

AN EXAMINATION OF
BLACK ENGLISH AS FOUND IN
SPIRITUAL TEXTS

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A THESIS
IN
THE CENTRE
FOR THE
TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics at
Concordia University

* Montreal, Quebec, Canada

June, 1981

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis reviews current theories on the formation and development of pidgins and creoles: monogenetic (common source theory) and polygenetic (minimal language contact between speakers of at least two languages). Sociohistorical factors which influence languages are also considered.

Subsequently the history of American Black English is reviewed and theories of its origin and development compared with those of other pidgins/creoles. The majority view now seems to be that specific phonological, morphological and syntactic differences exist between black and white speech, even on a non-standard level. A description of Black English compiled by Dillard (1975) is used as the instrument for examining the corpus in preparation for this paper: the corpus being a body of text extracted from 116 black spirituals. The tunes to which these texts were set were those already used by white worshippers. This paper attempts to show that the differences in the texts are due to pidginization (Black English pidgin). If true, the relevance of this body of literature to interlanguage studies would be established.

"Languages don't become simpler;
they merely exchange one kind of
complexity for another."

Paul Roberts

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CHAPTER 1

PIDGIN AND CREOLE LANGUAGES

1.1' INTRODUCTION

The history of blacks in North America, while as long in duration as that of whites, has been marred by injustices and atrocities, performed not only as a result of deep-seated prejudices against their skin colour but also because of misinformed attitudes towards their speech form. Until relatively recently it was felt that blacks actually suffered language deprivation, or at best, that they spoke a non-standard, deficient language which would need to be corrected before its speakers could attain societal acceptance, intellectual development or economic mobility.

In the years after the Second World War, the Civil Rights Movement and desegregation have awakened interest in the speech of blacks. Black children have been admitted to formerly all-white schools where educators, backed by federal research funds, have focussed upon their unique language problem. Unfortunately, too seldom was research directed towards describing Black English from either the

historian's or linguist's point of view and too often the purpose of such research was to find ways to eradicate Black English from the education system.

Today there is tacit recognition of Black English as a language. Black artists and intellectuals are beginning to regard it as a symbol of black unity and are giving it status by producing a considerable body of literature. Linguists are now examining Black English in order to isolate consistent grammatical features; sociologists, to discover if it can be used by its speakers to express all functions in a variety of situations; and language historians are perusing its documentation to learn more about its developmental stages. The results of their studies point to the fact that, far from being a deficient language, Black English serves its speakers as adequately as do other languages. In defining Black English, so much attention is directed to political or ideological consideration that the linguistic issues are often overlooked. Black English appears to be a language in its own right, with a history (in contrast to white American variants) not traceable to British regional dialects. Indeed, it was found that the English of American blacks retains some features which are common to both West Indian

and West African varieties of English. This led linguists of the 1960's to state that Black English was most probably a creolized version of the pidgin variety of English spoken by slaves from Africa: a statement which resulted in a changed attitude towards subsequent descriptions of Black English. In order to more fully understand Black English, then, it is necessary to consult what has been learned about pidgin and creole languages.

1.2 The formation of pidgins

The origin of the term pidgin is somewhat confusing. It is generally believed that the term was first used for Chinese Pidgin English: 'pidgin' thought to be a distortion of the word 'business'. It has since been generalized to mean any language which has no native speakers and which dispenses with those features of its base language(s) which might hinder communication in restricted language contact situations.

Hall (1966) originated the theory of spontaneous generation of pidgins. He postulates that a pidgin can arise in the space of only a few hours if two or more people or groups wish to communicate on a minimum level of

comprehension. He dubs all pidgins "reduced languages", Jespersen (1921) calls them "minimal", Reinecke (1938) "marginal", and there are a number of colloquial names: bastard lingo, mongrel jargon, petit negre, to name a few.

1.2.1 Monogenetic theory

The monogenetic theory states that pidgins/creoles are historically related, having come from a common source. As evidence they cite a number of vocabulary items (Cassidy 1971) which are shared by geographically separated pidgins/creoles (i.e. sabby or savvy 'to know'; doble 'double'; pickaninny 'small'; paen 'slave child's petticoat'; sampatta 'rough sandal'). Although these vocabulary items are of Portuguese origin, they turn up in the lexicon of pidgins in many parts of the world outside of the Portuguese orbit. Secondly, the structural characteristics of pidgin/creoles are remarkably similar (Stewart 1962) and although they lexically and grammatically resemble their source languages, it is difficult to explain why the structures of different source languages would be modified in precisely the same way. Whinnom (1965) suggested that the common source, or

proto-creole, was Sabir, the famous Mediterranean Lingua Franca carried by Portuguese sea traders to the Far East, West Africa and then to the New World. Accounts of it are found as early as the sixteenth century and it was still extant when Schuchardt described it in 1909. Those holding to the monogenetic theory feel that the grammatical base and some vocabulary of the original Portuguese Pidgin has been retained, but because of the proximity of other languages, relexification (Stewart 1962) has taken place.

Other tendencies indicate either common source or universality. The fact that pidgins contain a good deal of sound-symbolism: stop sounds for abruptness, ablaut series to show gradations, closed versus open vowels correlated respectively with small versus large (Cassidy 1971), and iteration to express repetition, increment, essentiality (such as in the 1980 television advertisement for Chiclets: the gum-gum with the flavour-flavour), may be features common to minimal communication. (Cassidy 1957).

Comparisons of pidgins might also show how humans handle conceptual reality; i.e. actions, events are realized as tense (as in English) or aspect (as in Semitic languages) but in pidgins, tense and aspect are clearly distinguished at the surface structure. This factor of close resemblance

of (syntactic) surface and (semantic) underlying structures are thought by Kay and Sankoff (1974) to reflect universal deep structure in their surface structure more directly than do other natural languages. This may, of course, be due to the restricted function of pidgins. The lack of inflections and transformations in pidgins also contributes to the close similarity of surface and deep structures. For example, the negative, question and imperative transformations that are present in natural languages are structurally related to each other, but are semantically quite different. By not using transforms pidgins reduce this semantic complexity and in so doing become perfect vehicles for minimal and speedy communication with less opportunity for misinterpretation.

1.2.2 Polygenetic Theory

There are weaknesses in the monogenetic theory, the most obvious of which is the dearth of written documentation. The monogenetic theory accounts for the presence in pidgins of Portuguese forms, but does not account for other kinds of similarities. Also, there are pidgins (Sango, Chinook, Amerindian Pidgin, Pitcairnese), which developed with no Portuguese influence. These weaknesses in the monogenetic

theory are used as evidence by those who support a polygenetic theory of pidgin formation. The polygeneticists claim that when speakers of two or more mutually unintelligible languages attempt to communicate, they seem systematically to simplify and reduce the source languages into a code which permits communication. Whinnom (1971) developed the polygenetic theory further in contending that contact between languages may result in three kinds of hybridization: primary, secondary and tertiary hybrids. Primary hybrids are dialects formed by the breaking up of a species language. Whinnom calls them 'incipient species' and describes them in biological terms. While secondary hybrids result from the interbreeding of distinct species, primary hybrids resemble the interlanguages used by new learners in that they are both unstable and individualized. Although no two secondary hybrids are identical, they become a predictable and recognizable variety of speech. Although constantly undergoing renewal, variation in the hybrid is reduced by 'breeding back' (1971:91) to parent languages. Whinnom considers that only tertiary hybrids are true pidgins. Tertiary hybrids arise when the target language is removed. The absence of, or distance from the target language norm is essential because it stabilizes the pidgin

and allows it to function as a means of communication between people who speak none of the base languages. Whinnom used the following representation to illustrate his formula for a tertiary hybrid (true pidgin):

Target language

Substrate languages A x B (x C ...)

Whinnom's hypothesis is exemplified in New Guinea where the natives of many differing backgrounds communicate in pidgin (Neo-Melanesian), the only shared language. Similarly, in the cities of Nigeria, natives moving there from the various linguistically different provinces use a particular, stabilized pidgin for inter-group contacts.

Hall's (1966) theory of spontaneous generation explains those pidgins which are very different in structure from one another and which clearly developed without any Portuguese influence, but Hymes' (1971) theory of stimulus diffusion is more useful in explaining the striking similarities among pidgins. Hymes feels that the development of new pidgins is, in many instances, influenced by previous contact with another pidgin spoken elsewhere.

Cassidy (1971) outlines a developmental process in expressing functions of communication which he feels results in the formation of pidgins. The process starts with the accompaniment of gestures, and develops through the establishment of group identity (I vs. you; ingroups, vs. outgroups) to the more elaborate expressions of aspect, modalities, possibilities, contingencies and causal relationships. He thinks that the ways in which we learn to simplify language in functionally restricted situations are possible universals.

1.3 English-based pidgins and creoles

Following the establishment of a trading post in Canton we read of a Chinese variety of Pidgin English which was used then and which continued to be used there and in the Treaty Ports until well into the twentieth century (Hall 1944:109). English-based pidgins were used elsewhere in East Asia during the nineteenth century. One, nicknamed Bamboo English, emerged during the Korean War but was of short duration. Similarly, during the period of American occupation, a variety of Japanese Pidgin English (also known as Bamboo English) came into existence. This pidgin may

have provided the impetus for pidginized varieties of English used in Thailand and Vietnam (Goodman 1967).

Australian and New Zealand settlers used a Pidgin English in speaking to the Aborigines (Maori Pidgin English, Australian Pidgin, Neo-Melanesian offshoots, Neo-Nyumgar, and Wetjala) as has been attested by early nineteenth century documents from the area. In New Guinea the Europeans and natives of many differing language backgrounds communicate in an English-based pidgin (Neo-Melanesian). A type of Pidgin English flourished in the South Sea Islands where it is still firmly entrenched, having been made an official language in Melanesia before World War I by its German administrators of that time. We read also of the post-European Tok Pisin (or Bisnis English) of Papua-New Guinea which boasts at least two other pidginized languages, Motu and Siassi (Hancock 1977), not to mention Bichlamar, the pidgin spoken in the New Hebrides. East of New Guinea, in the world's newest independent nation, the Solomon Islands, one finds an English Pidgin: the only semblance of a common language among the forty dialects spoken by the Islands' 206,000 people. "Today one fella big day", was the pidgin phrase used by the Duke of Gloucester as he formally relinquished British control of

the country (reported in the Montreal GAZETTE, July 9, 1978.)

In that area of the globe, too, is Norfolkese, an offshoot of Pitcairnese (but now almost extinct), spoken by the descendants from H.M.S. Bounty who settled on the Australian island of Norfolk in the nineteenth century.

Hawaiian Pidgin-English, though transitory, has been the subject of recent research (Feldman 1977, Tsuzaki 1971) as has Pitcairnese Pidgin with which it shares many similarities, possibly because of a pan-oceanic nautical English link (Ross and Moverly 1964).

The slave trade of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries fostered pidgins in the slave factories of the west coast of Africa where they are spoken by varying segments of the population to this day (Americo-Liberian, Broken, Kwasai, Waterside, Water Street English, Nigerian and Ghanaian Pidgins, Bush English, Broken, Weskos, and Cameroons Creole).

Records of an English-based pidgin used by the American Slave (spoken today as Black English) bear similarity to those of certain Afro-American varieties of English: Gullah, or Sea Island Creole (Florida coastal strip and offshore Sea Island), Quashee, or Jagwa-Taak (Jamaica), Bouriki or Banana English (Trinidad, Dominican Republic, the

Lesser Antilles, British Honduras, Barbados), Sranan or Taki-Taki (coastal Surinam), Creolese (British Guyana), Krio (Sierra Leone).

Amerindian Pidgin English has been studied to some extent and some linguists (Dillard 1972) have suggested a link between it and a pre-existing Afro-Pidgin.

1.4 The formation of creoles

When a pidgin is learned as a mother tongue by a group of people, a creole is said to have evolved. A number of English Pidgins are now entering this stage or have already become entrenched as creoles, notably Neo-Melanesian (New Guinea), Taki-Taki and Sranan (the Caribbean Islands and the Guyanas), Gullah (the Sea Islands of Georgia and South Carolina), and the creole which is the focus of this paper's study, Black English (the United States). Creole-speakers can be entered as such by official census takers in many countries. Roberts (1962) estimated about six million English/Spanish/French/Dutch/Creole-speakers in the Caribbean area, South and West Africa and Southeast Asia. Figures for the numbers of speakers of pidgins are not conclusive, because a pidgin is frequently so

transitory, and not considered a native language. However, Hall (1966) ventured an estimate of in excess of a million speakers of Pidgin English varieties throughout the southwestern Pacific. De Camp (1971) sees the development of a pidgin into a creole as a continuum having the attainment of the standard as its goal. Samarin (1971) equates pidginization with simplification and creolization with expansion. He subsequently isolated features for further study as did others. (Clyne 1974, fossilization of universal du and other simplifying tendencies; Samarin 1971, simplification; Ferguson 1971, the absence of the copula and notions of simplicity; Labov 1971, the copula before the NP and/or locatives; Traugott 1973, the verb system; Kay and Sankoff 1974, the variability of future markers; Agnello 1977, negation; Fleisher et al. 1977, cognitive implications.

Alleyne (1971) feels that the requirement of a pidginized starting-point for a creole can be questioned, since there exist creoles which appear not to have evolved from pidgins (Gumperz and Wilson 1971). However, the requirement of expansion, according to Alleyne, is essential. He insists, moreover, that creolization must be understood as a complex process, involving the concurrence

of three components: expansion, extension in role, as well as convergence. It is not reducible to any one of them. Creolization, then, is expansion in content, with convergence, in the context of expansion in use (Alleyne 1971).

Whinnom (1965) explains the linguistic unification of the creole as resulting from a rigid system of caste isolation in which the standard language is not spoken nor even heard much by the lower class. While suggesting that baby talk, foreigner talk and pidgins are based in part on universal characteristics of language acquisition, Ferguson (1971) agrees with Whinnom that their creation, development and degree of permanence depend upon sociological processes as well.

1.5 The role of pidgins and creoles

This brings us to a consideration of the sociological factors surrounding pidgin and creole languages. Schumann (1975) sets out a criterion of social/psychological distance which he feels must be operative in their formation. Indeed, he attempts to find similar sociological parallels between pidgin/creoles and the interlanguage (Selinker 1972)

or approximative systems (Nemser 1971) of second language learners. Under certain sociological conditions the features of the approximative system tend to become fossilized. Hymes states:

Closeness to or distance from such an underlying (that is natural) universal form, and 'payment' as it were of 'costs' for departure may depend in part on the role a language or language variety has played in maintenance of social boundary and communicative distance.

(Hymes 1971:424)

Smith and Shuy (1972) separate the function of languages into three components:

1. Communicative - to exchange information among persons or groups of persons.
2. Integrative - to identify the speaker as a member of a particular society. (This integrative function of language has recently been exploited by Camille Laurin (1977) in his White Paper outlining Quebec's language

policy: 'Because of their common language, people realize that they are part of the same group and that their feelings are similar to those of others...').

3. Expressive - to permit the speaker to express various psychological needs.

Smith feels that since speakers of pidgin/creole languages and of interlanguages may have their own native languages to provide for them the latter two functions, it is only the communicative function which requires gratification.

Similarly, Schumann hypothesized that the social/psychological distance an L2 learner has from speakers of the target languages is comparable to that which pidgin speakers have from those speaking the superstrate language. Both have a requirement: the function of communication. The factor of social/psychological distance can develop into a dominance pattern. This pattern is usually established in contacts which Europeans have with natives where the Europeans are too sure of the superiority of their own culture over that of indigenous cultures to take any interest in the indigenous languages. The relexification hypothesis (Stewart 1962) is supported by this sociological factor since lexical borrowing requires

less intimate contact than phonological or syntactic influence:

Whinnom (1971) describes the superstrate speakers as typically a transient or socially superior minority such as can be found in New Guinea where the socially superior Europeans regard their stay in that country as temporary. It follows, then, that in situations where the pidgin speakers are the transient group or, conversely, where the superstrate is not transient, one might expect the demise of the pidgin language or its failure to develop into a creole (i.e. in Baia or in Cuba). Whinnom's description might also explain why there has been no Pidgin Hindi.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF BLACK ENGLISH

Dillard (1972), whose description of Black English is used as the instrument for examining the corpus of this study, recognizes Black English as a language which has passed through several developmental stages, but which has evidenced structural similarities throughout. These developmental stages, while unique to Black English, have parallels in the developmental stages of other languages; argument enough, were there no other reason, for giving true language status to Black English. Dillard outlines five distinct stages:

The early period.

The late eighteenth century period.

The early nineteenth century period.

The Civil War period.

The post-emancipation period.

2.1 The early period (1620 to almost 1700)

Historical accounts of West African Pidgin English exist, though without objective description. Other examples can be found in literature, such as in the works of Daniel Defoe, who had several of his fictional characters speak a Pidgin English. Since there is no attestation of the speech of the American slaves of this period, it has been necessary to find documentation in other sources, such as diaries, court records and medical treatises, to find some record of the speech used by slaves in this period. These accounts are based on white impressions of blacks' speech and written in eye dialect, so they are of dubious validity; however they do confirm that a different type of English was spoken by this segment of the population. Quite obviously, languages and varieties of languages exist in spoken form before the written form comes into existence. Even before the slave trade of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, West Africans, living in an area where so many languages were employed in commerce, used European-based lingua francas so extensively that their use came to be regarded almost as a social institution (Dillard 1972). In all probability, the captured African had been exposed to a type of pidgin even before being placed on the slave boat

During the passage to the New World further exposure to trade pidgins would have been provided by the crews of the slave boat. Thus, a type of interlanguage was probably used by the slave in very early language contacts in his new environment. This follows Hymes' theory of stimulus diffusion. Previous pidgin exposure would also account for the presence of non-English words in the lexicon. Before long, slavers discovered that an effective way of curbing insurrection in the slave camps or on the boats was to separate the captives from others speaking the same tribal languages. The pidgin which developed under these circumstances resembles Whinnom's tertiary hybrids: no common base language would have been present and the target language (English) would have been removed. However, one detects a weakness in Whinnom's hypothesis because it can be said that there was, indeed, a target language: the new pidgin became the target.

Enslavement further stratified the captive; not only were there language divisions, but there was an imposition of social division upon the slave community. A distinction grew between the house servants, who learned their masters' language and culture, and the field hands, who didn't. The Standard English of the masters became the target language.

of the house servants whose Pidgin English subsequently underwent a creolization process. Field hands had little contact with their masters, who depended on the overseer or even upon the house servants to communicate their orders. In the absence of a superstrate the slave pidgin tended to stabilize or fossilize, demonstrating that the degree of closeness (whether social and/or psychological) with the 'model' language group correlates with the degree of acculturation. This point of view is taken by Alleyne (1971) who feels that linguistic adaptation may be seen as just one instance of a very general process of cultural adaptation.

It has been suggested (Dillard 1972) that the overseers relayed the master's orders in a form they felt could be understood by the slave. This brings us to a consideration of input. Ferguson (1971) feels that foreigner talk takes the form it does because of a supposition of what is appropriate to use in speaking to others who do not have a full understanding of the language. According to Ferguson, hearers learn to copy these truncated forms when replying and a pattern is developed. Recent descriptions of an 'Immersion Pidgin' found among students in the immersion classes of Montreal possibly bear out Ferguson's

hypothesis. With the teacher and text the only models for the target language, the pidginized form spoken amongst the students provides the greater amount of input. The fossilization of the universal use of du and other 'simplifying' tendencies amongst Gastarbeiter in Germany are possibly due to the greater frequency of these features in the input: the input being their conversations with one another rather than with fluent speakers of German (Clyne 1974). At any rate, in the early years of slavery there appeared to be recognition of the fact that the slave pidgin was then undergoing a creolization process. Public notices of runaway slaves often included an evaluation of the degree of English spoken by them. These advertisements often indicated that certain slaves were bi- or polydialectal. Dillard feels that by 1700 three varieties of English were spoken by the slave:

1. West African Pidgin English
2. Plantation Creole
3. Standard English

2.2 The late eighteenth century period

Dillard calls this period the period of the early Plantation Creole. From his vantage point of familiarity with modern Black English, he examines accounts of slave talk for expected phonological devices. There is ample documentation from this period: stage plays representing the society of the time frequently included actors in blackface who spoke lines quite different from Standard English; travel diaries often contained accounts of observation of Plantation Creole (often described as 'broken' English); authors and historians of the day often attempted to show (in conventional orthography) the differences between Plantation Creole and other varieties of English. From this documentation, Dillard was able to discover developing features in early Plantation creole which persist in Black English today: the terminal enclitic vowel, unmarked verb forms, the durative be of long-term attribution, the zero copula of short-term attribution, and non-redundant tense markers. He also discovered what seemed to be characteristic phonological features: the unstable /r/, unstressed initial syllable, etc., and lexical features such as day naming (naming new-borns after the days of the week on which they were born); and other Africanisms.

Sociological conditions were favourable to the formation of a creole. Slavery continued unabated during those years, with very little social contact between the slaves and their overseers or masters. This system of caste isolation was what Whinnom (1971) would regard as producing linguistic unification. Smith's (1972) second component, that of the integrative function of languages, can subtly be used in a negative sense: that of maintaining boundaries. By using a pidgin/creole only when speaking to a slave and accepting only 'broken' English in response, the class separation was thereby enforced. This notion that only masters had the ability to use Standard English explains in part why Plantation Creole (or modern Black English, for that matter) is considered to be a corruption or reduction of the dominant English language pattern, while other pidgins/creoles, in a society without this class division factor, appear to show no dominance pattern and may even carry two variants of many lexical items. (Of the latter variety we cite the now extinct Russornorsk (Neuman 1965), the speakers of which were all simple fishermen of similar social class. Another case in point is English-Japanese Pidgin (Goodman 1967), which arose in the Hamamatsu area of

Japan between equal-ranking military types of American and Japanese forces.

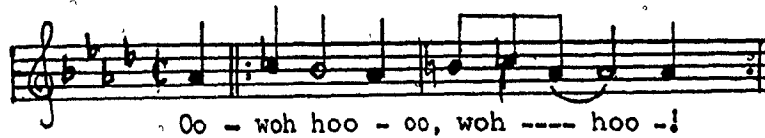
Occurring simultaneously were the acquisition of Plantation Creole as a mother tongue and the exposure to the West African languages still used by recently-imported slaves. Relexification (Stewart 1962) probably occurred and Africanisms, both lexical and syntactical, became a part of Plantation Creole. African 'field calls' or 'field cries' were no doubt subject to the same assimilation and, in addition, may have been used for an integrative purpose.

In slavery days, the field calls doubtless had a special importance they later lacked. They were a means by which the slaves could keep in touch with one another, and perhaps get around regulations of the overseer. In early slave days, these calls undoubtedly were in African dialects, insofar as actual words were used, and they must have been a source of irritation to white overseers who could not understand them. If one considers the tonal

aspects of West and Central African languages, the possibility is that many of the calls and cries were less wordless than they seemed.

(Courlander 1963:85)

Field calls closely approximated song and are sometimes given musical notation as in the following:



The following phrase from Water Boy illustrates how sequences resembling field calls slipped into music which was otherwise quite western:



(Field cries recorded by H.Courlander 1963)

Semblances of field calls were not infrequently introduced as a melodic extension of the musical line of the black spiritual which might otherwise be identical to the white spiritual on which it was modelled.



Have you heard how they crucified my Lord?O sometimes

This spiritual was recorded from the singing of Miss Gracie Whitaker who had "heard it from her mother and others", and which is well-known in the upper Cumberland region of Tennessee. It was never taken, in this form, into the white man's song books and was first made known to the world in its black-sung version.

(Jackson 1943. No. 106)

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh _____ some - times

Found in Barton's Old Plantation Hymns.

The text theme had been current for over a century among white Americans when Barton put this black version down.

Notice the resemblance to the field call on the word 'Oh'.

(Jackson 1943. No. CVI)

Dillard's research has shown that African lexical items were attested in many different regions of the United

States: wherever Plantation Creole was used. However, it was in the Charleston area where they survived the longest. This was probably due to the fact that Charleston was used as a port for the direct importation of African slaves well into the nineteenth century.

During the eighteenth century period there began an intimation of a changing attitude towards the social status of the slave. Samuel Davies (1724 - 1761), a Presbyterian leader and evangelist from Virginia, preached to the slaves, and, in cooperation with the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, provided them with copies of Bibles and Watts' Psalms and Hymns. He recorded that the slaves loved to sing and sometimes spent whole nights in their kitchens singing religious songs (Jackson 1943). The influence of this early Christianizing was not very widespread, however, for, of the 150,000 blacks in Virginia Colony before the Revolution (1775 - 1783), only a few hundred had ever attended religious meetings. It was not until after the Revolution that any determined endeavour was made to Christianize the slave. This missionizing was first organized by itinerant Baptist preachers from New England bringing with them their Watts' variety of old time psalms and hymns. By the end of the eighteenth century only

about 31,000 Blacks were enrolled as church members, out of the million in the land. An additional model for language was thus brought to the slave - not Standard English exactly, but rather the somewhat archaic English of the King James' Version of the Bible; that, and the simple, repetitive-chorused texts of revivalist hymns and old-time religious folk songs, sung in the old surge-singing way. The influence this variety of language had upon the slave's acquisition of English must not be underestimated, particularly since he usually learned it without benefit of literacy.

2.3 The early nineteenth century period

By the early nineteenth century there had been many literary attempts to represent the type of language spoken by the slave. Examination of the available sources (Dillard 1972), shows a considerable amount of mixing: West African Pidgin, Plantation Creole and nearly Standard English. All were occasionally represented in the speech of the same individual. In reality, all of these varieties did coexist; even the most recent slave arrivals were in some contact with partially decreolized language varieties toward

which they would modify their own speech. However, social factors continued to govern the type of English used. By far the greater majority of slaves were required as field hands; consequently, for the vast majority of blacks there was but one life style and one dialect. The most recently arrived slaves were increasingly expected to adapt their English to that spoken by the American-born who were, by then, using the language of a historically later stage than slave pidgin. Slaves speaking a closer approximation to Standard English were more easily trainable, supposedly, and commanded a higher price upon resale (Andrews 1920). One might expect that, for this reason, Plantation Creole would have become more quickly decreolized than it did. However, in the Charleston area a pidgin continued to flourish throughout these years, fed, as it were, by the continuous stream of pidgin-speakers which flowed from the slave boats using Charleston as the chief port of illegal entry. Following the slave embargo (imposed by Great Britain and certain other nations), illegal importation of slaves to America continued for some time at the rate of about 10,000 a year.

During the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth there was a great deal of migration and

immigration to the south of the United States of various ethnic elements which merged, gradually but unmistakably, into the Anglo-Saxon majority. The new southerners were mostly religious Baptists and Presbyterians with an increasing number of new-made Methodists - a denominational breakdown which would be immaterial except for the reason that it allows us to examine the religious language forms first offered to the slaves as a model for religious expression.

After 1800 there sprang up many meeting houses and singing schools which became the centres for religious folk songs. The black, whether slave or free, was simply a pioneer amongst pioneers; therefore, those who had built the meeting houses invited him to participate even to the extent of becoming a church member. It has been suggested (Jackson 1943) that colour prejudice is less rampant among pioneers and also that it was less among northerners. Whatever the reason, a good number of blacks settled into this religio/cultural environment. In 1820 a census recorded 1,538,064 slaves and 244,020 Free Negroes. Church statistics in 1820 showed 40,000 black Methodists and 60,000 black Baptists. The Baptists appeared to be most ardent in missionizing to blacks, because of the 2,671,000 blacks

listed as church members in 1890, by far the majority were claimed by the Baptists (statistics from Jackson, 1943). Thus from the beginning and throughout, the main musical influence on the black was old-time religious folk songs and spirituals in the Baptist tradition. The black spiritual, then, evolved out of this tradition during the years from 1800 to 1880. Locke (1969) gives the dates as follows:

Before 1830: the age of the Plantation Shout, dominated by African reminiscences and survival.

1830 - 1850: the age of the sorrow-songs, the classical Folk Period.

2.4 The Civil War period

Anyone who has read the works of American writers of the mid-nineteenth century will have encountered numerous descriptions of the speech of blacks. What is somewhat surprising is that it seemed to make no difference whether the author was a pro-abolitionist or an apologist for slavery; the accounts match to an amazing degree. In his research into the literature of this period, Dillard found countless examples of expected grammatical features: the zero copula, indicating temporary state; stressed been,

indicating remote past; done, indicating recent past; non-redundant pluralization; sex non-differentiation in pronouns; non-standard subject/object pronoun distribution; non-standard subordinate clause patterns and question forms; malapropisms.

Clearly, decreolization was well on its way, although in the areas of the plantations, Plantation Creole would continue to be used by the large groups of slaves in their segregated existence. For these people there was little social mobility and no motivation to modify their speech in the direction of the standard. For the others, those workers in close contact with whites, decreolization continued apace.

Emancipation brought this latter group away from the aristocrat and non-aristocrat and for the first time into close contact with the southern poor white who frequently spoke a non-standard dialect and who resented the more standard language of these freedmen. The Jim Crow Laws lumped together all blacks, whether field hands or house servants and a great unification of the underlying grammatical structures of their speech resulted. Social stratification became very complex: there was little contact with the white aristocrat any longer (his Standard English,

the model for decreolization was removed); the race-caste system earned the freed slave the resentment of the poor white who might otherwise have been his equal; the imposed social stratification which the blacks carried with them from the task-segregation of their slavery days caused dissension and distrust within their own society.

Involvement with the religious groups overcame some of the social problems. Storefront churches sprang up everywhere, and the black spiritual became a very vital element of worship (modelled, at least in the beginning, upon white worship and white singing).

2.5 The post-emancipation period

Dillard places this comparatively long period of development under only one heading because it was marked by so little social change for the black people. Black and white children may have played together, yet through much of the post-emancipation period they rarely studied together and rarely shared social contacts after puberty. During all these years, writers document the lack of change and, not unintentionally, record examples of language which appear to be quite similar to Plantation Creole. We must remember

that before Emancipation the field hands outnumbered other slaves about ten to one. Because of their isolation and greater numbers, this group of creole-speakers probably showed less linguistic variability on the scale from creole to Standard English and, accompanied by the effect of the Jim Crow Laws, served to make the black population one of linguistic, cultural and social solidarity. Dillard feels that Black English is now the most homogeneous dialect of American English. After surveying most geographic areas of the United States and examining pertinent literature of the three-hundred-year residency of the black in America, he concluded that essentially the same grammatical forms could be found in the Black English of all areas. Also, he discovered that in spite of mutual influences, Southern White and Southern Black dialects are far from identical. There is, Dillard contends, no large group of whites anywhere which speaks according to the rules of Black English grammar. This is in contrast to the opinions of linguists of previous decades - McDavid (1951), Kurath (1949), Walser (1955) - who supposed that the only significant variety of Black English in the United States was Gullah, and that it was confined largely to the Charleston/Sea-Island area. Dillard sees few geographic

limitations and even those few are subsidiary to social factors. Moreover, he feels that, in spite of surface changes, the underlying structures of present-day decreolized black English remain similar to earlier stages of the language. One is able to find formal style patterns even in the non-Standard English spoken by the black (as evidenced by the speech of storefront preachers and politicians) and, just as readily, find reminiscences of a more pidginized form in the standard speech of others. 'He's been gone for many year', said a black performer of Bill Robinson, 'The Master Dancer'. (Quoted from Vermont ETV documentary on tap dancing in Harlem. Aug. 5, 1980.) His English was Standard, even to the use of the present perfect tense, but his non-redundant plural is a grammatical feature found in all stages of Black English.

In the nineteenth century the American Colonization Society and its auxiliaries were organized to provide a means of repatriating those freedmen who wished to return to Africa. At least 15,000 Blacks were returned during this period, mostly to Liberia. There, too, were dumped other Black captives from the ships which unsuccessfully tried to evade the British Naval embargo against slave trading. Undoubtedly the language they used had an influence on

Liberian Pidgin English and Sierra Leone Krio. Researchers - Reinecke (1938), Schneider (1966) - point out similarities between the English of the black in the United States and that of Africans who do not speak a "perfect" pidgin. Dillard speculates that, in all probability, the outstanding insights into the history of Black English in the United States may be found in studying the "repatriated" varieties.

CHAPTER 3

THE BLACK SPIRITUAL

3.1 Assumptions underlying the analysis

It seems not unreasonable to assume that the camp meeting was the first exposure to Standard English for a number of the slaves and that the simple texts of the Camp Songs provided abundant material for rote-learning. Set to simple melodies and accompanied by hand clapping and rhythmic body movements, these texts are quickly learned, however unsophisticated the learner. In a short time the slave could have acquired a number of tunes and been able to reproduce (in song) a number of coherent Standard English sentences. We all know individuals who are able to spout poetry in languages otherwise unfamiliar because of having learned this poetry (with folk-tune setting) in elementary school music classes. The repetition of the syllables of the Camp Song texts would at first be quite meaningless, but gradually they would become attached to concepts pertaining to matters of the soul - concepts already possessed by the

slave, able to be expressed in his mother language and awaiting expression in his target language. The point at which cognition became attached to the texts of the Camp Songs or the progressive changes the texts underwent before they became a true part of the black worshippers' musical repertoire is unknown, as little attempt was made to record the very early worship services of the slave. We do, however, have a collection of black spirituals from the date of 1883. Its collector was an itinerant preacher in the Kentucky-Tennessee region, Marshall W. Taylor. His collection, Plantation Melodies (1883), is considered by some musicologists to be unintelligible because there is no barring, comparative note lengths, or time signs. The tunes reveal a tendency towards a one note/one syllable pattern (a tendency which was frequently discovered when examining other spirituals in preparation for this paper). Until Taylor's collection was published, little effort had been made to describe black spirituals as being different from white ones. Taylor employs a heavy editing hand when recording the texts, so examples of Plantation Creole in the accompanying texts are all but obscured.

Other collections followed, the texts of many written in eye dialect (often revealing phonological features) but

occasionally containing features which resemble pidginization. To someone interested in developing a theory of second-language learning, this body of literature ought to be explored because of the wealth of socio- and psycho-linguistic situations it represents.

Selinker (1972) states that it is very difficult to identify data relevant to second-language learning because it ought, he feels, to be utterances in the target language by native speakers, and in the native language and interlanguage by second-language learners. He discounts classroom performances of drills and repetition of nonsense syllables as having little interest to the psychology of second language learning because they fall short of being 'meaningful performance situations' (i.e., situations where an adult attempts to express meanings, which he may already have, in a language which he is in the process of learning 1972:114). To study the interlingual situations of the black American slave coupled with the sociological factors of his caste isolation is challenging enough, but when the situation of his need to express his spiritual concepts by using a rote-learned form from the target language is added to the situation, we are provided with something approaching Selinker's meaningful performance situation. Selinker

specifies that identification of utterances ought to be across the three linguistic systems of native language, target language, and interlanguage. We can trace the target language utterance (Camp Song or white spiritual), the native languages of the early African slaves are still extant, so what remains is to establish that black spiritual texts represent an interlanguage.

This paper will attempt to do that by first using texts common to both repertoires of the white and the black singers from the period when the slave was struggling to acquire Standard English. Next, it will strive to show that the differences in the language forms of the paired texts are there because the black text was, indeed, sung in an interlanguage when recorded. Dillard's (1972) description of Black English is of a language which is not merely transplanted Southern white dialect.

Further mention may be made of the type of white music preferred by the black. Simple and unsophisticated texts were the ones usually adopted which the black singer often simplified further. Those songs requiring a back-and-forth style of singing were especially popular. Also appealing were the 'revival spiritual' songs with choppy texts, sung by a leading voice and interrupted by repetitive passages

sung by the group. The call-and-response pattern was drama in song and could take several patterns:

Pattern 1.

Leader

Chorus

a _____
b _____
c _____
d _____
e _____
f _____

b _____
b _____
b _____
b _____

Pattern 2.

Leader

Chorus

a _____
b _____
c _____
d _____

a _____
b _____
c _____
d _____

Pattern 3.

Leader

Chorus

a _____

b _____

a _____

b _____

c _____

b _____

d _____

b _____

d _____

b _____

Pattern 4.

Leader

Chorus

a _____

/ _____

a _____

/ _____

a _____

/ _____

c _____

b _____

c _____

/ _____

c _____

/ _____

b _____

Pattern 5.

Leader	Chorus
a _____	b _____
a _____	c _____
d _____	b _____
d _____	c _____
e _____	b _____
e _____	c _____

Pattern 6.

Combinations of the above patterns.

(Work 1940)

In the black adaptation of the tune, the textual phrase disintegrated, resulting in a repetition, or near-repetition of text fragments: an 'eking-out' pattern. Very often it was only the refrain of the white song which was used, the black adding what was often a non-rhyming text with subject matter less of abstract philosophies than of tales of particular events or episodes. Similarly, the oral and religious literature of the African layman was less of prayers than of dramatic statements.

In the early religious services of the black, song was used as an extension of preaching. The preacher often began with a prose narration with frequent rhythmic pauses for congregational response and then launched, at the last syllable, immediately into the singing. The whole body of songs (embodying a large number of themes projecting Christian concepts of faith, love and humility, and stories of the Old and New Testaments) if arranged chronologically, would form an oral version of the Bible. Indeed, many of the lay preachers travelled from church to church without a book, sermonizing only with their songs and the meanings they conveyed. Many songs were partly chanted, partly sung, and the point at which speech turned into song was often difficult to detect. An interesting description of the thematic material of black spiritual can be found in Courlander (1963).

3.2 The black spiritual: its relationship to white religious hymns

In America, the black folk-music idiom taken as a whole (spiritual, work songs, blues, jazz and ragtime) is an integral and somewhat separate phenomenon with a character

of its own. In spite of its development into distinctive form, the music of the black shows a number of elements of European influence. The black spirituals, in particular, were often modelled upon existing tunes which were subsequently altered: some only slightly, others more radically. The new tunes were in turn often submitted to further melodic alteration and expanded with repetitions and refrains. Thus, although formed originally in the mould of the white tunes, some black spirituals have lost all recognizable relationship to known individual white-sung melodic entities.

Indeed, most folk-songs are migratory, carried to and sung in distant lands by the migrating people whose heritage they were. In their foster-lands, the transplanted tunes gradually acquired the tonal variations of those songs already there. The textual variations of folk-songs are even greater than the tonal variations. As an example, 'Malbruck', one of the oldest European folk-tunes, can be found on several continents and in many countries. In North America alone, one finds several textual versions of this tune of which the two most common probably are 'The Bear Went Over The Mountain', and 'For He's A Jolly Good Fellow'. In the light of this, it is not surprising that

some of the black folk-music idiom bears resemblance to that of the white.

In performance, certain characteristics of black folk-music show uniqueness: black singers value the quality of hoarseness in their song leaders' voices. Foggy, rough or sandy voices are thought to be desirable qualities. "If he can just mostly talk it..." was given as a criterion for a songleader by a prisoner who was a member of a work gang chorus (Lomax in Courlander (1943:24)). Frequently black singers intersperse humming, moaning and groaning sounds into their performances. These are sometimes produced in non-linguistic, non-musical fashion, but not infrequently become part of the music itself, and are able to be represented by musical notation.

The frequent appearance of a partly flatted third or seventh (the so-called Blue tones) is thought to be a New World black development as it is not often found in either African or European music (Jackson (1943)).



The sung interval between Lawd and do is characteristically flatted; it is almost a glide, ending in what sounds a little like a cry or crack in the voice. When the interval of the third occurs at the end of the musical line, the quality of the flatness or 'neutrality', to use Jackson's term (1943:237), is even more pronounced. The interval of the major third (doh - mi) is frequently sung flat by an amateur singer, but imprecision or accident cannot be the reason for its appearance in the performance of well-trained black singers.

The black spiritual, a significant part of the black folk-music idiom, is not exempt from white influence. In fact, certain musicologists, among them George Pullen Jackson (1943), have striven to show that, in spite of their unique alteration, few black spirituals originated with the Negro. Jackson, an authority on comparative tune lore, analyzed 116 Negro-sung tunes and concluded they were

antedated by similar white source tunes. His study traced sixty of the source tunes to the British Isles and Eire, fifteen were widespread in white America, seventeen had been written by known white composers, a further fifteen were so simple they could be taken for general melodizing, and for only nine was the kinship questionable. He conceded, however, that the alterations from the ancestral pattern were often radical, and that the problem of tune classifying or typing is still only in the process of solution. 'Singing an old song anew is, in a sense, the same as singing a new song,' admits Jackson.

Previously fifty-five protean patterns had been isolated, five of which accompany more folk texts than all the rest put together. Accordingly, 'Were You There?' falls into the 'Fainne Geal' protean pattern; 'I'm Troubled in Mind' into 'Bailiff's Daughter', protean pattern; 'Nobody Knows the Trouble I See' into 'Lazarus' protean pattern, etc. However interesting the theory of protean patterns might be, it is somewhat less complicated for a non-musicologist to recognize the relationship between tunes which are more contemporary; 'Every Time I Feel the Spirit' was borrowed from the refrain of 'When He Cometh', according to Jackson. The latter tune was written by George Root and

predated the black melody by several decades. Root's sentimental triple time was changed to duple and the unstressed words are relegated to shorter (eighth) notes.

For the purposes of this paper it was decided to accept the Jackson analysis of the 116 Black Spirituals and his conclusion that all had been modelled on existing white tunes or Protean patterns.

3.3 Description of textual settings

The next step was to extract the texts from the 116 tunes of the Jackson study. Of the 116 tunes, paired white with black, it was found that forty-four have related texts. Of these, four have identical texts, another four identical refrains and an additional one has an identical verse text. Since it had been concluded that the tunes had been 'borrowed' from white tunes it seems reasonable to assume that the texts would have been borrowed also. However, since this was not often the case, a logical explanation for the difference might be that the black, although singing a tune which originally was sung by whites, set it to a text which was unique to him by way of its themes; its lexicon and its grammar. It was decided to

examine the black texts for expected grammatical features of Black English grammar as set out by Dillard (1972).

Presumably, several aspects of the dialect had been 'corrected' and modified towards the Standard by the editors. Moreover, there was bound to be distortion of clause structure due to musical and poetic restraints of metrics, barring, notation and rhythm. Some Black English features may have been disguised by the editors' orthographic corrections (e.g. Canaan's shore may have been sung Canaan shore - Black English juxtaposed possessive - the 's' having been placed there by the editor).

The seventy-two non-identical texts contained a great deal of eye-dialect (fo', mo', lawd and dis, for example, were the equivalents of for, more, Lord, and this). It can be argued that eye dialect is artificial, set down by a recorder untrained in linguistics, in imitation of how blacks were presumed to speak. The 'minstrel-show origins' theory (Mencken 1919) that Black English is an invented dialect which has been created by writers for entertaining and humorous effects tends to discredit the validity of using literature as source material.

In the light of these considerations, the fact that any Black English features appear in the texts at all is rather

remarkable. No literary texts should be ignored, partly because they were, in the past, the only record of the language spoken at the time, but also because there is no reason to believe that their writers' attempts to recreate Black English were not influenced by the real thing.

We must utilize evidence, and for the great part of human history we must utilize mainly written records. This is especially true of language; artifacts without inscriptions say nothing of the people who made them. An author who records a language may represent it inaccurately, or misrepresent it; linguists have traditionally had a way of saying that writing is an inadequate representation of speech...it is perhaps possible to change one's cultural patterns to some degree, and it is certainly possible for certain individuals to change cultures, but it is hardly possible for one person to innovate an entire culture.

(Dillard 1972:17)

3.4 Categorization of textual Black English grammatical features

In categorizing the features of Black English grammar which were extracted from the texts of the black spirituals, it was decided to group them under four main headings:

1. Aspect over tense
2. Lexicon
3. Morphology
4. Clause structure

Dillard's description of Black English was the instrument used throughout the analysis, and the numbering of the corpus samples is that used by Jackson (1943) (i.e. Roman numerals for the black set of paired spirituals and Arabic numerals for the white set).

3.4.1 Aspect over tense

Dillard contends that the dominance of aspect over tense in Black English is traceable to the verbal system of African languages. Using aspect, verbs are marked for the ongoing, continuous or intermittent quality of an action rather than for the time of its occurrence. For Black English speakers, the aspect of a verb is obligatory, but

the tense is optional. Dillard suggests that most events that we see as points of time are set in the past (about ninety per cent, by his calculations); therefore, the time of the action is understood. In Black English a time cue in a surrounding clause will often avoid confusion (e.g. he go yesterday). A further tense marker would only appear redundant. To carry non-redundancy one step further, only one verb of a sentence requires the tense marker. A clear example of verb non-redundancy was seen during a CBC television news coverage of the Miami race riots (May, 1980) which included a camera shot of a storefront sign: Own and Operated by Blacks. Our corpus produced the following examples:

When I was a seeker I sought both
night and day, / I ask de Lord to help me
and he show me the way. (XCVI)

I never stopped till I come
through, / until the warfare's ended.
(LXVI)

His sweat like drops of blood run
down,/ in agony he pray'd. (LXXIV)

Ain't dat uh awful time,/ People
keep awake all night,/ It was sad w'en
duh grabe sinkin' down. (LX)

3.4.1.1 Durative be

A device which is used in Black English grammar to express long duration or inherent character is what Dillard terms the 'durative' be. Use of this marker indicates that the action is 'stretched out' longer than the nature of the verb which follows would indicate. Dillard illustrates the durative be with the following (1975:45):

He be waitin' for me every night
when I came home. (Be correlates with
every in the same way that Standard
English -ed correlates with 'last
night').

Today's media often produce examples of durative be: in the course of a Vermont ETV documentary on the Council for the Problems of the Aged (June, 1980), an elderly Black man complained about his son, "I dunno why he be treatin' me like dat".

No clear examples of durative be were found in the corpus, although several examples of auxiliary will + be appeared in the black text when not in the white text. A possible explanation for its appearance is that the editor, hearing be sung by his informants, decided to supply the auxiliary.

I'm almost done, and I soon will be
done, / I'm climbing up Zion's hill.

(LII)

We're almost there, dear Lord,
Climbing up Zion's hill. (52)

Although not usually found in interlanguages, several examples of Standard English conditional and subjunctive appeared in the corpus. One wonders, since the examples all used the verb 'to be', if the similarity to the durative be

allowed these forms to be taken, unchanged and unsimplified,
into the black texts.

Before I'd be a slave I'd be buried
in my grave / And go home to my Lord and
be saved. (I)

If dis be death I soon shall be /
from ev'ry pain and sorrow free.

(IX and 9)

3.4.1.2 Immediate perfective done

To locate the point of time in the recent past, Black English grammar requires the use of a preverbal done. This is the most popular system, although a second, not uncommon system permits the use of unstressed been in the preverbal position to express the recent past. Standard English -ed marker indicating recent past is insignificant for that function as shown in examples which combine the infinitive with verb -ed (e.g. to failed, to taught, Dillard: 50). A similar use of the preverbal done for expressing the recent past is found in other pidgin and creole languages even when

the base language is French (tek) or Portuguese (kaba - acabar).

Our corpus yielded many examples of the past tense marker of both regular and irregular verbs; no examples of its combination with the infinitive were found, however. Several examples of done were present, but its use proved synonymous with 'through', or 'finish' and appeared very similar to its use in the paired white text.

I'm almost done, and I soon will be
done... (LII)

We're almost there. (52)

O my mudder's in de road,/ Mos'
done trabeling. (XXXVI)

I've a father on the road,/ He's
almost done traveling. (36)

3.4.1.3 Remote perfective past stressed been

The stressed been expresses the remote (decidedly) past. It can express either the point-of-time aspect, I been know, or the progressive aspect, I been knowing

(Dillard:46). Dillard feels this aspect resembles that of West African languages.

Been drinking from the fountain.

(CV)

We are drinking at the fountain.

(105)

O brothers, you ought t'have been
there,/ Yes, my Lord,/ A-sitting in the
kingdom To hear Jordan roll. (XLIX)

Although there were no instances in the corpus of remote perfective past in negation, the rules of Black English grammar would show done and been falling together in negation.

3.4.1.4 Zero copula

Temporary state is expressed in Black English by the absence of the copula, i.e. zero copula indicates a current, but short term state. Its inclusion in stressed form would be simply for argumentative purposes (e.g. My brother IS

sick, Dillard:53). In his interviews with his informants Dillard found many forms of the copula which were similar to standard forms; such forms were occurrences of code-switching - a fact which became apparent when sentences were subject to question and negative transformation (Dillard:54). Our corpus, too, yielded many examples of the copula used as it would be, in Standard English:

There is a balm in Gilead.

(LXXVI.A. and 76.a.)

However a number of sentences showing the zero copula were also found:

No second class [0] aboard this
train, / no difference [0] in the fare.

(XCI)

0 where [0] you going, preacher?

(III)

Heav'n [0] so high an' I [0] so

low.

(LXIX)

An additional example was found which could, phonologically, have contained zero copula, presuming once again that the editor had corrected its orthography:

His name's so sweet. (CV)

3.4.1.5 Auxiliary function of have

Dillard's description of Black English grammar indicates that been and done come closest to the perfective function of Standard English 'have'. Have is occasionally used for this purpose, but such use was probably due to Standard English influence. The auxiliary function of have in Black English is frequently performed by is (e.g. the hogs is all died. Dillard:48)

Our corpus yielded a number of examples (similar to white English variants) of the absence of auxiliary have with the verb got signifying 'to have' or 'to be obligated'.

Q believer [0] got a home at
last. (V)

Poor mourner's found a home at
last. (5)

For I [0] got a home in glory.

(LXXXIV)

We have a home in glory. (84)

You [0] got to cross that river
Jordan, / You [0] got to cross it foh
yohself. (LIV)

An example was found of is serving in the auxiliary position
of 'have':

Jesus my all to heav'n is gone / To
play upon the golden harp. (LXXXVIII)

In addition, several examples were found where the auxiliary
'have' could have been called for, but where it was deleted:

I [0] heard of a city call'd
heaven. (LXXV)

I've heard of a city call'd
heaven. (75)

Nobody knows the trouble I [0] see.

(XVIII)

No one knows but Jesus how sinful I
have been.

(W.H. Doane in Jackson 1945)

There seems to be no governing rule here. Dillard, too, claims that 'although Black English speakers, including relatively young speakers, do use the have/has auxiliary at times, they use and manipulate them with a lack of skill which shows that they are really borrowing them from Standard English and not using the resources of their own language' (48).

3.4.2 Lexicon

3.4.2.1 Enclitics

The lexicon of Black English is not radically different from Standard English either in the volume of its word stock or in its use of derivations. However, it shares some characteristics with other pidgins and creoles, one of

which is the use of enclitics - that is, a word with an added terminal vowel which produces a consonant-vowel sequence. The Duke of Gloucester, having learned some pidgin English especially for the occasion of handing over British control to the government of the Solomon Islands, included an example of an enclitic in one of his opening sentences: 'Queen want it belonga you fella'. (Montreal Gazette, July 9, 1978.)

A number of enclitics were discovered in our corpus where they were given the importance of separate note and times values in the musical line:

I lookee on de God's right han'.

(XII)

Turn sinner, turn while yo' Maker
axa you to turn...May the Lord helpa yo'
to turn. (XI)

God, your Maker askss you why...May
the Lord helpu you turn. (11)

O does your love-a continue true?

(XXI)

Go hear-de what my Jesus say.

(XXII)

We have a just God to plead-a our
cause. (CX)

In-a my heart. (CXII)

Come to me, sweet Marie. (112)

O rock-a my soul in de bosom of
Abraham. (CXIII)

The verbal prefix a- was frequently discovered (e.g. a-goin'
a-born). Since the form was absent from the white text, an
explanation for its appearance in the black may be editorial
misunderstanding and subsequential rearrangement of the
enclitic vowel.

Dar's a better day a-comin'. (XXVI)

Possibly day-a

Brudder George he is a-gwine to
glory. (LXXVI)

Possibly is-a

Just let me in the kingdom when the
world ~~ketch~~ a-fire. (XXV)

Possibly ketch-a

...When this world's all on fire.

(25)

3.4.2.2 Relexification (Africanisms)

Relexification is the replacement of a vocabulary item in a language with a synonym from another language. This replacement produces no change in the structure of the sentence. Black English relexification is interesting in that until recently linguists seemed reluctant to acknowledge African etymons, preferring instead to label them as inaccuracies whenever they appeared. Turner (1949) reported finding thousands of Africanisms in the Gullah dialect in addition to many African survivals in syntax, inflections and intonations. Many words which had been attributed to a corruption of English appeared to him to be reminiscences of

Vai, Mende or Wolof. Herskovits (1941) went a step further and speculated that the so-called 'musical' quality of the Black dialect might be related to African use of tone for semantic purposes.

Dillard reasons that total absence of Africanisms in Black English would be astonishing given that certain African languages (such as Wolof, for example) were used almost as lingua francas in the early days of slavery. Moreover, slaves would doubtless find other speakers of their native African languages to converse with from time to time, thus keeping them alive. While emphasizing their frequency and the extent of their dispersion, Dillard feels relexification is relatively rare. African influence, however, is widespread. Black English white folks is a vocabulary item which Dillard interprets as a direct translation of buckra, an Africanism. This item has been attested from Pennsylvania to Oregon. Several examples of those Africanisms listed by Dillard were found in our corpus:

shout - |relexification for the African word signifying a religious expression |

My massa died a-shouting / Singing
glory hallelujah. (XXXIV)

Amazing grace, how sweet the
sound, / I want to die a-shouting.

(XXXVIII)

He shouts with his expiring
breath. (XCII).

carry - [relexification for the African word signifying 'to
conduct someone', as opposed to tote signifying 'to bear' or
Standard English 'to carry'. Cassidy (1971) testified to
finding the same meaning for this item in in Jamaica.]

I'm boun' to carry my soul to my
Jesus. (XXXVI)

He's bound to go where Jesus is.

(36)

A band of angels coming after me,
Coming for to carry me home. (LIII)

White text unrelated. (53)

A relexification of African language habits is that of
verb-stacking: He look the road see something.
(Dillard:177).

O won't yo' rise an' go wid me?
(LXXXVII)

Brings salvation from on high,/ Now
look up and see him. (CI)

O when I come to die, give me
Jesus. (L)

Trabel on, go hear-de what my Jesus
say. (XXII)

Go and call the bishops in, and ask
them what the Lord has done. (XCVII)

3.4.2.3 Malapropisms

A very common feature of Black English is malapropism - a somewhat humorous misuse of a word. Dillard is somewhat reticent in including this feature in his description of Black English grammar, since it can so easily be interpreted as mere incorrectness. Dillard absolutely refutes this interpretation because "from a purely structural point of view, each language variety establishes its own 'correctness'" (107). The use of malapropisms is at other times thought of as an attempt at 'Fancy Talk' or even an imitation of how 'white folks' spoke. Dillard rejects this interpretation also. Elegantizing is not the result of poor imitation of white language behaviour, because examples of it can be found in other parts of Afro-America and in the West Indies. The same characteristic was discovered by Hall (1966) in Haiti amongst even the educated Haitian whose French he described as 'grandiose', 'flowery' and 'over-literary'. He cites an advertisement placed by a dentist in a small town newspaper:

Le Dr. X refait l'oeuvre du Bon
Dieu en procurant à sa clientèle une
magnifique dentelure nouvelle.

Dillard feels that by fact of its widespread occurrence, such linguistic activity (Fancy Talk) must be the result of an institutionalized tradition and as such must be regarded as an elaborated code as opposed to restricted code. The black tradition of verbal elegance generates malapropisms; these may appear in response to morphological, phonological or derivational rules.

Morphological: the Black English factor of the unstressed initial prefix results in its loss. Since the elaborated code would call for the initial syllable, one might be supplied (not necessarily the original) and a malapropism is created. Thus 'divorce' passes through successive stages: d'vorce > 'vorce > re + 'vorce > revorce (254). Following this line of reasoning we can explain the appearance of certain 'incorrect' words in our corpus:

Jehovah, hallelujah, de Lord is
perwide. (II)

So long as 'tis written the Lord
will provide. (2)

De element [f'irmament?] open'd an'
de love came down. (XIX)

Tell ole Pharo', O Lord! Loose
[release?] my people, O Lord! (CXIV)

I will meet chu een duh primus
lan'. (VII)

We have fathers in the promised
land. (7)

Phonological: Example (VII) might more properly be explained phonologically since the morphological loss of the initial syllable occurred on one that was unstressed, not one such as 'prom' in 'promised'. The Black English requirement for an impressive word might be at the expense of exact spelling or as a result of homophonic similarity as in the following examples:

O - what a mournin' when de stars
begin to fall. (XII)

My Lord, what a morning. (12)

Come trembleing, [tumbling?] down,
go shouting home, / Safe in the sweet
arms of Jesus. (CVIII)

You praise God with your glitt'ring
[glib? gibbering? blathering?] tongue,/
But you leave all your heart behind.

(XCIII)

My breatheren don't get
weary,/ Angels de tidings down. (XXXII)

O stand the storm, it won't be
long./ We'll anchor by and by. (LVIII)
We'll stem the storm, it won't be
long. (58)

Santofy [sanctify?] me just now,
(XXIV)

Come to Jesus just now. (24)

Take car' de [take care of ?]
sinsick'soul. (LXXVI.B)

To cure the sinsick soul. (76)

Derivational: The speaker of Plantation creole,
striving to alter his language code in the direction of

Standard English and, recognizing the need for a derivation suffix and/or prefix, yet unfamiliar with the process, would make his own substitution, thereby creating a malapropism. Thus, one might hear the verb 'inherit' changed to heritance, or the noun 'thoughtfulness' to thoughtful, with no adjustment in sentence structure (66). In our corpus, some of the malapropisms probably can be attributed to insecurity in the derivational process:

We'll overtake [takeⁿ over?] the
army, / Yes, my Lord. (LXI)

3.4.2.4 Iteratives

Though frequently found in the Gullah dialect (sho nuf sho), Dillard claims not to have found examples of iteratives - repetition of initial syllable - in the present day basilect of Black English. Interestingly enough, no examples were found in our corpus either.

3.4.3 Morphology

The function of inflections and derivations is no less rule-governed in Black English than it is in Standard English; one of the most stringent of these rules is the rule of non-redundancy. This rule affects the previously-considered tense markers and, in like manner, affects the processes of pluralization, possession, gender marking and verb declension.

3.4.3.1 Pluralization

Governed by non-redundancy, the noun remains uninflected after a numeral or other modifier denoting plurality. Dillard points out that noun forms are usually changed to indicate plurality when the modifiers do not perform that function. He illustrates this by the examples: forty year, twenty bushel (where the noun is unmarked) as opposed to the songs, the dollars (where the noun is marked for plurality) (62). One often finds the non-redundancy rule governing the choice of verb agreement as was observed in a recent (Winter season 1980) television trailer which advertised a recording of Muddy Waters (singing about the

Memphis barroom): 'Drinks was served as usual and a nice little crowd were there.'

Our corpus yielded many examples of Standard English pluralization (editorial correction once more?) but also showed some examples which clearly showed the Black English principle of non-redundancy:

Call de nation, [0 plural marker]
great and small ... When de stars begin
to fall. (XII)

I'll meet you way up yonder/ In a
few day [0 plural marker]. (LXIX)

I can't stay in these diggings./
Few days, few days. (69)

Going to write to Massa Jesus to
send some valiant soldier [0 plural
marker] / To turn back Pharroh's army,
hallelu! (XLII)

Since it is an army to be turned back, the soldier is
intended in the plural sense, not singular in the sense of

David the Goliath-killer. We are reminded of an example documented by Higginson (1870) from his recordings of the speech of his black regiment:

We hab some valiant soldier here (194).

3.4.3.2 Third person verb: terminal /s/

Dillard feels the customary absence of the terminal /s/ from the third person verb is due to two factors: its presence would be redundant if used in an environment already marking the third person, and secondly, since Black English verbal categories are different, the Standard English 'present tense' is not recognized as such, eliminating the need for the tense-marking function of the terminal /s/.

In our corpus, Zero terminal /s/ was often found, sometimes in a variant form of a contracted verb:

O what a band of music go soundin'
through de lan'. (XVII)

While the band of music shall be
sounding through the air. (17)

Go hear-de what my Jesus say. (XXIV)

When the world ketch a-fire. (XXV)

When this world's all on fire. (25)

There cain't nobody cross it for
yo!. (LIV)

There's no one can go there. (52)

Ef my mudder want to go, why don't
she come along? (LXIV)

If my fathers want to go, why don't
they...(64)

The third person negated of do as found in this example and as in the 'he don't (come)' and 'she don't (know)', etc., were Standard English in late nineteenth century America, and so would have been acceptable (even though different from the white model).

Where shall I be when de firs'
trumpet soun' ? / When it soun' so loud
till it wake up de dead. (LXXXV)

Dillard cites examples of hyper-correction where the first person form of the copula is used with other than first person subjects. However, no such examples were found in our corpus.

3.4.3.3 Possession

Dillard draws a paradigm of the possessive pronouns he found in his survey of the stages of Black English (57):

creole and pidgin	partly decreolized
me	me or my
him	he
him	she or her

Possession is also indicated simply by juxtaposition, with or without a pronoun: On Sunday, we-uns do us washing (57).

The textual content of our corpus is intensely personal as shown by the fact that of the seventy-four possessive pronouns used, forty-five were first person (in each case the form was my). Second person possessives used forms your, yer or yo'. Third person used his or her (the context of the spiritual allowed for only one of the latter in the entire corpus), and plural forms were those of Standard

English. In several instances de or dis replaced the possessive form:

An' am I born to die,/ To lay dis
body down. (XXXI)

I'm a-trav'ling to the grave/ For
to lay this body down. (XXXIV)

He dunno where to lay de weary
head. (II)

Several examples of Standard English (Norman genitive)
were found:

We will walk dose golden streets of
de new Jerusalem. (IV)

O just let me get up in the house
of God. (CXII)

Don't get lost,/ We are the people
of God. (CX)

Standard English possessive marker (terminal /'s/) was found in only six spirituals:

I lookee on de God's right han'.

(XII)

We'll land on Canaan's shore. (XIV)

To, turn back Pharoah's army,
hallelujah. (XLII)

I leave you in God's care. (XLVIII)

I'm climbing up Zion's hill. (LII)

Freely go marching along like
Zion's sons and daughters. (LXXIX)

Of the above examples, the latter six could be thought of as examples of the 'possession by juxtaposition' feature described by Dillard. Of course, if one allows for

editorial addition of terminal /'s/ possession-marker (particularly in examples XIV and LXXIX), the similarity to Dillard's description is more evident. Other examples, written in eye dialect, seem to indicate undifferentiated pronoun forms and thus resemble 'possession by juxtaposition':

Turn sinner, turn, while yo' Maker
axa yo' to turn. (XI)

3.4.3.4 Non-differentiation of pronoun gender

Pronoun gender forms are characteristically lacking in pidgins and creoles and Dillard's samples obtained from informants provide many instances, e.g. He a nice little girl (56); Ole woman one single frock he hab on (106). He believes that at the present time this feature is found more commonly in Gullah than in American Black English and reasons that it may be a West African language influence. No examples of gender non-differentiation were found in our corpus in pronouns of genitive or any other case. An example was discovered where chariot was replaced by she in a cataphoric reference (LXVII.b.). This use resembles the

Standard English stylistic device of personification in which vehicles, ships, planes and countries are commonly referred to by using feminine gender pronouns.

3.4.3.5 Negation

Dillard's study of the earliest documents containing reports of Black English while yet in its pidgin stage gave him evidence of the use of the all-purpose no verb pattern (Agnello 1977). However, since the somewhat later pidgin/creole stages had three verbal categories: tense, aspect and phase, a new negator was required for each of the categories, and the older pattern was dropped. Don', ain' and dit'n were used as the three negators and, depending upon sentence structure, may or may not represent Standard English 'don't', 'ain't', and 'did not'. These are often used in elaborate double negative patterns (the redundancy here seems to serve to make the negation more absolute). Dillard claims that the change in negation patterns between earlier all-purpose no pattern to three-negator pattern is one of surface change only; the system of negation is the same but three forms are used to perform the same function that one form did previously.

If one were to construct a paradigm of Dillard's description of Black English verb and negation systems, it would approximate the following:

MOMENTARY ACTION VERBAL STRUCTURE	PRE-VERBAL NEGATION
<u>He go</u> - (90% of use refers to point-of-time in past)	<u>ain'</u>
<u>He go yesterday</u> - (co-occurent adverbial time expression reduces point-of-time confusion)	<u>dit'n</u> or <u>ain'</u>
<u>He goin'</u> - (progressive action; often but not always, refers to point-of-time in present)	<u>ain'</u>

DURATIVE ACTION (Stretched out)	PRE-VERBAL NEGATION
<u>He be goin'</u>	<u>don'</u>
<u>He be gone</u>	

REMOTE PERFECTIVE ASPECT (Decidely past)	PRE-VERBAL NEGATION
<u>He been go</u> - (point-of-time aspect).	
<u>He been goin'</u> - (progressive aspect)	<u>ain'</u>

IMMEDIATE PERFECTIVE ASPECT	PRE-VERBAL NEGATION
He <u>done go</u> - (immediately present time reference)	done is sometimes negated like <u>been</u>
He <u>done gone</u> - (immediate perfective in past time)	
He <u>done went</u> - (quasi-adjectival type of structure)	

Of the many opportunities for negation in our corpus, there were surprisingly few samples; several of them were identical to the paired white texts:

O mourn not for them, / O weep not
for them ... / They weep no more.

(C and 100)

It won' be long. (LVIII and 58)

Only four examples were found of don' negator - an imperative:

My bretheren, don't get weary.

(XXXII)

two other examples appear to negate a durative action:

De Son of man he dunno where to lay
de weary head. (I)

I don' wan' her [God's chariot]
leave-a me behind. (LXVIII)

and a fourth sample was found in question form:

Ef my mudder want to go, Why don't
she come along? (LXIV)

The negation of a temporary action is found in the
following:

I feel like my time ain't long. (CIV)

I feel like I'm on my journey home.

(104)

None of these has any connection with forms that are
uniquely identifiable with Black English, although they
don't provide contrary instances to Dillard's schema. Two

other examples of ain' fall less neatly into Dillard's description since they appear to negate a durative state:

Pray on, brothers, it ain't too late. (XXXIII)

Pray on, mourners, / It's not too late. (33)

There cain't nobody cross it, Cain't [don' be able?] your brother cross it foh you. (LIV)

There's no one can go there for you. (54)

Noticeably altered from the paired white text was a double negative pattern:

I'll never turn back - no more, no more. (CVII)

I'll never turn back anymore. (107)

3.4.3.6 Transitive marking

Hall (1966) studied the many examples of /&m,im/ in unstressed position after a verb form and concluded that it was simply the pronoun /h&m,him/ which we would have to set up as a direct object suffix in Proto-Pidgin-English. Dillard includes this feature in his description of Black English, having found it in many of his samples. Although the transitivizer morpheme is presently considered a characteristic feature of pidginization, Dillard feels it occurs rather late in Black English Pidgin. He speculates this is because of the social stratification and irregular decreolization of Black English (97). His examples show this morpheme clearly:

Tie um all up, and whip um
plaintiff and whip um 'dendant, and whip
um witness. (145)

He full um fote wid cotton bale.

(98)

A cursory examination of our corpus revealed not one example of a transitivizer morpheme. However, upon closer

examination of the enclitics, and after allowing again for orthographic adjustments, several examples were found where the enclitic vowel functioned as transitive marker:

O rock-a my soul in the bosom of
Abraham. (CXIII)

May the Lord help-a yo'. (IX)

May the Lord help you turn. (9)

We have a just God to plead-a our
cause. (CX)

I don't want her leave-a me
behin'. (CXVIII.B)

Go hear-de what my Jesus say.
(XXII)

3.4.4. Clause Structure

3.4.4.1 Predicate Marker

In his description of Black English grammar, Dillard includes examples illustrative of another common characteristic of pidgins/creoles: the predicate marker. The predicate marker (denoted by the form /i-/ in many pidgins) picks up the subject function and links it to the verb. It is often mistaken for a redundant pronoun subject, or even for an appositive. To illustrate, Dillard uses the following sentence:

Jacob, he done go? (58)

The redundant pronoun he, Dillard feels, is not that at all, but is, instead, a device (typical of pidgins/creoles) for announcing the predicate. The written form ought to be as follows:

Jacob i-done go? (58)

The predicate marker (termed such by Hall 1966) is an interesting characteristic of pidgins in that it 'adds' a

grammatical feature rather than 'simplifies'. It is found even in such short sentences as the last example, but most particularly after a very long sequence of intervening modifiers. In Black English it may alternate between unmarked him and marked he subjects of verbs, but is not utilized if the relative clauses modify the subject or complement of a verb rather than its subject:

You know Ray sister [0 predicate
marker] live on S Street [0 predicate
marker] go to school at Adams? (60)

In contrast, the following example contains what appears at first glance to be a repetition of the subject she immediately before the predicate verb. In reality, says Dillard, she is a predicate marker and functions as a link between subject and predicate:

Ray sister seven year old go to
school at Adams she got a new doll
baby. (59)

Dillard's data was oral, so there was no way to tell whether she isn't simply the beginning of a new sentence. We can only surmise that he judged it to be a predicate marker because the speaker's intonation indicated such. Whatever the case, by using his scheme for metanalysis, we were able to find several examples of predicate markers in our corpus:

The ol' time religion it is good enough
for me as we go marching home. (LXCI)

'Tis the old time religion. (46)

De son of man he dunno where to lay de
weary head. (I)

Dar's a better day a-comin'. (XXVI)

Then Mary she came weeping, a-looking
for her Lord. (XL)

See, Mary comes a-weeping, to see where
he was laid. (40)

3.4.4.2 Undifferentiated pronouns:

In Dillard's examination of even the earliest documentation of Black English there were exceptions to the non-differentiated pronoun rule. Characteristically, most pidgins use the non-differentiated forms him, me, her, us, them as the subject of the verb in both principal and subordinate clauses. Informal styles of Standard English occasionally use these forms for the same purpose, but usually only if the subject is plural (You and me will go). However, exceptions to this pidgin feature are not so important when understood in relation to the relative structure in Black English (60). Dillard received many examples of undifferentiated pronouns from his informants:

Him eat and get so full him can't
hardly swallow. (58)

Us ain't been far off from there
since us first landed in this country.

(58)

Her' didn't have nothing to give
me. (58)

However, he found just as many examples of
differentiated pronouns:

He tell me he God. (79)

I no hurt them at all. (79)

They told me serve him. (79)

Applying his metanalysis once again, Dillard reasons
that he may actually be the predicate marker of the phrase:
He tell me he God, and that the noun classifier, though
understood, has been deleted in this instance. In the
following example the noun classifier (Atticus he) is
present:

He tell me that Atticus he went to
bus 'em one day. (80)

While the feature of undifferentiated pronouns is a characteristic feature of most pidgins, it doesn't seem pertinent to our corpus. To speculate on whether all uses of he or she in subject position represent an understood (but deleted) noun classifier would be just that: speculation.

3.4.4.3 Conjunctions

When examining conjunctions between clauses, Dillard found some important departures in Black English from Standard English. His paradigm illustrates the comparative use of correlative conjunctions:

SE - either x or y

BE - x or either y

SE - neither x nor y

BE - It ain' x neither y (67, 68)

No examples of the above structures were found in our corpus.

In addition to the Standard English inventory of conjunctions, Dillard found time (sometimes interpreted in Standard English as 'by the time that') which he illustrates with the following example:

I made you a livin', gal, time I
was free. (67)

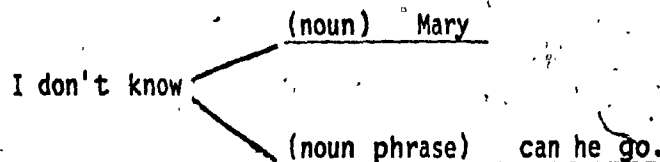
No examples of this 'conjunction' were found in our corpus.

Dillard also examined the use of the conjunction form if (or variant iffen) which he found operates like Standard English adverbial clauses with 'if' except when showing relational function of the verb to the object:

SE - I don't know if (whether) he can go.

BE - I don't know can he go. (63)

In the Black English example, Dillard argues, there is no feeling of an adverb 'if' clause, but, instead, a "noun" subordinate clause acting as the object of the verb know.



If the relational function is object relationship, the if need not be stated, as the following comparisons illustrate:

SE - Even if a man gets rich, he still pays taxes.

BE - Even [0] a man get rich, he still pay taxes.

Whether because of editorial correction or not, the examples of adverbial clauses with 'if' which were gleaned from our corpus seemed to operate just like those of Standard English:

If Jesus don't help me / I surely
will die. (XIII)

Ef my mudder want to go, / Why don't
she come along? (LXIV)

If our fathers want to go, / Why
don't they come along? (64)

If in Christ you do believe, / You
will find him precious. (CI and 101)

Sister, if your heart is warm,
Snow and ice will do no harm. (XXVIII)

And if I nevermore see you, / Go on,
I'll meet you there. (XLVIII)

3.4.4.4 Prepositions

Dillard found the same (albeit reduced) inventory of prepositions in Black English as in Standard English. Although their distribution is different from that in Standard English, there is no evidence that Black English prepositions are lacking in positional concepts (69). Out replaces Standard English 'out of' in the following:

Put the cat out the house. (69)

Dillard feels this slight mismatch with Standard English is a result of historical approximation from pidgin/creole. There is a tendency for pidgins to have one universal preposition (e.g. Melanesian - blong, Weskos - fo') which Dillard also found in uniquely Black English subordinate clause patterns:

Ran to the wood for hide. (107)

...fraid for truss.... (107)

Evidence of a universal preposition (for to, or fo' to) was
seen in many examples in our corpus:

Coming for to carry me home. (LIII)

Did you come for to help me?
(XXXVII)

I'm going down to Jordan / For to
hear the trumpet sound. (XXIX)

I'm a-trav'ling to the grave / For
to lay this body down. (XXXIV)

I'm going down to Jordan / For to
deliver up the cross. (III)

Example (III) shows a superfluity of prepositions common to
variants of English, but not reported by Dillard. There are

several more examples of this feature of superfluity:

Hid me over in the Rock of Ages.

(CIX)

By the grace of God I'll follow
on. (XXXV)

I have a mother over yonder on the
other shore. (LXIII)

The latter example (LXIII), while superficially appearing to contain redundant prepositions, illustrates a use of yonder which is more properly understood in our corpus as a noun rather than as a preposition (yonder = ^{heaven}). This can be seen in the following examples:

I have a mother over yonder.

(LXIII)

I'll meet you way up yonder in a
few day. (LXIX)

I want to live up yonder in bright
mansions above. (XXIII)

Our corpus yielded several examples of deleted prepositions:

Take care' [of] de sinsick soul.

(LXXVI.B)

O stand [against] the storm.

(LVIII)

I don't want her [to] leave-a me
behin'. (LXVIII)

Out [of] his mouth came fire and
smoke. (LXXXVI)

I looked over [to,at,the] Jordan
and what did I see. (LIII)

Besides prepositional deletions, other non-Standard uses of
prepositions were found in the examples in our corpus:

I have a sister in that day. (LXV)

When the world ketch a-fire. (XXV)

Not found in our corpus, but reported by Dillard (69) was the frequent use of /higo/ or /d~~o~~go/ which is very like French voici and voila and may correspond to Standard English 'here is (are)' and 'there is (are)'.

CONCLUSION

In historical-comparative linguistics, documentation is essential, but in the case of pidgins and creoles, little attempt was made to record the early forms. The general attitude seemed to be that these forms were corrupted forms having little value. Therefore it is very difficult to determine whether the modern creole shares relationships with earlier forms and precisely what these relationships were.

A consideration of sociohistorical conditions points to a similarity of language contact situations throughout the Caribbean, Atlantic and North America where the language contact was European/African. There is the question of whether the slaves had enough access to the Standard models to allow them to become proficient after only a short period of pidginization, particularly since it has been established that there was a prolonged influx into America of slaves already speaking a pidgin. The condition then becomes one of transmission of a code, not its creation.

Dillard argues that the development of creole studies has made a vital contribution to the understanding of Negro Non-Standard English in the United States. From his vantage

point of Modern Black English, he studied documentation from various literary works and official records in an attempt to find a common structural basis. What resulted was his description of Black English grammar which he feels was operative through out all developmental stages of Black English.

Dillard's description was used as an instrument to examine the corpus of this paper. The texts of a number of black spirituals adopted from white sources were examined: first, in order to compare the texts for departures from their white counterparts and, second, in order to discover if features from Dillard's description were present in the black text. Four general areas were considered:

1. Aspect over tense. It was difficult to find conclusive examples of durative be, immediate perfective done, or remote perfective past been. This may have been due to editorializing in deference to comprehensibility. Numerous examples of the zero copula were present, particularly when those concealed in the orthography were included in the list. Deletion of the copula is a salient feature of all pidgins.

2. Lexicon. Several examples of relexification were found (underlined by the lack of a counterpart in the white

version). A few malapropisms and enclitics were present, the latter in spite of editorial attempt to place them in standard orthography.

3. Morphology. The governing rule in Black English morphology is non-redundancy. The operation of this rule was evidenced throughout the corpus by occasional deletion of the plural marker and terminal /s/ in third person verbs. Little deviance from the white model was found in possessive markers or pronoun gender (contrary to Dillard's findings). However, there were several departures from the white text which could be interpreted as the transitive marker of pidginization.

4. Clause structure. The texts of white and black spirituals were most similar in the area of clause structure. Two possible explanations are that poetic constraints and those of the musical line discouraged deviance from white forms and also that editorial corrections were most evident in this area. Further studies may provide more conclusive indications that in the area of clause structure decreolization is strongest.

There are serious obstacles to the study of written documents of early Black English: the editors' native linguistic habits, the recorders' or copyists' carelessness

and lack of knowledge of Black English forms; however, it is not possible to ignore these sources. The very paucity of documentation calls for its acceptance. Moreover, important insights may be gained through comparisons of what appear to be aberrant forms of Standard English, with other descriptions of pidgins. There is also a growing awareness of an important link between the process of pidginization and that of second language learning.

It is now generally agreed that the structural simplicity of pidgins is a result of their limited communicative function; development into a creole is a result of the broadening functional needs of their speakers. Thus the process of elaboration (creolization) occurs when the need to express social identity and affective functions is felt. The same needs may account for the development of the mother tongue in infants. For this reason the study of pidginization and creolization may yield

valuable insights into the second language learning process.

(Corder 1967:168)

In conclusion, the presence of Black English features in the texts of spirituals constitutes the desired evidence, especially considering the fact that the texts had, for the most part, been learned with the accompaniment of music (limiting clause structure changes) and more especially, since in their published form, the texts were subject to editorializing.

Further study may provide reasons why editors felt constrained to correct some features (e.g. pronoun gender or remote perfective past been) and not others (e.g. zero copula or enclitics), why Black English phonological features (e.g. fo', lawd, cain't) were allowed to remain in texts while Black English morphological features were erased.

For languages having a long literary tradition, attestation of earlier forms are plentiful and historical description has not been a difficult task; however, for pidgins and creoles, a comprehensive diachronic picture is often lacking. For this reason these valid early sources are valuable.

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