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Language, Racism, and Ethnicity

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20.   Language, racism, and ethnicity

Thomas Paul Bonfiglio

1.   Introduction

On Thursday, July 12, 1990, the Singapore newspaper *The Straits Times* listed the following advertisement: "Established private school urgently requires native speaking expatriate English teachers for foreign students." By Saturday, July 14, the advertisement had been changed to read "Established private school urgently requires native speaking *Caucasian* English teachers for foreign students" (Kandiah 1998: 79). It does not require great powers of speculation to imagine the events and discussions at *The Straits Times* on that Friday the 13th, an inauspicious day for the Anglophone applicants whose appearance did not conform to a certain stereotype. Clearly, this example belies the ostensible innocence and neutrality of the locution "native speaker", which is invariably taken to indicate an objective description of someone possessing natural authority in language. The belated addition of the word "Caucasian", however, indicates that the semantic field of the term "native" in the original advertisement extends well beyond purely linguistic criteria; it clearly contains notions of race and ethnicity.

While ethnic prejudices can be expressed in and through language, they are not, however, intrinsically linguistic in nature. They are, instead, supralinguistic concepts that become disguised as linguistic ones and imported into the theater of language. The pathways that facilitate this importation have been made by the repeated interconnections between the concept of language and the concept of race. In other words, language in the service of racism and ethnocentrism cannot occur without conceptualizing language and race in similar ways. Accordingly, the identification of language with race is not possible without the genetic misprisions that create the myth of race in the first place; thus a folkish notion of genetic ownership of language lies at the root of all ethnocentric linguistic prejudice: "our native" language, which is "our birthright", is seen as endangered by the presence of an other who is perceived as a biological contaminant and thus a threat to the matrix of nation, ethnicity, and language.

The understanding of the construction of this matrix presents a significant problem in the field of applied linguistics. To date, the study of racism in language has largely been limited to descriptions and classifications of the permutations thereof, along with ample theoretical critiques, but the historical and ideological etiology of the conflation of race and language has yet to be formally assessed. *The Language, Ethnicity, and Race Reader* (Harris and Hamp-

ton 2003), a useful but motley anthology, is a case in point. This is indeed an impediment, as prejudicial misconceptions cannot be properly demystified without an understanding of their origins and radical causes. Thus this inquiry will illuminate the *sine qua non* of ethnolinguistic prejudice, the determining factors without which that prejudice would be nonexistent, and focus on the historical development and exemplary permutations thereof. Ashcroft (2001) locates the beginning of the link between language and race in the discovery of Indo-European. It can be shown, however, that this phenomenon occurred much earlier.

Decades ago, anthropology jettisoned the concept of race as a useful category of human taxonomy and substituted other classificatory terms, such as family. The myth of race is generally the product of a perception of differences in skin color, which is based on no more than four to ten pairs of genes out of the 50,000 to 100,000 pairs needed to produce a human being (Cohen 1998: B4). Race is a folkish notion created *a priori* by a desire to identify a majority within a nation as essentially in *natural* possession of national character, as well as to identify a minority as an other, as *naturally* different, and then to exclude that minority as foreign to the configuration of national character. From a racist perspective, blacks are not really American, Arabs are not really French, Turks are not really German, etc. The inclusion of language in the discourse of race is made possible by the *racializing* of language, by grafting onto language the folkish notions of consanguinity and inheritance that make racism itself possible in the first place. Crucial to this matrix are the concepts of "native language" and "mother tongue", especially as they inform the representation of nation and national language.

Smith (1998: 168) has called for "the integration of language myths in general into current scholarship on the discourse of nation-building" and offers a useful taxonomy, which is, however, too broad for the present study. This inquiry revises Smith's taxonomy in order to focus upon the myths that generate race-conscious linguistic nationalism. These myths are:

(1) Primordiality: The national language is closest to some original point, either religious or secular.
a. Religious: It was present in some form either in Eden, or at Babel, or at Mount Ararat.
b. Secular: It preserves the features of the proto-language, usually seen as Indo-European.
(2) Sanctity: The national language is uniquely capable of communicating holy truth, or of mediating between the individual and God, usually in the context of the protestant reformation.
(3) Representationality: The national language either captures nature onomatopoeically, or it is the unique expression of national character.

(4) Untranslatability: The concepts of the national language are ineffable in any other language.
(5) Innateness: The national language is inborn and inherited by its speakers from their parents, almost always from their mothers.

In order to account for these myths, it is first imperative to historicize them.

2.   Antiquity and the Middle Ages

The genetic myths of "mother tongue" and "native language", especially in the service of exclusionary nationalism, were not present in antiquity. While the Romans and Greeks had clear standards of proper Roman Latin and Attic Greek, they did not articulate these standards in ethnic contexts. The Greek term for language in general was *logos,* and the term for proper speech was *glossa attike* 'Attic speech' which denoted speaking within the established tradition. Although language purism was widespread among the Greeks, there is no evidence that the performance of *glossa attike* was connected to ethnicity or nativity. The collective identity of the Greek elite was articulated in and through culture and language, but not through race.

There is also little evidence of protectionist patriotic attitudes toward Greek in the presence of Roman occupation. Swain (1996: 41) observes that "there is ample evidence for official use of Greek by Roman administrators in Greek language areas. This favorable treatment perhaps stopped Greek from acting as a spur to some form of proto-nationalism, as vernacular languages have often been in modern independence or nationalist contexts". Also, Langslow (2002) has studied the dynamics of code switching among Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin in the first century and observes five preference rules for the proper selection of language in this diglossic situation, none of which reflect concerns of patriotism or ethnicity.

The Roman situation is similar. While the Romans did indeed have articulated notions of country, language, and people, these notions were, in effect, quite permeable. Roman military identity was a significant agent in this regard; military expansionism was facilitated by naturalizing non-Roman recruits, and the use of the Latin language conferred authority on the user and was a powerful symbol of Roman military identity (Adams 2003: 761). The permeability of identity was also aided by Roman Graecophilia. Biville (2002: 90) observes: "The Roman practice of imitating the Greeks, which involved adopting their language, [...] gave rise to a specific vocabulary of acculturation, which allowed Romans to become either Greeks (*Graeci*), or half-Greeks (*semigraeci*), or pseudo-Greeks (*Graeculi*)". Code switching was of such secondary importance, that Suetonius actually spoke of *utroque sermone nostro* 'our two languages' (Biville 2002: 92).

The Roman discourse of language also has little in common with current western notions of native language, native speaker, and mother tongue. The Roman term for language in general was *lingua,* and the term for proper speech was *sermo patrius.* It is the latter locution that is regularly translated as "native language", and that suppresses awareness of the absence of images of nativity in the original Latin. The term *sermo* is a rather straightforward reference to discourse in general, and *patrius* indicates speaking in the proper tradition of the forefathers. The massive online Latin search engine *Perseus* offers no examples of *lingua* or *sermo* in combination with derivatives of *mater* or of *natus*, with one exception, which refers concretely to the individual speech of the mother of Andromeda.

While scholarship has documented that ancient Greece and Rome were by no means exempt from racism (Isaac 2004), the question remains as to why ideologies of race and ethnicity were not present in the *discourse of language* at that time. The answer lies, curiously, far ahead in time and is found in the realms of politics and printing. The hegemony of Latin in the Roman Empire had made that language the monolithic medium of law, education, and culture in general. The same was true of the Latin middle ages. From the Roman Empire, Christianity inherited in toto a massive infrastructural network and administrative monopoly that needed but rededication in religious terms. All texts of the church were produced in Latin – liturgy, hymns, prayers, church records –, and Latin was the language of instruction for all university students as well. This meant that the standard language was no one's first language. All were second language learners, and none could claim native language property rights. The standard language was thus accessible by all through proper education, regardless of the learner's regional or ethnic origin. Kohn (1972: 7–8) holds that, in the middle ages, "People looked upon everything as not from the point of view of their 'nationality' or 'race', but from the point of view of religion. Mankind was divided not into Germans and French and Slavs and Italians, but into Christians and Infidels, and within Christianity into the faithful sons of the Church and heretics". The naissance of ethnolinguistic prejudice was to await the secular catalytic influences of the early modern period.

3.   Ethnolinguistic nationalism and the nation state

The key concept for understanding the genesis of prejudicial ethnolinguistic consciousness has been supplied by Benedict Anderson's work *Imagined Communities* (1991). Anderson holds that the representation of the modern nation-state as a community is made possible by the vehicle of language. He bases this on the primordial imagined community, which he sees as "imaginable largely through the medium of a sacred language and a written script" (Anderson 1991:

13). He uses the example of Islam, whose numerous mutually unintelligible dialects are nonetheless joined in a community, because the sacred texts that they have in common existed in classical Arabic. There is thus an ideographic unity at work here, not unlike mathematics, the symbolic language of which is understood by mathematicians of linguistically diverse origins. Similarly, the hegemony of medieval Latin was secured by the concretization and standardization of its forms. Thus Latin was the medium through which the global medieval community was imagined, its *sine qua non*.

It was the rise of the printing press and of literacy that eventually undid the hegemony of Latin: The interests of print-capitalism motivated this revolution. Anderson (1991: 38) observes: "The logic of capitalism thus meant that once the elite Latin market was saturated, the potentially huge markets represented by the monoglot masses would beckon". Publishers had a limited elite market in readers of Latin, but a rapidly growing market in the readership of novels and newspapers written in the vernacular. In addition, the protestant reformation effected a mass readership in the vernaculars and a transition from the privileged trinity of biblical sacred languages – Greek, Hebrew, and Latin – to a privileging of vernacular(s). This resulted in a sanctification of each vernacular as the private property of the speaker of that particular vernacular. Anderson holds that regional vernaculars were arguably the cause of the emergence of the nation state. Language niches served as markets for the print industry, and "these print-languages laid the foundation for national consciousnesses" (1991: 44).

Anderson's model implies that a weakening of imperial organization would give way to language regionalism, and this is exactly what happened in the early middle ages, which can be regarded as a kind of linguistic interlude between the hegemony of the Latin language of the Roman Empire and the hegemony of the Latin language of the Holy Roman Empire. This period witnessed the emergence and awareness of vernacular forms. A striking example is found in the seventh century. It concerns an attempt on the part of Irish grammarians to defend the use of spoken Gaelic over Latin, which is found in the work *Auraicept na n-Éces: The Scholars' Primer* (1917), a grammar that sees the Celts as descendant from the mythical Fenius Farsaidh, who himself was said to be descended from Noah, through his son Japheth, and who helped build the Tower of Babel. The primer claims that "the Irish language [...] was the first language that was brought from the Tower" (Calder 1917: 5).

One of the most influential images in the generation of ethnolinguistic prejudice is that of the Tower of Babel, which serves as a conventional point of reference for claims of linguistic primordiality and sanctity. There are only three known representations of the Tower before the end of the eleventh century (Eco 1995: 17), but there are roughly 140 representations between 1550 and the early seventeenth century, a sudden appearance that correlates with the anxieties of the emerging nation state. The image of the Tower of Babel is symptomatic of

the birth trauma of nation and national language. Umberto Eco (1995) ultimately argues for a linguistic view of the emergence of the concept of Europe that displays some affinities with Anderson's thesis. Europe is first born as a mosaic of linguistic orphanages, of languages bereft of the medium that had united their speakers in a supraregional whole. Eco observes:

> Before this confusion there was no European culture, and, hence, no Europe. What is Europe, anyway? It is a continent, barely distinguishable from Asia, existing, before people had invented a name for it [...] Europe was an entity that had to wait for the fall of the Roman Empire and the birth of the Romano-Germanic kingdoms before it could be born [...] How are we going to establish the date when the history of Europe begins? The dates of great political events and battles will not do; the dates of linguistic events must serve in their stead [...] Europe first appears as a Babel of new languages. Only afterwards was it a mosaic of nations. Europe was thus born from its vulgar tongues.
> (Eco 1995: 18)

If vernacular language is at the heart of nation-forming, it is thus at the heart of nationalism and of the ethnic ownership of language. Anderson (1991: 68) speaks of "a conception of nation-ness as linked to a private-property language".

An example in point concerns the northern Balkans, where the emergence of Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, and Slovenian as literary languages preceded the formation of their respective nation-states (Anderson 1991: 74). The case of Ukrainian is also especially instructive. Seton-Watson (1977: 187) holds that the emergence of Ukrainian as a literary language in the 1830s "was the decisive stage in the formation of an Ukrainian national consciousness". Austria also offers a useful example: In the 1780s, Emperor Joseph II replaced Latin with German as the official administrative language of the empire, which evoked fierce opposition in the non-Germanophone population, for whom Latin represented the sole possibility of linguistic access to power. The subsequent progressive fragmentation of the Austrian empire can be seen as generated by this ethnolinguistic conflict.

Anderson (1991: 143) observes the presence of the "vocabulary of kinship (motherland, Vaterland, patria) or that of home [...] something to which one is naturally tied" in the discourse of nationalism, but the question of why the vocabulary of kinship is invoked in the first place is never posed. It is such kinship metaphors that enable the racializing of language. This connection necessitates an examination of the history of the kinship terms "mother tongue" and "native language", along with their permutations.

4.   The racializing of language in the early modern period

Dante Alighieri's (1265–1321) *De vulgari eloquentia* (1996 [1304]) is the first work in the west to assert the superiority of the vernacular over Latin and to use images of nativity and maternality in the representation of language: "I declare that vernacular language is that which we learn without any formal instruction, by imitating our nurses (*nutricem*)" (3). The vernacular is superior "first, because it was the language originally used by humans (*humano generi*); second, because the whole world employs it [...] and third, because it is natural to us" (3). Dante situates the vernacular as imitative and indeliberate. The notion of a maternal connection is implicit in the word *nutrices*, the wet nurses used for breast feeding. Dante also asks how Adam, a "man without mother or milk" (10) (*vir sine matre, vir sine lacte*), could have learned a language. Here, the figures of the mother and of maternality become explicit, and, in the very next paragraph, Dante uses the phrase "mother tongue" (*maternam locutionem*) for the first time. Dante is obliged to justify claims for the superiority of the vernacular, but this is not easy to do, as the vernacular has no aesthetic or philosophical tradition; he thus (re)invents the vernacular otherwise, as "natural" and ascribes to it an ontology in body and kinship. In doing so, he lays the foundation for an ethnic ideology of language that was to have immensely significant consequences.

The location of language in body and kinship does not, however, fully account for its naturalization, nor for its nationalization. Another ideology played a crucial role in the emergence of language as an implement of ethnic prejudice: the understanding of language by reference to organic nature. This, as well, has its beginnings in Italy. The noted renaissance scholar Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), in a treatise also written in defense of the vernacular, speaks eleven times of "the flourishing language" (*la fiorentina lingua*) and offers the following organic representation of language: "The strengths of the native sky are always great, and in every land better thrive those plants that are there born, than those brought from distant lands" (Bembo 2001 [1512–1525]: Vol. 1, ch. 7). Thus language exists as a plant relative to its environment, to its "native soil". These few words are also of crucial importance, for they display the earliest configuration of vernacular in the matrix of organic nature and nation.

This ideology achieves fuller articulation in the work of the Italian renaissance rhetorician Sperone Speroni (1500–1588), who was a principal member of the literary and rhetorical society of the *Academia degli Infiammati* and the author, in 1542, of a polemic advocating publication in the Italian vernaculars. Speroni speaks of "our mother tongue (*la lingua nostra materna*) [...] which is, today, our own and belongs to no one else". It was created by ancestors who "imitated our mother Nature (*la madre nostra Natura*)" (Speroni 1740 [1542]: 175). Thereupon follow numerous organic metaphors: Italian "is still a short

little branch that has yet to fully bloom and produce the fruits that it is capable of bearing". Because Latin was dominant, Italians "did not sufficiently cultivate it, but, as with a wild plant, left it to age and almost die in the same desert in which it had been born without ever watering it, nor pruning it, nor protecting it from the brambles that overshadowed it". The Romans, however, were "good cultivators (*agricoltori*)" of Latin and "transplanted it from its wild place to a domestic one; then, in order that it grow the fattest, most beautiful, and most precocious fruits, pruned off the first useless shoots and grafted in their place several branches [...] there thus appeared in that language flowers and fruits of such colorful eloquence" (183). Speroni adds that "someone not born Tuscan could learn good Tuscan", and he speaks of "usage, which in the course of time converts itself practically into nature" (26). Here, the notion of language proficiency as birthright is still absent. The ideologies have not yet developed to the point of being exclusionary of "non-natives", nor have they yet acquired meanings of genetic enracination. The first language is depicted simply as more natural.

Speroni's organicism of language found significant reception in the work of his French contemporary Joachim du Bellay (1522–1560). Du Bellay was a member of *La Pléiade*, a group of writers who sought to ameliorate the French literary language. The principles of *La Pléiade* were set forth by du Bellay in his manifesto *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoyse* (1972 [1549]). Du Bellay's work constitutes the first instance of organic metaphors in the validation of French, such as images of herbs, roots, and trees, metaphors that he translated, however, wholesale from Speroni (Villey 1908: 43). He observes that Latin "bore fruit", but French has yet to flower or fructify, not at all because of a defect in its nature, but because it was a wild plant that was not watered, pruned, or protected from brambles and thorns. The Romans, on the other hand, cultivated their wild language, pruned off the useless twigs, and grafted onto the trunk "natural and domestic branches magisterially drawn from the Greek language" (Du Bellay 1972 [1549]: 28). The Romans performed this grafting so well, that the branches no longer appeared adapted but natural. So should one proceed with the French language; one should cultivate it to beautiful fruition. Du Bellay also says that "each language has something (*je ne scay quoy*) proper to itself alone; if you strive to express the naturalness (*le naif*) of this in another language, your diction will be constrained, cold, and ungraceful" (33). This is a very early instance of the notion of an indefinable essence to a vernacular, a *je ne sais quoi*, which is nonetheless tangible. Unique to a particular language, it cannot be translated. This is an ideology of a naïve naturalness that conveys and preserves the essence of a national language and makes foreign access difficult. The Greeks and Romans produced great literature because they wrote in languages "that they had sucked in with the milk of the nurse" (57). He adds that the "glory of the Romans is no less [...] in the expansion of their language than

in their frontiers" (106–107), and that the "highest excellence of their republic was not sufficiently strong to defend itself [...] without the benefit of their language" (107). Here, one sees an imperial aspect to language; it is represented as a sort of weaponry and instrument of defense. Thereupon follows an assessment of France as the premier country in the world (108).

These ideologies subsequently spread to northern Europe. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, there began to appear claims made by vernacular speakers that their vernacular was the best of all living languages, if not the perfect language. In 1569, Jan van Gorp asserted that the Dutch language in Antwerp was the only one that displayed a perfect representational relationship between words and things (see Eco 1995: 96). According to Gorp, Antwerp had been colonized by the descendants of the sons of Japheth, the third son of Noah, who were not present at the Tower of Babel; thus the language was not confused by the dispersion of tongues. He also claimed that Dutch had the greatest number of monosyllabic words, which indicated its ultimate simplicity and originality. Gorp's ideas were subscribed to subsequently by Abraham Mylius in his *Lingua belgica* (1612) (Eco 1995: 97). Similarly, the Swedish physician and alchemist Anders Kempe conjectured that Swedish was the oldest language in the world (Borst 1957–1963, Vol. III, 1: 1338). In 1638, he wrote *Die Sprachen des Paradises*, in which God speaks Swedish, Adam and Eve Danish (an imperfect copy of the original), and the serpent French (Eco 1995: 97). The most curious of these attempts was made by Lemaire de Belges in the early sixteenth century, who claimed that the Trojans were descendants of the Celts; thus Celtic was the origin of Greek. This led him to praise Breton as the true Trojan language (Beaune 1991: 269).

In 1641, the German baroque poet Georg Philipp Harsdörffer (1607–1658) claimed that "nature speaks in our own German tongue [...] Adam would not have been able to name the birds and all the other beasts of the fields in anything but our words, since he expressed in a manner conforming to their nature, each and every innate property and inherent sound; and thus it is not surprising that the roots of the larger part of our words coincide with the sacred language" (1968 [1641]: 335). Umberto Eco (1995: 102) notes that "such nationalistic hypotheses are comprehensible in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the larger European states began to take form, posing the problem of which of them was to be supreme on the continent".

It was nationalist ideologies that generated the first instances of the combination of "mother" and "language" or "tongue," as follows: Icelandic *modurmal* ca. 1350, Swedish *modhor male* 1370, English *modyr tonge* 1380, low German *modersprake* 1424, high German *Muttersprache* 1522, French *langue maternelle* 1538. Germany also exhibits the first Latin use of the Latin *materna lingua* in 1119 (Weisgerber 1948: 55). The word "nation", in the modern sense, dates from the fourteenth century; "national" from the sixteenth; "nationally" and "national-

ity" from the seventeenth; "nationalize" from the eighteenth; and "nationalism" and "nationalization" only from the nineteenth (Galbraith 1972: 47).

The year 1492 witnessed the appearance of the first vernacular grammar in any language, the *Gramatica de la lengua castellana* of Antonio de Nebrija (ca. 1444–1522). Nebrija's grammar is interesting for its prolog, which has been characterized as the most grandiose ever to introduce a grammar (Weisgerber 1948: 77). Nebrija dedicates the grammar to Queen Isabella and characterizes it as a *compañero del imperio*, or companion to the empire. He claims that language has always been a companion of empire and lists Assyrian, Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin as examples, continually reminding the reader that empires, like languages, grow, flourish, bloom, and wilt. Now is the time for the Spanish empire and the Castilian language, and his grammar will serve to fix and secure imperial power. The rule of the queen will subjugate "many barbarian peoples and nations of foreign languages (*muchos pueblos bárbaros y naciones de peregrinas lenguas*)" unto her rule. The new subjects are to learn "our language [...] just as we Spaniards now study Latin grammar, in order to learn Latin". Thus Castilian and Isabella's empire are the successors to Latin and the Roman empire.

It was Martin Luther (1483–1546) who first used the term *Muttersprache* in High German in 1522. In his *Theologica deutsch,* Luther says, "I thank God that I thus hear and find my God in the German tongue, as I, and it along with me, never before found Him, not in Latin, Greek, or Hebraic tongue" (Weisgerber 1948: 84). This is significant in that it opposes German to the three traditional sacred languages and then makes it more profoundly and personally religious. In 1526, Luther proclaimed, "I am by no means of one mind with those who set all their store by one language [...]. That was not the way of the Holy Ghost in the beginning. He did not wait till all the world should come to Jerusalem, and learn Hebrew. But He endowed the office of the ministry with all manner of tongues, so that the Apostles could speak to the people wherever they went" (Weisgerber 1948: 84). Here, the image of Pentecost serves as a stratagem for sanctifying the vernacular; by writing in German, Luther is simply following the directive of the Holy Ghost. German thus becomes *a holy language for Germans*. Huber (1984: 285) astutely observes that the rise of cultural patriotism in seventeenth century Germany begins with grammars, lexicography, and poetics and is codetermined by reformation humanism and the printing industry.

Primus Trubar (1508–1586) was a reformation priest and follower of Luther who authored the first books written in Slovenian, and who is also credited with creating the Slovenian literary language. His *Catechismus Jn der Windischenn Sprach* (1970 [1550]) is of significance in the history of the religious empowerment of the vernacular. He foregrounds the miracle of Pentecost, which he sees as a baptism of the vernaculars, an instrument for the establishment of the kingdom of God, and a means of grace and salvation (Weisgerber 1948: 90).

Ethnolinguistic nationalism, along with a hint of imperial intent, also became well-articulated in the waxing English nation state in the work of the orthographer and grammarian William Bullokar (ca. 1531–1609), who was the author of the earliest grammar written in English, the *Pamphlet for grammar* (1586). He also wrote *A short introduction or guiding to print, write, and reade Inglish speech* (1580), a primer on pronunciation and orthography, which was written so that "our language [...] will excell in learning, and eloquence, (yea in straunge languages also) above any nation in the worlde: to the great light of the true knowledge of our selves, and of all transitorie things, our dutie toward God, and our neighbour" (Bullokar 1580: 15–16). Bullokar also exhibits the first instance of the locution "native language" in English.

The work of the French political theorist Jean Bodin (1529/1530–1596), especially the mammoth *Les six livres de la republique* (1579), is of relevance for the present inquiry, as it views national characteristics as a product of climate and geography. Bodin divides countries into three groups: those within thirty degrees of the equator, which he attributes to "the burning regions (*aux régions ardentes*) and peoples of the south", those between thirty and sixty degrees of latitude, which he attributes to "the intermediate peoples and temperate regions" (*aux peuples moyens & régions tempérées*), and those above sixty degrees, which comprise "the excessively cold regions" (Bodin 1579: 464). He assigns to the peoples of the middle region the characteristics most conducive to governing. The peoples of the north are strong but not all that bright; those of the south are intelligent but lack physical force. The former have produced good armies; the latter good philosophy. Those of the middle regions, however, combine the best of both worlds and have excelled in government, law, and rhetoric and have established the greatest empires: the Greeks, Romans, Persians, and Assyrians. Bodin places France clearly in the middle region and chooses to emphasize the image of the French as natural mediators: "The Gauls, especially those of Languedoc, hold the middle region between the cold and extreme heat [...] the people of the middle regions hold of the two extremes in humor (*en humeur*) [...] between the north and south, which can never concur together for the contrariety of manners and humors that is between them" (469). This makes the Gauls of the median region the ideal governors, for "when it is a question of mediating (*moyenner*) peace, or making alliances between two nations so opposite, or of leading them both forth to war together, you must place the median (*metoyenne*) nation between them that has more moderate affections" (469). The speciousness of Bodin's assertions betrays his fundamental objective, which is to situate France as the proper successor to the great Greek and Roman empires and to elevate it above other European countries. One sees in Bodin the construction of a certain kind of nature, a psychogeography in the service of nationalist interests. Bodin's theories suppose a national character, naturalize it in local physical nature, and thus render it the organic personal property of the

French people. His theories were received in the eighteenth century by Montesquieu and Rousseau.

In 1586, Simon Stevin counted the "stem words" of the imagined protolanguage and concluded that Latin had 163, Greek 265, and Germanic 2,170 (Weisgerber 1948: 96). The Lutheran theologian Johann Matthäus Meyfahrt (1590–1642) published in 1634 his *Teutsche Rhetorica*. Meyfahrt holds that "Germans do not seek their language from books, but take it instead from implanted nature (*aus der eingepflanzten Natur*), do not study it from masters, but instead learn it from nurses, do not receive it in schools from the mouths of teachers, but instead suck it, in the cradle, from the breasts of mothers" (Meyfahrt as quoted in Huber 1984: 144). This passage sets up a correspondence among nature, home, mothers, and the family. The German language is actually implanted in nature and exists as well in mother's milk. This not only reinforces the private ownership of German by Germans, but also acts to render it inaccessible to foreigners, to those not born into the matrix of physical German nature and nurture by German mothers.

One of the most crucial influences upon the development of the nationalist ideologies of language in German, especially in their organic, nativist, and maternal manifestations, was exercised by Justus Georg Schottelius (1612–1676). Schottelius was a leading spokesman of *Die fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*, the language society founded in Weimar in 1617. The name literally means "the fruit-bearing society". The text of the foundational meeting of the society states its goal as follows: "During the blood-dripped battle cries, our primordial unfinished German mother tongue was dribbled into us purely with the first milk" (Huber 1984: 243). In 1641, Schottelius also authored *Teutsche Sprachkunst*, an influential grammar of the German language. In 1647, he published a collection of mixed poetry and prose entitled *Fruchtbringender Lustgarte*. In the preface, he praises "the old Teutons", who "preserved [...] unmixed and unspoiled, their old mother tongue and brought it down to us" (Schottelius 1967 [1647]: Preface). It is astounding to see how the ferocious nationalist sentiments in Germany in the seventeenth century tend to pivot around language. Schottelius adds: "Churches and schools, law and justice, war and peace, trade and change, action and non-action we preserve, perform, and propagate through our German language; through it we attain to God and heaven; indeed, through it we receive body and soul" (Weisgerber 1948: 102). Thus the national language becomes the enabling medium of the social, cultural, bodily and religious. How then could someone not born into the all-inclusive matrix that has language as its nodal point gain access into that matrix and become a bona fide member? Schottelius uses a baroque excess of arboreal images to characterize the growth and development of language. Languages possess

[...] word stems that, like juice-rich roots, hydrate the whole language tree, whose sprouts and twigs abounding in branches and veins spread high and wide in the most beautiful purity [...] our main language is comparable to an impressive fertile tree that has extended its juice-rich roots deep, far, and wide into the earth, so that, by virtue of its veinlets, pulls the dampness and marrow of the earth into itself, hardens its roots with a fruit-rich juicy wetness [...] and grafts itself into nature. For the roots and juicy word stems of our language have, as demonstrated above, sucked the pit and marrow from reason and stemmed themselves upon the major grounds (*Hauptgründe*) of nature.
(Huber 1984: 55–56)

The pun here on "grounds", in the senses of terrain and reason, seems to be intentional. And it is important to note that the logic of language is repeatedly represented here as innate.

Schottelius is faced with the same problems that beset the other German language ideologues of the seventeenth century. The Romance languages can trace their origin back to Latin, one of the three holy languages, but to what can the Germanic languages trace theirs? He offers a most unusual solution: to the name of God itself. Speaking of the Babylonian dispersion of humankind, he asks, "What name was it then with which the scattered humans wanted to indicate the true God? Namely the one from which we Germans have our name [...] *Teut*, [...] which is thus the true infallible original source of the German name (*des Teutschen Nahmens*), namely the name of the true God itself, so that German (*Teutisch*) more or less means godly or god-like" (Huber 1984: 54). Of all the attempts among all the vernaculars to assert ultimate primal authority for a given national language, it is difficult to imagine an effort more chauvinistic than the assertion that the name of one's language is the original word for God. Such an assertion would have to bequeath upon that language a status of unique and incontestable veracity as the ultimate "parent" language. Schottelius sees the originality of German as lying in the recombinative quality of its morphemes, both free and bound, and its compounds. If a stem is lacking in German and "the number of individual entities in nature is almost infinite, one could still combine three or more words to make a word and thus basically and properly express every entity" (Huber 1984: 82). Thus he sees "duplication (*Verdoppelung*) as the noblest part of any language" (Huber 1984: 83).

One sees here the extremes to which the anxiety of vernacular authority can motivate the philology of nationalism. Both nature and language become configured here symbiotically. First, the organic qualities of nature become foregrounded, and from these, the arboreal aspects are selected as having the greatest analogic potential for the configuration of language. Second, the chosen arboreal aspects of nature are then transferred onto language. Third, nature and language are both configured as behaving similarly, and one arrives at a codeterminative intertwining of the trees of nature and the trees of language.

5.   Ethnolinguistic ideology in the enlightenment

Schottelius exercised his most important influence, however, upon the philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716). In the *Nouveaux Essais sur l'entendement humain* (1704), Leibniz asserts "the common origin of all nations and in a primitive root-language [...] the Teutonic seems to have better preserved that which is natural" (Schmarsow 1877: 218). In this language, "there is something natural in the origin of words – something that reveals a relationship between things and the sounds and motions of the organs of speech" (220). The objective of this naïve referentialist concept of language is to ascribe to the German language an aspect of primacy. Schottelius's *Teutsche Sprachkunst* served Leibniz as his primary German reference grammar (Schmarsow 1877). In 1705, Leibniz expressed his admiration for Schottelius's *Teutsche Sprachkunst* (Schmarsow 1877: 6); his texts are bestrewn with numerous borrowings from and allusions to Schottelius. In the manuscript *Die Ermahnung an die Teutsche, ihren Verstand und Sprache besser zu üben* (1679–1680), Leibniz adamantly recommends writing in German and also avoiding borrowings from other languages. He says, "All histories generally confirm that language and nation bloom at the same time [...] I do not think that this occurs by happenstance, but rather affirm that the waxing and waning of peoples and languages are interrelated just like the moon and the sea" (Schmarsow 1877: 15). Another of Leibniz's German writings relevant to this study is the manuscript *Unvorgreifliche Gedanken betreffend die Ausübung und Verbesserung der Teutschen Sprache* (ca. 1680), which displays many similarities in vocabulary and opinion with Schottelius's grammar. Both praise the mother tongue for a certain concreteness and primacy that enable it to communicate the essences of nature. Leibniz also paraphrases a challenge issued by Schottelius to categorize all the words of the stem-related Germanic languages, in order to arrive at their origin and basis. Most interestingly, Schottelius also terms his proposal *Unvorgreifliche Gedanken* and recommends seeking "good ancient German word stems" (Schmarsow 1877: 22). He also emphasizes that "once the root (*Radix*) is located in this way, then all the other words flowing from it can be easily recognized". In 1680, Leibniz requested Schottelius's manuscripts on the German language from the library in Wolfenbüttel (Schmarsow 1877: 33).

Leibniz sees the German language as excelling in that which concerns the five senses and the "common man" and also in benefitting from a certain neglect: Because scholars discoursed in Latin, "the mother tongue" was left to "the common run of things", with the result that the unlettered maintained it well "in accordance with the teachings of nature" (*nach Lehre der Natur*) (Schmarsow 1877: 47). He represents German as having an empirical supremacy in the realm of the senses and following the course of nature. He displays the tendency, common to the period, to anteriorize the Germanic languages. He affirms that the

Gauls, Celts, and Scythians were related to the Germanic peoples, and that "Italy received its oldest inhabitants from the German and Celtic peoples [...] it thus follows that the Latin language owes a lot to the primeval Germans" (1877: 60). He subsequently asserts that Greek was influenced by Germanic tribes that migrated there from Asia Minor. This genealogy becomes more and more out-landish, as Leibniz claims that "the origin of the European peoples and lan-guages lies in German antiquity" along with, in part, the origins of "Religion, morality, law, and aristocracy", and that finally, "the origin and source of Euro-pean existence is largely to be found with us" (1877: 61). Thus the German lan-guage is "closer to the origin", especially in its basic roots; he holds that Ger-manic displays the proto-root for "world" (1877: 62). Leibniz also called for the publication of a *Glossarium etymologicum,* which should be organized "accord-ing to basic roots, and to each root or stem the sprouts are to be added" (1877: 71); here, the sprouts serve as organic metaphors for the derivatives of each root.

Leibniz's ideas influenced Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), one of the major figures of eighteenth century thought, a promulgator of organicism, who idealized the human in the state of nature. His *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (1755) signifies an important stage in the naturalization of language. It also offers the first instance of Bodin's theories of climatology applied to language. It begins: "Speech (*parole*) distinguishes humans from animals: language (*lan-gage*) distinguishes nations from one another. One does not know where a per-son comes from until that person has spoken. Usage and necessity make people learn the language of their own country (*pays*)". Rousseau frames speech both prehistorically and nationally. It is a fundamental aspect of human nature and is related to the expression of passion: "We render our feelings when we speak and our ideas when we write [...] in speaking, we vary usage by intonation as we like [...] we are more forceful" (1990 [1755]: 79). The spoken language is de-scribed as possessing energy and vivacity; intonations and infections make lan-guage more particular and render it appropriate only in the place where it is (*seulement au lieu où elle est*). Based on a broad geographical difference be-tween humans living in the north and humans living in the south – ideas gleaned from Bodin – Rousseau then relativizes aspects of language to geographical lo-cation. Those in harsh climates have indelicate voices; those in hospitable cli-mates delicate ones; southerners have sonorous, accentuated, and eloquent lan-guages; northerners mute, rude, and monotone ones (112–113). For Rousseau, language is innate, a fundamental aspect of human nature, and appropriate to a specific time and place, most importantly to a given *homeland.*

Rousseau's ideas were received by his German contemporary Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), who published the essay *On Diligence in the Study of Several Learned Languages* (ca. 1764), in which he relates language and nation to climate: "Greek flourishes in the most sensitive and mild of re-

gions [...] the Romans, sons of Mars, spoke more forcefully [...] more masculine is the speech of the martial German; the sprightly Gaul invents a skipping, softer language; the Spaniard gives his won an appearance of gravity [...] the languorous African mumbles weakly [...] so this plant transformed itself according to the soil that nourished it and heaven's breeze, that quenched its thirst" (1992: 29–30). Language is to be viewed as a plant that transforms itself in accordance with the "soil" of the culture that feeds it. Herder holds that "each language has its distinct national character", and that "nature imposes upon us an obligation only to our mother tongue, for it is perhaps better attuned to our character and coextensive with our way of thinking" (30). He speaks of "my native tongue, to which I must therefore offer the firstborn sacrifices of my diligence [...] our mother tongue really harmonizes most perfectly with our most sensitive organs [...] our mind clandestinely compares all tongues with our mother tongue [...] thereby [...] the goal of our fatherland remains steadily before our eyes" (32–33). He exhorts "each nation [...] to enjoy, within the confines of its frontiers and attached to its soil, nature's gifts from the womb of the earth" (30). The presence of family images, the "birthright" and the "fatherland", is also crucial for his argument. The mother tongue is thus a unique and inalienable birthright, inaccessible to the non-native, the performance of which aids in the preservation of the sovereignty and independence of the fatherland. In the *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1771), Herder holds that the language of nature is a *"Völkersprache* (language of a people) for each species among themselves" (1978 [1771]: 11). It is in the nature of language that it be regional and ethnic. He holds that the fundamental patterns of pronunciation of a language cannot be mastered by someone who is not a first speaker of that language: "The more living (*lebendiger*) a language is [...] the more originally (*ursprünglicher*) it climbs to the full, undifferentiated sound of nature, the more often it is completely unpronounceable for the outsider" (14).

Thus the discourse of ethnolinguistic prejudice underwent a progressive abstraction during the enlightenment that acted to mask its inegalitarian aspects, which aspects then became embedded in historical, philosophical, and structural analyses of language. This abstraction has continued to the present day.

6.   The abstraction of ethnolinguistic ideology
in the nineteenth century

Friedrich Schlegel (1767–1845), in *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Inder* (1808), holds that German and other synthetic languages are living organisms: "[E]very root is truly that which the name says, and is like a living germ (*Keim*) [...] the fullness of development can expand into the immeasurable [...] everything that comes out of this simple root [...] keeps the impress of its relation-

ship" (1975 [1808]: 157–159). He attributes the "richness and durability" of these languages to the fact that "they have arisen organically and form an organic web" (1975 [1808]: 159). This web has the properties of a genealogical structure: One can locate "after millennia the thread that leads through the wide expanse of a race of words (*eines Wortgeschlechts*) and leads us back to the simple origin of the first root" (1975 [1808]: 159). In the "inferior" analytic languages, on the other hand, the roots are not like a "fruitful seed, but instead like a heap of atoms"; they are "mechanical" and lack "the germ of living development" (1975 [1808]: 159). Schlegel's speculations represent language in a primitive genetic framework and endow it with hereditary properties. But only the synthetic languages are granted this status, Schlegel's own German language among them.

The German linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) was a crucial figure in the development of comparative linguistics and modern linguistic science. Humboldt makes the mother tongues the point of departure and organizes languages in "families" situated in the soil: "The study of the languages of the earth (*des Erdbodens*) is thus the world history of the thoughts and sensations of humankind" (Weisgerber 1948: 109). Languages are rooted in physical nature and are always "the property of entire nations". Humboldt drives this idea to the point of an equation (language equals nation): "[L]anguage is basically the nation itself, and in all actuality the nation [...] in its active, living existence" (Weisgerber 1948: 118). In its particular vernacular manifestation, German language is German nation. He represents language as "living" and as an "organic whole". Language is the "mental breath (*Aushauch*) of a nationally individual life". Since the language/thought complex is always relative to a specific nation, full bilingualism is impossible, in Humboldt's view: "[T]o learn a foreign language is to gain a new perspective in our view of the world [...] but because we always carry our own worldview and language view into a foreign language, we never experience pure and complete success"; language "has passed through the experiences of earlier generations [...] who are related to us as nation and family in the same sounds of the mother tongue that are also the expression of our own feelings" (Humboldt 1836: Part 9). There is a notion here of language as a medium of genetic inheritance; the mother tongue becomes at once national, prehistoric, and ethnic property.

This occurs in a context of biolinguistic determinism: "The power of descent (*Abstammung*)" upon all human languages can be seen "in their distribution by nations [...] since descent has so predominantly powerful an effect on the whole individuality", and it is to this individuality that the particular language "is most internally connected". By virtue of its "origin in the depth of human existence", language enters "into true and authentic combination with physical descent". He asks, "Why else would the fatherland's tongue possess so much more power and innerness than a foreign one?" This is a power so strong,

"that it greets the ear, after long absence, with a kind of sudden magic and awakens nostalgia when far away". Humboldt was among the first to represent language in the form of a tree diagram, which acts to configure it genealogically. It is a family tree remapped onto language and planted in the ethno-national soil, where its ownership becomes exclusive (all quotations in this paragraph from Humboldt 1836: Part 9).

The work of the German historical linguist Franz Bopp (1791–1867) constitutes the first formal systematic investigation into the study of comparative Indo-European philology. Like Schlegel, Bopp sees morphological (synthetic) languages as displaying the dynamic ability of "organic modification" (Bopp 1816: 10). With time, however, languages lose their inflection. The "weakening" tendency of language is that of the "slow and gradual destruction of the simple language organism" and its replacement by "mechanical combinations" (11). In his *Vergleichende Grammatik* (1833–1852), Sanskrit is characterized as the "truest, oldest" language that exceeds the perfection of form found in Greek, while the Semitic languages are "of a crasser nature" (iv). The "family bond, however, that contains the Indo-European language trunk (*Stamm*) is [...] of infinitely finer constitution" (v). Within this family, Sanskrit is said to have "European sisters" (iv), the "members" of which are related as "stem sisters" (*Stammschwestern*) (v). Of the Germanic languages, Bopp places Gothic in closest relationship to Latin and Greek and refers to it as the example of "our mother tongue in its oldest, most perfect form" (vii). The fact that he refers to Gothic as "our mother tongue" is very telling; it constructs a genealogical pedigree for German in a lineage connected to Sanskrit and the ultimate Indo-European *Ursprache*. He refers to Gothic as "our Germanic Sanskrit" (Bopp 1833–1852, Vol. I [1835]: viii). For Bopp, language serves as a barometer of ethnic homogeneity: He holds that "the Slavs, like the Greeks, Romans, Germans, Old Prussians, and Lithuanians, without the degree of mixing with heterogeneous tribes (*Stämme*), which would have had a destructive effect upon the language, belong to the Asian proto-people (*Ur-Volk*)".

Bopp influenced August Schleicher (1821–1868), who was among the first to apply biology to the study of language. For Schleicher, "Languages are organisms of nature; they have never been directed by the will of man; they rose, and developed themselves according to definite laws; they grew old and died out" (Schleicher 1863: 20–21). Schleicher sees languages as behaving like biological organisms. He holds fast to the view that "the rules now, which Darwin lays down with regard to the species of animals and plants, are equally applicable to the organisms of languages" (30). Schleicher engages in a remapping of linguistics onto the matrix of biology: "[W]hat the naturalist terms a genus the linguist calls a family [...] the species of a genus are what we call the languages of a family, the races of a species are with us the dialects of a language; the sub-dialects or patois correspond with the varieties of the species" (30–32). Thus

languages are species, dialects are races, subdialects are species varieties, and this proceeds right down to the level of individual differences. The entire "Indo-Germanic family of speech [...] consisting of numerous species, races, and varieties, have taken their origin from one single primitive form" (34). The processes of "ramification" and "gradual re-ramification – Darwin's continual tendency to divergency of character" (37) explain the genesis of separate languages. Indeed, "the kinship of different languages may consequently serve [...] as a paradigmatic illustration of the origin of species" (45). Verb roots are "the cells of speech, not yet containing any particular organs for the functions of nouns, verbs, etc." in which "the functions (the grammatical relations) are no more separated yet than respiration and digestion are in the one-celled organisms" (53–54). And the "organisms of speech" are subject to laws of natural selection: "[S]pecies and genera of speech disappear, and [...] others extend themselves at the expense of the dead" (60). He holds that "a similar process is assumed by Darwin with regard to the animal and vegetable creation; that is what he calls 'the struggle for life'" (62). He then directly quotes Darwin's observations on the extinction of "feebler groups" that "in consequence of their common inheritance of imperfection, incline to a common extinction".

Schleicher attempts to stretch the Darwinian model to cover the phenomenon of the disappearance of languages. The absurdity of this overextension can be demonstrated by posing a few questions common to the biological model: Do languages inherit imperfections? Do they compete with each other for limited resources? Are some better adapted to a particular environmental niche than others? Do some produce more offspring than others? The avoidance of such questions enables Schleicher to blindly biologize language. The "smoking gun" in Schleicher's discourse, however, is found in his account of the spread of the Indo-European languages, which he sees as the victors in "the process of the struggle for existence in the field of human speech. In the present period of the life of man the descendants of the Indo-Germanic family are the conquerors in the struggle for existence; they are engaged in continual extension, and have already supplanted or dethroned numerous other idioms" (Schleicher 1863: 64). Clearly, Schleicher is writing here in the idiom of his era, which spoke of the Aryan and Indo-European "conquests", as opposed to the current preference to speak of the *migrations* of those speakers. In the schema of the survival of the fittest, Indo-European is represented here as the strongest and best-adapted, and its ascendance to domination is explicable as a natural autonomous phenomenon. It is interesting to note how Schleicher, having epitomized Indo-European as the victor in the struggle of language, invokes his tree diagram: "The multitude of the Indo-Germanic species and sub-species is illustrated by our genealogical tree" (64). He is also skeptical of bilingualism, of mastering a language other than the *Muttersprache* (Schleicher 1865: 11), and argues on a biological basis. Schleicher sees language as a more consistent biological trait than "cran-

ial shape or other so-called racial differences" (16). Language "is a completely constant trait. In head hair or protruding jaw, a German can match the most articulated Negro head, but he will never speak a Negro language naturally (*von Haus aus*)".

The ideological elements in Schleicher's gambits are evident; under the guise of scientific inquiry, language becomes biologized in the service of ethnolinguistic prejudice. Umberto Eco (1995: 105) makes an astute observation on the rise of Indo-European philology:

> But are we really able to say that with the birth of the modern science of linguistics the ghost of Hebrew as the holy language had finally been laid to rest? Unfortunately not. The ghost simply reconstituted itself into a different, and wholly disturbing, Other [...] during the nineteenth century, one myth died only to be replaced by another. With the demise of the myth of linguistic primacy, there arose the myth of the primacy of a culture – or of a race. When the image of the Hebrew language and civilization was torn down the myth of the Aryan races rose up to take its place.

Towson (1992: 107) sees a continuum here and speaks of "the language-purist discussion since the nineteenth century; in German fascism it reaches its culmination when the 'purity' of language is inextricably linked with the 'purity' of 'race'.

Examples of the myth of primordiality persist, and surprisingly so, into quite recent times. Thurston, in his *Lithuanian History, Philology, and Grammar* (1941), seems to imply that Lithuanian is itself Proto-Indo-European. He says that the Lithuanian language is "more perfect than either Sanskrit or Greek, more copious than Latin, and more exquisitely refined than any of these three [...] any philologist can see clearly that Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin must have sprung form a common source, Lithuanian" (Smith 1998: 180). Thurston ultimately uses this fabrication to plea for Lithuanian independence – an excellent example of language myths in the service of nationalism. And as recently as 1993, the leader of a Ukrainian political party held that Sanskrit was "the ancient Ukrainian language" (Smith 1998: 229). Turkish also offers a relevant example. After WWI, Turkey sought to establish a new Turkish identity, in contrast with the older Ottoman-Islamic identity, and employed language reform as a vehicle; Roman script replaced Arabic, and the Turkish technical vocabulary became Europeanized. This was justified on the claim that all European languages originally descended from Turkish anyway; thus this was a way of reclaiming Turkish roots that had been lost under the impact of Arabic and Persian (see Fishman 1972: 224–243).

The assessment of ethnolinguistic prejudice in the service of vulgar nationalism also necessitates, however, a more focused critique of the inductive leap from organism to language.

7.   Are languages really trees and organs?

The central culprit in the discourse of ethnolinguistic prejudice is the racializing of language and the unreflective grafting of genetic and genealogical models onto it. The innumerable interlanguage borrowings – lexical, phonetic, morphological, and syntactic – problematize the hierarchical genetic model and argue for the inclusion of horizontal patterns of language evolution. Interlanguage borrowings constitute *acquired characteristics* for the receiving language. These phenomena are then passed down in a Lamarckian fashion to subsequent generations of speakers. How could one characterize a phenomenon as consisting of genetic organisms if development proceeds in a Lamarckian fashion, and if data from one "organism" can change a different "organism" at one and the same time?

Hope (2000) critiques the "single ancestor-dialect" hypothesis of the rise of standard English, which "places the chosen dialect in a direct genetic relationship to Standard English: one evolves from the other in the linear way that man evolves from one of the early primates" (49–50). This nationalist hypothesis desires to see the east midland London dialect as the cradle for the standard. Standard British English did not, in fact, arise from a single dialect; instead, its features can be traced to a wide range of dialects. Hope points out that "the success of this hypothesis is also due in no small part to the parallels it draws between evolutionary biology and linguistic change […] languages and dialects are not equivalent to biological species: the metaphor of the family tree is inappropriate as a way of representing their development" (2000: 50). The reason for the inappropriateness of the biological model here lies in the concept of a species. Separate species cannot exchange genetic material. Humans cannot naturally exchange genes with birds, so as to develop wings. Hope observes, however, that "linguistic structures *can* be mixed and recombined across dialect and language boundaries […] it is very easy to mate linguistic sparrows with rats to get bats" (50–51). Creolized languages clearly demonstrate that language contact opens up an immense range of possibilities for phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and semantic interlanguage adoption.

There is an entire subfield of biology called cladistics, which is devoted to the study of tree diagrams in taxonomic description. Genetic trees are indispensable to phylogenetic classification, and the mechanics of remapping from one structure to another are facilitated by the support of numerous homologies. Their metaphorical application, however, to the study of language is problematic. Roger Lass (1997) observes that the family tree model of language lineage is parthenogenetic, as it traces descent from a single parent; for instance, the Latin language alone generated the entire "family" of Romance languages. This metaphorical discourse generates maternal images that continually invoke references to mothers and wombs; these are, however, incommensurate with human genealogy, which is exclusively biparental.

Wiener (1987) observes that the dynamics of lateral language influence correspond, in biology, to the field of reticulate evolution, which studies horizontal networks. Wiener holds that "there have been no good, realistic methods for dealing with both the hierarchical and the reticulate aspects of language evolution" (1987: 224). She says, "Languages are all hybrid to some extent, while most organisms only occasionally produce hybrids. Also, there is no necessity for close genealogical relationship for hybrid formation in language groups, while this is essential in organisms. The features of a language are not adaptive and do not determine its relative success. Rather, the spread of a language character is dependent upon the social status of the people who use it" (225).

The reticulate model is resisted because it confronts the national language with its own hybrid nature and the reality of foreign incursions. If a given nation participates in the superstitions of ethnic purity, it will tend to reject outright, and sometimes violently so, any notion that its stem population could be hybrid. It will be comfortable with vertical genealogical narratives of race and ethnicity. This structure will then be transferred to concepts of language, and the genealogical narrative of linguistic descent will be found in both popular and professional spheres. Thus the horizontal model is favored because it insulates "our native" language against the influence of other ones.

8.   Deconstructing the native speaker

The ethnic ownership of language is also buttressed by the divisive language myth of the authority of the native speaker, a term introduced by Bloomfield (1963 [1933]: 43), an authority that is configured as an infallible birthright, as an innate sense of the acceptable utterance. The word *native* derives from the Latin *nascor* (past participle *natus*) 'to be born', which encourages the perception of first language capabilities as innate. Recent studies on the image of the native speaker, however, have shown the ideological elements at work in the construction of that image.

Paikeday, in *The Native Speaker is Dead!* (1985), cites studies on the acceptability of marginal utterances and the inability of linguists to identify whether or not the error had been made by a first-language (L1) or second-language (L2) speaker. He says, "Sometimes you begin to wonder, when people start recruiting 'native speakers' of English, for example, whether they don't really mean white Anglo-Saxon protestants; Scots, maybe, but no Irish need apply" (1985: 33). On the subject of L1 speaker intuition, he says, "Such intuition comes with training and experience, not from circumstances of birth or infancy, although these doubtless could help in a subsidiary role. It is like your having a better chance of becoming an engineer if your mother was an engineer [...] there are no native speakers any more than there are born engineers" (43).

One of Paikeday's interlocutors is Noam Chomsky, who claims that the grammaticality of an utterance can always be verified by a "native speaker", but can offer no definition of the term when encouraged to do so. Davies (1991: 8) shows that L2 speakers can often "pass" as L1 speakers. He refers to this neo-nativity as being reborn, as a renaissance into another identity, as acquiring a "new ethnicity". Rajendra Singh (1998) sees the native speaker as a political construct. Michael Paradis (1998) reminds us that one is not an L1 speaker of a language per se, but of a given sociolect of a particular dialect, for example, middle or working class New York English.

The perception of nativity is at once one of identity and language together, a phenomenon seen in Austrian attempts to apprehend the "linguistic nationality" of the Slovenians in southern Carinthia, who were asked, in four different censuses, what was their thinking language, cultural language, vernacular language, and household language (Stephens 1976). Gardner (1985) shows that L1 speakers tend to be seen as more kind, resourceful, attractive, and sincere than accented L2 speakers. This is a function of the fact that L1 speakers are an in-power group whose speech becomes desired as a metonym of their power. Gardner's findings correspond to Tucker and Lambert's study on pronunciation, which found that speakers who spoke like network standard were rated higher on a list of similar positive character attributes (Tucker and Lambert 1972: 179–181).

In the judgment of an accent as "foreign" to the English language, there is little natural or ontological evidence in the accent itself that it is not of anglophone origin. The exoticism of the accent lies rather in the perceptual categories of the listener, in his or her habitual auditory patterns, in the anomality of the accent relative to the patterns with which the listener is familiar. To a naïve listener, an unfamiliar anglophone South African accent could sound just as foreign as an Estonian one. An accent is judged as "native" because it is unconsciously perceived as the repository of the linguistic capital that is desired and worshipped. The purpose of the notion of linguistic nativity, i.e. of saying that there is a certain "really native" accent, is to anchor power in a certain class of speaker.

9.   Ethnolinguistic ideology in the United States

In the United States, a fundamental ideology of a Teutonic and northern European essence has been present in conceptions of the American language since the eighteenth century, which escalated to an outright xenophobia in the twentieth (Bonfiglio 2002). The centers of urban power did not become the geographical sources for the standard pronunciation, as they generally did elsewhere in the world; instead, the norm arose from a primarily rural area, the midwest and west, a region that acquired the meanings of *heartland*.

The prejudicial ethnolinguistic consciousness tended to surface in the presence of alterity and congeal around the salient other(s) existing at a particular time. For Benjamin Franklin, the German was constructed as the other, for Thomas Jefferson, it was the black American, and for Noah Webster, it was the British. This caused Webster to represent the American language as "more Teutonic" than British English. In the postbellum period, the northern migration of blacks from former southern slave states effected an anxiety of race in the white population and determined the prescriptive judgments of southern speech. In the twentieth century, massive immigration to the northeastern seaboard, especially by Jews, elicited ethnolinguistic prejudices that converged most acutely upon the characteristic phonemes of the eastern metropolises, especially the non-rhotic postvocalic /r/. The phonemes of the area became associated with the undesirable elements that occupied it, and the region experienced a massive devaluation of linguistic capital. Similarly, the phonemes of the area that was perceived as still pure, natural, virile, and healthy – the *heartland* midwest and west – acquired those characteristics metonymically. Because of their association with the immigrant population, American eastern urban industrial centers became regarded as sources of contamination of race and language. They had to remain marginalized from basic folkish notions of American identity. Rural areas were perceived as uncontaminated and were thus invested with notions of proper ethnic identity. Due to the northern prejudices against the south in the postbellum period, and due to the surreptitious perception of negative racial content in the south, the southern states also had to remain tangential to that identity, as it was conceived by the class hierarchy of the north. The negative racial content not only applies to the prejudices against blacks, but also to the prejudices against Appalachian whites; they were victimized by folkish biological descriptions that characterized them as genetically inferior (Bonfiglio 2002).

In 1914, the noted British historian Stephen Graham published *With Poor Immigrants to America*. In this work, he said that "the contemporary language of America [...] is in the act of changing its skin" (1914: 248). The choice of the word "skin" here is hardly coincidental, as Graham explains:

America must necessarily develop away from us at an ever-increasing rate. Influenced as she is by Jews, Negroes, Germans, Slavs, more and more foreign constructions will creep into the language, – such things as "I should worry," derived from Russian-Jewish girl strikers. "She ast me for a nickel," said a Jew-girl to me of a passing beggar. "*I should give her a nickel*, let her work for it same as other people!" The *I shoulds* of the Jew can pass into the language of the Americans [...] To-day the influence that has come to most fruition is that of the negro. The negro's way of speaking has become the way of most ordinary Americans, but that influence is passing [...] America [...] will be subject to a very powerful influence from the immigrants.
(Graham 1914: 250–251)

American ethnolinguistic identity was also seen as contaminable by black Americans. The phonologist Alexander Melville Bell (1819–1905), the father of Alexander Graham Bell, polemicized against the dropping of final /r/, which he framed in racist terms: "The vowelized R is a vestige of the stronger element which was undoubtedly prominent in our speech at an earlier stage; and – rather than eliminate this vestige – we should conserve it and strengthen it […] Give, then, no countenance to the 'white nigger-speech' which would deprive us altogether of the valuable expressiveness of this element" (Bell 1896: 15–16). The conflation of southern coastal speech with black English persisted into the second half of the twentieth century, as has been attested by Raven McDavid:

> In experiments in Chicago, middle-class Middle Westerners consistently identified the voice of an educated urban white Southerner as that of an uneducated rural Negro […] similar experiments in New York have yielded similar results. And many white Southerners can testify to personal difficulties arising from this confusion in the minds of Northerners. In Ithaca, New York, I could not get to see any apartment advertised as vacant until I paid a personal visit; I was always told that the apartments had just been rented.
> (McDavid 1966: 15–16)

The enracination of language also enables its configuration as a vehicle for the deracination and naturalization of the other. A U.S. government report from 1868 recommended teaching English to Indians as a panacea for the hostilities between native and European Americans, saying that "by educating the children of these tribes in the English language, these differences would have disappeared, and civilization would have followed at once […] through sameness of language is produced sameness of sentiment, and thought" (Crawford 1992: 48). The report advocated that "their barbarous dialects should be blotted out" and assumed that this would "fuse them into one homogenous mass". This resulted in the separation of Indian children from their families for forced education in English, a policy that continued until 1933. This unfortunate episode in American history is an example of the configuration of language as the instantiation of proper race and behavior. This was conceived as a kind of complete linguistic transfusion that could replace one composite of language and behavior with another. A similar example is found in the treatment of the Hispanic population of New Mexico. In 1910, Congress mandated English-only instruction in New Mexico schools and required English fluency for elected officials (Crawford 1992: 58–60).

Such examples are clearly not limited to the United States. In the 1990s, Singapore instituted the "Speak Mandarin Campaign", which was aimed at the suppression of Chinese dialects and the standardization of Mandarin and reflected the government position that linguistic diversity was incompatible with the goals of nation-building (see Saravanan, this vol.). At that time, the population of Singapore was 77.5 percent Chinese; the rest were Malays, Indians, and

"others". Consequently, this program served to unify the majority and solidify the hegemony of the "ethnic" Chinese. Before 1991, national identity cards indicated both race and dialect; after 1991, race alone was indicated (Bokhorst-Heng 1999).

The recent examples of white reactions to minority languages in the United States – the "English Only" anti-Hispanic movement and the opposition to the teaching of Ebonics – attest to the persistence of prejudicial ethnolinguistic consciousness. In 1988, *The Arizona Republic* published parts of a confidential memo written by John Tanton, the chairman and cofounder of U.S. English, an organization seeking to make English the official language of the United States:

> *Gobernar es poblar* translates "to govern is to populate." In this society where the majority rules, does this hold? Will the present majority peaceably hand over its political power to a group that is simply more fertile? Can *homo contraceptivus* compete with *homo progenitiva* [sic] if borders aren't controlled? Or is advice to limit one's family simply advice to move over and let someone else with greater reproductive powers occupy the space? [...] Perhaps this is the first instance in which those with their pants up are going to get caught by those with their pants down! (Crawford 1992: 151)

This passage configures language as biological and racial to the point where language legislation becomes a means of population control. In 1996, the Oakland California schoolboard decided to implement the teaching of Ebonics in schools. (The Linguistic Society of America endorsed the Oakland resolution in 1997.) Oakland's decision elicited a flurry of ethnic jokes representing blacks as ignorant, sexually promiscuous, as drug abusers, and as criminals. The jokes described drug deals ("one joint, two joint, three joint") and maternal prostitution ("what you say about my mama?") (Lakoff 2000: 240). Lakoff observes that the suppression of Ebonics is a method of controlling speech and thus controlling behavior. Similarly, Smitherman (2000: 293) sees the resistance as a "backlash against People of Color masquerading as linguistic patriotism". The discourse of racial prejudice in "polite" society stigmatizes speech as it once did physical expressions. Clearly, there is a white fear of contamination at work here, which Smitherman has characterized as a fear of "the browning of America".

Traces of racial ideology are also present in academic discourse that appears to be innocently descriptive. For instance, French academics regularly distinguish between *les pays anglophones* and *les pays anglo-saxons* in discussing countries whose official language is English, for example, Australia and Nigeria. This is justified by the gratuitous assertion that one should know if the country in question was originally "Anglo-Saxon" or not. The utility of such information is questionable; should ethnicity be the principal factor in determining the differences in language usage among English-speaking nations? Anglophone academics are content to identify both Australia and Nigeria as anglophone countries, without initially addressing the ethnic provenance of the

speakers. Applied linguistics should critique the usage of the term *anglo-saxon* in this context, as it reads ethnicity into language *a priori* and foregrounds problematic notions of nativity.

10.   Conclusion

The matrix of language, racism, and ethnicity clearly presents problems that demand the attention of linguistic inquiry, but that simply cannot be addressed by purely theoretical approaches. In its ahistorical and idealist postures, theoretical linguistics must remain mute in the face of the phenomenon of ethnolinguistic prejudice, which, in order to be properly analyzed, must first be historicized and situated in its emergence out of social, cultural, political, and philosophical contexts, as well as in its manifestations in the history of science. Applied linguistics alone can, in its practical, socially accountable, and interdisciplinary methodology, offer the appropriate modes of inquiry here.

Unlike the dress, food, or music of the other, which can be comfortably enjoyed by the empowered majority, and which are not perceived as contaminative, the language of the other is no mere accessory; it is surreptitiously perceived as a metonym of race and thus serves as a surrogate arena for ethnic conflict. Nationalism itself was born, in the early modern period, *of* and *in* language and articulated in the apparently innocent kinship metaphors of maternality and nativity, as well as in the ideology of a natural connection between national character and national geography. Organic metaphors were thus taken from body and nature to construct the myths of imagined congenital communities that still persist today. These imagined communities inscribe the exclusionary attributes: innate, primordial, sacred, representational, and untranslatable as pennants upon the nationalist flagship of language; they also aid in the inscription of the national language in a symbiotic matrix between body and physical environment. Language thus becomes configured in the discourse of the ethnic and corporeal ownership of national identity and local organic nature. These ethno-nationalist gestures informed the philology of the early modern and modern eras; they became cloaked in philosophical abstractions and generated arboreal and genealogical models of language, the most divisive examples of which can be seen in the race-conscious discourse of the Indo-European hypothesis of the nineteenth century. Thus philosophical theories of organicism participated in these ideologies, at least as they concern configurations of language. The fundamentally nationalist conflation of race and language was and is the catalyst for subsequent permutations of ethnolinguistic discrimination.

Prejudicial ethnic ideologies still persist, clearly in the popular, but also, to an extent, in the academic discourse of language, however implicitly. It behooves scholarship to continue to combat the racializing of language and

the surreptitious preservation of antiquated ethnic prejudices cloaked by the apparently neutral terms "native language" and "mother tongue". These terms are no innocuous intuitions: They are the divisive implements of ethnolinguistic nationalism. Applied linguistics, by virtue of its interdisciplinarity, is uniquely positioned to engage these problems by employing tools of discourse analysis to further illuminate submerged gestures of race consciousness in otherwise ostensibly neutral locutions. It can also apply similar scrutiny and vigilance to the biological metaphors used in descriptions of language. It is clearly incontestable that language has biological components, but it is equally clear that the reticulate nature of language resists hierarchical genealogical metaphors. Awareness of this resistance, however, becomes repressed by the tendency, both historical and current, to overextend biological metaphors in the study of language and thus to determine language genetically. Scholarship would do well to continue to scrutinize this tendency, both in the popular, as well as in the scholarly spheres.

The current frontiers of the scientific study of language abut upon the territories of other disciplines, for instance, cultural studies, sociobiology, and political science, with which linguistics shares crucial objects of investigation, such as those examined in the present study. Applied linguistics serves as the optimal interlocutor in such inquiry.

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