

7-1-1999

Introduction: Language Is a Virus

Keith Aoki

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.law.miami.edu/umlr>

Recommended Citation

Keith Aoki, *Introduction: Language Is a Virus*, 53 U. Miami L. Rev. 961 (1999)

Available at: <https://repository.law.miami.edu/umlr/vol53/iss4/21>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at University of Miami School of Law Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Miami Law Review by an authorized editor of University of Miami School of Law Institutional Repository. For more information, please contact library@law.miami.edu.

Introduction: Language Is a Virus

KEITH AOKI*

I. IS LANGUAGE A VIRUS?

Laurie Anderson said, “language is a virus from outer space — that’s why I’d rather hear your name than see your face.”¹ What might a spiky-haired, violin-playing, iconoclastic post-punk NYC performance artist’s tribute to the even more iconoclastic beat novelist William Burroughs have to do with a bunch of pedantic and stuffy law professors, LatCrit or otherwise? More than you might think.

For one, Anderson’s phrase, “language is a virus”² captures neatly the simultaneous power and danger of language. The power of language lies in how it oozes, it permeates, it stains and colors, it flows into the interstices, it saturates the air and the airwaves, it is between, within and without us — perhaps no area of human experience remains unmediated by language. The language of power is, literally, language (or rather, languages). Gluing us together, splitting us apart, driving us into ecstasy and despair, seeping into, pervading, screaming our pain and voicing our deepest dreams and nightmares — speaking us even while we think we speak it. Language is the turbulent, restless ocean sur-

* Associate Professor, University of Oregon School of Law, Visiting Professor, 1998-1999, Boston College Law School. This piece has benefited from innumerable conversations with Anthony Paul Farley and Phyllis Goldfarb. I have benefited immensely from reading a draft version of Anthony Paul Farley, *The Poetics of Colorlined Space* (draft, forthcoming in Francisco Valdes, Jerome Culp and Angela Harris *Critical Race Theory*).

1. Laurie Anderson, “Language is a Virus (for William S. Burroughs),” *United States, I-IV* (1991); *Language is a Virus, Home of the Brave* (1986).

2. I am aware of the pernicious power of ways that the “virus” metaphor has been deployed against immigrants in the past and in no way do I endorse the labeling of languages other than English or people speaking those languages as “viruses.” I do, however intend to (1) name the “virus” metaphor as a xenophobic response and then (2) contest, subvert and complexity by asking us to consider that all languages may be viruses.

I also note that in the mid-19th century West Coast states, “Chinatown (and Chinese immigrants living in them) were viewed as pathological breeding grounds for diseases such as leprosy, cholera, and the bubonic plague . . . the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1870 declared that the ‘Chinese were considered ‘moral leper[s]’ whose habits encouraged disease wherever they resided.” See Keith Aoki, “*Foreign-ness*” & *Asian American Identities: Yelloface. World War II Propaganda, and Bifurcated Racial Stereotypes*, 4 *UCLA ASIAN PAC. AM.L.J.* 1,33-35 (1996). One should note the long shelf life of the virus metaphor, when U.S. newspapers have characterized the economic crisis that began during summer 1997 in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia as the “Asian (Economic) Flu.” See e.g., Editorial, *The Asian Virus Spreads*, *N.Y. TIMES*, Nov. 20, 1997.

rounding the islands that are individual human consciousness. Language simultaneously separates and connects us in complex and painful ways.

Language's mercurial and terrible power make it a threat. In order to replicate, viruses attach themselves to living DNA. Viruses are a program, activating themselves even as the host organism's DNA loses the ability to tell what is "self" and what is "other." Like a virus, language is a nonliving pattern of information, a configuration of meaning that attaches itself to consciousness, a program waiting to be executed, changing both the consciousness it infects and morphing its very own structure as it replicates itself. There is no defense against the virus of language except perhaps death. Predating us, the virus of language will be infecting other consciousnesses long after we are dust. Language is a *menace* – it is a void that when *you* look into it, *it* looks back into you, it changes you, changes your world – it is the unliving worm that flies. Language is a virus.

The authors of the following cluster of pieces tease out the politics and poetics of struggles over language. What is the nature of the terrible connection between knowledge and power in a society simultaneously subject to centrifugal and centripetal political, cultural and economic forces played out on the fraught landscape of gender racial and class politics?

These authors share certain critical attitudes about who is the "subject" threatened by the power of language-viruses and who is the "object" of fear, possessed by and possessing contagious language-viruses. What is to be the normative baseline? What conceptual spaces do such a legal "subjects" and "objects" occupy? Who is the 'American "I"' that desperately fears collapse into a terrifying babble of languages and discourses that turn the familiar strange and the strange familiar? Who or what is the linguistic equivalent of Atlanta's famed Center for Disease Control? Who are the language-cop versions of Scully and Muldaur chasing down the "X-Files"-like menace of instant language-viruses to the American body politic?

Before introducing the pieces in this cluster, I ask you to briefly contemplate F. Scott Fitzgerald's character Jay Gatsby, who unsuccessfully tried bridging the vast epistemological and ontological gulf between him self and the language(s) of power.

II. JAY GATZ AS AN "ALIEN" FROM AN "OTHER WORLD"?

Bypassing the convoluted history of the rise of "Official English" and "English Only" movements that have been increasingly chronicled

and critiqued by eloquent and studious voices,³ I suggest there is something to be gained by momentarily contemplating Jay Gatsby, the doomed protagonist of F. Scott Fitzgerald's jazz-age novel, "The Great Gatsby,"⁴ an elegant cultural artifact of the most enduring kind (poignant and complex), from one of the decades when American nativism⁵ reached a fevered peak.

Jay Gatz, a poor Midwestern white kid from America's "third coast" (presumably somewhere on the shores of Lake Michigan or Superior in Michigan, Wisconsin or Minnesota) had striven mightily to transform himself into an "American." Climbing the ever-precipitous social ladder, Gatz changed his name to the elegantly anglicized "Gatsby" (the son of Gatz?). He ably gathered the markers and accoutrements of wealth and power—a spacious tony mansion on East Egg on Long Island's North Shore, staging glittering all-night parties in a grand diaphanous-tented pavilion on his blue lawn, fragrant in the warm Long Island summer evening, impeccably tailored seersucker suits, straw boaters and tasseled two-toned shiny leather wingtips, a Stutz-Bearcat with a rumble seat ("those were different times, when the ladies studied their rules of verse, and the poets they just rolled their eyes").⁶ But the gulf between East Egg and West Egg remained unbridgeable, Daisy's "green light" remained tantalizingly out of Gatsby's longing reach. Gatz, or rather Gatsby, ultimately was not able to grab that final brass ring symbolizing his arrival arrived as an "American." Gatsby's haunted erotic longing, his unrequited desire for the "green light," his obsession with Daisy Buchanan,⁷ for assimilation was his hamartia, his

3. James Crawford, *Hold Your Tongue*, in *THE LATINA/O CONDITION: A CRITICAL READER* 559 (Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic eds., 1998) [Hereinafter *THE LATINA/O CONDITION*]; Rube Navarette, Jr., *A Bilingual Education Initiative as a Prop. 187 in Disguise?*, in *THE LATINA/O CONDITION*, *supra*, at 563; Juan F. Perea, *American Languages, Cultural Pluralism and Official English*, in *THE LATINA/O CONDITION*, *supra*, at 566; Margaret E. Montoya, *Law and Language(s)*, in *THE LATINA/O CONDITION*, *supra*, at 574; Christopher David Ruiz Cameron, *How the Garcia Cousins Lost Their Accents*, in *THE LATINA/O CONDITION*, *supra*, at 579; Juan F. Perea, *Death by English*, in *THE LATINA/O CONDITION*, *supra*, at 583; Miguel A. Mendez, *Lawyers, Linguists, Story-tellers, and Limited English-Speaking Witnessess*, in *THE LATINA/O CONDITION*, *supra*, at 596; Bill Piatt, *Attorney as Interpreter*, in *THE LATINA/O CONDITION*, *supra*, at 602; Rachel F. Moran, *The Politics of Discretion: Federal Intervention in Bilingual Education*, in *THE LATINA/O CONDITION*, *supra*, at 610; *see also* Antonio Califa, *Declaring English the Official Language: Prejudice Spoken Here*, 24 *HARV. C.R.-C.L. L. REV.* 293 (1989); Steven W. Bender, *Consumer protection for Latinos: Overcoming Language Fraud and English-Only in the Marketplace*, 45 *AM. U. L. REV.* 1027 (1996).

4. F. SCOTT FITZGERALD, *THE GREAT GATSBY* (Preface and notes by Matthew J. Bruccoli, Scribner Paperback Fiction, Simon and Schuster Inc., 1925).

5. *See* JOHN HIGHAM, *STRANGERS IN THE LAND: PATTERNS OF AMERICAN NATIVISM, 1860-1925* (1955).

6. Lou Reed, *Sweet Jane*, on *Velvet Underground Loaded* (Verve Records, 1969).

7. "Rich girls don't marry poor boys." *The Great Gatsby* (Paramount Pictures 1974).

fatal flaw. Unfortunately, Gatsby “sprang from his Platonic conception of himself” and not from wealthy progenitors of the proper lineage, “who are different than you or I” thus, ultimately, his self-perfection was irrelevant.⁸

And so Gatsby ended up as a deathly pale, soggy, bullet-riddled corpse floating face down in an elegantly-tiled swimming pool, his blood staining the turquoise waters in dilute crimson streams, like a 1920s foreshadowing of William Holden at the beginning of the dark 1950s Billy Wilder film “Sunset Boulevard”— a potent fictional warning of the futility of transgressing or challenging the impermeable class-ethnic boundaries of the day. If the class-ethnic boundaries were so hardened, even for the son of a white northern European immigrant, it is difficult to even begin imagining the impenetrable nature of the color-lined race boundaries of the day. While Gatsby certainly learned how to talk the talk and walk the walk, he still ended up as just another failed American dreamer. The novel’s narrator, after learning of Gatsby’s distant and humble midwestern origins from Gatsby’s father, Nick Carraway concludes:

And as I sat there, brooding on the old unknown world, I thought of Gatsby’s wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on into the night.

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that’s no matter — tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning——

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.⁹

Gatsby’s dream of assimilation was an intoxicating dream of upward mobility. His self-gentrification was underwritten by his skill at mastering the languages of another world. If only he could learn to use the right silverware, speak with the proper elocution, learn the correct etiquette, buy his impeccably tailored shirts with french cuffs and his impossibly natty white linen ice cream suits from the proper tailor, master the right dance steps and the infinite and subtle body languages of clothing and carriage of this “other world” — he could pass — he could enter that evanescent, shimmering dream world inhabited by

8. THE GREAT GATSBY, *supra* note 4, at 104.

9. THE GREAT GATSBY, *supra* note 4, at 189.

Daisy and Tom Buchanan, he could reach out and grasp the “green light” across the hypnotically lapping Long Island waters in that beckoning, warm, dark, narcotic 1920s American night. It was a great fantasy while it lasted. But it didn’t last. If even Jay Gatsby couldn’t assimilate, if even he couldn’t manage a satisfactory “mind-meld” with that “other world” of the orgasmic green light, if even he ran aground on the dragon teeth shoals of the American dream, then what hope would a non-white, non-English speaking, non-Christian immigrant of the time have for an epiphanic apotheosis into “American” (of course, “American” with a capital “A”) life?

If “B” equals the world of Jay Gatz which he sought to escape (or any other upwardly-mobile 1920s vulgar parvenu insufficiently far removed from the windowless smoked-stained-walled thatched brick hut of his uncouth potato and cabbage-eating ancestors), and “A” equals the world of Daisy’s “Orgasmic Green Light,” Gatsby’s dream might be diagrammed thusly:

$$A + B = A.$$

The challenge immigrants have consistently posed to the United States throughout its history in complex but meaningful ways has been to realize the possibility of the following equation:

$$A + B = C, \text{ a new amalgam, or something other than A.}$$

The connection between language as a virus, Jay Gatsby’s haunted longing quest for the orgasmic “green light” and the authors in the following section is that each in their own way, ask when are we, as a society, going to be able to (1) acknowledge that the second formulation is a largely credible (albeit skeletally minimal) account of what has been going on in the US for at least the past 200 years; and (2) that process has been regularly disguised and distorted by racism, sexism, nativism and homophobia promulgating the first equation as a normative excelsior to which all should aspire, while all it ever was a pure fantasy. *All* languages are viruses – there is *no* original non-foreign host (and never was) – all languages are viruses from outer space, from other worlds.

III. SPEAKING IN TONGUES FROM OTHER WORLDS?

The following writers are all ‘speaking in tongues’ from other worlds – discourses within discourses. When Lisa Iglesias asked me to moderate this panel, she asked me if I had any ideas for a title. I initially responded with a suggestion that she work in something about the “Means of (Re)Production” as a smarty-pants ironic pomo reference to Marx’s focus on analyzing control of the means of production. In a national and global economy that has increasingly moved towards broader media reach, the question of who controls rights to legally

reproduce and disseminate information, images and ideas is increasing important.¹⁰ Probably feeling ennui with pointy-headed, fancy-French-philosopher-citing, ironic, over-clever, self-referential neo-Marxist leftist posturing, Lisa wisely chose to go with a title focusing on control of the means of COMMUNICATIONS. By focusing on communicative means, the following authors look substantively and creatively at both the form and substance of the emerging political economies of legal (and other) meaning.

Professors William Bratton and Drucilla Cornell each speak within internal legal discourses, simultaneously inhabiting the terms of their respective discourses and pushing at the boundaries, enlarging the epistemic spaces of both traditional law and economics scholarship and moral philosophy. Seeking to discover the blind spots of each discourse by asking what does an interrogation of the treatment of language regulation tell us?¹¹ Importantly, Professor Bratton warns us that failure to learn a “language” — here, the “language” of law and economics, for better or worse, the *lingua franca* of vast stretches of legal academia — can and will be used against you. In the Middle Ages, even the atheist needed to know how to speak the language of faith. In a secular age such as ours, even the deeply devout must speak the language of the secular. In the hot-house micro world of late 1990s legal academia, even one who may be deeply skeptical of some assumptions made by practitioners of law & economics should be able to manipulate them, if only for the purposes of self-defense.

However, as with all languages, the language of law & economics proves to be surprisingly indeterminate in terms of the political and ideological freight it is asked to carry. Professor Bratton shows how the *discourse of economics* has everything to do with the *economics of discourse* — showing how the economics of language difference in the real world are “more complicated and friendly to regulation than your law and economics colleagues want you to know.”¹² Language from another world, language inverted and subverted. Professor Bratton argues that English Only laws have an inefficient “seamy public choice underside” as Anglo-special interest group legislation, which, when one considers racial discrimination as type of market failure fueled by information asymmetries in which race/ethnicity/language become imperfect information proxies and are anything but efficient models to emulate/promul-

10. Keith Aoki, *How the World Dreams Itself to Be American: Reflections on the Relationship Between the Expanding Scope of Trademark Protection and Free Speech Norms*, 17 LOYOLA ENT. L. J. 523 (1997).

11. See William Bratton, *Law and Economics of English Only*, 53 U. MIAMI L. REV. 973 (1999); Drucilla Cornell, *The Imaginery of English Only*, 53 U. MIAMI L. REV. 977 (1999).

12. Bratton, *supra* note 11, at 973.

gate.¹³ Elementary public choice theory tells us that democracy fails when a powerful, well-organized group is able to exclusively appropriate the gains from a policy change such as proposed English-Only legislation at the expense of a relatively larger, but much more dispersed and less organized group whose individual losses may seem low-level, but which in the aggregate may be extremely significant socially and economically. Talking the talk, but walking a different walk?

Shifting from the language of self-interested, rational, autonomous, utility-maximizing monads to the language/discourse of deontological moral and political philosophy, Professor Drucilla Cornell confronts and critiques “the norm of assimilation as the basis of citizenship through English only statutes [that] treat[] Latinas and Latinos as less than free and equal persons, equally worthy and capable of evaluating their own basic identifications, including their language.”¹⁴ Professors Bratton and Cornell masterfully shift between various discourses and languages to show us how language(s) are constitutive of both our public and private selves — rational market actors and individual moral selves. They set a challenge for LatCrit to be as multilingual and ecumenical in the types of discourses and analytical tools it deploys as it is asking Anglo society to be of those who speak languages from other life-worlds.

Professor Catharine Wells reflects on ways that languages, or more precisely, discourses, operate to confine as much as they free us to communicate. While Professor Wells entitles her piece, “Speaking in Tongues,”¹⁵ it may have been entitled, “Thinking in Tongues.” As a monolingual English speaker who drones on in the flat tones of the upper American Midwest (“ruff” instead of “roof”), I can only imagine what it might be like to speak in English but experience in Spanish. As a Sansei (third-generation Japanese American), I am regretful that, according to my mother, I was conversant in both Japanese and English until I entered kindergarten in the hyper-assimilationist world of the early 1960s American Midwest, after which I completely lost all Japanese speaking ability. If multilingual language ability is like an additional mental “limb,” allowing one to grasp ideas and emotions in different ways, I am left with the distressing experience of an amputated “phantom (linguistic) limb.”

Professor Wells also comments on the multiple “scholarly dialects” that we all negotiate in our professional lives, reflecting on “how we both lose and gain when we choose to speak within the confines of an

13. *Id.* at 974.

14. Cornell, *supra* note 11, at 979.

15. Catherine Peirce Wells, *Speaking in Tongues: Some Comments on Multilingualism*, 53 U. MIAMI L. REV. 983 (1999).

academic discourse.”¹⁶ She usefully assesses the contributions as well as potential weaknesses in the discourses that Professors Bratton and Cornell urge us to be able to use, imploring us to retain a focus on “the gift of otherness, the opportunities of multi-lingualism,”¹⁷— language may be a virus from other worlds, but it may be beneficent, rather than destructive.

Also commenting on Professors Bratton and Cornell, Professor Madeline Plascencia asks us to consider the crucial question of agency – how truly voluntary or involuntary are the “choices” that we make that in aggregate over time construct our identity?¹⁸ Professor Plascencia makes the point that with regard to language(s), our traditional legal structure for evaluating and categorizing “volition” and agency may hopelessly fail us. Are languages chosen anymore than race, religion, class, ethnicity, or even gender? Perhaps the virus that is language speaks us, speaks through us, even while we entertain the notion that our existentially privileged selves are speaking transparently through language?

Professor Yvonne Tamayo writes eloquently about silence and silencing.¹⁹ Sometimes, as Mr. Rogers says, “It’s good to be quiet,” but enforced silence can be oppressive and deadly. Elsewhere, Professor Margaret Chon has written of the importance of being sensitive to and aware of silence in narratives – what is left unsaid, who is absent.²⁰ Silence, the gap in signs that punctuate and give animating rhythm and tempo to our words and thoughts are what impart meaning. Every standup comedian or jazz musician knows that timing is everything — timing includes knowing when not to speak, what not to say, what to imply. Rather than being a void, a negation, empty, hollow — silence is capable of being invested and pregnant with gravity and import. However, silence can also carry terrible and painful freight, as Professor Tamayo points out as she unpacks the “oppressive effects of law and culture experienced by various groups” that are “silenced.”²¹ Professor Tamayo describes how easy the slide from metaphorical into actual policed silence may occur as our legal system imposes “real silence upon non-English-speaking people.” She considers the view that lan-

16. *Id.* at 985.

17. *Id.* at 988.

18. Madeleine Plascencia, *Anti-Subordination and the Legal Struggle Over Control of the “Means of Communication”: Technology, Language and Communicative Power*, 53 U. MIAMI L. REV. 989 (1999).

19. Yvonne Tamayo, *Literal Silencing/Silenciando la Lengua*, 53 U. MIAMI L. REV. 995 (1999).

20. Margaret Chon, *On the Need for Asian American Narratives in Law: Ethnic Specimens, Native Informants, Storytelling and Silences*, 3 UCLA ASIAN PACIFIC AM. L. J. 4 (1995).

21. Yvonne Tamayo, *supra* note 19, at 995.

guage is a threatening virus to an English-speaking America, suggesting that “[s]peech in a language other than English may be most highly suspect when the communication appears to fortify human bonds, enhance intimacies, or serve as an exchange of useful information between speaker and listener.” However, such a view of language as a dangerous virus cannot long be credibly sustained in a world in which “greater mobility demands not only that many different languages and cultures co-exist, but that different experiences and practices reinforce one another toward an America that thrives on ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity.”²² Rather than an impediment, Professor Tamayo suggests that understanding the necessity of language as a virus from other worlds may be a vital and necessary precondition to living, thriving and surviving in the global condition of postmodernity we find ourselves in.

The next two writers, Professor Sharon Hom and Professor-in-waiting John Hayakawa Torok pass back and forth through the extremely permeable conceptual boundary between LatCrit and Asian Pacific American Legal Scholarship (APACrit). LatCrit and APACrit at first blush share many ideas. LatCrit and APACrit both question the coherence and salience of national boundaries, concepts of “foreign-ness,” confluences of race and nation, a critique of the Black-White paradigm, questions about the salience and limits of panethnicity and what it means to occupy the racial “middle” in a sharply racially hierarchical society such as the contemporary United States. Both LatCrit and APACrit also share a concern with the complex identities engendered in individuals and groups who have historical, political and intellectual links with people and cultures existing dynamically both within the and without the United States. Many LatCrit and APACrit scholars have been among the most articulate critics of a steamroller hegemonic unilinear vision of globalization. Without positing an unproblematic, “why-can’t-we-all-just-get-along” sanguine coalitionalism on the part of either LatCrit or APACrit, it is significant that LatCrit has reached out affirmatively and consistently to invite the comments and contributions of many APACrits²³ to be part of the project of developing the shape of LatCrit theory.

Professor Sharon Hom asks us to consider what kinds of weird, complex, funny, strange, multiple, multilingual, multilevel conversations may be occurring as we have breakfast in the ruins (of earlier political and economic orders) – how do our languages interact syntactically as

22. *Id.* at 1001.

23. LatCrit commentators and participants have included Sumi Cho, Sharon Hom, Neil Gotanda, John Hayakawa Torok, Nancy Ota, Robert Chang, Eric Yamamoto, Margaret Chon, Natsu Saito and your humble narrator.

well as stylistically? What does rock n' roll (a mutant piece of Anglo-American-African cultural miscegenation feasting gleefully on the carcass of colonialism and slavery if ever there was one) have to do with Tiananmen Square?²⁴ What happens when you let loose the unabashedly anarchistic, materialistic, hedonic, libidinal (and fiendishly capitalist commodity fetished) impulse of western culture in general and western rock n' roll in particular in the PRC? A+ B definitely doesn't equal A, but it is unclear what valence the new equation may have. In fact, it may remain unclear for a long, long time (and, perhaps, a good thing it may be too), exactly what the effects of exponentially increasing quantities of people, culture, money and media sloshing around ever faster in the global media infrastructure may have. While Stuart Hall has said that postmodernism is the way the world dreams itself to be American—one perhaps needs to consider that when the U.S. looks (or rather broadcasts) into the “void,” the “void” looks (and broadcasts) back into the U.S.—it is far from clear that U.S. “kulchur” is a one-way street (although there may be troublingly univocal aspects to it). If globalization is a trend that has been going on for at least the past 400 years since the age of conquest and colonialization, one wonders what happens when the global “washing machine” we seem to be sloshing around in hits the “spin” style. The “King” is dead; long live the “King(s) [or Queens]” as we slouch toward Shanghai (or Chiapas or Lagos or Luna City), stealing furtive but hopeful glances at the twenty-first century – what mutant dawn will the Eastertide bring?) One may only guess that it may be of a shape that we have not seen before.

In his essay, “Finding the Me in LatCrit Theory: Some Thoughts on Language Acquisition and Loss,”²⁵ Professor-in-Waiting and marathon-runner John Hayakawa Torok importantly notes that “the roots of both Latina/o and Asian American marginalization are in the earlier loss of the ‘language’ of settler-over-native racialization when white over Black became the mother tongue of American racial discourse.” Linking the Indio experience with the Latina/o, Asian American, white and Black experiences in North America is a very important move from identity politics to a politics of anti-subordination. Torok urges “workers against all forms of subordination . . . [to] speak of and learn about and work against subordination . . . [to] learn, work and speak in many tongues.”

24. Sharon K. Hom, *Lexicon Dreams and Chinese Rock and Roll: Thoughts on Culture, Language, and Translation as Strategies of Resistance and Reconstruction*, 53 U. MIAMI L. REV. 1003 (1999).

25. John Hayakawa Torok, *Finding the Me in LatCrit Theory: Thoughts on Language Acquisition and Loss*, 53 U. MIAMI L. REV. 1019 (1999).

IV. $A + B = C^2$!

To the extent that all languages are a virus from outer space, or at least other life-worlds that may seem as far away at times as outer space, we should also consider the strong possibility that, to paraphrase the cartoonist Walt Kelly, as we meet the “aliens;” the “foreigners;” the “invaders;” all those who are “others,” we may find that they are “us.” By forsaking indefensible and unstable ethnocentric monolingual visions of the future, we can begin working towards creating a world where symbiotic semiotic multilingualism ($A + B = C^2$) may thrive. Long Live LatCrit!