a long-lost Moroccan *hispanidad* in need of colonial restoration. The Sephardi repertoire, however, is far from frozen in time, and includes a much richer, more historically layered, more multilingual corpus than Spanish philologists presented. Contestations over 'tradition' could be between rival parties who each claim a 'tradition' as their own, or they could be a tussle over what counts or does not count as 'traditional', or whether a 'tradition' is worth preserving at all. 'Traditional' folk tales, for example, have recently been the object of heated discussions about whether the conservative ideologies they sometimes promote (think about the trope of the damsel in distress) impel us to stop honouring the canonical repertoire and create a new progressive one.[18] If 'orature' and 'oral literature' foreground questions of form and aesthetics, 'oral traditions' foregrounds attitudes towards history and historiography.

Oral Texts

The designation 'oral texts', in turn, helps us analyse the performance as a moment of 'entextualisation' that detaches and abstracts a given utterance from the flow of everyday discourse, thus 'constituting oral genres as something capable of repetition, evaluation and exegesis'.[19] It

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18   See for example Kirsten Salyer, 'Are Disney Princesses Hurting Your Daughter's Self-Esteem?', *Time Magazine* (2016).

19   Barber, 'Text and Performance in Africa', p. 325; See also her *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons, and Publics*. See also Joel C. Kuipers, *Performance: The Creation of*

is precisely these strategies of formalisation and semiotic detachment that allow us to re-activate and re-embed a text in 'a new context of utterance, where it has an effectual engagement and dialogic force'.[20]

The particular form an oral text takes in a given performance is an 'instantiation' or concretisation of the oral text, which is the result of a set of choices, by an author or performer, for a given audience, in a given context, and at a given time—all aspects that matter and that the scholar must consider.[21] Depending on the specific genre conventions, the process of instantiation can entail different levels of improvisation, intervention, and recreation. The oral author is sometimes expected to perform a set text *verbatim*, such in the case of Somali *maanso* poetry,[22] or they can reassemble and readapt looser textual configurations belonging to the same narrative or thematic repertoire, such in the case of most oral epics, *malḥūn* concerts, and Sufi *qawwals*. In the case of the Somali *maanso*, the composer of the text and the reciter of the text are usually different figures, with creative agency attributed to the former and not the latter. The reciter, 'who was seldom a creative poet himself, was regarded merely as a channel of communication and a memory storage and was in no way a co-author or the version he recited'.[23] In other cases, the text is more fluid, and the performer has a broader range of creative possibilities in terms of words, tone, music, gestures, and movement. Sufi *qawwals* 'knot' together lines from different poetic texts as they sing,

Textual Authority in Weyewa Ritual Speech (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), p. 7; and Michael Silverstein and Greg Urban, eds, *Natural Histories of Discourse* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Barber ('Text and Performance', p. 327) further notes that techniques of entextualisation often 'involve a certain reflexivity—a consciousness of text as something created in order to be expounded, recontextualized and reflected upon'.

20 Barber, 'Text and Performance', p. 326. As she puts it, using the example of praise poetry, 'it is the very consolidation of chunks of examinable, quotable, repeatable text which makes possible the dynamic processes of fluid incorporation, re-inflection and recycling' (Ibid.).

21 Barber, *The Anthropology*, p. 43.

22 Martin Orwin, 'On the Concept of 'Definitive Text' in Somali Poetry', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 66.3 (2003), 334–347, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X03000235

23 B. W. Andrzejewski, 'The Poem as Message: Verbatim Memorization in Somali Poetry', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 23.1 (2011), 27–36 (p. 27), https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2011.581454

with the aim of providing a rich aesthetic as well as spiritual experience.[24] Regardless of the degree of improvisation required of the performers or the social perception of their role, instantiation always entails a degree of creative and intellectual agency: even in the case of the 'definitive text' of the Somali *maanso* memorized by heart, for example, 'the reciter added to the poetic texts explanations in prose which gave an account of the original circumstances [of composition]'.[25]

The authorship function, as we can see, is much more fluid and complex, and sometimes less salient, for oral texts than in the case of a printed name on a book cover. While nineteenth-century collections and studies of oral traditions tended to attribute authorship to the nameless collective of the people, twentieth-century collections and studies have dwelt on single storytellers and performers as literary agents with individual styles and artistic visions – one may think, for example, of Jeff Opland's extended documentation of Xhosa *imbongi* David Yali-Manisi's life and work.[26] Some performers, like Sundar Popo in Trinidad or Papa Wemba in Congo, turn out to have fans worldwide and successful careers to their name, but their oral texts often circulate widely without holding the memory of who the author was. Few listeners to the 'Phulauri bin chutney' song in the Hindi film *Dabanng 2* (2012) would know that Sundar Popo was its composer and original singer. Oral texts, in this sense, can help world literature to articulate more expansive definitions of authorship.

A main feature of oral texts is that their meaning is created in performance, through the live interaction between the performer, the audience, and the socio-physical space of performance. This also determines the shape and functioning of oral texts. In Chapter 9 of this volume, for example, Sadhana Naithani notes that textual content and form are more important at local levels and in smaller performance spaces, whereas at large-scale festivals the virtuoso performance skills

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24   See Mikko Viitamäki, 'Poetry in Sufi Practice: Patrons, Poets and Performers in South Asian Sufism from Thirteenth Century to the Present' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Helsinki, 2015).

25   Andrzejewski, 'The Poem', p. 27.

26   For example, Jeff Opland, *The Dassie and the Hunter: A South African Meeting* (Durban: University of Kwa Zulu-Natal Press, 2005); Jeff Opland, 'First Meeting with Manisi', *Research in African Literatures*, 35.3 (2004), 26–45; Jeff Opland, 'The Early Career of D. L. P. Yali-Manisi, Thembu Imbongi', *Research in African Literatures*, 33.1 (2002), 1–26.

and embodiment of performance become more important. Storytellers, oral poets, and performers can typically rely on their audiences' familiarity with tropes, stories, and characters, so that oral texts— particularly songs—can sometimes sound like shorthand. A single phrase, like *Jamunā ke tīr* ('the banks of the Yamuna'), immediately alerts listeners of a Sur song-poem that this is about milkmaids irresistibly attracted to Krishna. It evokes in a flash a whole aesthetic of the night in the forest and a structure of feeling centred on the milkmaid's mixture of fear and irresistible attraction. While listeners will have varying levels of competence, the music and the occasional explanations consolidate their poetic knowledge. In fact, an intriguing aspect of entextualisation in oral and performance contexts is how texts can be split or distributed across lyrics and explanation, modulated in different voices shifting between metre and prose, or apportioned to different people. 'The meaning of these texts, then', Karin Barber argues, 'is created not *by* individuals so much as *between* individuals, and a text exists only as part of a distributed field or network of texts'.[27]

Finally, we need to conceive of oral texts as dynamically spreading across genres, platforms, and languages. They require an expansive temporal and cultural-anthropological frame that goes beyond a single instantiation, genre, or even language. In Chapter 4 of this volume, Francesca Orsini borrows the idea of 'soft texts' from Ratnakar Tripathy to explain what happens to Bhojpuri fragments of cultural memory embedded in key terms within songs as the songs change language, and travel back and forth across the oceans of indenture migration and diaspora. Such song texts can appear more like shorthand. But they are still texts. Clarissa Vierke shows that the Fumo Liyongo tradition is 'fragmented […] across multiple genres, thereby seriously calling textual boundaries into question […]. Its fuzziness and amorphousness—where does the text start? Where does it end?— […] urges us all the more to critically reconsider the (normative) notions of textual boundaries derived from the printed book' (Vierke, Chapter 1 in this volume, p. 51).

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27   Barber, *The Anthropology*, p. 92.

Oral Texts in Anthropology, Folklore, and Literary Studies

Oral texts have been central to the development of comparative literature and of world literature—we only need to think of folk tales or epics—but in quite specific and limited (and limiting) ways. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Western scholarly interest in non-Western oral texts was driven for the most part by anthropological considerations.[28] Oral texts were mined for information about another people's culture, values, and worldview. The result of this anthropological orientation was 'the denial, for the oral text, of whatever aesthetic, intellectual, and, indeed, ideological criteria the model of written literature has been based upon'.[29] As ethnographic sources, oral texts were seen as stable, fixed repositories of collective signification. What Western anthropological scholarship valorised in non-Western oral texts was their alleged 'traditional' and 'pre-modern' character, in which cultural otherness could be located. At the same time, scholars sought to identify broad family resemblances, connections, and universal elements in folk materials from widely different and very distant contexts—an example being the structuralist theory of mythology proposed by Claude Lévi-Strauss.

Sadhana Naithani has pointed out the different impulses behind the collection of folklore in India and in other colonies compared to Europe: instead of the nationalist 'engagement of middle-class intellectuals, poets, and writers with the narratives and songs that were common among the majority of the populace' of [their society], in the colonies it was the colonial administrators (and their wives) and missionaries who undertook the first collections of 'folklore'—ostensibly to reveal the mind of the people, though they rarely elaborated on what this meant.[30] These

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28 For the 1960s–1970s debates about the relationship between anthropology and the study of oral literature, see Ruth Finnegan, 'Attitudes to the Study of Oral Literature in British Social Anthropology', *Man*, 4.1 (1969), 59–69; Patrick Pender-Cudlip, 'Oral Traditions and Anthropological Analysis: Some Contemporary Myths', *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 7.1 (1972), 3–24, William P. Murphy, 'Oral Literature', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 7.1 (1978), 113–136. Heda Jason proposed a 'multidimensional approach' to oral literature able to combine anthropological and folklorist perspectives, 'A Multidimensional Approach to Oral Literature', *Current Anthropology*, 10.4 (1969), 413–426.

29 Jaco Alant, '"Did you say *oral literature*?" asked Walter Ong', *Literator,* 17.2 (1996), 117–130.

30 Naithani, *The Story-Time,* p. 98.

figures of colonial administrators *cum* folklorists have been appraised in the scholarship through a dichotomy between condemnation of their politics and validation of their scholarship.[31] Naithani cautions against straitjacketing the impulse of folk collectors in a simple category of colonial power-knowledge: 'in the colonial context, there are many cycles of motivation—from macro to micro level, and from state to individual level'.[32] For Naithani, therefore, the field of folklore in the empire was a 'multimodal trail', 'beginning from a particular location and then going on to predictable and unpredictable terrains', producing 'loops of cultural definition' in the process. Colonial collectors worked individually, but were often in contact with colleagues elsewhere in the empire or with the Folk-Lore Society in London, 'where folklore from the whole Empire could be put on the same table and discussed'.[33]

And discussed it was along the same scholarly patterns. Both folklorists and ethnographers turned the 'expressive cultures of different peoples in many different local languages into English language texts' with scant regard for local informers, performers, and contexts.[34] *The Talking Thrush and Other Tales from India* (1922), 'collected by W. Crooke and retold by W.H.D. Rouse', embodies the transformation of Indian orature into English children's literature.[35] For the beautiful printed book, the re-teller anglicises and standardises the names of animal and human characters (the Phudki bird who goes to see a Behana in the first story becomes a Thrush who goes to see a Cotton-Carder); the endnotes carry details of the changes Rouse made to Crooke's stories and give the barest details of where the story was originally collected,

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31   An example is the Italian orientalist and colonial administrator Enrico Cerulli, who rose to be the governor of two provinces of Italian East Africa under Benito Mussolini. Karla Mallette weighs Cerulli's scholarship and Fascist affiliations in *European Modernity and the Arab Mediterranean: Toward a New Philology and a Counter-Orientalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). James De Lorenzi is more damning towards Cerulli's track record and stance towards Ethiopian scholars; James De Lorenzi, 'The Orientalist on Trial: Enrico Cerulli and the United Nations War Crimes Commission', *Northeast African Studies,* 18.1–2 (2018), 165–200, https://doi.org/10.14321/nortafristud.18.1-2.0165

32   Naithani, *The Story-Time*, p. 18.

33   Ibid., p. 6.

34   Ibid., pp. 6, 7.

35   William Crooke and W.H.D. Rouse, *The Talking Thrush and Other Tales from India* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1922).

and from whom.[36] A parallel process is visible in folk tales collections in Indian languages by Indian folklorists, who smoothed out dialectal/local linguistic features and stressed the cultural authenticity of the tales by invoking the figure of the grandmother, as in *Ṭhākurmār Jhūlī* or *Grandmother's Bag of Tales* (1907) by Dakshina Ranjan Mitra.[37] In revisiting the work of earlier folklorist Gerhard Lindblom, the Ugandan poet Okot p'Bitek notes how Lindblom's attempt not to interfere with the storyteller's performance changed the nature of the performance itself. Without a 'live, responsive, audience, taking up the chorus, laughing and enjoying the jokes', the storyteller 'sat facing a strange man who wrote down something, and not really seeing the fun'. The barrier that Lindblom erected between himself and the storyteller in the name of scientific objectivity emptied the performance and made it fake.[38]

The anthropological approach to oral texts as repositories of a people's 'culture' remained operative in the postcolonial period, when scholars from formerly colonised countries turned to oral texts as perceived sources of indigenous cultural authenticity, untainted by Western colonial modernity. In African philosophy, for example, this theoretical orientation came to be known as 'ethnophilosophy', and was later criticised for reproducing a view of African societies as static and internally homogeneous in their beliefs. Some of the philosophical paradigms in response to ethnophilosophy later replicated some of ethnophilosophy's assumptions. Henry Odera Oruka's 'sage philosophy', for example, opposed ethnophilosophy's collectivist, unanimist bias by valorising the individual thinking of singular 'sages'. Oruka wanted to push back against Eurocentric claims that philosophy is and can only be a 'written' enterprise, and therefore defined the 'sage' as somebody illiterate, operating outside of writing.[39] Such a philosophical programme, however, upheld the dichotomy between

36   Ibid., pp. 197, 1.

37   See Raahi Adhya, *The Fantastic World of the Bengali Roopkatha: Unpacking Gender, Generation and Genre* (unpublished PhD thesis, SOAS University of London, 2023).

38   Okot p'Bitek, *Hare and Hornbill* (London: Heinemann, 1978), p. xii.

39   For a critique of ethnophilosophy and sage philosophy, see Benedetta Lanfranchi, 'Rethinking World Philosophies from African Philosophy', *Journal of World Philosophy*, 7.2 (2022), 26–41, https://doi.org/10.2979/jourworlphil.7.2.03 and Benedetta Lanfranchi, '"Does this mean that there is philosophy in everything?": A Comparative Reading of Henry Odera Oruka's First and Second Order and Antonio Gramsci's First and Second Level Philosophy' in *Rethinking Sage*

orality as authentic and indigenous and writing as modern and global. Walter Ong further essentialised this distinction by describing orality and literacy as structuring two different ways of thinking or modes of consciousness. The 'literary mind' cannot work the way it does without writing: 'more than any other single invention, writing has transformed human consciousness', enabling analytical thinking, inventiveness, and innovation.[40] Just as the field of African philosophy has since developed a robust critique of ethnophilosophy and sage philosophy,[41] the technological determinism undergirding Ong's 'Great Divide' has been later criticised by many scholars, from Ruth Finnegan (in *Literacy and Orality*, 1988) to Karin Barber and Liz Gunner.

Finnegan's *Oral Literature in Africa*, now republished (2012) in the book series of which this volume is also part, made the influential claim that African oral forms should be considered 'literature', on the grounds that 'the assumptions that seem to set oral forms totally apart from written literature are in fact questionable or false', and all the various elements that feed into existing definitions of written literature 'are also recognizable in oral forms, often with exactly the same range of ambiguities'.[42] Both oral and written literatures are based on verbal expression geared towards aesthetic purposes, with accepted conventions of style, structure and genre with which individual authors can play. Both oral and written genres are named and patterned forms that are recognizable as such to speakers and audiences even as their patterns, themes, and boundaries are stretched, reshaped, and renewed. Overall, Finnegan makes a powerful argument against a dichotomous understanding of orality and literacy as two diametrically opposite forms of literature, stressing that 'if we do treat them as fundamentally of a different kind, we deny ourselves both a fruitful analytic approach and, furthermore, a wider perspective on the general subject of comparative

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Philosophy Interdisciplinary Perspectives on and beyond H. Odera Oruka, ed. by K. Kresse and O. Nyarwath (London: Lexington Books, 2023), pp. 77–98.

40   Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 2002 [original 1982]), p. 76.

41   See Paulin J. Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) and, more recently, Kai Kresse and Oriare Nyarwath, eds, *Rethinking Sage Philosophy: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on and beyond H. Odera Oruka* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2023).

42   Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2012), p. 26, https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0025

literature'.[43] In general, the second half of the twentieth century has seen the emergence of a sophisticated body of scholarship on oral texts, their literariness, and their relationship with literature in other media.[44]

... and World Literature

Since its emergence in the early 2000s, however, the discipline of world literature has kept this scholarship at arm's length. John D. Niles finds it 'a point that scarcely needs to be argued' that 'all forms of narrative, even the most sophisticated genres of contemporary fiction, have their ultimate origin in [oral] storytelling'.[45] Whether in scholarly or common-sense understandings, however, world literature normally rests on an idea of literature as a constellation of *written* genres that are *read*, and on a historical-teleological shift from orality to writing and print.[46] As Caroline Levine has pointed out, opening statements and introductory sections of publications on world literature gesture towards oral literature before quickly sidelining it to concentrate on written genres, usually the novel.[47] For Venkat B. Mani, world literature involves bibliomigrancy, the circulation and reception of printed books. Gisèle Sapiro's studies of translation flows rest on data about translations of printed books.[48]

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43   Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa,* p. 27.

44   This body of scholarship is vast, and it is impossible to do it justice here. See the important work by Paul Zumthor, *Oral Poetry: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); and two recent edited volumes: Charles Bernstein, ed., *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Marjorie Perloff and Craig Dworkin, eds, *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

45   John D. Niles, *Homo Narrans: The Poetics and Anthropology of Oral Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. 2.

46   In this, we follow Caroline Levine, who argues that mass literacy projects and cheap Great Book series forged a strong connection between literacy, democracy, social progress, and upward mobility. 'The flip side of this politics is that it assumes literacy as itself the mark of progress and civilization and therefore implies that nonliterate societies are backward and primitive'; Caroline Levine 'The Great Unwritten: World Literature and the Effacement of Orality', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 74.2 (2013), 217–237 (p. 223), https://doi.org/10.1215/00267929-2072998

47   Levine, 'The Great Unwritten'.

48   See B. Venkat Mani, *Recoding World Literature: Libraries, Print Culture, and Germany's Pact with Books* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016); Gisèle Sapiro, 'Translation and Symbolic Capital in the Era of Globalization: French Literature in the United States', *Cultural Sociology*, 9.3 (2015), 320–346, https://doi.org/10.1177/1749975515584080

For David Damrosch, world literary texts are those circulating beyond their culture of origin and 'read as literature'.[49] Christopher Prendergast acknowledges that 'both historically and geographically, the oral vastly exceeds the written' and that, even today, the oral 'remains the most fundamental mode of humankind's self-expression'[50] – but, despite this premise, he circumscribes the scope of world literature to written texts only: 'the idea of world literature cannot practically be taken to refer to all the verbal arts around the globe (among other things, it typically excludes cultures whose only or main form of self-expression is oral recitation unless and until they become transmissible through transcription)'.[51]

It seems to us, however, that the advantages to be gained by leaving orality out of world literature (a methodological simplification, a more stable definition of our object of study) do not offset what is lost. The exclusion from world literature of those 'cultures whose only or main form of self-expression is oral recitation', in Prendergast's words, might usefully narrow the scope of the discipline, but at the price of casting an implicit connotation of 'unwordly', perhaps even 'unliterary', onto a numerically sizeable portion of humankind. It is hard not to see reverberations of colonial hierarchies in this definitional move.[52] The West's 'scriptist bias' comes with its own fraught history, and a self-critical analysis of these colonial intellectual genealogies would only add strength and clarity to world literature.[53]

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49 David Damrosch, *What is World Literature*? (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 6.

50 Christopher Prendergast, 'The World Republic of Letters' in *Debating World Literature*, ed. by C. Prendergast (London: Verso, 2004), pp. 1–25 (p. 4).

51 Ibid., p. 21.

52 The exclusion of oral expression from world literature also has a gendered dimension, as women were excluded from writing and publishing at various points of history. See Greg Buzwell, 'Women Writers, Anonymity and Pseudonyms', British Library Blog (2020). With regards to African literature, the argument has been made by Obioma Nnaemeka, 'From Orality to Writing: African Women Writers and the (Re)Inscription of Womanhood', *Research in African Literatures*, 25.4 (1994), 137–57, and Susan Arndt, *African Women's Literature: Orature and Intertextuality* (Bayreuth: Eckhard Breitinger, 1998). See also the special issue of *Research in African Literatures* 25.3 on 'Women as Oral Artists'.

53 In Roy Harris, *The Origin of Writing* (London: Duckworth, 1986), p. 46. Prendergast takes a position against the argument that a society only attains 'civilization' when it 'inscribes itself', pointing out that the association of 'civilization' with writing devalues oral expression and overlooks the fact that 'both historically and

Even within the current goals of the discipline, the exclusion of unwritten literatures limits our understanding of written literature itself. Many existing publications on world literature are still informed by a teleological view of orature as the chronological and aesthetic antecedent of written literature. The *Norton Anthology of World Literature*, for example, includes oral texts only in the initial sections dedicated to ancient literatures.[54] In African literary studies, oral genres are often treated as the raw materials out of which the African novel emerged, a framework that casts the novel as the end point of African literary histories. Of course, many written genres, including the novel, are in dialogue with oral genres—but, as Ayele Kebede Roba argues in Chapter 3, the presence of orality in the novel is not merely a decorative accessory or a flavourful interlude in the plot. The inclusion of transcribed oral texts in the novel is rather a conceptual intervention that changes the rules of the genre, whereby the plot is designed precisely to 'novelise orature', foregrounding a relationship of coevalness and simultaneity between orality and the novel, or what Russell West-Pavlov calls an 'aesthetics of proximity'.[55] The novel is turned into a written hub for the continuous circulation of oral texts. The transcriptions of oral texts are not just add-ons, but integral elements around which the text is built, and, in some cases, they are the real purpose of the narration. We cannot just talk about orature 'in' the novel; we are rather faced with a textual oralisation of the narrative that partly forces us to reconsider what the novel is, and how it works.[56]

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geographically, the oral vastly exceeds the written; the former even today remains the most fundamental mode of humankind's self-expression', 'The World Republic of Letters', p. 4. Against this premise, as we have seen, he nevertheless excludes oral literature from the domain of world literature.

54   Martin Puchner et al., eds, *Norton Anthology of World Literature*, vols. 1–3 (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012-2018).

55   Russell West-Pavlov defines it as a 'proximate mode of meaning-making' that 'activates a mode of semiosis whose functioning is primarily somatic (that is, bodily, visceral, and material) rather than representational; it functions according to a dynamic or economy of "affect"; its condition of possibility is that of spatial contiguity; and that contiguity defines the modes of agency it makes possible', *Eastern African Literatures: Towards an Aesthetics of Proximity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 5.

56   See also Moolla, 'When Orature Becomes Literature'. In the case of Bhojpuri, to make another example, novels capitalise on the status and popularity of oral performers. See Pandey Kapil's novel *Phoolsunghi* (1977), loosely based on the life of singer-composer Mahendar Misar, whose English translation in 2020

In general, the written texts studied by world literature always exist and circulate as part of a complex range of intermedial channels, commutations, and translations. Written genres rub shoulders with oral genres in the same social spaces, with constant stylistic and technical cross-fertilizations. We can scarcely understand written literature in Somali, for example, without an awareness of the aesthetic and compositional primacy of oral poetry: what Somalis have done 'is to *add* literacy to their traditions of memorization and diffusion of orally composed poetry'.[57] In the case of Swahili poetry—in the *utendi* and *mashairi* forms— 'written and spoken forms flow into each other', and written pieces are understood to be only departure points for a new performer to transform them and reenact them.[58] In both the Somali and Swahili examples, we see literary genres transmitted through a mix of writing, memorization, tape or digital recordings, internet sharing and downloading. These genres have a written instantiation, but these written instantiations can only be understood through their multimedia connections and conversions. An exclusive focus on transmission 'through transcription', again going back to Prendergast, would not suffice. Thinking intermedially, instead, allows us to better understand what (written) world literature is and how it functions.

A whole range of written texts, to give another example, exist only in relation to oral traditions. After the great wave of studies into oral composition spearheaded by Andrew Lord's *Singer of Tales* (1960), which spurred a flurry of research into oral epics worldwide,[59] most scholars of contemporary orature point to the symbiotic combination of oral performance and some kind of writing 'at some point', either in the form of manuscript versions of songs and performance genres (see Clarissa Vierke, Chapter 1 of this volume); of handwritten copybooks and printed chapbooks acting as reminders to performers; of physical texts present as token presences during performance; or of memories

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caused a sensation. Or Sanjeev's Hindi novel *Sutradhar* (2003) on the 'Bhojpuri Shakespeare' Bhikhari Thakur; see Orsini, Chapter 4 in this volume.

57 John William Johnson, 'Orality, Literacy, and Somali Oral Poetry', *Journal of African Cultural Studies,* 18.1 (2006), 119–136 (p. 134).

58 See Annachiara Raia, 'Texts, Voices and Tapes: Mediating Poetry on the Swahili Muslim Coast in the 21st century', *Matatu*, 51.1 (2020), 139–168.

59 See e.g. Stuart Blackburn et al., eds, *Oral Epics in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), John D. Smith, *The Epic of Pabuji* (New Delhi: Katha, 2005); Lauri Honko, ed. *Textualization of Oral Epics* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011).

of a lost text from which a particular orature originated (see Sadhana Naithani, Chapter 9 of this volume).[60] Catherine Servan-Schreiber, for example, studied the publication and distribution of chapbooks of a large number Bhojpuri oral epics and songs by commercial publishers in northern India, peddled by itinerant colporteurs and singers along specific trade and migration routes into cities and villages Nepal and eastern India and the coolie diaspora.[61] These written texts cannot be studied outside of the oral, performative context that gives them currency and meaning.

Audiovisual and digital technologies have for the most part enabled and supported the reinvention of older genres and the emergence of new ones, offering new means for circulation that defy the dichotomy of written/unwritten.[62] Aldin K. Mutembei, for example, has studied WhatsApp narratives as an emerging genre in Swahilophone East Africa, showing how they mix verbal and non-verbal (photos, images, emojis) elements to creative stylistic effects. The recipient has an active role in sharing these messages and potentially in editing them to their liking, meaning that variants can branch out at any time and authorship is within

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60   See also the chapters by Monika Horstmann, Christopher Novetzke, and Richard Widdess in *Tellings and Texts: Music, Storytelling and Performance in North India,* ed. by Francesca Orsini and Katherine Butler Schofield (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015), https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0062

61   See Catherine Servan-Schreiber, *Chanteurs itinérants en Inde du Nord: la tradition orale Bhojpuri* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999); and *Histoire d'une musique métisse à l'île Maurice: chutney indien et séga Bollywood* (Paris: Riveneuve éditions, 2010). From the point of view of world literature, the role of chapbooks for the transmission of orature importantly points to a whole other, more demotic domain of authorship, publishing, circulation, consumption, and recognition than that of 'proper' book publishers and bookshops. Apart from Servan Schreiber's seminal work, see also Francesca Orsini, 'Booklets and Sants: Religious Publics and Literary History' in *Imagining the Public in Modern South Asia*, ed. by Brannon Ingram, J. Barton Scott, and SherAli K. Tareen (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 89–103; and 'Love Letters' in *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History*, ed. by Francesca Orsini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 228–258.

62   The argument that digital technologies have made it redundant to distinguish between 'oral' and 'written' literatures is powerfully made by Angelus Mnenuka, 'Online Performance of Swahili Orature: The Need for a New Category?', *Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies*, 5.3-4 (2019), 274–297, https://doi.org/10.1080/23277408.2019.1685752 In their introduction to the edited volume *Listening Up, Writing Down, and Looking Beyond: Interfaces of the Oral, Written, and Visual* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012, p. 1), Susan Gingell and Wendy Roy similarly ask their reader to 'open the door to transdisciplinary, multimodal communication'.

everybody's reach. The WhatsApp groups in which the narratives are shared provide a forum for the audience to comment on the narrative and discuss its meaning, in a way that approaches the live presence of the audience at a public recital (where the person who shared the story to the WhatsApp group plays the same role as the reciter). This is a genre that defies the distinction between oral and written, but whose circulation is as 'worldly' as that of some Anglophone novels.[63]

According to John Miles Foley, digital platforms have reproposed the same 'thought-technology' on which oral traditions are also based. Both the digital and the oral, he notes, are based on pathways and processes, not on static 'things'. The oral-digital can act as a starting point to deconstruct what we mean by 'book': from a unitary, fixed object to be consumed in a unilinear order, the book can be reimagined as a network of interconnected items that can be read in a variety of ways and directions.[64] Thinking intermedially, in this sense, can help us rethink the functioning of the material object of world literature *par excellence*.

This volume argues that contemporary and historical oratures raise questions that are directly relevant to world literature. Orature can fruitfully defamiliarize world literature's implicit reliance on written, indeed printed, texts when thinking about textuality, authorship, circulation, scale, translation, intermediality, recognition, the market, the meanings and functions of literature, and so on. The Nobel Prize for literature awarded to Bob Dylan in 2016, and arguably also that in 1997 to Dario Fo, who championed oral traditions in his work as a performer and playwright, signalled a recognition of the aesthetic value and importance of songs and orature-inflected playwriting, but have remained exceptions. What if, rather than considering song, storytelling, or performance as close kin to but nonetheless 'other' than poetry or literature,[65] they were simply part of literature? What if 'folk' artists were just artists?[66]

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63   Aldin K. Mutembei, 'The Future of East African Kiswahili orature in the digital age: a case study of WhatsApp Narrative', *Studies of the Department of African Languages and Cultures*, 51 (2017), 33–52, https://salc.uw.edu.pl/index.php/SALC/article/view/21

64   John Miles Foley, *Oral Traditions and the Internet: Pathways of the Mind* (Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2012).

65   As Bob Dylan himself put it in his 2016 Nobel Lecture.

66   Priyanka Basu, *The Poet's Song: 'Folk' and its Cultural Politics in South Asia* (London: Routledge, 2024).

Most of the chapters in this volume emphasise the longevity of oral texts and traditions even as they shift language, form, and location. Oral genres are everywhere, both old and new, constantly reinvented, resilient in time, and adaptable to varying socio-economic and technological conditions. The volume also pays attention, however, to the threats faced by some of these oral genres. In Chapter 6, Yenealem Aredo and Desta Desalegn Dinege analyse one such case study in Ethiopia, arguing that oral traditions in Na'o are in decline, paralleling the decline in the number of Na'o language speakers and the dispersion of the Na'o community away from their heartland. According to the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, published by UNESCO in 2009, a third of the 6,500 languages spoken around the globe today are in danger of disappearing forever. Oral genres can survive and readapt in different languages, but endangered languages frequently mean endangered oral traditions. In other cases, institutional neglect, or in the worst cases institutional repression and opposition, cast a shadow over certain traditions. The Moroccan *halqa*—the square often outside the historical boundaries of the city where storytellers, acrobats, magicians, snake charmers, singers, fortune tellers, medicinal plant sellers and other street performers ply their trades—is recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage, but despite this international recognition, Fatima Zahra Salih explains in Chapter 5, it has experienced a period of neglect, and even attempts to completely erase it, by the officials in Moroccan cities. Even after its rehabilitation and even championing as national heritage by the state, it faces questions about its future, as in the case of other 'traditional' spaces. As the *Encyclopaedia of African Literature* reminds us, oral literature is 'something passed on through the spoken word, and because it is based on the spoken language, it comes to life only in a living community. Where community life fades away, orality loses its function and dies. It needs people in a living social setting: it needs life itself'.[67] An expansive definition of world literature to include oral traditions, then, would also interrogate the materiality of 'life itself' and the material processes that single out some forms of life for replacement and elimination.[68]

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67   Simon Gikandi (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of African Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 580.

68   For Hindi novelist Phanishwarnath Renu, only oral traditions have the potential to heal divided communities and put forward shared visions for the future;

Location

If location 'is not simply a geographical, historical, or cultural context but a standpoint, a position, an orientation, a necessarily partial and particular perspective, however complex, ample and multiversal it may be, from which [an author] represents and imagines a world', how does it play out in oral genres, and with what consequences for world literature?[69] Given the importance of embodiment and presence (spatial, for speakers and addressees), social relevance, and imaginative agility, oral genres are particularly rich sites for processes of worlding and active agents participating and intervening in these processes, to paraphrase Pheng Cheah.[70]

Oral genres come with their own politics of location, manifested for example in the space of performance and in the liminality of the performer.[71] In Chapter 5, Fatima Zahra Salih explores the marginality and bustling creativity of the space of the *halqa* (lit. circle) in Morocco. She notes that the 'familiarity and habit' that a storyteller like Omar Douâmi in the city of Beni Mellal in central Morocco was able to develop with his audience 'sealed a sort of contract between them, which translated in concrete terms into a spatially specific agora recognized by the city and its inhabitants. The magic of the spoken word is that it impacts both the public and the space that retains its memory' (p. 182).

Location may also mark the moment of composition. Oral authors creating new texts have ritual ways of connecting, both spiritually and intellectually, with the source of their inspiration. For composers of *qəne* poetry in Amharic and Ge'ez, for example, creative ideation is

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Phanishwarnath Renu, *Parati Parikatha* (New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, 1957); *Tale of a Wasteland,* translated by Madhusudan Thakur (New Delhi: Global Vision Press, 2012).

69   Francesca Orsini and Laetitia Zecchini, 'The Locations of (World) Literature: Perspectives from Africa and South Asia: Introduction', *Journal of World Literature*, 4.1 (2019), 1–12 (p. 2), https://doi.org/10.1163/24056480-00401003

70   Pheng Chea, *What is a World?* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), p. 2.

71   Traditional performers are holders of specialised knowledge and art within the performance space but often occupy low socio-economic positions; see Katherine B. Brown (now Schofield), 'Introduction: Liminality and the Social Location of Musicians', *Twentieth-Century Music,* 3.1 (2007), 5–12. Angelus Mnenuka warns against considering performer, audience and performance space as fixed and separate components of the performance, stressing instead their fluidity, 'Fluidity and Fixity of Performer, Audience and Performing Space', *UMMA: The Journal of Contemporary Literature and Creative Arts*, 8.1 (2021), 37–54.

marked by social self-seclusion and immersion into the natural world. Authors depart from their community for an isolated location, like a forest, and their poetic inspiration is the result of time spent in solitude and contemplation. They only reunite with other people once the *qane* is fully formed in their mind and they are ready to recite it.[72] In this sense, literary creation follows a spiritually charged physical movement from a social space to a natural space and back. In other cases, the source of inspiration is even more literal. In Chapter 2, Assefa Tefera Dibaba and Adugna Barkessa Dinsa describe how Oromo singers (*shaayii*) derive their inspiration from a specific location: a mountaintop, an old tree. These are considered sacred places—the seats of gods, supernatural entities, and ancestors—and the process of artistic creation entails a reconnection with the spiritual world. The *shaayii* brings gifts and offerings to the gods and ancestors, and they will teach the *shaayii* new songs in turn. The physical embeddedness of these rituals of artistic creation shapes a politics of location, but also of dislocation. When those spaces of literary inspiration are destroyed, or people are forcibly separated from them, the connection between people and their environment breaks down, and so does the meaning-making enabled by that connection. The loss of space, is, in this case, also a loss of literature and history. But, as Assefa and Adugna's chapter shows, that brokenness can itself generate oral genres of disruption and displacement, who reorient the community towards new meanings. Creation can come from spatial connection, but spatial disconnection also generates its own poetics.

In this sense, oral texts not only derive meaning from the physical space in which they are composed and perform, but dynamically co-constitute and co-define those spaces in turn. They inscribe, story, and change locations as they migrate across geographies, genres, languages, platforms, and audiences. 'The cultural memory of Liyongo, like that of other epics, is tied to a specific geography', Clarissa Vierke writes (p. 58), namely to the Tana and Ozi deltas just opposite the Lamu archipelago on the northern Swahili coast. The Tana and Ozi deltas were an area of 'overlapping geographies', which become inscribed in the characterization of Liyongo as being of Persian (Shirazi) descent and in

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72   A fictionalisation of this process of poetic creation is in the novel *Mine to Win* by Hiwot
      Teffera (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2016), whose protagonist is a
      boy who goes through the school curriculum of the Orthodox Church.

the 'precious goods from afar: fruits, scents, and clothes' made available through Indian Ocean connections evoked in some of the early texts (Vierke, Chapter 1, p. 61). Mauritius becomes, in the songs of Bhojpuri indentured migrants working in the sugarcane plantations, *mirichiya*, a land of mirages and false promises, whose streets, they discovered, were not paved with gold after all. Later, as migrants became locals, *mirichiya* became *morisva dil mohela* (Mauritius charmed my heart).[73] In Sundar Popo's nonsense song, discussed by Francesca Orsini in Chapter 4, key Bhojpuri terms (*kudari, phulauri*) mix with local Trinidadian spaces (the cane field) and toponyms (Sangre Grande) and with 'exotic' English nursery rhymes to convey the specific location and orientation of Indians in Trinidad.

The disproportionate concern of world literature with global texts in print, global circulation, and global recognition, implicitly connotes the 'local' as inert and static, but even deeply private or localized forms of orature—like the Haketia songs of Sephardi women from Morocco, or the Oromo songs about ecological decay and dispossession—speak to world literary concerns through their potential comparative perspectives, whether on minor literatures and intimate repertoires, and how they transmit knowledge and affect that is considered too important to lose; or through a shared ecopoetic sensibility and response to ecological damage.

Transmission and Circulation

As Karin Barber has pointed out, 'texts survive because of the efforts that human beings go to, to mark them out, bind them up and project them across time and space'.[74] Oral texts that only exist embodied in the memory of human beings have to contend with death as a major moment of disconnection. The proverb 'when an old man dies, a library burns down' makes frequent appearance in scholarship on oral genres, often in relation to urgent appeals for the preservation of threatened traditions. The image conjures up an oral landscape where older people are the main repositories of literary and historical memories and the principal agents of its conservation and transmission. Yet, research on oral genres has identified many more agents and axes of oral

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73   See Servan-Schreiber, *Histoire d'un musique metisse*, pp. 100, 167.
74   Barber, *Anthropology*, p. 28.

transmission. Older people teach younger people, of course, but older children also teach their younger siblings. Nor is transmission only monodirectional, from the older to the younger. As Tadesse Jaleta Jirata shows in Chapter 7, children are themselves creators and innovators and play an active role in literary transmission, and some genres are their exclusive preserve. Children's culture is not 'trivial and innocent' but 'artistic and complex', and it is able to shape adult interactions, too.[75] Such intergenerational creativity and cross-collaboration in the circulation and transmission of oral genres can be contrasted, at least partly, with the more distinct generational roles in written literature, where children are more passive—read to, or readers, but rarely legitimate creators. The intergenerational co-creation of oral texts, as we have seen, stretches beyond the living. Spirits, gods and ancestors speak from the afterlife, gift poets new songs, or manifest themselves when certain songs are sung. From this point of view, death is a form of disconnection that simultaneously generates new forms of connection. It is often the task of oral genres to enable the relationship between the living and the dead; between the material and the spiritual worlds. In these cases, the performance of a particular oral text is an illocutionary act: it brings back the ancestors and makes them speak.

Even when not outright illocutionary in their structure, many oral texts are tied to actions—they bring into being, demarcate some collective acts or activities, spur the audience to do something. This function is often globally portable. Political or protest songs often enjoy extraordinarily long lives over multiple locations and multiple generations, and can define an entire zeitgeist (see Karima Laachir, Chapter 10 of this volume). We only need to think of the global circulation of the song *Bella Ciao*, originally a rice-pickers' lament that became an anthem of the Italian partisans during World War II and has now been taken up by protesters in Kashmir and Iran, among other places. Later movements bring old songs back to life and charge them with new, urgent meanings with each reiteration. Virginia Pisano in Chapter 11 usefully declines different meanings of transmission with regards to the political songs of the Egyptian duo Ahmad Fu'ad Negm

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75   This argument is made by Brian Sutton-Smith, Jay Mechling, Thomas W. Johnson, and Felicia McMahon, eds, *Children's Folklore: A SourceBook* (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 1995).

and Sheikh Imam in 1970s Cairo and their circulation through time and space, ending with important considerations about the pressures that international circulation can have on artists from political hotspots. The circulation of artists and singers between the south and the north of the Mediterranean is not politically neutral: protest singers are championed by European festivals and curators, but they feel the pressure to adhere to and project a particular stance and identity, with stifling consequences.

On a larger, transnational scale, then, although rhetorically institutions of world literature, including festivals, 'emphasise the systemic quality of circulation, in reality the networks that sustain it are more fragile, informal, and serendipitous'.[76] This holds true for written or printed literature—which, if not written in English, is often translated and circulates transnationally thanks to the efforts of small publishers. It also holds true for oral traditions and their performers, who face the challenge of addressing a contemporary audience that does not understand the long and rich textual tradition from which the texts they perform originated. In 1970s India, Sadhana Naithani writes, a new 'world of festivals—national festivals, folk festivals, regional arts, and crafts festivals' (and Festivals of India abroad)—provided:

> new venues for performance drawing new kinds of audience. A fissure between text and performance was inevitable, for text was limited by language, but the performance and music were not. So, performance of text remained more important in the local and traditional venues, but at new venues the universal language of the performer's style and music became the centre of attention (Naithani, Chapter 9, p. 269).

If oral performances offer a surfeit of sensory messages and experiences, then, language can become a barrier that needs to be circumvented with ingenuity. Naithani's chapter nonetheless stresses the dynamism and ingenuity of oral performers and genres, as people and performers come together to form new groups and communities, breaking down identitarian boundaries. A focus on orature, then, uncovers the vitality and the transnational, often transcontinental, expanse of subcultures and submarkets dedicated to oral forms, belying accounts of a single, though uneven, global market.

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76   Orsini and Zecchini, 'Introduction', p. 6.

Transcription, Archiving, Translation

Folklorists, ethnographers, and literary historians today are revisiting the nationalist and/or colonial roots of early archiving and transcription projects.[77] Contemporary scholarship is more self-reflective about the protocols and politics of transcription.[78] John Niles, for example, highlights the difficulties inherent in 'scripting the voice' and the choices and biases involved in literate interventions imposed on an oral tradition. As print culture is 'saturated with connotations of literacy', documenting an oral text on the written page transforms its aesthetic integrity, producing a hybrid *tertium quid* (third entity). As a result, 'an oral-derived text is by its nature a hybrid form, something that is neither fully literary nor fully oral in nature'.[79] 'Textual refashioning' aimed at producing an ethno-poetic transcription may highlight the original performance elements and modalities on the written page to more fully bring the performance to life, but it still brings to the fore the question of whose performative voice do we hear—the original performer's, the ethnographer's, the editor's?[80] Moreover, since oral texts, as we have seen, have 'multiple centres of authority', Niles stresses the latent collaboration and negotiation integral to subsequent re-inscriptions that create an oral text. 'Oral textual scholarship', which Niles defines as 'using the medium of print to preserve traces of orality', requires a patient, responsible, responsive, attuned, and contextualised approach to oral texts. [81] The contributors to a volume like this, aimed at literary comparatists rather than linguistic anthropologists or folklorists, have tried to strike a balance between attention to performance and contextual elements and a focus on key oral textual elements/quotations while

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77 See e.g. Sadhana Naithani, *The Story-Time of the British Empire: Colonial and Postcolonial Folkloristics* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010); John Neubauer, 'Rhetorical Uses of Folk Poetry in Nineteenth-Century Central Europe' in *Studying Transcultural Literary History,* ed. by Gunilla Lindberg-Wada (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006), pp. 88–97.

78 See for example Laura J. Murray and Keren Rice, eds, *Talking on the Page: Editing Aboriginal Oral Texts* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

79 John. D Niles, 'Orality' in *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship*, ed. by Neil Fraistat and Julia Flanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 205–223 (p. 211).

80 Ibid., p. 219.

81 Ibid., p. 211.

providing readable translations, conscious that there is no 'right way' of doing so.

If transcribing an oral art form engenders a loss of the original performative voice, the digital archiving of performance can alleviate some of the 'problems of representation [...] endemic in print culture'. And indeed paratext-rich digital transcriptions as well as sound and audiovisual recordings of oral corpora have multiplied, from *Verba Africana* to the World Oral Literature project.[82] The edited volume *Oral Traditions in the Digital Age: Archiving Orality and Connecting with Communities*, published by the team of the World Oral Literature Project in the same book series as this volume, reflects on how digital technologies can be used in projects of knowledge and archive co-creation between researchers and communities. Consciously critical of the history of Western scholars' appropriation of other people's oral literature for economic profit and career advancement,[83] the World Oral Literature project made sure:

> that source communities retain full copyright and intellectual property over recordings of their traditions. [...] Returning digitised materials to performers and communities frequently helps to protect established living traditions, with materials used for language education as well as programmes that aim to revitalise cultural heritage practices.[84]

Archival recordings have been the springboard for the revival of oral traditions also in the case of Sephardi oral literature: 'Today, few older singers are alive,' Vanessa Paloma Elbaz writes in Chapter 8, 'though the repertoire is undergoing a revival through the professional performances of singers from the diaspora who often turn to archival recordings and scholarly transcriptions as sources' (p. 233). Janet Hayward finds digitally archived orature to be important in educational settings as well:

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82   For the *Verba Africana* series, see Daniela Merolla, 'Verba Africana: African Languages and Oral literatures: DVD Documentation and Digital Materials' (2009).

83   See Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, 'Stop Stealing Native Stories' in *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation*, ed. by B. Ziff and P. V. Rao (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), pp. 71–73.

84   Mark Turin, Claire Wheeler, and Eleanor Wilkinson, eds, 'Introduction' in *Oral Literature in the Digital Age: Archiving Orality and Connecting with Communities*, ed. by Mark Turin, Claire Wheeler and Eleanor Wilkinson (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2013), pp. xiii–xxiii (p. xiv), https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0032. See also Sophie McCall, *First Person Plural: Aboriginal Storytelling and the Ethics of Collaborative Authorship* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011).

'oral traditions that have already been documented, and others yet to be accumulated, provide essential educational and scholarly resources in the development of decolonised curricula, and potentially serve as tools for the promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the classroom and beyond'.[85] All these observations are pertinent to scholars of world literature in interrogating the politics of the (literary) archive, the pedagogy of the field in relation to language, and the legacies of the colonial relationship between Western scholars of literature and non-Western authors and audiences.

Some of these legacies have a bearing on translation as well. Translation is part and parcel of oral texts as they are retold, reframed, and repackaged each time for a new audience. But what about translation more narrowly defined as the crossing of linguistic boundaries to carry a text beyond its original language? This is an important issue that affects the circulation and recognition of oral genres within and as world literature. If, as we have seen, circulation on a larger scale tends to de-emphasise texts in relation to voice and music, or to modify and simplify them for the sake of broader circulation, this paradoxically means that oral texts like songs are less likely to be recognized as verbal art or poetry. This, in turn, can reinscribe the primacy of a small number of regional or 'global' languages. Is it a coincidence that the only singer-songwriter that ever won the Nobel Prize for literature composes and sings in English as his mother tongue?

Translations of oral texts can be roughly divided among academic-, performer/artist-, and fan-led, and each reveals a different, specific set of outcomes, strategies, challenges, and patterns of circulation. Academic translations may render the artistry and complexity of oral texts through skilful wording and paratexts, and thereby help establish their stature as world texts.[86] But the most successful case of translations of oral texts

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85   Janet Hayward, 'Orality in the Digital Age' in *The Transformative Power of Language: From Postcolonial to Knowledge Societies in Africa*, eds. R. H. Kaschula and H. E. Wolff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 277–303 (p. 277).

86   E.g. J. P. Clark's translation and transcription of *The Ozidi Saga* from Izon into English (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press and Oxford University Press, 1977). For Isidore Okpewho, it did 'more than any other edition of African oral literature before it to give us a good picture of the oral performance in context,' especially in 'emphasizing as never before the relevance of, among other things, contextual circumstances (e.g. audience interjections) to the text of the oral narrative performance'; Isidore Okpewho, 'Towards a Faithful Record: On Transcribing and

that do not lose complexity or popularity is that of performer/artist-led translations. We may think of the massive translation and adaptation of the French songs of *chansonniers* like Georges Brassens and Jacques Brel into Italian by *cantautori* like Fabrizio De Andrè, Herbert Pagani, Gino Paoli, Giorgio Gaber, Fausto Amodei that helped renew the linguistic, thematic, and emotional landscape of Italian songs.[87] The translations and adaptations of French *chansons* gave lyrics primacy over music, and introduced a new realism defined by an anti-rhetorical language of everyday words from urban speech, sometimes even dialect.[88] Although Italian *cantautori* also drew on other sources and wrote their own songs, their adaptations of French *chansons* helped them to broaden the range of themes and affects sayable through song, including loneliness, incommunicability, existential angst, nostalgia, urban alienation, migration and industrialisation, marginalisation, power, violence, and sex as well as love.[89]

Finally, there is a vast archive on the internet of websites devoted to providing texts and translations of songs originally in Hindi, Arabic, and many other languages. If YouTube and other digital platforms have made a huge repertoire of songs in languages other than English widely available, many listeners and viewers are looking for translations of the song lyrics, and others are providing them. Translation of oral or performance texts more often than not takes place 'on the hoof', distributed across communities of fans or added as subtitles to videos.[90] The proliferation of websites offering transcriptions of song lyrics in multiple scripts and in translation highlights the need for and care towards translation, but also the different protocols of translation from

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Translating the Oral Narrative Performance' in *The Oral Performance in Africa,* ed. by Isidore Okpewho (Ibadan: Spectrum, 1990), pp. 111–135 (p. 117).

87   See Enrico de Angelis, '*Le mal de Paris*: influenza della canzone francese su quella italiana', *Trasparenze,* 22 (1990), 41–50.

88   As in Nanni Svampa's translations of Brel into Milanese dialect.

89   de Angelis, '*Le mal de Paris'*, p. 45. Fabien Coletti notes that Herbert Pagani's translations of Jacques Brel songs like *Le plat pays* (as *Lombardia*) and *Ces gens–là* (as *Che bella gente*) transpose not only Brel's Flemish landscape onto northern Italy, but also help Pagani outline processes of rapid socio-economic change accompanying the Italian postwar economic boom; Fabien Coletti, '«In Lombardia, che è casa mia»: traduzione, identità e stile negli adattamenti breliani di Herbert Pagani (1965–1969)', *Line@editoriale,* 8 (2016), n.p.

90   See Nikitta Adjirakor, 'African Language Literature and the Paradigm of World Literature', Mulosige webinar, 26 February 2011.

those of written texts.[91] These on-the-hoof, unofficial translations are a hugely important, if under-the-radar, tool in the transnational circulation of oral genres.

This Volume

This volume is inspired by scholarship questioning the oral-to-written teleology and the dichotomy between literate and non-literate cultures. The conference behind it, titled 'Oral Traditions in World Literature' and held in Addis Ababa in December 2019, included papers covering the Horn of Africa, the Maghreb, and South Asia—the three areas of the research project of which it was part ('Multilingual Locals, Significant Geographies' or MULOSIGE, 2016-2021, European Research Council Advanced Grant, based at SOAS University of London). Although the chapters in this volume focus on case studies from Africa, the Maghreb, and India, we hope that the range, importance, and vibrancy of the chapters will also alert readers to comparable examples in 'the West', where, we argue, orature is also strong and alive. Several events we ran as part of MULOSIGE aimed at giving visibility to oral literary production and oral performances in multilingual London, including multilingual storytelling and spoken-word poetry, and pushed for a greater scholarly recognition of oral genres in the West, where the criss-crossing of diasporas and mobilities opens new possibilities for oral reinvention. The three geographical and literary areas covered by this volume offer, of course, only a partial coverage of 'oral literary worlds' – and yet we decided not to regionally decline the title of this volume, as a provocation towards the habit of world literature to treat Anglophone literature as the default 'universal' and the non-Anglophone as an inevitably narrower deviation from this default universal.

It was important for us to hold a located discussion on 'Oral Traditions in World Literature' in Addis Ababa, where 'oral literature' has a programmatic salience that 'world literature' does not have. At the conference, some colleagues perceived an antagonistic relationship between the two, and saw the study of oral genres in local languages precisely as a reassertion of cultural difference against the assimilating

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91   Examples include http://www.arabicmusictranslation.com/, 'Gitayan', https://www.giitaayan.com

and homogenizing motives of 'world literature'. For our colleagues based in Ethiopia, this was not just a theoretical discussion. Many of them study oral genres whose socio-historical trajectories were profoundly affected by Ethiopia's integration into the global capitalist system, for example as a result of development-induced displacement.[92] In this context, the study and collection of oral genres is not only a scholarly pursuit, but a form of resistance against ongoing violence. This tension is palpable in the different stances and varying levels of interest in world literature and transnational circulation that the chapters show. The effects of these tensions on knowledge production were tangible even for the conference participants that travelled to Addis Ababa for the first time: the conference, in the end, was held in a hotel over the university.

The discussions at the conference contributed to MULOSIGE's own positioning within the field of world literature. The members of the research project (July Blalack, Fatima Burney, Jack Clift, Itzea Goikolea-Amiano, Ayele Kebede Roba, Karima Laachir, Sara Marzagora, Francesca Orsini) share a general scepticism towards understandings of world literature aimed at fitting all global literary traditions onto a single map, or organising them according to universal 'laws of literary evolution'. Such goals, it seems to us, are inspired by a positivist, classificatory impulse that risks reproducing imperialist cartographies and eliding variability, fluidity, and contradictions to fit all-encompassing abstract models. Our response to these impulses is not to argue for the irreconcilability of difference or to celebrate local particularisms. We disavow the search for a 'solution' to the 'problem' of world literature, and advocate an open-ended methodology that, on the contrary, constantly generates new questions, even at the cost of leaving some unanswered. In fact, the unanswerability of certain questions is not a cost or a liability to us. Reckoning with the partiality of our understanding is not only a matter of scholarly ethics vis-à-vis the complexity of global literary histories and the multiplicity of their languages, but is also in itself an invitation to compare, for example by learning new languages and starting more conversations. World literature can then be recast as a process, not an object; and as a process, it derives more strength from the conceptual

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92   For more information on development-induced displacement in Addis Ababa, see Marco Di Nunzio, 'Evictions for Development: Creative Destruction, Redistribution and the Politics of Unequal Entitlements in Inner-city Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), 2010–2018', *Political Geography*, 98 (2022), 1–9.

vocabulary of directions and routes than the conceptual vocabulary of maps, models, and roots.[93]

As we started considering oral genres, this reflection became even more pertinent. Oral genres are performed, and they are defined by performance. If we transcribe the lyrics of a praise poem in a book, or if we record the voice of the praise poet, or even if we film the whole performance, something of the original meaning of the text survives, but a lot more gets lost. Performance is meant to be transient, and its meaning resides in its impermanence, immediacy, and in the performer-audience dynamic. We can archive some of it, but we also should make peace with the meagreness of the archive over the experience. Again, this is not necessarily a limitation: transcriptions and recordings can acquire new meanings, start new processes of signification—or their inadequacy to capture the performance in full can also be an invitation to just experience that performance in its fleetingness.

We too had live performances at our 'Oral Traditions in World Literature' conference in Addis Ababa: Vanessa Paloma Duncan Elbaz performed songs belonging to the Moroccan Sephardi repertoire, and students from the university of Addis Ababa performed a range of Oromo songs. This volume does not capture those performances, just as elements of the conference presentations, as oral acts, are lost when they are transformed in book chapters. By putting together this volume, we too are, after all, turning an oral genre into a written one, but again this is not a unilinear teleology: just as the presentations were orally performed alongside PowerPoint slides with images, videos and hyperlinks, our book is also available to download from the internet as a digital product.

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93   See James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

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