9.4 Clio's Talkative Daughter Goes Digital

The Interplay between Technology and Oral Accounts as Historical Data

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Introduction

The introduction of the recording device at the beginning of the twentieth century not only marked a major transition in communication technology, but also paved the way for a revaluation of the oral account in Western historiography. With the rise of early civilizations and the introduction of writing tools it had lost its central role in the transfer of meaning and identity. Centuries later, the spread of literacy and the invention of the printing press stimulated the consolidation and appreciation of historical sources in textual form. Given the weight of this strong focus on text, the invention of a device that could capture and reproduce the human voice directly can be truly regarded as revolutionary. Most important, in the context of historical sources, is that accounts could now be stored and preserved in their original form: as sound. This development laid the ground for the practice that is referred to as 'oral history'. Another series of transitions, decisive for the accessibility and contextualization of oral narratives, set in with the 'digital turn' at the end of the twentieth century. The purpose of this paper is to offer an overview of these transitions by showing how the interplay between technology and social-cultural change influenced the creation and appreciation of oral history interviews as sources of knowledge. What can be observed is a shift in appreciation of what is regarded as the most truthful and characteristic representation of the oral account: the original sound recording or the transcribed interview.

Although the term 'oral history' has various meanings, most scholars agree that its purpose is to create spoken accounts on personal history in an interview setting. A distinction can be made between collecting interviews to answer a specific research question, and documenting the experiences of a person as an archival effort with future listeners in mind.[1] The first approach, with strong roots in Europe, bears a strong resemblance to academic practices in the social sciences,

and draws on a long tradition of investigative journalism. The second places oral history in the archival realm, and is strongly rooted in a tradition of nation-building, in which the state initiates projects that stimulate public involvement in the creation of shared cultural heritage. Researchers in the United States were the pioneers in using the method of oral history for this purpose.[2]

The paper starts off with a description of the change in status of oral sources in the late nineteenth century and the parallel technological innovation. The next stage presented is the early evolution of the practice of interviewing in relation to bearing witness to crises and conflict in the first half of the twentieth century. Then the emergence of the postwar social movement is described and its central role in developing a pluralist perspective on history by giving voice to minority groups through collecting life stories and making them public. The following section discusses the impact of the digital turn and the introduction of the Internet on historical culture in general and on oral history in particular. The final section deals with the potential of information and communications technology (ICT) for the accessibility and analysis of digital oral history.

Text defeats spoken word

Contrary to what one would expect, oral sources were regarded as quite reliable until the professionalization of history as an academic discipline was heralded by the nineteenth-century Rankean school of historicism. Ranke and his disciples confined the search for historical sources almost exclusively to written documents that were found in archives produced by the state and other institutions,[3] and that were attributed the desired level of objectivity. They thereby rejected oral sources as a valuable asset of the historiographical paradigm, disregarding that, of course, many textual sources are the product of a sequence of witnessing, discussing, and passing on historical evidence to future generations.[4]

The retrospective oral accounts of sieges and battles documented by Herodotus and Thucydides, the founding fathers of history, are a clear illustration of the oral origin of many written sources. At the same time the opposing positions of these Greek pioneers show how timeless the debate is on how to weigh the quality and validity of oral accounts. Herodotus would include myths, rumors and tales in his documentation on the Persian Wars and relied on oral accounts of events that had happened long before his time. He would sometimes offer different versions of an account and ask the reader to choose. Thucydides, in contrast, did not regard himself as a 'storyteller', and based his accounts almost entirely on facts that he himself had witnessed or been told from firsthand witnesses and recorded:

> And with regard to my factual reporting of the events of the war I have
> made it a principle not to write down the first story that came my way, and
> not even to be guided by my own general impressions; either I was pres-
> ent myself at the events which I have described or else I heard them from
> eyewitnesses whose reports I have checked with as much thoroughness as
> possible. (*History* I, 22)[5]

Thucydides acknowledged the importance of 'pathos' in a narrative as a technique
to appeal to an audience. Nevertheless he chose to strive for truth and accuracy,
for this would yield history having a long-lasting impact.

The evolving culture of documenting a phenomenon in all its details for the
sake of a reliable historical record led to the development of history as an aca-
demic discipline with a distinct method of its own in the course of the nineteenth
century.[6] Moving from the pub and the marketplace to the lecture hall, a new class
consciousness emerged that made 'ordinary people' less appealing as a historical
source.[7] Combined with the cumulative effect of three centuries of printing, and
the central role attributed to historians in the process of nation-building, this
profoundly changed the character of the profession. Historians were now trained
to analyze what were perceived to be the building stones of academic history:
printed and written documents. This came down to using sources that had been
generated in the slipstream of the lives and policies of those who were the most
influential and powerful.[8]

Capturing the voice

At the beginning of the twentieth century developments in communication tech-
nology and transport increased the pace of interpersonal communication. As the
telephone offered the opportunity to discuss issues that would previously have
been communicated through letters, the social function of documents changed
gradually in the course of the twentieth century. As new generations of histori-
ans made it clear that archives contained only a biased selection of hand-picked
written sources intended to legitimize or advocate a pursued policy, history based
exclusively on the meticulous study of official state documents and diplomatic
sources lost some of its standing.[9]

The first scholars to embrace the potential of recording technology were not
historians but ethnologists. Already in the second half of the nineteenth century
the interest in recovering (and sometimes 'inventing') cultural traditions such as
ceremonies, customs and folktales, had shifted from local amateur historians to
professionals. The focus on cultural identity expressed in objects, dresses, lan-

guage and music makes it easy to understand their interest in capturing sound and images and their pioneering role in modern oral history.[10] The very first recording device, the phonograph, invented by Thomas A. Edison in 1877, would be taken along as equipment during research expeditions not only by ethnologists and linguists, but also by medical doctors, missionaries and colonial officials. Although expensive until the 1920s, these recorders were simple to use and could be easily transported, not being dependent on electrical power.[11] It is noteworthy that its use for documenting history was envisioned by Edison himself. In a long list of possible applications he also lists: 'The 'Family Record' – a registry of sayings, reminiscences, etc., by members of a family in their own voices, and of the last words of dying persons'.[12] The conditions for actually applying the phonograph by introducing an affordable version and improving its performance, were created by Chichester Bell and Charles Sumner Tainter, with the introduction of wax cylinders.[13]

As always happens when new technology is introduced, there were reservations. Some writers even feared that the phonograph would be the beginning of the end of writing. An illustration hereof is a cartoon by Albert Robida that portrays Edison as a devil handing over a phonograph to Gutenberg.[14] The Italian historian Benedetto Croce looked upon it as a folly:

> I am convinced that the realism of the phonograph, this cunning attempt to physically grasp the past, will not contribute to the increase of historical knowledge, just as attempts to evoke the atmosphere and impression of a past life do not enrich our knowledge; that very life is dead as a doornail and should be understood, not evoked.[15]

In Croce's view the peculiarities of the voice would distract and entertain, rather than increase the understanding of history. When listening to sound recordings or watching newsreels with speeches of Mussolini or Hitler today, we may be inclined to think that there is a kernel of truth in Croce's observation. Many will find it hard to believe that these demagogues could hold such sway over the masses with their theatrical gestures and shouting voices. However, with only the texts of these speeches, it would be even more difficult to understand their performative power and appeal to the masses. Still, it would take decades for many historians to appreciate that the original sound of spoken words reflects the human experience better than words transmitted in textual format.

The next step in technological innovation in recording human speech was the wire recorder invented by the Danish engineer Valdemar Poulsen in 1877. It would take until the Interbellum before its more successful successor, the tape recorder, was widely introduced. Both devices involve the use of a magnetizable medium that can capture sound waves and turn them into electrical signals.[16]

Personal experience with war and crisis

The dissemination of the practice of documenting and recording interviews should be seen in the light of the emergence of the social sciences as instruments for social engineering in the two World Wars. In this period bureaucratic structures came into existence meant to manage large numbers of conscripts that were sent to the military fronts in other parts of the world. Military personnel were separated from family members and spouses, and on their return had to reintegrate into society together with large numbers of displaced persons. This pressed the social sciences to offer solutions. Besides, the first massive involvement in the circumstances of war by citizens who could write letters to their loved ones led to a culture of giving testimony about extraordinary experiences. While paper was still the main carrier of such testimonies, many memories remained in the minds of the people to be captured only decades later.[17]

An example of a folklorist for whom the context of war created unique opportunities was the German teacher Wilhelm Doegen. Having been granted access to all German prisoner-of-war camps during the First World War, he began to systematically record the languages, music and texts of prisoners from other countries with the intent to create a collection for a future 'Museum of the Sound'.[18] In the United States the massive draft in 1917-1918 called for an adequate selection mechanism and interviewing became a method for psychological testing. This was repeated during World War II when more than half a million American soldiers were interviewed to document their mental and emotional lives.[19]

The connection between the social sciences and the Armed Forces was paralleled by that between history and soldiers' experiences at the battle fronts in the Second World War. Anticipating the Army's official history of the war, the US government initiated an extensive program that, in each theater of war, brought professional historians together to collect sources. One of these was the drafted journalist S.L.A. Marshall, who introduced the practice of gathering troops shortly after their engagement in battle in order to conduct group interviews. The purposes served by this practice were multifold: providing additional testimonies to military unit journals to improve efficacy of operations, giving participants the opportunity to relate their experiences in battle, and creating a basis for popular monographs to explain the war to wounded soldiers and new recruits.[20]

One of the first war-related projects to record extended interviews from the perspective of victims was initiated right after the end of the war in 1946 by the psychologist David P. Boder, of Latvian Jewish origin. Trained in Germany and Russia and emigrated to the US in 1932, Boder was determined to document the impact of extreme suffering on personality. Using a state-of-the-art wire recorder he traveled to displacement camps all over Europe, interviewing 130

persons in nine languages. At his return he not only set out transcribing the interviews but also submitted them to analysis, and commented on terms and narratives, with the intent of developing a systematic coding system for the various kinds of trauma. The transfer of knowledge on traumatic experiences to the broader American audience came in 1948, when he published a book, hoping that it would be helpful in advocating on behalf of the refugees for immigration to America.[21]

These pioneers in the archiving of oral sources illustrate the interest in capturing the thoughts and actions of people in extreme circumstances such as war. The focus was primarily on using technology for the purpose of documentation and the derivation of knowledge from the sources as a basis for publishing books. The potential and motivation to convey the material to large audiences was limited.

Pioneers in archives and academia

The pioneering role of the United States in the establishment of oral history as an archival practice is connected to a policy of social engineering that aimed at forging unity in a multiethnic society in times of crisis.[22] Similar approaches can be found in other Anglo-Saxon immigration societies such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

It was Franklin Delano Roosevelt who introduced the Federal Writers' Project as part of the New Deal to support writers and journalists during the Great Depression. Among the many who set out across the country, equipped with pencils and manual typewriters, to compile local and oral histories, were famous names such as John Steinbeck, Saul Bellow and Studs Terkel. Since the interviews were conducted at a time before tape recorders were widely available, writers had to rely on their exhaustive notes and memory to capture each history.[23] The project led to the collection of more than 10,000 first person narratives, including accounts by the last generation of slaves.[24] Although much effort was put in creating this archive, only decades later would the full potential of this rich collection be exploited.[25]

An initiative covering the lives of the famous and powerful was the establishment of the Columbia University Oral History Research Office in 1948 by the political scientist Allen Nevins. Nevins took the initiative out of concern for missing important information from the top level of society, as the introduction of the telephone had led to a dramatic decrease in written correspondence among prominent figures in the political, cultural and economic realm.[26] With his team, he set out to document life histories making use of first-generation wire recorders. It is striking that they treated the material as text, not as sound. In fact, the

officially catalogued date of the interview was that of publishing the transcript, not the one on which the interview had been conducted. Moreover, just as is usual with manuscripts before publication, the transcripts would be returned to the interviewees to check whether they contained mistakes or potential embarrassing or sensitive references. These were then taken out. The most radical intervention was the destruction of the original tapes, sometimes out of concern that the interviewees would dislike the way they sounded.[27] This tradition of arranging power to 'speak' for posterity was further institutionalized with the introduction of the 'Presidential Libraries' program in 1961 by the National Archives, that included interviews with the higher ranks of a political administration.

In other parts of the world, and in Europe in particular, the practice of oral history emerged from a long tradition of traveling investigations that would, at the end of the nineteenth century, evolve into academic social research.[28] For practitioners in this field, the focus was not on the elite, but on those who were poorly represented in written archives. When 'oral history' was introduced as a term for collecting oral accounts of past experiences, for this particular group it was just a new name for something that they had always been doing. What was new and coincided with the postwar political tide of activism, was putting their efforts at the service of history 'from below'. Another fundamental difference with the American archival approach was the social historian's exclusive relationship with the interviewees. While archival projects separated the creation of the interview from the end use, social historians argued that only those who had created the interviews should be responsible for their use and interpretation. This monopoly excluded other researchers from access to valuable sources, leaving the enormous potential for reuse unexploited. In the 1960s a heated debate evolved around this issue. During the founding meeting of the US Oral History Association in 1967 the archivist Philip C. Brooks stressed the advantages of the archival approach: 'The person who is collecting a stock of evidence for other researchers to use is almost by definition to be [*sic*] doing a more objective job than the one who is writing his own book, especially one that has a case to prove'.[29] This stance does not take into consideration that the archival interview cannot anticipate the variety of research questions of future listeners. Of course, for the study of topics pertaining to the recent past, accounts collected in a setting with an exclusive relationship between researcher and interviewee that offer the possibility to probe for certain details, may be preferred over interviews conducted by someone else with a less specific goal or topic list, that have been deposited in an archive. Yet this advantage of direct contact becomes irrelevant with the unavoidable disappearance of generations of eyewitnesses. Oral accounts of the lives of the last American slaves and of the daily routine in the trenches of World War I, can now only be found in archives.

Fig. 28: The British historian Paul Thompson among his books

The scholar to be accredited the pioneering role of facilitating the reuse of life stories is the social historian Paul Thompson, who led the first national oral history project in Great Britain in the early 1970s. He collected 537 interviews about family and work with so-called 'Edwardians', people living during the reign of King Edward VII between 1901 and 1910, and opened them up to other scholars. It was a decisive step that paved the path for the archival tradition in Great Britain, which would later be picked up by the Imperial War Museum and the British Library [Fig. 28].[30]

Despite the differences between archival and research-generated oral narratives, in both approaches a traditional appreciation of the sources persisted. Out of defense against criticism from positivist historians, oral historians tended to regard their interviews as mere data from which the 'objective' historian extracted facts that could be tested for their accuracy, verifiability and representativeness.[31] This attempt to gain credibility did not convince the American historian Barbara Tuchman, who lamented that the 'tape recorder is a monster with the appetite of the tapeworm that facilitates an artificial survival of trivia of appalling proportions'.[32] Her comments seemed to foresee what according to some would be brought about by the digital turn twenty years later.

The memory boom, the cultural turn, and the digital turn

At the end of the twentieth century a paradigm shift in oral history occurred that was shaped by the interplay of three powerful social, intellectual and technological forces: the popularization and democratization of historical culture,

the postpositivist appraisal of sources as construction of meaning, and the digital revolution that set in the late 1990s.[33]

The first manifested itself in the proliferation of the production of personal memory and the interest raised in it.[34] The combination of affluence, higher education, individualism and mass media fostered an historical culture that was no longer the exclusive domain of professional historians. This not only led to less visible hierarchies of authority but created a strong demand for personalized history, turning identity into a commodity that can be consumed by anyone in leisure time.[35] The economic component of this new demand created new job opportunities for academically trained historians, but at the same time problematized their professional ethics. This process of democratization could draw on the firmly grounded position of 'history from below' that oral history had already established in the 1970s and 1980s.[36]

The second change that influenced the practice of oral history was the transformation from the search for information in the narratives into an appraisal of the narratives as constructions of meaning. Instead of objective information on the past they were now considered to be a type of data that merely offered an interpretation of the past conveyed through the agency of memory and language. Subjectivity and memory became key concepts in this new approach and the 'objective observer' was now expected to reflect on his role and influence in the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. This transformation was part of a much larger shift in paradigm, often referred to as the 'linguistic turn' or 'cultural turn', and had the effect that scholarly work in oral history moved from social history to cultural studies.[37]

With this new orientation the speaker's subjectivity, his or her biases, failing memory and distortions, were no longer problematic, but clues to how people make sense of experiences of the past in the present. In the words of a leading theorist on oral history Alessandro Portelli: 'Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did'.[38] Portelli argued for more listening and less reading. In his view the practice of transcription denied the reality of oral sources, by not considering the value of tone, volume, range of sound and rhythm of speech.[39] The contemplative nature of this line of research reinforced the already existing multidisciplinary potential of oral history connecting it to disciplines such as biographical and literary studies, linguistics, communication and narrative studies, folklore studies and interdisciplinary work exploring the relationship between memory, narrative and personal identity.[40]

The effects of the cultural turn and considerations of the nature and impact of narratives were duplicated with the expansion of digital video recording as an option in the late 1990s. In combination with the disseminative power of the digital turn, this led to a third major shift in the practice of oral history.[41]

Digitization and the World Wide Web made unlimited reproduction and distribution of oral history transcripts and sound files possible, bringing technological and ethical issues regarding copyright, accessibility and control of data at the center of the debates on oral history.[42] Direct online access to the original spoken narrative became possible, and by adding subtitles, access to videotaped oral history can even be offered across the borders of language. The most compelling illustration of what multilingual video oral history has to offer is the Shoah Visual Archive with video narratives of 52,000 survivors of the Holocaust collected in fifty-six countries in thirty-two languages [Fig. 29 below].[43]

Although the advantages in terms of massive involvement in online oral history are evident, the wide range of online digital encounters with historical accounts and the diversity of personal narratives to be found online calls for some scholarly guidance in the form of digital source criticism. The boundaries between community engagement, entertainment and carefully designed oral history projects that yield valuable sources for academics are not always clear. Moreover, when an appealing narrative that represents the view of an underprivileged group, although historically inaccurate, gains strong public support, the perspective of historians can lose authority. A critical stance should also be taken with regard to the dominance of state-funded oral history projects on the Web. Contextualization of digital oral sources is therefore vital to understand the current battle between memory and history.

Immediacy and hidden layers

As indicated, novel means for online access to spoken content have entered the scene, and the emerging techniques for the automated unraveling of the multiple layers encrypted in narratives are likely to enhance the options for exploring the wealth of data that is available in digital format. They come along with other innovations in the (digital) workflow that is now at the disposal of humanist scholars for handling their data. This new encounter of the humanities with technology is nurtured and closely monitored by industrial parties and ICT researchers alike, as they all have something to gain from mastering the complexity inherent to humanities data and practices.[44] The promise for the oral history community is the development of sophisticated software that can help to search, annotate, analyze, share and present oral histories in novel ways with no limits in terms of space, scale and time.

A number of pioneering initiatives for using the Internet as a stage for presenting oral history were carried out in the past decade. These projects yielded recommendations for how to apply cutting-edge technology to online interview repositories at all conceivable levels: across online collections, within a collection, within a specific interview, or within a specific fragment.

Fig. 29: Home page of the Shoah Foundation Visual Archive

According to Michael Frisch, the paradigm emerging in the application of search technology to digitized oral history, is characterized by 'a postdocumentary sensibility': away from text and sensitive to other dimensions of human expression than language, including the nonverbal and affective layers of speech (visual and non-visual) and gestures, or in other words: the 'full' story. The nonverbal dimensions are also crucial for the interaction design of online platforms giving access to spoken word content. Audio content may be faceted (not just speech, but also sighs, laughter, hesitations, corrections, etc.), and video narratives are inherently multifaceted, but user interfaces should also provide visual anchors, such as timelines, related image content and well-designed frameworks for the presentation of metadata and time-coded pointers to search results. Ideally, life stories can be played together with any relevant geographical and chronological context, and without dependency on information elsewhere in cyberspace. Figure 30 (see next page) contains an illustration of the timeline visualization for retrieved fragments in the access portal for a collection of thirty-eight interviews with survivors from Camp Buchenwald.[45]

In addition to tools for search and navigation, analytical tools for the automatic discovery of patterns in oral history data are gradually becoming available for scholarly use. The successful and rapid adoption of such tools in humanities disciplines such as ethnography, literature studies and media studies, calls for the exploration of their usability for oral history. The so-called 'mining' of speech
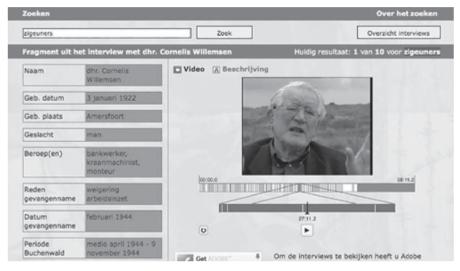
Fig. 30: Timeline visualization of retrieved fragments in the access portal for a collection of thirty-eight interviews with Dutch survivors from Camp Buchenwald, Buchenwald, NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies, http://www.buchenwald.nl

data is mostly approached as a special instance of text mining (also known as text analytics), as for spoken word content the textual annotations layers, including metadata and interview transcripts, can be used.[46] Tools supporting content sharing are specifically relevant from the perspective of archives that deploy some form of crowdsourcing and that invite the general public or dedicated communities of amateurs to help enriching archival content.

How to benefit from the innovations described and illustrated above lies in the hands of scholars who are willing to embrace e-humanities and the challenges of engaging in collaboration with software engineers.[47] Of course, the innovations have encountered skeptical responses, and in the field of oral history with its rich tradition of debates on how to appreciate new technology, one may expect that there will be recurring calls for rethinking the risks and virtues attributed to the digital humanities. Some of these attributions are expressed through concepts such as 'distant reading' (as opposed to 'close reading').[48]

The support for search and navigation in speech collections and the tools for pattern detection in spoken audio are likely to reach maturity in the coming years. For oral history this would lead to the paradoxical scenario that transcriptions are fully exploited, while at the same time the potential is created for direct access to oral sources without engaging in transcript reading. This is once again an illustration of the ever shifting balance in the appreciation of the spoken word and transcripts that characterizes the field of oral history.

Notes

1   A. Freund, 'Oral History as Process-Generated Data', *Historical Social Research* 34.1 (2009), 22-48.

2   R. Grele, 'Oral History as Evidence', in T.L. Charlton, L.E. Myers, and R. Sharpless (eds.), *History of Oral History: Foundations and Methodology* (Altamira, 2007), 34.

3   Peter Burke has observed that Leopold von Ranke was less orthodox than his followers; just as Marx was not a Marxist, Ranke was not a Rankean ('Overture the New History, Its Past and Its Future' in Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* [Cambridge, 1991], 3).

4   Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 35.

5   J. Morris, 'Inimitable Charlatan or the "Father of History"? A Reexamination of Herodotus', URL: http://www.yale.edu/heyzeus/winter2002/herodotus.pdf. Cf.: 'Herodotus as an Ancient Journalist: Reimagining Antiquity's Historians as Journalists', online paper by J. Saltzman, Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, URL: http://ijpc.uscannenberg.org/journal/index.php/ijpcjournal/article/viewFile/22/29. The difference between the two Greek historians is accentuated strongly in order to illustrate that the discussion about the validity of oral sources has a long tradition. According to some classicists a closer reading of their texts makes clear that there are passages in the work of either that do not fit well with this ideal-typical differentiation.

6   Thompson, *The Voice*, 34.

7   *Ibid.*, 51.

8   *Ibid.*, 56.

9   Just a few examples of new approaches to history are the French Annales movement, with its focus on social structures and mentalities, the interest in micro-histories and ego-documents expressed by historians like Carlo Ginzburg and Leroy Ladurie, and anthropologists like Eric Wolf, who tried to rewrite world history from a subaltern perspective in his magnum opus *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley, 1982).

10 Thompson, *The Voice*, 54.

11 C. Weber, 'University Collections as Custodians of Oral Heritage: Some Examples from Germany', URL: http://publicus.culture.hu-berlin.de/umac/2004/weber.doc.

12 T.A. Edison, *North American Review*, June 1878, Library of Congress, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division; URL: http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/edhtml/edcyldr.html.

13 Edward B. Moogk and Paul Théberge, 'Recorded Sound Technology and Its Impact', The Canadian Encyclopedia, URL: http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/recorded-sound-technology-and-its-impact-emc/; U. Idzikowska, *De fonograaf in de Nederlandstalige literatuur rond de eeuwwisseling; een motievenstudie* (MA thesis, Ghent University, 2009/2010), URL: http://lib.ugent.be/fulltxt/RUG01/001/457/999/RUG01-001457999_2011_0001_AC.pdf.

14 Original source unknown. The cartoon is included in J. Weverbergh and I. Hobana, *De triomf van de droom* (Antwerp-Baarn, 1991), 35, cf. Idzikowska, *De fonograaf*, 16.

15 Benedetto Croce, 'Sentendo parlare un vecchio napoletano del Quattrocento' (orig. 1913), in *Storie e leggende napoletane* (Bari: Laterza, 1948), 121-122. Cited in Alessandro Casellato, 'Le guerre non finiscono mai. Fonti orali, storiografia, culture di Guerra', in *Associazione di Storia Orale, Fonte edite.* URL: http://www.aisoitalia.it/wp-content/uploads/Storia-orale-storiografia-e-cuture-di-guerra.pdf; website: Associazione di Storia Orale

Italiana: http://www.aisoitalia.it/2008/12/28/alessandro-casellato/ (translation by Stef Scagliola).

16   URL: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/357264/magnetic-recording.

17   Casellato, 'Le guerre non finiscono mai'.

18   S. Ziegler, 'Die akustischen Sammlungen. Historische Tondokumente im Phonogramm-Archiv und im Lautarchiv', in Horst Bredekamp and Jochen Brüning (eds.), *Theater der Natur und Kunst/Theatrum naturae et artis. Wunderkammern des Wissens* (Berlin, 2000).

19   A. Fontana and J. Frey, 'The Art of Science', in N. Denzin, *The Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Sage, 1994), URL: http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~pms/cj355/readings/fontana%26frey.pdf.

20   R. Sharpless, 'The History of Oral History', in T.L. Charlton, L.E. Myers, R. Sharpless (eds.), *History of Oral History: Foundations and Methodology* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007), 11-12, See also: S. Everett, *Oral History Techniques and Procedures* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1992).

21   *Voices of the Holocaust*, Paul V. Galvin Library, Illinois Institute of Technology, URL: http://voices.iit.edu/david_boder.

22   J. Hirsch, *Portrait of America: A Cultural History of the Federal Writers' Project* (Wilmington: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 147-148.

23   URL: http://suite101.com/a/the-federal-writers-project-a-new-deal-initiative-a240803/. The fact that recording devices were only used for a very small part of the project and that the eventual sources were the notes of the interviewers and not the original wordings of the interviewees, does not mean that the accounts should be regarded as a form of journalism. They were created as sources with clear instructions to stay as close as possible to the language of the speakers.

24   Sharpless, 'The History of Oral History', 10. *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, URL: http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/entry/view/federal_writers_project_in_oregon/.

25   Hirsch, *Portrait of America*.

26   Thompson, *The Voice*, 65.

27   R. Grele, 'Oral History as Evidence', in Sharpless, *History of Oral History*, 36-37.

28   Grele, 'Oral History', 38.

29   E.I. Dixon and J.V. Mink (eds.), *Oral History at Arrowhead: The Proceedings of the First National Colloquim on Oral History* (Los Angeles: Oral History Association, 1967); Grele, 'Oral History', 39.

30   Thompson, *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society* (Philadelphia: Taylor and Francis, 2005). URL: http://www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/online/data/edwardians/introduction.asp.

31   A. Thomson, M. Frisch, and A. Hamilton, 'The Memory and History Debates: Some International Perspectives', *Oral History* 2.22 (Autumn 1994), 33-35.

32   B. Tuchman, 'Distinguishing the Significant from the Insignificant', in D.K. Dunaway and W.K. Baum (eds.), *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology* (London/New Delhi, 1994), 94-98; Sharpless, 'The History'.

33   R. Perks and A. Thomson, *The Oral History Reader* (New York, 2006), 1.

34   J. Winter, 'The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Contemporary Historical Studies', *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* (Spring 2000), URL: http://www.ghi-dc.org/publications/ghipubs/bu/027/b27winterframe.html.

35   A.S. Milward, 'Bad Memories', *Times Literary Supplement*, 14 April 2000, 8.

36   Sharpless, 'History of Oral History', 14.

37   Grele, 'Oral History', 53-54.

38   A. Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different?', in R. Perks and A. Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (New York, 2006), 36.

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