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The radicalization of oral history

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Thinking on oral history within contemporary western culture follows two complementary lines: “regional balances” (almost always fragmented into national realities) and “historical balances” (which turn to the origins and evolution of academic and discipline commitments, mainly in relation to history). This thinking sets the rhythm for the spread of oral history, establishing the nucleus and the periphery of the hegemonic onslaught emanating from Europe or the United States and following the “historical and geographical” expansion on a world scale. The purpose here is to overview critically the field of oral history, noting in particular the obstacles to an analysis that goes beyond the premises determined by its origin and national appropriations. The latter are seen as a whole, rather than as regional pieces, and are then compared to the proposal developed from the “original” principles. The purpose of the article is to pose principles which may serve to establish oral history as an academic discipline, at the same time throwing light on some of the responses coming from regions far from the dominant contexts.

A problem for our time

Those who follow the development of what is conventionally known as “modern oral history” have devoted their attention to certain aspects.¹ It is surprising to find, on one end, the full and widespread acceptance of this practice to record experience, establish topics for research and create collections on oral traditions and documentary sources for aspects of present-day society.² A troublesome paradox, however, lies on the opposite end: an excess of theory muddles rather than eases understanding and definition of the current state of oral history. In the end, we ask, what is the place for oral history within the body of knowledge about the contemporary world?

The high number of conferences, funding agencies and programs in oral history are proof of the popularity of a practice which, rigorously speaking, has always existed but that today acquires new uses due to technologies that make public presentation easier than ever.³ The flexibility brought about by the counterculture in the social-science disciplines (largely at the end of the 1960s) also encouraged the acceptance of inter-

views as a source and starting point for analysis. Analytical proposals favoring the use of interviews in the writing of history have been made at different times, from Herodotus and Thucydides to Bourdieu and E. P. Thompson, and have invariably stumbled against ideas that reduce the practice to "means" and not an end in itself, to an adjective and not a subject. "Tool," "instrument", "mechanism", "resource" have been some of the terms used to justify the presence of interviews as documentary reality and analytical pretext that facilitates social studies.

The practice of using interviews demands new definitions that place it in ideological, epistemological and social debates and frees it from the narrow treatment given to it up to now. Its permanence and undeniable acceptance, together with the theoretical abundance concerning its historicity, is praiseworthy. In the end, what is new in the use of such an old practice? Could the introduction of machinery (tape recorder, computers, Internet) be the element that explains change? Or to the contrary, does the use of electronic technology represent solely an adaptation of the same old practices? Have there been, nonetheless, different political implications at each time and have we now come to a critical point that welcomes exploring the possible autonomy of the practice of using interviews in research? Given variations over time in the means for recording and transforming oral into written speech and in the criteria for preserving the results, we ask if the validity of such a practice may be the same in any culture or situation or if it conforms to possible autonomies and dialectical responses. And we may also ask why use the term "oral history" when "interview" or "testimony" would suffice.

These questions, together with the contemporary problematic of knowledge, require plural

answers capable of promoting a wide, unceasing and democratic debate that fosters a critique of formal knowledge according to old schemes and of its effects regarding the social functions of knowledge. We intend to assess the new achievements of oral history (social and political, and therefore erudite, rigorous and pertinent but not exclusively academic) because we believe that its widespread acceptance responds precisely to the lack of practical and useful sense in the human sciences. Still posing further questions, may we suppose that the ample space opened to theorizing has more to do with the current absence of proposals for new objectives in oral history rather than with finding answers to central questions that would disrupt the routine of accommodating interviews within the traditions of the "old disciplines" The latter, by the way, often use oral testimonies without any innovations in recording or analyzing but following fashion, they call it oral history.⁴

We observe that as oral history becomes more popular, theoretical discussions become more banal, finally revealing a vacuum of arguments owing to the absence of objective, valiant and well-formulated analytical purposes. Responsibility for this situation certainly falls to the lack of courage to focus on the crucial problem for modern oral history: should oral history be only a tool, a technique, a methodology subordinated to other fields of knowledge or, should it be upgraded to the status of a new academic discipline? Will it be enough to think of oral history as "history without adjectives"?⁵ Is history in the widest sense the sole or fragmented required stage for oral history? Above all, could oral history make use of other disciplines to validate its objectives that are of necessity oriented toward the common good?

Nobody's land?

Even though the relation between oral history and the various conventional disciplines has generated complex polemics, no proposals have appeared to renew the forms of knowledge included in that relation. Oral history still pays main tribute to History (with capital H) even though sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, journalists and geographers, among others, claim recognition because they too resort to interviews. It is curious to note that "history" dominates "oral" to the point that few people think of orality as a component of oral history.

The persistence of the "historical root" dictates a dominant rite and an analytical determinism that somehow invokes history as the ultimate end of research, suggesting a chain of events capable of explaining the life trajectories evoked in the interviews. Facts nevertheless demonstrate that historians themselves admit (for sundry and even contradictory reasons) the existence of variations in their disciplinary lineage, expressed through what has been customarily termed, since Michelet, "live document". The document, that is, the result of the interview, despite its being "alive", is still the angle open to research that inevitably becomes historical. That which is proclaimed as the foundation for variations in the way of doing history is the subjective content resulting from the oral source.⁶

The documentary and historical character of oral history, despite discomfort and dissidence from colleagues in other fields of knowledge, persists as the analytical solution to social experience. Other scientists in the humanities, apparently somehow extraneous to this determination, call for negotiations. In the end, oral history tends to resemble a terrain belonging to nobody, where collec-

tive and adventurous camping is possible, as all intend to document and eventually analyze situations based on interviews. And all dip into their respective traditions to theorize about the relation interview—document—analysis. Some spend their efforts in neutralizing differences arising in the arena of discourse by consecrating the dangerous but comfortable notion (or pretext) of interdisciplinarity.⁷ At this point emerges, logically, a similar discussion about the procedures, an affinity immediately dissolved in analytical criteria or appropriations that follow in the strong traditions of each field of knowledge. In this sense, the debate on interviews gains forums with the lowest common denominator and much time is wasted in trying to evaluate futile questions that may be resolved simply by common sense. Some salient topics are the best and most opportune moment for recording, its frequency and length, the ways to conserve the tapes and the differences in style for recording life histories. It is obvious that these are valid discussions but we ask whether they should be the aim of a debate that seldom leads into questions of political practice or epistemological vigor.

Oral history conferences are frustrating insofar as papers present only the results of the use of interviews by various academic disciplines and avoid questions that would jolt debate. Has not oral history reached the point where it may establish its own sovereign terrain and develop as an autonomous discipline? Do existing studies already guarantee a purpose for oral history beyond feeding other disciplines in the social sciences or subordination to history? There is a curious, fatal and even perverse trait in this approach, when many sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and ethnologists to their surprise are defined as "oral historians" and yet they do not summon the courage to carry this debate forward. Ultimately, if

the expression "oral historians" is uncomfortable, why not accept the more ample concept of oralist as a term to describe those who do oral history?⁸ Are not those who study mediaeval history called mediaevalists? Do not foreigners who study Mexico term themselves Mexicanists? Then why not apply the term oralist to those who study oral history?

The answer is complex and deserves attention in the general debate. The use of the term oralist implies accepting that oral history is more than just a mediating solution or a tool and that it has the stature of a discipline. Posing this question for debate elicits conservative reactions that above all extrapolate the classical limits of the unquestioned classificatory bars imposed by already established disciplines. To them oral history is what it always has been, except for the presence of new mechanical means to record and present it and of a discussion inflated by theorizing that, at best, explains the growth of the practice by the excess of ink spent on variations on the same theme. Oral history, in so far as it is a form of expression, would continue to be nobody's land and a place for all to camp, even if the influence of history were a required, conflictive and aggressive reference for those not formed within the historical discipline. The definition of new classifying criteria for oralists would amount to establishing a new discipline that evolves from the point of its social significance, i.e., of its practice.

Some important authors have more than eloquently expressed their opposition to upgrading oral history to a discipline. Joseph Fontana, in fact, states that "the pretension of making into independent disciplines what in fact are just research techniques is an extreme aberration". He goes on to designate oral history as "tools that only make sense when they are put to work in the

service of a global historical interpretation".⁹ Even progressive historians clearly adhere to conservative positions when it comes to oral culture and in this way help to make oral history no more than a simple resource for general use.

Memory and identity: a new place for oral history

But on what foundations could oral history be established as a discipline? Are existing propositions for understanding societies, behavior and institutions enough? An analysis of the recent origins of oral history may throw light on the matter.

The practice of interviewing, now known as "modern", acquired a new impulse from the need to measure the transformations caused by the Second World War, especially in the United States.¹⁰ The popularity of broadcasting through electronic means (most of all radio) led to the formulation of a new and widely accepted binomial: personal histories resulting from diverse processes and experiences in the contemporary world and the emergence of a public capable of generating, understanding and transforming the results of such changes and assume them as new facts. It could be said that finally a new "rebellion of the masses" had emerged from the territory of intelligent participation, analytical insofar as it was social and cultural, and from the acceptance of what has been conventionally termed "public history".

The ongoing institutionalization of oral history has led to a crucial dilemma for the problematic of modern knowledge: what has become of modern oral history? Does oral history belong to academics, who so much insist on theorizing, or to participants in given historical processes, whose explanations rest on memory and in fashioning

individual and group identity? The latter option would generate a second way of knowing and composing arguments that afford wider social explanations. This is a complex question, and in fact, the academic institutions that arrogate the responsibility for this field of work have avoided it. Are social "actors" agents of change or mere participants in the formidable human stage? Are they protagonists or directors? Informants or transformers? "Objects of study" or social subjects? Passive beings or political beings capable of turning social experience into praxis? Would oral history professionals be in that case necessarily members of academic institutions? And by the way, one might also ask if universities actually guarantee the quality of production in this or any other sphere of knowledge.

Three sectors have led the way in working with interviews, extracting the most common questions posed by university theoreticians: feminists, Jews and workers. Studies dealing with problems concerning centuries of male dominance, Jews in concentration camps and their modern Diaspora, and exploitation and struggles at work have in practice brought together two main factors: one, the stories of individuals retrieved by recording memory narratives, and two, the motivation to organize political movements capable of reflecting the demand for identity in each category. Other minorities have followed behind the steps of these three groups: Blacks, Indigenous peoples, illiterates, gays, the physically disabled. That work forms the essential contents and objectives of oral history: memory and identity. Memory and identity are in fact topics of historical research but are not necessarily the means or ends of History as they would be for oral history. And one may say in passing that the distinction between memory and history is one of the issues most fre-

quently raised in conflictive debates over the purpose of oral history.

Here is then a point of departure for oral history to claim a framework of its own: besides recording individual experiences in and producing sources for history (this also being an aim of researches on memory and identity), modern oral history would stake out individual spaces of social praxis as long as these spaces have a social, collective or historical meaning. Oral history, because it can capture half-meanings, silences, lies, forgetfulness and distortions, would occupy the privileged position of a discipline capable of dealing with subjectivity.

From this last point follows another: fostering the political actions that stem from acquiring consciousness of identity. In times of "political correctness" and social inclusion, oral history would have a leading role in formulating agile premises to generate arguments that would enable a political militancy to modify the historical status quo. Although it is true that indirectly all other disciplines could also produce such premises, oral history would be the ideal field for this debate. In this way oral history would become the political and discursive terrain that would afford direction to debates, demands, affirmative politics and consequently to social transformation. It would not be, however, a simple resource, since the consideration of memory and the creation of identity links could reveal the renowned "class consciousness" of which E. P. Thompson speaks.

We must of course consider some of the bases for establishing oral history as a discipline. Above all, oral history presupposes a democratic political space in which to carry on. Legitimate oral history may only exist where freedom of expression is a guaranteed right, which in turn ensures the ideological plurality that confers auto-

my to doing and using interviews in the present. Again we are speaking of politics and by politics we mean a subject that will undertake the orchestration of each personal history in its collective sense as a way to reach the intended social transformations usually dismissed by history.

"Present time" implies the elaboration of points of departure that act upon the existential dynamics of the living. Oral history takes for granted that its practice occurs in the social space of the living and revolts against tired views of history as the science that studies an abstract past unrelated to the present. We believe the past is an unfinished process dynamically included in the present and we defend the idea that society is and will eternally be a changing continuum. This being so, the aims of oral history stand independent from those of other disciplines.

To consider oral history as a discipline would benefit affirmative action projects. Projects for the recognition of social demands, without roots in the exercise of life, are almost always present-minded and superficial searches carried out in the heat of the moment. By proposing the modification of the status of oral history, we intend to convert it into a permanent, informed and balanced space for the elaboration of proposals rooted in the present and responding to a past that did not take into account the social inclusion of certain groups and therefore the foundations of democracy. Avoiding the simplistic trap of pointing out the alienation of traditional disciplines and intellectual practice, we aim to redirect discussion by ascribing to oral history the main purpose of elaborating political arguments.

We evidently believe that democracy may survive without an oral history defined by these new bases. But we also believe that an oral history thus defined would make it possible to raise issues con-

cerning alienation and social participation. These lines draw a new place for oral history and, further, project a way forward to knowledge engaged with social transformation. This would be the locus of oral history.

It is interesting to note that authors unaware or unconcerned with disciplinary boundaries have demonstrated the meaning and value of what we propose here as a politically active oral history. This is the case with the pioneering work of Jonathan Grossman in South Africa, Yara Bandeira de Ataíde in Brazil and Mats Greff in Sweden.

An oral history of whom, for whom, and by whom?

Oral history would be, given the argument thus far, a generalized practice and not the privileged space of a specialized elite.¹¹ It would be a public practice capable of spawning projects useful to society and not just theoretical exercises isolated from the "others". Oralists would be people capable of practicing social inclusion on the grounds expressed by memory and group identity. All of it carried with rigor and insight. Academics or university-trained individuals are not the only ones capable of fulfilling the methodological requirements for setting up and developing projects. Let us take feminists, for instance, who through constant militancy demonstrated their conditions for social participation and reversed the historical role of women. They acted as organic intellectuals of their own condition in a Gramscian sense. We think the same reasoning applies to other victims of brutal processes of domination. So that instead of "actors", "informants" or "objects of study" the participants in any analytical venture would be "collaborators", that is, makers of their own histo-

ry and characters in search of a political definition in social processes.

Some authors dismiss the possibility of organic intellectuals by resorting to arguments about “banality” and “trivialization”.¹² But the principle that good oral history may be done by good oralists, exposes the irrationality of criteria that distinguishes between good and bad work on the basis of university affiliation. The same criteria, oddly enough, has not been applied in literature. Renowned intellectuals and authors of relevant works in the literary world are not judged by their schooling. Just to mention an extreme but meaningful example: Jose Saramago, Nobel in literature, does not belong to any university department and still enjoys prestige and recognition for his work. We then ask why not recognize the validity of oral history studies, if they are good and duly researched, even when they are not the work of academics?

This reflection opens a debate on the disciplinary objectives of oral history. In the end, of whom, for whom and by whom should oral history be made? The part dealing with “by whom” has been sketched so now we turn to “of whom” and “for whom”. These questions, at the same time, point to the basic objectives of oral history as a discipline: identity and memory.

One of the most avoided debates in oral history concerns the questions “of whom” and “for whom” is research developed. In a proposal claiming to be innovative, to ask “of whom?” is fundamental because it points to the function of cultural agents capable of encouraging the process of social inclusion. We have in mind precisely those people who participate in movements demanding social recognition, identified above as “intellectuals” of their own social question. In consequence, agents of the communities that are

its final destination should primarily carry out oral history.¹³ We of course do not mean to exclude, since we have already defined oral history as a procedure carried out within democratic settings and consequently containing differences of opinion. But those who were previously referred to as “social actors” or “informants” are now raised to the condition of “citizens”. On the other hand, as agents who are often historically disfranchised, these citizens, when assisted by other mediators, could and should be recognized as “collaborators”. Because they consider themselves “vanquished”, however, many of those who are excluded from social recognition confine themselves to an historical corner and submit themselves to occasional analysis. Groups outside the process then carry out the task of overcoming this condition. The polarization between those who live the process and those who search for data to interpret it pertains without a doubt to writing history without including memory. Identity is in this case, moreover, defined by others and not by the agents of the process.

For whom should the works of oral history be made? Knowledge is a social fact, according to Pollack, because it enables the multiplication of the arguments extracted from underground memories.¹⁴ Oral history, as a discipline, is carried out within the existing patterns of politics and should serve social purposes; the intellectual effort it entails ceases to be alienated when it finds justification in politics.

Accumulated tensions

Is the proposal to approach oral history as a discipline really revolutionary? Although at first it may seem daring and even aggressive, a close reading

of the development of oral history may find a tendency to a mature debate that contains in itself the will to change. Besides discomfort felt by non-historians when referred to as "oral historians" and exclusion of wider questions regarding orality (very much appreciated by linguists), there is dissatisfaction with the meager results attained by accumulated reflections on the foundations of oral history. It may be that those who conceive oral history from its modern root have traveled a road that contains the seed of contradiction that leads today to thinking of a new statute for the subject. At the bottom line at what point did History appropriate oral history?

A close reading of the origin and evolution of oral history reveals the build up of tensions caused by the vague nature of reflections on the matter. Not long ago the standing of oral history did not represent a real problem. The issue of its definition was at times seen as problematic but none went further than pointing this out. Concepts were then mixed, referring to oral history as a method, a tool or a technique according to the researcher's whim. There certainly are situations, here and there, that evince the perversity of combining concepts that imprecisely coupled produce in most cases more noise than music. Tereza Burmesiter is a good example of such chaos, when she affirms that "establishing oral history as a discipline is closely linked to the process of democratizing historical research and writing that initiated in the 1960s". Even though Burmesiter seems aware of the direction taken by oral history toward becoming a discipline she later returns to the historical framework and adds that "the oral source is testimony of its own life but it is the task of the historian to transform that testimony into history".¹⁵

The silent war over the standing of oral history demands going back to the main points in its

definition as a field of knowledge. There were since the beginning, according to Joutard, three inspiring motives that required commitment: to hear the voice of excluded people, to bring to light the "indescribable" realities and to give testimony of situations of extreme suffering.¹⁶ According to these points, oral history was not the monopoly of History. The daring appropriation that historians made of oral history, however, defined the historical character it adopted. Eugenia Meyer, for instance, after noting that oral history is not a technique but a methodology, takes up one of the original principles of oral history and writes that

probably owing to the nature of our Latin American realities, the comings and goings of caudillos, military coups, dictatorships and constant violations of human rights the work and products of oral history acquire a fundamental dimension, its character of denunciation.¹⁷

Close examination of the foundations of oral history discloses how, from its inception, the social commitment of oral history (signaled by "the voice of the excluded") revealed unknown and hidden aspects not registered in official documents and, above all, exposed the suffering of groups under particular situations. The items mentioned make clear the intention of generating political attitudes informed by the experience of those who lived through repression or social exclusion. In the face of it, we should ask ourselves what right does History have to claim exclusive rights over the process of orality.

The institutionalization of oral history followed the route dictated by the predominance of historians. This road evolved from trends within the historical discipline that insisted on updating the profession by using this "new" resource. It is

hence symptomatic that the first meeting of "oral historians" was planned in the midst of the XIV International Congress of Historical Sciences, held in San Francisco, California, in 1975, and took place in 1976. Many conferences followed since, numbering nine in Europe (with a version in New York in 1994). It is worthy of attention that Europe and the United States have kept in the vanguard of the process of institutionalization of the practice of oral history and have guarded its professionalism.¹⁸

There is another critical date, besides the year 1975 that inaugurated the phase of internationalization, that marks a turn in the evolution of Anglo-Euro-American oral history: 1998. In that year was held the X International Conference and the fact that it took place in Rio de Janeiro was regarded as a reply to signs of indignation with the existing project. The words of the then president of the meeting, Mercedes Vilanova, indicated a departure from the course set by European and U. S. oral history. Vilanova explained her motives to accept the presidency of the International Oral History Association as follows:

First, to support with all my heart the development of IOHA in America, a feeling that has deep roots in me. When we founded the journal *Historia y Fuente Oral* in Barcelona, in 1989, we did so as an answer to the exclusion suffered by Spaniards and Latin Americans at the 1987 Conference in Oxford; and we did it to promote dialogue, to integrate and not to splinter the movement. Second, I accepted the presidency to be able to hand the torchlight, or if you will allow me an otiose expression, to hand leadership to a younger generation and I hope this should occur at this Conference.¹⁹

The position expressed by Vilanova signaled the beginning of a debate that allowed questioning of the relationship between the hegemonic centers of production of oral history and the regions away from, and recognized as aggregated to, those centers.

Responses: the reactions of the periphery

Scrutiny of the process of expansion of modern oral history and of the reaction of the third world leads to detect two parallel lines that nonetheless move in opposite directions. One moves in the direction of continuing the same process. The refusal to accept oral history as a potential discipline and the hegemony of history as main discipline (even when permitting access to other fields of knowledge that use oral testimonies) reveals continuance and growth of the institutional control exercised by Europe and the United States. The second line leads in the opposite direction: as an inevitable consequence of the institutionalization of oral history, the discovered new worlds move toward testing their autonomy and independence.

While the continuist line unfolded its power by naming representatives for each "feud", the general reaction of the "incorporated lands" dictated their protests. Sheer numbers in people, institutions, projects, museums and archives show the natural inclination of the locals to produce work related to orality.

The politics of assessing oral history in terms of national results is eloquently criticized. What is the use of thinking about the analytical logic of such topics as oral history in Spain, France, England or Italy? It would make more sense to inquire about Latin America, a task commonly un-

dertaken by two or three people who write general analyses and act as "spokespersons".

Rather than embarking on a critique of those who speak for Latin America, it is better to focus on how independent one may consider oral history in those new places. The Brazilian case evinces the opposite lines of development previously mentioned. The Ford Foundation and the Getulio Vargas Foundation in Rio de Janeiro sponsored a first effort, in the 1970s, to promote oral history programs. Whether because of military rule or because of the academic character of the event, the experience was a failure as a social phenomenon. In the next two decades, especially in the 1990s, on the contrary, a surprising blossoming and plurality of expressions of Brazilian oral history took place in the midst of the democratic opening. Alessandro Portelli described the situation as follows:

Brazil leads the world in this field [...] The cosmopolitan theoretical formation of Brazilian historians (as well as of other Latin American countries) always did impress me: one look at their bibliography is enough [...] to note that the references practically cover the whole theoretical and research production originating in countries of very different traditions.

Portelli adds that

in Europe and the United States these traditions do not communicate much with one another and little is known of the sophisticated contributions of Latin American oral historians. Paradoxically, and perhaps because of its original position regarding the traditional centers, Brazilian oral historians are

capable of being less provincial and more eclectic.²⁰

There have emerged in Brazil, owing to the possibilities of expression, authors who conceive of oral history in ways that are more committed to epistemological postulates. Alberto Lins Caldas is at the head of those whose hermeneutic position strengthens the foundations for launching oral history as a discipline.²¹

To start debate

The purpose of this article was to ignite debate on a larger scale. An examination of the evolution and consequent expansion of a European and North American proposal for a universal oral history implies admitting the advantages of engaging in a dialogue that does not suppress local originality and autonomy. It is convenient to assume, as counterweight, that the contribution from "new countries" must indicate positions able to face the conglomerate of ideas and opinions that have oriented the critical context of oral history in a global scale.

My final words are paradoxical: either oral history becomes an independent discipline and integrates the benefits of modern technology and the philosophical contents filtered through general debates or it will turn into a passing fashion. The paradox alluded to comes from the establishment of the principles of oral history, that is, to denounce, document, recognize the citizenship of oppressed groups, propose dialogues between classes and, above all, carry on the fight for human rights within democracy.

Notes

- ¹ The University of Columbia created what may be considered the model followed by modern oral history, that is, the production of taped interviews and their preservation for future research uses. See *Oral History at Columbia, American Craftspeople Project, Projects and Interviews*, New York, Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1987-1992, p. 1.
- ² For a definition of "present time" see François Bédérida, "Tempo presente e a presença da história" in *Usos e abusos da história oral*, Marieta de Moraes Ferreira and Amado Jannaina (eds.), Rio de Janeiro, Editora Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1996.
- ³ *Historia, Antropología y Fuentes Orales* has published many articles where authors discuss the present state of the question for their respective countries. Philippe Joutard has made the worthy effort of bringing together general comments on this topic (see no. 24, 2000 for a cumulative index).
- ⁴ Many of the important collections were first known as "Word Archives", "Bank of Interviews" or "Testimony Collection" and only recently were named Oral History Archives or Collections.
- ⁵ Many historians have used interviews in their efforts to innovate in historical writing. Mercedes Vilanova discusses the virtues of "history without adjectives" (oral, for instance) and suggests looking at results and not at the sources, in "Combate, en España, por una historia sin adjetivos con fuentes orales", *Historia, Antropología y Fuentes Orales*, no. 14, 1995, pp. 95-117.
- ⁶ Fernando Gil, "Posestructuralismo e historia oral", *Historia, Antropología y Fuentes Orales*, no. 19, 1998, p. 117.
- ⁷ See Roland Barthes, "Jeunes Chercheurs" in *Lê Bruissement de la Langue*, Paris, Lê Seuil, 1998, p. 97.
- ⁸ Some authors use the term oralist without fully assuming the consequences of the term. See, for instance, Philippe Joutard, "Algunos retos que se le plantean a la historia oral del siglo XXI", *Historia, Antropología y Fuentes Orales*, no. 21, 1999, p. 157.
- ⁹ Josep Fontana, *Reflexiones después del fin de la historia*, Barcelona, Crítica, 1992, p. 84.
- ¹⁰ See Allan Nevins, "Oral history, how it was born" in *Oral History, an Interdisciplinary anthology*, David K. Dunaway and Willa Baum (eds.), Nashville, American Association for State and Local History, 1984, p. 42.
- ¹¹ Eugenia Meyer, "Memoria y conciencia histórica", *Historia, Antropología y Fuentes Orales*, no. 24, 2000, p. 77, argues in favor of a professional academic oral history. Her words show that the topic is complex and polemical: "We cannot imagine the slightest disagreement between the archivists who gather, restore, classify and make available that essential universe of heuristics and the historians who attempt to carry on successfully the hermeneutic task."
- ¹² Danièle Voldman, "La historia oral en Francia a finales de los años ochenta", *Historia y Fuente Oral*, no. 5, 1991, pp. 145-155; Philippe Joutard, "Algunos retos", *op. cit.*, pp. 149-162.
- ¹³ Ecléa Bosi defines the term "communities of destination" in *Memória e sociedade: lembranças de velhos*, São Paulo, Cia. das Letras, 1995, p. 21.
- ¹⁴ Michel Pollak, "Memória, esquecimento, silêncio", *Estudos Históricos*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1989, pp. 3-15.
- ¹⁵ Tereza Burmeister, "Un proyecto de democracia narrativa: pasear a la ciudad para transmitir la historia", *Historia, Antropología y Fuentes Orales*, no. 22, 1999, pp. 157-158.
- ¹⁶ Philippe Joutard, "Algunos retos", *op. cit.*, p. 151.
- ¹⁷ Eugenia Meyer, "Recuperando, recordando, denunciando, custodiando la memoria del pasado puesto al día. Historia oral en Latinoamérica y el Caribe", *Historia y Fuente Oral*, no. 5, 1991, p. 140.
- ¹⁸ Philippe Joutard, "25 años de historia oral, II", *Historia, Antropología y Fuentes Orales*, no. 15, 1996, p. 155. Other authors consider different dates for the beginning of the internationalization of oral history. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, for instance, refer to the international conference held in Essex, England, in 1979, see Perks and Thomson (eds.), *The oral history reader*, London, Routledge, 1998, p. 3.
- ¹⁹ Mercedes Vilanova, "Palabras inaugurales de la X Conferencia Internacional de Historia Oral (Río de Janeiro, 14 de junio de 1998)", *Historia, Antropología y Fuentes Orales*, no. 20, 1998, p. 161.
- ²⁰ Alessandro Portelli, "Apresentação" in Sônia Maria de Freitas, *Historia oral, possibilidades e procedimentos*, São Paulo, Humanitas/Imprensa Oficial SP, 2002, pp. 9-14.
- ²¹ Alberto Lins Caldas, *Oralidade, texto e historia. Para ler a historia oral*, São Paulo, Loyola, 1999.