

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

In collaboration with the Department of Arts and Culture (National Archives of South Africa)

TRUTH, LEGITIMACY AND REPRESENTATION: ORAL HISTORY AND ALTERNATIVE VOICES

Fourth Annual National Oral History Conference

Limpopo, 23 – 26 October 2007








CALL FOR PAPERS

A few years ago, the Oral History Association of South Africa convened a conference which debated and examined the role and position of Oral History in the post-apartheid South Africa. This year, we want to probe into the polemics of situating, truth, legitimacy and representation. Although it is generally accepted that truth is socially-constructed, there are still debates on the extent to which truth can be arrived at using various tools and instruments. In the process of truth-making, and authenticating texts for historical truthfulness, there is also a challenge of representation. Whose truth is told? Who tells the most truthful accounts? Can the truth ever be arrived at in the re-telling of oral history? Representation tends to assume a role of speaking for and standing for. How far can we reliably “speak for”, can we allow the subaltern to speak as Spivak suggests? This year’s conference should probe into these contestations of defining and redefining oral historiographies and their methodologies.

One other challenge is the position of orality vis-à-vis literacy. Oftentimes, orality is subjugated by literacy such that the former is analysed in terms of methodologies and theories that are derived from the written tradition. Views that see the written word as the most reliable, authentic and primary essence of truth-making tend to ignore that orality is a precursor to literacy, and that both orality and literacy are not flawless.

The conference looks forward to papers which will examine the given sub-themes, focusing largely on the central theme. Contributors have to examine oral history as an alternative voice, a voice that seeks independence and credibility of its own.

CONFERENCES SUB-THEMES:

-  *Of Voices and Silences*
-  *Ethics Gossip, Lies, Slander and Defamation*
-  *Truth, Legitimacy, Representation and Alter/Native Discourses*
-  *Oral History and Development*
-  *Performance and Re-enactment of Orality*
-  *Memories of the Struggle and (Re)Constructing History*
-  *Case Studies, Research Projects Reports, Family Histories, Community Histories*

The envisaged end-product of the conference will be a publication of the proceedings. Interested contributors are encouraged to bring along to the conference papers that are photo-ready for publication.

Proposals are invited for contributions to the 4th National Oral History Conference. Academic papers and case study reports are welcome. The contributions must be based on **original work** and have a **clear focus on oral history**.

If you are interested, please send us a short proposal including:

- a) an abstract of your paper or case study report (100 - 300 words)
- b) the relevant conference sub-theme
- c) a short biography of yourself (50 - 100 words)
- d) your contact information (name and surname, affiliation, postal address, e-mail address, phone and fax numbers).

The time for presentations will not exceed twenty minutes and will be followed by ten minutes for questions and discussion.

It is our intention to publish refereed conference proceedings. The papers should not be longer than 5000 words.

Deadline for proposals: July 31 2007

The conference organising committee will confirm acceptance or rejection of your proposal by **25 August, 2007**

Send proposal to:

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