

# “Better than any monument”: Envisioning Museums of the Spoken Word\*

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*Within weeks of Edison’s introduction of the phonograph, late in 1877, commentators began to imagine its capacity to materialize the human voice in the form of physical recordings as a basis for the collection, preservation, and display of intangible heritage, conceived of as “treasures” of oral expression. Between the late 1870s and World War I, a number of visionary proposals for the establishment of museums of language were advanced by scholars in the U.S. and Europe. In this article, I offer a preliminary examination of the history of such proposals and consider the reasons that none of them came to fruition.*  
[Keywords: language, phonograph, intangible heritage, exhibitionary complex]

## Museums of Language, New and Old

Within the past several years, an apparently new kind of institution has appeared on the horizons of the museum world: the museum of language. The two most prominent exemplars of this new type of museum are the Museum of the Portuguese Language in São Paulo, Brazil, and the Museum of the Afrikaans Language in Paarl, South Africa.<sup>1</sup> The former is part of the Afrikaans Language Monument (Afrikaanse Taalmonument), opened in 1975, and is housed in the family home of one of the founders of the Association of True Afrikaners (Genoostkap vir Regte Afrikaners), established 100 years earlier in 1875. It is relatively small and low tech, relying heavily on print and visual images, augmented with some audio-recorded materials. Shaped originally by an ideology of Afrikaner cultural nationalism, the museum has since adapted to the multicultural and multilingual ideology of post-Apartheid South Africa. The Museum of the Portuguese Language was dedicated in 2006, occupying the upper floors of an historic train station that was the point of entry to urban São Paulo for many non-Portuguese speaking immigrants from Europe and Asia. The Museum’s principal focus is on Brazilian Portuguese, with gestures toward the multicultural and multilingual environments in which it developed in the New World. By contrast with the Museum of the Afrikaans Language, the Museum of the Portuguese Language is proudly high-tech, featuring lots of televisual and hypermedia elements and interactive exhibits. Both institutions claim historical priority (though the South African museum is in fact the older of the two), and both make a point of their uniqueness, with the implication that they had no historical precedents on which to model themselves. In fact, however, the idea of museums of language is not at all new; it may be traced back at least a century and a quarter, to the time of the invention of the phonograph in 1877. An examination of the history of this idea and how it fared in the institutional world is instructive, both as a way of adding depth to the history of museums and their missions and as a critical vantage point on our

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own contemporary practice.

## **Proposals in the Early Phonograph Era**

When Edison first announced his new invention to the public, in November 1877, the most remarkable thing about the phonograph to contemporary observers was its capacity to overcome the ephemerality of the human voice, to capture and fix an utterance, detaching it from its originary source and endowing it with the qualities of an object: autonomy, durability, and even materiality.<sup>2</sup> As framed in one early report, “Your words are preserved in the tin-foil,” and indeed, bits of tinfoil from early demonstrations of the phonograph were fetishized as souvenirs of the wondrous experience (Gitelman 2006:36-40).<sup>3</sup> In one of the very first assessments of Edison’s new invention, his sometime associate, George B. Prescott, envisioned among the “public uses” of the phonograph the establishment of galleries in which “The utterances of great speakers and singers will there be kept for a thousand years. In these galleries spoken languages will be preserved from century to century.” These new public spaces, Prescott imagined, would include facilities in which “these treasures of speech and song” would be “brought out and reproduced” before the public (Prescott 1878:857). Here, within weeks of Edison’s introduction of the phonograph, is the recognition of its potential to serve as the basis for the collection, preservation, and display—indeed, for the very symbolic construction—of intangible heritage, conceived of as the “treasures” of oral expression. Significantly, however, for these processes to become possible, the intangible voice had first to be rendered tangible, in the form of physical recordings.

While Prescott’s vision for galleries of oral heritage gave pride of place to recorded displays of verbal virtuosity, others advanced different motivating principles for the development of collections to preserve and present the spoken word. Edison himself foresaw an application more scientific than artistic for the phonograph, anticipating that “Philologists will use it to compare different tongues. You see,” he told a visiting journalist, “its articulation is perfect.”<sup>4</sup> He was gratified, then, a few weeks later that “The President of the American Philological Society [sic: he meant Association] want one of my improved phonographs to preserve the accents of the Onondagas and Tuscaroras, who are dying out. One old man speaks the language fluently and correctly, and he is afraid that he will die. The phonograph will preserve the exact pronunciation.”<sup>5</sup>

To be sure, the agendas of connoisseurship and science are not incompatible, and the most ambitious of the early, speculative visions for the collection, preservation, and presentation of the spoken word combined them both. Writing in 1890, a far-seeing observer of the phonograph’s potential for the preservation of intangible heritage predicted that “The phonograph will make philology an exact science. It will do an equal service to art by enabling our descendants to compare their music and oratory with those produced by the masters of previous ages.”<sup>6</sup>

By 1890, it appears, the time was ripe: phonographic technology had improved sufficiently to allow its application to fieldwork and Jesse Walter Fewkes famously undertook to test its suitability for “the preservation of the languages of the aborigines of the United States” (Fewkes 1890:267). In March of 1890, Fewkes traveled to Calais, Maine, to record the speech and oral

traditions of the Passamaquoddy people, and later that year, he recorded a corpus of Zuni materials as well. Fewkes framed his research trip to Maine as a scientific experiment to determine whether the phonograph was suitable for linguistic research. “The result of these experiments,” he wrote, “has fully justified his expectations and convinced him that the instrument has now reached such a degree of perfection that it can now be adopted by scientific students for that purpose. He believes that it is a most valuable auxiliary in linguistic researches, and that it should be used in the study of the fast disappearing languages of races, and in making record of those which are rapidly becoming extinct” (Fewkes 1890:267). Fewkes’s pioneering efforts have been well documented, not least by his own assiduous efforts at publicizing his work, so I will not discuss them further here (Brady 1999:53-56). It is worth noting, however, that Fewkes’s colleague, Benjamin Ives Gilman, recognized in Fewkes’s collection of phonograph cylinders the basis for “a permanent museum” of sonic culture (Gilman 1891:68).

In the decade following Fewkes’s pathbreaking fieldwork, the use of the phonograph in the documentation of language and oral tradition gained momentum, though much of the work continued to be of an experimental cast as scholars explored the capacities of the new technology (Brady 1999). By the turn of the 20th century, the phonograph had proven itself sufficiently to encourage a French linguist and anthropologist, M. L. Azoulay, to offer to the Paris Anthropological Society in May 1900, a far more ambitious, concrete, and detailed plan for the establishment of phonographic museums (*musées phonographiques*) and archives (Azoulay 1900). In Azoulay’s view, the phonograph had achieved the capacity to “fix, preserve and reproduce” sound, fundamental operations of “all true science” (Azoulay 1900:173).<sup>7</sup> Azoulay emphasized the revolutionary potential of recording technology to capture “the vocal, phonic” aspects of language, such as vocalic harmony, whistle language, and the like, that linguistics was incapable of treating adequately with available methods of transcription and analysis (Azoulay 1900:175). Especially notable, for our purposes, he maintained that “The proper tradition in the art of saying and of singing, so difficult to transmit to the student and to posterity by means of the signs of punctuation and of music, becomes an easy matter” (Azoulay 1900:174). Azoulay is thus foregrounding the potential of phonographic collections for the intergenerational transmission of traditional performance styles, an essential concern in the safeguarding and perpetuation of intangible cultural heritage.

Consistent with his scientific agenda, and unlike the other speculative and programmatic proposals we have seen thus far, Azoulay’s recommendations for phonographic museums attend to methodological considerations for the documentation of the oral forms—he includes such cultural forms as “folklore,” “customary expressions,” “ancient and popular songs,” “oratory,” and local and regional dialects commonly identified as intangible heritage—that are to be included in the phonographic museums he envisions on a worldwide scale. The museums’ holdings would consist of the recordings themselves, accompanied by the original texts (in transcription and translation) and contextual apparatus, including information concerning place of origin; linguistic, ethnographic, geographic, and kinship data; photographs and genealogies of the individuals from whom the materials were collected; and detailed information concerning conditions of life (Azoulay 1900:176). Such data, systematically collected and supplemented on a regular basis, Azoulay maintained, would provide a basis of attack for the problems of “linguistic anthropology” (*anthropologie linguistique*, the first use of the term of which I am aware) and many others as well (Azoulay 1900:176).

Azoulay's proposal was persuasive. Aided by the enthusiasm surrounding the ethnological exhibits featuring living peoples that were a prominent feature of the Paris Exposition of 1900, the Society established the Phonographic Museum of the Society of Anthropology in May 1900 (Azoulay 1911:453). In the space of five months, with the aid of colleagues, and taking advantage of the accessibility of speakers of exotic languages at the Exposition, Azoulay was able to record more than 400 cylinders for the Museum's collection. His recordings included stories, folktales, conversations, songs, music, and linguistic data on more than 74 languages, dialects, and other linguistic varieties from what he described as "a large number of the world's regions" (Azoulay 1911:453). At the close of the Exposition, however, enthusiasm for the Museum waned, and to Azoulay's evident and strongly expressed disappointment, the Society ceased to support it in 1904 (Azoulay 1911:450 n. 1).

It is not unlikely, though, that Azoulay's thwarted effort to establish his phonographic museum helped to lay the groundwork—seven years later—for an institution that was more fully realized, the Archives of Speech (*Les Archives de la Parole*) established at the Sorbonne in 1911 under the directorship of the linguist, Ferdinand Brunot. A professor of the history of the French language, Brunot had a special interest in the non-standard, vernacular varieties of the language, and became one of the pioneers of the study of phonetics, recognizing sound patterns as a significant dimension of variation among regional and local dialects.<sup>8</sup> He had been interested for some years in setting up an institute of phonetics at the Sorbonne and published a number of articles in which he proposed the creation of a Museum of Speech (*Musée de la Parole*) (Veken 1984:47). In 1911, through the generosity of Émile Pathé, co-founder of the Pathé Brothers phonograph company, Brunot was finally able to get his project off the ground. Pathé offered to establish at the Sorbonne a laboratory dedicated to the recording of speech and to underwrite the expenses of the laboratory for ten years. Satisfied that the equipment Pathé proposed to provide would yield scientifically reliable data, a university committee established for the purpose recommended acceptance of Pathé's offer and the immediate establishment of the Archives of Speech that would be the basis of the future Institute of Phonetics (Anonymous 1911). Although the facility was officially designated as an archive, Brunot continued to refer to it as a museum (Veken 1984:47) and to conceive of it as an institution for the collection and preservation of linguistic objects.

As in the earlier visions and proposals we have considered, the founders of the Archives of Speech were especially impressed by the capability of the phonograph to neutralize the ephemerality and intangibility of the spoken word, to capture and fix spoken language "in its full integrity" (Brunot 1911:7). One commentator on the inauguration of the new repository noted that while manuscripts and books were "guardians of speech, fixed by writing," the recordings would preserve the spoken voice still more completely: "At the same time as the vocal signs, which up to this point vanish with the vibrations of the air, [the recordings] will fix the fugitive vestments of these signs, the individual timbres and inflections of the voice" (Liard 1911:5). Brunot casts the special capacity of the phonograph explicitly in terms of its materialization of the intangible word. With the advent of sound recording, he observes, "speech inscribes itself in matter for all time" (Brunot 1911:9).

Although its charter was primarily linguistic, Brunot articulated an intellectually broad mission

for his repository, extending its purview to anthropology and folklore as well (Brunot 1911:12-13). By the same token, he defined its reach as global: open “to the explorer who will bring us the echo of a conversation collected in Tibet, or on the edge of the Congo, it will be the refuge of ways of speaking termed savage as well as of the languages deemed classical” (Brunot 1911:13). Notwithstanding this breadth of vision, however, the task that Brunot considered most urgent was to rescue linguistic varieties in France that were in danger of being lost. “We have all around us,” he wrote, “great elders who are dying, that is our dialects. One by one the villages, under the influence of the school, of the press, of commercial relations, multiplied a hundred times by the new means of communication, are abandoning their old venerable language. In several years, they will be deformed or will have vanished” (Brunot 1911:13). Brunot’s nostalgia for the old ways of speaking did not prevent him from acknowledging that the social and cultural changes that threatened their survival brought with them much that was positive, but he could not help but see the decline of the linguistic heritage as an “irreparable disaster” (Veken 1984:66). Significantly, he insisted that it was not the already dead dialects that demanded conservation, but the living ones, “chatting and singing, casting into the winds of the distant future the indelible echo of the sonorities that even a scholar does not notice, the accents that an outsider cannot ‘catch’” (Veken 1984:66).

Brunot’s dedication to the non-standard, local and regional varieties of French was conjoined to a broader nationalist frame of reference. He saw these vernacular dialects as “the direct products of the national genius, ... the popular spirit,” reflecting the *Volksgeist* in the conduct of “everyday life” (Veken 1984:47). That is to say, the dialects offered a vantage point on French national character from the bottom up, from the on-the-ground lived experience of everyday life. Moreover, these intangible features of everyday life are more revealing of a people’s character than tangible ones; “Better than any monument,” Brunot maintained, “the language of each village represents its personality” (Veken 1984:47).

The initial plan for the Archives of Speech included an ambitious program of field research to document the regional languages and dialects of France that Brunot considered so important to the study of French language and culture. To launch this empirical part of the archive’s mission, Brunot and his colleague, Charles Bruneau, undertook summer recording trips to the Ardennes, where Walloon was spoken, in 1912 and to Limousin, an Occitan-speaking region, and Berry, home of the Berrichon dialect, in 1913. Unfortunately, the outbreak of World War I cut short their further plans (Veken 1984). The protocol guiding the field recordings that Brunot gathered for the archive included several standardized procedures designed to elicit systematic and comparable lexical, phonological, and grammatical data. In the course of the fieldwork in the Ardennes, however, Brunot came to an important realization, with profound methodological and epistemological implications. Concomitant with his realization that the existential domain of the vernacular language varieties he sought was everyday life, Brunot realized as well that what was distinctive of each locale and its ways of speaking could only emerge to its fullest extent not in the reproduction of canned elicitation devices but in spontaneous, improvised talk: “The ideal would be to have instantaneous [talk]; not discourse repeated in the archives, but the original harangue as it falls from the lips during the debate, as the orator lives it, in full contest, in the emotions of an encounter.” Each disk recorded under these spontaneous circumstances, then, would be “a slice of life” (Veken 1984:53).

## **Museums of Language and the Exhibitionary Complex**

The three decades between the invention of the phonograph in 1877 and the establishment of the Archives of Speech in 1911 coincided with the heyday of the 19th century “exhibitionary complex” identified by Tony Bennett (1988), characterized by a vigorous penchant for cultural displays that figured the triumph of modernity. Museums, together with other display formats like expositions, pageants, and the like, were on the minds of cultural specialists and it is productive to consider the various imaginings, proposals, and undertakings that I have discussed relating to the establishment of museums of language and oral performance within that broader historical context.

In doing so, it is important to bear closely in mind that within the exhibitionary complex, museums were dedicated to the collection, preservation, and display of material objects: autonomous, durable, tangible. During the period we are considering, museum objects tended to be of two principal kinds, not necessarily mutually exclusive: (1) things that were in some wise extraordinary, whether curious, anomalous, or artistically excellent, or (2) things that were the distressed remnants of a bygone time that indexed the advent of modernity. To think, then, of a museum of language and oral expression, was to assimilate them to this conventional frame of reference.

The first requirement was a means of making the spoken word, in all its ephemerality, into a stable object. The phonograph provided that capacity. Time and again, the historical sources we have considered emphasize this aspect of sound recording technology: it fixes the spoken word. Not surprisingly, the verbal forms singled out for preservation by recording were closely consistent with the predisposition of museums toward objects of artistic excellence—the verbal art forms of oratory, theater, literature—or the language and oral traditions endangered by modernity—“primitive” languages, regional dialects, traditional tales, and the like. To be sure, the documentation of disappearing languages and distressed oral traditions was an enterprise of long standing at the time of the invention of the phonograph, part of the Herderian philological tradition established in the latter part of the 18th century (Bauman and Briggs 2003). It is also worth noting that the forms of oral poetry to which that Romantic nationalist program directed attention—folktales, legends, folksongs, epics, etc.—already display object-like properties by virtue of their textuality: bounded off to a degree in formal terms from their contextual surround, internally cohesive, susceptible to decontextualization and recontextualization, not to mention materializable through transcription as text objects (Bauman and Briggs 1990; Silverstein and Urban 1996). With the advent of the phonograph, however, it is not merely the text but the performance that can be fixed and objectified, brought “within the control of the hearer” (Gilman 1891:68), preserving features that could not be captured adequately by written transcription, features that characterized all vocal utterances, such as timbre, intonation, and other suprasegmental features. What was also important, for intellectuals and cultural specialists of the day, was that these formerly evanescent and intangible forms could be fixed (at least arguably) with precision, sufficiently so to make them amenable to the kind of close, sustained observational and analytical scrutiny that science demanded. Recording made speaking a potential object of scientific inquiry, an increasingly important standard for many in the museum world of the day.

## **Conclusion**

What can we learn from this examination, brief and summary as it is, of efforts in the late 19th and early 20th century to establish museums of language? Necessary to all of them, as we have seen, was a sense that language could be collected, preserved, and displayed in a manner consistent with contemporary understandings of what a museum was about. And a second fundamental requirement was a conviction that language was worthy of being the organizing focus of a museum, that it warranted the investment of effort and resources that establishing and maintaining a museum would require and that it would be of sufficient interest to sustain public support.

As regards the first of these requirements, the triggering mechanism was the invention of the phonograph in 1877. What enabled early visionaries to imagine museums of language was the capacity of the phonograph to materialize the spoken word, to endow it with the qualities of a collectable, preservable, displayable object. To be sure, there were verbal forms that were recognized as objectifiable and displayable before the advent of the phonograph. The formal, textual properties of spoken art forms such as folktales, folksongs, epics, public oratory, and the like—marked off from their co(n)textual surround, bounded, internally cohesive, coherent—were conducive to decontextualization, recontextualization, iterability, and so on that allowed them to be conceived of as durable objects, all the more so when they were transcribed in writing and rendered as material text artifacts. Moreover, these entextualized forms were often the vehicles of oral display, in performance. What was different, however, with the advent of sound recording, was that not merely the text, but the living, voiced performance could be objectualized: stabilized, preserved, and reinstated as such.

When it came to the second condition, museum-worthiness, there were a number of qualities put forward as warrants for the establishment of museums of the spoken word. The very first plan, offered almost as soon as the phonograph was publicly announced, foregrounded artistic excellence, envisioning “galleries” for the preservation and presentation of “the utterances of great speakers and singers.” “Galleries” assimilates the collection and display of recordings to the model of fine arts museums, institutions for the cultivation of esthetic connoisseurship and symbolic capital. An alternative warrant was science, on the model of natural science museums. As Fewkes suggested in 1890 (Fewkes 1890:268), “What specimens are to the naturalist in describing genera and species, or what sections are to the histologist in the study of cellular structure, the cylinders made on the phonograph are to the student of language.” The phonograph was lauded for its fidelity, for its ability to capture and fix aspects of spoken language inaccessible by other means, and to render these hitherto ephemeral and intangible aspects of language stable, observable, and susceptible to controlled examination. Also in the service of science, the preservation of recordings in museums would arrest the forces—like literacy, standardization, or the disappearance of speakers—that threatened the continued existence of “primitive” and vernacular languages. The speakers might disappear, but the speech would be preserved for scientific study.

Still another factor that might make linguistic forms museum-worthy were the associational (or indexical) resonances that accrued to them. A given way of speaking may thus stand as a

metonym of the “national genius,” or the “popular spirit,” or the distinctive “personality” of a village. One especially persuasive way of framing the indexical resonance of a verbal form is as an expression of tradition, that is a saying again of what has been said before, an instantiation of an intertextually constituted series of iterations, extending back into the history of a community, a people, a tribe, a nation. The existence—or construction—of such a tradition serves as symbolic testimony to the persistence and durability of the people among whom it is current. This ideological nexus, in which language and oral tradition give voice to the *Volksgeist* of the nation was of long standing in Western romantic nationalism (Bauman and Briggs 2003), and represents the true core of what we have come to know as intangible cultural heritage. Such symbolic constructions depended upon the understanding that the traditions that stood as the underpinning of national identity were laid down in the distant past, handed down from the ancestral generations to the people of the present, their descendents and cultural heirs. Sound recording, however, opened up a new possibility: that the vernacular forms and expressions recorded from contemporary individuals—ordinary conversations, perhaps, or the talk of everyday life—might serve as resources for future generations in their own construction of their heritage. That is to say, the planners of language museums understood their role, at least in part, to be that of heritage builders, documenting and preserving the ancient heritage while at the same time laying the groundwork for future efforts of heritage construction on the part of our descendents.

All of the factors I have enumerated that entered into the proposals for the development of museums of the spoken word were quite compatible with established conceptions of the nature and mission of museums and with prevailing ideologies of culture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. And yet, interestingly enough, none of the proposals and plans for museums of language, based on the new technology of sound recording, ultimately succeeded. Why should this have been the case?

Certainly, one significant factor, with regard to the notion of having public galleries for the collection and presentation of oral art forms, was that by the turn of the 20th century, the phonograph was fast becoming a private, rather than a public technology, a commodified means of home entertainment. Audiences who wanted to hear the great orators and singers outside live performance could buy commercial recordings, assemble their own collections, and play them at home on their own phonographs (Gitelman 2006; Marvin 1988:79-80; Millard 1995:37-64). The transformation of the phonograph to an instrument of home entertainment had a number of significant correlates. First, by situating the phonograph and its mediated performances to domestic space, the establishment of public venues for phonographic display lost whatever impetus it may have had in the first heady days of the medium. Moreover, the cultivation of the phonograph as a mass medium revolved around the production, sale, and—most importantly—reproduction of pre-recorded cylinders and discs that could be played repeatedly, yielding reliably identical performances. This technology of mechanical reproduction routinized mediated performances, attenuating the aura of wonder and uniqueness that attended the very first recordings. Museums depend heavily on the collection and display of auratic objects, objects of “resonance and wonder” (Greenblatt 1991; cf. Moore 2006). Stripped of their aura, the claim of recordings to museum-worthiness fell away.

During the same period that the phonograph became a mass medium, there was a shift in the



institutional base for the study of anthropology and linguistics, away from museums and toward universities. From the 1860s until the first decade or so of the 20th century, most of the research on Native American language, including traditional texts, took place under the auspices of museums. Beginning in the early decades of the 20th century, the center of gravity shifted to university departments of anthropology and linguistics, with a concomitant shift from museums to archives as sites for the collection and preservation of field materials, including recordings (Campbell 2000:77; cf. Jackson 1999). In France, the Archives of Speech, conceived by Brunot sometimes as museum, sometimes as archive, and located from the start within the Sorbonne, was ultimately realized as an archive and never really functioned as a museum, with the mission to display as well as collect and preserve its materials. Regardless of geographical location or institutional base, however, the use of sound recording in the documentation of unwritten and vernacular languages and oral tradition became routinized and ethnographic sound archives continued to proliferate as the 20th century progressed, and with the common, widespread use of sound recording technologies, sound recordings were no longer a focus of wonder. Ultimately, they dropped out of the exhibitionary complex.

Until recently, that is. Now, if only on a modest scale as yet, museums of language are coming back. The burgeoning of identity politics and ethnic nationalism, with continuing strong appeals to language and oral tradition as the touchstone of identity, the resurgence of museum building as an adjunct of tourist development, and the development of new communicative technologies on which the museum world has seized as a means of documenting, preserving, and displaying cultural forms remind us of conditions that prevailed during the period a century and a quarter ago when the first plans to develop museums of language were originally offered. The enthusiasm for “high tech” exhibition aids on the part of today’s planners of language museums certainly echoes the excitement generated by the advent of the phonograph that we have seen in the writings of their forebears in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Grepstad 2009:62, 64,70). At the same time—and not unrelatedly—the broad sway that protocols for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage exert in the museum world and coordinate programs for the protection of endangered languages in linguistics and anthropology provide further stimulus to program and institution building. We may confidently expect to see more museums of language opening their doors before very long.

## **Acknowledgements**

My thanks to Jason Baird Jackson for comments on an earlier version of this essay.

## **Notes**

1. On the Museum of the Portuguese Language, see: <http://www.museulinguaportuguesa.org.br/>, accessed December 14, 2010. On the Museum of the Afrikaans Language, see Burden (2007). A more modest institution is the National Museum of Language, in College Park, Maryland; see <http://www.languagemuseum.org>, accessed December 14, 2010. Grepstad (2009) surveys museums of language and writing, including institutions in various stages of planning and development but not yet in operation. I thank Per Rekdal for providing me with a copy of this

publication.

2. On “artefactual ideologies” of language, see Blommaert (2008), Manning (2006), Moore (1988, 2006), Silverstein (2003).
3. See “The Man Who Invents.” (Anonymous 1878c:1). Tinfoil was the matrix material for the earliest phonographs. Note that the goal was preservation, not safeguarding, as in the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage. See: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00006>, accessed December 14, 2010.
4. See “Edision the Magician” (Anonymous 1878a).
5. See “The Edison Speaking Machine” (Anonymous 1878b).
6. See: “A Phonogram Library” (Anonymous 1890).
7. All translations from the French are mine.
8. On Brunot, see Serrailh et al. (1961) and Chaurand (1981).

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