Oral Literary Worlds

Location, Transmission and Circulation

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2. Ecopoetic and Ecolinguistic Approaches to 'Broken Places'

Orature of Displacement Around the Ethiopian Capital

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Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between Oromo oral literature and the environment through the lens of the emerging disciplines of ecopoetics and ecolinguistics, problematizing those cases in which the relationship becomes 'broken' due to forced displacement. We want to approach Oromo oral traditions through historically and geographically sensitive categories, focusing on what is important for the poets themselves, as opposed to forcing Western literary categories onto the Oromo literary tradition.[1] The discipline of world literature has often assumed the universal applicability of Eurocentric critical categories to non-Western literary traditions. Here, we want to argue against this top-down perspective and propose a bottom-up framework that foregrounds the geographies, themes, and conceptions of literature that

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1   Assefa Dibaba, 'Oromo Orature: An Ecopoetic Approach, Theory and Practice' (Oromia/Ethiopia, Northeast Africa), *Humanities* (2020), 9–28 (p. 27), https://doi.org/10.3390/h9020028

are significant for local Oromo poets. This does not imply a disavowal of the discipline of world literature, but a different perspective on it.

As we are writing this chapter in 2020, Development-Induced Displacement (hereafter DID) is intensifying in Ethiopia, profoundly impacting people's lives and the environment in which they live. It has disrupted the people's ecology, including their literary ecology, separating them from the places they call 'home' and eroding their sense of attachment to their local environments. Everywhere around the world, the trend appears to be the same: indigenous people are being evicted from their land in the name of industrialisation, urbanisation, and 'development'. We are interested in oral traditions as a way in which people make sense of the environment around them, and how this meaning-making changes when the link between people and their 'significant geographies' is broken. Thus, one goal of the present study is to contribute to the ongoing environmentalist discourse about the exploitation and destruction of natural landscapes, which is of global concern. Indeed, our analysis of the oral traditions that emerged as a result of forced displacement has a comparative resonance, as it connects Oromo verbal creativity to the verbal creativity of other indigenous people facing evictions and land loss.

Throughout the twentieth century and up to the present, literary studies in Ethiopia have tended to privilege the analysis of written literature in Amharic and, less prominently, Tigrinya. Oral traditions, particularly those of the many other Ethiopian languages, have been severely neglected and themselves 'displaced' and 'evicted' from academic discourse and cultural institutions. In our research areas, Koyyee Faccee and Boolee Arraabsaa, located around the Ethiopian capital, the victims of DID have been forced to live in 'broken places', where their voices and their 'broken narratives' have been, for the most part, marginalised and left unheard. The people we interviewed during our fieldwork have suffered an immensurable human and environmental catastrophe over the years. The chapter centres their songs, narratives and the verbal creativity with which they have made sense of their displacement and resisted state hegemony.

Development-Induced Displacement in Ethiopia

As reported by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), internal displacement can be caused by, among other factors, natural disasters (droughts, floods, earthquakes, landslides, wildfires), military conflicts, and other forms of violence. Whether caused by natural or man-made disasters, the scale and pace of displacements is increasing over time. According to a United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2015 report, the number of displaced people in 2007 all over the world was 42.7 million. In 2016, almost a decade later, this figure increased to 65.6 million. After only a year, in 2017, the number of displaced people in the word reached 68.5 million. Countries highly affected by internal displacement include Syria (4.9 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), South Sudan (2.4 million), Myanmar (1.2 million), and Somalia (1.1 million).[2]

A major cause of DID is land eviction ordered by state authorities or local institutions in the name of urbanisation, industrialisation, and resource exploitation. One case in point is the Ogoni people, evicted from the River State in Nigeria and still not benefiting from oil revenues 20 years after the Ogoni environmental campaigner Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed for his political activism.[3] Until early 2018, Ethiopia was mentioned as one of the countries *hosting* displaced people. For example, in 2017 Ethiopia was hosting 14,000 Somali refugees.[4] This is only half of the story, however. In the last few years, Ethiopian state authorities have been directly responsible for the displacement of Ethiopia's own citizens, not only in the name of development, but also as a punitive measure against the protest movements against the government that erupted in the country from 2014.[5] Of the many forms of DID

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2   UNHCR, 'Global Trends on Forced Displacement' (2018), UNHCR Global Trends - Forced Displacement in 2017.

3   Ken Saro-Wiwa fought the Shell Oil Company and the state for turning what was once a thriving ecosystem into a desolate black moonscape with gas flares, air and water pollution, and oil spills; see Joya Uraizee, 'Combating Ecological Terror: Ken Saro-Wiwa's "Genocide in Nigeria"', *JMMLA,* 44.2 (2011), 75–91.

4   UNHCR, 'Global Trends on Forced Displacement'.

5   In the first half of 2010, for example, the number of people forced to flee their homes in Ethiopia due to systemic violence reached 1.4 million, recorded as the highest in the world; see 'Internal Displacement: Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2010' (2011). According to Tesfa, 'DID affects the overall living condition of the displaced households, particularly the low-income and vulnerable

happening in Ethiopia at the moment, this chapter focuses specifically on the displacement caused by urban expansion or urban restructuring projects. According to Stanley, more than half of the internally displaced people in the world in 2004 suffered from urban redevelopment projects.[6] Over the past decade, dwellers residing around, or at the edge of, Ethiopian cities have been profoundly affected by DID, resulting in the loss of houses, lack of access to roads and electricity, and lack of job opportunities for the displaced population.[7]

The Oromo people attach a special significance to Addis Ababa, traditionally known as Finfinne, meaning 'fountain', 'sacred well', or 'hot spring' in Oromo due to the presence of thermal waters. Finfinne was renamed 'Addis Ababa' ('new flower' in Amharic) in 1887 during the reign of emperor Menelik II, who chose it as his new capital precisely because his wife Taytu and his entourage liked taking mineral baths in the hot springs. Our two research areas, Koyyee Faccee and Boolee Arraabsaa, are to the immediate south of the Ethiopian capital. The people living here still retain a memory of the old Finfinne that predated Menelik's settlement in the area. According to the local tradition and historical records, before 1887 Finfinne was mostly inhabited by the Oromo clans of Gullalle, Ekka, Galan, and Abbichu. It was partitioned into twelve districts, each administered by a local clan chief.[8] Under the rule of Ras Tafari (1916-1930), later crowned emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974), Oromo names for towns, cities, mountains, and features of the natural environment were replaced by Amharic names as part of an imperial project of 'nation building' under 'one language,' 'one culture,' and 'one religion'. This process of renaming obscured the earlier history

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groups in Ethiopia'; Tesfa Teferi GebreEgziabher, 'The Effects of Development-Induced Displacement on Relocated Households: The Case of Addis Ababa' (MA Thesis, The Hague, International Institute of Social Studies, 2014), p. ix.

6   Jason Stanley, 'Development-induced Displacement and Resettlement', *Forced Migration Online Research Guide*, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford (2004)

7   Tesfa ('The Effects of Development-Induced Displacement') and Ambaye Getu and Assefa Abeliene ('Development-Induced Displacement and Its Impacts on the Livelihoods of Poor Urban Households in Bahir Dar, North Western Ethiopia', *AHMR*, 1.3 (2017), 310–313) have studied in particular the DID around the city of Bahir Dar.

8   See Svein Ege, *Class, State, and Power in Africa: A Case Study of the Kingdom of Shawa (Ethiopia) about 1840* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996).

of local people, alienating them at a linguistic level from the places that informed their past and their sense of identity.

When it comes to the Ethiopian capital, the older loss of Finfinne to Addis Ababa has recently been compounded by new forms of displacement. The Ethiopian government is undertaking a large-scale policy of evictions around the city, ostensibly to pursue construction projects in response to the increasing rates of urbanisation. This policy, under the name of 'Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan', was designed and imposed from above, without involving local residents in the decision-making process. In Koyyee Faccee and Boolee Arraabsaa, most of the local residents targeted by the evictions identify as part of the Tulama branch of the Oromo people. Their main sources of livelihood have traditionally been agricultural produce and livestock. Their cattle and pack-animals like horses, mules, and donkeys benefited from vast grazing lands in the area. The land is fertile and well-suited for agriculture, and local people grew wheat, barley, *teff* (a cereal indigenous to the Ethiopian highlands), and vegetables like tomatoes and onions. Not only have the people traditionally living in Koyee Faccee and Boolee Arraabsaa been forced to leave their land and former homes, but the two districts have also seen an influx of refugees from the inner city of Addis Ababa, who were themselves forcefully relocated to condominiums built on the land evicted from farmers. As a result, not only were the old inhabitants of these areas forced to leave their lands, but the new inhabitants are also refugees who had themselves been evicted from their former inner-city neighbourhoods.[9]

According to available data, the Oromo constitute the most numerous ethnic group in Northeast Africa. They speak a Cushitic language called Afaan Oromoo (rendered in English as 'Afan Oromo' or simply as 'Oromo'), which is the fourth most widely spoken language in Africa after Arabic, Swahili, and Hausa.[10] During most of the twentieth century, the Oromo were split across different administrative zones; but following the post-1991 restructuring of the Ethiopian state along

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9   Tesfa, 'The Effects of Development-Induced Displacement'; and Zwedie Berhanu, 'Impact of Urban Redevelopment on the Livelihoods of Displaced People in Addis Ababa: The case of Casanchis Local Development Plan' (MA thesis, Addis Ababa University, 2006).

10   Abdulaziz Lodhi, 'The Language Situation in Africa Today', *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 2.1 (1993), 79–86 (pp. 79, 84).

ethno-federalist lines, a new regional state called Oromia was carved in the south of the country, and although there are still Oromo living in other administrative regions, with the creation of Oromia the Oromo have gained a more representative political home. Although figures are contested, some sources (albeit dated) suggest that the Oromo population makes up nearly half of the total population of Ethiopia, while other sources claim that Oromia is the largest Ethiopian region by population and area.[11]

Literary Ecologies in the Context of Development-Induced Displacement

The current wave of displacement has both reactivated the memories of the old nineteenth-century dispossession, as well as generating a new oral literature of sorrow and resistance.[12] The clash between farmers and central governments has always been accompanied by a clash of narratives. The government narrative of development promised to integrate the city with the surrounding areas, offering new homes and making clean water, electricity, health, and educational institutions more accessible to the inhabitants. The local narratives (one may call them 'survival narratives') blame the Master Plan for its top-down nature and for the lack of a proper consultation process, for the destruction of farming and of the natural environment in the area, and for violently severing people's link with the place they call home.

Oral literature is central to the deconstruction and reconstruction of identities, and shape people's attachment to the natural and built environments. Ecopoetics and ecolinguistics use the term 'literary ecology' to describe how people's sense of environment, or the sense of place, is conveyed through verbal creativity. Literary ecologies have both a mental and a social component. The mental component refers

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11   Paul Baxter, 'Boran Age-Sets and Generation-Sets: Gada, a puzzle or a maze?' in *Age, Generation and Time: Some features of East African Age Organisations,* ed. by Paul T.W. Baxter and Uri Almagor (London: C. Hurst, 1978), pp. 151–182.

12   Assefa Tefera Dibaba, 'Oromo Social Resentment: Re-envisioning Resentment Theory, an African Perspective', *Journal of Pan-African Studies,* 11.7 (2018), 96–122 (p. 96); Aberra Degefa, 'Addis Ababa Master Development Plan: A Program for Development or for Ethnic Cleansing?', *RUDN Journal of Sociology,* 19.1 (2019), 31–39; and Alemayehu Kumsa, 'The Oromo National Memories', *RUDN Journal of Sociology,* 19.3 (2019), 503–516.

to beliefs, values, and worldviews, whereas the social components refer to everyday verbal and non-verbal actions and interactions. How people behave towards each other as humans and how they treat their environment depend on the systems of meanings in which they partake. Ecolinguistics brings both linguistic and ecological perspectives to bear on the analysis of these literary ecologies.[13] Much of its enquiry traces how literary ecologies arise and how they change and are changed by language.

Changes in landscapes trigger changes in the people's ecological identity through a process of renegotiating new spatial symbols and meanings. This means that environmental change forces people to modify the stories by which they live. As Stibbe puts it, 'stories about socio-economic situations, ecological progress, environmental degradation, urbanization, etc. have profound impact on how people treat each other and their environments that life depends on'.[14] At the same time, people often use narratives to challenge and resist the stories that have been externally ascribed to them.[15]

In the case of the Addis Ababa Master Plan, the displacement and evictions can be understood through the clashing of narrative ecologies of displaced people on the one side and of the displacing agents on the other. The narrative agency of the local people in shaping the narrative around the Master Plan is a fundamental point, as it shows that local people are not only passive victims of the evictions, but active agents in contesting them, including through literature. The implementation of the Master Plan was in fact one of the elements that triggered a wave of protests throughout the Oromia region beginning in 2014, and this chapter shows how the protests mobilised older oral literary traditions and created new ones. This heated political moment, in other words, coincided with the deployment of a formidable oral literary apparatus, through which people were mobilised and collective grievances expressed. In this sense, top-down development narratives and bottom-up local narratives have created for the same location contested ecological identities—another key notion in both ecopoetics and ecolinguistics.

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13 Arran Stibbe, *Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live by* (London: Rutledge, 2021); and Ruby Rong Wei, 'Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live', *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 36.2 (2018), 161–163.

14 Stibbe, *Ecolinguistics,* p. 2.

15 Wei, 'Ecolinguistics'.

Ecological Identities: People, Place, and Meaning-making

Ecological identity consists of 'the feelings, experience, and the knowledge that people have developed over years about their physical and social environments'.[16] The feelings we develop on the basis of our local values, beliefs, experiences and expectations determine who we are in relation to where we live.[17] Ecological identities map the ways in which people identify with their surrounding environment and the way in which that environment impacts processes of in-group socialisation, people's social networks, and their relationship with their neighbours.[18]

The environment, then, is not merely an inert backdrop to human life, or a passive object of human activities. Rather, it shapes personal and collective belonging, and it is an active component of people's understanding of themselves and their place in the world.[19] In other words, the landscape is part and parcel of people's meaning-making process, and it shapes their thought, ideas, and sense of personal and collective self. In *Wisdom Sits in Place*, Keith Basso argues that 'the meaning of landscapes and acts of speech are personalized manifestations of a shared perspective on the human condition'.[20] How people understand their position vis-à-vis the geography surrounding them also shapes how they cognitively and epistemologically process new events, foreign places, and 'other' people. Basso argues that members of a local community 'involve themselves with their geographical landscape in at least three ways': firstly by simply observing the physical aspects of the landscape, secondly by using the landscape and engaging in different physical activities that modify the landscape, and thirdly by communicating about the landscape and 'formulating descriptions and other representations of it that they share in the course of social

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16   Andrew J. Weigert, *Self, Interaction, and Natural Environment: Refocusing Our Eyesight* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2018), p. 250.

17   Anna Duszak, 'Us and Others: An Introduction' in *Us and Others: Social identities across language, discourses and cultures*, ed. by Anna Duszak (Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002), pp. 1–28.

18   Manuel Castells, 'The Greening of the Self: The Environmental Movement' in *The Power of Identity*, Vol. II (Blackwell, 2010), pp.168–191.

19   Ülo Valk and Daniel Sävborg, *Storied and Supernatural Places: Studies in spatial and social dimensions of folklore and sagas* (Finnish Literature Society/SKS, 2018).

20   Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), p. 73.

gatherings'.[21] In other words, the socialization and networking systems of a community are part and parcel of the environmental identities constructed through the community's ecological values.

Place is therefore far more than geographical location. Physical landscapes are always linked to, and filtered through, mental and cultural landscapes. Place is the site of memories that attract and inspire people, and attachment to those memories is also attachment to that specific place. Place therefore mediates a people's sense of history. If memories of events are also memories of the places where those events happened, the landscape becomes a historical text, that local people are able to read by learning how certain events are attached to certain locations. Historical memory, in this sense, is geographically constructed, both at a collective and at a personal level. Our biographical experiences are inseparable from the places where we dwelled, and our own sense of self is shaped by the places where our ancestors lived and died. As a consequence, the impossibility of accessing those places also means the impossibility of accessing first-hand the memories attached to those places, generating a sense of historical loss and alienation. This may result in a profound sense of disempowerment.[22] When people lose their environmental knowledge, they may also lose their sense of community, and their ability to collectively come together, cooperate, and mobilise. Detaching individuals and groups from the physical environments to which they have a historical and psychological attachment triggers pain and anger. As Basso puts it, 'when these attachments to places are threatened, we may feel threatened as well. Places, we realise, are as much part of us as we are part of them'.[23]

Once individuals and groups are forcibly separated from their natural and built environments, they are disconnected from their social networks, from their tangible and intangible cultural heritage, from their sources of income and livelihood, and from their religious landscape of holy places.[24] The undermining or loss of ecological identities may also lead to the loss of political and religious systems. Several indigenous

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21   Ibid.
22   See Rick Altman, *The Theory of Narratives* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2008).
23   Basso, *Wisdom,* pp. xiii–xiv.
24   A. M. McCright and T. Nichols Clark, *Community and Ecology: Dynamics of Place, Sustainability, and Politics* (Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Ltd, 2006).

customs and institutions depend on a specific geography. The council of elders may need to gather around a holy tree; midwives and diviners may need to use local herbs and fruits; artisans and craftspeople may need to work with local materials; religious leaders may need to perform rituals at local shrines by sacred rivers or mountaintops, and so on. In some cases, especially when the ecological severance has been violently caused by an identifiable process, institution, or group (as opposed for example to a natural disaster), political grievances are likely to arise and new forms of resistance can emerge.

Ecopoetic Theory and Practice: Oral Poetry and Environmental Embeddedness

Ecopoetics can help us take the analysis one step further in the direction of verbal creativity and literary production. If ecolinguistics tends to map the use of specific words, syntaxes, registers, and dialects in the context of literary ecologies, ecopoetics traces the specific aesthetic forms through which literary ecologies are textually expressed. Jan Vansina's fieldwork observation of a Rwandese performer highlights the link between oral literature, poetics and nature—and exemplifies a typical ecopoetic instance of composition of a folk song close to nature. As he put it: 'I have seen a poet on a hilltop in Rwanda mulling over his composition for hours, presumably day after day, until he felt it was perfect'.[25] In this poetic practice, creative inspiration is tied to a particular location (the hilltop) and a particular practice of social isolation, in which the poet withdraws from the community and immerses himself in nature, in order to channel his verbal and imaginative skills.

We witness something very similar for the Tulama Oromo, for whom poetic inspiration is also linked to a specific natural location, which the poet visits in order to reconnect with their source of creative inspiration. During fieldwork in Selale in 2010, for example, one of the authors asked his informants (Mr Gurmu Badhaadha, Mr Taddasa Galate, and Mr Haile Tufo)[26] where their folk songs come from. Their answers pointed to specific locations: Odaa Jilaa in Mogor Valley, Haroo Calanqoo in the

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25   Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 12.
26   All informants have consented to being named in this publication.

Jama gorges, and Tullu Qaawa near the Ilu and Qacama mountains in Yayya Gullalle. These are sacred places where people go for meditation, to seek divine advice on tragedies such as disease and crop failure, or to ask the ancestral spirits (*faloo*) for protection and good fortune. The informants were clear that the songs 'belonged' to those specific places, and were constitutive sonic parts of those spiritual landscapes. Mr Taddasa Galate (who lives in Sole, Daalatti in Yaayya) said that traditionally songs were composed on the mountain of Tulluu Qaawa, where the spirit of an old lady is heard singing songs nonstop throughout the night between the last day of the old year and the first day of the new one. This old deity or muse is called Jaartii Qaawa or Jaartii Xoomi, and people visit the mountaintop to bring her gifts and offerings and learn new songs in exchange. Deities, or spirits of muses, often appear to the singer (*shaayii*) camouflaging as birds or other wild animals, and inhabit specific locations. People point at specific locations as 'home' to a particular musical deity. Mr Mabre Goofe and Mr Gurmu Badhaadha reported that at Holqa Calanqo in Hidhabu Aboote, another deity or muse called Abbaa Toochii guides and tutors the singer who seeks refuge in the muse's cave. A third deity was mentioned by Mr Gurmu Badhaadha, according to whom every New Year's Day and during the new harvest season, the *shaayii* travels to the Mogor River, climbs the Odaa Jila, a sacred tree, carefully ties themselves up with a rope to avoid accidentally falling asleep and slipping down and, covered by foliage and in confinement for days and nights, meditates on Ateete, the Oromo goddess of fecundity. After this creative 'rite of passage', the *shaayii* comes home with new songs that he shares in the secular place of the community, initiating continuous group rehearsals.

We can call this form of verbal creation ecopoetic *practice*, as opposed to the academic discipline. An ecopoetic practice is an ecocreative human communication with the nonhuman, a meditative human connectedness to nature. This meditative communication involves saying prayers; composing and singing songs, or telling stories in certain locations; naming totems, idolizing deities and offering tree coronations; summoning and glorifying God at hilltops; making sacrifices at river banks; carrying out farming and harvesting rites; offering libations to shrines; visiting graveyards and tabooing sacred groves; and communicating with nature. Much of this ecopoetic practice

finds full expression in the biannual Oromo *Irreecha* festival, when people pray for rain on a hilltop in March and for thanksgiving at a lakeside in September.[27] Through such folkloric and ecopoetic practices of mediation and meditation, humans learn to find and reclaim the place they call 'home'.[28] Against the backdrop of this worldview, ecopoetics is a theory and praxis of the human-nature nexus, a deliberate life-form close to nature within the locale, contrary to, or complementary with, the dominant culture.

The Song of Displacement

The displacement that followed the top-down implementation of the Addis Ababa Master Plan, as we mentioned, also triggered older memories of displacement about the time Finfinne was occupied by Menelik II's army and imperial court in the 1880s. This has led both scholars and ordinary people to revisit the 'brokenness' of their historical links with Finfinne. During his fieldwork in the region of Shewa in 1970–1971, Tamene Bitima collected various Oromo historical poems, including what we may call Finfinne's 'Song of Displacement', thought to have been sung by an unidentified Salale folk singer and of uncertain dating.[29] The song is still performed by the Tulama Oromo living in the area, and serves today as a model and inspiration for new folk songs as the struggle for Finfinne/Addis Ababa has reignited.

In the lyrics, the singer grieves the loss of Finfinne, described as a sacred site with lush nature—a description that resonates with the historical record. At the very beginning of the twentieth century, for example, French traveller Martial de Salviac described the area as a 'luxuriant' and 'opulent' 'oasis'. De Salviac marvelled at the 'greenery' and 'shade' that 'delight the eyes all over', making the landscape look like 'a garden without boundary'.[30] He also mentioned the temperate,

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27   See Admasu Shunkuri, 'Erracha Oromo Tradition in Thanksgiving: Its Assimilation in Ethiopia', *Ethiopian Review,* September 5, 1998.

28   J. Edward Chamberlin, *If This is Your Land, Where are Your Stories? Finding a Common Ground* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2003).

29   Recently republished in *Oromo Oral Poetry Seen from Within*, ed. by Catherine Griefenow-Mewis and Tamene Bitima (Köln: Rüdiger Köppe, 2004), pp. 42–43.

30   Martial de Salviac, *An Ancient People in the state of Menelik: the Oromo, Great African Nation* [French original 1901, translated by Ayalew Kanno] (East Lansing, Michigan: Ayalew Kanno, 2005), p. 21.

salubrious climate, the fertility of the soil, the solidity of the houses, and even 'the beauty of the inhabitants'.[31] All of this, the song repeats, is 'no more'. Freedom has been lost and the whole landscape has also been lost. The feeling of rupture in the song is total, and the loss is framed as irretrievable. The song mentions both the loss of the physical environment (the meadow, the wild grass, the mineral springs), but also of the associated social environment (assemblies and elders' councils). Yet, the song also contains an element of resistance, and it proudly calls all the lost places by their original Oromo names. These places may be lost, but they are unapologetically claimed as 'ours'.

Inxooxxoo irra bahanii	No more standing on the Entoto hilltop,
Caffee ilaauun hafee	to watch the meadow and wild grass below, no more.
Finfinne loon geessanii	No more taking cattle to Finfinne,
Hora obaasuun hafee	to water at the mineral spring, no more.
Oddoo Daalattiirratti	No more gathering on Oddo Daalattii,
Yaa'iin Gullallee hafee	where the Gullalle assembly used to meet, no more.
kooraa Dhakaa Araaraa	No more elders' council
jaarsummaa taahuun hafee	at Dhakaa Araaraa, no more.
Hurufa Boombiirratti	No more taking calves
Jabbilee yaasuun hafee	to the meadow at Hurufa Boombii, no more.
Gafarsatti darbanii	No more going to Gafarsa
Qoraan cabsachuun hafee	to collect firewood, our maiden, no more.
Bara jarri dhjufanii	The year the enemy came,
loon keenyas in dhumanii	our cattle perished.
Eega Mashashaan dhufee	Since [Menelik's general] Mashasha came,
Birmadummaan in hafe	freedom has vanished.

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31   Ibid.

Place names carry historical significance in constructing the ecopoetics of a given place. The Tulama Oromo singer recounts the toponyms, eponyms, and ethnonyms of the memory sites around Finfinne. Mount Inxooxxoo (usually rendered in English as 'Entoto') was the first location where Menelik's court settled, though it later relocated to the area below the mountain, since the mountaintop lacked firewood and water. Hurufa Boombii was an area apparently used as commons, whose resources were shared among the people. Later renamed Jan Meda, it ironically remained an open public space and continued to be used for religious festivals, public celebrations, military reviews, and sport events. Dhakaa Araaraa, according to the song, was a rocky hilltop where the Oromo used to assemble to deliberate political and religious matters of public concern. It was later chosen by the Ethiopian emperor as the site of the imperial palace, but the memory of its ancient past was not lost, at least judging from the presence in the area, until recently, of a restaurant and bar called Dhakaa Araaraa. The song also mentions the famous hot springs—used for bathing and medicinal purposes—that attracted Emperor Menelik's wife Taytu to the area. The poem grieves the loss of Finfinne, but at the same time brings it back to life, with its old toponyms, its landscape, and vivid pictures of the local people's old ecological identity. The song is about historical loss, but invoking the old placenames also carries a sense of possibility: it may be impossible for those old ecological identities to be restored, but the utopia of the past can become the utopia of the future.

Narrative Discourses of Displacement

The 'Song of Displacement' was first collected nearly fifty years ago. In this section, by contrast, we analyse the oral texts we gathered first-hand during fieldwork in Boolee Arraabsaa and Koyyee Faccee in the late 2010s. This section includes oral texts collected by informants in the two areas, interviewed either individually or in groups. When informants relayed these oral compositions to the researcher, they performed them in a normal voice, stressing the lyrics and avoiding the loud, declamatory style that is common in performance. In this sense, when the setting is academic and not an organic performance context, the texts tend to be recited as poems and not sung. Our focus will be mainly on the linguistic devices, lexical units and narrative strategies employed by the

victims of displacement to express their perspective. Linguistic devices are some of the most powerful realisations of the socially constructed representations of self and other.[32] They have the power to legitimise or delegitimise the practices and strategies involved in the constructions of identity. Through them, speakers encode a specific relationship to their environment and a particular political perspective on their experience of displacement.

Structurally, lexical units (such as wording, antonyms, toponyms, glottonyms, and ethnonyms) build larger units such as phrases and clauses in sentence constructions. Functionally, they impact the realisation of the discursive practices and strategies used in identity construction.[33] The texts of displacement collected from the informants contain different lexical units that overtly show where the dwellers place the blame for the destruction of their environment and the violent detachment from their ancestral homes.

Wording a concept in one way or another can profoundly change the intended meaning. The wording of the following composition contains important semantic connotations:

Fayyuu dide madaan keenya	Our wound refused to be cured
Akkuma madaa qubaa nu guba	It burns just like a finger's wound
Madaa mogolee nutti ta'e	It became the wound on someone's knee
Madaan keenya qoricha hinarganne	Our wound did not get medicine
Nuyi qoricha fayyisu hinarganne	We did not get the healing medicine
Baroota darban keessas madoofne	We have been wounded in the past era
Bara kana kessa madaan itii caale	It became serious in this era
Kaleessis har'is nu madeesse	Both yesterday and today made us wounded

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32   See Ekaterina Povova, *Self and Other*: *Representations in Contemporary Russian Discourse on Migration* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2012).

33   See Winston Kwon, Ian Clark, and Ruth Wodak, 'Micro-Level Discursive Strategies for Constructing Shared Views around Strategic Issues in Team Meetings', *Journal of Management Studies,* 51.2 (2014), 265–290; M. A. K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (London: Edward Arnold, 1994).

Garuu bakka handhuurri keenya
   itti awwaalamerraa nu
   kutuun itticaale
	However, detaching from the place
	   where our umbilical cord is
	   buried seriously continued

Buqqasi lafa abbaarraan ittuma
   fufe
	Displacement from our fathers' home
	   is continued

Ilmaan keenya kan boru mataa
   nuu ta'antu qubata dhabe
	Our children who will lead us
	   tomorrow, were denied land to
	   settle

Key words include *madaa* 'wound' (with its forms, *madoofne* 'we were wounded', and *madeesse* 'made us wounded'), *qoricha* 'medicine', *handhuura* 'umbilical cord', *buqqaasa* 'displacement', *mataa* 'head', *abbaa* 'father', and *qubata* 'land/residence'. The words *madaa, handhuura, mataa, qoricha, abbaa, buqqaasa* and *qubata* are simple nouns, while *madoofnee* and *madeesee* are complex passive and active forms of verbs. All are concrete words, but with added textual and contextual meanings. Semantically, *madaa* refers to an injury that hurts, *madoofnee* indicates the receivers ('we') being wounded, whereas *madeesee* indicates the agents of the wounding ('they'). *Handhuura* and *mataa* are parts of the body, both essential to keep the body alive. The word *buqqaasa* denotes pulling up what has been fixed or stable, and *qoricha* refers to a substance or plant that can heal a disease or a wound. The poem draws a clear line between the displacement of the past and the displacement of the present. The pain of displacement is described as a long-standing illness, the physical pain of an open wound for which there is no available medicine. The loss of the environment is framed as a loss of blood or the loss of a limb—something that severely undermines the victim's survival and human integrity.

   Antonyms are 'words or expressions that are opposite with respect to some components of their meanings'.[34] They feature prominently in this other composition below:

Isa du'aa gadi jirra	We are below the dead
Nu warra jiraatu du'aadha	We who seem alive are dead

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34   William D. O'Grady and Michael Dobrovolsky, *Contemporary Linguistics Analysis: An Introduction* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1996), p. 234.

Har'a asirraa, bor achirraa nu kaasu	They displace us today from this [place], tomorrow from that place
Bishaan qulqulluu jedhan	They promised to provide us with clean water
Garuu xuraa'aa nu obaasan	They made us drink unclean water
Nuun iyyoomsanii soosoman	They became rich making us poor
Nuun beelessanii ofii quufan	They are satisfied by starving us

Binary oppositions include *du'aa / jiraa* ('dead/alive'), *qulqulluu / xuraa'aa* ('clean/unclean'), *iyymmaa / sooruma* ('poverty/prosperity'), *beelessuu / quufsuu* ('starvation/satisfying'), *har'a / kaleessa* ('today/ yesterday'), and *asii / achii* ('here/there'). These contrasting (we/ us vs they/them) expressions are used to reflect the exclusion of the displaced people from decision-making about matters that deeply affect their life and the environment in which they live. The agency is firmly in the hands of the displacing group, which benefits economically from the displacement and gains a relatively better life for themselves (*prosperity, alive, satisfying*, etc). The displaced instead have no agency to determine their fate, and following the displacement they are forced to live dislocated lives in 'broken places'.

Rhetorical devices offer important semantic information on the circumstances of language users. The focus of rhetorical devices includes objects, persons, and situations that participants choose in order to explicitly or implicitly compare them to other familiar elements. Rhetorical devices serve as linguistic means to realize experiential and relational values.[35] The rhetorical devices repeatedly used in these poems include *metaphor*, *personification*, and *antithesis*.

In everyday language practices, people choose *metaphor* to explain themselves, reflect their attitudes and values to others, and react to others' attitudes towards them in an implicit manner.[36] A recurrent metaphor in the oral compositions collected during fieldwork describes

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35   See Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl, *Discourse and Discrimination: Rhetoric of Races and Anti-Semitism* (London: Routledge, 2001).

36   See Shirin Zubair, 'Silent Birds: Metaphorical Constructions of Literacy and Gender Identity in Women's Talk', *Discourse Studies*, 9.6 (2007), 766–783; and J. Stern, 'Metaphor, Semantic and Context' in *The Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. by Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 262–279.

the land as 'mother', 'father', 'kin', 'food', 'cloth', 'bone', and the closing verse sums it up by saying that land is 'life':

Lafti haadha	Land is mother
Lafti abbaadha	Land is father
Lafti lammiidha	Land is kin
Lafti nyaata	Land is food
Lafti kafana	Land is cloth
Lafti lafeedha	Land is bone
Lafti jireenya	Land is life

In this oral poem, land is implicitly compared with relatives (mother, father, kin), food, clothing, and life. The land nurtures and takes care of people, just like parents nurture and take care of their children. The metaphor inscribes the land into the family ('land is kin') as a member that is nourishing and reliable; the family metaphor also indicates that people were born (or, even more strongly, the land gave birth to them) and grew up on the land. The metaphor collapses the boundary between physical and social geographies. The informants at Boolee Arraabsaa and Koyyee Faccee stressed that because they have been displaced from their land, they consider that their life has been drastically disrupted. The loss of land is akin to the loss of close family members, and therefore being displaced is akin to being an orphan. The poem also associates displacement to nakedness, hence bodily vulnerability, and to starvation. The recurring metaphors repeatedly compare loss of land to the loss of bodily integrity. The land was so integral to the identity of the individual that displacement is experienced as an attack on an individual's body, almost like an amputation.

   Personification attributes human qualities and faculties to an inanimate entity:

Finfinneen kun maaliif nu affanaaqqalti?	Why has Finfinne displaced us?
Magaalaan kun Oromia nyaachaa har'a geesse	This city became the way it is today by eating Oromia
Finfinneen Oromoo nyaattee gabbatte	Finfinne became fat by eating the Oromo
Har'allee lachanuu nyaachaa jirti	Even today, it is eating both

Magaalattiin lafa, muka,	The city is eating our land, our trees,
laga nyaachaa jirti	and our rivers
Laaftoon, Ekkaan, Labuun,	Let Lafto, Eka, Labu and Kaliti speak
Qaallittiin haadubbatan	

Finfinne is framed as an agent with human qualities, namely a person who is hungry and eats. The city is considered responsible for displacing the Oromo and 'eating them up'. This personification indicates that the Oromo contributed, to their detriment, essential resources to the expansion of the city. They gave their lives for the city, and yet Finfinne remains greedy and ravenous and cannot be satisfied. In its eating spree, the city is also accused of having desecrated the ecology of the Oromo, including mountains, rivers, memory sites, sacred places, and trees. Placenames like Laaftoo, Ekkaa, Labuu, Qaallittii are 'broken places' swallowed and 'silenced' by the ever-expanding Finfinne. Much like the 'song of displacement', the list evokes a disappearing (or already disappeared) geography around Ethiopia's capital city. All these natural places have been lost to a wave of uncontrolled and self-interested urbanisation. Such personification seems to allow the singers to avoid naming specific individuals to avoid retaliation in an already politically tense environment.

Similarly, *antithesis* is the rhetorical device the informants used in the poems to address the narrative clashes between the people and the government. Ruzibaeva defines antithesis as 'a stylistic device of contrast in art or oratory, consisting in a sharp contrast of concepts, positions, and images, conditions, interconnected by a common construction or internal meaning'.[37] This next oral poem is entirely built on antonyms, creating a structure of antithesis in which official promises are contrasted with the miserable reality on the ground:

Saamichi hinjiru jechaa saamu	Telling us, no more raiding, they raid us
Duutii hinjiru jechaa ajjeesu	Telling us, no more killing, they are killing us

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37   Nigora Ruzibaeva, 'Peculiarities of the Antithesis in the Literary Text', *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences*, 7.11 (2019), 149–152 (p. 150).

Affanaaqqaluun dhaabate jechaa kaasu	Telling us, no more displacing people, they are displacing us
Bishaan qulqulluu jecha xurii nu obaasan	Promising clean water, they made us drink dirty water
Barumsa nuun jechaa nu wallaalchisan	Promising to educate us, they made us illiterate

Each line starts with verbs that denote a verbal act ('telling', 'promising') followed by the official state propaganda. The second part of each line contrasts the official propaganda with a statement that the exact opposite is happening. The official narrative promised people that the government would protect them against the danger of being raided, killed, displaced, and would improve their quality of life. These were insincere promises, though. Not only did the government not protect the people, but it was itself responsible for plundering, murdering and displacing them. Not only did the government not provide clean water and schools, it forced people to drink dirty water and made them illiterate. The poet sees through the lies of the government, and holds it accountable for attempting to deceive the people with false promises and appease their anger with empty words.

Code-switching is another ecolinguistically important element used in these oral poems. Most Tulama Oromo living in the research site know Amharic (the official government language) as well as Oromo, and can code switch between the two languages. The code-switching can be bent to generate specific meanings:

Finfinneen kun maaliif nu **affanaaqqalti?**	Why has Finfinne displaced us?
Akkabaabii *kana faalan*	They polluted this environment
Shittaa *qilleensa keenyaa faalan*	They polluted the odour of our air
Maasaa *keenya onsan*	They deserted our farm yard
abbaafi ijoollee **allayaayya'an**	They separated family members
indeganaa battanan	They misplaced them again
akkanaan of nu dadhabsiisan	In this way they made us weak

All the lines of this extract contain Amharic words which the speakers have incorporated in the Oromo composition. The words have been 'Oromised', i.e. pronounced according to Afaan Oromo phonology and adapted to the Oromo grammar. The Amharic words (*affanaaqqalti, akkabaabii, shittaa, maasaa, allayaayya'an,* and *battanan*) relate to displacement and its impacts. The first two show the act of displacing (*affanaaqqalti*) the inhabitants from the area (*akkabaabii*) where they had lived for a long time. The use of Amharic words draws the audience's attention to the ecologically destructive impact of displacement by the Amharic-language government, such as polluting the environment, cutting people off their land, and breaking families apart.

Other oral poems further emphasise the contrast between past and present. This contrast was implicit in the 'song of displacement', which kept repeating that the past is 'no more'. Some of the themes recur: the loss of land, wealth, resources, and food. Once again, a past of relative abundance is contrasted with a present of poverty and starvation:

Dur qabeenya qabna	In the past we had wealth
Waan nyaannuu waan uffannu qabna	We had food and cloth
Waan qonnu qabna	We had land
Waan ittiin qonnu qabna	We had oxen to till our land
Waan dhalu qabna	We had cows
Waan elmamu qabna	We had cows to drink milk [from]
Har'a marti hinjiru	Today we have nothing
Midhaan nyaataa hinjiru	We have no crop to eat
Dhugaatiin duraanii hinjiru	We have nothing to drink
Lafti qonnaa hinjiru	We have no land
Sa'i elmatu hinjirtu	We have no cow
Qotiyyoon hinjiru	We have no ox
Martuu waan buqqaaneefi	Because all of us were displaced

In this poem, displacement is once again presented as a radical fracture in people's lives, marking a drastic lowering of their living standards and forcing them into conditions of extreme economic precarity, in which their basic needs for food and drink are not being met. If some of the poems we just saw emphasise the contrast between a happy past and a painful present, some insist on tracing a direct line of continuity

between the discriminatory practices of successive Ethiopian regimes. There is no happy past conjured up by this composition, for example:

Kanuma duraatu har'as ta'aa jira.	What was in the past is happening in the present
Hayilesillaaseen akaakayyuu buqqise	Haile Selassie displaced our grandfather
Dargiin abbaa keenya buqqis	The Derg displaced our father
Kun ammoo ilma buqqisaa jira.	This one [government] is displacing the son

Rather than building a contrast between past and present, the composer here indicates that the present displacement is just more of the same. The displacement faced by people in the present, the lyrics stress, is but the latest manifestation of a long history of violence and exploitation by the Ethiopian state. The imperial regime of Emperor Haile Selassie (1930–1974) displaced the generation of today's grandfathers; the military regime of the Derg (1974–1991) displaced the generation of today's fathers; and the current EPRDF government (1991–present) displaced today's children. Every Oromo family and every generation has been scarred, and—to go back to the metaphor of the open wound of an earlier poem—carries the wounds of earlier displacements.

All in all, these oral compositions tend to present a positive view of the natural environment, with which the people are described to have a relationship of intimate and bodily interdependence. In the interviews, recurring expressions were *keenya jireenyi lafarratti* ('our life is based on the land'), *keenya jireenyi mukarratti* ('our life is dependent on trees'), *jireenyi loon keenyaa margarratti* ('our cattle's life is dependent on grass'), *lafti keenya lafee keenya, lafa dhebnaan homaa hinqabnu, kunuunsuu qabna* ('our land is our bone; having no land means having nothing, and so we have to preserve it'). These sentences highlight how the speakers see themselves as part and parcel of an ecosystem in which they depend on the land for their livelihood, but they see the land as far more than a mere object of exploitation. Rather, the land is perceived as something to be loved, respected, thanked and, more crucially, preserved. Stressing how people's lives depend on the land acknowledges the power of nature to keep people alive, and the duty of people to protect their environment. The land is a subject in its own right: a family member that takes care of people and that should be taken care of in return.

Recorded Songs

In this last section, we analyse the lyrics of two songs that became famous among those protesting the Addis Ababa Master Plan. Here we enter the domain of the music industry: these songs were recorded by famous artists with accompanying videos, and they have millions of hits on YouTube. These songs share many themes and tropes with the oral poems gathered on the field and handed down orally, thus showing the synergies between the oral tradition and the music industry. Recording artists draw from the oral repertoire, and the songs analysed in this section feed back into the world of oral traditions, creating a rich audio-visual interconnection. Tracing a continuity between oral traditions and the digital audio-visual world of recording technologies and the internet also allows us to point at the dynamism and adaptability of oral traditions. Far from disappearing with the advent of new technologies, oral traditions have capitalised on the possibilities that new technologies offered to address a larger audience, complement sound with image, and promote the verbal creativity of gifted artists.

The first song is 'Maalin Jira!' (2015), meaning 'Distracted!', by the late Oromo artist, Hacaaluu Hundeessaa, who was shot to death outside of his house in the Ethiopian capital in June 2020, in his early thirties. The assassination sent shockwaves throughout Ethiopia, igniting a new wave of Oromo protests against the government. The song has gone viral and has currently over fifteen million views on YouTube, veritably becoming one of the anthems of the Oromo opposition.[38] The themes are directly in line with those we have analysed in the oral poems: alienation, deprivation, and resentment. The song tells the story of an individual who has been harassed and forcibly removed from his ancestral home, and now feels confused and broken by strong feelings of homesickness, melancholy, and nostalgia. His mind is troubled by the grief of historical loss and by a woeful love. Hacaaluu mentions various sub-groups of the Tulama Oromo (Gulalle, Abbichu, Galaan), stressing their former unity and the social harmony that used to exist between them. The subsequent displacement is framed against this idyllic backdrop, contrasting once again the prosperous past of 'love' with the decline (the 'fall') of the present.

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38   Haacaaluu Hundeessaa, 'Maalan Jira'; for a version with English subtitles, see Hachalu Hundessa, 'Maalan Jira! With ENGLISH Subtitle'.

Gullalleen kan Tufaa	Gullalle of Tufaa
Gaara Abbichuu turee	and Abbichu's mountainous land
Galaan Finfinnee marsee	and Galaan surrounds Finfinne
Silaa akka jaalalaa	so, love contains all
Walirraa hin fagaannuu	we never chose to grow apart
Jara t' nu fageessee!	but they pushed us to fall!

Compared to the oral poems, this song is more optimistic about the possibility of resistance: all is not lost if the people come together: the video shows scenes of communal dancing and smiling youth. Indeed, the theme of unity is central in the lyrics. The 'mountain' keeps the singer separated from his beloved, a metaphor for the divisions ('divisions we never chose') among the Oromo engineered by the government to politically disempower them. The mountain is then a metaphor for the oppressive system, which must be 'levelled' for the people to be able to come together. The protest movement is compared to a bulldozer that will flatten the mountain and rekindle the lost unity.

Diiganii, gaara sana	Level that mountain
gaara diigamuu hin malle	not easy to bulldoze
nu baasan addaan baane	they set us apart
nu addaan bahuu hin malle	division we never chose

The second song is by Galaanaa Gaaromsaa and is titled 'Amala Kee' (2016), meaning 'Your Vibe'. It is a well-known and popular song, and the video has around five million views on YouTube.[39] The song denounces the evictions, contrasting the 'home' people lost with the anonymous buildings built on it.

Salgan Haroo Abbaa Makoo	The nine pools of Abba Makoo,
iddoo gabaa hin qotani	it is taboo to plow a marketplace.
dur manni keenya asoo	Oh, our home used to be here.
gamoo itti ijaarattanii	They evicted us to erect these buildings.

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39   Galaanaa Gaaromsaa, 'Amala Kee (Official Video)'

In the song, natural places like the nine pools of Abba Makoo are ecological references to the ongoing land grabs, evictions, rural-urban migration, urbanisation and industrialisation. The coverage of the Oromo protests has mostly focused on political and economic grievances, but the poems and songs we have analysed show that the mobilisation against the government was also motivated by environmental grievances. The Oromo movement for equal political and economic rights, in this sense, was also, importantly, a movement for environmental justice.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have shown the importance of ecopoetic and ecolinguistic approaches to past and contemporary oral literature. We have drawn on a variety of sources: oral poems collected by other scholars and published; poems collected directly on the field; interviews on the field; and songs circulating on television and the internet. These sources show the vitality of oral traditions, and the way in which print, recording technologies and the internet can help preserve oral texts and spread them to even larger audiences.

Ecopoetics and ecolinguistics allowed us to identify the conception of nature underpinning the oral poems of the Tulama Oromo living in the Koyyee Faccee and Boolee Arraabsaa areas, and the effects of Development-Induced Displacement on their ecological identities. The poems pit the people's narrative ecology, in which people and land are linked not only in economic, but also spiritual terms, against the government's narrative ecology, in which the land is just to be exploited to make way for urbanisation. In the chapter, we wanted to foreground local people's perspectives and their voices, to counteract their exclusion from the decision-making process about the future of their land and their homes. This approach privileges bottom-up approaches to literary production over the top-down analytical models that have generally been typical of disciplines such as world literature. The people we have interviewed—refugees who live in poor conditions—are far from the glittery world of literary prizes, boardroom meetings with the CEOs of international publishing houses, and fashionable literary festivals in which authors sign their freshly printed books. We wanted to present the dispossessed—those who are the victims of modernity, not the

winners of the game—as literary subjects as aesthetically sophisticated and as aesthetically powerful as the famous cosmopolitan novelists on whom world literature departments in Western academia have almost exclusively concentrated.

Ecopoetics and ecolinguistics also allow us to map in what ways certain geographies are 'significant' for the people who live in them, and the meanings people attach to their environment, not only in terms of identity but also in terms of poetic inspiration. Hegemonic political narratives around the world privilege 'development' over the preservation of ecosystems, whereas the oral poems of the Tulama Oromo show an acute awareness of the need for a greater environmental consciousness. We can find in these poems a lucid environmentalist critique of pollution and uncontrolled urbanisation. Even more profoundly, we can find in these poems a philosophy of nature as something to be taken care of, as opposed to the hegemonic developmentalist view of nature as an inert source of resources to be extracted, or a physical space to be occupied. Such oral traditions powerfully capture the human and environmental costs of developmentalist practices.

More broadly, far from disappearing in the face of 'modernity', as some teleological narratives of literary evolution argue, oral traditions have instead been able to see through the contradictions of modernity, in some cases much more incisively than written literature. New oral poems have been created in Ethiopia to denounce crony capitalism and Development-Induced Displacement, demonstrating the ability of oral traditions not only to be in dialogue with modernity but also to point at alternative anti-capitalist modernities. The nostalgia for a lost past that we find in many oral poems also indicates possible ways to a different future. Indeed, these oral traditions not only lament how old ecological and ecopoetic identities have been irretrievably 'broken', but also articulate new, powerful forms of resistance, bringing people together and inciting political mobilisation against political, economic and environmental injustice. If displacement has disempowered the people, these oral poems re-empower them.

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