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Editorial

This updated edition of the Archives News is published after a process of consultation with the editorial team and staff. It is an updated version in the sense that the cover has been revamped to fall in line with the branding of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa under the Department of Arts and Culture. It has been updated to include images reflecting the functions of the National Archives and the heraldic insignia of the country. It is published after nearly a year of being out of print for reasons of updating the database and transforming this publication to meet and satisfy the interest of readers.

Of interest to the reader are articles focussing on contemporary trends in the theory and practice of oral history, case studies, oral history in the classroom and individual experience of selfless service in the archives and heritage fraternity.

It is with the hope that this edition will be warmly received and readers are encouraged to forward articles relevant to heritage and archival practice by post or email to thabang.khanye@dac.gov.za, lesetja.maraba@dac.gov.za; matome.mohlalowa@dac.gov.za, khanyi.ngcobo@dac.gov.za

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Editor
Thabang Khanye

Reflections and highlights of the 2006 National Archives Week

By Lesetja Maraba

On 12 June 2006, the Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture: Ms NGW Botha officially launched the National Archives Week which took place from 12- 16 June 2006.

The event aims to raise awareness about archival functions, services and the importance of record keeping in the preservation of societal memory, particularly among the previously disadvantaged communities. It must be seen to be fulfilling the mandate of reaching out to the South African people as prescribed by the National Archives and Records Service Act 43 of 1996 (as amended). This project will reach milestones as it is to be held annually between May and June in line with international trends. The event took place during the youth month (June); and all public archives across the country were flooded with the youth, professionals and communities. Provincial Archives that had no human resources capacity and infrastructure were assisted by the following officials from the National Archives: Matome Mohlalowa (Limpopo) Nkwenkwezi Languza (North West), Lesetja Maraba and Bongani Mabaso (Northern Cape) and Seipei Mashishi (Mpumalanga).

At the National Archives about 19 schools took their hectic schedule off the exams and visited the archives on different dates. There was an exhibition mounted on the foyer themed "Age of Hope" as a theme of the government programme of action for the year. Learners enjoyed cultural music and poetry; they were given information brochures, attended different presentations about archival functions and heraldry concluding the day by touring the building of the National and Film Archives. Included in the programmes were archival film clips commemorating anniversaries such as the Bambatha Rebellion, Satyagraha, 1956 Treason Trial etc.The 2006 National Archives Week coincided with the official opening of the refurbished Reading Room by the Deputy Minister of the Department of Arts and Culture. The new Reading Room now has the capacity to accommodate 30 researchers with separate photocopy facilities, new area for researchers' luggage and computer cubicles. These developments must be seen as an effort to make the archives friendlier and more accessible to the South African public.

In all events the 2006 National Archives Week was a success and the beginning of the 2007 Archives Awareness Week is enthusiastically awaited. Special gratitude is expressed to all staff members who made it possible, without human capital there will be no implementation of ideas.

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF THE ALUMNI: THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA AS A CASE STUDY

By Bronwyn Strydom, Ria Groenewald and Louis Changuion
UP Archives

Defining

The History Matters website of George Mason University refers to oral history as "a maddeningly imprecise term"[1] and certainly, an exploration of the definition of oral history reveals a variety of both broad and narrow understandings of the term. On the one hand, oral history or oral reminiscence can be broadly defined as "the first-hand recollections of people interviewed by a historian"[2] or simply, "the recording of people's memories."[3] Bill Schneider explains that, personal narratives are stories which individuals tell about their experiences or observations, such as eye witness accounts of disasters or the role which they may have played in some event deemed worthy of recall. Oral history consists of those parts of the oral tradition and personal narratives, which get recorded, and which become a record.[4]

On the other hand certain definitions insist on "the spoken word"[5], for example, D.K. Dunaway and W.K. Baum refer to oral history as primary source material obtained by recording the spoken words – generally by means of planned interviews – of persons deemed to harbor hitherto unavailable information worth preserving.[6]

Historian Carolyn Hamilton, however, has pointed out the "blurred" division between oral and written texts[7], indicating that both categories are subject to the same types of problems. It is therefore not that simple to distinguish between oral and written first-hand accounts and reminiscences. For the purposes of this paper, the broadest definition of oral history will be taken into consideration, namely, that "[o]ral history embraces all types of interviewing for first-person testimony about directly lived experience."[8]

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1.	L Shope, "What is oral history?" http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/what.html, (n.d.), access: 15 September 2004.

2.	J Tosh, The pursuit of history, (Harlow, 2000)), p. 206.

3.	Oral History Society, Essex University, http://www.oralhistory.org.uk, (n.d.), access 15 September 2004.

4.	Quoted in MB Gilder, "Preservation of oral history: the case of South Africa", in Archives News 41(2), December 1999, p. 17.

5.   Shope, "What is oral history?", http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/what.html.

6.   Quoted in DA Webb, ""Cultural History" museums and oral history", in Die Kultuurhistorikus, October 1987, p. 95.

7.   C Hamilton, "'Living by fluidity': Oral histories, material custodies and the politics of archiving", in C Hamilton et al (eds.), Refiguring the archive, (Cape Town, 2002),
 p. 217.

8.   A Skotnes, "People's archives and oral history in South Africa: a traveller's account", in SA Archives Journal 37, 1995, p. 66.

History writing

Oral history has been a growing part of historical methodology since the second half of last century, and in the South African context it has become an important part of the reconstruction process.[9] Historian Andor Skotnes comments that "people's oral history has a contribution to make to the South African transition"[10] and also that "a great wealth of experience with oral history exists in South Africa and ... there are enormous resources available in the country to anyone interested in oral history."[11]

Oral history offers historians the opportunity to interact directly with their subject matter, establishing an active relationship between the present and the past.[12] For archival and museum purposes, oral history is extremely appealing as it is, as J. Tosh states, "an effective instrument for re-creating the past" by virtue of being "the authentic testimony of human life as it was actually experienced."[13] Museum curator D.A. Webb demonstrates that oral history is an inexpensive way to save museums from becoming "calcified" or "irrelevant"[14] and he has appealed to South African museums to "move away from simply collecting the dead past, [and to] start collecting the living past."[15]

Oral history is therefore seen as an effective way to explore recent social history and the everyday life of non-élite communities.[16] It gives history a human face by highlighting the individual experience that is ordinary and also particular.[17] One of the main features of oral history is thus its democratic nature. Tosh explains that by means of oral history, "[o]rdinary people are offered not only a place in history, but a role in the *production* of historical knowledge."[18] Oral history can therefore bring in the often unheard voices and address imbalances in the representation of the past.[19] Webb explains, "It puts the people who made the history back into history, and it does so by involving them."[20]

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9.   Shope, "What is oral history?", http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/what.html; Oral History Society, Essex University, http://www.oralhistory.org.uk; Skotnes, "People's archives and oral history in South Africa", pp. 64-65; RC de Jong, "Use of oral sources in the recreation of historical sites: four recent case studies", Archives News 47(1), March 2004, p. 40.

10.   Skotnes, "People's archives and oral history in South Africa", p. 65.

11.   Ibid.

12.   Tosh, The pursuit of history, pp. 211 & 215.

13.   Ibid., p. 211.

14.   Webb, ""Cultural History" museums and oral history", pp. 95-99.

15.   Ibid,. p. 98.

16.   Tosh, The pursuit of history, pp. 206-208.

17.   Ibid., pp. 209-210.

18.   Ibid., p. 211.

19.   Webb, ""Cultural History" museums and oral history", p. 97.

20.   Ibid.

In addition, oral history is a useful means of "filling the gaps" where there is a reticence of written sources.[21] In pre-literate, subjected and previously disadvantaged, as well as paperless societies, there is a need to create historical sources.[22] The archives has been identified as a logical place to begin oral history projects and it is claimed that "[s]ince archivists are in a better position to identify gaps in the public records that they keep; this is why they have to be involved in the collection of oral history."[23]

Not surprisingly oral history is subject to certain problems or possible errors such as nostalgia, presentism and the historian and informant's subjectivity.[24] For this reason Tosh points out the necessity of having a "[c]ommand of the full range of relevant sources."[25] Cultural historian/museologist RC de Jong points out the positive uses of oral testimony when he says that "[a]n increasing number of people in this field are using oral history in order to document and reconstruct the tangible and intangible past."[26] De Jong also encourages historians to always supplement and verify oral testimony with other sources.[27]

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21.   National Archives of South Africa, http://www.national.archives.gov.za/, (n.d.), access: 30 September 2004; Tosh, The pursuit of history, p. 207.

22.   Webb, ""Cultural History" museums and oral history", p. 96.

23.   Gilder, "Preservation of oral history: the case of South Africa", p. 20.

24.   Tosh, The pursuit of history pp. 212-214.

25.   Ibid., p. 214.

26.   RC de Jong, "Use of oral history in the recreation of historical sites: four recent case studies, Archives News 47(1), March 2004, p. 40.

27.   Ibid.; RC de Jong, "Use of oral history in the recreation of historical sites: four recent case studies, Archives News 47(1), March 2004, pp. 33-41.

UP Archiving

This paper considers the use of oral history in the writing of the history of an institution, in this case the University of Pretoria (UP). This is a project which tackles an area which is generally out of step with the current nature of most oral history projects in South Africa. It deals with the history of a historically "advantaged" institution, which for most of the past century was very much part of the dominant segregatory and apartheid constructs. However, while the archives of the institution are primarily the official records generated from the typical top down hierarchy, there are exceptions. The advantage of oral history in this context is that it can bring in the University's non-élite, namely the students (and staff), to the centre stage and truly give the institution a human face.

Oral history projects at the University of Pretoria have primarily two purposes. In the first place, oral history is a source of information regarding the greater historical processes surrounding the University. It saves the University from an inward-looking history, as past students and staff can shed light on more dimensions of the past at specific moments. Oral history provides the University Archives with information regarding specific events as well as pointing to the relatedness of events and circumstances. In addition, oral history provides the non-official non-elite view of events and developments. In the second place, oral history can provide personal life narratives and anecdotes which can give the institution a human face and tell more than merely a political history.

In the University of Pretoria Archives, four distinct episodes of oral history can be identified.

1. **1920s "Old Student's Page"**

A first attempt at collecting student reminiscences at the Transvaal University College (TUC), the forerunner of UP, was made after World War 1. A regular feature, the "Old Student's Page", was introduced to the annual Transvaal University College *Student's Magazine* in 1921.[28]

In the "Old Student's Page" past TUC students gave recollections of their student years including their time in the residences, in class, of student initiation and pranks. One past student, only known as "B.H." visiting his Alma Mater in 1925, not only gave a written account of his recollections, but also drew some amusing "then-and-now" pictures (ie. pre-World War 1 and 1920s pictures), which were published in the *Student's Magazine* of 1925.

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28.   The Student's Magazine was published by a committee appointed by the TUC Students Representative Council.

2   1959 Ad Destinatum collection

In 1960 UP celebrated the jubilee of the promulgation of Act No. 1 of 1910. By this act the TUC was established as a separate institution from the Johannesburg School of Mines (later to become the University of the Witwatersrand).   In commemoration of this event, the University issued a memorial book called *Ad Destinatum*.   As early as 1958, but especially in 1959, attempts were made to collect reminiscences of past students and staff for this book.   Reminiscences of all aspects of student life were called for – this included memories of fellow students, favourite lecturers and lectures, campus life incidents and so on.   The information gathered from past students in this manner was verified by an editorial team consisting among others of members of the then Department of History. Apart from the reminiscences, photos and other TUC and UP memorabilia were also collected.

3   1980 UP Jubilee collection

Then, in the 1970s, with the coming jubilee of the founding of the University of Pretoria in 1980, another project was launched for the collection of reminiscences. In 1975 the memories of a number of old staff members and students were recorded and later transcribed. Among these were some of the very first professors, such as Prof D.F. du Toit Malherbe, and students, such as Mr C.A.G. Kuschke, of the TUC. The main part of the project was launched in 1979. A large number of people responded to the University's calls and their reminiscences are today housed in the UP Archives. Some of these recollections were published in a little book called *Herinneringe van Oud-Tukkies* (Recollections of Old Tukkies) in 1988.

4   2004 Pretoria University Archives collection (for centennial 2008)

In 2004, in view of the 2008 centennial of the founding of university classes in Pretoria in 1908, the University Archives launched a project to yet again collect the memories of past students and staff. Of particular interest here will be the collection of the memories of students of the transformation of UP from an all-white institution to the more representative institution it is today.   Calls for assistance have and will be made through the press and of particular importance here will be the active cooperation of the Tuks Alumni association as well as the current student body.

It is ironic that in an age where communication has been apparently facilitated through technology, that there is such a lack of response from former students and staff.   Compared to the overwhelming response that the 1980 Jubilee Committee received, archivists have encountered indifference from especially students who graduated in the late 1980s and 1990s.   Although there are exceptions for the most part, these former students perceive the University as a large impersonal institution where students are treated as merely a number. This can easily frustrate the oral history project and the material can be viewed as subjective due to the small participation. Instead of seeing this as an obstacle, this should challenge the collectors to pursue the project with more vigour to illicit participation from as broad a cross section of the University community as possible.

Oral history projects at UP differ from the general trend of oral history projects currently undertaken in South Africa. Regardless of this, it remains a useful tool for collecting and recording the past and giving the institution a more democratic and human face. Oral history can save the UP Archives from becoming an isolated entity housing only documents of a limited perspective, by pursuing the active participation of the University's community.

"EACH TIME A XHOSA LIVING HUMAN TREASURE DIES, A WHOLE LIBRARY DIES WITH HIM." ORAL HISTORY ENCOUNTERS IN THE DIVERSE PARTS OF THE EASTERN CAPE.

By Vuyani Booi & Alvin Petersen

"Each time an Indian dies, a whole Library dies with him" by Fernando Benitez

ABSTRACT

The title of the paper is paraphrased from a thought provoking quote from the words of a renowned Mexican historian Fernando Benitez. We, the Indigenous Music and Oral History Project at the University of Fort Hare, try to contextualize the thinking of Fernando and make it relevant to our project vision and mission. Accordingly, we draw parallels from his thinking with respect to Indigenous Music and Oral History Project. In August up to mid September 2004, we had undertaken oral history research in Matatiela, Mount Fletcher, Mzimkhulu, Mount Ayliff, Ntabankulu, Qumbu and Cofimvaba. Our informants were from the Hlubi, Batlokwa, Ntlangwini, Xesibe, Pondo, Mpondomise and Abathembu cultural communities. The major focus of the interviews was on cultural traditions which have been preserved and passed from generation by word of month.

Amongst others, this paper explores the following:

1.   The main objective of the fieldwork

This was to conduct oral history research in the above selected areas in a manner that highlights the importance and value of the Living Heritage through informative interactions. In this way, we could obtain first hand information or data from communities that are in possession of a wealth of cultural traditions in the form of indigenous music, dance, rituals and customs.

2.   Strategic interventions

In order to conduct this research we had to employ a strategy of participatory approach and consultative meetings with gatekeepers of the rural communities and custodians of culture that is the Great Places, 'Tribal' Authorities and Chiefs. These were the institutions which mobilized and organized local people to attend the oral history research gatherings.

The Chiefs had the privilege to choose who was to be interviewed on what. As researchers we were given a list with names of people to be interviewed and their areas of specialization with respect to their knowledge of cultural traditions. And most of the time the list was full of elders who are commonly known as Living Human Treasures and Chiefs or their representatives. Hence, this paper will explore the relevance of these custodians of culture to their societies even now as South Africa celebrates ten years of democracy.

The focus was on the Living Human Treasures who, we believe, are the reservoirs and realms of this knowledge which actually informed these cultural traditions. I will explore explore how these Living Human Treasures;

- Contributed through solid action towards the revitalization of a cultural tradition that is at risk of disappearing due to either lack of means for safeguarding and protection or due to the process of rapid change, urbanization or acculturation.

- Contributed their role as a means of affirming the cultural identity of the peoples and cultural communities concerned, their importance as a source of inspiration and as a means of bringing peoples and communities closer together.

- Given wide evidence of their roots in the cultural tradition or cultural history of the community concerned and affirmed the value as unique testimonies of living cultural traditions

A second focus of this research was to unearth the processes which go into the making of indigenous music. It has been a focus of many interests to establish the significance and meaning of different genres of indigenous music and how they relate to cultural communities. For instance one way or the other it became clearer through the oral testimonies that indigenous music plays an uncontested role to affirm the significance and meaning of cultural traditions within cultural communities and in keeping these cultural communities closer together.

And, through this research we wanted to establish the role that a word of mouth had played in affirming knowledge and wisdom which has survived for centuries. Hence the title "Each time a Xhosa Living Human Treasure dies, a whole library dies with him" In this scenario the word *Xhosa* is metaphorical in the sense that it's a symbolic representation of any elder whose knowledge of cultural traditions is not recorded and when he/she dies the whole society suffers. It`s like a community library has been set alight in the middle of the night.

Conclusions

Against this background this paper wants to affirm a significant and pivotal role that Living Human Treasures, including chiefs or their representatives could play in the preservation of cultural traditions in the rural communities. It also wants to affirm that these local gatekeepers are the important people to deal with before dealing with their subjects on issues which are closer to their hearts (cultural traditions). And because they are put in the position of power and authority by their own people to protect people, their cultural traditions, knowledge and rare wisdom they need to be considered as important stakeholders in the debates about Living Heritage. One of the factors that emerged clearly as a result of our field trips was that genuine aspects of Living Heritage can only be found in the rural communities of this country and of which most of those areas are under the jurisdiction and influence of the Traditional Leaders and their local authorities.

This paper also shows that these Traditional Leaders and Living Human Treasures or Icons of our South African cultural heritage must play an informative and integral role in the formulation of strategies and development of policies that seek to protect Living Heritage of South Africa. Their knowledge and the knowledge of the academics and technical knowledge of the bureaucrats need to be combined in the interests of developing comprehensive, inclusive and representative policies on aspects of Living Heritage.

THE CENTRE FOR POPULAR MEMORY: INTEGRATING ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH, TRAINING, DISSEMINATION AND ARCHIVING.

By Sean Field

The Centre for Popular Memory (CPM) is an innovative campus and public service organisation located at the University of Cape Town. Within the African context the CPM is uniquely skilled and placed to offer the following specialised services to off-campus audiences in and beyond South Africa:

- *Training:* The CPM trains students in oral and visual history methods of research, dissemination and archiving. We provide under and post-graduate courses in oral history methodology, memory, identity and trauma, and off-campus workshops for museums, archives, schools and NGOs in oral history and archival skills.

- *Research:* The CPM conducts research through audio and audio-visual recordings of people telling stories about their memories. We prioritise research on: apartheid forced removals; trans-national African migration from Nigeria, DRC and Rwanda; refugee life stories; heritage sites and memorialisation in South Africa and Rwanda.

- *Dissemination:* The CPM contributes to strengthening the public voices of marginalized people by popularising their stories through multi-media. We produce academic and popular history publications, portable audio-visual exhibitions, radio programmes, films and website galleries.

- *Archiving:* The CPM conserves recordings of people's stories for current and future generations through conventional and digital archiving methods. We have an accessible research and public audio-visual archive of over 1600 hours of audio and 200 hours of video interviews (fully transcribed). (Visit us at: www.popularmemory.org) A searchable, digital database of our collections will go on-line in November 2004.

Social Responsibilities

The aims and activities of the CPM (outlined above) are responses to particular social needs that we have identified as follows:

- *Silences:* The memories of the vast majority of South Africans, especially women, are unrecorded because of widespread silences, oversights and forgetting that were created through pre-apartheid and apartheid systems. This has been exacerbated by a lack of attention to local knowledge systems and the over-reliance on written sources by academia. Rigorous and sensitive research methodologies such as oral and visual history are well suited to responding to these research lacunae.

- *Social Development:* The multilingual recording and dissemination of popular memories can contribute to human development by ensuring that

marginalised peoples' stories are heard, and recognized as valuable to communities, NGOs, heritage and government sectors. Furthermore, heritage institutions in South Africa and other African countries need specialised training in oral history and audio-visual heritage practises.

- *Human Rights, Reconciliation and Cultural Diversity:* There is a need to deepen democracy and reconciliation across the 'racialised' cultural differences in South Africa. The public presentation of diverse and multilingual voices will strengthen human rights not merely as rhetoric but as lived principles. Furthermore, the methodologies of oral history and 'peace and conflict prevention' share aims of inculcating the skills of listening and empathy across identities through development projects.

- *Organizational Transformation:* Many black communities and donor institutions perceive UCT as bearing the imprint of its white colonial past. There is a need for UCT to move beyond the rhetoric of 'extension services' and to build sustainable training and development partnerships with off-campus institutions.

Past and Present Activities

Established in 1985, the Western Cape Oral History Project was initiated by Professors Colin Bundy and Bill Nasson to record the memories of former District Six residents. This project was transformed and expanded into the CPM in 2001. This is a brief selection of recent project outcomes:

- 2001: Book: S. Field (ed.) Lost Communities, Living Memories: Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town (David Philip).

- 2001: V. Bickford-Smith, S. Field and C. Glaser (eds.) Special edition: 'Oral history in the Western Cape', African Studies, Vol. 60, No. 1.

- 2001. Oral history project on forced removals to Atlantis, in partnership with Radio Atlantis. Training of four interns from Atlantis, produced two, 30-minute radio programmes broadcast by Radio Atlantis.

- the history of alcohol in Langa Township. Training of two heritage diploma students and production of portable exhibition of oral history and visual texts. Exhibited at Gugu se' thebe Community Hall, Langa; Robben Island Museum; Paarl Museum; Kleinplaasie Museum, Worcester.

- 2003. A trauma and memory project on the political struggles of the 1980s, entitled 'Imini zakudala: Guguletu Elders Remember'. Training of two female interns from Guguletu and production of a portable exhibition and two programs for broadcast on community radio stations. Exhibited at CPOA Community Hall and Fezeka High School in Guguletu.

- 2004. Above exhibit was displayed at the Learning Cape Expo, Khayelitsha and the 10 Years of SA Democracy Exhibition in Copenhagen.

- 2004: Over the past 18 months two students interns from Nigeria and the DRC have conducted interviews with migrants and refugees in Cape Town. These interviews and photograph collections are being utilized to produce publishable articles and will be presented publicly through an portable audio-visual exhibition in November.

- 2005: Forthcoming book [David Philip Publishers] Imagining the City: Memory, Space and Culture in Cape Town. This book combines the oral history work of student interns and experienced researchers in a creative manner that moves beyond conventional popular or public history approaches.

SO FAR WE HAVE TRAVELLED: The Growth Of Folklore Research And Studies In South Africa

By Sekgothe Mokgoatšana, Tel/Fax 015 268 3243, 082 200 5313
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The study of folklore in South Africa is an interesting subject. It has evolved as a slippage from Anthropology, for the latter was concerned with an ethnocentric study that valorised difference, and reduced every society into minimal groupings with distinct characterisations that would qualify them as "nations" separate from all others. Folklore, became the controversial problem of definition, is it the study of "survivals", "relics", "primitive antiquities", "recollections" or what? Besides this, there has been movement to ignore the oral dimension of folklore because it is laden with idiosyncrasies which are culture-bound and socially constructed, which need a researcher well-versed and immersed with them to unravel. Anthropology took refuge in material culture as an object of study and thus ignored orality.

This study direction as well became oblivious of the fact that material culture is a product of oral tradition, and it is orally shaped. The study of folklore was then left to language departments, especially African languages that focussed on what they considered oral literature. Literary cannons set for literature became new tools to domesticate folklore. English departments focussed on orature as they called it, and historian and Library Scientists worked on Oral Tradition. This is the travel experience of Folklore Studies in South Africa. University of Natal established the Oral Documentation Centre, now University of the North has a full-fledged qualification in Folklore Studies.

Southern African Folklore Society, SAFOS, of which I am the current Chair, takes credit for some of these developments, which we shall engage extensively during the Conference.

THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE INDIGENOUS MUSIC OF THE PEOPLE OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MUSIC OF VATSONGA, VHAVENDA, AMANDEBELE AND BASOTHO BA LEBOA.

A Research Project funded by the National Department of Arts and Culture and Conducted by the University of Venda for Science and Technology.

By Ndwamato George Mugovhani

Introduction

With the institutionalization of racism and apartheid before the advent of the democratic South Africa of 1994, the dominant arts were those of the politically and economically dominant white race. The music of the indigenous black groups was seen as primitive, ungodly and devoid of artistic excellence. It was therefore not championed in public discourse (politically and academically). It was not perceived as a national asset and therefore could not be promoted through either education or formal training.

The time has come for African universities to carry the flag for African civilization. This challenge includes leading the processes of cultural emancipation within our communities. It is to this end that the Music Department of the University of Venda for Science and Technology was mandated to play a leading role in redressing the past imbalances in the arts and culture of the historically marginalised people of Limpopo through affirmation, promotion and development of their intangible cultural heritage. This heritage includes oral history, culture (rituals,etc) indigenous music skills and techniques and performances.

The University of Venda for Science and Technology remains the only institution of higher learning in the entire Limpopo province with a Music Department. It is therefore the main centre for research about the indigenous music of the people of Limpopo. The National Department of Arts and Culture recognized our strategic position and significance and also our activities down the years in our endeavor to promote the music of our people, which has remained our focal point of research. Indeed, of course, it was also due to the Department's recognition of our particular expertise and interest in Ethnomusicology, Oral History, African Languages and African History. The University of Venda for Science and Technology is culturally the most privileged of the sites for the project because it serves four previously marginalised language groups of the province (Xitsonga, Tshivenda, isiNdebele and Sesotho sa Leboa) a fertile ground for research taking cognizance of the fact that each language group in itself has a plethora of indigenous ensemble groups with a variety of musical practices.

It is incumbent upon this research project to trace the history, culture, customs and traditions of the people, so that we could best understand their music. Blacking contends that musical styles and attitudes are anything but cultural acquisitions, and that if we are analyzing the music of a particular culture or society, we have to study the meaning of that music to their culture (Blacking, 1964: 9). It is therefore crucial for this research project to trace the place of the music of the people of Limpopo within the context of their historical and cultural foundations.

It was mainly in recognition of this factor, and to this end, that a research team had to be established. A number of academics from our School of Human and Social Sciences of our University have already come on board from the different departments to be part of this team, and are participating in this valuable research about our intangible cultural heritage – the history, culture, language and the music of our people. It was also incumbent for this research team to be multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary in its personnel composition, hence we have oral historians, representatives from the departments of African Languages, musicians and anthropologists.

Whilst the main research team comprises academics and scholars of the University of Venda for Science and Technology, we have also recognized the indispensable or rather imperative inclusion and contribution of our real experts – the musicians themselves, as part of this research team. Undoubtedly, they will always play a major role in a project of this nature.

The University of Venda for Science and Technology's Indigenous Music Research Project Team has planned to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To play a leading role in collecting, documenting, presenting and promoting all areas of indigenous music and instruments that are endemic (prevalent) in the communities around the Limpopo Province.
2. To compile a research document about the music and instruments with the ultimate aim of producing a publication (book) for both the national and the international audience.
3. To work towards producing a documentary on the history, culture and music of the people of Limpopo Province.
4. To facilitate in the education and training on indigenous musical performances and learning.
5. To preserve this intangible cultural heritage.
6. To empower students and the broader community in indigenous music knowledge and practice.
7. To create accessibility to this heritage for the broader communities, and
8. To encourage dialogue; in order to generate continuous research.

Published works such as library books and articles from journals, and unpublished ones such as research papers and dissertations; about the history of the people and their music will lay some foundation for further research.

Periodic field trips are being undertaken by the research team, research assistants and the students; this in order to gain access to first hand information about the origin of those intangible indigenous music instruments, groups, individual performers and to record the history of this heritage within the musical context. Areas such as Senwabarwana (formerly Bochum), Lulekani in Phalaborwa, Mahatlane in Mopani, Makonde in Vhembe, and other around our immediate communities, have already been covered.

In an attempt to stimulate the broader community's interest in the project, the strategy entails involving them as co-researchers, regular commentators and practical music instructors.

Data is being sought through consultation with the broader surrounding communities, particularly with people who have valuable knowledge on Indigenous Music Knowledge Systems. University students are also involved in this process.

Documentation of these peoples' cultural music performances will always be part of this data collection venture.

PROGRAMME OF ACTION AND TIME FRAMES:

This project is for the entire populace of the Limpopo Province. It will strive to encompass all the indigenous music of all the language groups that it will be able to recognize. The main traditional musical ensembles that we have so far come into contact with are; Tshikona, Dinaka, Kiba,Mutshongolo, Mbila/Dipela, Malende, Xincayincayi, Malombo, Mancomane, Mankhutheni, Tshigombela, Xibhelane, Makgakgase and Visa. We are still to cover some IsiNdebele music too.

Launch of the Project

The project was launched on Saturday October 11, 2003, and was presided over by the then Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, Buyelwa Sonjica and the Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders in Limpopo, Hosi M Ntsanwisi, who were the keynote speakers. The three local arts and culture centres, together with a number of recognised/established indigenous music practitioners, were consulted to identify the best music groups to perform during this launch. We did try our best to make the selected musicians and groups/ensembles were fully and truly representative of the demography of our province.

Transport and catering cost for the performing groups was borne by the project funds, and the day was concluded with presentations of awards and/or honoraria to the participants.

The launch served very well as an awareness campaign - awareness that our government is geared towards redressing the past imbalances in the arts, and that it is encouraging artists to practice them vigorously and with enthusiasm, and urging us academics to promote this. It has generated a lot of interest amongst traditional master musicians around our communities. Subsequently, we have been inundated with visits and enquiries from these musicians, and already most of them are working with us as research assistants.

The Project has also received wide media coverage before, during and after the launch – particularly newspapers and radios.

The launch indeed surpassed our expected objectives. It has paid off more than we had bargained for, and now we are under pressure to deliver on the promises and encouraging speeches that were made during the occasion; hence this programme of action.

1. Establishment of Indigenous Music Library

- Early last year, a proposal was presented to the University Executive Management to help identify and establish a structure that could be utilized as a library, either within the Music Centre or in any underutilised building.
- I am happy to announce that an art gallery and cultural centre is presently under construction at the University of Venda for Science and Technology. This building, which will cost approximately R 6 m, shall be used both for the preservation of the cultural heritage of Limpopo people and for hosting their various cultural activities. This should be firmly established and functional by the end of May 2005.
- The Indigenous Music Project Research Team of Univen will perform most of its mandated activities within this building. Presently, all activities of this project are being carried out from our rather very tiny Music Department and the office of the project leader.
- The envisaged building will contain a gallery for the permanent collections, artists working studios, a hall for exhibitions, a seminar room, a library and a large dance area.
- This archive will be readily accessible to the community at large at all times.
- It will also serve as a resource centre for researchers.

2. Purchasing of Indigenous Music Instruments

- Collection of intangible indigenous music instruments will receive immediate priority.
- Ensemble instruments such as nanga and ngoma have already been purchased.
- This activity will be much more vigorously pursued as soon the library project is accomplished.

3. Marketing and Publicity

Radio: The three SABC Radio Stations in the province are being fully utilized i.e. Phalaphala FM, Munghana Lonene and Thobela FM. Univen Community Radio will be utilized maximally.

Television: On a long-term basis, it would be ideal to flight all activities about this project on television. We aim to produce a documentary in the long run.

Internet/Website: To keep the world abreast with our endeavors in the revivalof our intangible cultural heritage, we shall develop a website.

Newspapers/Magazines: We also aim to put Periodic Features about our activities with regards to our project in Newspapers/Magazines.

Journal: We also envisage establishing a journal in order to publish our research articles, papers, etc on indigenous cultural heritage, particularly music.

4. Promotion of Indigenous Music

a) Music – Festivals and Concerts

- Traditional African Music (song and dance) festival to be held annually. As wide a scope as possible to be covered in terms of the different population groups in the country and the different traditional styles, with more emphasis on Vatsonga, Vhavenda and Basotho ba Leboa.

b) Documentation of Performances and the collected intangible instruments.

5. Education and Training

- Employment of traditional Master Musicians as Resident Artists. This activity is already in place.
- Making inputs in the design of the Arts and Culture Curriculum for schools in the Province – Sesotho sa Leboa, Xitsonga and Tshivenda. Arts and Culture forms part of our school's curriculum.
- Organising workshops on indigenous instrument making and playing

Conclusion:

The Indigenous Music Research Project Team recognises the vastness of Limpopo Province in terms of its cultural heritage- diverse language groups with diverse and interesting histories, cultures and music. It is also significant to note that down the years, and for reasons unknown to some of us, our people have only recognized the existence of only three so-called black language groups (Basotho ba Leboa, Vhavenda and Vatsonga). It was only through this laudable initiative (The DAC Indigenous Music Project), that we were made to recognize another significant component of the Limpopo Province populace- Amandebele. Do Amandebele resident in Limpopo have their own history and culture, and do they have different musical practices from the others? This is what makes research interesting and exciting - continuously unearthing new, valuable information.

This research project, therefore, cannot afford to be selective. It compels an all-inclusive sampling approach; all historically or previously disadvantaged and marginalised population groups in Limpopo should be covered in this mammoth venture. Undoubtedly, for this project to achieve its intended specific outcomes and realize its long-term objectives, it has to be allowed to unfold unhindered and unrushed. The end- product has to be authentic and devoid of glaring omissions. The University of Venda for Science and Technology Indigenous Music Project Research Team has accepted the mammoth challenge. We feel privileged and are all excited and enthusiastic at the challenge of spearheading this milestone project which will undoubtedly assist to restore our pride.

THE ROELAND STREET PRISON DURING THE APARTHEID YEARS

By Jolanda Hogg

Background

The Roeland Street Prison was built during the latter half of the 19th century was closed in 1977 and demolished in the eighties and while public records exist on the official administration of the prison, there is virtually no recorded evidence on life in the prison. In line with the National Oral History Programme initiated by the former Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, the Cape Town Archives Repository (CAR) proposed to undertake an oral history project aimed to document everyday life experienced by the wardens and prisoners of the Roeland Street Prison in an effort to contribute to a fresh perspective on the social history of South Africa, especially during the Apartheid era.

The first steps taken to launch an oral history project were made by the head of the CAR by undertaking discussions with interested staff members and drawing up a business plan.   This plan was presented to the National Archivist in November 2000.

Professor HC Bredekamp, formerly of the University of the Western Cape was subsequently appointed to facilitate the training of CAR staff members. From the outset of the project it was clearly stated that the CAR would take ownership of the project and that Prof. Bredekamp would act in an advisory capacity.

A comprehensive set of photographs of the interior of the prison were taken by Mr Malcolm Cobern, the official photographer of the CAR which acquired the grounds on which the prison once stood. Most of these photographs, taken in June 1977, are included in the Photograph Collection of the repository.

A brief background to the prison is as follows: consequent to the passing of Ordinance no 24 of 1847 ("For improving the Goals of the Colony"), building on the Roeland Street Prison (also known as Cape Town Prison, Cape Town goal and the New Prison) commenced on 24 September 1855. Due to financial constraints the prison was completed on 14 November 1859 and 1 December prisoners were moved into the compound under supervision of the first goaler, W Stewart.

The erection of the prison had cost the Cape Colonial government £18 167 and had taken over 4 years to complete. It was the largest prison erected under the scheme to improve the colony's goals and became a landmark at the entrance to Cape Town.

During the 1970s the prison housed a staff of 80 and 850 prisoners (650 male, 200 female). At times it had an intake of more than 1000 prisoners. According to a report of 1948 the authorized capacity was 866, but 1124 were recorded on a certain date.

On 30 April 1977 the last 214 prisoners, including White and Black awaiting trail, women and some illegal Chinese immigrants, were transferred to Pollsmoor Prison and the Roeland Street Prison was then handed over to the Department of Public Works. The reason why the prison was shut down was attributed to the fact that it could not be modernized economically to comply with the requirements of the Department of Prisons.

The Secretary of Public Works announced in 1975 that the prison would be demolished and that an archives repository would be built on the premises. On 30 November 1989 the State Archives Service (now the National Archives and Records Service) took possession of the new building especially designed to house the Cape Town Archives Repository.

Against this background and equipped with the training given by Prof Bredekamp, eight employees embarked on the daunting task of making contact with former prisoners, wardens and prison associates.

Given the fact that a period of 26 years had passed since the prison was demolished made contact with perspective interviewees that much more complicated.

Coverage of the project appeared in local newspapers and notices were placed in public places such as libraries and museums, but the best results were obtained through personal contact, such as to commence with, the gardener of the head of the repository who had been incarcerated in the prison during the 1960s for theft; visitors to the repository who having viewed an exhibition in the foyer on the Roeland Street Prison made themselves known to personnel as having had an association with the prison; personal exertions of a project team member, who were having a close relative employed by the Department of Correctional Services, obtained through this source contact details of a number of wardens who had seen service in the Roeland Street Prison; permission sought from the head of the repository by a film company to shoot scenes of Mrs Blanche La Guma against the backdrop of the historic wall which formed part of the prison and which remains preserved and which opportunity was taken to interview Mrs La Guma and generally speaking, word of mouth proved to be the best means for this project of obtaining interviewees.

Interview Analysis

Four different questionnaires were compiled for wardens, prisoners, family members of wardens and of prisoners. A total of 20 interviews were held. A study of the transcribed interviews brings various aspects of Apartheid to the fore which I highlight in this presentation.

How were prisoners treated? A wife of a political prisoner commented:

"Here you have turned this prison, which was a terrible prison, it was a feared prison, Roeland Street. Where are you going? Where are you? In Roeland Street, it was feared, Roeland Street, the way they treated people here."

Specific treatment apportioned to prisoners is discernible from both the remarks of prisoners serving political and criminal sentences, respectively:

"They [wardens] hit you with the keys and for nothing. You run out the door, the lot of you, there is one coming with the keys and he hit you on the head with the keys, a whole bunch of keys".

"Prisoners were hit unnecessarily. They were hit out of their cells to the gate with batons".

When asked to remark on the relationship between the wardens and prisoners, one warden responded as follows:

"Look it varies. The relationship varies a lot where certain wardens whites and coloureds some of them do get along with the prisoners, others always sort of bullying type, you know. Want to show their authority and this is where things differ a bit but I always had a good relationship with the prisoners".

Remarking on the differences between the treatment of whites and blacks, the following quoted from the interviews of a female prisoner convicted for shoplifting and a political detainee:

"The whites had it good, they get milk and overalls and they can wear make-up. Their hair gets done. We [the blacks] did not have these privileges".

"The whites were happy, man. Playing radios and everything inside. They were kept. I wouldn't say they were prisoners".

Treatment of black wardens as opposed to white wardens reflected in an interview:

"The coloureds they were not allowed to be in charge of a section. Sections were run by the whites only and a policy where firearms were concerned coloureds didn't have firearms only until at a later stage, when they only received revolvers and as far as uniform was concerned we used to use the, wear clothes – like on the picture here in comparison to the whites with their collar and tie and that also we only received about in 62, new uniforms and firearms. Otherwise we used to use the assegaai – which we were never trained to use and we used to take the prisoners to various courts with an assegaai".

How the Apartheid policy and the imprisonment of those who resisted the policy and were imprisoned affected family life is detailed in the response of the wife of a detainee:

"Very badly so. We were interrupted all the time. I had learnt that my whole life, and in hindsight, was a system of adjustment and re-adjustment all the time. You had to adjust for when he was home and then suddenly there is an arrest and then you have to readjust to being without him. To organize, coming to visit him on the visiting days and at the right times, to also do work, because I was a midwife and I had to do my work which meant that I had to get help to do my work while I was able to visit him. It was vitally important that we visited the men, well, in my case, it was men. Also the children were constantly without their father and, to make it clear, come and visit, to tell him how the children are. As I say the visits were so terrible, you could hardly talk over the thing there but I could say that I saw Daddy and he is fine and so on and he says you must be good boys and that kind of thing you see. The last arrest was the terrible one in 1965/66, he was arrested under solitary confinement and that was held in 180 days solitary confinement and then he had been arrested quite a lot of times and this affected my eldest son, but as he stood at the gate and Daddy drove off, Alex drove off and waved to him, he just collapsed like a bag of salt and I grabbed him up and I said to him " No, you don't collapse now, you must go and do well at school today". "It was cruel really, but I had to harden them, you understand, for this whole thing that was happening all the time. Life was disrupted all the time. All the time. Our life was disrupted. Largely it was not a criminal offence, it was always a political offence, so who were we up against, not the civil police, but the security police. They were vicious, vicious is putting it mildly, to be honest with you".

Difficulties associated with the project

As already mentioned earlier in my presentation, a period of 26 years had transpired since the Roeland Street Prison had been demolished and as such interviewees who were identified were already of an advanced age and as such, in instances, but not in all instances, could not recall their experiences clearly or coherently.

While prisoners both political and criminal as well as their relations who were interviewed, spoke openly and freely of their experiences, interviewers were acutely aware that wardens, black and white who were prepared to be interviewed, were cautious in their responses, a possible reason being the fear of retribution. A number of retired wardens were not prepared to be interviewed.

While not regarded as an insurmountable difficulty, interviewees were encouraged to speak in their mother tongue and as such interviews are recorded in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. For ease of consultation, interviews conducted in the latter two languages may require translation into English.

The nature of the project in itself was demanding on the project team who had no prior experience of recording oral histories. They were at once exposed to the viewpoints of male prisoners and wardens as opposed to female prisoners and wardens; political prisoners as opposed to criminal prisoners and prisoners as opposed to wardens which required much adaptation on the part of the interviewers.

Two well-known South Africans, a Constitutional Court Judge Albie Sachs and the Archbishop of Cape Town, NWH Ndungane are known to have been incarcerated in the Roeland Street Prison, but all attempts to approach them through various channels for the purpose of being interviewed, have failed which the project team regrets because given the standing in society of these two great South Africans, they have much to contribute to the oral history project undertaken by the repository.

Viewed globally, the objectives contemplated at the commencement of the project were achieved by a team of interviewers who previously had no relevant experience and who ultimately were enriched through their involvement in the oral history project which was made possible through funding by the former Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology.

TRAUMA, RESILIENCE AND RECONCILIATION: SINOMLANDO'S PSYCHO-SOCIAL INTERVENTIONS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

By Radikobo Ntsimane and Abraham Lieta, University of KwaZulu-Natal

INTRODUCTION

Looking back at the decade of democracy one appreciates the important work done on the rebuilding of the nation that had been living with gaping wounds, bleeding souls, hatred, racial discrimination, greed, racial intolerance and broken relationships.   As the country is healing from these maladies, one cannot avoid looking to the era before the new political dispensation. As a result of those maladies, one detects especially in KwaZulu-Natal the gaps of trauma that calls among other things, for psycho-social interventions. It is of paramount importance to deal with the past traumatic experiences to foster resilience and reconciliation.

Those of you who are familiar with the history of KwaZulu-Natal will attest to the fact that not only fierce political battles, but also the protracted faction fights have been fought on this province. Sad to admit, the casualties are women and children who come out with the experience of trauma and irreversible loss.   The other menace of our time whose prevalence is said to exceed that of Black Death in Europe

(1348-1350) and worldwide Spanish Flu (1918-1919)[1], HIV/AIDS leavesthousands of orphans in its path of destruction. Statistics have shown that KwaZulu-Natal ranks among the top provinces where HIV/AIDS has reached alarming proportions. In 2003 out of the 1 579 people surveyed, 11.7% were HIV+. KwaZulu-Natal ranked the highest HIV prevalence among the antenatal attendees. The rate was 37.5%, which shows an increase of 4% since 2001[2]. Imagine the number of orphans!

Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa within the University of KwaZulu-Natal, uses Oral History methodology in its psycho-social interventions to address the situation.   Since this is but a brief paper reporting on the activities of Sinomlando, I shall paint the theoretical framework we use in our various research projects and have my colleague and co-presenter Abraham Lieta, to report on the activities and the statistics of our interventions.

SECTION ONE

This section intents to show the extent to which broken relationships have caused damage and how oral history can be employed to address the damage. We shall show this by looking at trauma, resilience and reconciliation, all of which are in fact psycho-social terms. Though we have psychologists in the research centre, the two of us are far from being experts in the field. As the Centre for Oral History and Memory Work, Sinomlando sees itself drawn to ordinary peoples' life stories. In KwaZulu-Natal these stories are saturated with traumatic memories detected only where interviewees are given space and time to narrate. The question of resilience is asked when seeing that some people (including children) have managed to cope and go on with life after their experiences and others with similar experiences have not been able to move on. Why are some resilient and others not, and how can those who lack resilience be helped to move on? The truth and Reconciliation Commission, as its name suggests, acknowledges the fact that reconciliation can be achieved where the truth is told. LaCapra's explanation illuminates better,

The TRC provided a forum for the voices-often the suppressed, repressed, or uneasily accommodated voices-of certain victims who were being heard for the first time in the public sphere. Indeed, as a force in the public sphere the TRC itself was attempting to combine truth seeking in an open forum with a collective ritual, requiring the acknowledgement of blameworthy and at times criminal activity, in the interest of working through a past that has severely divided groups and caused damages to victims (including damages inflicted by victims on other victims). This complicated past was now to be disclosed truthfully in order for a process of working it through to be historically informed and to have some chance of being effective ritually and politically in creating both a livable society and a national collectivity[3].

Likewise, Sinomlando creates a platform where those who have wronged and those who have been wronged can tell their stories, however contradictory, in order to be reconciled.

We are under no illusion though, that ours is an easy responsibility. The creation of the platform is not the end, in fact it is the beginning, since such platform needs to be recognized as such and be used[4]. The difficulty or the magnitude of the challenges do not exonerate us as oral history practitioners from striving for reconciliation and nation building.

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1.   Jacob P Brits, Concise Dictionary of Historical and Political Terms, 1995.

2.   Safricastats in Avert. Org.

3.   Dominick LaCapra, Writing History, Writing Trauma, 2001, p. 43-44.

1.1   TRAUMA

The horrific experiences people of KwaZulu-Natal have undergone during the political wars which intensified in the late 1980s have undoubtedly left many traumatized. Unarmed people were attacked at night and in daylight and homesteads burnt down. The Seven Days War and the Five Days War both of Pietermaritzburg, the protracted war in Hammarsdale now called Mpumalanga, the Trust Feed Massacre near Wartburg, the Shobashobane Massacre are but a few examples of political and faction fighting whose intensity had psychological impact on survivor' memories.

Sinomlando in partnership with Program for Survivors of Violence, conveniently called Sinani (isiZulu for we are standing by you), started a research project called Family Violence in 2003 in KwaNxamalala near Pietermaritzburg. While Sinani was providing material assistance to the survivors of the less-written about Five Days War, Sinomlando came in to provide research on the negative impact the war had on relationships.   The research title is: The use of religion for reconciliation.

Though this project has not been brought to closure yet (two of the three villages involved have been completed), we can share some findings. The two villages Bhobhonono and Mthoqotho, though separated by a hill, had an amicable and a harmonious relationship where intermarriage was practiced until one village, much against previous undertaking, chose to belong to a political party.   When Mthoqotho refused the invitation to join the same party they were targeted for elimination on sight[5].

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4.   Radikobo Ntsimane, "The Mirage Called Forgiveness: A Critique of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission" in P Denis' Orality, Memory and the Past. 2000.

5.   An interview conducted in KwaNxamalala in 2004. (Names are ficticious).

Allow us to share one story in our research:

One morning while Mrs Mzobe was preparing for the thanksgiving ritual for her husband's escape of death the previous day, she saw something she can never forget. She looked through the window when she heard Mzobe calling out to his brothers to go to work. It was a usual thing since they all went to work on the same bus, except that on this fateful morning a car drove towards Mzobe and she heard gunshots. As the car drove off, she saw her husband lying down. She called her son to wake up and help his father. Mzobe was that day not as lucky as he was the previous day, escaping by running into a yard of an unknown person in town.

Unfortunately, traumatic experiences are not confined to adults. Through the HIV/AIDS pandemic thousands of orphans are traumatized by the loss of their parents. Their world which depends wholly on the proximity support of their parents, collapses as soon as they lose them. What exacerbates the trauma and the confusion is the fact that children are not told what happened to their parents and where they are told, they are told that their parents will come back[6]. The children who watch television have a better understanding of the reality of death and loss. At Sinomlando we are convinced that bereaved children can cope better when they know why they are orphans. Their thoughts need to be validated. Through the Memory Box Project Sinomlando memory facilitators create space for the family stories to be told in the presence of the children by grandparents, caregivers or where one is still alive, by the parent. Philippe Denis et al attest to this,

"The work of the memory boxes helps family members to express their experiences of their loved one's death and thus remember them. By their presence, the memory facilitators validate the experience of the children who hear, sometimes for the first time, the history of their family. Their support provided an opportunity for this moment to become (positive)[7] memory, however taxing it may be.[8]"

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6.   Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntsimane and Veronica Wilson. Memory Work in KwaZulu-Natal. 2004 (Forthcoming as HIVAN Occasional Paper).

7.   Brackets are authors' emphasis.

8.   Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntsimane and Veronica Wilson. Memory Work in KwaZulu-Natal. (Forthcoming HIVAN Occasional Paper, 2004).

As alluded to above, some children manage to live lives with minimum psych-social disturbances after suffering severe loss. Sinomlando's intervention is informed by those who either become aggressive or withdrawn as a result of loss of loved ones. We are not naïve to assume that psycho-social interventions have been unknown until the establishment of Sinomlando. Some cultures, and in KwaZulu-Natal Zulus, have practiced rituals like ukubika and ukuhlebela to help develop and enhance children's resilience to cope with loss through death. How do we develop or enhance the resilience of those whose families have abandoned the rituals? Sinomlando and partner organizations employ the Memory Box methodology for psycho-social support.

With regard to the traumatized adults, we listen to their stories. They realize with the ear that we provide by means of listening, recording and writing up their stories, that they are important. We have had people putting on their Sunday-bests, cleaning their houses and even informing their neighbours about the interview that is going to take place. When everyone else has believed that she is not telling the truth about the shabby treatment she endures from her husband, a woman is happy that an interview validates her story. The uManyano Prayer Women who pleaded through IDAMWASA for their stories to be heard, (after the stories of the clergy were recorded[9]), reported that while the clergy claim oppression from the Apartheid and Church structures, they have suffered immensely under the same clergy who are husbands and leaders. Talking about past difficulties and recognizing present stressors and naming them, helps one to better understand them and be resilient. Sinomlando has conducted research in Sobantu in 2002 and since last year (2003) in Greater Durban area on women religious leadership and traditional leadership respectively.

With regard to children the situation looks hopeless. A publication of the University of Cape Town's Children's Institute reports in relation to the children and HIV/AIDS that, of particular significance to children is the fact that four times more women are infected than men. An estimated 3.2 million women of childbearing age (15-49) years) were living with HIV/AIDS in July 2002. The number of children who have been orphaned is rapidly increasing, as is the proportion of parental deaths that are AIDS-related, with over 150 000 children losing a mother to HIV/AIDS in 2002 alone[10].

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9.   Philippe Denis, Black Clergy Under Apartheid, 1995.

10.   Rapid Assessment: The Situation of Children in South Africa. November 2003.
        p. 37.

While these are but numbers, the reality is what measures are in place to deal with the situation. The number of orphaned children increases by the day. We cannot fold hands and point fingers. Realities like the one presented below by the Children's Institute has moved Sinomlando to use the Memory Box project to intervene:
Children living in HIV/AIDS-affected households typically face increased social, emotional and physical risks, including the risk of contracting opportunistic infections. Poverty in many HIV/AIDS-affected households is exacerbated by reduced income earning capacity and increasing expenditure[11].

The situation above is a reality in KwaZulu where Sinomlando has began to work this year.   Orphans who are looked after by their grandparents are so poor one would think they do not live in South Africa. Sinomlando along with partner organizations visit the families who tell the story and put its transcribed form in a physical box. The idea is for the children to keep the positive memories alive. If the grandparents or the caregivers die before the life story is told and recorded, we at Sinomlando believe the child will go into life without a positive identity and with negative memories. Through play therapy techniques, life stories and family trees, and memory boxes we help in the development of resilience in orphaned and vulnerable children. Our basic assumptions[12] in developing and enhancing resilience are:
Intergenerational dialogue around sickness and death (by allowing family to talk meaningfully)
Validating the children's perceptions and feelings (by naming the cause of suffering[13])
Life story works as a way of giving meaning to the children's disrupted lives (They gain control over their lives if they know)
Simply put, resilience is the ability of a person to live a normal life after experiencing traumatic conditions. Trauma can cause depression and a life filled with moments of fear and confusion. Where we can intervene, we hope our psycho-social support will minimize the number of dysfunctional members of society. In fact we are turning the tide.

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11.   Ibid.

12.   Denis P Makiwane N and Mafu S, Death and Memory in Times of AIDS: Memory Boxes as a way of enhancing resilience in children affected by AIDS. (power pint presentation used in Awareness Workshops).

13.   Ntsimane R and Denis P. Unpublished paper read in the University of the Free State's IKS Colloquium 2004.

1.2   RECONCILIATION

Despite criticisms[14] leveled against the TRC as a process and its achievements, we are convinced that both perpetrators of human rights violations and their victims will agree of its significance at least as a beginning of a path to the reconciled nation. The nation cannot move forward until the past has been adequately addressed. One way of addressing the past is to create for talking. Oral history is recognized as the tool to precisely create that space for talking. In KwaZulu Natal where as I mentioned earlier, blood has been shed and not accounted for, a platform to talk is necessary.

Sinani and we envisage as a closure to the research in the Pietermaritzburg area, a reconciliation ceremony where amakhosi, izinduna and their communities will come together to talk and have an opportunity to understand what happened and why it happened. Still at the conceptual stage, we are thinking of a beast or two and a physical symbol that people will look at and commit themselves never to allow so much blood to ever be spilt again. Of course the final decision remains with the communities and their leaders. This is a minor initiative to create space for reconciliation. We are also planning a symposium for 2006 where academic papers and debate with the theme of violence and reconciliation can be entertained.

We have deliberately avoided in this paper, the value of Oral History in schools and universities.   That part is slowly being acknowledged as evidenced by the number of universities represented here. We shall see later how schools are benefiting from Sinomlando's work of promoting Oral History in KZN schools in partnership with the KwaZulu-Natal Archives.   In South Africa at the moment, besides academic work, we are faced with unavoidable responsibility as oral history practitioners to work for nation building. We can invest our time and efforts by allowing voices from below to find expression in as high places as possible. More than others we know the power of voice! True to its mission the Primier University for African Scholarship (UKZN), cannot afford to do academic work that does not benefit the society. We respond to the need.   Phezu komkhono! (To echo one oral historian Bunie Sexwale: we are saying: this is a time to act – chona)

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14. Radikobo Ntsimane "A Mirage Called Forgiveness: A Critique of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission", in Philippe Denis' Orality, Memory and the Past. 2000.

ORAL HISTORY: AN AFRICAN ART?

By Philippe Denis

Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa
University of KwaZulu-Natal

1.   Introduction

Oral history as a technique for historical documentation was initiated in the West. In the United States, in England, in Germany, in Spain and in Australia, it has been recognised as an academic discipline for more that half a century. But oral history is no less relevant in developing countries, as was shown at the thirteenth conference of the International Oral History Society in June 2004 in Rome. Over the past ten years state institutions, universities, local communities and churches have developed new ways of doing oral history in South Africa. In this paper I shall examine these practices and methodologies. To what extent do they differ from those in use in the rest of the world?

This paper is based on the experience of the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa, a research and development centre located within the School of Religion and Theology of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The Sinomlando Centre has conducted, and is still conducting, various oral history projects. It offers introductory oral history modules to university students, archivists, heritage officers, high school teachers and church personnel. Based on this teaching experience, the Sinomlando Centre is busy writing a manual and a code of ethics for oral history practitioners which will hopefully be ready for publication in 2005.

What I present here is work in progress. Research on the theory and practice of oral history in Africa is still at its infancy stage. A previous stage of my reflection is to be found in a 2003 paper entitled "Oral history in a wounded country".[1] In the volume in which this paper has been published the African historian and anthropologist Terence Ranger discusses some of the points raised in it. I shall use this opportunity to respond to Terence Ranger.

2.   Antecedents of oral history in Africa

The past of pre-colonial societies is mostly known through oral traditions. Unlike oral history testimonies, oral traditions are generated in situ for cultural, social or political purposes. They do not claim to have an academic purpose. Ye they anticipate, in many ways, today's oral history interviews.

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1.   Philippe Denis, "Oral history in a wounded country", in Jonathan Draper, ed., Orality, Literacy and Colonialism in Southern Africa. (semeia Studies, 46). Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003, pp. 205-216.

Oral traditions pass from mouth to mouth, for a period of time beyond the lifetime of the informants. The expression "oral tradition" applies both to a process and to a product. The products are oral messages based on previous oral messages, at least a generation old. The process is the transmission of such messages by word of mouth over time until the disappearance of the message.

Among traditions, Jan Vansina, the Belgian anthropologist, distinguishes different classes, according to the further evolution of the message:

A first class consists of memorized messages and within it one distinguishes messages in everyday language (formula, prayer) from messages subject to special language rules (poetry). Memorized traditions behave very differently over time from others. Among the latter, one distinguishes again between formal speech (epic) and everyday language (narrative). Narrative themselves belong to different classes according to the criterion of factuality. Some are believed to be true or false, others are fiction. Factual traditions or accounts are transmitted differently - with more regard to faithful reproduction of content - that are fictional narratives such as tales, proverbs, or sayings.[2]

Particularly relevant for our purpose is story-telling. Storytelling is a well-known African form of socialisation that bridges the perspectives of old and young. As literature scholar Isabel Hofmeyr pointed out, men and women do not tell stories in the same way nor to the same audience. Gender shapes story-telling practices:

[O]ne of the most enduring stereotypes in Southern African oral literary studies is that of woman-as-storyteller. Almost invariably a grandmother, preferably seated in the vicinity of a fire, this figure has dominated virtually all local research into oral narrative.[3]

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2.   Jan Vansina, Oral tradition as History, London: James Currey, 1985, p. 13.

3.   Isabel Hofmeyr, 'We Spend Our Years as a Tale That is Told.' Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chiefdom. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994.

3.   Oral history and culture

a)   The social meaning of the interview

All interviews, whether in the North or in the South, have a social and cultural dimension. Oral history practitioners need to be aware of the cultural dynamics at work in the interview situation. One does not conduct an oral history project in a middle-class suburb of England as one would do in rural Zululand.

In developed countries, interviews are a well defined and socially acceptable mode of communication. Job seekers know that an interview is a prerequisite to employment. Interviews regularly feature in television programmes and people are used to respond to polls and questionnaires. There is nothing unusual in being interviewed. In Africa, by contrast, interviews are a rare event. When submitted to a formal interview, indigenous people are disconcerted. This is why they tend to revert to traditional modes of communication.

b)   Seniority and respect

Oral history practitioners have to conform to the local norms of communication when planning and conducting interviews . These norms relate to turn-taking, the order of topics for discussion or various rituals attached to story telling.

 In some societies, individual interviews are considered dangerously intimate encounters. In others, the recounting of group history can be a sacred ritual and certain people must be consulted before others. Sometimes a number of clearly prescribed topics should be used to start proceedings, while other topics may be taboo, or should not be introduced until a particular level of intimacy and trust has been achieved.[4]

In an African context custom dictates how to address senior people. Seniority relates to age but also to gender, social rank and education. Strict conventions, usually described as "respect" (ukuhlonipha), regulate the relationships between the ordinary people and the senior people. Priests and teachers, for instance, are seen as senior people even if they are young. A woman owes respect to her husband but if she has raised her children, and even more if she is a widow, she can expect to be treated with respect by younger women, her daughters-in-law in particular. Oral history practitioners who do not take into account these subtle hierarchies will be perceived as rude and face rejection.[5]

In traditional African societies a long and complicated process regulates the access to senior people. One does not approach a chief or a headman without intermediaries. All transactions required middle men who prepare the ground for the meeting with the leaders.

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4.   Hugo Slim and Paul Thompson, Paul, Listening for a change. Oral testimony and development. London, Panos Publications, 1993, p. 62.

5.   Du Bruyn and Tshitso Challa, "The dos and don'ts of interviewing the African culture. An introductory guide". Oral History Workshop, Bloemfontein, 2004 (unpublished).

Junior people are not expected to address senior people directly. They have to use the indirect speech and the plural form. It is inappropriate to call a senior person, especially if he is a man, by his name. Paraphrases are deemed more suitable.

Likewise young people are not supposed to look at elderly people in the eyes. The same applies to women in their relationships to men. Anything which could be construed as pride should be avoided.

In a traditional African setting, topics such as sexuality, marriage or divorce are taboo. Interviewers can only refer to them indirectly. Both parties must pretend that they do not know what the conversation is about. If the interviewers speak, it will be after a long time. They must be sure that the people to whom they talk will not constitute a risk to themselves, to their families and to their communities.

The culture of respect is very strong in the rural areas. But it would be a mistake to think that it is no longer observed in the urban and peri-urban areas despite the impact of modernity on everyday life. Age and gender discriminations are resilient. The interviewers who ignore these social codes are condemned to failure. If they manage to secure an appointment the content of the interview will be poor. Respecting the culture of the interviewee is a prerequisite for a successful interview.

c)   The communal dimension of the interview

In Africa individual interviews make little sense. All interviews, even those who are conducted on a one-to-one basis, have a communal dimension. People do not stand alone. The other members of the community want to be involved. Either they insist on being present during the interview or they asked to be consulted before it takes place.

Women are particularly reluctant to speak on their own. They are brought up in the belief that they are not allowed to speak in public. Women avoid the first person and rarely mention personal accomplishments. They do not often place themselves at the centre of public events, they downplay their own activities and emphasise the role of other family members in their recollections. In pre-colonial Southern Africa, women's storytelling was a marginalised and patronised craft, relegated to the distinctively lesser sphere of a separate women's world. In many ways the "institutionalised silencing"[6] which characterised women's subordination in former times continues to affect female storytelling in contemporary South Africa.

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6.   Hofmeyr, op.cit., p. 25.

If she is married, a woman is expected to ask permission from her husband before accepting to be interviewed. If she is not married, as most women involved in the

Sinomlando Memory Box Programme, she does not feel free to talk until senior members of the family such as an aunt, an uncle or a brother have been informed about the interview and given the woman permission to take part in it. Many interviews had to be postponed several times for this reason. At first we did not understand why the person we approached – HIV positive mothers or grandmothers caring for AIDS orphans – were so reluctant to share their memories. Experience shows that a good knowledge of the family dynamics is essential for the success of the intervention.

Similar resistance is observed in church groups. Unless they are very educated, lay ministers, members of women's organisations and church volunteers are reluctant to speak about church matters without the pastor's explicit permission. Social control is usually stricter in African indigenous churches (AICs) than in "mainline" churches. A minister of a local AIC congregation would not agree to speak to a stranger without having first referred the matter to his bishop or superintendent.

d)   The assertiveness of African women

Is it true that in Africa individual interviews make little sense, as I argue in my paper? In his "commentary" Terence Ranger claims that, in Zimbabwe at least, women are "not reluctant to tell their stories":

I have worked with third-year history students from the University of Zimbabwe both in researching the black peasant experience of Makoni district in eastern Zimbabwe and more recently in exploring the urban experiences in the Bulawayo townships. The students found no difficulty in interviewing women on their own – whether the researcher was male or female – nor in recording their long personal narratives. These women were also quite ready to talk about their personal accomplishments.[7]

Our experience of interviewing women in KwaZulu-Natal is, in fact, similar. It is true that the women we have interviewed – manyano leaders, victims of political violence or caregivers of AIDS orphans – are sometimes very assertive. Once given permission to give their testimony, they talk. Sometimes they talk for a long time, with pride and passion. They always thank the interviewers for giving them the opportunity to tell their stories.

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7.   Terence Ranger, "Commentary", in Draper, ed., Orality, Literacy and Colonialism, p. 231.

But Ranger misses the point. Most black women, even those who exercise responsibilities in their community or in their church, do not speak spontaneously about themselves. They only confide their experience to people whom they trust. For an interview to be rich and substantial, particularly when it comes to gender issues, a relationship of trust needs to be established between the interviewer and the interviewee.

This is where the communal dimension of the interview plays a role. In some instances, a woman may be interviewed individually. But this does not mean that the community is absent. The intrusion of a researcher, particularly if he or she is smartly dressed and drives a car, is a social event. It will be commented, sometimes for days, by the neighbours and the relatives of the person who is interviewed. If, for some reason, the motives of interviewer raise suspicion in the community, all the doors will be closed. The interviewee will not be available. The interviewer will wonder why the person they want to interview is always busy, or sick, or looking for a job. In Africa an interview, even if it conducted on an individual basis, involves the whole community.

4. Oral history and trauma

a)   Is South Africa's destiny unique?

In my previous paper I made the point that in South Africa all individual stories are influenced by the "grand narrative" of colonialism and apartheid, even those that apparently have nothing to do with it. Racial and social domination was, and still is in many ways, so pervasive that nobody can escape it. This is probably why, I further said, the stories of the people we interview have an intensity, a quality of emotion, a sense of tragedy which is not always found elsewhere. South Africa is a "wounded country".

All stories are meaningful, whether they come from the North or from the South, from privileged sectors of society or from rejected classes. But in a divided country such as South Africa oral history projects have to pay particular attention to trauma and healing. These aspects are usually under-emphasised in oral history projects conceived and carried out in countries exempt from war and extreme poverty.

In the United States, for example, the impetus for doing oral history is said to be "curiosity and a desire to see one own's past preserved". I found this phrase in the (excellent) pamphlet on community history projects published by the American Oral History Association.[8]

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8.   Laurie Mercier and Madeline Buckendorf, Using Oral History in Community Projects. (Pamphlet series/Oral History Association # 4), 1992.

 "Community history projects", the pamphlet says, "significantly expand community members" understanding of their identity, their history and their connection with other communities. If an oral history component of a community history project is carefully planned and well researched, it can produce a more accurate picture of the complexity and diversity of a community's heritage and can potentially contribute to a broader understanding of American history and culture".

I wonder if this language could be used in an oral history manual for South Africa. In a wounded country, one does not collect stories merely to satisfy one's curiosity. In a further paragraph, the authors of the pamphlet note that community history projects contribute to "a broader

Understanding of American history and culture". In South Africa nobody would assume that there is a national culture to the broader understanding of which oral history projects would contribute. This culture may exist in some places but it is extremely fragile. In no way it can be taken for granted.

In his "commentary" Terence Ranger argues that "it is not helpful to the oral historian to lay so much emphasis on the abnormality of South Africa":

Whatever view one takes of the history of the United States or Britain, is it really possible to maintain that South Africa's history has been more traumatic than that of Nazi Germany or of Soviet Russia, to cite two examples where there has been recently been much discussion of memory and forgetting? [...] And even in Africa can one seriously maintain that South Africa's memories are more agonising that those of the Southern Sudan, or of the Congo, or of Rwanda? In Rwanda, indeed, the scale of calamity almost overwhelms memory and its capacity to heal.[9]

I note Ranger's critique. To a degree, I sympathise with it. I would hate to engage in the sordid task of classifying the atrocities committed in the past according to their degree of horror. Which one should come first? The millions of people whose lives were ruined because of the slave trade? The extermination of the Indian people during the conquest of America? The Holocaust? The genocide in Cambogia? The one in Rwanda? Then comes apartheid. Does apartheid need to qualify as a crime against humanity to be horrible? I do not want to enter into this debate. In my paper I made it clear that South Africa does not have the monopoly of trauma. The list of nations, ethnic groups and cultural minorities who suffer from oppression and marginalisation has no limit. As far as oral history is concerned, what matters is that colonialism and apartheid have left an indelible park on South Africa society. Whether we are black, white, Indian or Coloured, our lives bear the mark of apartheid. This is true even for people, like myself, who were not born on South African soil.

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9.   Ranger, "Commentary", p. 230.

Why coming back to apartheid? Should we not rather look ahead and face the challenges of the new South Africa? This is probably where I differ most from people like Ranger who are at pains to explain that South Africa is not, and probably never was, an "abnormal" country. All the evils of our times can be described, at least partly, as the legacy of apartheid. One can argue, for instance, than the higher prevalence of AIDS in Southern Africa is a consequence of the disruption of family life brought about by migrant labour and forced removals. Domestic violence and sexual abuse, one of the worst plagues of modern-day South Africa, are the expression of a crisis of masculinity which the entrenchment of racial domination has, if not produced, at least deepened and perpetuated. The long association of the police, the army and the judicial system with an unjust regime has provoked, in wide sectors of the population, an almost instinctive disregard for the law. Under apartheid, a semblance of order reigned in the country. Since its demise the level of crime has increased considerably. This is typical of countries emerging, like Russia, from decades of authoritarianism and dictatorship.

b)   Emotions and trauma

In a recent paper, Sean Field, who has spent many years studying violence-stricken communities in Cap Town, argues that "oral histories are always emotional histories".[10] In the context of violence, he further explains, the expressed and unexpressed feelings of interviewees (and interviewer) are persistently "present" in different, sometimes disruptive manifestations.

Our experience as oral history practitioners in KwaZulu-Natal is similar. When we conduct interviews the likelihood of an upsurge of emotions – anger, sadness, fear, guilt – is very high. Of course, we do not deal with trauma narratives all the time. Many interviews are uneventful from that point of view. But traumatic situations are less rare than one would think. We often have to deal with emotions, strong emotions sometimes. This happens in all societies which have undergone massive abuse of human rights. Oral history practitioners need to know how to deal with emotional situations. They have to be prepared. Here again, I agree with Sean Field when he says that "the interviewer needs to be acutely sensitive to the emotional, transferential and power dynamics of the interviewer/interviewee relationship".[11]

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10.   Sean Field, "Interviewing in a culture of violence. Moving memories from Windermere to the Cape Flats", in Kim Lacy Rogers and Selma Leydesdorff, Trauma: Life of Stories of Survivors (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2004), p. 61.

11.   Ibid.

Why is oral history so important at this particular stage of the history of South Africa? It is because the sharing of memories has the potential to affirm and consolidate identities, individual as well as collective, which have been repressed in the past. Any oral history project, however small, can be an instrument of nation-building. For this to happen oral history practitioners need proper training. An insensitive interviewer can do more harm than good. If somebody tells a painful story, the murder of a son during the times of political violence, for instance, or a situation of gender oppression, the attitude of the interviewer plays a crucial role in the outcome of the interview. Good interviewers encourage – by nodding their head or by asking follow-up questions – the interviewees to continue their story. They show that they listen and that the story that they hear, painful has it is, is important to them. By the simple fact of being present, they validate the experience of the narrator.

c) Narratives of pain and of redemption

Even when told by people who have suffered trauma, the stories do not necessarily convey an experience of pain and suffering. Kim Lacy Rogers, who has interviewed black civil rights activists in the American South, notes that if some stories fall into the category of trauma narratives, others can be described as "narratives of redemption".[12] They show how people suffering exploitation and trauma have successfully overcome these difficulties. Ranger makes a similar point. "The people of northern Matelebeland", he says, "have their own mechanisms of healing and did not need us to help them do to it. What we were used for, other than as listeners, was as reporters, expected to write their narratives into the national records as a way of proclaiming their due rights as citizens."[13]

Yet, it is not because people have shown resilience and are proud of their accomplishments that good listening skills are not needed. Many people, especially among the poor, do not know that their stories are worth recounting. The act of soliciting an interview is never insignificant. A good interview is one which makes a difference in the lives of both role-players: in that of the interviewers because it may the first time that they have the opportunity to tell their stories and in that of the interviewees who feel humbled and enriched after having listening to these stories.

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12. Kim Lacy Rogers, "Trauma Redeemed: the Narrative Construction of Social Violence", in Chase and Bell (eds), Interactive Oral History Interviewing, pp. 31-47.

13. Ranger, "Commentary", p. 233.

d)   What is an oral historian?

Oral history practitioners need listening skills. They are sometimes confronted to emotional situations which require self-control, sensitivity and openness of heart. Their response will be better if they have dealt with their own emotions. But what is an oral historian? Do I mean that to do a good job, an oral history practitioner needs to be a trained counsellor?

On this issue I would like to quote Ranger once more. In his "commentary", he interprets my paper as saying that an oral historian should be a "thaumaturge". He outlines his own position as follows: "I see the oral historian not as an active healer and certainly not as an agent of conscientization. The oral historian is above all a listener, an audience."[14]

My response is that an oral historian does not have to choose between being a healer and being a listener. He is not a professional healer, for sure. If the interviewee displays signs of distress, it is duty to refer him to health professionals. This is what, at the Sinomlando Centre, we describe as "signposting". The role of an oral historian is to facilitate a conversation about the past. He is not a priest, he is not a psychiatrist and he is not a social worker.

This being said, I do not see why a good interview could not have a healing value. The simple fact of being listened to – and we know how it is difficult to listen effectively– can give to people who have suffered discrimination and oppression a sense of self-esteem and of identity which will positively orientate their lives.

4.   The ethics of oral history

Three ethical principles should guide oral historians in South Africa:

• informed consent and transparency
• respect of the interviewee
• benefit to the community.

These three ethical principles are not specific to South Africa. They feature in codes of ethics for oral history practitioners all over the world. It is my contention, however, that given the history of this country they are particularly relevant.

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14.   Ibid.

a)   Informed consent and transparency

In communities confronted to violence and conflict, despite the culture of ubuntu, the relationships between people, families and local groups are often loaded with mistrust and suspicion. A neighbour of even a family member always represents a potential risk. When strangers, whether social activists or researchers, request an interview from a community member, they should not be surprised to face resistance. They must prove that they are trustworthy.

To alleviate all fears the interviewers must ensure that the interviewees give informed consent. The purpose of the interview and its projected outcome must be made perfectly clear to the interviewee. Sometimes the request for an interview must be reexplained to ensure that the interviewees fully understand its implications. As much as possible the members of the group – family members, colleagues and friends, other parishioners – should be included in the process.

b)   Respect

I have emphasised in the first part of this paper the importance of respect in African society. Interviewers should understand and follow the codes of communication governing the communities to which they want to be introduced. They should not do so in an utilitarian way. "I do what I am told to do, otherwise they will refuse to be interviewed". Oral history practitioners should follow, out of conviction and as moral duty, the rules of respect in use in the community.

This is even more important when they face emotional situations. The retrieval of information should never be an absolute priority. If the interviewers realise that the person they interview is overcome by emotions and reaches a state of distress, it is their duty to give the interviewee a break and, if need be, to interrupt the interview. Interviewees retain the right to withdraw from an interview at all times.

c)   Benefit to the community

We all know examples of over-researched communities. In these areas the people are tired of researchers, journalists and politicians who pump information from them without giving any return. They multiply the promises in order to gain access to the community but never keep any of them. Once they have what they want, they are never to be seen again.

Community members or a group of community members which grant an interview should always derive some benefit from it. This matter is difficult and controversial. I personally would not recommend that the interviewees be remunerated. This creates confusion and raises false expectations. Under normal circumstances one does not derive a financial benefit from a story.

But other forms of benefit can be considered. The minimum is to give feedback to the person who has been interviewed once the interview has been transcribed and edited. Giving the interviewee a copy of the tape and of the transcript should be the normal practice. In this way the interviewee will have access to their own stories. They will be able to share them with their children, their relatives and their friends. Having the possibility so share one's story with others is extremely affirming. For people whose rights have been denied, sometimes for long periods of time, such return would contribute to a renewed sense of self-esteem.

Other forms of feedback can be envisaged such as the publication of a book, an exhibition or the organisation of a meeting during which the achievements of the interviewees will be recognised and celebrated. The local people are probably those who know best how to conclude the oral history project in which they have taken part.

5. Conclusion

Oral history is practised all over the world. In a country like South Africa, with a long history of oppression and discrimination, this form of social intervention is particularly relevant. Interviewers need to take into account the norms of communication and the rules of respect in use in the community to which they want to be introduced. They should be culturally sensitive not only as a way of gaining better access to information but because the people they interview deserve respect and recognition. Many interviews are laden with emotions. South Africans have joyful but also painful memories to share. For this reason some interview situations are difficult to handle. This is why training is important. If well done properly, oral history has a very significant role to play in nation-building.

STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES TO INFUSE ORAL HISTORY INTO THE MPUMALANGA SCHOOLS

By Ian Steenkamp

1.   Introduction and background

Changes to the school curriculum after 1996 had fundamental influence on the way educators educated learners. Not only did the basic methodology of teaching and learning change but the "what" to teach in history also changed fundamentally. This made most of what and how educators at al levels have been trained in, irrelevant. Though these changes were long overdue and promised to renew history for the better, it is clear that this brought about a number of challenges concerning the training of educators. The introduction of oral history into HSS* (GET band) and History (FET) is one example of this. Oral history entails much more than just collecting stories. It demands training and experience in a number of skills that educators still need to familiarize themselves with. Amongst other challenges we faced in transforming history teaching in Mpumalanga, this was one we tackled at the beginning of 2003.

My presentation aims to explain the way we have tackled and is still busy with the challenge of infusing oral history into our schools. This presentation does not imply that we have discovered the ultimate answer on how to infuse oral history into the classroom. I rather hope that it can trigger a discussion on how to deal effectively with the challenges faced by those of us who must assist Educators to infuse oral history into the classroom.

2.   Challenges

In an effort to determine how to introduce oral history in the classroom we first identified the different possible challenges we faced in doing it.

2.1   Budget

To effectively train the target group and provide resource material, needed a budget set aside specifically for oral history training. This also required that the budget must be available for as long as it takes to complete the process. The problem was where to get the money?

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* Changed to Social Sciences in the RNCS.

2.2   Size of target group that needed training

This included everyone at the following four levels:

➢   Head Office (DCES's for HSS and History) – 3
➢   Regional Office (Curriculum Implementers for HSS and History) – 25
➢   Educators for HSS and History (estimated at between 3 and 4 thousand)
➢   Learners (All learners Grade 4-9 and History learners grade 10-12)

2.3   Trainers and manpower

With no capacity at any level in the province and no local tertiary institution we were forced to look elsewhere. At the same time it was also clear that the number of head office staff and regional staff is very small for effective training. The challenge was how to provide effective training to such a large target group.

2.4   Skills

To determine the "what" of our training we were faced with the question of what skills our trainers needed to ensure the successful infusion of oral history into the schools.

2.5   Other responsibilities

We had to consider the fact that the group we targeted to be the trainers had a lot of other responsibilities that would impact on the time for training. Educators are not allowed to be trained during school time. Holiday training was still an issue between the department and unions and at present other training takes priority e.g. RNCS. At the same time oral history was not viewed as a priority in the province and no extra support outside the normal training programs was forthcoming. This clearly created a major challenge to us on how to carry out training under these circumstances.

2.6   Resource Material

We needed material to:

a)   Train the trainers (Head Office to teacher level)
b)   Educators guides (training activities and assessment instruments to train learners)
c)   Evaluation instruments for the whole process

How to develop this and by whom was the main challenge.

2.7   Monitoring and evaluation

To ensure that the process of infusing oral history into schools is effective and sustainable demanded that we had to find a way to monitor the process continuously. We also had to evaluate the process at specific times. The question was how to do this and by whom?

2.8   Awareness

For the successful infusion into schools and sustainability of oral history in schools the support and cooperation of both the Department and public is needed. The former is needed for financial support, but also for the general support and understanding of the process. The latter who will become sources need to be aware what oral history is all about and why their support and cooperation is needed. In this respect we had to find a way of gaining support and cooperation from both, but also to choose our timing correct.

2.9   Scope

The challenge here was to determine if we only wanted to train the educators or if the scope must be wider than that and include the initiation of oral history projects in the province.

2.10   Timeframes

Right from the start it was clear that the we had to determine how long the training process had to be, taking into account the barriers we faced in order to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.
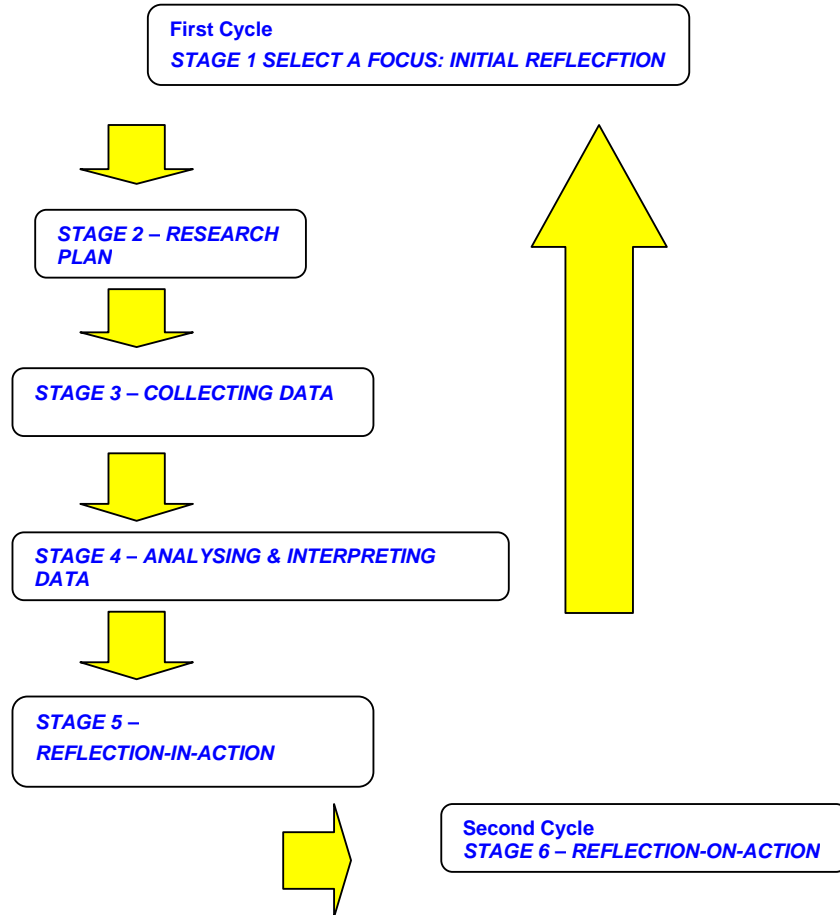

3.   Strategies

3.1   Budget

Period Source	Action	Program/Project	Budget
2003-2004 National Grant	Conditional Business plan	Values in Education - building research capacity	R250 000
2004-2005 National Grant	Conditional Business plan	Values in Education - building research capacity	R200 000
2005- - Provincial Projects	Business plan	Oral history	

3.2   Training

Main Strategic components:

3.2.1   Trickle down – The aim of this is to avoid the sausage machine training of large groups with little control over the impact of the training. Instead the focus will first be on a core group that will eventually take over the training.

3.2.2   Small training groups – The aim of this is again to try and keep the groups that are trained relatively small throughout the process.

3.2.3   Application of Action Research in Oral History and assessment

3.2.4   Development of Resource Material.

3.2.5   Continuous monitoring – To be able to monitor the effectiveness of the training, we will make use of case studies by participants that can be assessed.

3.2.6   Practical – The training must be hands-on as far as possible.

3.2.7   Flexibility – Adapt the process when necessary.

3.2.8   Link with RNCS implementation process.

3.2.9   Sustainable link with experts from WITS.

Fig 1.   Six (6) Stages in Action Research
Action research is an ongoing process of examining educational problems in schools.

First Cycle
STAGE 1 SELECT A FOCUS: INITIAL REFLECFTION

STAGE 2 – RESEARCH PLAN

STAGE 3 – COLLECTING DATA

STAGE 4 – ANALYSING & INTERPRETING DATA

STAGE 5 – REFLECTION-IN-ACTION

Second Cycle
STAGE 6 – REFLECTION-ON-ACTION

3.3   First phase: 2002-2004

Type of training/ activity	Facilitator(s)	Time-frame	Purpose for oral history	Outcomes	Target group
Action Research	University of North West	2002	Capacity to monitor and evaluate oral history infusion process	Theory of Action Research	Curriculum Implementers
	MPU DoE	2003	Practical exercise in action research	Development of research instruments for data collection and implementation	Ditto
	MPU DoE	2003	Interpretation of Data	Data of instruments interpreted	Ditto
Oral History	Wits History Workshop	2003	Theory of Oral History	Participants exposed to theory of oral research Practice interview-wing skills Initiate case studies	Core group: H/O, CI's and lead Educators
	Wits History Workshop	2004	Practical	Participants prepare for interview Interview 6 locals from Pilgrims Rest to collect data Discuss results Discuss own case studies	Ditto

Type of training/ activity	Facilitator(s)	Time-frame	Purpose for oral history	Outcomes	Target group
Development of a resource for training by trainers	Wits History Work-shop in consultation with DCES, GET-Mpu DoE	2004	To have a resource that trainers can use for training	Booklet with source material for trainers in oral history	Trainers
Audit of case studies and assistance for researchers	Wits History Work-shop in consultation with DCES, GET-Mpu DoE	2004	1. Monitor process 2. Assist trainees in action	To assess the impact of the training	Trainees

3.4   Second Phase 2005

Type of training/ activity	Facilitator(s)	Time-frame	Purpose for oral history	Outcomes	Target group
Oral history	Wits History Work-shop (with CI's assisting with facilitation)	2005	Take oral history training to the school level	Broaden the base of trainers	School cluster leaders in regional components to keep number in groups small (First round intermediate phase, 2nd round senior phase, 3rd round FET
Develop and pilot of educators training guide for learners activities and assessment instruments	Wits History Workshop and HSS and History trainers at Head Office and Regional level	2005-2006	To provide educators with a practical resource to train learners in the class	Training resource customized for the different grades from 4-12	Educators
Evaluation of the process 2003-2004	Wits History Workshop and HSS and History trainers at Head Office and Regional level	2005	Establish the impact of the project	Evaluation report	Trainees

Type of training/ activity	Facilitator(s)	Time-frame	Purpose for oral history	Outcomes	Target group
Initiating the township oral history project	Wits History Work-shop and HSS and History trainers at Head Office and Regional level	2005-2006	Starting the process of a provincial oral history	Data collecting of oral history of towns/ townships etc of province	Educators learners
Radio talks and presentations	H/O DCES's	2005	Create an aware-ness and gain support of the value of the project	DoE officials informed on the project Public awareness, interest and support	DoE officials and public
Resource center	H/O DCES's	2005-2006	Place to store data and interview people	Data center	Education Library service of Mpumalanga

4.   Impact

➢   Trained core group of trainers:
•   Action Research in History
•   Management of Training Sessions
•   Oral History
➢   Developed six research Instruments, piloted, distributed, retrieved and analyzed.
➢   Developed Action Research Guidelines for History
➢   Developed Oral History Training Guide
➢   Oral History Case Studies
➢   Working relationship with WITS

5.   Conclusion

Due to the nature of oral history and the refined research skills involved in it, the infusion of it into schools, need to be done in such a way that it does not just become an exercise of collecting stories from people. Learners need to benefit from the research skills involved in it and in general the collection of data of the history of the province through the collective memory of its inhabitants.