

partments all over the country. And yet I believe a broad change in national attitude toward language and citizenship, a seriously revised ecology of language, is the thing that will in the end save all our skins. It's going to require forms of linguistic adultery even beyond those undertaken at this conference. So let us indeed hope, rather than fear, that it spreads.

NOTE

¹ The notion that the world is becoming English-speaking is misleading. The world is becoming increasingly bilingual, with English as a lingua franca, not a native tongue. Moreover, even as English spreads, it behaves as any lingua franca does—it is breaking apart into local hybrids unintelligible to one another, like Taglish in the Philippines and Singlish in Singapore. The future of English, like that of any lingua

franca, does not belong to its native speakers. (See, for example, Mydans.)

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Cooperation between English and Foreign Languages in the Area of Multilingual Literature

WERNER SOLLORS

Harvard University

trialized country will add more to consumption and pollution over his or her lifetime than 30 to 50 children born in developing countries. The ecological "footprint" of the more affluent is far deeper than that of the poor and, in many cases, exceeds the regenerative capacity of the earth.

("Chapter 1")

THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY SIX BILLION people living in the world today, of whom roughly one billion are well off (living at or near Western standards) while three billion live on less than two dollars a day; two billion are in between, though even the most fortunate among them are at least fifty percent below the standards of the top one billion (Summers). The trend, unfortunately, is toward more wealth at the top, more poverty at the bottom, and the population is growing fastest where needs are greatest (estimates for population growth by 2050 range from about eight to nearly twelve billion). The United Nations Population Fund report from which these facts are taken furthermore points out that the

world's richest countries, with 20 per cent of global population, account for 86 per cent of total private consumption, whereas the poorest 20 per cent of the world's people account for just 1.3 per cent. A child born today in an indus-

One does not have to be a prophet to predict large global crises—military, political, migratory, environmental, health-related, concerning international law, and so forth—that will affect if not us, then surely our students' generation.

There are also at least 5,000 languages spoken on earth (the precise number depends on what is called a language rather than a dialect), and at least 150 of those languages are in danger of dying out. Since there are fewer than 200 nation-states, this means that the average number of languages per country should be about 25, and that for each country that has fewer there must be others that have more. (Françoise Lionnet was right when she said understatedly [in her paper for this conference] that most of the world is at least bi- or trilingual.) There are 138 languages with more than a million speakers, and 409 with between 100 and 1,000 speakers. While Chinese is the most popular mother tongue (with over one billion speakers), English is the most widespread official language (with nearly 1.5 billion speakers). The next most popular official tongues are Hindi, Spanish, Russian, French, Arabic, and Portuguese.

When one takes these two sets of facts together, one recognizes the global importance of language learning and teaching in making human communication possible. The United Nations has always recognized the importance of multilingualism, and in 1995 it passed resolution 50/11, in which the General Assembly affirmed in “commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, that the universality of the United Nations and its corollary, multilingualism, entail for each State Member of the Organization, irrespective of the official language in which it expresses itself, the right and the duty to make itself understood and to understand others” (“Multilingualism”).

One would imagine that a socially or globally concerned academy would want to prepare students for an economically divided and explosive world by encouraging or even urging them to become fluent in as many languages as possible—both those that serve as *linguae francae* and those that are spoken by small single groups—in order to understand better the world’s problems, to be able to communicate with a broader circle of others, and to help fight the dis-

appearance of endangered and prohibited languages. Hence, one would expect that large language societies in democratic countries would place a special emphasis on what Domna Stanton at this conference called the “ethics of linguistic diversity,” support the protection of endangered languages, and create a lobby for the intensification of all language teaching in the United States. The Linguistic Society of America passed a resolution in 1996 that could serve as a model.

Such training would not merely be *technē*, but even if it were to be instrumentalized, it could still be an instrument to prepare students for the world, whether they pursue careers in the sciences, the social sciences, or the humanities. However, it will be up to us humanists to explain the centrality of language teaching that continues on (whenever possible) to the teaching of texts written in those languages—to explain the centrality of foreign language literature—to our colleagues, deans, provosts, presidents, trustees, and legislatures. The recent concerns about security risks stemming from “linguistic shortfalls” provides one opening for a much broader approach (“Washington”). I think we have a good case for advocating perhaps not a polyglot but at least an oligoglot ideal for every undergraduate and graduate student. Yet as we have learned, or been reminded, in the past few days, we seem to be far from reaching such an ideal. (And now I move from the global to the local.)

We have witnessed the decline of foreign language enrollments (according to MLA statistics) from about a million college students per year in 1968 down to a mere 500,000 in 1994, even though the student population has, of course, grown in the intervening years. We have not opposed, or we were not successful in opposing, the many votes that were needed to reduce requirements to the lowest level of any industrialized nation—a true United States exceptionalism. And despite our own research findings, we adhere to a structure of teaching that organizes literatures and languages nationally and that often separates language from literature. As Claire Kramsch and

Carlos Alonso emphasized at the conference, we continue to perform the foreignness of foreign language teaching and let Anglo-America take the imperial place of the universal because we don't say often enough that it is peculiar, that its monolingualism is indeed exceptional. We know that the study of a place (say, "trilingual England," as Mary Carruthers put it at the conference, France, India, or the United States) soon makes apparent that that place is, and has been, multilingual; and when we study literature in a single language (be it French, English, Spanish, or Chinese), we quickly realize that we are in a transnational realm—and even any given language may in itself be multilingual from a certain point of view. Yet we do not seem to give up the fiction of one language, one nation, in organizing the humanities, in pitting imperial English, neo- or near-imperial Spanish, comparative literature, and the LOTE (languages other than English) and LOTS (languages other than Spanish) against each other. Hence, we tend to be too modest, or too inefficient, to stress in the public arena that language is a central medium for any academic knowledge and humanistic self-knowledge, and that it is also an important cultural capital in a country with a strong multilingual past and present, a significant element of international cultural relations, and that it relates strongly to place and to people living in specific places (say, Algonquin or French in New England; Navajo or Spanish in the Southwest; Sioux, German, or Scandinavian languages in the Midwest; and pretty much all living languages in New York City or among our student populations pretty much anywhere). Language could therefore play a central role in a wide variety of goals for the humanities, from the preservation of America's multilingual heritage (the Harvard University Library alone has well over 100,000 United States imprints in languages other than English) to the part-time employment of recent immigrants (as is common practice in Sweden) in order to expand the language portfolio of American primary and secondary schools.

The Conference on the Relation between English and Foreign Languages in the Academy provides an excellent occasion to examine problems and to imagine change—to address the question of what we can do, except to deplore the status quo. I am truly grateful to the MLA and to NYU for organizing this event and for asking me to participate in it.

It is not clear where the United States will move in its attitude toward languages. The active multilingual presence has certainly increased in the populace in the past three decades, but institutions have responded differently. Here in New York you can buy a chip at newsstands that transforms your FM radio into an all-Urdu receiver, and I am told that such chips are available for dozens of languages. And isn't it interesting that Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* should have the Oscar for the best foreign film of 2001, and that John Sayles made *Hombres armados / Men with Guns* almost completely in Spanish and Indian languages? So multilingualism seems to be on the rise in the culture.

Yet the pressures toward the opposite direction, of official English and English-only, are also intensifying. The Supreme Court, for example, seems to be worried about American multilingualism, and in *Hernandez v. New York* (1991), it handed down a verdict that says, in effect, that it is better to have a monolingual jury, all of whose members hear the same official court translation—even if it is false—than to have the gnawing presence of one or two jurors who know the language of a testifying witness. When a juror, Dorothy Kim, asked the court in the original case whether the setting a witness described was really, as the translator rendered, a bar called La Vado, since it made more sense to assume the Spanish-speaking witness was speaking about a bathroom, *lavabo*, the judge dismissed the juror. The Supreme Court sustained the dismissal, adding that it was not discriminatory since the juror was not Hispanic but just knew Spanish. Bilingualism was thus viewed as a problem not because it supposedly

leads to an incomplete fluency in English but because it provides single jurors with a more correct understanding of the evidence than is available to the court. The verdict explicitly made constitutional “excluding allegedly Latino potential jurors due to claimed uncertainty whether they would accept interpreter’s translation.” The fact that this now valid interpretation of the Constitution has not received much attention by humanists concerned with languages and translations speaks to the distance we tend to keep from the world we live in. Is this not an area in which the Court might be guided by humanists in the same way in which social scientists guided it, say, in *Brown v. Board of Education*?

In view of the global issues and pressing institutional concerns I have quickly sketched, I can now only give you the smallest bits of experience from some activities I have been engaged in at my university and within the narrow limits of my academic horizon; and I am presenting them to you with sincere modesty—imagining really only very small changes that just inch along toward more cooperation between English and the other languages and literatures. I shall focus on the language citation program and on the Longfellow Institute project.

The wish of many faculty members in language departments (including English, which has, at my university, kept its old requirement that undergraduate students majoring in English must take at least one course in which they read literature in another language in the original) to increase language requirements ran up against the general obstacle that we have instituted too many disciplinary and distribution requirements to make room for a new one. However, five years ago, my colleagues managed to convince the whole faculty—scientists and social scientists included—to approve a language citation program that confers on students who advance far enough in the study of a language to read and work with literature in the original a new honor: a citation as part of the official transcript. The re-

quirements vary somewhat (they are more demanding in Japanese than in Spanish), but the rules are simple. Students generally have to complete “four courses of language instruction beyond the first-year level and/or courses taught primarily in the foreign language. At least two of these courses must be at the third-year level or beyond” (scroll ahead to “Citations in Foreign Language” at the Harvard student handbook Web site). This small device, which interestingly links language to literature and which is based solely on the students’ wish to receive additional recognition for accomplishments, has encouraged many students not to tick off the general college language requirements with just a course or a test but to continue working on languages they already know, to take up new languages, and to follow through to the stage the citation guidelines require. In the first year, more than a hundred students participated, in a great variety of languages, and several in more than one language; and in 2001, 183 citations were awarded in fifteen languages, including seven students who received two citations and two students who received three. The most popular languages were Spanish and French, but Chinese, modern standard Arabic, German, Korean, Russian, modern Hebrew, Japanese, Italian, Portuguese, literary Chinese, Latin, Swedish, and Vietnamese also attracted students. The number is even more impressive when one considers that language majors are not permitted to seek a citation in their own language and that the participants included students in the sciences and social sciences. Perhaps students who answer the survey question to the effect that they do consider language learning a serious part of college education tell the truth.

Before reporting to you in conclusion about the United States multilingualism project of the Longfellow Institute, let me add that our faculty is now engaged in examining the intensification of exchanges and study-abroad programs. One possibility we are considering is the opportunity provided by the European Union to connect, with links of European universities through the

Socrates Program, which is financially supported by the European Union and by FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) in the United States (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates.html>).

The Longfellow Institute (<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~lowinus/>) grew out of a seminar in NAFTA literature, team-taught by Marc Shell (comparative literature), Doris Sommer (Romance languages), and Werner Sollors (English and Afro-American studies). In 1994 we formed the Longfellow Institute with the goal of reintroducing the multilingual history of the United States into public, scholarly, and educational debates by studying, translating, and publishing in facing-text bilingual editions exemplary texts in many languages and by stimulating new scholarship and generating a new awareness of this history. We undertook this project in the hope that this work might offer a reorientation to such fields as American studies, comparative literature, English, foreign languages, ethnic studies, and history in the universities; lead to more international cooperation in the humanities; engender an increased interest in language teaching and learning; and help to create the fullest possible historical consciousness of the remarkable linguistic diversity of the United States. We named the Longfellow Institute after the polyglot nineteenth-century poet and Harvard professor of comparative literature who did much in his translations and academic work to develop literary study across linguistic boundaries. What we have built up in a relatively short time now serves as a “home for students of American Literature in all American languages,” as Orm Øverland, the author of the first comprehensive literary history of Norwegian-language writing in the United States, puts it. To quote him at greater length with a good characterization of the task at hand: “Obviously, no single scholar will be able to study American texts in the languages of the Cherokee, Chinese, Portuguese, and Celts. And yet, if the texts are to be studied as American texts and if the

study of these texts is to lead to reconsiderations of the concept of ‘American Literature,’ then this study must necessarily be comparative and generalist rather than uni-lingual and ethno-specific.” In this spirit, the work proceeded and grew, and research findings were presented at various conferences and conventions, including the MLA Annual Convention; in 1996 the MLA created the Discussion Group on Literature of the United States in Languages Other Than English and granted it permanent status in 2001.

The core of the project had to be the work of textual recuperation and presentation. Indeed, soon after the founding of the Longfellow Institute, scholars from around the globe, and our students from different disciplines, unearthed often fascinating materials and presented them at seminars and conventions, as primary texts or as the subjects of critical essays. We were generally looking for works meeting at least one of the following three requirements: they had to be aesthetically outstanding, historically significant, or culturally fascinating. To offset the antiquarian spirit of the enterprise, we also favored works that appealed to current academic interests (race, gender, sexual orientation, and so forth).

For a 1996 European Association for American Studies panel in Warsaw and a 1997 American Comparative Literature Association meeting in Puerto Vallarta, Marc Shell and I devised a simple format of gluing original texts (in about 30 languages) on the left pages and English translations, or draft translations, on the facing right pages, permitting the readers to refer easily from the English translations to the original texts—and vice versa. This mode of textual presentation, familiar from bilingual series that are popular in many countries (though not in the United States), was complemented by brief introductions and sparingly added notes. When I carried the volume—“The Longfellow Anthology”—to Poland and Marc Shell took it to Mexico, the homemade book caused so much interest that we soon approached publishers with the proposal to make a book publication out of this collection of source materials.

Editors were genuinely excited by what we showed them—but once they had met with their boards, their initial enthusiasm usually had moderated. Now they would raise questions such as the following: Isn't it a waste of paper to publish a book that no single reader is likely to be able to read completely, since too many linguistic boundaries have to be crossed in it? Why did we want to publish such a costly object, when an English-only version was far more likely to find readers? One publisher estimated that the hardback edition of the anthology would need very substantial support, perhaps as much as \$100,000, and still could be offered only at a prohibitively high retail price. He also worried that since facing-page editions are so rarely adopted in American classrooms, no paperback edition would ever be feasible.

If on the one hand some publishers' dream was an English-only printout, and perhaps a CD in a glued-in sleeve or a Web site with the originals, then on the other hand some language scholars pointed out the hegemonic implications of making English the general and central means of communication, for do not the English translations eat up the originals and thus contribute to the process of anglicization that we profess to question in this project? We insisted on the bilingual format neither to claim the whole world as American nor to deny the significance of English as the common linguistic tool in the United States but to be able to present many different original texts, the great linguistic variety of which kept us and our students humble in confronting the enormous task.

Making available the originals also changes the nature of facing-page translations, which tend to be different instruments from translations that do not have to confront originals page by page. This also kept directing our attention to the problem of translation. In view of the great variety of languages in which American literature has been written, translations are helpful and indispensable tools because they make accessible a language that might otherwise be a secret. Hence, there may be a danger in the very

act of translation—which a rabbi in New York names, writing in Hebrew: “I am writing this book of mine in our own language, in Hebrew, and I am certain it will not be translated into a different language, but just to make sure I hereby order the translator upon oath not to translate these following statements of mine” (Lazerow 503). It is odd to read this statement and what follows it—in English translation!

We were ultimately lucky to find at New York University Press a truly understanding publisher who shared our point of view in the important matter of multilingual text presentation. On the 750 pages of *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature: A Reader of Original Texts with English Translations*, which was published in 2000, a great number of works are presented, typically in facing-page format, with the non-English originals on the even-numbered pages and the English translations on the odd-numbered ones, even if that was costlier to produce—though by far not as expensive as the editor I mentioned had feared; and the paperback is priced for student readership.

There might be at least one theoretical gain that becomes apparent in the languages represented in the *Multilingual Anthology*: unlike in anglophone versions of American literature, which tend to cast it as a branch of English literature, the literature collected in the Longfellow Institute project is often revealed to be more than an offshoot of a single mother country and more also than an offshoot of several mother countries. Take the writer Tino Villanueva, whose career as a Texas-born poet started in English but who later switched to writing in Spanish and publishing his work bilingually, with a professional translator's facing-page English version, and who contributed to the anthology not only a Spanish poem (with many English words in it) but also an essay on the history of bi- and multilingual poetry from antiquity to the modern period that helps to establish a tradition for plurilingualism in literature.

In fact, much literature in the *Multilingual Anthology* is the result of the transcultural inter-

action of many linguistic trajectories, which are felt strongly in the many “impure” linguistic elements—be they code switching, translated metaphors, or nonidiomatic expressions—that are often present in texts in any given language; and the idioms include not only “Germerican” but also “Franglais,” “Spanglish,” “Portinglês,” and hitherto unnamed language combinations and “adulterated” languages—including versions of Anglo-Chinese.

This became painfully apparent in the editing of the anthology, when various copyeditors and readers flagged, and wanted to correct, the New York Russian, the New Mexico Spanish, and the New Orleans German. The signposts of multilingual American literature are such words as *skrin-portsen* (screen porch) or *nervøsbreikdaun* (nervous breakdown) in a Norwegian-language tale, the place-name *Faydel* (Fayetteville) in an 1831 Arabic-language slave narrative from North Carolina, the English words *cancer* in the Chinese-language story “Abortion” and *shine* in a French-language novella, or the German-Yiddish *bitter Herz* in a Russian-language joke.

The language nuances highlight the complicated location of these texts: they are rarely completely unilingual, and the linguistic presence of other languages also makes them hard to translate into any single idiom—the most difficult being to translate a text into English that is written in a language in which the English language itself is thematized. And bilingual authors, sometimes believed to be the best translators of their own works, may actually be more inclined to imagine different audiences and to create two differing works for diverse language communities. Jules Chametzky showed pioneeringly how Abraham Cahan varied the plot lines in the English and Yiddish versions of his short stories, excising the socialist editor’s voice and adding a happy ending as well as more caution in matters of sexual frankness for the American audience (43–74, esp. 49–55); and the anthology includes two versions of the novella *Peppino* by the Italian American writer

L. D. Ventura—though they were published in French and in English, not apparently in Italian.

This complicated location may even have thematic consequences, not only in the strange topography of dreams but also in the emergence of certain themes that seem to come out of nowhere. For example, there is a relatively explicit chapter titled “Lesbische Liebe” (“Lesbian Love”) from an 1853 German-language novel published in New Orleans, unlike anything scholars have uncovered in English-language American fiction—bolder, too, than treatments of the subject by German-language writers of the 1850s, and exceptional in the history of representations of lesbian love altogether.

What was encouraging was the international interest that this project has generated, from scholars who stated enthusiastically that a Longfellow approach was needed in Turkish or British literature to those who saw parallels with Maghrebin writing in France and Gastarbeiter literature in Germany. Some felt confirmed by our project in their work to preserve endangered languages and to inspire students to learn them. Some scholars even saw in this project a model approach to literature after nationalism because it focused on what national literatures tended to exclude—even in an age of supposed multicultural openness. Others saw in the Longfellow Institute the first realization of the immigration historian Marcus Lee Hansen’s admonition: “The student of the future who is willing to conceive of American literature in more than a parochial sense must be the master of at least ten or a dozen languages” (138). (We took “student” to be a collective or an ideal designation.) And what was often surprising was that scholars with widely different interests were able to talk with each other about such topics as translation, the theme of the language traitor, writing in mixed languages, or the thematization of dominant languages in texts written in minor tongues. Of course, much, much cooperative and collective work remains to be done, and only the future will tell whether this admittedly offbeat work might inspire more bilingually

produced texts or the further publication of world literature with facing-page translations in anthologies and in editions of single works.

In view of the global manifesto I started out with, let me conclude by saying I am only too aware that what I have described to you are only very small—though to me, exciting and hopeful—steps, but that even though much remains to be done, I hope such little steps are better than no steps at all.

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