A well-developed notion of revolution as a good thing and as a cleansing action, overturning the past and setting things right.

In 1960, deeply alienated individuals operating within the parameters of this transript, tested the limits of power with open revolt and failed. But even as Ronald Henry’s and his allies lay moldering in their graves, the 963 Coral Gardens incident, in which a personal vendetta carried out by some Black men was interpreted as a new uprising illustrated the real fear and paranoia that Claudius Henry’s movement had instilled in ‘official’ Jamaica.

A central issue of the 1972 electoral campaign was the ‘rod of correction’ and the ‘Honey Pussies’. After the 1960 incident, Claudius, convicted of treason (though never served a sentence of ten years hard labour. On release, he established a highly successful, largely self-supporting commune on the plains of southern Clarendon. Henry reputedly commanded a large following in that parish and, in the weeks before the election, issued a pamphlet endorsing Michael Manley’s FNP. It featured pictures of Henry with a rod purportedly given to him by Haile Selassie. Manley and Selassie himself. Completely misreading the mood of the electorate, the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), sought, in subsequent newspaper advertisements, to embarrass Manley for consort with known and convicted subversives, but this campaign largely backfired. Among many voters, particularly the young, the association between the FNP, Rastafari and black consciousness, gave the party a certain credibility and elan and contributed to its resounding victory at the polls. See, for example, Olive Senior’s account in "The Message in Change: A Perspective on the 1972 General Elections" (Kingston: Kingston Publishers, 1972).

Both myself and Okika Cay, separately, and with different emphases, explore the intense and barely veiled struggle for cultural and social dominance which is gaining momentum in Jamaica today. See Okika Cay, "Discovering the Social Power of the Poor", Social and Economic Studies 35, no.3 (1990), and Brian Moms, "Radical Caribbean: From Black Power to Abu Bakr" (Kingston: The Press, University of the West Indies, 1996).

In Jamaica the society is worried about the Creole or Patois interference. In America we are worried about the Ebonics [sic], which has been defined as a form of American Black English.

Yvonne M. Williams,

INTRODUCTION

Over the past four decades, there has been a wave of activism linked to the assertion of political, economic and cultural rights of the African-descended population of the USA. Along with the wave of activism has come a heightened awareness of the language variety, African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), used by most of this community in everyday informal communication. This increased awareness has occurred both amongst members of the African-American community and within the academic community in the USA. The two streams of language consciousness.

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have tended to come together in the area of education.

A primary function of the education system as an apparatus of the state is to reproduce the language skills necessary for people to function in economic production and in the administration of the state. In the USA, the main language used within the economic system and the state is English, more specifically those varieties of English regarded as standard in that country. A major task of the education system in that situation is teaching the use of these varieties of English, particularly in writing.

One way in which people of African descent in the USA have tried to assert their rights has been by contesting for the power that can be exerted over and through the apparatuses of the state. Not surprisingly, therefore, increased language awareness among speakers of AAVE has resulted in conflict over language policy within the education system.

A notable manifestation of this conflict has been litigation within the court system in the USA around the question of language rights for African-Americans. The trigger has been the poor academic performance of children of African descent within the school system, particularly in their writing and reading of English. Their poor performance has been blamed on the failure of the school system to take into account the language backgrounds of these children in the process of teaching them literacy skills in English.

Perhaps the most famous of these court cases has been the *King vs. Ann Arbor School District Board* in 1979, in which a suit was brought in the federal court on behalf of a group of “black economically disadvantaged children living in the social isolation of a housing project” in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The children represented a small minority of the school population of a school district which was predominantly white and economically well-off. Part of the grounds for the suit was that these children were denied equality of educational opportunity. The basis for this claim was that, in efforts to teach them literacy in ‘standard English’, no appropriate measures had been adopted by the school authorities to take account of the children’s home and community language, AAVE.

In a memorandum opinion and order, the judge, in denying a motion by the defendants to dismiss one of the claims in the suit, referred to the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1972, Section 1701(f) of Title 20 of the United States Code, which states that:

5 Ibid., p. 19.
7 Ibid., p. 19.
8 Ibid., p. 19.
9 Ibid., p. 19.
10 Ibid., p. 19.
The second issue that the witnesses presented testimony on was the exact nature of the differences between Black English/AAVE and standard varieties of English in the USA. The expert witnesses identified a variety of structural linguistic features that were present in the speech of the children and which were typical of Black English as spoken in the northern cities of the USA. The third issue dealt with in the expert evidence was the history of Black English. The judge, in a summary of the evidence, pointed to the significant connection between the language of the African-descended population of the United States and that of the Caribbean. He noted, among other things, that Black English bore the distinct marks of an Afro-Caribbean ancestry which reflected the earlier history of the black community in the USA.

In his ruling on the suit, the judge found that:

The failure of the defendant Board to provide leadership and help for its teachers in learning about the existence of 'Black English' as a home and community language of many black students and to suggest to those same teachers ways and means of using that knowledge... in connection with reading standard English is not rational in light of existing knowledge of the subject. (my emphasis).

The judge ordered that the School District Board submit plans for remedying situation. The stance he took on evaluating these plans was that "What action is appropriate should be judged simply in light of existing knowledge on the subject" (my emphasis).

THE EBONICS CASE

In making a contribution at a 1980 conference on the Ann Arbor decision, Labov (1983, 34) comments that many educators have borrowed Robert L. Williams's term 'Ebony' to refer to both the linguistic and cultural systems particular to Black Americans. He adds that the term is not widely used in linguistics but that it refers essentially to the same linguistic features as described by other terminology such as Black English. The term Ebony seems to be a coinage involving a blend of the words 'ebony' and 'phonics'.

In the academic literature on linguistics, the language variety has been variously designated, subject to evolving notions about the appropriate labels to describe people of African descent in the US. Among the terms have been Negro (Non-standard) English (NNSE), Black English (BE), a label popularized in a book

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7 Ibid.
10 Ibid. p 7.
11 William Labov, "Recognizing Black English", p. 34.

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title of the same name by Dillard. Black English Vernacular (BEV), Afro-Descendant Vernacular English (AAVE) and African-American Vernacular English (also AAVE). It should be noted, for the purposes of some of the observations to be made later, that the word 'English' crops up in all of these labels.

The hot public controversy which was going to the heat of theEbonic hit the USA and international media towards the end of 1996. The controversy concerned a resolution by the Oakland School Board in California. This resolution, No. 9607-0063, has as its subtitle "A policy statement... directing the Superintendent of schools to devise a program to improve the English Language acquisition and application skills of African-American students". Of the four clauses prefaced by the formula, "Now be it... [further] resolved", the last of which deals with implementation details, the first three read as follows:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education officially recognizes the existence, and the cultural and historic bases of West and Niger-Congo African Language Systems, and these are the language patterns that many African-American children bring to school;
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent in conjunction with her staff shall immediately devise and implement the best possible academic program for the combined purposes of facilitating the acquisition and mastery of English language skills while respecting and embracing the legitimacy and richness of the language patterns whether they are known as 'Eboney', 'African Language Systems', 'Pan African Communication Behaviours', or other description;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent and her staff shall utilize the input of the entire Oakland Educational community as well as state and federal input in devising such a program.

Let us first deal with the general thrust of the proposal, ignoring for the moment certain crucial details. The proposal was to immediately devise and implement the best possible academic programme that would teach English to African-American children. This was to be done while recognizing and respecting the language backgrounds they brought into the school. Teaching English was one of the goals of the school system and so that teaching aspect of the proposal should have been uncontroversial. As for respecting the language backgrounds of speakers, it is well known in the area of language teaching that the higher the status of children's first languages, the more effectively they
manage to learn a second (e.g. Cummins 1979). Thus, the natural spin-off of an approach that respects and values the home language would be an increase in the effectiveness of efforts to teach these children English as a second language. This connection was explicitly made in one of the clauses in the preamble of the resolution. Here, it was stated that it was the intention to base teaching on the linguistic system that the children had, with the aim of adding proficiency in English to the skills they already had in their native language variety.

The source of the controversy, I would suggest, lay in the detail of the resolution. Throughout the resolution, the linguistic system which African-Americans were said to possess was described by a multiplicity of terms, “Ebonics”, “Pan African Communication Behaviours”, and “African Language Systems”. These were terms that were attributed by the preamble to “various scholarly approaches”. What is significant here is the absence of the resolution of the word ‘English’ in any part of the nomenclature adopted for AAVE, even though, as we have noted, the scholarly works in linguistics almost always use labels that include the word ‘English’.

The terms preferred in the resolution were imprecise, and with the exception of Ebonics, inelegant. The Ebonics label, as a blend of ‘ebony’ and ‘phonics’ implied that the system being talked about was simply a special set of pronunciations associated with black/ebony people. The terms “Pan African Communication Behaviours” and “African Language Systems” were, from a strictly linguistic point of view, absurd. In Africa, a continent with huge language families such as Afro-Asiatic and Niger-Congo, there are enormous differences in the hundreds of languages in each language family, and even bigger differences from one language family to another. The use of the terms “Pan African Communication Behaviours” and “African Language Systems” to describe a single language variety in the resolution incorrectly implied that there was some single shared language or linguistic system for all people of African descent, within Africa and beyond.

With reference to various scholarly works, the second clause in the preamble states that “these studies have also demonstrated that African Language Systems have origins in West and Niger-Congo languages, and are not mere dialects of English” (my emphasis). We must presume that what is intended by the phrase “West and Niger-Congo languages” is the Niger-Congo languages of West Africa. The suggestion that the vernacular speech of African-Americans is influenced in this manner is supported by significant work in linguistics, most notably Alleyne 18. But the clincher in the resolution was the phrase “and are not mere dialects of English”. A statement was explicitly being made recognizing the vernacular language of the African-descended population in the USA as a language in its own right, separate and apart from English. The political context for this declaration was provided by the fourth clause of the preamble which makes reference “to legislation passed by the State of California recognizing the unique language status of descendants of slaves, with such legislation being vetoed repeatedly by California state governors”. 19

It is clear that the focus of language activism for people of African descent in the USA had shifted since the time of the Ann Arbor case in 1979. The claim at Ann Arbor had been for the recognition of African-American vernacular speech used by children as a ‘language barrier’ which had to be overcome in order to teach them to read in English. The Oakland resolution prescribed a similar remedy, that is the recognition of the existence of this community language system. However, wrapped in this relatively uncontroversial prescription was the claim, made almost in passing, that it was a language in its own right, separate and distinct from English.

A decision as in the Ann Arbor case to treat a form of speech as a ‘language barrier’ was, even with all the politics and race issues which surrounded it, largely a technical decision. The court and the educational authorities could seek guidance from the experts, the linguists and educators on how to overcome the ‘language barrier’ of Black English. However, to decide to view and treat any form of speech as a language in its own right is politics. In fact, in one of the published discussions of the 1979 Ann Arbor case, mention was made of Max Weinreich’s aphorism that “a language is a dialect with an army and a navy”. 20 Part of the Oakland resolution was symbolically assigning an army and navy to the vernacular speech of the population of African descent in the USA.

A decision for this population to secede linguistically from “English-speaking USA”, as was implied by this bit of the quoted portion of the resolution, was very serious politics. The issue raised in the resolution was a particularly sensitive one at a time when the position of English was being threatened in the USA, and particularly in the State of California, by the expansion of Spanish. Small wonder, therefore, that the issue blew up into a major subject of discussion and press coverage in the USA.

17 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
The matter became an issue of such great import that the United States Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education set up an Ebonics panel. On January 22, 1997, the linguist, John Rickford, submitted a statement to the chairman of the Senate subcommittee, requesting that it be read into the record of the Ebonics panel which was due to testify before the subcommittee. In his submission, Rickford pointed the subcommittee to six pieces of research: one on Norway, another on Sweden, and the rest relating to children of African descent in the USA. These pieces of research all evaluated methods employed to teach literacy skills in a language variety designated as standard to persons who spoke a non-standard language variety. Based on the evidence from this research, Rickford argued that "approaches which take vernacular dialects of students into account are more likely to succeed on a large scale than those which do not". He used this evidence to justify his support for, as he put it, "the Oakland School Board's decision to take the vernacular of their students into account in teaching them to read and write and to master SE [Standard English]."

The Rickford opinion, like much of the defense of the Oakland resolution from within the discipline of linguistics, took the "in light of existing knowledge on the subject" approach. This was much the same approach as that taken by the judge in 1979 Ann Arbor case. Nowhere in Rickford’s defense of the Oakland resolution do we see the slightest mention of the issue raised by the phrase “and are not mere dialects of English”. This absence is not accidental. AAVE was regarded by its speakers and others as, in the main, an unwritten and non-literary language. The education system, by contrast, is a state apparatus which is dominated by the written language. I suggest that defenders of the Oakland decision fell into two camps. There would have been those who were hostile to the suggestion and what it implied. There would have been others who sympathized but who may have considered that the political conditions were not right to argue the separate language case for AAVE in relation to an institution in which the role of written language was so dominant.

Interestingly enough, we do happen to know where Rickford stands on this particular issue. In a magazine article which focused on this aspect of the resolution, or as it put it, the decision to “declare Black English as a second language”, Rickford was quoted on the subject. He was identified in the article with the full range of his expert credentials, as Professor of Linguistics at Stanford University and as a member of the Linguistic Society of America’s executive which issued its own public statement of the Oakland decision. According to the article, Rickford explained that in layman’s terms a dialect is “a set of one or more varieties within a language”. What this treatment of the issue did was to imply that there existed an expert or linguist’s view of the subject. As had so clearly been expressed by expert witnesses in the 1979 Ann Arbor case, the issue of language versus dialect is always decided by lay people, not by linguists, it is essentially a political decision, not a linguistic one. Rickford is quoted as saying that Black English “is more like a separate dialect than a separate language. But it is probably the most distinctive dialect in the United States.”

Linguists have the knowledge necessary to make judgments about the extent of the difference between language varieties. As a consequence, the second statement does fall within Rickford’s area of expertise. As for the case dealt with in the first sentence, concerning whether these varieties are dialects of the same language or separate languages, as we saw in our discussion of the Ann Arbor case, this is a matter for lay people to decide. Unfortunately, the report treats both parts of Rickford’s statement, one that relies on his professional judgement and the other purely a matter of personal opinion, as if they were both opinions based on expertise.

In spite of lack of expressed support for the “and are not mere dialects of English” stand among the expert public defenders of the Oakland decision, however, this phrase was not just in the resolution by chance. It was not merely an unfortunate expression born of over-enthusiasm on the part of the drafters of the resolution. In fact, the phrase appeared in the January 15, 1997 amended version of the resolution. The amended version was produced in response to the public outcry about many aspects of the first version, passed on December 18, 1996. The scrutiny under which the amended version would have passed was unlikely to have allowed an unintended but controversial phrase such as this to slip through unnoticed. Added to this was the deliberate avoidance of the term ‘English’ in any of the labels used for AAVE in the resolution, and reference to the California state legislation recognizing the language of the population of African descent which had been vetoed by California state governors.

The import of the accumulation of evidence is clear. We have here a defiant position which expressed the view that AAVE was a language in its own right and should be regarded and officially recognized as such. The effort on the part of the supporters of the resolution to avoid publicly dealing with this aspect of the resolution was tactical. It represented the temporary papering over of a fundamental rift amongst activists on AAVE issues. On the one hand, there were

21 John R. Rickford, Letter to Senator Arlen Specter, Chairman, Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, January 22, 1997. [online.stanford.edu/~rickford].
22 Ibid.
23 "Should Black English be Considered a Second Language?", Jet 91, no. 9 (January 27, 1997).
24 Ibid.
those who wished to maintain the perception of AAVE as a dialect or variety of English, albeit unique and distinct. On the other, there were those who supported a perception of AAVE as a distinct language in its own right.

The latter position did not simply require the treatment of AAVE as a ‘language barrier’ to be overcome. It implied the development of a standard writing system for the language, and some level of standardization and the elaboration of technical vocabulary for the new communicative functions it would be required to perform. It would have to become a language in which literacy skills would be taught, and a medium of instruction through which other subjects might be taught.

Nowhere did the resolution say that the language of the African-descended population of the USA would be used as a medium for teaching literacy, as a medium of instruction or taught as a subject. However, this is implied by the part of the resolution that recognizes it as more than a mere dialect of English. Amidst all the distortion from the US media, that particular message did get over to the public. Thus, in a letter to a Jamaican newspaper, which from its content was written by a Jamaican residing in the USA, the writer states that “in California in the fall of 1996, a school district voted a new course of study called ‘Ebonics’.25 Wrong in fact, but correct in the underlying implications of the Oakland resolution.

The Caribbean Response

Many educated persons in the Commonwealth Caribbean see themselves as embattled, about to be overrun by an invading wave of ‘dialect’, ‘broken language’, ‘patois’ or ‘Creole’. This perception has some basis in reality. The status of Caribbean vernacular languages is indeed rising and the number of situations within which the exclusive use of English is a social requirement is rapidly shrinking. These educated persons often direct blame for the situation at the reforms of the education systems in the Commonwealth Caribbean during the 1970s. These reforms did indeed produce more liberal attitudes to the vernacular languages within the school systems.

Policy changes, similar in inspiration to those advocated by the Ann Arbor decision, were adopted in the major territories of the Commonwealth Caribbean in the early to mid 1970s. These policies, as pointed out by Carrington,26c involved the education authorities recognizing the existence of the home languages of

children as rule-governed systems, distinct and autonomous from English. These policies were devised using the advice of educationists and of linguists working on Caribbean vernacular languages. There was comparatively little public controversy regarding these reforms. The education authorities and public opinion generally accepted policy directions which were taken “in light of existing knowledge on the subject”.

Efforts were made to train teachers to respect the home language in the education system. In addition, English language teaching materials and methods were devised that took into account the vernacular language background of the majority of the children coming into the school. There were, of course, numerous shortcomings in the implementation of these enlightened and more effective ways of teaching English. Not surprisingly, therefore, such shortcomings have been used by its conservative opponents as sticks with which to attack the overall direction in which language education policy appeared to be moving. From another direction, these reforms have been criticized by Devonish as representing mere tinkering with the language situation.27 According to this view, the reforms avoided recognizing Caribbean vernacular languages as official languages and formal languages of education. As a consequence, they were seen as helping to maintain a linguistic status quo which discriminated against the mass of monolingual vernacular speakers.

Interestingly enough, John Rickford who emerged as a major public spokesman in the USA on the ‘Ebonics’ controversy, is not just a major scholar of AAVE. He is from Guyana and the other major area of his expertise is Caribbean Creole languages. Rickford presented a 1987 study of language use in a rural community in Guyana.28 In response to a question which he put to his informants about whether they thought Guyanese Creole should be used on the radio and in schools, one female sugar estate informant responded enthusiastically in the affirmative. This was essentially an affirmation that in her view, Guyanese Creole was a language separate and distinct from English, deserving of official recognition as such. Rickford, in commenting on responses such as these, states, “For her...the use of the basilect (the most non-English Creole in the most English-English forms of Guyanese Creole) is part of a larger sociopolitical statement that progress for those at the bottom does not involve adopting the behaviours and lifestyles of those at the top, but defying and resisting the dominant social order.”29 Here, he allows a member of the community to have her own say about

29 Ibid., p. 164.
relationships between language varieties, accepting that it is a matter for the individuals and the social groups concerned. Note the difference in his reported position, discussed in the previous section, on whether AAVE was a dialect of English or not.

It is into this situation in the Commonwealth Caribbean that shrapnel from the Ebonics bomb fell. And there was a great deal of squealing from people who considered that they had been hit. Such persons were particularly concerned since the pattern has been that, almost as if by imperial fiat, any changes that originated in that great and powerful northern neighbour are copied in the Caribbean.

The squealing was a product of the language ideology of the typical educated person in the Commonwealth Caribbean person. These persons derive authority to express opinions on language based on the fact that they (i) have a command of written English that approximates the norms of written English as used in Britain and/or the USA, and (ii) speak a variety of English that is considered educated within their societies and often beyond.

According to their language ideology, English is the only language, as distinct from ‘dialect’, ‘broken language’, ‘patois’ used in their communities. The fact that English language is just one of perhaps four thousand named languages in the world is irrelevant. For them, English is the most international of languages, the major language of communication in the areas of science and technology and, according to this view, easily the finest tool of literary expression. By contrast, vernacular languages in the Commonwealth Caribbean have traditionally rarely been written, and are never used in great literature or modern scientific writing. Hence, such modes of communication can hardly be deemed to be a language, but are really simply dialects.

For the typical educated person in the Commonwealth Caribbean, the rising status of vernacular languages within their own societies represents the end of civilization as they know it. The Ebonics issue in the USA, therefore, though it frightened them, also provided them with propaganda support. The hostile coverage of the Ebonics issue by the US media provided fresh ammunition for the local language battle. They used material provided in such coverage to ridicule both the Oakland School Board decision and those local persons who were perceived as promoters of ‘dialect’, ‘patois’ or just ‘plain bad English’.

A POSTSCRIPT: TECHNOLOGICAL ORATURE

Before the invention of writing, stories of origin, along with the values considered to mark a national group as distinct from all others, were encoded in bodies of spoken language. These often took the form of epic oral poems, performed to musical backing by specialists, bards or ‘people of the mouth’. In these societies, bards had the responsibility of learning these bodies of orature, performing them for the public and transmitting them to new generations of performers. This was as true of the Iliad and the Odyssey, attributed to Homer, dating back to Greece in the preclassical period, as of the Sundial epic associated with the ancient Mali empire in West Africa. The language variety manifested itself as ‘a language’ through these works of orature. The existence of the language variety as ‘a language’ along with the content of the body of orature, together served to act as expressions of national identity.

The arrival of writing and more recently, in the mid-fifteenth century, of the printing press, totally transformed how the sense of linguistic and national identity was to be expressed. The language in its written form became the point of identification for the entire national group. Through creative language use, works of literature became the medium by which traditions and values could be spread and transmitted from one generation to the next. Multiple copies of such works, produced by the printing press, developed as the means by which the works were disseminated and common attitudes and values formed amongst large groups of people. A language variety became ‘a language’, according to this new dispensation, when it acquired a widely recognized written form and a body of literature to go with it. The nation became the group who spoke this language, and had their identity expressed through the literature in the language. The English nation in the post-fifteenth century period came to define itself as consisting of people who spoke the language of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton and the King James version of the Bible.

In modern times, a huge psychological barrier separates language varieties with an established writing system and a recognized literature from those that have neither. Movement from the latter kind of state into the former requires the overcoming of this barrier. For most people, the fact of a language having or not having an established writing system and literature is a given. Like the path the sun takes across the sky each day, it is a reality of existence into which they were born and which they will die and leave. A language moving from the class of unwritten and without literature into the category of written and literary, a fairly regular historical occurrence, is outside of the actual experience of most people. Any suggestion, therefore, that this can happen is often treated with as much ridicule as someone suggesting that the path of the sun can be changed.

Sound recording, reproduction and transmission represent a set of twentieth century technologies that perform essentially the same functions as writing and print. They allow bodies of language to be recorded and transmitted to large audiences without the sender being required to be in the presence of the receivers of the messages. These technologies are even more effective in that they do not require the persons receiving the message to know how to read. So long as the recipients can understand and speak the language variety in question, they can receive any message transmitted by these new technologies. In cases where the language is an unwritten and non-literary one, there are none of the
psychological barriers associated with writing and print to be overcome amongst the senders or hearers of such messages. Speakers of Jamaican and AAVE have been quick to capture these new technologies as a means of using their vernacular languages to a mass audience and asserting the identities associated with these language varieties.

Dancehall in Jamaica and rap in the USA are forms of technological orature. These are orally performed poems, delivered to musical backing. They have mass audiences and serve to transmit and reinforce a common world view across their respective communities. They are the poor man's answer to the riddle of how to construct a national language and a national identity in the information age. Unwritten and unrecognized languages can now be technologized and employed to serve as a badge of national identity. And the new technologies are profoundly democratic, available to speakers of any language, irrespective of whether that language is written or not.

It is a truism that change to any well-established system never comes from the centre of this system but from its periphery. It is at the periphery that opportunities for experimentation and innovation exist. Jamaica and the community of African descent in the USA are linked historically by language. They also share similar contemporary situations, with their vernacular languages existing in a peripheral relationship to English. It is probably no accident, therefore, that they should resort to the same technologically innovative solutions to the problems of language and identity construction.

Technological orature avoids challenging the state where it is strongest, in the area of writing technology, written language and its uses both as an agent of administration and production and as a symbol of national identity. And it avoids making a direct challenge to the education system, the state apparatus where the status of written language is strongest. Technologized orality provides a means of walking around the language barrier rather than jumping it.