

FROM ORAL TRADITION TO ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

Vineet Kaul*

1. Introduction

We live in a global village today where cultures across the globe influence and reshape one another. Consequently, oral tradition continues to be impacted by migration, diasporic experience, and interconnectedness with new cultures. Oral tradition is the vast field of knowledge through which cultural information and messages are transmitted verbally from one generation to another. It is the complex corpus of verbal arts created as a means of recalling the past. Sometimes oral tradition is used interchangeably with folklore or elements such as language and belief systems that are shared by a group; what gives a community its cultural and national identity. In contemporary usage, oral tradition or folklore means popular and group-oriented expressions of culture. Oral tradition is governed by certain characteristic features: the situation or the context of production, the audience, the language, and the structure or form of the art. One major feature of oral tradition, which relates to the nature of performance, is the involvement of the community in the creative process as well as in the criticism. Every performance is for and about the audience. The main objective of the performer is to entertain, amuse, and impress the audience so as to earn praise, admiration, and material gifts. In creative performance, members of the audience neither listen silently nor wait for the invitation of the performer before joining in. Instead, the audience spontaneously breaks into the performance with additions,

queries, and comments. Although storytelling is one of the common ways of preserving the values and ethos of culture, what are the implications on culture when storytelling changes within today's global digital economy? Unfortunately, oral literatures and endangered languages together are now on moribund and need to be preserved for posterity and cultural identity as well. What does it mean and what is the impact when the oral tradition is likely to die out in today's fast-paced and Internet-based culture? The changes that are evident can be difficult to capture but in an attempt to preserve the cultures will ultimately support the tradition of storytelling, which ultimately lends itself to preserving language, culture, dress and family values.

Oral literature is a creative text delivered by the word of mouth. The term "oral literature" broadly includes ritual texts, curative chants, epic poems, folk tales, creation stories, songs, myths, spells, legends, proverbs, riddles, tongue-twisters, recitations and historical narratives. In most cases, such traditions are not translated when a community shifts to using a more dominant language. It appears in the work of historians, literary and linguistic scholars, folklorists, anthropologists, biblical scholars and interdisciplinary specialists in a whole series of historical periods or geographical regions. Oral expression and transmission has been the cornerstone of sustaining, perpetuating and disseminating information in many cultures throughout the world. It changes and grows to accommodate the changing times and trends in the human world. In a world order characterized by individualization, globalization, commodification, unemployment, ecological crisis and unprecedented cultural

circulation, where can we find folklore, that quintessential expression of community and place? Far more than “just talking,” oral tradition refers to a dynamic and highly diverse oral-aural medium for evolving, storing, and transmitting knowledge, art, and ideas. It is typically contrasted with literacy, with which it can and does interact in myriad ways, and also with literature, which it dwarfs in size, diversity, and social function. But for many orally-based cultures, the spoken word continues to carry much weight and is a pillar of this social mosaic (Alant 2006).

Ethnographers have long realised that oral performances cannot be divorced from the socio-economic contexts in which they take place. Globalisation and rapid socio-economic change exert particularly complex pressures on smaller communities of speakers, often eroding expressive diversity and transforming culture through assimilation to more dominant ways of life. Until relatively recently, few indigenous peoples have had easy access to effective tools to document their own cultural knowledge, and there is still little agreement on how collections of oral literature should be responsibly managed, archived and curated for the future.

It is ironic that technology is creating a fecund environment for the rebirth of orality. Through the use of web networks and web platforms, oral performers are now more globally visible and able to market their literary talents. Furthermore, intellectual and academic sites that discuss, analyse and preserve material electronically are emerging. Linguists have responded decisively to the threatened disappearance of many

endangered speech forms by embarking on urgent documentation projects, training a new generation of field linguists, and partnering with members of speech communities invested in the preservation and revitalisation of their threatened tongues. Many such collaborations result in visually-rich digital outputs with geospatial components, and represent research findings through web interfaces that use sophisticated protocols to ensure that online access is granted at the appropriate level. Similarly, anthropologists are working with technologists and communities of origin to develop platforms for curating and disseminating cultural heritage in ways that reflect and respond to local needs. While the print book on the whole creates an authoritative uni-linear narrative, digital storytelling explicitly invites user intervention, interaction, and subjective ordering through a reader's personal desire or interest. While skimming and non-sequential readings are possible in the print narrative, they are not premised in its present culturally accepted structure or assumptions. Contemporary understanding of oral tradition depends not on documents—which are at best written reflections of oral traditions—but on experience gained through firsthand study of societies that depend upon oral tradition as a major means of communication. Anthropologists, folklorists, and other ethnographers have worked directly with such societies to learn how this textless communication operates. Their research not only has helped to clarify local media ecologies and contexts but has offered comparative insights into oral traditions from the ancient, medieval, and premodern worlds that have survived only as fossilized transcriptions of once-living performances.

Perhaps the most significant realization we as readers and critics have reached with electronic literature is that styles, media, and genres come with certain assumptions that qualify their use and limits. By maintaining the assumptions and qualities of other media like print books or oil paintings when approaching new media projects, we can easily miss what new media can offer as well as misjudge the effectiveness of new media's potential in aesthetic and political realms. The very network capabilities of computers today bring certain assumptions about how writers and artists should work with and create through that medium. The onset of digital technology has meant that oral literature has to adopt it if it is to retain its functional and aesthetic place in society. Some oral literature scholars and researchers have argued that the advent of technology and other changes in society are killing oral literature. My argument is that oral literature is not a dying art; instead, it is taking different and more resilient forms in this digital age. This is especially true in many African and Asian societies that view oral transmission as an avenue to preserving the history, traditions, genealogical, and cultural legacies of their communities. There are a number of states that any new idea goes through in terms of public reaction and acceptance. These cultures have elevated those individuals who are the oral memories, the griots/griottes that ensure that their legacies endure by chronicling and remembering every minor and major event within those societies.

Western scholarship has rediscovered the importance of this oral tradition. The willingness to reconsider those oral histories once buried in our archives and historical

centers has brought awareness that we have only scratched the surface in showing the contributions of people of color. What scholars, academics, and cultural chroniclers comprehend is the essential element of the eyewitness account that oral histories add to the entire context of any scholarship, discussion, or research. They have to understand the relationships between oral literature, the written word and technology, and then suggest that the term technauriture may offer a suitable encompassing paradigm for further engagement with the oral word and its effective application in modern society. A theoretical paradigm is now required to better understand this mixing of genres and technologies, building on the seminal works of Walter Ong (1982), Ruth Finnegan (1988), Brian Street (1995) and others.

Of course "oral tradition" should never have been so simplistically construed, but such has been the tyranny of print, text, and related media that verbal art outside their culturally sanctioned auspices did in fact suffer from this kind of marginalization. From one perspective this historical trajectory was entirely predictable. While oral cultures advanced performance and literate cultures forwarded hierarchical ordering, our present experience in the digital era has brought the order developed with literacy into an openly accessible network rather than obscured in authorial intent and singular vision. The act of reading and writing in the digital can no longer be about composing or determining an objective plots if we are to take advantage of the characteristics of new media. As more writers, poets, and artists enlist digital technology as integral parts of their composition process, we come to understand technology as a collaborator in our

goals of expression and community building rather than an impediment to Romantic conceptions of creative authorship. Many recognise the purely visual piece as having a substantial amount of narrative information that would warrant the title of digital literature.

2. Oral Culture

Cultures define themselves by defining competitive modes and ideas out of existence: just as regularly as mother tongue learners of any given language eliminate certain sounds from their vocal repertoires even as they acquire the acoustic network to support their own particular language, so we textualists have narrowed our focus to textual works—complete with authors, situated inside a literary tradition, and available for individual and silent perusal via books stored in libraries. Ironically, the voices that made these texts possible, the non-textual verbal art that was both the precedent and the crucible for the book-bound strategies we so admire, was often labeled “primitive,” “unsophisticated,” or “simple”—or, more characteristically, simply ignored. In the modern era, and never more than in today’s world, we are coming to understand that “oral tradition” plays an enormous and necessary part in any concept of verbal art. Moreover, the stakes are high. If we fail to take sufficient account of these riches, we disenfranchise whole cultures, misconstrue the cognitive categories and social activities of others, and redefine the ancient and medieval worlds in our own necessarily graven image.

It may now be time for us to undertake studies of contemporary oral literature against the backdrop of the emergence of what is being called “global culture”. These studies, as well as the emergence of such a culture, are facilitated by modern technology. At the end of the day it may simply mean the recognition of the dynamism of culture which allows for common ways of expressing human reality, whilst acknowledging that this reality is not experienced simultaneously by humankind, but rather at different times on what could be termed a human continuum, hence resulting in perceived cultural and political diversity. With the nature and expectations of the writer and reader so significantly altered by digital technologies, the time has arrived for the humanities to take up the challenge of incorporating these traits into our cultural capital, building a rhetoric to bring to our schools where our ideas of literacy are far too limited to be of use to a digital subject working with a networked computer. Cultures that rely on oral tradition look at the concept of time differently. Events are not always sequential and they are not always consistent with historic events or human development.

In some oral cultures, time seems almost collapsed in that the origin of the individual, or the activities of the individual, are not separated in the way that they are for written language cultures. Part of the reason for this is the way the stories are told. Oral traditions do not rely on strict memorization, some stories are contained in or modified by others. In addition, because things are not recorded, it is not possible to go back to particular dates or eras with any degree of specificity or reliability. The time that exists within the tradition, outside the everyday or seasonal times that can be accounted for

by individuals or communities, is called the dream time in some cultures. Additionally, this may included a different connection between knower and known, a sort of non-separation. Oral traditions are generative and mnemonic. They are affirming of the present order and provide a level of predictability. Sometimes the stories are changed, or may reflect a vision of the culture that doesn't agree with historical fact. Changes to legends, or stories (cultural mythologies) serve to make the events more interesting, more flattering to the culture, which helps keep the story alive and thereby, the culture as well. Today, both the linguist and the anthropologist, and the anthropologist's counterpart, the folklorist are trained in linguist methods and the anthropologist uses these methods much to the benefit of his work.

The shift from orality to literacy registers in many genres of verbal art—lyric, narrative, descriptive discourse, oratory (purely oral through chirographically organized oratory to television-styled public address), drama, philosophical and scientific works, historiography, and biography, to mention only a few. Modern folktales integrate the realms of oral traditions and formal literature, possibly more than any other artistic or rhetorical form. Our society has been so literate since before the twentieth century that many modern readers forget that language and storytelling were originally and are primarily oral, that writing is a relatively new invention used with a small minority of the world's languages, and that all literature is linked with oral traditions of the ancient past. By the strictest definition the term "folktale" applies only to a story being told and heard through a natural oral tradition. Yet most of us in this literate, multimedia society

encounter folktales in writing or other fixed modern forms such as films. The storytelling revival that has grown since the 1960s has inspired not only the work and pastimes of many professional and amateur storytellers who carry on the oral tradition, but an explosion in the production of folktale retellings and adaptations in books, films and drama.

Although studies covering oral traditions of the people of various cultures of the world did appear under different names in the past, the present scientific term "folklore", almost accepted universally, is of English derivation and was, as is well known, coined by William John Thoms in 1846. "The term caught on and proved its value in defining a new area of knowledge and subject of inquiry, but it has also caused confusion and controversy" (Dorson, 1972: 1), as folklore, more often than not, suggests both to the layman and the academician "wrongness, fantasy and distortion" (Ibid.). This was precisely due to the fact that oral traditions were not understood and studied properly. Emphasis on the written variety of literature which grew under the shade of the great paperwork empires of the urban cultures, did not permit scholars to even consider studying and understanding the meaning of such literary tradition that survived in orality. One need not remind that "myth" became a synonym for unreality, fantasy, and something which is false. These and other misconceptions remained there for a long time and ironically continued in countries that are rich in oral traditions and to a very great extent still live with such traditions, than those that do not share such a rich heritage. Another reason responsible for the perpetuation of these misconceptions was

the utter lack of scientific understanding among the early scholars who championed folklore theories and various methods of studying oral traditions. We shall deal with these and other important issues in detail in the following sections. Our endeavour in this brief introduction will be to show summarily the growth of folklore studies and survey the major theoretical advancements or conceptual framework of various schools that guide the folklorist in the analysis of folklore materials.

Folktales are generally more realistic and more relevant to ordinary human experience than myths and other heroic and sacred stories of the world because folk heroes are not always as smart, hard-working, charismatic, or lucky as they should be, but they usually get lucky or figure out how to overcome danger and adversity. There are realistic folktales about human fears and foibles, joys and triumphs, but most stories from the oral traditions of the world convey universal truths about the world and human experience through fantastic plots and flat characters who are helped or hindered by magic or supernatural forces..In addition to being adapted in a variety of contemporary media, folktales are linked with many other oral and literary forms, including nursery rhymes, jokes and riddles, ballads, folk songs, legends, romances, and myths There are many types of folktales that are frequently adapted for children—some more closely related to mythology or to written literary traditions than others—such as trickster tales, animal tales, wonder tales, noodle head stories, tall tales, ghost stories, and pourquoi tales that explain the phenomena of nature. There are numerous modern folktales in collections published for adults, and they are often worth sharing

with children, but generally in the realms of literature and popular culture, folk and fairy tales had been relegated to the nursery by the twentieth century, and they continue to be ignored or spurned by most modern adults except when reading bedtime stories to children.

3. Digital Technology

To take on Oral Tradition and Digital Technology as a discussion topic feels overwhelming, which is perhaps the best sign of the richness of this relatively new area of study? New technological developments have presented all practitioners with an opportunity to reverse the alienation that the written word has brought to many oral cultures. However, in order to reverse this alienation, it is incumbent on the researchers to engage in a rigorous exploration of what knowledge is, how knowledge is valued, and how it can be mobilised effectively. The history of knowledge development is replete with agendas of domination and conquest, richly sprinkled with theological objectives thinly disguising a goal of exploitation of societies and securing resources (Norman 1979).

As the field of digital storytelling has developed into hypermedia and the differences between digital literature and digital art becomes harder to discern, we cannot deny that digital storytelling is neither an amplified print narrative nor a new literary genre but belongs to a model beyond print literate thinking. The act of reading and writing in

the digital environment can no longer be about composing or determining an objective plot if we are to take advantage of the characteristics of new media. Judging digital writing as fragmented, chaotic, or disastrous assumes that we measure digital writing against the same criteria as print narratives before it. For societies in which traditions are conveyed more through speech than through writing, oral literature has long been the mode of communication for spreading ideas, knowledge and history.

The development of written literature adversely affected the practice as memorizing stories and orally narrating them became redundant. Industrial Revolution is another factor in its decline as it impacted family structure through urbanization and fragmentation to meet the emerging manpower needs. A worldwide effort adapting modern technological means is necessary to prevent the practice from becoming extinct. As John Miles Foley (2008) insightfully suggests, oral tradition and digital technology are the frameworks to the fading era characteristic of the printed page. Digital storytelling situates the elders in the line of public gaze, where once their audience was more immediate and culturally relative. The presumed influence of their stories involves the variation of exposition, the representational language, and the latent relationships between the human and spiritual realms according to worldviews. The elders' role is to sustain the continuity of belief and so accept the digital as a means to reach a broader audience and illuminate a complex system of interrelated values.

One good thing about the astronomical growth of the children's book publishing industry in recent decades is that seeing multiple adaptations based on the same or related folktales, with different styles of language and illustration helps us appreciate the diversity of folktales within the region and their links with many stories from other cultures. Metaphors such as a pot of soup or cauldron, a quilt or tapestry, a giant clothing swap, and a web have been used to represent the body of interwoven tales from the oral traditions of the world (Hearne, 1999, Herrin, Roberta, 1996). In very practical ways, digital technology has aided those working in the field by increasing both the amount of data they can collect and the speed at which they can collect and disseminate that data. For those with access to the Internet, opportunities are multiplying both to share oral traditional performances and to view them. And, of course, each new tool raises far-ranging questions from the efficacy of a particular methodology to the authenticity of the performance experience for audiences separated by many miles or years.

At present the term 'oral literature' is, fortunately, losing ground, but it may well be that any battle to eliminate it totally will never be completely won. For most literates, to think of words as totally dissociated from writing is simply too arduous a task to undertake, even when specialized linguistic or anthropological work may demand it. The words keep coming to you in writing, no matter what you do. Moreover, to dissociate words from writing is psychologically threatening, for literates' sense of control over language is closely tied to the visual transformations of language: without

dictionaries, written grammar rules, punctuation, and all the rest of the apparatus that makes words into something you can 'look' up, how can literates live? Literate users of a grapholect such as standard English have access to vocabularies hundreds of times larger than any oral language can manage. In such a linguistic world dictionaries are essential. It is demoralizing to remind oneself that there is no dictionary in the mind, that lexicographical apparatus is a very late accretion to language as language, that all languages have elaborate grammars and have developed their elaborations with no help from writing at all, and that outside of relatively high technology cultures most users of languages have always got along pretty well without any visual transformations whatsoever of vocal sound.

Oral cultures indeed produce powerful and beautiful verbal performances of high artistic and human worth, which are no longer even possible once writing has taken possession of the psyche. Nevertheless, without writing, human consciousness cannot achieve its fuller potentials, cannot produce other beautiful and powerful creations. In this sense, orality needs to produce and is destined to produce writing. Literacy, as will be seen, is absolutely necessary for the development not only of science but also of history, philosophy, explicative understanding of literature and of any art, and indeed for the explanation of language (including oral speech) itself there is hardly an oral culture or a predominantly oral culture left in the world today that is not somehow aware of the vast complex of powers forever inaccessible without literacy. This awareness is agony for persons rooted in primary orality, who want literacy

passionately but who also know very well that moving into the exciting world of literacy means leaving behind much that is exciting and deeply loved in the earlier oral world. We have to die to continue living.

Fortunately, literacy, though it consumes its own oral antecedents and, unless it is carefully monitored, even destroys their memory, is also infinitely adaptable. It can restore their memory, too. Literacy can be used to reconstruct for ourselves the pristine human consciousness which was not literate at all—at least to reconstruct this consciousness pretty well, though not perfectly (we can never forget enough of our familiar present to reconstitute in our minds any past in its full integrity). Such reconstruction can bring a better understanding of what literacy itself has meant in shaping man's consciousness toward and in high-technology cultures. Such understanding of both orality and literacy is what this book, which is of necessity a literate work and not an oral performance, attempts in some degree to achieve moving the debate beyond what has essentially been a dichotomous tension between the oral and written word, to a discourse that includes the implications of technology as a general and alternative category. Here, the term technology is used in its widest sense to include all technologies that are relevant to orality and oral traditions, and implicates the consequences of the application of technology to contexts that need to be characterized by a sympathetic perspective towards orally-based cultures. These technologies could include all forms of digital recording, from the unobtrusive hidden recording device to elaborate holographic technologies that could transport the poet

into another physical context. Such technologies have the potential to fundamentally alter the nuances of a performance and will have an impact on the immediacy of audience feedback. Such examples point to the multiple considerations that must come into play as digital technologies are developed, a point that is fundamental to the very idea of technauriture.

A consideration of the impact of technology is not an attempt to bypass written materials, but to recognize that contemporary culture is dynamic and more aware of the implications of technological advances. In contrast, during the evolution of the written word, cultures tended to assess their value in terms of their ability to advance religious and political objectives. The written word was seen as superior as a result of being accompanied by advances in technology. Cultures that were written tended to have more effective tools for waging war and supporting the plunder of resources, giving conquering written cultures a sense of superiority, and instilling in the orally-based cultures that were conquered a sense of awe for the written word.

Technauriture allows researchers to assess the potential of harnessing technology to reverse the demise of oral traditions and the knowledge systems embodied in such spoken contexts. For the purpose of this paper, technauriture acts as a referential paradigm to facilitate the effective transmission of in *situ* production into meaningful resources that mobilise the innate potential of orality and oral traditions to support cultural identity and cultural maintenance. This is key to revaluing the human

knowledge that remains embedded in traditional cultures through orality, because oral tradition, as Alant has noted, is 'a vehicle of social cohesion' (2006: 201).

The challenge that researchers now face is the effective contextualization of orality within a post-modern milieu that has—outside of certain institutional structures such as parliaments and courts—historically undervalued the spoken word. Technauriture offers a vehicle by which orality is able to bypass the written phase and directly harness the potential of new technological structures and solutions to capture and disseminate oral performances. This term includes literature, the written word and technology.

In developing technauriture as a paradigm, it is essential to avoid the pitfalls that have become evident with the term literacy and the wider implications of the compound term technological literacy. 'Even though it still does mean "the ability to read and write", the word "literacy" has long taken on more ambitious dimensions—of reason, rationality and progress' (Alant 2006: 201). When Alant asserts that 'literacy is a function of language', a corollary for technology could be that 'technological literacy is a function of language and the human/machine interface'.

Highlighting the problems of a technologically determinist approach to debates about orality and literacy. Alant underlines the importance of a coherent approach to context and contextual factors, as 'it is the situation that gives the oral text its meaning, rather than the medium—orality—through which it comes to pass' (2006: 202).

One researcher's oral literature is another's utterance, of little or no use beyond its performative value. However, when that performance has been committed to the written word, it is fundamentally altered and can no longer be considered to be primarily oral. Through writing the ability of the performance to evolve has been stunted and has become part of a static history. It is through technauriture (which includes the use of technology to record, archive and disseminate audio or audio-visual content) that a performance can keep aspects of its primary character and yet be allowed to develop within a nurturing and coherent paradigm that sees the written as only part of a dynamic process that is sympathetic to audience, artist and future contexts.

Another aspect central to the currency of orality is 'symbolic power', which defines as the 'capacity to intervene in the course of events, to influence the actions of others and indeed to create events, by means of the production and transmission of symbolic forms' (1995: 17). Symbolism runs deep in all oral cultures, and technauriture provides the capacity for symbolic influence beyond the in its production, with the role of the media becoming paramount. Expand the concept of symbolic power to a 'symbolic system' in which the university and early religious systems had the power to classify social space. Such a symbolic system needs to be developed for oral material in a manner that will make the media delivery as neutral as possible, allowing the original message to carry its 'symbolic credibility' and to be resonant across contexts, in respect

of the transmigration from primary to secondary.. However, a concomitant enhancement in terms of 'symbolic credibility' is still lacking.

Developing the paradigm of technauriture requires a vigorous analysis of the migration of context to ensure that the medium of delivery does not become an end in and of itself. New technological developments are presenting practitioners with opportunities to reverse the alienation that the written word has visited on oral cultures. In order to achieve this, it is incumbent on researchers to engage with the question of what knowledge is, how knowledge is valued and how it can be effectively mobilized.

In summary, it is necessary to identify and develop a strategic framework that will 'work to introduce/affirm/re-inscribe knowledges' of various kinds (Sefa & Simmons 2009: 17). Through the proposed digital models built around technauriture, we hope that a structure will emerge to value the diversity of human knowledge and to mobilise its potential for human society. 5. Why technauriture?

The term technauriture is used in order to highlight the complex nature of oral literature in the contemporary global reality. This encapsulates technology, auriture and literature. The term auriture has been chosen as it involves both the oral and the aural, which seems appropriate when talking about both the production of oral literature as well as its reception through hearing and understanding, namely the aural aspects. No

oral performer remains untouched by the influence of radio, television ,the internet and the constant interaction between the oral and written word.

There is no longer any society which is not affected by Ong's (1982) notion of secondary orality. Technauriture offers an attempt to establish a coherent framework for the challenge of technologising orality and oral traditions. Implicit is that the technological infrastructure exists, or will soon exist, to make it feasible to capture, develop, nurture and utilize the store of human knowledge that is embodied in indigenous cultures.

Technauriture presents a significant foil to the concept of born digital "knowledge", in other words, knowledge that only exists in digital form. Currently, resources are being applied to ensure that such material remains accessible for future generations. Digital preservation (DP) is becoming a relevant issue for ensuring the future accessibility and usability of knowledge, information and data that only exist in digital formats (Hemmje & Riestra 2010). That born-digital material is receiving such attention is due, in no small measure, to the innate value placed on the content.

The relationship that has been developing between orality, literacy and technology is flourishing leaps and bounds. Performance poets are taking advantage of this new form of technologised orality supporting the idea of a technauriture that encapsulates technology, auriture and literature. Use of technology is dependent on the individual performer and where they find themselves on the oral-literacy-techno continuum, as

well as the extent to which they choose to allow orality and literacy to interact with modern technology.

Isabel Hofmeyr (1993) points out that there is an 'appropriation' of the oral into the literate, with the extent of this process depending on the individual performer. These days, this appropriation is often taken one step further, into the arena of technology. The extra linguistic elements that are often lost in the transmission of orality into literacy can be re-captured through technology when sound bites and video-clips are uploaded. The reaction of the audience, the performer's intonation, voice quality and emphasis, the effects of rhythm, context and speed of performance are lost when written, but can come alive once again through a digitized version. The result can be a performance of different impact and intensity, a performance based on technauriture.

4. Conclusion

As technology becomes a defining aspect of all disciplinary investigation, technauriture offers a suitable paradigmatic framework upon which to build a cross-disciplinary approach to orality and oral traditions in the digital age. In a very real sense, the journey from orality through the written word to the virtual utterances of avatars encapsulates the cyclical nature of human culture. Perhaps digital oral poets and shamans will lead the next generation as they build their own performative worlds online that transcend the narrowing of contemporary and traditional cultures.

Orality and the spoken word will continue to be the backbone of human existence, but the integrative nature of technology, while not yet defining our existence, will also work its way into our lives. It is therefore imperative that the oral aspects of our cultures are effectively captured, and technauriture offers the ideal vehicle to ensure that the central role of orality is maintained through the discourse of technological development. Consequently, there is much in technauriture, as it allows for the primary and secondary aspects of orality to engage with technological advances that can and often do overawe the original sentiments or messages. Technauriture captures the modalities of these times: a human existence that is increasingly defined by technology.

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