

Oral Traditions in World Literature – book of abstracts

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London)

First panel - Oral literature in world literary studies

Francesca Orsini (SOAS University of London)

Looking back, looking forward: Bhojpuri orature travels the world

A “model of world literature that does not include orality is comparable to an act of self-amputation: it entails the excision of a huge field of human cultural endeavour”, argues Liz Gunner. As “verbal art, it belongs to a universal practice of making or creating in language” (116). And yet, many have noted, it has been enduringly difficult to include orature, “the great unwritten” (Levine), within models of world literature. Although the ubiquity, portability and power of orature on digital and live platforms are undeniable in our contemporary globalising moment, so little of it seems to qualify as “literature”, even in the most capacious sense of world literature. So much contemporary orature is worldly and travels “outside its culture and language of origin”, and thus qualifies as world literature according to David Damrosch’s circulation-based definition, but is it “read as literature”? Here the ball seems to drop.

In this presentation I hope to argue that a located (or multi-located), multilingual and ground-up approach to world literature, such as that of our MULO SIGE project, can help us out of this conundrum, as the work of Karin Barber and Liz Gunn has already shown. They have studied the entextualisation of verbal art and have compared forms of oral praise poetry and epic across African languages and traditions to show the enduring vitality of orature. Here my method will not be to compare across languages and traditions but rather to take one example, that of Bhojpuri songs in India and in Mauritius, which have been studied in great depth by Catherine Servan-Schreiber.

Bhojpuri, spoken in eastern north India and with a rich tradition of oral epics and songs, was carried far and wide by migrant labourers and traders in India and beyond, most notably across the oceans along the coolie diaspora. In Mauritius, Bhojpuri became one of the *linguae francae* of the island alongside Creole, particularly in the agricultural inland, and the most recognised among the Indian languages there. It has acquired a status there that it has never quite managed to acquire in India. Over time, the position of Bhojpuri in Mauritius, and its relationship with Hindi and Creole, have changed, and the traditional (folkloric) repertoire of songs and performance style have been enriched and transformed through the encounters with Creole *Séga*, Western music, and Hindi film songs. If, as Servan-Schreiber notes, the history of Mauritian Chutney music and songs is tied to a great extent to the evolution in the status of Bhojpuri, this relationship is now reversed and it’s the success of Chutney music that supports the status of Bhojpuri on the island. My presentation will reflect on the “footprint” of Bhojpuri song orature in India and Mauritius and its parallel lives and meanings in verse and prose genres within different languages (Bhojpuri, Hindi, Creole, English). In many cases Bhojpuri orature embodies an attachment to or longing for a rural identity, but in others it also imagines new presents and futures. Does this extensive footprint count as world literature?

Biography: Francesca Orsini is Professor of Hindi and South Asian Literature at SOAS, University of London. She is currently finishing a book on the multilingual literary history of Awadh from the 15c to the early 20c. She is also leading a project funded by the European Research Council (2015-2020) on “Multilingual locals and significant geographies: for a new approach to world literature”, which proposes an alternative, located and multilingual approach to world literature from the perspective of three regions: North India, the Maghreb, and the Horn of Africa.

Tadesse Jaleta Jirata (Addis Ababa University)

'Orature' across generations among the Oromo of Ethiopia

The Oromo, who are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, are known for their oral literature since time in memorial. The Oromo culture embodies multiple forms of oral literature that have played essential roles in all aspects of people's lives across generations. Until today, oral literature takes the precedence to written literature among the Oromo society. However, it has not been long time since the Oromo oral literature started to get the attention of international and local researchers. It was only as of the 19th century that a considerable amount of studies and collections have been made on the different forms of the Oromo Oral Literature of which works of Karli Tushek, Onesimos Nasib, Aster Ganno, Enrico Cerulli, Sheikh Bakri Sapalo, Mangasha Riqxuu, B.W Andrzejewski and John van De Loo are the pioneer ones. The Oromo oral literature consists of several forms known in Oromo language as Gerarsa, qexala, lalaba, makmaaksa, duriduri, oduu-duri, hibboo, weedduu(faaruu) sirba, eebba, abaarsa, kadhata (sagada) and xapha. These forms belong to and performed by different generations such adults, children, men and women. For example, Gerarsa, qexala and lalaba are performed by adult men while oduuduri and hibbo are predominantly known as children's oral play. The rest are performed by all generations in different social and cultural contexts. These forms have different structure and styles of performance but have similar characteristics which arise from their oral and artistic nature. In this paper, I try to show how performance gives identity and life to these forms across the mentioned generations. I discuss how the performance approach may help to combine the literary and anthropological characteristics of oral literature and argue that the concept "orature", in the study of Oral literature, may refer to performance beyond verbal actions. Eventually, I assert that the literariness and meaningfulness of oral culture exist in performance out of which it is difficult to understand the literary and artistic quality of African oral literature.

Biography: Tadesse Jaleta Jirata has a PhD in Interdisciplinary Child and Youth Research from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (2013) an MA from Addis Ababa University (2005). He has been working as a researcher and lecturer at Dilla University (from 2000 to 2017) and is now an Associate Professor at Addis Ababa University (from 2018 to present). He was a postdoctoral researcher at Geneva University in Switzerland and receiver of the Swiss Excellence Scholarship in 2016/17. He was also awarded an Open Society Scholar Award and did field research in South Africa in 2016. His research career emphasizes the dynamic relationships between folklore (folk literature) and young people among agro-postural communities in southern Ethiopia. His focus has been firstly on oral literature and intergenerational relationships, secondly on the relevance of oral literature in building young people's social competence, and thirdly on children's right to education in the context of multilingual societies in southern Ethiopia. He has published his research in several high-impact peer reviewed journals such as *Research in African Literature*, *Northeast African Studies*, the *Journal of Folklore Research*, *Global Studies of Childhood*, *Storytelling*, *Self, Society*, *African Studies Quarterly*, and *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute*. He is also the author of a book titled *A Contextual Study of the Social Functions of Guji-Oromo Proverbs: The Savor and Rhetoric Power of Verbal Arts in Everyday Communications of African Peoples* (2009). He participated in the following interdisciplinary research projects as a leader and principal researcher:

1. "Children, Young People and Local Knowledge in Ethiopia and Zambia" (2008-2012), funded by NORAD;
2. "Building the Social Competence of Children and Young People through Indigenous Education" (2014-2017), funded by Dilla University;
3. "Towards Understanding Reasons for Young People's Migration from Ethiopia to South Africa" (2016-2017), funded by the Open Society Foundation;

4. “Children’s Right to Education in the Context of Social Realities in Southern Ethiopia: Practices, Dilemmas and Implications for Policy Making” (2016-2017), funded by the Swiss Government Excellence scholarship.

Second Panel – “Traces” of oral literature against hegemonic narratives

Vanessa Paloma Elbaz (University of Cambridge)

Sephardi orature and the myth of hispanidad

Beginning in the late nineteenth-century, philologists studied Sephardi oral literature as a vestige of Spanish medieval memory which had been “frozen” in time after the expulsion (Menéndez Pidal (1956, 1973), Benichou (1968), Alvar (1969, 1971), Armistead & Silverman (1973, 1977, 1978, 1982, 1986), Pomeroy (2005), Díaz-Mas & Sánchez Pérez (2013) etc.). Three generations of studies on Romances present a homogeneous picture of hispanidad as the driving force behind a rich and dynamic singing tradition, which was mainly transmitted by Sephardi women throughout the Mediterranean diaspora.

Historically scholars have linked Sephardi orature as a straight and unique line to Spanish literary culture. Quoting examples from 16th and 17th century printed romanceros, as well as the remaining oral tradition in Spain, the Spanish link seemed undeniable. The Spanish colonial project used this tradition and its “hispanidad” to buttress their colonial expansion in various geographic locations, most notably in northern Morocco. The fact that it was Sephardi women’s orature that was used to support the ideology behind this colonial project is telling in itself.

The reality of what Sephardim sing, conserve and transmit is a layered interweaving of local, multilingual oral repertoire built over traces of historic material gathered by the community throughout its migrations, plus newly adapted pieces from current cultural influences. This reality is wider than the one presented by previous scholarship which mostly restricts it to the romancero tradition, playing into World Literature hegemonic tropes which link romance texts to philology and Spanish literature. The remaining oral repertoire from this community is then confined to anthropological and ethnomusicological study, not reaching the status of a valuable literary contribution. This paper will deconstruct and analyze the consequences of the asymmetry inherent in the ways in which Moroccan Sephardim see and interact with their orature compared with the manner in which Western academia has studied and written about it.

Biography: Vanessa Paloma Elbaz is a Research Associate at the University of Cambridge, working on the research project “Past and Present Musical Encounters across the Strait of Gibraltar”. Her work for this project explores the role that Jewish music and musicians played in colonial and post-colonial cultural interactions. She currently working on a book proposal tentatively entitled *From Your Mouth to the Heavens: (Trans)Nationalism, Diversity and Jewish Music in Spain and Morocco (1890-2020)*. Vanessa has a PhD from Center for Middle Eastern and Mediterranean Studies (CERMOM) of the National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilization (INALCO) in Paris. Her dissertation “Contemporary Jewish Women’s Songs from Northern Morocco: Core Role and Function of a Forgotten Repertoire” explored why Judeo-Spanish women’s sung repertoire from northern Morocco continues to occupy a central place within the group’s identity construction even while being almost completely forgotten in practice. In 2014, she founded “KHOYA: Jewish Morocco Sound Archive” to collect, digitize, classify, and analyse contemporary and historical sound recording of Moroccan Jews. Her research and publications focus on identity transmission, and the use of music and language in interactions between Moroccan Jews and the majority culture. Vanessa has an international

performance career as a singer of Moroccan Jewish repertoires and has been described as “a kind of one-woman roving museum of her own” by The New York Times. She is an alumna the Early Music Institute at Indiana University’s School of Music (MM) where she studied vocal performance practice of Medieval and Renaissance secular monody. Her performances and lectures on five continents—including Los Angeles’ World Festival for Sacred Music, Paris’ Institute du Monde Arabe, Bogotá’s National Museum, Santa Fe’s Crypto-Judaic Studies Conference, and Ifrane’s Hillary Clinton Center for Women's Empowerment at Al Akhawayn University—have been featured on PBS, NPR, PRI, I24, France24, and Al Jazeera International amongst others.

Ayele Kebede (SOAS University of London)

Novelization of Orature or ‘localization’ of the novel?: The interface between orature and the novels in Afan Oromo and Amharic

The implication of exclusively privileging writing over orality, which perniciously demeans the epistemic base of orally produced knowledge systems, is still perceptible in Ethiopian (literary) studies. A statement by Christopher Clapham in which he explicates the bias in the Ethiopian ‘grand tradition’ could be one of the telling examples of such an implication. According to him, in the ‘grand tradition’ the ‘Amharas and Tigrayans have a history, whereas other [Ethiopian] peoples have only an anthropology...’ (2002, p.40). I believe that this bias is mainly a consequence of the privilege owed to the history of writing that these peoples have had for a long period of time. In a similar fashion, the literatures in the languages spoken by these peoples, particularly Geez and Amharic are presumed as ‘literature proper’ whereas those in other Ethiopian languages are denied such a recognition and exempted from important academic platforms up to recent times. One important area where this problem is palpably observed is university literature syllabi where a disproportionately large amount of time and space is given over to the literatures of the languages with print culture (i.e., Amharic and Geez). However, orature is impactfully present in literature including the mostly celebrated genre of modern print culture, the novel. More importantly, scholars of African literature such as Eileen Julien, Fiona Moolla and Olankunke George argue that the presence of orature in the novel is not only for ‘ornamental’ (Julien) purposes, but also it is an ‘analytical category’ in the study of the novel. Against this backdrop, through the comparative study of the historical and ethnographic novels in two widely spoken Ethiopian languages, this paper addresses the following questions. How do the authors contest and unsettle the assumptions about ‘linear progression’ of the genre of the novel from oral narratives and the hierarchical relationship between literature and orature? How do the authors foreground ‘an ongoing relationship of covalness and simultaneity’ (George, 2008, p.17) between the novel and orature so that the divide and hierarchy between writing and orality are blurred? How do the novels draw on and rework different genres of orature in representing the voices and experiences of the marginalized and minority peoples whose history is overlooked by the state historiography and mainstream Ethiopian (literary) studies? And how does orature inform and shape the development of the stories or the overall narrative structure of the novels on the one hand, and how do the novels contribute to the preservation and transformation of orature, on the other. In addressing these questions, I draw on MULOISIGE approaches in combination with Bakhtinian theory of the novel.

Biography: Ayele Kebede is a PhD candidate at SOAS University of London. His work contributes to the Horn of Africa strand of the MULOISIGE project. His doctoral thesis, provisionally titled “Voices in/from the Margins: Marginalisation and Resistance in Ethiopian Novels in Oromo and Amharic”, is one of the first comprehensive comparisons between Ethiopian novels in Oromo and Ethiopian novels in Amharic. He has a BA from Ambo University and an MA from Addis Ababa University. Prior to joining SOAS, he worked for six years as a Lecturer in English Language and Literature at the

University of Bule Hora, Ethiopia. At Bule Hora, he been the recipient of a number of research grants to study the oral literature, sociolinguistics, and cultural traditions of the Guji Oromo in Southern Ethiopia. He is also a member of the Oromo Writers Association.

Third Panel – Modernity and the non-linear histories of oral traditions

Sadhana Naithani (Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Two tracks: Stories of the destinies of two performative oratures

The two case studies in this paper foreground the complex relationship of oratures with modernity and history. The first case is that of Muslim Jogis of Alwar, Rajasthan, who have been performers of an oral version of the epic Mahabharata and of the songs of Shiv-Parvati's married life. By their own account their tradition is seven hundred years old. I have been following a family of Muslim Jogis: the current young performer is the grandson of a man who gained extraordinary heights as a performer, and a father who took that yet ahead, but passed away suddenly a couple of years ago. We can see how the world of their performance and of their oral texts has changed over time. The second case is that of the genre of Dastangoi, which was considered almost extinct until a few years ago. It has been revived by the efforts of a learned man who is himself a writer, poet, novelist, editor and translator. He and his nephew, also a renowned writer, decided to revive this tradition of Urdu storytelling in 2005. This form was based on the narration of written 'dastans' (stories) and has a rich repertoire of old texts, to which new texts have been added. The performers are urban and educated individuals who are not compelled to be performer-narrators. They are not conditioned by family tradition; they choose to perform and revive a form of orature.

The paper will present a comparative analytical view of the two cases: one of traditional performers determined by traditional status and resources, and the other of urban, educated individuals choosing to revive a traditional form of storytelling. This analysis will let us see how there is no one destiny for the oratures in the modern world, and what are the factors that govern their becoming or not becoming part of world literature.

Biography: Professor Sadhana Naithani is a folklorist who has did her PhD on German folksongs. Her postdoctoral researches and publication have been concerned with colonial folkloristics in India and across the British Empire. Her interest in the history of the discipline of folkloristics has most recently led her to study folkloristics in the Baltic countries during the Soviet occupation. She is the author of *In Quest of Indian Folktales* (2006), *The Story Time of the British Empire* (2010), *Folklore Theory in Postwar Germany* (2014), and her forthcoming book *Folklore in Baltic History* (2019). Her work has been internationally acknowledged and appreciated. Sadhana Naithani is President of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research. Recently, she has initiated a Folklore Unit at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi and is its Coordinator.

Sara Marzagora (SOAS University of London)

The significant geographies of fukkära and qärärto (heroic recitals and war songs) in Ethiopian history

Fukkära and *qärärto* (heroic recitals and war songs) are mostly studied from the point of view of folklore studies, or cited without commentary to complement and illustrate the historian's description of past events. This paper, based on an analysis of over 200 poems from Šawā and Gojjam, proposes a third approach: to analyse the two genres as sources of Ethiopian cultural history. The paper investigates two topics in particular: the representation of the hero (*jägəna*) and the significant

geographies described in the poems. *Fukkära* and *qärärto* are indeed founded on a series of oppositions between, on the one hand, civilization, the village, agriculture, and on the other hand wilderness and nature. New sets of dichotomies are built starting from this basic binary. The village is linked to comfort and security, while the *jägəna* has to prove his manhood by living in hardship and danger. The village is often linked to metaphors indicating the highlands, the mountains, “staying up”, while the hero, in his departure from his community, always “descends”, “goes down”. Many *fukkära* and *qärärto* contain references to Mənilək’s military campaigns of imperial expansion. Slave raiding expeditions (with associated racial connotations) are often hinted at when the poems mention the lowlands. More importantly, the two genres are highly individualistic, and, in their highly condensed narrative plots, they thematise the voluntary separation of the *jägəna* from his family and friends, thus reflecting over the role of the individual vis-à-vis society. *Fukkära* and *qärärto* about hunting will be analysed in the paper alongside *fukkära* and *qärärto* about the Italian occupation.

Biography: Sara Marzagora is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at SOAS University of London. She contributes to the Horn of Africa strand of the MULOSIGE (Multilingual locals, significant geographies) research project. In January 2020, she will take up an Assistant Professorship in Comparative Literature at King’s College London. Her PhD thesis (completed in 2015) and subsequent research have explored Ethiopian political thought, global intellectual history, world literature, critical theory, and postcolonial theory. She is currently finalizing her book manuscript, provisionally titled “The True Meaning of Independence: Ethiopian Intellectuals in a Colonial World (1901-1936)”. Her work has been published on the *Journal of African History*, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, *African Identities* and the *Journal of World Literature*.

Fourth panel – Oral traditions, landscapes and public spaces

Fatima Zahra Salih (Université Sultan Moulay Slimane)

Erasure and rehabilitation of halqa in Morocco: The fortunes of a marginalised oral cultural heritage

English: If we had to pick one typical cultural phenomenon of Moroccan imperial cities, it would be the public spaces dedicated to the street performances commonly known as “halqa”. This Arabic word means “circle” and it is an approximate equivalent of “agora”. In a famous work on the city of Marrakech, Elias Canetti devotes an entire chapter to these performances, unknown to him up to that point. The chapter is titled “The voice of storytellers”, since the traditional storytellers had chosen this public space to meet their audience daily just after the third prayer of the day, “al asr”. The “halqa” is a practice rooted in Moroccan culture and in specific geographical spaces. From here comes the anthropological interest in this tradition and in these geographical space as “places of memory”, in the definition of Pierre Nora. Whether as a practice or as a space, the so-called “halqa” has gone through a period of neglect, and in some cases even an attempt at complete obliteration on the part of city authorities. This has contributed to the decline of the tradition and to the decrease in the number of practitioners, thus limiting the possibility to hand down the skill to future generations of practitioners and renew the tradition – at least until recently, when intellectuals (such as Juan Goytisolo for Jamaâ El-Fna in Marrakech) and specialists (such as anthropologist Ahmed Skounti) have worked to safeguard this heritage. Today, after the rehabilitation of “halqa” in Morocco, questions still remain on its place in modern culture as well as on its future. Would it be enough to restore the “places of memory” destroyed in the last decades to guarantee the continuity of the cultural practices linked to those places? And when it comes to storytellers and practitioners, whose chain of transmission was interrupted, can they rise from their ashes and guarantee future continuity?

French: S'il existe une spécificité culturelle des villes impériales du Maroc ça serait celle des espaces publics dédiés aux spectacles de rues appelés communément "halqa". Ce mot arabe, signifie le "cercle" et serait un équivalent approximatif de l'agora. Dans un célèbre ouvrage sur la ville de Marrakech, Elias Canetti a consacré tout un chapitre à ce phénomène inédit pour lui et qu'il intitula "La voix des conteurs", puisque les conteurs traditionnels avaient élu ce lieu ouvert pour rencontrer leur public quotidiennement, juste après la troisième prière du jour "Al asr". La "halqa" représente ainsi une pratique ancrée dans la culture marocaine et un espace géographique qui lui est lié. D'où l'intérêt anthropologique de cette tradition et de l'espace "lieu de mémoire", comme l'a nommé Pierre Nora. Que ce soit en tant que pratique ou en tant qu'espace, ladite "halqa" a connu une époque de négligence, voire de tentative d'effacement complète par les responsables des villes marocaines. Ce qui a participé à son effritement et à la disparition de nombreux praticiens sans promesse de relève et encore moins de renouveau, jusqu'à une époque récente où des intellectuels (tels Juan Goytisolo pour Jamaâ El-Fna, Marrakech) et spécialistes (tels Ahmed Skounti, Anthropologue) ont oeuvré pour la sauvegarde de ce patrimoine. Aujourd'hui, après la réhabilitation de la "halqa" au Maroc, des questions se posent toujours sur sa place réelle dans la culture moderne tout comme sur son devenir. Suffirait-il de restaurer les lieux de mémoire détruits durant des décennies pour garantir la continuité d'une pratique culturelle qui lui est liée? Quant aux conteurs et autres praticiens, dont la chaîne de transmission a subi une fracture, pourraient-ils renaître de leurs cendres et s'assurer l'éternité?

Biography: Fatima Zahra Salih teaches in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University Sultan Moulay Slimane in Morocco. Her PhD dissertation, completed in 2014, was titled "The Conquered Word or Women's Novelists: A Study of the Works of Marguerite Duras, Hélène Cixous and Nathalie Sarraute". Her main research interests are literature, intangible heritage, genre, psychoanalysis and theatre arts. She has organized several cultural festivals and festivals of theatre and dance, including the International Festival of the One Thousand and One Nights, and has in turn taken part to several international festivals in Belgium, Jordan, Canada and Egypt.

Assefa Tefera Dibaba (Addis Ababa University)

Ambience: Voices from broken places

The present project aims to bring forward the localised voices and genuine concerns of people living around desecrated and 'broken places' in Oromia. Using interviews, group discussions, direct observations, and available sources in print, data for the present study came from 'desecrated' and 'broken places' in and around Finfinne in Oromia. Based on the people's construct of sense of place--of rootedness, insidedness, and place identity--a 'desecrated place' is an endangered sacred ecology (mountains, well springs, trees, caves, and groves), currently threatened or abandoned. The study also shows that a 'broken place' is an area (ecosystem) of decline left in a state of degradation by natural disaster or by reckless anthropogenic activities. To reclaim a desecrated and a broken place is an ethnoecological act of social and ecological rescue through stewardship to regain control of, recreate, and restore the place, and to provide a narrative of healing the historical and contemporary grief of loss.

Biography: Assefa Tefera Dibaba is a poet, educator and researcher based at Addis Ababa University. He is the author of anthologies of poems in English and Oromo including: Anaany'aa (1998, 2006), Edas-Edanas (1997), Finfi (Ilyaada) (2014), Decorous Decorum (2006), and The Hug (2011), and has published works of prose including Danaa (2000), Eela (2009), Theorizing the Present (2004, reprinted as Beyond Adversities, 2010). He first moved to the United States in July 2010 after receiving the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund for the persecution he was

facing in Ethiopia. He stayed in the United States to pursue a PhD at Indiana University (2011-2015). His recent research has focused on ethnoecology and ecopoetics, and his latest poetry collection is *Symposia* (2018). Assefa is currently working on another collection of his poems in English titled *Ate-Loon*.

Adugna Barkessa (Addis Ababa University)

Contested ecological identities and narratives in and around Finfinnee: An ecolinguistics approach

Using oral tradition from the study area, the objectives of this study are a) to examine how linguistic devices are used to construct and represent people's conceptions of and relationship with their environment, b) to explore the role of language in disclosing the impacts of the ongoing unplanned urbanization and industrialization practices on the pro-social and pro-ecological behavior of the people and c) to explain the nexus between language, ideology and power in the construction and representation of human-environment relations. The study employed qualitative methodology to collect and analyze the linguistics devices used in the oral and available resources in print, in conjunction with personal experiences. Focus group discussion, individual interview, and observation of the natural settings are the instruments of data collection partially used and planned to be fully used in the study. The sample data collected through these instruments were analyzed thematically. The findings show that lexical units (wording, antonyms, collocations, toponyms and ethnonym), grammatical devices (pronouns, conjunctions, activations), figurative languages (oxymoron, simile, personification and analogy) and codeswitching and mixing are the main linguistic devices used in the contemporary narratives of the people in connection with their conceptions of and relationship with the environment in which they live. Most of these linguistic devices convey the inextricably inseparable relationships of people-environment which shows positive perceptions of the people to their natural environment. The devices reflect that the people from below perceive that an environmental crisis is nothing but their life crises. The findings also revealed that the ecologically destructive practices (displacing, polluting) from displacing authorities disrupted and reduced the symbiotic relationships between the people and their environment. As a result of the words and expressions people use their narratives in connection with the development induced displacement and anthropogenic factors of the ecological degradation in the study area, show hopelessness, helplessness, homelessness, unsecured, marginalization, inefficiency and ambivalence in the life of the dwellers. The ecolinguistic analysis of the oral tradition magnifies the blame and claim of the people about their natural environment, emphasizes the ecologically bad past and the worse present done by government and victimization of the people from below which disrupts people-environment relationship. This is framed by the asymmetrical power relationships between the people within the same ecology.

Biography: Adugna Barkessa is an Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics and Development, Addis Ababa University. Adugna is teaching courses such as Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, Semantics and Pragmatics, Pragmatics and Discourse, and Dialectology and Language Standardization at the university. He is the author of seven books: *Terminology Related Problems in Teaching Afaan Oromoo* (2009), *Introduction to Afaan Oromoo Grammar* (2010), *Basics to Teaching Afaan Oromoo and Literature* (2011), *Introduction to Applied Linguistic Research* (2011), *Afaan Oromoo Word and Its Structure* (2012), *Arra Gurba 'Novel'* (2017) and *Afaan Oromoo Textbooks* (grade 3, 6, 11 and 11). His PhD research was on "The Discursive Construction and Representations of the Waata Identity: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Oral Texts". Adugna's research interest

are: language as a social practice, oral texts, and critical discourse analysis (environmental discourse, identity discourse, economic discourse, gender discourse).

Fifth Panel: Oral traditions, music and popular culture

Karima Laachir (Australian National University)

Morocco's popular culture powerhouse: Darija, literariness and Chaabi music

Darija (or spoken Moroccan Arabic) with its regional diversity is one of Morocco's most vital artistic languages with a rich oral and performative literary repertoire and heritage. Its sophisticated popular literary imaginary and vocabulary has inspired generations of Morocco's centuries old literary traditions such as Zajal and Sufi genres of poetry, Halqa performances, Malhoun and Gharnati music as well as modern forms of performative genres such as theatre, musical, cinematic and television productions. In this paper, I explore how contemporary Chaabi (popular) music has reinvented the literary language of Darija through a close reading of the musical group Nas al-Ghiwane (established in 1971), a group that is credited not only with revolutionizing the aesthetics of Darija but also with starting a popular social and political movement of freedom in 1970s/80s Morocco, an era marked by brutal political oppression. I argue that the group's use of storytelling through songs draw heavily on Morocco's popular Sufi poetry, performative traditions of folktales and proverbs as well as on the sounds and rhythms of Gnawa (African-Moroccan) music and repertoire. The group reinvented a plural literary Darija in their lyrics and music that cut across regions and social classes; their sophisticated political lyrics represented a nation in search of its "soul" at a time of rapid social and political change. Ultimately, I want to show that although Darija is strongly co-constituted with Arabic Fusha (written Arabic) and Tmazight (Morocco's other vernacular language) as well with other languages in Morocco, it has its own literary imaginary that has constituted a powerhouse of Morocco's popular oral culture. Therefore, instead of opting for the flawed equation of "either or" (referring to the current debates in Morocco on the merits of Fusha and Darija), I argue that we should opt to enrich and nurture Morocco's multilingual scene of oral and print languages and cultures that are not only co-constituted but also marked by their own literary specificity and locality.

Biography: After a long-term position at SOAS, University of London, Karima Laachir is taking up an Associate Professorship in Arabic Cultural Studies at the Australian National University; she will be the Director of the ANU Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies (Middle East and Central Asia) from January 2020. Karima's research is located at the interface between Humanities and Social Sciences looking at how culture, cultural productions and practices underpin social and political movements of change under authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. She also works on Comparative literature and Postcolonial Studies multilingually and from the perspectives of the Arabic Global South. She is the Maghreb-lead of the ERC funded project "Multilingual Locals and Significant Geographies: For a New Approach to World Literature" <http://mulosige.soas.ac.uk/>. Her current book project on *Postcolonial Moroccan Novel in Arabic and French: From Decolonisation to Neo-Liberal Times* (forthcoming with Edinburgh University Press) offers a connected multilingual literary history of contemporary Moroccan literature.

Yenealem Aredo and Desta Desalegn (Addis Ababa University)

The contextual and functional analysis of Nao folk songs

The main objective of this study is to analyze the contextual function of one of the endangered elements of Nao culture- folk songs. To achieve this aim, observation and interview data collection methods were employed. Consultants were identified using purposive and snowball sampling

techniques. The Contextual and functional approaches were consulted to conduct the research. Based on the mentioned research methodology, researchers described the findings as follows: Nao people use their folk songs exactly in the context of their cultural activities. In the culture the people perform folk songs during different occasions, for example, folk song during marriage which is called ‘Yaahe iiwosee’ (‘where is his home...’), during plowing their farm ‘wookisee wookasaa’ (‘we sung this song during...’). They use their folk songs during cultivating their staple food- inset. They have a special folk song when they are celebrating the first day of using their harvested *teff* which is called ‘kookee’. Nao people never use *teff* before they gather and celebrate by singing folk songs. Every folk song is accompanied by traditional musical instruments. Nao youth express their readiness for marriage by growing inset and singing folk songs using traditional musical instruments such as *kamba*, *kirar*, *imbilta* and *golfa*. Among these Golf is the most favorite musical instrument which is played by 12 individuals at a time. One can hear different sounds from each individual who play with it. Therefore, folk songs are everything to Nao people. Every cultural activity is accompanied by folk songs which help the people to accomplish their activities. The people use them to express their happiness and sorrow their wish and interest. Therefore, the researchers recommend that these endangered folk songs need to be collected and well-documented as they are the reflectors of the people’s life.

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Dissenting voices of Cairo: Sheikh Imam, Ahmad Fu’ad Negm and their legacy in the contemporary music scene

This paper is the outcome of fieldwork carried out in Cairo over the months that preceded and followed the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak (February 2011). It provides an analysis of political songs by Sheikh Imam and Ahmad Fu’ad Negm and addresses their legacy in the production of contemporary artists.

Sheikh Imam (1918-1995) was a blind ‘oud player and singer trained in Qur’an recitation. Along with the poet Ahmad Fu’ad Negm (1929-2013), who wrote most of the lyrics for his songs, he was at the forefront of an underground cultural movement that derided the political establishment and denounced the social problems of the country.

Imam and Negm’s cultural movement drew inspiration from the work of Sayyed Darwish (1892-1923) and Bayram Tunzi (1893-1961), and it was led by poets such as Salah Jahin (1930-1986), Fu’ad Haddad (1927-1985), who challenged the official mainstream *fusha* (classical Arabic) poetry by composing poems in colloquial Egyptian. According to Booth¹, this new poetic movement did “raise controversial issues about the political role of poetry in a neo-colonial context, the boundaries of community/nation and the meanings of marginalities”. Indeed, by using idioms and words that belong

to everyday life, these poets dealt with topics that had been hardly treated before. Thanks to their irreverent humour and satire, Sheikh Imam and Negm were considered as the symbols of the Egyptian popular culture, and despite many years of imprisonment and heavy censorship, they were (and still are) well known in several Arab countries.²

The main scope of this research is to highlight the thread that links together different artistic expressions of dissent in Cairo - from vernacular poetry of the early 20th century against British occupation, through Imam Negm's songs of the 60's-70's and 80's against Nasser and Sadat, to the songs of contemporary artists who took part to the demonstrations in Tahrir square in 2011. Many of these contemporary artists, such as composer Mustafa Said, choir director Salam Yousry, and 'oud player Hazem Shaheen, have adopted Imam Negm's artistic and cultural legacy to denounce political and social problems. This shows that Imam-Negm's legacy is still living matter and that contemporary dissident songs are the product of a century-long tradition of vernacular poetry put into music that connects the grievances of several generations of Egyptians.

Moreover, this research claims that old and new dissenting songs of Cairo do not necessarily draw inspiration from imported genres, such as rock and rap - as some scholars³ and journalists tend to highlight - and that they can be the product of renewed local forms of music and poetry. Indeed, the selected artists challenge what the Egyptian poet Tamim Barghouti calls "the false dichotomy of innovation versus heritage in arts production".⁴ According to this dichotomy, embodied and transmitted by the Egyptian and European intelligentsia from the early 20th century onwards, innovation means westernization, and heritage means the return to a supposedly timeless and retrograded tradition.

¹ Booth, 2006.

² See for example the video of their concert in Tunis in 1983 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MYMoAOfwzI>

³ See LeVine, 2008.

⁴ Tamim Barghouti, "Heritage and innovation, on both sides of the Mediterranean", text commissioned for the Medinea Meetings organized by the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Marseilles, 19th July 2015

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