

Language Wars

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LANGUAGE CONFLICT

Ever since the Biblical myth of the Tower of Babel, analysts have identified language difference as a potent cause of division and conflict. We might question Solorzano y Pereyra's view in *Politica Indiana* (1648) that "the diversity of languages is the greatest cause of religious warfare, national discords, and civil seditions,"¹ but it is often difficult to identify a more fundamental and ubiquitous cause. Where empires once extirpated a people's language as a sign of domination, and where nation-states once sought their own form of totalizing dominance for the national tongue, language conflicts are now often a complex tangle of hegemony and resistance that threatens to re-create Babel on a global scale.

We generally respond to the Babel of languages in the world by seeking to carve out a space in which only "our" language is spoken; but this response is inevitably at odds with the reality that living in the world demands a range of spaces in which speakers of different languages can communicate effectively. The problem is immense: there are now some 225 so-called nation-states in the world and 6,700 languages.² For each nation-state there are, on

the average, 30 languages, and for every nation-state that has only one language (as do Iceland and Liechtenstein) another has 60.

This range of linguistic spaces is particularly important nowadays because, until recently, the academic discussion of language and international politics has been dominated by responses to a single sort of “space,” the territory of the nation-state. And, since the early nineteenth century, that national space or territory has been defined by the ideal of linguistic nationalism: the idea that peace and justice demand that all the speakers of a given language secure a national homeland where that language is supreme. The bloody conflicts caused by this aspiration have by no means ceased, but as the nation-state retreats in importance it necessarily yields to more complex spaces in which official national languages coexist uneasily with dialects, with minority and immigrant languages, and with such “international” languages as English.

One might say that the homogeneous linguistic space of the nation-state is being contested by an older archetype: the multilingual trading city. Alexandria in classical times, Constantinople and Venice in medieval history, and Strasbourg in early modern and modern history existed precisely to overcome constraints of distance and language and to bring different peoples together.

Linguistic conflict and cooperation now take place in such a bewildering variety of specific spaces and cases that the importance of language itself is in danger of being lost. Yet, in an age when language is being rediscovered as an “historical determinant,”³ many wars that we used to call simply “religious” or “nationalist” turn out, on further reflection, to have been “linguistic” as well. Increasingly, peoples are being understood as attached to “group language” or “mother tongues” in something like the same sense in which historians once said that they were attached to territory,⁴ religion,⁵ and race.⁶ (For example: Britishers, though they once warred for the territory “England” or “Great Britain” or for the religion “Anglicanism,” seem nowadays actually to have won the battle for the language “English.”)⁷

Language, as such, is an important component of “culture”—if not, as we will also consider, *the* essential component of culture. After all, some people believe that changing their language means changing their culture, their

kinship system, and even their rights to the land. Indeed, many people maintain that they cannot change their language without ipso facto also changing their gods and themselves. When the captive Jews exiled in ancient Babylon—the Hebrew *babel*—are required by their captors to sing an entertaining song in the tongue of their new masters, they hardly know how. Their psalmic refrain, “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?”⁸ came to mean, not that slaves and exiles do not know or cannot learn how to speak the language of the conquerors, but rather that their God cannot show himself in that language. (The refrain was, of course, a favorite for non-anglophone linguistic minorities in the New World—e.g., Sweet Honey in the Rock.) All too often in human history the motives for “linguicide” (destroying a language)⁹ and “glottophagie” (absorbing or consuming a language),¹⁰ verge on the terrible purposes of “genocide” (destroying all the individuals of a culture).

There is rarely an escape hatch from this dilemma of linguistic alliance. A native language is a distinguishing group characteristic more difficult for the individual to mask (or transform without telltale “accent” or speech impediment) than such relatively more mutable characteristics as territorial, political, and religious allegiance. So, throughout the globe and throughout the centuries, people have often been killed as a consequence of being unable to speak a particular language or even to pronounce such a word as *shibboleth* or *cheese* without accent.¹¹ The Greek term *barbarian* suggests *enemy* and *stutterer*, but it comes down to its older meaning: “a people who cannot speak ‘our’ language ‘properly’” or who cannot speak *any* language without accent, like the still growing number of immigrants and stateless persons in the world today who may be or represent a real problem of international peace and security.¹²

Some people fight for or against a language because they seriously believe that certain languages are good or evil in themselves regardless of the good or evil intentions of their individual speakers.¹³ A few American revolutionaries argued in 1776, that, even as one language’s lexis or syntax might promote democracy or empire, so another’s might promote dictatorship.¹⁴

Consider here the possible military purposes for compelling or strongly encouraging conquered or immigrant peoples to speak mainly the language of the victorious or host country,¹⁵ as well as to adapt a new toponymy, or

system of place names. Presumably, outlawing the languages of newly conquered peoples diminishes the likelihood of their successful conspiracy against the imperial power and educates them both about the new definition of territory and about the new layout of territories. But, at the same time, in certain situations, a common language newly adopted might give those very peoples a *lingua franca*—a frank means of communication with one another—which they may never have had until the moment of conquest and which they might now use to conspire jointly against the imperial power. Moreover, the very fact of the imposition of a new language is often cause enough for conspiracy. No matter how often they may be taught that the new language is a means of political “liberation,” or economic “opportunity,”¹⁶ or that learning the new language is merely voluntary, many conquered peoples come to believe that “the language of the conqueror on the lips of the conquered is the language of slaves.”¹⁷ “I have one language and it is not mine,” writes an Algerian Jew educated in French.

Such problems of Babel nowadays bear variously on war in such “nation-state hotspots”—scenes of deadly conflict—as Bosnia, Israel, Egypt, South Africa, Moldavia, Estonia, the Ukraine, and Kurdistan¹⁸ (among dozens of others). They suggest what Calvet has called “the war of languages.”¹⁹ And in the present world, with its changing relationships between language and territoriality and shifting outlooks on “Americanization,” these problems call out for fresh analysis and outlook.

LANGUAGES OF THE UNITED STATES

The colonization of the New World by Europeans—“the biggest population shift of modern times”²⁰—involved on the cultural level the territorial spread of such languages as Spanish, English, and French by means of genocide, linguicide, and glottophagia. Eventually myriad languages hailing from Africa, Europe, and Asia, as well as the Native American (or “First Peoples”) languages were involved.

In the New World Babel that is the now the United States, for example, many political and intellectual means have buoyed the currently predominant anglophone monolingualism. How has this affected me as co-editor of

the recently published *Multilingual Anthology of American Literature: A Reader of Original Texts with English Translations*²¹—a 29-language collection in bilingual-English split-page format? Among American literary scholars in the 1990s, a distinct focus on anglophone literature written by “ethnic” groups with all-too-familiarly racist hyphenated names seems generally to have displaced most literature written in America in languages other than English. In this view, scholarly discussion of exclusively anglophone “Asian-American” and “African-American” and “Native American” literature generally serves to displace, rather than to introduce, the study of American literature written in Chinese, say, or in Arabic and French, or in Navaho. Yet American citizens and residents have published successfully in the United States in scores of languages—well over two hundred, in fact. And, to judge only by the holdings of Widener Library, they have produced more than 125,000 imprints in languages other than English. Their works, mostly overlooked by scholars since before World War II, range from immigrant tales to brilliant novels, from marvelous cookbooks to newspapers with circulation figures in the tens of thousands, from cosmopolitan poetry to what are easily the best American plays of the nineteenth century. These works include an American tradition of literature with lesbian themes extending back as far as the 1840s, Arab-language writing by literate black slaves who wrote in their mother tongue, and polyglot American literary works that range from “immigrant ethnic” to “cosmopolitan international.”

How and why has so much work been overlooked? And not only by the mainstream, so called, but also by those scholars and readers interested in American “Ethnic Studies” of various sorts?

Let me try out here one answer to this Americanist question by first recalling again that, according to the Bible, all human beings once spoke only one language, but because they tried to build “a city,” God punished them by creating a diversity of languages. Now the English colonists in America wanted to build a “city upon a hill,” but, as urban planners, they never openly recognized any absolute architectonic need for a single language of the pre-Babel sort that God confounds in the Book of Genesis. In this same tradition, the Constitution of the “United States of America,” though written in English, is notably silent about the need for linguistic

unity or even about the means of dealing with linguistic diversity. What “group rights,” for example, were to be enjoyed by German speakers in Pennsylvania? (They numbered just over 50 percent.) Was English to become an official language?

At the time, Noah Webster, among others, recognized that “the diversities of languages among men may be considered as a curse, and certainly one of the greatest evils that commerce, religion and the social interests of men have to encounter.”²² And he once thought that American English, or English as then spoken in America, would eventually become the basic ingredient in a melting pot of languages that would peacefully extinguish and finally absorb all the other languages spoken in the lands bounded by the United States. Of course, this sort of universalist-anglophone amalgamation seemed unlikely to happen in the short run. In 1776, after all, only 40 percent of people living in what was then the United States were anglophone. These people spoke scores of African, Native American, and non-English European languages. And at least one new state, Pennsylvania, probably did have a majority of voters speaking a single non-English language. In the following two centuries, moreover, there was a good deal more voluntary immigration from non-anglophone European and Asian groups. The slave trade forced further “immigration” of non-anglophone African populations to the United States. The military conquest of Spanish speakers in the Southwest, the commercial takeovers both of French speakers in Louisiana and also of Russian speakers in Alaska, and land grabs from myriad Native American tribes all made for complex, often brutal, language engineering policies. These policies included linguicide by various means: genocide for many Amerindian groups, removal of tongues for slaves sometimes unwilling or unable to speak English, execution under martial law for French speakers in New Orleans in the wake of the Civil War, the firing squad for Russian speakers in the wake of the Alaska Purchase, the devalorization and sometimes even criminalization of all non-English language speaking and teaching due to concern about the five million German Americans constituting a “third column” during World War One, and oddly abortive attempts at bilingual Spanish-English constitutions in New Mexico. All such means contributed to that “fading away” of languages that fills the pages of

non-anglophone American literature and makes university departments of English and their Ethnic Studies components merely clever cheerleaders for the winners. Even, perhaps, ex post facto monolingual opportunists.

Yet America still harbors tens of millions of non-English speakers—principally Spanish. And it is ever the site of a remarkable micro-experiment in interlinguistic “globalization.” Here, two apparently contrary imperatives continue to confront each other. On the one hand is the imperative for one language that everyone would speak to the permanent *exclusion* of any other language. That is the platform of the political organization known as English Only. On the other hand is the imperative for a language that everyone would speak in *addition* to another one. That is the platform of English Plus.

MULTILINGUAL TRANSLATION

Interlinguistic translation is needful for peace and security, but it is also “one of the most representative paradigms of the clash between two cultures.”²³ The political problems at work here are extreme: certain cultures have a taboo on translation and a few ethnic groups hold out against translation because they like to keep the secrets that translation can reveal;²⁴ some cultures believe that religious worship requires a particular linguistic affiliation; a few groups regard a particular language as the “private property” of one or another gender or economic class. Increasingly, commercial interests recognize here the role of transnational advertising in the global arena.²⁵

Moreover, there is the perhaps insurmountable problem that culturally “unbiased”—if not also technically accurate—translation is somehow impossible. The controversial German-American-Canadian “Whorf-Sapir” hypothesis, for example, suggests that even an accurate and well-meaning translation is, willy nilly, merely cultural appropriation insofar as interlinguistic differences in grammar create a “firewall” between certain language groups.²⁶ The work of linguists from Roman Jakobson to Noam Chomsky is likewise relevant here, as well as the novels of Suzette Elgin, for understanding the roles of poetry and any idea of universal language.

Now *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature*, which I mentioned earlier, gathers together original works written in many non-English

languages, and it presents those languages together with (“plus”) translations into the English language. In this context, the international conference room, with its facilities for translation, may well present a useful model for such an anthology’s translation of many languages into one. The conference room suggests the opportunity for diplomacy,²⁷ trade, and intellectual exchange, but it is also a site renowned for sparking wars. In which language (if any) should the group of conferees, in a preliminary way, discuss the language that the group will use for the principal part of the proceedings? Is it all *ex post facto*? In an essentially or historically bilingual setting in Miami, for example, might the appropriate language be Spanish and/or English and/or French? In which language should one discuss the question of language diversity? The choice of language is a key element in determining the outcome of the debate.²⁸ So, why English?

In fact, *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature* has three prototypical kinds of readers. One kind of reader knows the language in which the particular original work is written. Either that reader pays no attention to the English translation or else he reads it as a biased interpretation or as a work of art in its own right. The second kind of reader does not know the language of the particular original work. This reader pays attention mainly to the facing-page English translation. But if this second reader knows some other non-English language (most likely represented elsewhere in this anthology), she will know something of what she is missing; she will be reminded of it (what she is missing) by the facing-page original. The third hypothetical reader knows all languages—as do the people imagined in Genesis before the “confusion of languages” and as do those Christian universalists, ecstatic celebrants, who “speak in tongues” in Acts.

It is deceptively easy nowadays in the predominantly anglophone United States to “celebrate” linguistic diversity. In much the same way it is safe, in a territory where all tigers are believed to be extinct, to celebrate biological diversity. Indeed, the very disappearance of another group’s language often provides the dominant group with a sublime platform from which to enjoy it, as well as a tragedian’s soapbox on which to bemoan the loss of language diversity. Such decriers can be compared with the imperial Roman grammarians who made anthologies of non-Latin literature gathered from colonial

outposts as if to “preserve” them in imperial translations that “incorporate and transcend” (sublate) them—as in a jar of assorted “language preserves.”

The editors of *The Multilingual Anthology*, with its pervasive “English Plus” facing-page, bilingual format, do not enter the fray in a political vacuum. Indeed, the very notion of common language is always fraught with political difficulty. Common languages here include the “language of diplomacy” for international conflict and war,²⁹ the “language of civil discourse” for international communications and laws, the “trade language” for international exchange,³⁰ the “air controllers’ language” for international transportation systems,³¹ and, whether we like it or not, English as it operates willy-nilly in our own communications with one another.

The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature attempts to recuperate forgotten American languages and literatures and to indicate how much remains to be done. But, at the same time, it inevitably recapitulates, on the other hand, the same movement toward “anglicization” that led to the need for recuperation in the first place. My apprehension here is that any and all translation, which one might want to present as a solution to a political problem, is itself already and always political. But if translation has long been recognized as “one of the most representative paradigms of the clash between two cultures,”³² it is also the salve.

I have tried to raise general questions about the question whether language or politics is prime. On the one hand is the perhaps pleasant view that “The emperor is not above the grammarian”³³—which implies that in certain respects, the realm of language is at least as powerful as the political realm that enunciates itself in language, if not more powerful. On the other hand is the polar opposite view, as expressed by the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund: “I am the Roman king and above the grammarian.”³⁴ Many a “Royal Academy” would pretend to legislation. In 1492, when Columbus sailed the ocean blue, Antonio de Nebrija gave Queen Isabella of Spain a copy of his *Gramática sobre la lengua castella*. The Queen asked: “What is it for?” Nebrija answered: “Your majesty, language is the perfect instrument of empire.”³⁵ But is it the poet who wields the instrument, or the state?

Some people used to say that, one day soon, there would be a single global language—whether an imperial language, a “planned language,”³⁶ or

some sort of successful yet informal lingua franca. Nowadays many say likewise that that “machine translation” will soon render all inter-linguistic problems obsolete³⁷ or that the Internet will ensure that English becomes everyone’s language of second choice or even everyone’s native (and only) language. It is tempting to believe that the confusion of Babel will disappear with a new technological age. However, in his *Modern Utopia* (1905) that great writer of “science fiction,” H. G. Wells, already warned us to be wary of the view that “we need suppose no linguistic impediments to intercourse.”³⁸ Computer translation and tele-translation are still disappointing technologies and some have argued that they will always remain so.³⁹ The “city on a hill” that is the American Babel, with all its opportunities for cooperative toleration and (as Thomas Paine observed in his acute remarks on American multilingualism)⁴⁰ for all its burdensome conflict, is too much with us. The multilingual past of the United States and the unique achievement of American literatures are essential parts of the political experiment that is America’s polyglot past and its global presence and future.



N O T E S

1. Juan de Solórzano y Pereyra, *Política indiana* (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1972), 252–256. In 1940, mindful of World War II, John Hubert Jagger wrote: “The unfortunate incident that happened in Babylon some few millennia ago is one of the predisposing conditions leading to war, and perhaps the chief of them” (*English in the Future* [London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1940], 119). For the issue in the latter half of the twentieth century, see Kurt E. Mueller, ed., *Language Status in the Post-Cold-War Era* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996).
2. See *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas*, ed. Stephen A. Wurm, Peter Muhllhausler, and Darrell T. Tryon (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996). Other scholars estimate that there are only 3,200 “real” languages.
3. Joseph Frederic Privitera, *Language as Historical Determinant: the Normans in Sicily, 1061–1200* (Washington, D.C.: American International Book Development Council, 1995). The complex “linguistic elements” on the remarkable island of Sicily included

- Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, German, and Latin dialects (as well as French and that Lombardian dialect that apparently became Italian). The “linguistic conflict” here between French and Italian eventually made for open warfare in Sicily and then much of Europe (Edward Augustus Freeman and Thomas Ashby, “Sicily,” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. [1911]: 11:32b–c).
4. J. A. LaPonce, *Langue et territoire* ([English] *Languages and Their Territories*, trans. by Anthony Martin-Sperry) (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1987), a study of “areal” linguistics; see also: *Linguistic Minorities, Society, and Territory*, ed. Colin H. Williams (Clevedon, Avon, England; Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1991). The latter work contains revised papers from a seminar held in May 1987 at the Department of Geography and Recreation Studies, North Staffordshire Polytechnic.
 5. The British North America Act links the freedom of French Canadians to worship with their freedom to use French.
 6. Among some peoples, indeed, “race” and “language” are nearly synonymous terms. See, for example, Octave Huard, *De l'utilité de la langue française aux Etats-Unis* (Nouvelle-Orléans: Imprimerie Franco-Américaine, 1882).
 7. Philip Vuciri Ramaga, “The Bases of Minority Identity,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1992): 409–28, shows that: “Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) sets forth criteria for identifying minority groups whose rights need protection. The UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities decided in 1979 that the ICCPR includes culture, religion, and language as identifying criteria but excludes physical criteria, particularly race. The omission of race differentiates the ICCPR from the League of Nations’ post-World War I identifying criteria, which emphasized race. Race was [presumably] left out of Article 27 to make the ICCPR more comprehensive.”
 8. Psalm 137.
 9. Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, “Linguicide,” in *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, ed. R. E. Asher, 10 vols. (Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press and Aberdeen University Press, 1994), 2211–12. See also: Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, and Sertac Bucak, “Killing a Mother Tongue—How the Kurds are Deprived of Linguistic Human Rights,” in Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, eds., in cooperation with Mart Rannut, *Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination*, Contributions to the Sociology of Language #67 (1994), 347–70 (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter). See too Jaroslav Rudnyč'kyj, *Linguicide*. 3d rev. ed. (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Technological

University, 1976); and Liudmyla Kovalenko, *Linguicide in Bad Ems 1876: texts in Ukrainian and English*; English translation by Ol'ha Woycenko (Winnipeg: [s.n.], 1976).

10. See Louis-Jean Calvet, *Linguistique et colonialisme, petit traité de glottophagie* (Paris: Payot, 1974).

11. For the Biblical *shibboleth* (Judges 12:6):

And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites who had escaped, said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said to him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, No; Then said they to him, Say now: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan. And there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

—*trans. Noah Webster, 1833*

For Sicily:

The “War of the Sicilian Vespers” began with a bloody “shibboleth massacre” (Easter Monday 1282) that took place outside a church in Palermo: Frenchmen who could not pronounce properly the Italian word *ciceri* were killed (Francis Marion Crawford, *The Rulers of the South: Sicily, Calabria, Malta*, drawings by Henry Brokman [New York: Macmillan, 1900–1901], 321).

For England and the “Wat Tyler Rebellion”:

“They had a Shibboleth to discover them, he who pronounced *Brot* and *Cawse* for Bread and Cheese had his head lopt off” (John Cleveland, *The Rustick Rampant, or, Rurall Anarchy Affronting Monarchy in the Insurrection of Wat Tiler* [London: printed for F.C. and are to be sold at Westminster-Hall and the Royall Exchange, 1658], 36). Consider too James Heath’s observation that “There were slain [at Worcester] in Field and in Town, . . . and in pursuit some 3,000, and some 8,000, taken prisoners in several places, most of the English escaping by their Shibolet” (*Flagellum, or, The life and Death, Birth and Burial of Oliver Cromwel: faithfully described in an exact account of his policies and successes, not heretofore published or discovered by S.T.* [London: Printed for L.R., 1663], 123).

For Yemen:

Henry Cassels Kay, *Yaman: Its Early Medieval History* (London, 1892), 36.

For Egypt:

S. Lane Poole, *History of Egypt in the Middle Ages* (Karachi: S. M. Mir, 1997), 300.

For Algeria:

The emphatic voiced alveolo-palatal spirant “r” may be unique to Thaqovelith—one of the twenty varieties of Berber; as such it often serves as a “shibboleth,” in that Arabs and the

French render this consonant as “1” (Gregory Paul Schaltz, *A Descriptive Phonology of Thaqovelith*, Ph.D. thesis, Illinois Institute of Technology, 1980).

12. The Greek word *barbaros* had probably a primary reference to speech, and is compared with L[atin] *balbus*, “stammering” (OED).
13. Such an argument was made by some English speakers against the French language in Norman England, by some French Canadians against the English language in Quebec, and by some Americans against the English language in Revolutionary times. Several cases are discussed by Joseph Stalin, who ruthlessly suppressed groups of people partly on the basis of language difference, while at the same time insisting in his *Marxism and Linguistics* that language in itself was not a contributing factor. His opponents wrote such works as Earl Browder, *Language and War: Letter to a Friend Concerning Stalin’s Article on Linguistics* (Yonkers, N.Y.: [The author], 1950).
14. See Marc Shell, “Babel in America,” *Critical Inquiry* (1993), on American attitudes to the English language.
15. Manipulation of language grouping is one of the oldest means of political conquest and domination. See Shirley Brice Heath, *Telling Tongues: Language Policy in Mexico, Colony to Nation* (New York: Teachers College Press, [1972]).
16. Concerning the relationship between language and poverty, see Gilbert Foster, *Language and Poverty: The Persistence of Scottish Gaelic in Eastern Canada* (St. John’s, Nfld., Canada: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1988). See also Louise M. Dallaire, *Demolinguistic Profiles of Minority Official-Language Communities*. Demolinguistic profile, Nova Scotia (Ottawa: Promotion of Official Languages Branch, Department of the Secretary of State of Canada [1990]).
17. K. Mateene, “Colonial Languages as Compulsory Means of Domination, and Indigenous Languages as Necessary Factors of Liberation and Development,” makes the very point that Mateene’s title suggests. In Mateene, K. Kalema, and B. Chomba, *Linguistic Unity and Liberation of Africa* (Kampala: OAU Bureau of Languages, 1985).
18. For Bosnia:

Jasna Levinger, “Language War—War Language.” *Language Sciences* 16, no. 2 (1994): 229–36, and *Language Contact—Language Conflict*, ed. Eran Fraenkel and Christina Kramer (New York: P. Lang, 1993).

For Israel:

Here the old intranational conflict between Hebrew and Yiddish now has unhappy effects on the present international and intranational conflict between Hebrew and Arabic. See

Itamar Even-Zohar, "Language Conflict and National Identity," a paper presented to The Reuben Hecht Chair of Zionism conference "Language and Nation," The University of Haifa, January 23, 1985. Subsequently published under the title "Language Conflict and National Identity" in *Nationalism and Modernity: A Mediterranean Perspective*, ed. Joseph Alpher, (New York: Praeger and Haifa: Reuben Hecht Chair, 1986), 126–35. Likewise see his article "The Emergence of Native Hebrew Culture in Palestine, 1882–1948," *Studies in Zionism* 4 (1981): 167–84. (More recent version in *Poetics Today* 11, no. 1 [1990]: 175–91).

For Egypt:

Aleya Rouchdy, *Nubians and the Nubian Language in Contemporary Egypt: A Case of Cultural and Linguistic Contact* (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1991).

For South Africa:

Timothy Reagan, "Language Policy, Politics, and Ideology: The Case of South Africa," *Issues in Education* 2, no. 2: (1984): 155–64.

For Moldavia:

Celestine Bohlenm, "Language Law Stirs Pride and Anger in Moldavia," *The New York Times* (Oct. 7, 1990), sec. 1, p14(N), p14(L), col. 3.

For Estonia:

Marika Kirch, "Search for Security in Estonia: New Identity Architecture," *Security Dialogue* 26 (1995): 439–48.

For Ukraine:

Documents of the Helsinki Monitoring Groups in the U.S.S.R. and Lithuania (1976–1986) Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.R.O., 1986–87. These documents were "compiled, translated, and edited by the staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe" (99th Congress, 2d Session, House of Representatives).

For Kurdistan:

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Sertac Bucak, "Killing a Mother Tongue—How the Kurds are Deprived of Linguistic Human Rights," in Skutnabb-Kangas and Robert Phillipson, eds., in cooperation with Mart Rannut, *Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination* (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), 347–70.

19. Louis-Jean Calvet, *La Guerre des langues et les politiques linguistiques* (Paris: Payot, 1987).
20. Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: Norton, 1997), 67.
21. Edited by Marc Shell and Werner Sollors (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

22. Noah Webster, *A Collection of Papers on Political, Literary and Moral Subjects* (New York: Webster and Clark, 1943), 119.
23. See Roman Alvarez and M. Carmen Africa Vidal, eds., *Translation, Power, and Subversion* (Clevedon, Avon, England; Philadelphia, Pa.: Multilingual Matters, 1996).
24. That many groups have a taboo on translation itself already suggests the problem here. See Douglas Robinson, *Translation & Taboo* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996).
25. See Lawrence Venuti, "Translation and the Formation of Cultural Identities," and Candace Séguinot, "Translation and Advertising: Going Global," both in *The Cultural Function of Translation*, ed. Christine Schaffner and Helen Kelly-Holmes (Clevedon, Avon, England; Philadelphia, Pa.: Multilingual Matters, 1995).
26. Writes Edward Sapir: "Human beings do not live in the objective world alone . . . but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society," *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir*, in *Language, Culture, and Personality*, ed. D. G. Mandelbaum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 162. Benjamin Lee Whorf writes: "We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages" (*Language, Thought, and Reality* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1956], 213). He also writes: "The background linguistics system (in other words, the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade" (212). Concerning the view that translation as such is impossible, consider especially the "Whorf-Sapir" hypothesis as presented by Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir. Fictional works based on this hypothesis include Suzette Hayden Elgin, *Native Tongue* (New York: Daw Books, 1984) and *Native Tongue II: The Judas Rose* (New York: Daw Books, 1987).
27. Concerning diplomatic languages and problems of war and peace, see Jonsson Christer with Karin Aggestam, *Diplomatic Signaling* (Leicester: Centre for the Study of Diplomacy, 1997). See also Ray T. Donahue and Michael H. Prosser, eds., *Diplomatic Discourse: International Conflict at the United Nations; Addresses and Analysis* (Greenwich, Conn.: Ablex Pub., 1996); Fritz Pasierbsky, *Krieg und Frieden in der Sprache: eine sprachwissenschaftliche Textanalyse* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, 1983); and Alexander Ostrower, *Language, Law, and Diplomacy; A Study of Linguistic Diversity in Official International Relations and International Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965).

28. Comparing these three relatively recent books can be instructive in this regard: *Language and Peace*, ed. Christina Schaffner and Anita Wenden (Aldershot, Hants, England; Brookfield, Vt.: Dartmouth Pub. Co., 1995); Jean-William LaPierre, *Le Pouvoir politique et les langues: Babel et Leviathan. La Politique éclatée*, 1st ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988); and Andrea Chiti-Batelli, *La politica dinsegnamento delle lingue nella Comunità Europea: stato attuale e prospettive futura*, preface by Giordano Formizi (Rome: Armando, 1988), 57–91.
29. Henriette Roumigièrre, *Le français dans les relations diplomatiques* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1926). Concerning the interpretation and construction of peace treaties: Walter Rudolf, *Die Sprache in der Diplomatie und internationalen Vertragen* ([Frankfurt a. M.] Athenæum Verlag [1972]).
30. James M. Crawford, *Mobilian Trade Language* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978).
31. See President F. Roosevelt, Convention on International Civil Aviation. Concluded at the International Civil Aviation Conference at Chicago on December 7, 1944. Also, *Communication in Aviation: A Collection of Papers Edited on Behalf of IACTFLAP, International Airlines Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages to Airline Personnel*, ed. Jürgen Beneke (Bonn: Dummler, 1993). The same aviation problem will arise within some countries; see for example, Sandford F. Borins, *The Language of the Skies: The Bilingual Air Traffic Control Conflict in Canada* (Kingston: Institute of Public Administration of Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983).
32. See Alvarez and Vidal, eds., *Translation, Power, and Subversion*.
33. *Caesar non est supra grammaticos*. That is how Immanuel Kant puts a similar matter in his “What is Enlightenment?” in *On History*, ed. Lewis White Beck, trans. Lewis White Beck, Robert E. Anchor, and Emil L. Fackenheim, 1st ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), 8.
34. *Ego sum rex Romanus et supra grammaticam*. At the Council of Constance in 1414 a.d.
35. This is quoted by Lewis Hanke in *Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World* (London, 1959), 8. Nebrija was the Bishop of Avila.
36. Klaus Schubert, ed., *Interlinguistics: An Introduction to the Study of Planned Languages* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989). James R. Knowlson, *Universal Language Schemes in England and France 1600–1800* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975). Peter G. Forster, *The Esperanto Movement* (The Hague: Mouton, 1982). Andrew Large, *The Artificial Language Movement* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985). Detlev Blanke,

- Internationale Plansprachen. Eine Einführung* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985).
37. Minako O'Hagan, *The Coming Industry of Teletranslation: Overcoming Communications Barriers through Telecommunications* (Clevedon, Avon, England; Philadelphia, Pa.: Multilingual Matters, 1996).
 38. H. G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia* [1905] (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1967), 17; quoted in Richard Bailey, *Images of English: A Cultural History of Language* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 17.
 39. By way of example, see Martin Kay, Jean Mark Gawron, and Peter Norvig, *Vermobil: A Translation System for Face-to-Face Dialog* (Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Translation, 1994) and also Kay, "Machine Translation: The Disappointing Past and Present" in *Survey of the State of the Art in Human Language Technology* (Postscript edition), ed. Giovanni Battista Varile and Antonio Zampolli (Pisa: Giardini; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
 40. Thus Thomas Paine wrote, "if there is a country in the world where concord, according to common calculation, would be least expected it is America, made up, as it is, of people . . . speaking different languages." Quoted in J. A. Parker and Allan C. Brownfield, "The Jackson Campaign and the Myth of a Black-Jewish Split," *Lincoln Review* (Summer 1984): 21–22.