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9 African verbal arts online

Intermediality and “technauriture”

Daniela Merolla

If we may follow a lead from Wole Soyinka’s play *The Road*, what stories do lorry drivers and touts tell about their dangerous profession – what sort of heroes do they project? [...] What about songs composed for political campaigns? What relations do these bear to recognized traditional models? Such lines of investigation would yield fruitful insights not only about the adjustments of oral literatures to the imperatives of urban life but also about the stresses we undergo in adjusting both to the pluralistic structures of our societies and from traditional rural to a technological existence. Our business is literature, but it is also – ultimately life.

– Okpewho, *African Oral Literature*, 363

Introduction

In his classic work *African Oral Literatures*, Isidore Okpewho discloses a keen interest in contemporary dynamics of orality as evident from the above epigraph. Such an interest has been taken up more recently in the introduction to a broad collection of articles on oral genres in the often competitive interaction with other media (Okpewho “Introduction”). My work on orality on the Internet is informed by Okpewho’s insights and hopes to contribute to the understanding of the “new life” of oral genres in the re-localisation of African diasporas on and offline.

At the beginning of the 2000s, I started to research African Migrant Websites and Digital Imagination (“Digital Imagination”, “Migrant Websites”), investigating the relationship between orality and other media (writing/printing, theatre, film, video, music, visual arts and the Internet) on websites of African organisations in the Netherlands. From a methodological point of view, websites were seen as “semiotic objects” (Stockinger 15), integrating an analysis of the multi-mediality, trans-mediality, and interactive characteristics of the Internet and taking into account their transient forms. Forms of digital *transnationalism* were also included. At the same time, it emerged that migrant or diasporic websites¹ also tended to reinforce *local* group identification through the creation and diffusion of self-identification discourses both on and offline. Such findings converged with further investigations on Amazigh Berber websites (Dahraoui, Lafkioui and Merolla, Lafkioui “Multilingualism, Multimodality”, Merolla

“Cultural Heritage”) as well as with the theorisation on forms of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism and the reinforcement of community identities on the basis of national, regional, linguistic, religious, and historical links (Appadurai, Georgiou “Diaspora, Identity and the Media,” Kaschula “Introduction,” Karim, Jansson *Mediatization*). The notion of the “connected migrant” developed by Dana Diminescu (“The Connected Migrant” 568–569) indicates that migrant populations find new digital ways of connecting with their land(s) of origin, their host land(s), their families and fellow community members thanks to the communication technologies (“e-diasporas”). At the same time, digital connecting underscores the migrants’ need to recreate the feeling of “homeliness” online (Dahraoui 61, 148) and to reconstruct community-based identities. In relation to expatriate and tourist websites, Jansson (“Critical Communication”, *Mediatization*) developed the notion of “encapsulation” as “transmedia spaces tend to sustain people’s endeavors of nurturing pre-existing social networks and communities, *moving about without risk, rather than spending time on engaging in foreign cultural space, ideas, and subjects*” (Jansson *Mediatization* 119, my emphasis). Such forms of social segregation do not emerge from my investigation of migrant websites and, in the e-diaspora case, the notion of encapsulation seems less adequate than, for instance, “localisation,” as migrants are forcefully engaged with making sense of “foreign cultural space” even when recreating “homeliness” online. I will thus continue to use the notions of homeliness and localisation in the analysis below.

The last ten years witnessed a profound modification of the Internet presence of migrant organisations in the Netherlands. Migrant cultural associations seem to shift from running websites to Facebook. Moreover, a change of the Dutch policy concerning migrant organisations, seen no more as a vehicle for integration but as producing segregation and extremism, put a stop to the subventions for migrant organisations in 2015. Although municipalities can still support them, many migrant organisations lost previous subventions, which also affected their presence online. The inactivity and disappearance of migrant websites are also part of a wider phenomenon. Already at the beginning of the 2000s, as much as 40 per cent of the Internet materials disappeared within one year, another 40 per cent was substantially changed, and hence only 20 per cent showed a degree of stability after a year (Sutton 1, Christensen-Dalsgaard *et al.* 2). More recently, Barone, Zeitlyn, and Mayer-Schönberger (1) write that the “average lifespan of a Web page is difficult to determine, but estimates put it at a mere 100 days in 2003, up from just 44 days in 1997 [...] In 2008, a survey by blog search engine Technorati found that a whopping 95 percent of its 133 million tracked blogs had been ‘abandoned’ or not updated in 120 days.”

The “vanishing web” affected my investigation as the websites analysed in the initial research are no longer active and only one website, presenting the storytelling project “Anansi Master is continued.”² A form of “webarchaeology” is thus offered below by presenting the analysis of two websites (Sankofa.nl and Tawiza.nl) which are no longer active. For comparison, I add examples derived from “active” websites, such as *The Hague African Festival* (Association Sankofa)

and *Amazigh.nl*.³ The inactivity of the websites *Sankofa.nl* and *Tawiza.nl* does not affect the analysis of “intermediated orality” (still valid on other websites, as indicated in “Cultural Heritage”), but it confirms the need for archiving web materials which easily disappear into an electronic void. The extreme fluidity of the Internet imposes working in the present and renders it extremely hard to give reasons for past processes. Although engines such as *Wayback Machine*, *UK Web Archive* and *Arquivo.pt* are useful tools offering millions of recorded webpages, web archiving of specific sites is very much needed for studying “intermediated orality” in African languages.⁴

Intermediality, “technauriture”, and visual/discursive dimensions of African verbal arts online

Since 2000, there has been an explosive growth of Internet users and of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter in Africa and its diasporas.⁵ Building on the fields explored by literary, cultural and anthropological studies, this chapter explores African verbal arts on the World Wide Web.⁶ Still today, as in the past, analyses of the role of the Internet and new media in the invention, maintenance and re-localisation of group identities mainly focus on mailing lists, chat rooms, discussion forums, and online news and business and tend to overlook digital forms of literary and artistic production and communication.⁷ However, artistic productions and references to orality may play a central role in the electronic construction and awareness of “us” both locally and transnationally.⁸ An examination of websites such as *Eritrea.nl*, *Somalia Holland Online*, *Sankofa.nl*, *Tawiza.nl*, *Amazigh.nl*, *Agraw.com* and *Peeral.com* show for example that the references to verbal arts appear under the form of proverbs and fixed expressions in the mother tongue, at times displayed within the icons and emblems that interperse the homepages and denote national or minority group interests, feelings and identification (Lafkioui “Reconstructing,” “Interactions digitales,” Merolla “Digital Imagination,” “Migrant Websites,” “Music on Dutch Moroccan”). The hyperlinks to cultural/artistic/literary/music pages of the homepages of the richest sites show presentations and discussion of verbal genres as well as examples of written prose and poetry, songs, proverbs, short oral narratives and longer folktales. “Artistic/literary” webpages display book covers and passages from texts already published on paper (often in the mother tongue or in the language of the land of origin), essays on authors, artistic genres and trends, information on current cultural events, meetings and dancing evenings (in one of the languages used on the site), and hyperlinks to commercial sites where it is possible to buy the mentioned books or music.⁹

As to intermediality (Jensen 2385–2387), such a concept points to the “inter-connectedness of modern media of communication” whether as multimedia (separate media used at the same time, such as in sound and slide shows) or multimodality (such as in films combining moving images, voices and music). This is the case of the Internet and the World Wide Web which integrate old and new communication media. When users view a website, they can read it as

an illustrated book, listen to it as a radio programme, or watch it as a film or TV. Moreover, website users experience interactivity, which also characterises the Internet, and intermediality as they interact with all of these different media and freely shift from one to the other. This means that the Internet and the Web offer a variety of “remediation” forms (Bolter and Grusin 22–50) in the sense that elements and forms are borrowed from and depend on other media. These media often host traces as well as new forms of orality, all of which can then be found on websites that integrate the different media. Although visual/aural/verbal media interactions have always existed (see Rajewsky), it is now possible to speak of “intermediated orality” and “intermediated verbal arts” – with websites revealing traces of orality and forms of oral genres through the “intermediality” and “remediation” that characterise the Internet. Kaschula and Mostert (*From Oral Literature*) propose to define such interactions by the term “technauriture,” which integrates the concepts of technology, auriture (the aural aspects of producing and receiving oral literature) and literature.

We therefore need to investigate intermediated orality or technauriture in the discursive construction of websites as well as “visually” in its spatial location. Both visual and discursive locations of orality help us to reflect upon the way intermediality works in the case of African verbal arts interacting with other media and genres in the electronic environment of the Internet. The next sections examine some specific instances of the visual/discursive location of orality on African websites from the Netherlands by raising the following questions: How are oral forms remediated? How do they interact with other genres and media? How can we interpret Internet-mediated oral genres in terms of cultural construction?

As indicated by the term “technauriture” and discussed in the section “The Orality/New Media Conundrum” below, recent approaches go beyond the dichotomic interpretation of changes of oral production in terms of “erosion” or “innovation,” and look at new forms of interaction between orality, low literacy and audiovisual media.

The presentation below counts as an example of the analysis of the multimedia interactions online and it is informed by the new approaches to technauriture. At the end, I will venture some answers to the questions raised until now, locating my analysis within previous debates on the modification of oral forms under the impact of new media in Africa.

Intermediated verbal arts in African websites from the Netherlands

Since the 1960s, larger groups of North and South Saharan migrants started to reside in the Netherlands.¹⁰ When I started my research in 2000, the presence of African migrant associations in the Netherlands was significant, whether as Pan-African or local (news, sport, religion, business, social support etc.) organisations, a number of them catering to migrants as well as non-migrant members and audiences (*Africa in the Netherlands* 1999 and 2002, van Heelsum “Afrikanen

in," *Migrantenorganisaties*). The political and economic turmoil of the decade 2001–2011 meant also a radical change in Dutch policy concerning migration and integration. Under the slogan "It's not origin that counts, but the future," as expressed by Dutch Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations J. P. H. Donner in 2011, the Dutch government decided to stop state subsidies to migrant associations and organisations which were considered as producing segregation and radicalism. In January 2015 the decision was fully implemented.¹¹

Online, the number of association-related websites grew phenomenally in the period 2002–2006 followed by a process of consolidation then reduction of migrant websites. Some sites disappeared and a few others remained active; meanwhile, a growing number of individuals and groups are on Facebook and other social media platforms.

The websites of migrant associations in the Netherlands are typically multilingual, with basic information and news progressively offered in Dutch. International languages such as English, French and Arabic are becoming secondary or are more often used in the lateral sections of the screen. In the case of *Amazigh.nl* and *Agraw.com*, however, the use of Amazigh (Berber language) has increased following the activist support for extending its written usage. It is difficult to generalise about the role of mother tongues and community languages on migrant sites. International languages and mother-tongues do not always overlap, as in the case of minorized languages in the land of origin (mother tongues) that may or may not correspond to the national language of the migrant community (community language). On some sites, mother tongues and community languages are present only in the title and header decoration; on others they are evident on a number of pages. As we will see below, the reasons for this are context-related – there's the local Dutch context of migration and the socio-political and cultural contexts of the land of origin. The space variously allotted to international and community languages/mother tongues can be considered an indicator of multiple transnational communities, with the use of the community language visually and symbolically loaded with identity construction and affirmation. In a substantial number of cases, oral genres are indeed presented as transcribed in the mother tongue. On the other hand, the websites are rooted in the migrant location of the cultural associations due to their use of Dutch and their increasing use of translations and the coverage of local news and opinion polls on issues topical to Dutch society at large.

Sankofa.nl, the Hague African Festival online, and the Anansi Master project

Sankofa is an interesting example of a multicultural organisation whose board members hail from Ghana, Suriname and the Netherlands. The website, once rich and active, is now under reconstruction and no indication is given as to when it will go live again.¹² However, a webpage of the site, presenting The Hague African Festival, has become independent from *Sankofa.nl* (the initial website) and it is regularly updated. I will thus refer to the updated festival website, offer an

analysis of the Sankofa.nl website updated until 2017, and consider the Anansi Master Project initially linked to Sankofa.nl.

As an organisation, Sankofa depends on external sponsors and is successful in fundraising. For example, Sankofa succeeded in gaining several partners and supporters, including the municipality of The Hague, which helped to give life to “The Hague African Festival.” The association’s aim, as explained on “The Hague African Festival” website (<http://thehagueafricanfestival.com/nl/organisatie>), is “to help the self-development of disadvantaged communities in Ghana through the implementation of sustainable integrated livestock and education projects, which are initiated and supported by the community itself.” The self-presentation further explains that the association and website(s) were born from the idea of providing information to the Ghanaian community in the city of The Hague and support for Dutch activities regarding poverty alleviation in Ghana. An important offline cultural engagement is the organisation of the annual “The Hague African Festival” which today is professionalised and a well-known musical event in the Netherlands, but suffering from the halt to collective meetings under the coronavirus outbreak as other large public events. The edition of 2020 was cancelled and rescheduled for July 2021.

The website of “The Hague African Festival” 2020 uses the colours of the Ghanaian flag, red, gold and green. The lightly transparent image of the stylised continent of Africa in these three colours is at the centre of a djembe (hand drum) with two hands on the drum skin, as if playing. This image and the equally transparent texture of a fabric in brown shades appear in the background of the banner. In the foreground, two stylised masks also in red, gold and green are at the centre of the festival name 2020 and, in the alternate image displayed, decorate the words of thanks to the participants of the 2019 event and invite them to the 2020 festival. The African map silhouette and the choice of colours show the continental dimension, the unitary horizon, and at the same time the specificity of the local, Ghanaian-based, organisation. The visual reference to the drum is significant. The percussion music from the Ewe of Ghana is known as being particularly complex and the Malian djembe (often translated as “everyone gathers together”) came to define African music and, metonymically, Africa as a whole. Other instruments are equally highly symbolic, for example, the West-African kora (harp lute). But notwithstanding the criticism of specialist Kofi Agawu (2003), it is rhythmic music and percussion that have been presented as characteristics of African music in musicology and in the general press. The choice of the two masks is equally symbolically related to Africanness and African unity (Duerden). Being the website of a music festival, contemporary verbal art is included in the audio clips of music recorded during the events, but major attention is given to photos from the live performances of singers and players. On the 2019 website version, hyperlinks connect to other pages presenting an exposition on “Music as a means of communication,” to display instruments and to allow visitors to listen to them. There’s also a link to the “iAfrican Film Festival” happening in The Hague at the same time as “The Hague African Festival.”

Instead of the image of the continent and the Ghanaian colours, the initial Sankofa website (2002–2017) showcased a more specific West African /Ghanaian *adinkra* symbol: on the banner, the letter “k” of the title Sankofa was represented as a stylised bird head. The name *Sankofa* and the bird head icon refer to the world of the verbal arts in Ghana. *Sankofa* is an Akan word meaning “go back and take it,” and an *adinkra* symbol reproduced as a stylised mythical bird with its head turned backwards.¹³ The *adinkra* symbol and the bird figure are reproduced on cloths, bracelets, head combs, wooden statues and gold weights as well. Word and symbol are associated with the proverb “*se wo were fi na wosankofa a, yenkyi*” – translated as “It is no taboo to return back and fetch it when you forget” by Ablade Gover in his work *Adinkra Symbolism*. The use of symbols on Sankofa.nl was far from static. Whereas Gover in the 1960s explained the proverb as meaning “being able to undo one’s mistakes,” in more recent times it has been interpreted as indicating the necessity to return to the African cultural heritage as a source for present identification and action. The information on Sankofa.nl was: *We moeten teruggaan naar het verleden om in het heden te kunnen begrijpen hoe en wie we zijn en waarom het zo gekomen is* (“We should go back to the past when we want to understand who we are in the present and why we came to be who we are”). In this innovative reading we can see the influence of the Ethiopian filmmaker Haile Gerima, who interpreted the Akan word and proverb as “Returning to your roots, recapturing what you’ve lost and moving forward” when releasing his film *Sankofa* in 1993.¹⁴ Gerima and others following in his footsteps are employing the well-known flexibility of the verbal arts to “remediate” *sankofa* as a word, proverb and icon in the context of the present African search for speaking, acting and seeing oneself from a self-chosen position.¹⁵

The mythical bird is also reproduced on the first “dossier” giving information on the website team and association. The layout of Sankofa.nl featured six square dossiers between the banner and the sponsors’ logos at the bottom of the page, an easy way to present content without simply reproducing standard web design formats. The dossiers contained information on the association (“on Sankofa”), collaborative projects, immigration and Ghana-Dutch relationships. One category was on “Art and Culture”; under it, several visual and verbal genres were presented, such as the Dutch wax textiles, the now-famous sculpted coffins, works by six painters (Almighty God, Augustine Goka and others), Ghanaian music (“highlife”) with videoclips from YouTube, and the Anansi Master project giving orality prominent location (sankofa.nl/Projecten/Projectenverleden/AnansiMasters).

The Anansi Master project is still online. It was developed by a Dutch film director, Jean Hellwig, and co-initiated by Sankofa. As is generally known, Anansi is a trickster figure, the protagonist of a gigantic cycle of folktales and aetiological narratives not only in West Africa but also in the Caribbean and Suriname (Yankah). The interest in the cultural triangulation (Africa-America-Europe) of storytelling is evident for an association that links to, and has members from, Ghana, Suriname and the Netherlands. The storytelling triangulation was indeed prominently presented on Sankofa and on the Anansi Master as well.¹⁶ Moreover, the Anansi Master information page takes on the scholarly

discussion as to whether Anansi contemporary stories and storytelling are under pressure or conversely upturning “because of the popularity of television amusement, the Internet or computer play.” Without offering an answer, the project clearly takes action in favour of storytelling: the use of the Internet is seen as an attempt to “unlock/unveil” (“ontsluiten”) the Anansi performances to everybody and as a stimulus for storytelling and for the bond among the three continents (anansimasters.net).

The website Anansi Master allows users to watch and listen to 80 performances on Anansi along with short interviews with the storytellers. The performances are mainly in Twi¹⁷ and in Dutch; in several cases the storytellers speak in English. As this is an international project on Anansi in Africa and in the diaspora, the stories and interviews in Twi have Dutch or English subtitles on the Dutch-language websites, while all stories have English subtitles on the English-language versions. Some of the recordings originate from two storytelling competitions held in Amsterdam and Rotterdam in 2007. Three competitions were organised in Ghana, in the villages of Awutu Bereku, Bawdjiase and Adeiso, although some recordings seem to be from Accra.¹⁸ Registering for the competition in Ghana was free and open to all, regardless of age, gender or occupation. Viewing the images of the competitions, we see that almost all storytellers in the final selection were adults. One winner was Queen Mother Nyaakye Awudu of Awutu Bereku, confirming that experience and authority are very much part of what makes the stories of gifted storytellers great.¹⁹

The average duration of the video tales is between five and eight minutes, a common length for Anansi stories. Stories of shorter lengths were also told at the competitions. As this shorter length is most apt for Internet diffusion,²⁰ it raises the question of whether the competitors were advised on this and, therefore, whether this affected their selection of stories.

Listening to the stories and watching the performances, we see that many storytellers open with well-known formulas such as “*abraa abraa*” (“listen listen”) to which the public replies “*yon yon*” (“we are listening”), and the equally familiar “*dabbi mekɔɔ*” “once upon a time,” or with a question on the story’s main topic “Do you know why...?” Both young and old storytellers greet the elders, showing the importance of the context of the competition. Some storytellers adapt their stories to the audience, for example “Ama and the Tiger” narrated by Isaac Afranie, where Ama learns to hunt with her father and shoots a tiger to save him.²¹ A skilful storyteller, Afranie invites “brothers and sisters” to educate their daughters and relates the lesson of the story to one of the members of the jury:

In the past, women were housewives; but now they are ministers. The lady is one of the judges. If her father hadn’t educated her, she wouldn’t be here today as a judge. So, my brothers and sisters, not only sons deserve good education. Also, girls are important. That is my story.

Afranie, employed at the magistrate’s court in Ewutu, says during an interview that he remembered this story told to him by his father because of its educative

theme. As girls' education is a timely topic, it is understandable that the storyteller saw it as appropriate to the circumstance and linked it to the authoritative female presence in the jury.

The choice of another storyteller to narrate the tale "America" might have an analogous motivation to address a (perceived or imagined) global audience. When rainfall suddenly creates a river that separates the good daughter Ama from her mother, the mother starts calling *Ama recca*, *Ama recca* ("Ama is trapped"). The assonance between the Twi sentence and the English name is used to explain America's creation. The moral of the story is that "every obedient child will become a great person in the future. People will travel from afar to come and see them. Because Ama was obedient she became America. People from all over the world visit Ama." This story resonates with references to the slave trade and continental division as well as with present commentaries on America as the centre of attraction, cleverly linking such references to a conventional moral value (the obedient child).

The winning stories are classic Anansi stories narrated by three storytellers who make good use of dialogue, songs, mime and voice impersonation as well as of onomatopoeics such as "hiss" and "buzz" which depict and enact "multisensory" experiences and become important aesthetic factors for the entertainment of public and jury alike (Yankah). The three storytellers use linguistic devices and gestures skilfully, while Nyaakye Awudu adds theatrical elements by using a stick to support herself as an elderly woman, and by taking more 'space' in gestures and body movements on stage than the other storytellers. The continuum of oral performance, theatre and reading/writing in the present literate context of Ghana comes to light in the interviews. If Kojo Anim, an elderly farmer, relates that he learnt his story from his father, and Gifty Afna, a school teacher, from her great grandmother when she was 16, Nyaakye Awudu learnt her story from the primary school book *When You Are in Doubt, Check and Check Again*. We can also wonder whether her work as a building contractor and her role as Queen Mother in Awutu Bereku can explain her choice of the moral, "With faith you can achieve all your dreams," for the story on the successful Anansi who tricked God into believing that he knows what God knows.

Through Anansi Master, Sankofa.nl provided a powerful example of the remediation of oral performances. This has also been a highly productive initiative for the (on and offline) world of Ghanaian visual arts, as artists were contacted and old and new objects, statues and paintings around the Anansi stories were collected, created and shown in Dutch museums. Anansi Master also shows that the full-fledged use of intermediality in the African verbal arts is facilitated when offline organisations can afford to invest in their online projects.

Tawiza.nl and Amazigh.nl

The Amazigh (Berber) websites offer a good example of cultural activism in the Netherlands. Tawiza.nl and Amazigh.nl were among the first Riffian Berber websites on the Internet.²² Amazigh or Berber is the second language of North Africa

after Arabic and it is spoken by large minorities in Morocco and Algeria. The estimated population figures for Imazighen (Berbers) were and are *loci* of political and scientific debate in both colonial and postcolonial socio-political contexts: Amazigh people are presently estimated to number between 12 and 25 million.²³ According to the low numbers of *Atlas des minorités dans le monde* (Atlas of the World's Minorities), Amazigh speakers number 17 million, and in 2008 they constituted 35 per cent of the population in Morocco, 17 per cent in Algeria, 2 per cent in Tunisia, 1 per cent in Mauritania and 6 per cent in Libya. In the Netherlands, Moroccans form the second largest group of Dutch people with a migration background (2.3 per cent of the population of the Netherlands)²⁴ and an estimated two-thirds of Moroccan immigrants come from a Berber-speaking region (El Aissati and Bos).

Tawiza.nl and Amazigh.nl provided information on the Amazigh (Berber) language, history, literature, arts and identity.²⁵ The controversial position of such websites in their support of the Amazigh language is illustrated by a conversation on the Forum of another Moroccan website, Maroc.nl Community (February 17, 2002), which stigmatised the aim and tone of Amazigh.nl as being “disgusting” and hateful.²⁶ We should consider that, in the postcolonial period, Imazighen (Berbers) and their languages endured censure as well as political, economic and military oppression until the 1990s, when Amazigh (Berber) started to be recognised as the national then official language in Algeria (from 1995 and 2016) and in Morocco (from 2001 and 2011), as well as in Libya after the fall of Ghaddafi.

The webpage layout and design of Amazigh.nl has undergone several modifications since 2001, when it appeared as a simple webpage with a list of themes under the photo of the anticolonial hero Mohammed Abdelkrim El Khattabi. The latter is an iconic image for Moroccan Amazigh activists, as El Khattabi established the “Republic of the Rif” in Northern Morocco, one of the three large Moroccan Amazigh-speaking regions, in the period 1921–1926.

From the homepage, one could follow hyperlinks to themes such as “poetry, music, and storytelling,” which corresponded to the website’s aim to make the Imazighen (Berbers) aware of their identity through cultural activities and information on language and “traditions”:

Knowledge of your own culture and identity gives you insight into yourself. That is why it is important that we think about the origins of our traditions in order to pass them on to the next generation. This is also what AMAZIGH.nl strives for: to make Imazighen aware of their rich culture and traditions. (“Over Amazigh.nl”)

In the period 2006–2012, Amazigh.nl had a banner with the logo “Amazigh” in Tifinagh (Berber script) and Latin letters surrounding the Tifinagh letter ⵣ (yaz, equivalent of “z” in Latin alphabet) iconically referring to the term Amazigh on the background of a green, transparent-like, mountain landscape having at its centre the flower of an agave plant, characteristic of the Riffian coasts. The banner of the present homepage is simplified in a yellow/red ensign saying “Amazigh

.nl, Free people.” As mentioned before, multilingualism characterises migrant websites. In the case of Amazigh.nl, since 2010 there has been the increasing use of Amazigh for writing folktales, poems, as well as articles. The attention paid to oral literature and other genres of literary production has remained remarkably stable on this site since its beginning. The visual and discursive organisation of Amazigh.nl resembled that of Tawiza.nl. A series of folktales, such as those analysed on Tawiza.nl below, are still presented today under the themes “Stories” and “Language” and discussions on oral literature are carried out in the “Forum.”

Though regularly updated and well visited since 2002, Tawiza.nl went ‘under construction’ in 2009 and it has been offline since 2010.²⁷ As stated in the self-presentation, Tawiza.nl also aimed to support Amazigh culture. Another specific aim was, for Tawiza, to help Berber youths find their way in the diasporic context of the Netherlands. The site’s main language of communication was Dutch, though the Tarifit (Riffian Berber) language was also present. As with other Amazigh sites, Tawiza supports Berber linguistic and cultural rights in Morocco. The Tawiza homepage contained several identity markers, beginning with its name (‘Tawiza’ means solidarity and cooperation) and the use of the Berber Tifinagh alphabet on the banner. The logo with the words ‘tawiza’, ‘stichting’ (‘association’ in Dutch) and again ‘tawiza’ written in Tifinagh,²⁸ visually encapsulated the linguistic and cultural conundrum of Berber diasporic groups. At the same time, it was a statement of autonomy as the Arabic script dominant on the Moroccan linguistic market was absent.

The central area of the Tawiza homepage was devoted to public discussions and news. In June 2009, the two headlines concern Berber issues in the Netherlands and in Morocco, while the central item reported on an Amazigh (Berber) festival held in Rotterdam. Literary and artistic information, with items on poetry and music, was announced under “Recent Articles” and “Recent Discussion.” On the right-hand side there were links to ‘entertainment’ pages (Tawiza quiz, e-cards, photos, download). An index contained hyperlinks to “Literature,” “Language,” “Music” and “Art”.

In contrast to general Dutch Moroccan websites, such as Maroc.nl and Mghraba.nl (Merolla, “Music on Dutch Moroccan”), on Tawiza one could find new written literary productions in Tarifit Berber and in Dutch, as well as sections and forums dedicated to Riffian oral genres, which can be read as statements on the socio-cultural position of the Amazigh/Berber language in the Maghreb and the diaspora. Here we should remember that the practice of writing down oral productions was part and parcel of the social and cultural changes that nurtured the rise of Berber minority demands within the modern nation-states; the practice stimulated the creation of a written literary production in Amazigh and was a decisive factor in Berber self-valorisation.²⁹ At the same time, intellectuals and writers such as Mouloud Feraoun, Mouloud Mammeri and Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine promoted the appreciation of Berber orality and oral genres. As with many African writers, Feraoun’s and Mammeri’s work was fuelled by concern over the possible disappearance of their mother tongue – and with it a host of oral poems and narratives – under the impact of colonial literacy and social

change (Merolla, *De l'art* 22, 154, 155, 156). Both oral and written cultural activity remain lively in the Amazigh/Berber movement today.

A number of poems written in Dutch and in Tarifit were to be found under the heading "Poetry" and in the Forum "Prose and Poetry." Under "Folktales" there were different types of short stories in Dutch, such as the story *Fetuc* by Mostaf Assithem and other texts by Mustapha Ayned, a Berber writer and singer well-known in the Riffian-Dutch community. There were also examples of the formula tale *tanfust*³⁰ translated into Dutch, including the story "Uncle Stork" – titled *Oom Ooievaar* in Dutch and *3emmi Bheleizh* in Berber Tarifit. As is often the case in the passage from oral performance to written form, the transcription/translation expresses elements of the oral communication, though with alterations linked to remediation, i.e. to the frame and characteristics of the new medium. The online version no longer contains opening and closing formulas and indications of dialogue ("inna-yas" and "inna-s baba-s" or "he says to him" and "his father says"). Linguistic and communicative aspects of orality may, however, appear in the national "host" language – in this case Dutch – as well as in the mother tongue. Mena Lafkioui ("Reconstructing" 114) points to markers of orality in the Uncle Stork story, including short and expressive locutions and the use of the onomatopoeic form "tfoe" to indicate the act of spitting usually echoed in mimic gestures during oral performance. The story's resolution is emphasised by the apposition of Dutch and Berber texts, which thus takes the form of the "expressive sermon." Nonetheless, with the story adapted to the new digital context, Lafkioui notes that it "may be perceived as 'non-literary', 'non-authentic', 'non-Amazigh'" when the normative model is offline oral storytelling ("Reconstructing" 115).

Narrative strategies similar to those indicated above are used in the tale "The brave cock," again offered in Dutch. Here onomatopoeics of the chicken language are expressed by "pok, pok," the emphasis of tone is given by adding "oo" at the end of the sentence, "is it so?" ("is dat zóóó?"), and the apposition of Dutch and Tarifit Berber marks the comic dialogue at the end when the cock states he "negotiated with the eagle" (while he was merely too heavy to be carried off). Other examples of tales in Tarifit Berber are under the heading "Children's stories," while under "Language" several proverbs and riddles are offered in Berber and in Dutch translation. Interestingly enough, the first section also includes the translation into Berber of a tale derived from Charles Perrault's work, the well-known seventeenth-century French literary collection of 'fairy tales'.

Oral communication on Tawiza entered directly into dialogue with the user thanks to the Forum "Dance and Music" and the "Multimedia" sub-page. Dozens of messages offered a link to tracks and videos of music/songs/concerts in *Amazigh* from bands and artists active in North Africa and Europe. The "Multimedia" section hosted music as well as a fragment of the theatre play *Tabrat* subtitled in Dutch. The play's central character – named Amazigh ("Berber") – is summoned by a judge who wants to stop him from speaking Amazigh. Though humorous, the play explicitly takes aim at Berber/Amazigh's status as a marginalised language in Morocco. The box 'Multimedia' also offered a list of "Islamic songs in

Amazigh (Berber)" – revealing to perceptive readers the website's position in the debate on the language of religion (can Amazigh also be a language of religion?). Interestingly, this was the only editorial reference to Islam on the website.

One thus sees that Tawiza hosted diverse forms and genres, from the usual transcription/translation of oral genres to more innovative intermediated forms, such as the digital story and the re-use of folktale style in written authorial writings. Moreover, all the genres on offer have short forms – similarly to the Anansi Master site – which is congruent with the proverb/riddle and anecdotal form, but far less with Berber oral tales of the genre *tanfust* that usually take some time to be told and require several pages of transcription/translation. It thus appears that the medium's frame and characteristics – the space allowed for easily "readable" web pages or "audible" fragments – are affecting the production and reproduction of offline oral narratives, whether performed on Sankofa.nl or transcribed/translated on Tawiza.nl. At the same time, it must be recognised that the medium gives users choice: on the website Amazigh.nl, it was also possible to find some of the tales but also longer narratives in Dutch and in Tarifit Berber, something that reflected individual (and the web team's) preferences at the time of the publication.

A final point is that the transcription/translation/subtitling and the upload of performance recordings in organised and translated fragments is a time-consuming activity for volunteers and for the editorial team. Without funds and sponsoring, it is a hard task to put it on the web. It is not surprising that the offer of the formula tale *tanfust* and of theatre and songs with subtitles remains limited online. This point could also explain why the same tales were offered on Tawiza.nl and Amazigh.nl.

As a whole, the offer of oral genres and music on Tawiza was committed to the preservation of the Berber language in the diaspora and in Morocco, the recognition of Berber in the public sphere (at school, in the written form, as a religious language, etc.) and by the local (Dutch) people. In the framework of these virtual spaces, even religious songs sung in Berber revealed a committed positioning.

Before returning to questions regarding changing oral genres in the context of the websites discussed above, it is imperative to ask, how do we understand oral re-mediation? How do we interpret the new forms that oral genres take on African diasporic websites?

The orality/new media conundrum in studies of African oral literature and popular culture

The understanding of new forms/directions of African verbal arts interacting with other media and genres in the electronic surroundings of the Internet is part and parcel of the general debate on how technology affects orality. As I indicated elsewhere, the increased use of new media led to conflicting interpretations of innovation in African oral genres (Merolla "Orality and Technauriture"). Two main interpretative tendencies could be identified here: *eroded orality* and *innovative oramedia*.

Studies that fall under the ‘eroded orality’ umbrella view the changing style and content of songs and narratives – and changes in the context of production due to the introduction of literacy and new media (in particular radio and television) – as a form of cultural loss (Andrzejewski, (Kadima-Nzuji; Diawara) or “erosion of orality.”³¹ Some critics rue the demise of live interaction between performer and public, the passivity of listening to the radio and watching television compared to active collective performances such as evening gatherings around storytellers. Others witness the folklorisation of oral productions and loss of their social functions, or gaps between the “authentic” oral tradition and modern broadcast versions (Diawara) and increasing misogyny as women become objects of male desire, pleasure and dominance in mass media productions (Adélele-Fayémi).

In contrast, studies that fall under the ‘innovative oramedia’ umbrella celebrate the successes and innovations of recent African productions due to the interaction of orality, literacy and new media. They may point to innovations in oral style and content in new contexts (Kaschula and Mostert) or see oral genres as forms of resistance (Coplan; Tomaselli). The studies focus on the democratisation and depoliticisation of griots broadcasting on radio (Schulz, 1997: 457), audience growth due to the broadcasting of performances, and the shift from direct contextual discourses (praise of patrons) to moralising and/or national discourses addressing all members of society (Adejunmobi, Barber *A History of African*, Schultz “‘Praise without’”). Other studies focus on the creation of social memory, consciousness, and desire for change in oramedia³² and in market-oriented productions (including videos, comics and popular novellas) that reach oral and low-literate publics.³³

Two large fields of theoretical debate underlie the ‘eroded orality’ and ‘innovative oramedia’ interpretations. The first concerns continuities and differences between literate and oral cultures; the second concerns “popular culture.” Regarding the former, the “great divide theory” (between orality and literacy) focused on ‘pure’ orality and mass literacy, argued that literacy was essential for the revolution in human cognition (Ong; Goody and Goody and Watt). Literacy, the enabler of critical thought, is here seen as the basis of democratisation and modern scientific development in Euro-American societies.³⁴ Literary scholars and anthropologists following Ruth Finnegan and Robin Horton, however, castigated the theory’s technological determinism and evolutionism, which suggests all cultures wanted to (or had to) achieve literacy, without taking into account factors of economic and political hegemony when studying the worldwide “shift to literacy.” Counter-arguments on the cognitive shift accumulated over time.³⁵

Note that a definitional shift takes place as orality comes to characterise ‘classical’ productions, representative of ancient (but living) prestigious literary forms – whether written or oral – such as the Vedic heritage of India and the Sunjata epic in West Africa. The significance of this shift becomes clearer when we look at the second field of debate over ‘popular culture.’ The debate on African popular culture was pioneered by scholars such as Johannes Fabian and Karin Barber, and further developed in influential publications such as Barber’s “Introduction” and *A History of African Popular Culture* and the anthology on the same subject

edited by Newell and Okome. In the social sciences, 'popular' usually refers to sectors of society and/or social classes marked by customs, tastes, styles, forms of entertainment and artistic productions that differ from the 'high,' 'classical' or 'bourgeois.' There is a further tripartite differentiation between 'folk culture' (rural, oral, traditional), 'popular culture' (urban, low-literate and/or oral, recently created by industrialisation and urbanisation), and 'elite culture' (bourgeois, written, classical/high).

The radical critique, however, sees popular culture as 'escapist,' in so far as it does not further action for radical social change.³⁶ In such an approach, dominant groups are hegemonic when they successfully command wide acceptance by spreading their views, tastes and customs; when they enforce interclass and intercultural prestige models that are ideologically complicit with the ruling group; and when they are able to integrate the cultural production of subordinate groups by innovating cultural forms that domesticate their dangerous (oppositional) contents. While this model of the production and circulation of cultural artefacts may imply the existence of two separate worlds and cultures – the popular and the elite (see discussion in Barber "Preliminary Notes" and *History* 7, 8) – it also enables investigation of the resulting tension as oppositional popular productions are constantly created and renewed, and perspectives interact and fuse in society and within artistic productions.

Scholars working on African orality and new media tend to emphasise that their examples of popular performances are not 'escapist' forms of cultural production (for example, Tomaselli [1997]; Vail and White 1991). Moreover, the oppositional model of popular culture is tricky in studies that address audiences in Africa, given the difficulty of finding clearly 'oppositional' and 'dominant' audiences (Barber *History*, Cancel, Newell, Newell and Okome; Schulz "Music videos").

The concept of 'popular culture' is indeed problematic in the African context. According to Barber ("Preliminary Notes," "Orality, the Media"), the division between urban and rural, and between working classes and bourgeoisie, applies poorly to Africa as distinctions between high/elite and low/popular, as well as between folk/rural/traditional and popular/urban/modern can be ambiguous. In her latest study on popular culture, Barber (*History*, 9) historicises the concept "pushing the idea of popular back into precolonial times." According to Barber, "in most African cultures, past and present, there has been a huge bedrock of shared forms [...] But [...] In some precolonial societies, there was such steep vertical stratification that royal, aristocratic and noble strata evolved cultural traditions inaccessible to commoners." The complex historical development and creation of what we tend to see as 'popular' needs to take into account the apparent contradiction of "instances of cultural expressions of protest, satire and self-assertion by disadvantaged and oppressed strata throughout history" (*History* 9) as well as the "two- way flows between elites and non-elites," and "cultural forms that belong to the whole population or attract audiences drawn from all social backgrounds" (*History* 11).

Russell Kaschula ("Exploring the Oral-written" and "Introduction") shows that South Africa's Xhosa poets improvise poems both orally and on paper; he

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argues that oral and written poems do not radically differ in content or style. As often with oral composition, it is difficult to point to a general trend; for example, Vail and White, among others, have shown that singers in other contexts orally revise the political contents of their poems. In his work (also together with Mostert), Kaschula has investigated the digitalising and commercial technologising of Xhosa oral poems and has proposed the new term “technauriture” which integrates technology, auriture (the aural aspects of producing and receiving oral literature), and literature. Technauriture is proposed as a paradigm for engaging with the interplay of orality, the written word, and technology, and its contextualisation “within a post-modern milieu that has [...] historically undervalued the spoken word,” as well as for maintaining the central role of orality in discourses on technological media (*From Oral Literature* 5). Another positive aspect is that “technauriture” – as term and paradigm – offers the opportunity to bridge the arguments pivoting on loss and innovation in previous debates.

Intermediated verbal arts in African diasporic websites: beyond eroded orality and innovative oramedia

The Sankofa and Tawiza websites show that verbal arts appear not only in transcription, translation and abridged forms, but also in interaction with innovative written forms and visual arts, with videos and audio recordings. The space devoted to folktales, proverbs and songs is furthermore integrated within the discourses that website operators and users construct about verbal arts and cultural identity. On the one hand, these websites appear as display rooms for what the migrant individuals and community can offer, online as well as in the diasporic location. In this framework, intermediated oral genres become assets under the ‘Arts’ and ‘Culture’ labels that can be exploited both locally and transnationally, in different manners and for different goals. On the other hand, intermediated oral genres can inspire gratifying discourses of the self (whether innovative or traditionalist) and form favourable starting positions for intercultural dialogue or discussion.³⁷ The verbal arts on diasporic websites thus participate in self-presentation and contribute to construct the migrant community’s ‘digital imagination,’ both on and offline. The websites’ intermediality, however, poses questions of modification and change within the verbal arts in an acute form, as we find elements discussed by both the eroded orality and the innovative oramedia trends of interpretation. As spaces for written communication, websites integrate verbal arts ‘visually’ with images and writing. Like radio and television, they offer audio-video recordings of oral performances. This means that well-known problems of “orality” in written transcription and broadcasting clearly apply to dimensions of intermediated orality on websites.

While the central feature of performance is missing from the websites, written forms of tales and songs, performance and storyteller/public interactions are reproduced in the videos and song clips. There is, however, no direct interaction between performer and (online) public in both writing and recording. There are also questions of formal modification: as stated above, many of the offered genres

have a rather short duration, though the transcriptions of songs on Amazigh.nl show that longer transcriptions/translation are also possible on websites. The use of abridged forms, for tales in particular, thus raises the question of whether this is related to the choice for easily “readable” webpages. The question remains when other media are integrated on the website, as we saw with the short “audible” video-tales on Anansi Master. We also saw that most of the narrative genres re-mediated on websites belong to genres such as proverbs and (types of) folktales, raising questions about the influence of the international folklore categorization on the website team and users’ choices.³⁸

A central question concerns the extent to which offline narrative or songs transcribed/translated online are ‘oral.’ The digital form may be one of re-mediation that had already passed through a written form, such as published collections of transcribed and translated oral tales and songs. I mentioned above the use of onomatopoeics, short expressive sentences and other ‘signs’ of oral communication in the formula tales on Tawiza, but such ‘signs’ belong to the scholarly practice of ‘oral text’ transcription. Even the apposition of mother-tongue and ‘host’ language sentences may depend on multiple ‘mediations’ by writing, as witnessed in the re-use and activation of offline artistic and literary productions on the African diasporic websites. This may also apply to audio recordings, as in the example of the audio tale uploaded by a user of Moroc.nl that could be ‘read’ from a written version. While the offline ‘oral event’ remains central in the Anansi videotaes collected in competitions on the ‘field,’ even here we saw that one of the ‘winning’ stories was re-told from a written version.

At the same time, there are elements of innovation as websites not only integrate previous communication technologies, but also become interactive tools and creative media in their own right. Whether transcriptions/translations and videos are uploaded by users or by the website team, users can reply or stir up responses. While the immediacy of the performance is lost, users and website teams participate in the construction of the social meaning of the communicative event, one that is no longer the storytelling event in itself, but the emblematic reference to it in its written/video form.³⁹ In such a framework, intermediated oral genres can become forms of resistance towards cultural marginalisation (Tawiza) and global homogenisation (Sankofa). Other choices and trajectories are open, for example intermediated orality becomes a weapon opposing political disruption in the case of Somali websites (Merolla “African Verbal Arts” 162, 163, 170).

If the transcription/translation and recording of tales seems to be an activist or documentary enterprise, the discography market and a wider public actively participate in offering audio-video clips of music and songs and transcriptions of lyrics.⁴⁰ In both cases they contribute to the creation of social memory and consciousness, though intermediated songs and music – interacting with offline productions – also participate in creating desires and views that may reach the whole range of oral, low-literate and literate publics. As Barber points out (*History* 178):

Many kinds of texts, in their constitutive detachability from the actual context that precipitated them, can have an afterlife in which they become the

focus of new struggles or social initiatives. Thus, texts or images encapsulating memory [...] are not purely memory of the past, but kernels of popular experience which may produce future growth.

Issues surrounding the dichotomy between the ‘authentic’ oral tradition and the intermediated version, and the belonging of intermediated genres to ‘popular’ culture, seems to be bypassed by storytelling as an activity that – both online and offline – re-uses all forms of knowledge and entertainment (oral performance, theatre, reading/writing etc.) diffused in the literate contexts of contemporary Africa and its diasporas. Song clips, audio-video tales and transcriptions/translations offered on the African diasporic websites considered here constitute artefacts and activities through which multiple communities are imagined. Certainly, these communities are not identical to the village community, or “pure orality” contexts if such a thing ever existed. However, oral artists can compose and perform in an oral/literate/technological continuum, easily moving through it. We may then interpret intermediated oral genres as a new specialisation of the verbal arts/artists and their public, one which requires some technical knowledge and even a basic literacy from audiences.

Finally, we see that intermediated orality online functions to create homeliness and relocalisation. Differently from the notion of “encapsulation” mentioned in the Introduction, the “connected migrant” very much engages with foreign cultural spaces: the websites’ multilingual approach and translation of oral performances, in the written and audiovisual forms, allow the migrants to connect, to communicate with, and to some extent include local communities, diasporas, and the co-citizens of the “hosting” country as well.

Notes

- 1 Websites created and/or managed by migrants. For a wider meaning of this notion including websites that deal with migrants, see Diminescu “Introduction: Digital” 453.
- 2 Examples of a few pages (mainly in text form) of the analysed websites are recovered on WayBack Machine.
- 3 The great research work on migrant websites and e-diaspora published in the *e-Diaspora Atlas* cannot be used here as the Moroccan website figures and maps unfortunately do not mention the second language of Morocco, the Amazigh/Berber language.
- 4 A list of web archives is in Gomes, Miranda and Costa. On Internet archives see Brügger “The Future of,” *The Archived Web*, Lor, Britz and Watermeyer.
- 5 According to “Internet Penetration in Africa. June 2019,” *Internet World Stats* there were about 4,500,000 Internet users in Africa in 2000 and about 520,000,000 in 2019 (<https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>).
- 6 A shorter previous version of this article was published in Merolla “African Verbal Arts.”
- 7 Anderson, Capone, Georgiou *Diaspora and Media and the City*, Jansson “Critical Communication,” Karim, Miller and Slater, Warf and Grimes.
- 8 Merolla “Cultural Heritage, Artistic.”
- 9 Web design programs play a central role in their visual and content-based structure and that spatial location of orality (and references to oral genres) follows a near-standard format.

- 10 Labour migration began in the 1960s with recruitment agreements between the Netherlands and Morocco. In the 1980s there were flows of refugees from Somalia, Ghana and Nigeria. At present, about 23 per cent of immigrants in the Netherlands come from Africa.
- 11 Migrant local organisations and national committees were dissolved or no longer got subsidies. The National Consultative Committee on Minorities (LOM) and Forum, the Institute for Multicultural Issues, the Dutch Moroccan Cooperation Association (SMN), the Turk Advisory Committee (IOT) and the Dutch Caribbean Consultative Committee on Governance (OCAN) stopped work.
- 12 Some images of the previous Sankofa website can be seen on the site of the technical developer at www.jpresult.nl/werk/item/sankofa-website
- 13 Parish (128) indicates that the bird has an egg on its back and that its head is turned to gaze at it. On the mythical bird Santrofi's story ("If you keep it you have troubles, if you leave it you lose treasures") see Anyidoho.
- 14 Quote from www.mdcbowen.org/p2/sf/faq033.htm. See also interview with Gerima released on Research Channel on February 13, 2008, seen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4ZmNcldQFw.
- 15 Other interpretations are possible. See the re-use of *sankofa* by African traditional religious congregations that interpret the image of the bird looking backwards as indicating the "rebirth, reactivation and reorganisation of traditional religion" (Parish 128).
- 16 See www.sankofa.nl/KunstenCultuur/Anansi/tabid/269/language/nl-NL/Default.aspx and www.anansimasters.net/info.html
- 17 Twi, spoken by the Ashanti, the Akuapem and the Akwamu, is one of the mutually intelligible vernaculars of the Akan language, the others being Fante and Brong.
- 18 See information on the "Journal" page of the Anansi Master at www.anansimasters.net/e_journal.html (Journal no 3: Publicity in Ghana; and Journal No. 1: Making of Anansi Masters Ghana, Visit the chiefs, Eyewitness, and Winners storytelling competition).
- 19 Nyaakye Awudu is Christiana Anaman's alias. The other winners were Gifty Afna in Adeiso and Kojo Anim in Bawjiase.
- 20 The Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley, California, for example, suggests video clips of about 2–4 minutes, with a script of about 250 words told in the first person and with still images (with thanks to Carien Touwen). See www.storycenter.org/index1.html.
- 21 African progenitors of the present tigers migrated to Asia in the prehistoric period, disappearing from the indigenous fauna of Africa (although South China tigers have been imported into South Africa for preservation purposes).
- 22 Tawiza.nl was analysed by Merolla ("Digital Imagination," "Migrant Websites" and "Music on Dutch") and by Laffkioui "Reconstructing."
- 23 Amazigh is spoken in several variants in North Africa from the oasis of Siwa in Egypt to Morocco, from the Mediterranean to the Algerian and Libyan Sahara and the north-central Sahel in Niger and Mali. In Morocco, Amazigh is spoken in the North (Riffian Berber or Tarifit), in the central Atlas Mountains (Tamazight Berber) and in the Southern areas (Chleuh Berber or Tashelhiyt).
- 24 People with a migration background are defined by the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics as persons with at least a parent born elsewhere CBS (The Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics) <https://opendata.cbs.nl/statline/#/CBS/nl/dataset/03743/table?fromstatweb>
- 25 Both the terms Amazigh and Berber are used because, since the end of the twentieth century, the Amazigh (sg.) and Imazighen (pl.) tend to stand out in society and in current studies, while the term Berber remains inscribed historically in the discourse of the research domain.
- 26 www.maroc.nl/forums/archive/index.php/t-55975.html

- 27 See Merolla "Cultural Heritage, Artistic" for an analysis of active Amazigh websites.
- 28 Tifinagh is the geometric consonant script of the Tuareg Berber. A slightly revised form of Tifinagh (Neo Tifinagh) was recently adopted by the Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe (IRCAM) in Morocco for teaching.
- 29 The colonial description froze Berber in the atemporal condition of exclusively being an oral language. For Berber intellectuals, the shift to literacy revolutionised the status of Berber that was no more perceived as subordinated to the 'prestigious' Arabic.
- 30 The genre usually translated into English as 'folktale' or 'legend' has different names in Amazigh depending on the local language. The presence of formulas of beginning and ending is characteristic; see the denomination 'formula tales' in Merolla *De l'Art* 104–118. On the difficulties of translating denominations and definitions of oral genres, see Okpewho *African Oral Literature* 127–137.
- 31 See Schulz "Music Videos" 346.
- 32 As in African-language theatre for 'specific linguistic' groups and less clear-cut classes such as taxi-drivers and urban painters (Barber *A History*; see also Fabian "Popular Culture," *Remembering*).
- 33 Barrot. Meyer, Newell, Schneider, Wendl.
- 34 Literacy would enable thinking in complex hierarchical systems of categories and in abstract terms (algebra, etc.); detachment and objectivity by creating distance between writer and reader; critical reflection and revision (due to the visual-spatial manipulation of written texts); and the accumulation of knowledge through the preservation of written texts.
- 35 Chafe and Tannen, Goody, Gunner.
- 36 Gramsci, Hall and Whannel, Hall, Guha and Spivak. In Gramsci, folklore expresses the subalterns' worldview but their conception is not elaborated and systematic; it is fragmented and contradictory because the "lower" classes are "on the defensive" (Crehan 100). In the radical analysis, social change takes place when the working classes become politically conscious and take revolutionary action in order to disrupt the system. The role of intellectuals 'organic' to the working classes is to aid the shift to 'true' revolutionary forms of action.
- 37 Which can be interpreted in term of Bourdieu's "cultural capital" (Lafkioui "Multilingualism" 143).
- 38 The categorisation of folklore is usually still based on the very local European tradition and scholarly classification of it.
- 39 Face-to-face interaction is already possible with programmes for video calls and video conferencing, though such programmes also ask for literacy and technical knowledge.
- 40 This difference, together with the fact that transcription and translation are a time-consuming undertaking for volunteers and editorial teams and thus require sponsorship, could explain why diasporic African websites offer more music and songs than proverbs and tales in transcription/translation.

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