African Tongues in Our Mouths: Their Role in African-Centred Psychology

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Abstract

This paper discusses the importance of language in the development of a Pan African Black Psychology. The article demonstrates how recognizing and honouring the ‘African Tongues in our Mouths’ (Ebonics and BaNtu Portuguese) are both acts of retention and resistance to dehumanization and are essential and valuable to the restoration of healing and wellness for African (continental and diaspora) people and practitioners.

Keywords: Linguistic, African Psychology, African Diaspora, Pan African Psychology

Izilimi zase-Afrika Emilonyeni Yethu: Iqhaza Lazo Kusifundongqondo Ngengxilabu-Afrika

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Iqoqa

Leli phepha lixoxa ngokubaluleka kwezilimi ekwakhiweni kobumbano lwama-Afrika ansundu esifundongqondo. Iphepha likhombisa ukuthi ukubhekelela kanye nokuhlonipha izilimi zase-Afrika emilonyeni yethu (ama-*Ebonics* kanye nabantu abangamaPutukezi) kokubili kuba kanjani yizindlela zokugcina kanye nokulwa nokwehliswa isithunzi; kanti kubalulekile futhi kunosizo ekubuyiseni ukwelapha kanye nempilo yabantu base-Afrika (abazinze e-Afrika nabahlala phesheya kwezilwandle) kanye nabasebenzi bolimi.

Amagama asemqoka: ucwaningo zilimi, isifundongqondo ngobu-Afrika, abantu base-Afrika abahlala phesheya kwezilwandle, ubumbano lwesifundongqondo nge-Afrika

Figure 1: Escrava Anastacia, circa the 1740s.

We open this discussion with the sketch of Escrava Anastacia who was enslaved around the 1740s by the Portuguese. Her mother was a BaNtu woman, who arrived in Brazil with a group of noble Africans, who came from Kongo to be enslaved in Brazil, and who helped to organise many collective escapes (Teixeira Neto 1988). The story told about Anastacia is that she was a very beautiful woman, who always aroused the attention of white men, and the envy of white women. However, by her real ascendancy, she always had a noble and haughty stance, rejecting any kind of relationship. She was a BaNtu woman, who stood up to her Portuguese enslavers in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. Of course, the quest for liberty is paramount in her story. Anastacia resisted and protested the loss of her freedom. To this day, her Spirit is sanctified and

worshiped in Umbanda (Afro-Brazilian religion) for her generosity and miraculous cures.

The enslavers, on the other hand, considered those captured to be less than human and responded to them in inhumane ways. Karash (2000) in his account of the life of the Black people enslaved in Rio de Janeiro in the nineteenth century, mentions the ill-treatment and physical punishment that was imputed upon these people.

Some threats were more terrible than a slug to control slaves. You could threaten them with lashes in the public square or the dreaded dungeon; abandonment in a dungeon; a visit to the tamer of 'refractory slaves', who specialized [sic] in more exotic tortures; imprisonment with iron in the legs, mask of iron or trunk; various forms of humiliation and public torture; castration, dismemberment, hanging; sale is from the city or Africa; and finally murders (Karash 2000: 174).

Anastacia's resistance to that situation of harassment caused her to be tortured, beaten, raped, and forced to wear a muzzle-like facemask that prevented her from expressing her disapproval towards what was happening to her and fellow captives. Kilomba (2010) describes the iron mask as an instrument of torture that can be taken as a symbol of the colonisers/enslavers' policies, denoting sadistic strategies for conquest and domination and their 'brutal regimes' of silencing the so-called 'Other'. Who can speak? What happens when we talk? What can we talk about, and in which language?

A most important consideration is that to be human is to have language. For the enslavers to rationalise their actions, they had to see wealth and greed rather than humanity. It was Escrava Anastacia and millions more who, in the eyes of their captors, became less than human, and were treated as chattel. Language defines us as being fully human. In being forced to wear a muzzle-like mask to mute her voice, Anastacia was prevented from expressing her indignation and fury about what was happening to her and others. This brutality is an indication of the enslavers' intent to have complete power and control over her language, her personhood, and her humanity. The vulgar and savage muzzling of Anastacia in 1794 in Brazil and the Soweto high school students protesting against the Afrikaans Medium Decree of 1974, that required the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in local schools, resulted in the murder of children in imposing language dominance.

These are but two examples evidencing centuries' old struggle to rescue our language as an act of freeing our humanity.

I The Importance of Being and Language

This paper discusses the importance of language in the development of a Pan African Black Psychology. An unaddressed problem in the advancement of a Pan African Psychology is the failure to understand and incorporate the retention of African language features as a critical component of Pan African Psychology. In utilising a comparative analyses of both Ebonics and BaNtu Portuguese, as examples of African tongues in our mouths, the article demonstrates how recognising and honouring the retention of African language features in the diaspora are both acts of retention and resistance to dehumanisation. Language retention is essential and valuable to the restoration of healing and wellness for African (continental and diaspora) people and practitioners. It serves as resistance and retention against the imposed western dehumanisation.

In 1996, the unrecognised language of African Americans was also assaulted. Even though professional linguistic associations or societies (Linguistic Society of America 1996) have recognised the scientific and human advantages to linguistic diversity and that Ebonics should be recognised as such, many scholars carrying the western grand narrative repeatedly indict and/or deny the legitimacy of Ebonics as retentive of an African linguistic system. Some have gone as far as to classify Ebonics as 'language nonsense' and a 'cockamamie' approach to language instruction. It is argued that Ebonics as 'bad' language or 'street' language must be eradicated and not sanctioned by any instructional programme. Unlike other bilingual initiatives (Ebonics is) the last thing children should be taught (Davis 1996). In the experience of Africans in Brazil, authors such as Lélia Gonzales (1988) can be cited, who argue that the African linguistic influence in Portuguese spoken in Brazil is an act of political resistance.

Cakata (2018) rightly points to the critical importance of language in expressing one's identity and one's world. She notes that the colonial attempt to transform the African mind was deliberate and intentional. In quoting Professor Saule, she shows that the colonial 'linguaging' of the word for ancestors from *iminyanya* into *izinyanya* (the prefix, *izi*, being reserved for the noun class

that denotes objects or things), was a deliberate attempt to shift our ancestors' humanness to 'thingness'. Indeed, Frantz Fanon delineated the concept of 'thingification' of the African being over a half century ago (Fanon [1952] 1967).

The human ability to communicate is the foundation of all human activities. Additionally, the ability to speak and think allow humans to define relationships, roles, and responsibilities. Moreover, language is a direct reflection of a people's cosmology and system of episteme. In the quest for global hegemony, the western world has oppressed African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora.

The denial of the African to exercise and enjoy linguistic freedom where this has taken place has been one of the most salient and costly forms of African dehumanisation. The language of the oppressor (linguistic hegemony) is used to devalue, dehumanise, and confuse, while at the same time causing the oppressed to lose confidence in retaining their indigenous linguistic and cultural values, while promoting ideas that empower the oppressors and their cultural artefacts.

II The Quest for Global Hegemony

The western world has oppressed African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora through the attempt to have complete power and control over 'language'. When our ancestors were brought to the new world absent of freedom, in chains, they did not arrive absent of thought and belief about their identity. They came with a language and a system of beliefs (logic) about what it meant to be human (W. Nobles 2016). The language of the oppressor (linguistic hegemony) is used to dehumanise, devalue, and confuse to promote ideas that empower the oppressors and their cultural artifacts while causing the oppressed to lose confidence in their own linguistic and cultural values and sense of humanity.

What is the intention of language imposition? Fundamentally, the strategy is to 'strip the people of their possessions as well as their sovereignty' (V. Nobles 2015: 131). Furthermore, the imposition of a foreign or alien language as well as the denigration or nullification of a people's indigenous language has the direct effect of dehumanising them and/or causing them a feeling of debasement, which also strips them of their sense of agency, authenticity, and fundamental cultural possessions.

III African Tongues in our Mouths: Ebonics and BaNtu Portuguese

Ebonics is a creole language that was created by the enslaved Africans, who came primarily from the areas of the Niger-Bantu-Kongo. Robert Williams coined the term Ebonics to capture and classify the African tongues of the enslaved descendants of African origin (Williams 1975). Ebonics for African American people has served as an act of resistance to hegemony and dehumanisation. Ebonics is a term developed by consensus among several African American psychologists and ethno-linguists as an all-encompassing, non-pejorative label for the linguistic and paralinguistic features that on a continuum represent the language and communicative components of West African Niger Kongo language family. The term was coined from joining two words: the ancient Kemetic word, *ebony*, which is a tree with wood that is black in colour, and has come to also denote Blackness, and phonics, from the Greek *fonetikos*, meaning sounds. Technically, Ebonics represents the resilience of the Niger Kongo language family and a New World continuation of African linguistic systems (V. Nobles 1998).

Ebonics addresses the common linguistic and paralinguistic features that represent the communicative competence of language speakers from West Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States. To understand Ebonics as a form of cultural retention, one needs to see the direct forms of retention of the Niger-Kongo-Bantu linguistic system. Ebonics is governed by precisely the same way as languages found in the Niger-Kongo-Bantu family of languages. Ebonics has retained the most common syllabic pattern of Niger-Kongo-Bantu languages, which is consonant-vowel, consonant-vowel (CVCV or CVC).

The experience of Africans in Brazil has also been marked by physical and symbolic violence, along with Africans elsewhere in the diaspora. Brazil hosted the great ports, where Africans came from the continent before they were dispersed throughout the American continent. The country is considered the nation with the largest population of African descent in the diaspora, second only in number to that of Nigeria on the Continent. Brazil was the country that received the most African people and the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery in 1888. At the time of Brazil's independence from Portugal, more than two-thirds of the Brazilian population was black and mestizo, and the government planned the 'whitening' of the population, by encouraging the arrival of Europeans (especially Germans and Italians) to increase the propor-

tion of white people in the country. They donated land to European colonial settlement, but there was no reparation for the Africans already being exploited in Brazil. A century after the end of slavery the lands of the communities of resistance of the fugitive Africans, the Kilombos, were regulated as areas of protection in the Federal Constitution of 1988. However, the official titling of the Kilombos only came to be concretely realised in 2002. The agrarian problem is one of the reasons for the emergence of the first favelas in Brazil in the post-abolition period, at the end of the nineteenth century (Campos 2005). This information illustrates how much there has been and still there is an effort to annihilate the existence of the African people, not recognising their contributions, trying to erase their memory, ignoring the need for reparations for the very grave historical errors, and invisibilising the BaNtu linguistic contribution to the way that the Portuguese language is spoken in Brazil.

Some authors explain that there was no creation of a Creole language in Brazil for several reasons:

The proportion between the population of African and white origin, which favored [sic] a greater access to the target language [Portuguese] than that observed in typical situations of creolization [sic]; the absence of social and family life among the populations of slaves, caused by the subhuman conditions of their exploitation, by the high mortality rate, and by the successive displacements; the use of African languages as an instrument for the interaction of segregated and fugitive slaves; the encouragement of proficiency in Portuguese; racial miscegenation.

Unlike the case of Ebonics, where racial segregation allowed blacks to maintain their way of speaking, the BaNtu Portuguese experience was not restricted to Black people, but extended to the entire Brazilian population. Africans changed the language of the Europeans, and the African presence in Brazil provided a way of speaking the Portuguese language, very different from the Portuguese spoken in Portugal (Castro 2016; Bagno 2016).

When it comes to computers, the keyboard settings offer Portuguese (pt) and Brazilian Portuguese (pt-br). Given the wealth of contributions and history of Africans in this place, we chose to put the BaNtu people in their rightful place and to name the Portuguese spoken in Brazil as BaNtu Portuguese. Because we understand that one of the European strategies of

annihilation of Africans in Brazil is to name their contributions as ‘popular’ or ‘Brazilian’, as a way of not saying that the owners of these voices and many other contributions considered as icons of national identity, like *samba*, *feijoada*, and *capoeira*, are people of African descent.

According to Gonzales (1988),

Thanks to growing contact with Black cultural manifestations from other countries of the American continent, I have had the opportunity to observe certain similarities that, as far as the speeches are concerned, remind us of our country. It is true that the Black presence in the Caribbean region (here understood not only as Insular America but including the Atlantic coast of Central America and the north of South America) has modified Spanish, English and French spoken in the region .... That is, what I call ‘Black’ and is nothing more than the mark of Africanization [sic] of Portuguese spoken in Brazil .... The tonal and rhythmic character of the African languages brought to the New World, besides the absence of certain consonants (such as *l* or *r*, for example), point to an unexplored aspect of Black influence in the historical-cultural formation of the continent as a whole .... Even more evident similarities are evident if our gaze turns to the songs, the dances, the belief systems, etc. Needless to say, all this is covered up by the ideological veil of whitening, it is repressed by Eurocentric classifications of the type ‘popular culture’, ‘national folklore’, etc., which minimize [sic] the importance of the Black contribution (Gonzales 1988: 70).

The impact of the speakers of African origin on the formation of Brazilian Portuguese was simply denied, or reduced to lists of words of African origin introduced in our language. The majority of the Africans received, spoke languages of the group BaNtu, in particular, Kimbundu, Umbundu, and Kikongo. And the lexical contribution of these languages to Portuguese BaNtu is enormous. For example, the BaNtu Portuguese calls the younger son of the *caçula*, while European Portuguese calls him *benjamin*.

BaNtu Portuguese has in common with Kimbundu a system of seven oral vowels (a é ê i ô ó u) and a similar syllabic structure: CVCV . This is why popular Portuguese, BaNtu Portuguese, does not usually close a syllable with a consonant, and the pronunciation of the word ‘*falar*’ becomes ‘*falá*’ and

‘*correr*’, becomes ‘*corrê*’. Another aspect of the BaNtu pronunciation is the breakup of consonantal encounters by the insertion of a vowel, and the Africanisation of the pronunciation of the words *flor* to *fulô*, *salvar* for *saravá*, for example.

Also, some authors argue that the palatalised pronunciations of / d / e / t / in front of / i /, widely diffused in the Brazilian territory – [dʒia] (day), [ʃia] (aunt) 1- may be the result of African influence as well.

In Kimbundu, unlike European languages, the plural is not marked by suffixes, but by prefixes: Nzambi – Ginzambi (God – Gods); Kota – Makota (older, older); for example. Bagno (2016) argues that Kimbundo speakers, having to learn Portuguese, have identified elements similar to their prefixes in articles and other determinants of names, so that they did not match names using push-ups. This would have resulted concordances such as: *as casa*, *os menino*, where the final letter *s* is suppressed. In a very similar way, also in verbal conjugation, Kimbundo uses prefixes and not terminations. Each verbal person has his/her prefix. In the irregular learning of Portuguese, the speakers of Kimbundo would have identified their verbal prefixes in Portuguese personal pronouns, which explains the conjugation paradigm with the obligatory presence of the pronoun-subject and the absence of flexural marks of person (with the exception of the first) in so many varieties of Brazilian Portuguese: *Eu falo* / *tu fala* / *ele fala* / *nós fala* / *vocês fala* / *eles fala*. These are some of the demonstrations of the practical effect of the BaNtu heritage in our mouths.

IV Retention and Resistance: Preservation of Authenticity

If language is the bearer of specific epistemological paradigms, then the retention of key languages is essential to uncover our way of knowing and our humanity.

Explore, for instance, the greeting, *khotso*, meaning a wish for peace for the person, family, and community. The isiZulu term *ukufa kwabantu* (human death) refers to more than diseases of people. It also includes spirit-related illnesses or spirit damage found amongst the ancestors (in the invisible realm, the macro-cosmos), as well as amongst the people in the visible realm, the micro-cosmos. The Yoruba word *Se Alafia* means I am in Peace, I am well.

Decolonization requires rescuing the deeper meanings of language. This explains how, in religions of African matrices practiced in Brazil, such as

Umbanda and Candomblé of the Angola nation, many prayers and songs are in BaNtu languages, so that they do not lose the essence of the sacredness of words.

For example, the word *Wohotesen* (wo-ho-te-sen) in the Twi language has a deeper meaning than ‘how are you?’ The underlying meaning in this example is, ‘I lower myself before you’, or ‘I bow down before your essence’. For the BaKongo, the word *Kingongo* means Spirit wellbeing, a state that exists when the community’s ‘inner divine presence’ is in harmony with the inner divine presence of all that is. The word *Kizila* means annoyance and refers to taboos and food and behavioural prohibitions, which if not respected, will cause discomfort to the individual.

Resistance to Being De-Africanised

What is most often overlooked is that these retentions of an African language structure as represented by Ebonics and BaNtu Portuguese are examples of our resistance to being de-Africanised. This may be better understood if I speak to the relationship between language and the logic of *being*. Language is a representation of *being*. The African meaning of being is that we are a Spirit (Spirit Beings housed in a physical container having a human experience). We are vibratory radiating energy and our language reflects our Spirit in its vibrancy and creativity (Fu-Kiau: 2003).

We are vibratory energy and our language as a sound is vibratory energy. Our language is, itself, alive. A very powerful example of this is found in the notion of spoken medicine. In Kikongo, the expression *Nkisi Mia Mova* means Spoken Medicine, the logic of which is that speaking constitutes a form of medicine. Sounds can activate particular cellular vibrations. That’s what spoken medicine does. You speak the word to someone and the word activates particular vibratory molecular changes. An example of the African experience in Brazil, which illustrates what we are saying about the power of this ‘magnetisation’ of words, is the Jongo Circle. Jongo is an Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestation BaNtu of origin of the Southeast region and is considered an ancestor of Samba. A person who sings and recites verses is accompanied by clapping and repeated by the other participants. These verses narrate something that is happening in the circle, and the next person who wants to position himself to sing the verses must respond to the demand of the previous person. Often, these verses are metaphorical and pose challenges that must be

answered as a result of promoting incantations in the person who failed to respond.

That which gives a person identity, no matter where s/he is born is culture. The total communication framework: words, actions, postures, gestures, tones of voice, facial expression, the way he handles time, space, and materials, and the way he works, plays, makes love, and defends himself (Hall 1977). We can cite as other examples the way people organise their families; the proverbs taught through metaphors; the way they might act in certain situations.

Languageing Our Being into Existence

As resistant acts of decolonisation and re-Africanisation, we must, as Cakata (2018) asserts, use our language to speak our being into existence and thereby re-humanise ourselves. ‘Languageing our being into existence’ is fundamental to our episteme, and is extremely important. Everyone would agree that language is one way that humans encode their experiences to transmit it to their descendants and peers. It must also be recognised that we use language to transmit stories, myths, legends, proverbial sayings, personal histories, collective group histories, instructions, and other forms of information that are necessary for survival. Essentially, through language, humans manage to live in and shape the world in their image and interests.

An example of ‘languageing our being into existence’ can be found in the use of metaphoric discourse. The use of metaphor is a direct outgrowth of African American response to oppression and dehumanisation in racist white America and African American reinterpretations of the African worldview. The invention of the Black metaphor was a cultural necessity (Nobles 2015). In this regard, the language used is continually and constantly challenged to make an accurate interpretation, discover hidden meanings that can call forth one’s humanity. Metaphoric discourse serves to advance and/or assert personhood (e.g., *the blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice*); clarify circumstances (e.g., *all eyes closed ain’t sleep*); and establish situational control and illumination (e.g., *the pot calling the kettle black*). There are numerous examples of attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs as a metaphoric discourse that ought to be seen as acts of resistance and retention of Africa in our mouths.

For over four decades African American scholars have recognised the linguistic marriage between African American speech and BaNtu Kongo

languages. As early as 1929, Lorenzo Turner recognised that African languages strongly influenced Gullah (the language of enslaved African on the South Carolina Islands). For the next 20 years, he made trips to the Gullah region in coastal South Carolina and Georgia, interviewing Gullahs (often in isolated locations) and making detailed notes on their use of language. He also traveled to several locations in Africa, specifically Sierra Leone, to learn about the development of Creole languages, as well as to Louisiana and Brazil, to study Creole and Portuguese, respectively. He published his classic work *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* in 1949, documenting the origin, development, and structure of Gullah, which was strongly influenced by African languages. He showed the continuity of African language and culture across the diaspora. Additionally, Holloway and Winifred Vas provide a detailed compilation of ‘Africanisms’ (1949) that illustrate folklore, place names, foods, aesthetics, religion, loan, and loan words retained from the BaNtu Kongo.

The BaNtu Portuguese also has words that were retained as a form of linguistic resistance and nullified the use of the original word originating from European Portuguese. Castro (2016) provides some examples:

they are lexical marks that bear cultural elements shared by the whole of Brazilian society and that go through recreation (samba, capoeira, forró, lundu, maculelê), musical instruments (berimbau, cuíca, xquerê, agogô, timbau), culinary (mocotó, moqueca, angu, mungunzá, canjica), religion (candomblé, macumba, umbanda), poetry (os tutus dos acalantos, o tindolelê from cicles songs), diseases (caxumba, tunga), of the flora (dendê, maxixe, jiló, andu, moranga), of the fauna (camundongo, minhoca, caçote, marimbondo), habits (cochilo, muamba, catimba), ornaments (miçanga, balangandã), clothes (tanga, sunga, canga), housing (cafofo, moquiço), family (caçula, babá), human body (bunda, corcunda, banguela, capenga), manufactured objects (caçamba, tipóia, moringa), manifestations of affection (xodó, dengo, cafuné), insults (sacana, xibungo, lelê), power relations (bamba, capanga), do trade (quitanda, bufunfa, muamba, maracutaia) [all sic].

It is in this regard that we wish to address our African tongues in our mouths from both the USA and Brazil.

V. The Role of the Tongue in our Mouths for Healing and Pan-African Psychological Therapy

The human ability to communicate is the foundation of all human activities. The ability to speak and think allows humans to define relationships, roles, and responsibilities. It allows families to preserve their histories, ancestry, and ancestral memories. Language is the tool for transmitting people's cosmology, philosophy, and episteme.

We have argued in this article, from the analysis of the case of Ebonics and the BaNtu Portuguese, that the therapeutic process from a Pan-African perspective is also a form of spoken medicine that promotes care and healing. Although other therapeutic resources can be used in addition to words, they have a very special meaning, and it was not by chance that the colonial process sought in every way to erase linguistic diversity and to homogenise culture through language. The language of a people is related to its logic and consequently its psychic organisation for problem-solving (Nobles 2016). Defining a Pan-African psychological therapy, then, takes place by rescuing the forgotten languages and our ancestral logics in which these are imbricated.

Languages today are being killed and linguistic diversity is disappearing at a much faster pace than ever before in human history, and relatively much faster than biodiversity (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000).

The connection of ancient nations can be best accomplished by language relatedness, and when any language is destroyed, we lose our ability to trace the lineage of nations. Given the inextricable connection between language and culture, it should be clear that if you find the same language in distant places in time or location, one can be certain that the inhabitants of these different places are the same people or are historically related.

As noted, Ebonics and BaNtu Portuguese have been used to preserve many West African traditions, words, and concepts such as hospitality, culinary treats and gumbo, yams, and okra, and some lexical items (including those foods items) that represent the Bantu-speaking heritage in the United States (Hollaway & Vass). Ebonics is also evidence that we are the same people and that there is much resonance amongst us. Linguistically speaking, there is a Pan-African world.

Future Considerations

Clearly the retentions of African language features are essential components of Pan-African Psychology. In the quest for African authenticity and the need to decolonise the African Mind, it is useful to note that, a common culture is reflective of a common mind. Our humanity is often lost when one fails to see the unity in diversity. Unity in diversity is misunderstood when the emphasis is in the difference (disorder) and not the commonality (order). Our humanity is, strangely enough, masked by the apparent complexity in the simplicity of our BaNtu Portuguese and Ebonics language systems.

The apparent anomaly caused by enslavement and colonisation found in BaNtu Portuguese and Ebonics did not eradicate the African language rule structure, and thereby can serve as keys to our decolonisation. The charge of Pan-African Psychology should be to challenge the western narrative and rescue our humanity through African language and culture.

In the article, *Sakhu Sheti, reclaiming African Centered Psychology Focus on Afro-Brazil: Theory and Practice*, Nobles (2009) notes that slavery and colonisation in all its forms and functions were fundamental attempts to dehumanise African people through a process of de-Africanisation and de-spiritualisation. He further suggests that the mental liberation of African people worldwide is directly dependent on our ability to assist in the re-conceptualisation and reconstruction of African reality independently of Euro-centric thought and western hegemonic, white supremacist conceptualisations. Without question, language, specifically, Ebonics and BaNtu Portuguese are essential to the restoration of healing and wellness for African (continental and diaspora) peoples. Our task is to recognise and honor the 'African tongues in our mouths' (Ebonics and BaNtu Portuguese) as both acts of retention and resistance to dehumanisation and essential and valuable to the restoration of healing and wellness for African people and practitioners.

Post-script on Justice, Power and Love

One of the greatest problems of history is that the concept of love and power have usually been contrasted as opposites. What is needed is a realization [sic] that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power (at its best) is love implementing the demands of justice and

Justice (at its best) is power correcting everything that stands against love (Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.).

In recognising and honouring the ‘African Tongues in our Mouths’, so too should justice, power and love be defined by and through our language and culture.

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