Not all these questions were addressed, of course, in the conference on the relation of English and the foreign languages, held on 12, 13, and 14 April 2002 at New York University. But a good many of them were, in position papers, in small discussion groups, and in very lively general debate. The choice of venue seemed particularly auspicious: New York, a city of linguistic crossings and unexpected cultural alliances, seemed the ideal site for our reflection. Most remarkable, however, was the eagerness with which scholars from very different institutions and locations engaged in discussion, asked questions, proposed topics for discussion, and thoughtfully considered new proposals. True intellectual inquiry, not disciplinary defensiveness, characterized the debate—one that, all participants agreed, was long past due. By the end of the third day it was clear to us all that this conference was only a beginning, that other exchanges must follow if we were to keep the dialogue going in challenging new ways. The publication of the papers from the conference is part of that effort, a call to sustained, action-oriented reflection for all members of the MLA, and an invitation to devise strategies that, while respecting differences, will allow us to explore possible new structures and create new sites of collaboration across the humanities.

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# Collaborating across Disciplines: "It's a Small World After All"

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MY TITLE CAME TO ME AS A WAY OF SUGgesting immediately both the exciting and the troublesome potentials of collaborations between foreign language and English departments. No one can take Disney's banal lyrics at all seriously, and the tune is both insidious and annoying. So why invoke it in a serious discussion?

Because in some ways we know that it is a small world, after all. A global economy aspires to shrink the world into a one-size-fits-all capitalism. And, at the same time, nation-states are fragmenting into smaller and smaller factions so that the kind of wholeness the song invokes in speaking of smallness is, ironically, receding into the distance. Yet no disagreement is so small that it cannot threaten to rend the fabric of civilization.

My mission—and I chose to undertake it—is to discuss issues, currently on deans' minds, that might encourage or constrain cooperative efforts and to present my view of the advantages and disadvantages of cooperation between English and foreign language departments.

Although I have been asked to provide a perspective on how deans think, I naturally hesitate to generalize from my own particular practice and distinctive situation. But here goes. We deans are, I hope, all invested in the success of the humanities disciplines on our campuses. That is, we all want the enterprises we shepherd to thrive and to be seen to be thriving. It's quite simple. If the departments and programs for which I have responsibility flourish with engaged and active faculties and interested and enthusiastic students, then I can secure more resources in the forms of dollars and faculty lines on which to build for the future. Even those deans who don't share my passion for what is, after all, my own disciplinary home think in similar ways about the resources of dollars and faculty lines. We are

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judged by *our* bosses on the quality of our investments, and we want to make good investments based on compelling visions for the future of the academy. Whereas a dean coming out of the sciences might regard the humanities the way the fool Touchstone in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* regards his inamorata, Audrey: "A poor virgin, sir, an ill-favored thing, sir, but mine own" (5.4.55–56), I take a more aggressive, "Be all that you can be" approach. I am convinced that the humanities are poised in the twenty-first century to reclaim a centrality in the academy that has eroded during the past half century as universities "have shifted their priorities away from basic research and liberal education toward applied research and vocational training" and "have portrayed themselves as vehicles for economic growth and workforce development" (Rosenstone 2). These last compelling points have been made by Steven Rosenstone, dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota, in an essay that examines our tendency to shipwreck the humanities on the shoals of justifications for higher education based on immediate economic impacts. (I should perhaps here make a wry and ironic comment about how my own perspectives that focus on investing in the humanities are imbued with the economic logic of our age.) But I'll keep to the high road with Rosenstone, who adds that "[w]e have not educated legislators [and the public] about the importance of basic research. We have not described what a liberal education entails or why it matters. We have not explained how the broad and open dissemination of knowledge serves society" (5). The disservice to ourselves that results from our silence is, increasingly, a disservice to our students and our future.

Much has been written in the wake of 11 September 2001, but one piece that particularly compelled my interest and attention appeared in the 2 December *New York Times Magazine*. In an article entitled "2011," Niall Ferguson anticipates that "[t]en years from now, historians will look back and see the events of Sept. 11 as mere ripples in a tidal wave of terrorism and political fragmentation," events that did not, in fact, alter but rather highlighted dramatically "several underlying historical trends." Ferguson offers his own vision of our unpredictable future, identifying "four deep trends shaping the early 21st century. First, the globalization of terrorism. Second, the approach of a second energy crisis. Third, the formalization of American imperialism. And finally, the fragmentation of the multicultural polity." In all these trends, Ferguson identifies "one of the great paradoxes of our time," that is, that "the economic integration of the world has coincided with its political disintegration" (79). I lingered over this vision because none of these trends—with the exception, perhaps, of the energy crisis—is susceptible to mitigation by the education received by those increasing numbers of university students majoring in applied science and various forms of vocational and professional training. And, certainly, the paradox of economic integration shadowed by political disintegration will not be addressed by universities positioned primarily as vehicles for local economic growth and workforce development.

Never, in my lifetime, has the call for a liberal education richly informed by the humanities, social sciences, and basic sciences been greater.[1] The danger, as I see it, is that we won't move vigorously enough to claim the importance and relevance of our expertise. In a world in which the worst people are full of passionate intensity—dedicated to waging a war on terrorism and evildoers through secret cabinets and military hardware—the danger is that, after decades of feeling marginalized, those of us in the humanities will lack all conviction.

As we enter the twenty-first century, the world is hungry for the kinds of knowledge that language and literature disciplines possess individually, collectively, and collaboratively. I think of these kinds of knowledge as comprehended in what I call the tension between globalism and localism—or "glocalism," as I heard it phrased while interviewing a candidate from the East

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Coast. I've not been able to determine yet the currency of this neologism, whether it has gone national or not; some ideas simply get stopped at the Rockies, as did early settlers. Obviously, glocalism is meant to capture the significance of the global in the local and the local in the global. Difference has never been more relevant than it is now when we ignore it at our peril.

Let me first characterize what individual departments do, before I go on to describe how we might build a collective advantage out of our individual strengths. The study of languages, national literatures, and cultures that structure our foreign language majors gives students intimate knowledge of alternative ways of organizing experience and understanding both the world and their place in it. And once students have been intimately exposed to difference in one context, they have a readier sympathy for and can more readily extrapolate the multiplicity of differences that structure our world.

First let me share some statistics that should give us hope, but let me also admit up front that my own hope is tinged with skepticism about the gap between boast, as it were, and performance. These statistics were compiled by the American Council on Education and published in 2001. A number of surveys sought to assess the importance of an international experience and foreign language study to current college-age students. Asked about the benefits of study abroad and other kinds of international experience, "[m]ore than 90 percent agreed that international education would help them work with people from other cultures, and 88 percent said it would give them a competitive edge in the workforce. [. . .] Eighty-six percent strongly or somewhat agree that knowing a foreign language would improve their chances for career success." And "almost 85 percent said that the availability of foreign languages in a college or university would be important to their choice of institution" (Hayward and Slaya 20).

The public at large also "overwhelmingly views learning a foreign language as an important tool for competing in today's world. When asked how important it was to speak another language, 85 percent of the public said it was very or somewhat important. [. . .] Comparative data from the Gallup / National Geographic poll show that in 1988, only 65 percent of the population thought knowing a foreign language was important" (21).

Given these responses, we might well wonder why students aren't beating down our doors to take our courses. Clearly there's a gap between theory and practice, because we know from painful experience that most students never pass beyond their first year of language study, much less develop real competence in a foreign language. When forced to choose among alternatives, most students fail to see what we offer as vital to their future prospects, as providing a real competitive edge.

How and why might collaborations help us, and what might those collaborations look like? These are questions not for deans but for our colleagues in departments to decide, once they grasp that what our programs offer is precisely what students want and need but do not recognize in the form in which we have presented it. That, I think, is the crux; we haven't fully persuaded ourselves, much less our students, that what we have to offer will enable them to grapple with some of the more intractable problems that will confront us in this century.

As I've said, the faculty, not a dean, has the knowledge, experience, and expertise to know how to structure majors that will attract students seeking to educate themselves for a new century. But I recognize that my role here is, in part, to show you how I am thinking, to throw out an idea or two so that you can reject them, refine them, revise them, and, in the process, arrive at more viable alternatives.

Next, I ask questions. Generally, why don't students choose our majors and courses and so affirm the value they purportedly identify in the study of foreign languages and cultures? How is the shape of knowledge changing in the twenty-

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first century? More particularly, looking at departments like French, German, and Russian, which are losing enrollments, I ask: how does it affect our programs of study that a new form of currency, the euro, has emerged? What does the emergence of the euro as an economic, political, and symbolic reality mean for the way we have organized the study of European languages, literatures, and cultures? What does it mean that the countries in the European Union include not only France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, and Great Britain but also Greece? What does it mean that of those fifteen only twelve have adopted the euro to date, and England isn't one of them? What does it mean that English is rapidly becoming the global language? What are the politics of English as global language? (The other day, someone on my campus—not in the humanities—asked me, without a trace of self-consciousness or irony, "Why would anyone write up research in another language if they could write in English?") Perhaps I need to refer that person to Thomas Babington Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education." How might the experiences of England as world empire in the nineteenth century enable us to understand America at the dawn of the twenty-first century?

My questions may suggest some avenues for collaboration. Rigorous area studies majors are one route. For example, I have been discussing with some members of my faculty the possibility of developing a major in European studies, not as an instantiation of a yet more comprehensive national ideological formation—Europe—but as a context in which to explore the very formation, deformation, and transformation of such concepts. The move toward the studies rubric is itself a statement about a concept under investigation. What does Europe as an ideological formation mean at this point in the twenty-first century? What is a populace claiming about itself in identifying itself as European? How does the euro impact what we conceive as Europe? And what does England's relation to the euro say about the country's relation to the new Europe? How does the development of areas such as francophone studies and anglophone studies open up new possibilities for collaboration?

Obviously, majors in East Asian studies, Near Eastern studies, or Latin American studies have anticipated the possibility of European studies. We may ask, why are European studies programs neither as common nor as popular on our campuses? To my mind, such a program offers one logical way for an English department to collaborate with foreign language departments. Is the long-standing existence of departments organized around nations—England and America, France, Germany, Russia, Italy, Spain—inhibiting that development?

I do not mean to suggest that European studies is the only route we might explore. Caribbean studies is emerging as a program on many campuses—and here, again, is a program that brings together many languages (French, Spanish, and English, as well as Dutch) and cultures from many regions (not only Europe but Asia, the Middle East, and Africa).

In a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article entitled "Globalization and Area Studies: When Is Too Broad Too Narrow?" Peter A. Hall and Sidney Tarrow argue:

> US higher education's increasing stress upon the study of globalization threatens the continued existence of area studies programs, despite the valuable insights into global processes that such programs foster. By limiting the amount of regional empirical knowledge available to students, this trend [to focus on global studies] may actually impede inquiry in the causes and effects of globalization itself. Area studies programs are unfairly criticized for being too narrow, when they are actually directed at using contextual regional information to construct the generally applicable theories that globalization requires.

A degree program in European studies, to my mind, would potentially be enormously attractive

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to our students, who often cannot grasp the real uses to which they would put a degree in French or Italian or German. It is only after they complete our majors that they realize we have given them knowledge most worth having. A European studies major might require at least two years of a major language and one of a minor language and so reinvigorate the study of European languages—broadly defined—that are now languishing. Certainly courses in all our disciplines would be among the requirements, as well as courses from other disciplines such as history, political science, and economics. It would be interesting to think about what the core courses for this major might be. Here I see an opportunity for some collaborative teaching. The capstone course or courses would offer a similar opportunity.

I've been focusing on Europe and the Caribbean for the moment because, as a dean, I feel a responsibility to help my European languages thrive again. Interest in Asian and Middle Eastern languages is growing rapidly on my campus. But, of course, we must do more than reinvigorate one or two languages. We must decide what kind of knowledge we owe our students. Even apart from developing new majors and programs, there are numerous productive avenues for collaboration opened up by globalization and the intensifying recognition that economic globalization and democratization necessitate a comparative approach in education. Noel F. McGinn's 1996 guest editorial essay in the *Comparative Education Review* summarized some of the challenges and opportunities we confront:

> The challenge is to reject false nationalism and through comparative science to help satisfy a worldwide hunger for a real democratization. The opportunity is to do research that celebrates cultural diversity and fosters social and political integration of peoples. Educators should reject the homogenization that follows from a centrally controlled world market. They should denounce the betrayal of democracy contained in the privatization of politics. (342)

Pursuing the intellectual work of mining the local in the global is certainly one important avenue for inquiry.

I would also raise another goal to be achieved by our potential collaborations, and that is finding a way of thinking about difference that is capable of engaging dissent and debate actively and productively. A 23 March 2002 article by Michiko Kakutani in the online *New York Times*—entitled "Debate? Dissent? Discussion? Oh, Don't Go There!"—argued that "quiet acceptance of differing views—be they political or aesthetic—is increasingly the rule on our campuses," because students are "not interested in engaging [. . .] challenging [. . .] or being challenged [by]" another person's point of view. In the wake of the culture wars and politically acrimonious nineties, "debate has gotten a very bad name in our culture." Kakutani is citing Jeff Nunokawa, who adds, "It's become synonymous with some of the most nonintellectual forms of bullying, rather than as an opportunity for deliberative democracy." Amanda Anderson echoes this sentiment: "Because so many forms of scholarly inquiry today foreground people's lived experience, there's this kind of odd overtactfulness. In many ways it's emanating from a good thing, but it's turned into a disabling thing" (qtd. in Kakutani). If we agree with these assessments of the prevailing intellectual climate, then I think we'll agree that opportunities exist for our disciplines, working in collaboration, to address the productive role of dissent and difference in a deliberative democracy. Finally, I can only frame these possibilities as options and turn the question of how best to collaborate back to my colleagues, because, as I state at the outset, the curriculum belongs to the faculty, not to deans.

Certainly, we have an opportunity to go further now than we did almost two decades ago when some scholars engaged this question in pages of the *ADFL Bulletin*. Those articles stemmed from a summer seminar whose general topic was planning for renewal, which focused specifically on collaborations between

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foreign language and English departments. What emerged from those discussions, in the words of Paul Reichardt, was "more a matter of 'reality' than 'renewal'—basically, an admission that such collaborations as existed were fundamentally mergers of departments apparently motivated by administrative convenience." And the collaboration's "primary purpose" for the faculty was "to nurture and defend language and literature study in a rather indifferent, if not openly hostile, academic environment" (14).

The world has truly changed in the past two decades. I regard this conference as a wonderful opportunity to think ourselves into some new educational paradigms that reflect the new epistemological paradigms that, since 11 September, may have quickened their pace but were, in fact, already slouching toward Bethlehem to be born.

## Note

[1] Although I focus in this essay on collaborations between foreign language and English departments, there are also extraordinary opportunities for collaboration now opening up between humanities disciplines and the hard sciences, whose research and discoveries have ever more substantial implications for what it means to be human. And cultural differences figure significantly in this conversation.

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# The Post-English English

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The relation of English to other language-oriented departments, though dense with complexity, is rarely talked about in the open. One explanation for the lack of discussion may be the difficulty of framing a relation that is moving in two directions at once: while over the last generation or so English and the so-called foreign languages have come to resemble each other in substance, they have grown apart in material resources and institutional prestige. Many departments of English are more or less thriving, while departments of other languages and literatures in the same places are depleted and struggling. And yet, in the view of many of the people who determine our condition—administrators, legislators, and students—we are largely all of a piece; my problems will soon be yours, yours will be mine, and scholars and teachers of literature will find that they have far more joining than dividing them. To revive one of the rubrics of our New York University conference,

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