Clues for an Archive:  
The University of Chicago, Mexico, the Social Sciences and Language

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Throughout the twentieth century and beyond, the University of Chicago and Mexico have woven a diverse and durable tapestry of intellectual crossings. Traces of these sometimes odd interactions are collected in the holdings of the Joseph Regenstein Library and its Special Collections. “Researching Mexico: University of Chicago Field Explorations in Mexico, 1896-2014,” offers multiple perspectives of this tapestry. Here are some clues to decipher the stories hidden in this archive.

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footing. In fact, Chicago social science came to be at the nexus of two larger histories. On the one hand, the emergence of the modern U.S. research university; on the other, the blend of the university with larger global trends and the very City of Chicago. That is, Chicago social science meant scholars facing rapid industrial development, social unrest, economic depressions, and world wars in the modern industrial metropolis.

In time, the University of Chicago became a sort of “style” in U.S. social science—a style that significantly impacted the course of the century. Commenting on the emergence of sociology, Albion Small wrote: “[A generation of American scholars] advertised that they were going to furnish the world with a science that would correct the errors of the older and futile social sciences... They adopted the name ‘sociology,’ and I am frank to admit that they accepted it as compliments when, after a few years, European scholars began to refer to “sociology” as the ‘American science.’” (Albion W. Small, Origins of Sociology, UCP, 1924). Certainly, this “American science” was not necessarily at odds with the great burdens of American history: racism, segregation, social exclusion. However...

The University of Chicago’s newfangled social science remained also inseparable from the problem-solving ethos and the moral standards of its time: from the progressive era with its works on immigrants, to the struggle against racism, to the search for a “useful,” “democratic,” yet rigorous and independent social science during the Cold War. So much so that in a 1954 report for the Ford Foundation, (“Notes on the Early History of the Social Sciences at Chicago, Ford Foundation Self-Study Program,” Burgess Papers), historian and educator Richard J. Storr explained how in the 1930s Chicago sociologists still felt the need to “prevent misconception”: sociology was not “the sum of modern experiments in beneficence nor the formulation of benevolent sentiments”; it was “an application of social philosophy to concrete problems.” Already in the 1920s, Small proudly quipped, “we are under indictment for resting content with satisfying smug, pedantic curiosities instead of
contributing to the world’s knowledge of the way of salvation…. I report (…) this, not in sorrow, but with rejoicing.” By 1952, Chicago anthropologist Sol Tax attempted a definition of a rigorous, yet progressive, social science in the midst of the ideological pressures of the Cold War: “we are willing to accept for pedagogical purposes what are commonly conceived to be the values of the democratic way of life—and indeed without such acceptance we could not educate for the enlightenment of the democratic citizenry but we believe it improper to permit any value—even democracy, God, or country, or any conception of the good or true—to lead us from the path of deterring what is the order in nature and imparting to the Student the understanding achieved by knowledge of that order obtained by the methods of science.” (“The Credo of the Social Scientist,” Burgess Papers).

All this is well known. The history of American social science has become an established field—to which various Chicago scholars have significantly contributed: Andrew Abbott, Peter Novick, and George Stocking. By necessity, such a history reserves a prominent role for Chicago. However, what these histories have often bypassed has been the impact of Mexico in this history. Indeed, Mexico was an ingredient in the emergence and growth of social science at the University. Why?

The science of the social sought its “laboratory,” and it came up with two main varieties: the community –_Gemeinschaft_-- with its well-defined geographic, temporal, and cultural domains; and the modern industrial city –_Gesellschaft_. Such concepts as modernity, tradition, the state, society, representation, individual rights, and race were scientifically articulated and tested in the study and contrast of these two spaces. Thus, Mexican “traditional” “communities” or American Native-Americans or “complex” American industrial cities, became laboratories --research site, testing ground, control sample (Robert Owen, “‘Laboratory Talk’ in U.S. Sociology,” _Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences_, 2014).
In this context, social science at Chicago became consubstantial with the City of Chicago. A social, human, economic, and cultural challenge, the city was both a laboratory and an overwhelming reality. Chicago had doubled its population in the two decades between 1880 and 1900, from half a million to a million. As the century opened, it was already the nation’s second largest city. By 1930, it had reached a population of nearly three million and a half. Chicago was one of the most impressive examples of the accelerated commercial, technological, and industrial development characteristic of the time. It was also an object lesson in the kind of social disruption such breakneck growth could bring about. A destination for African-Americans migrating from the South, the city had become an epicenter for racial tensions.

At Chicago, city and social science were inseparable. Soon, Mexicans began to play a role in the equation, albeit always within the context of an African-American capital, of a city of world immigrants, of rapid industrialization and social unrest—a city where a new kind of research university had been born.

Chicago is today a Mexican city, and the origins of this Mexicanness were one of the original concerns of social science at the University. Chicago scholars estimated that in 1900 there were one hundred Mexican men in the city. By 1930, census data counted 19,362. Today there are more than one million Mexicans in the metropolitan area. Early Chicago scholars found that Mexicans in the city were used as strike breakers in 1916 and 1919. They also examined how they had been able to grow and prosper despite the 1920s migration quotas—from which Mexicans were excluded—and despite a wave of repatriations during the Depression. Small wonder, thus, that social science, the University of Chicago, the City of Chicago, and Mexicans have for long been elements in the same equation.

Mexico and the University of Chicago were also linked by the import of the institution and the city for Mexicans themselves. They were points of reference, both
negative and positive, for Mexican scholars and travelers. “Chicago no solamente es lugar donde la especulación es más fuerte, más extensa, más atravida, sino también es el punto de reunión de los desgraciados,” wrote Francisco Bulnes during his stay in Chicago in 1874, adding: “Parece suficiente a algunos tocar esta ciudad de magnificencias para elevarse instantaneamente sobre la pobreza y dejar para siempre sus harapos.” (El porvenir de las naciones hispanoamericanas, 1899). By 1927, José Vasconcelos (1882-1959), then visiting professor at the University, wrote from a hotel in Hyde Park: “la hora del mestizo se acerca.” Contrasting his “Cosmic Race” concept with his impressions of the city, civilization “es alma de taller; constante, inextinguible producción y oleadas de humanidad prestos a producir.” As these waves of Mexicans crashed upon the city, they suffered “destrozo humano de la máquina.” (“Temas de Chicago,” in Mexico [Spanish language newspaper published in Chicago] April 6, 1927.) Chicago and its University have thus been a concern for Mexicans; from the musicians and bureaucrats who came to represent their country at the 1893 World’s fair and decided to stay, to the well-documented trips by Bulnes, Carlos Gonzalez Peña, and Justo Sierra; from the lectures and courses taught at the University of Chicago by Moisés Saenz, José Vasconcelos, Manuel Gamio, and Luis Leal, to the score of distinguished scholars and intellectuals who have taught there since 1980, such as Adolfo Gilly, Enrique Semo, Arturo Warman, Alicia Hernandez, José Luis Reyna, Brígida von Mentz, Guillermo de la Peña, Adolfo Aguilar Zinzer, Ilán Semo, Larissa Lomnitz, Eugenia Meyer, Federico Reyes Heroles, Sergio Aguayo, Javier Garciadiego, Cuahutemoc Cárdenas, Jorge Durand, Fernando Escalante, Anthony Stanton, Fausto Hernandez, Alma Guillermoprieto, Gerardo Esquivel, César Martinelli, Antonio Azuela, and Christopher Dominguez. The countless Mexican scientists, economists, historians, sociologists, and anthropologists who have pursued their graduate studies at Chicago also attest to the import of the University for Mexico.
In the 1920s, Mexico became going concern for University of Chicago scholars thanks to U.S. ideological and, as it were, imperial concerns, be they Pan Americanism during World War I or the search for a more harmonious relationship between the two countries during the Cold War. Certainly, the lore of an exotic Mexico and its revolution, as well as Chicago’s twentieth-century transformation into a a large and important Mexican city, were reason enough for the University to maintain a Mexican agenda in different fields and disciplines. But there were also national security concerns: racial fears, immigration quotas, the Mexican Revolution, World War I, and spies—as distinguished Chicago professor, Friedrich Katz, has masterfully shown in *The Secret War in Mexico* (UCP, 1981). There was also the question of Mexico as a refuge for pacifists, Mexico’s participation in the allied war effort in World War II, the Cold War, anti-communism… Such stimuli for research might seem, from a Mexican perspective, spurious and vile. But the fact is that a progressive agenda prevailed at the University, from the Norman Wait Harris Lecture for a better American understanding of Mexico and other countries, to the 1970 appointment of two progressive historians of Mexico, John Coatsworth and Friedrich Katz, who in turn trained a cohort of historians who transformed U.S. Mexicanism.

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Mexico played a key role in the transition of U.S. social science from the racialist perspectives of the nineteenth century to the twentieth century’s cluster of specialized disciplines, each with their own methods, languages, and goals: anthropology, sociology, history, political science, economics, social work. The original single Department of Social Science included flamboyant scholar Frederick Starr (1858-1933). Trained as a biologist, Starr became one of the founding fathers of anthropology at Chicago. Together with Daniel Brinton, Starr was one of the first U.S. “amateur” anthropologists devoted to Mexico. By all accounts, he was a true character; a strong speaker, a difficult colleague and a believer in the
innate superiority of the white race. Still, he was a traveler, a merchant, connoisseur and ambivalent admirer of Mexican, Chinese, Japanese, Native-American, and Korean cultures. His approach to Mexico blended the “civilizing” mission of the white man with an odd fascination with the Indian body and its anatomy. He measured skulls and collected images of deformed Mexican bodies—very likely inspired by his biology training and by his travels to Mexico; the image of the deformed bagger was a constant quotation for U.S. and European travelers. His numerous, carefully indexed notebooks were less “fieldwork notes” than dense narratives—travelogues and accounts of personal experience. His archive also includes a long, intriguing correspondence on the subject of a boy he “adopted” and brought back to Chicago in absolute disregard of the boy’s family, and their constant demands for news and explanation.

Starr profiled himself as an intellectual broker for various cultures. Equipped to lecture before a large audience on the Mexican revolution or Japanese art; capable of translating Porfírian literature or procuring Mexican or Japanese natives for display at World’s Fair exhibits. His papers include correspondence and pictures of Mexican writers he contacted, translated, and published in English (F. Starr, editor, Readings from Modern Mexican Authors, Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Company, 1904). Among these authors were geographers (García Cubas), novelists (Federico Gamboa), and historians (García Izcabalceta, Emilio Rabasa, Rafael Delgado). His correspondence with Federico Gamboa is particularly interesting. In 1904 Gamboa asked Starr to translate his popular novel, Santa, for he was determined to “make money with my books in the U.S.” As the Mexican saying goes: “ven burro y se les ofrece viaje.”

A portion of Starr’s library can now be found at the Regenstein library. It contains more clues to help us summarize Starr’s early anthropological approach to Mexico, a paradigm that would eventually be overcome by the new anthropology that flourished at
Chicago and Columbia universities over the 1920s. In 1914, Frederick Starr recalled how in 1899 he was “invited” to write one of the many propaganda books on the achievements of the Porfirio Díaz administration. Although Starr never wrote the book, his papers are filled with evidence of the help he received from cabinet members, governors, and archbishops. They aided him in collecting pre-Hispanic antiquities, measurements of indigenous people’s skulls, and the facial features of Indians. These would later show up in the various Mexican exhibits and book he organized and published in the U.S. (see especially F. Starr, *Mexico and the United States: A Story of Revolution, Intervention, and War*, Chicago, The Bible House, 1914). Thus the image: Starr and his native collaborators measuring the heads of Mexicans aided by Porfriían governors and local bosses—an encompassing allegory of such collaborations and alluring exchanges: Mexicans observing Mexicans, a U.S. anthropologist taking measures of a Mexican, a snapshot meant for U.S. audiences, used by generations of observers of Mexico as a mirror upon which to view themselves.

A more modern clue about these convoluted views of Mexico can be found in Starr’s ex-libris (1903), found on his vast collection of Mexican books at the Regenstein Library. In this image he included a stereotypical view of an “indigenous type” at the top; on its left side, the Virgin of Guadalupe, on the right, the Aztec god of war, Huitzilopochtli. At the center of the stamp: a landscape dominated by a volcano. Mexico was persistently related to volcanoes, reflecting both a fascination with those surrounding the Valley of Mexico and an enduring allegory (up to the 1940s) of an apparently calm, yet potentially explosive and violent society. Unique in Starr’s ex-libris is the inclusion of two distinguished historical figures: the former Mexican president Benito Juárez and the late nineteenth century capo of Mexican letters, Ignacio Manuel Altamirano. Foreigners did not understand the import of these characters, but Starr, being an “expert” on Mexico, knew better. In any case, the racial obsession remains. Both characters are included because they were considered “pure” Indians. Cacti, maguey, palms, and Mitla-like motifs complemented the image of this alien “civilization.”
Owing to the role of universities like Chicago, by the turn of the century, anthropologists were leaving behind this idea of Mexico. As the distinguished Chicago historian of anthropology, George Stocking, explained, the discipline of anthropology was founded twice at Chicago, once by Starr, then once again after his retirement. Starr never went beyond the racialist, evolutionary, nineteenth-century paradigm inspired by Edward Taylor. He thus maintained an uneasy relationship with Franz Boas (1852-1942), the father of the new paradigm that would gain dominance during the first half of the twentieth century. Boas, a German Jew, participated in the organization of ethnographic collections for U.S. museums and World’s Fairs. Seeking an academic job in the U.S., he kept a very respectful correspondence with Starr (mostly found in Boas’ papers at the American Philosophical Society). Mexico was a central concern for both Starr and Boas, the latter, however, was advancing a radically different approach to anthropology.

As is well known, in 1910 Boas founded the International School of Ethnology and Anthropology in Mexico City. Starr opposed the project. He knew Mexico “pretty well,” he said, and tried to convince Boas that the country was too unstable and anti-American for any such endeavor. Commenting on Manuel Gamio’s 1916 nationalist manifesto, Forjando Patria, in a 1918 letter to Gamboa, Starr claimed that it was characteristic of Mexicans “to discuss things wonderfully well, to lay out splendid programs, Constitutions, and platforms, but to fail utterly in practice.” Mexicans, it seemed, excelled in rhetoric but were wholly incompetent when it came to practice. Like Starr, Boas indeed made mention of alleged cultural atavistic tendencies in Mexican students and scholars. He argued that their need to “think high and broad” conflicted with careful, modest, time-consuming scientific work. So did the political ambitions and engagements so common among Mexican intellectuals. And
as historians M. Rutsch, B. Urias Horcasitas, and C. Ruiz, among others, have explained, it was the latter factor that produced insurmountable differences between Gamio and Boas.

The moral role of social science, especially anthropology, became a source of apprehension in the 1920s and 30s, particularly for Chicago social science. Starr’s approach was becoming, not only passé, but a moral liability. By the 1910s and 20s, when Chicago sociologists were at the vanguard of anti-racism and social-scientific rigour, Starr unapologetically expounded on the atavistic criminality of African Americans. He was also rumored to organize marijuana parties with his students. Meanwhile he maintained a high profile in national media. At this juncture then, in 1928, the University of Chicago decided to re-found its anthropology department,

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Starr was originally a biologist. His approach was closer to that of nineteenth-century Darwinism than to 1920s anthropology. Before turning to clues about Mexico in the new Chicago anthropology of the 1930s and 40s, there is one more nineteenth-century-like scientific clue to pursue in Chicago archives: another biologist and doctor, Howard T. Ricketts. Ricketts was already a prominent pathologist when he commenced work at Chicago. Along with French scientist Charles Nicolle and Harvard professor Hans Zinsser (all of whom worked in Mexico City at some point), he became a pioneer hunter of typhus contagion agents. Special Collections at the Regenstein Library holds the Ricketts papers, where one can find a commemorative medal, produced in 1945 for the Fourth Inter-American Typhus Meeting in Mexico City. Engraved upon it are the profiles of Ricketts, Nicolle, and Zinsser.
Rickett’s research into typhus offers more clues about the Chicago-Mexico connection. In 1909, in the midst of another serious typhus epidemic, Porfirio Díaz offered a prize of 50,000 pesos for the discovery of the typhus agent and cure. Together with his student Russell Wilder, Ricketts went to Mexico City to research typhus, along with a group of Mexico City bacteriologists in fierce competition with one another. Among the many protagonists of this scientific moment were Ángel Gaviño, Miguel Otero, Joseph Girard, and Herman Mooser. Mexico City became the scene of a frenzied hunt for lice, rats, flies, and tifosos in prisons, hospitals, and casas de vecindad. On December 14, 1909, Ricketts wrote to his wife, Myria, “there is only one way to go in this job, and that is a careful… business like way.” Then, in December 15, “if I find the microbe there will be 10,000 in it” (for he would have had to share the prize with Wilder). Months later, in April 1910, Ricketts wrote to Joseph Goldberger of the U.S. Public Health Service (also in Mexico City studying typhus): “I am a lucky fellow… we are both lucky, mighty lucky… when you think of the fate of the man from Ohio, we two differ having been down here for 3 or 4 months without being infected.” The Man from Ohio was Dr. James Conneffe, from Ohio State University. He was infected in Mexico City and died in Columbus in January 1910. But Goldberger was lucky, not because
he did not get infected, but because he survived; Ricketts died of typhus in Mexico City in May 3, 1910.

This archival clue is about the unique cultural nuances in the collaborations between U.S. and Mexican scientists. From January to April 1910, Ricketts wrote to Myra about his fears and his eagerness to publish his findings as soon as possible. He feared the competition and “spying” of his Mexican collaborators; “An impertinent bunch,” as he described them. Still, Ricketts and Wilder received all the official and unofficial credentials and honors that the city could give. Mexico City’s institutions, colleagues, and servants housed and assisted them. In 1910, Ricketts managed to publish four essays in four months, most of them in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. These were the results of Rickett’s efforts in Mexico and the basis of his solid reputation. The disease’s agent, rickettsiae, was named after him. Ricketts’ final transmission of typhus through lice, which cost him his life, made him a scientific hero. The Mexican government organized a pompous celebration in his honor. The Minister of Education, Justo Sierra, the U.S. ambassador, as well as Gaviño and Wilder were in charge of the honors. A commemorative plate was placed at the laboratory where Ricketts, Wilder, Gaviño and Gilbert worked in the 1910 battle against typhus. In his speech, Gaviño was as generous as Wilder. He asserted that he collaborated with Ricketts in good faith, and that he was the first to applaud his success and lament his death. He did, however, reveal his ambivalence: “Queriendo llegar antes que otros investigadores a las fronteras de la verdad en el estudio del tifo exantemático, no vio que iba a una muerte segura… despreciando los peligros que le rodeaban y sin excuchar los prudentes consejos de quienes lo veíamos tan confiado.” Like any good war, the war against typhus produced its own epic, which included a heroic sacrifice and a tense but necessary alliance. Along with Mexican scientists and institutions, the University of Chicago played one of the lead roles. (See exhibit, Howard
Taylor Ricketts to Myra Tubbs Ricketts, letter December 13 1909; and Howard Taylor Ricketts working in laboratory in Mexico City, photograph ca. 1910).

* Returning to anthropological clues, the small Department of Social Science gave rise to independent departments and schools. New scholars were hired, among them German-trained Americans William Thomas (1862-1947) and Robert Park (1864-1944) in the 1910s, and later Edith Abbott at the School of Civics and Philanthropy (later School of Social Service Administration). This became, in Andrew Abbott’s words, “the first Chicago School of social science,” (Department and Discipline: Chicago Sociology at 100, UCP, 1999). And it was at this point that Chicago began to truly leave its mark on the social sciences. In a few words, Chicago led the way to the professionalization of sociology, social work, and anthropology beyond the nineteenth-century biologism and eclecticism of someone like Starr. The new emphasis was on the city, on methodology, and on finding reliable knowledge for practical use. The key words were “mapping” and “laboratory.” Not crime, but “criminality.” Other key words were “assimilation,” “race relations,” and most prominently, “community,” a word that U.S. scholars began to use to translate the “Gemeinschaft” of their German professors. In translation, the word gained a new moral and normative content.

It was not only Starr’s influence that put Mexico in the new social scientific agenda at Chicago. It was also that Mexicans were becoming an essential part of the “laboratory” that was the City of Chicago. They became an ideal object for studying assimilation, or lack thereof. Above all, they offered the possibility of studying “community.” The Mexican population of the city could be mapped, measured, and studied. Meanwhile an array of innovative studies of “Indian communities” in Mexico had begun to appear. To be sure, in the emergence of this influential new social science Mexico was originally, above all, the
Mexican immigrant in Chicago. Departing from that Mexico, the University of Chicago developed different kinds of Mexicos through odd intellectual connections and developments.

After the publication of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918-1920) by W. Thomas in collaboration with the Polish immigrant Florian Znaniecki and, later, *The Ghetto* (1928) by sociologist Louis Wirth (1897-1952), the University of Chicago became known for the study of cities, immigration, and the process of assimilation. Based on the study of the city’s large Polish and Jewish populations, Chicago-style social science had ceased to conceive of assimilation in racial terms, and had redefined it in relation to social, economic, and educational factors. Race was seen not as an insurmountable biological problem, but as a problem of American prejudices, lack of opportunities, and poor education. The methods they advanced were innovative, including massive collections of life stories and interviews, mapping, studies of ethnic networks, criminality, family life, religious, and civic associations. This agenda was pursued in different ways by Park, Thomas, Wirth, Abbott, and one of the founders of the renewed independent Anthropology Department at Chicago, Fay Cooper-Cole (1881-1961). Mexico was there.

In the 1920s, Park suggested to his student and son-in-law, Robert Redfield (1897-1958), that he should study Mexicans in Chicago. For their part, Edith Abbott and Cooper-Cole encouraged two other Chicago connections, the Berkeley trained economist Paul Taylor (1895-1984) and the Columbia trained anthropologist Manuel Gamio, to study Mexicans in California and Mexican immigration as a whole, respectively. Thus the study of Mexican immigration and Mexican “communities” in the U.S. became a science.

The Mexican angle in the study of the city was maintained at the University from the 1920s to the 1940s by the influential Chicago sociologist Ernest Burgess (1886-1966). Along with Park, he had published a landmark book in American sociology, *The City: Suggestions for Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment*, (1925). From the 1920s to
the 1940s, Burgess and his colleagues sought to divide the city into communities—a long
term project based on “social surveys.” Their work was part of the Local Community
Research Committee, which produced the celebrated Chicago “community area”: 75
incompatible, largely ethnically defined, geographic areas. Burgess’ students researched the
Mexicans. They mapped them, examined their criminality, their cycle of assimilation or
failure to assimilate, and their community networks. Burgess’ papers indeed constitute a
repository for many reports, term papers, and research proposals on African Americans,
Jews, Homosexuals, Irish, Polish, and Mexican immigrants in the city.

Thus in 1928, following the new methodology, Anita Jones of the University of
Chicago School of Social Service Administration studied 1319 cases of Mexican immigrants
in the Immigrants Protective League. Thanks to this in situ research, today we have some
images of the life of Mexicans in Chicago. Burgess’s papers contain the remains of such an
endless attempt at mapping the city—of fixing well-demarcated “communities” temporally,
spatially, and culturally. He carefully filed his students’ assignments and term papers. The
archive is thus full of maps of Chicago, including many related to Mexican immigrants and
crossed-referenced to other variables, such as crime, marriage, or religion. Paul Taylor’s
1930s map of Mexican Chicago, inspired by Burgess and created with the support of the
Social Science Research Council through Abbott and Cooper-Cole, became one of the most
influential (Mexican Labor in the United States: Chicago and the Calumet Region, Berkeley,
University of California Press, 1932).

In her term paper, “Adjustment of Mexicans in Chicago” (1933), one of Burgess’s students, Madeline Kreberg, echoed the progressive position (for the 1920s and 1930) of the Chicago style of sociology. It supported the then unthinkable idea of an inevitable and enduring coexistence between Mexicans and Americans (this, while a large repatriation of Mexican immigrants was taking place throughout the Southwest). The paper began by positively quoting Jay S. Stowell (1833-1966), a well-known Methodist publicist and advocate of the rights of African and Mexican-Americans: [between Mexico and the U.S.]
“… We are man and wife in common law marriage, and no intentional divorce court can ever issue a decree which will separate our interests.” (The Near Side of the Mexican Question, 1921). Burgess’s archive also includes traces of the contacts with local committees of progressive Americans, some of them linked to Jane Addams’ famous Hull House. These groups included, for instance, the Mexican Relations Committee (chaired by Gertrude Howe Britton, William T. Kane, and the Mexican consul Luis Lupián). They believed, not only that Chicago’s Mexicans were intelligent and educable, but that their education was indeed a social duty.
Another interesting finding in Burgess’s paper is Manuel Bueno’s study of Mexicans in Chicago. Likely a student of social work, Bueno was a bilingual Chicagoan of possible Hispanic origin who often assisted University scholars in the study of the city’s Mexican population. He seems to have known the barrios and Mexican organizations. His paper – published in Spanish by Patricia Arias and Jorge Durán in *Mexicanos en Chicago. Diario de campo de Robert Redfield, 1924-1925* (2008) – has never been published in English. It has, however, been used by all scholars of Chicago’s Mexican immigrants.

In Burgess’s course, “Adventures in Religion” (1934), a term paper dealt with Chicago’s new Mexican Church and the role of protestant churches in civilizing Catholics; we can also find a research proposal by Robert C. Jones on the religious life of Mexicans in Chicago. But all of Burgess’s courses involved life stories and *in situ* ethnographic research. Students collected and translated life stories, such as that “written and typed by a young Mexican… who dares leave home somewhere in Mexico where Life is really sweet and fragrant, to enter a strange world full of mysterious mood and ways.” Or there is the intriguing life story of a young Mexican boy who, defying the surveyor’s intentions, rather than telling his life wanted to sketch the images of an Indian and a soldier.
ADJUSTMENT OF MEXICANS IN CHICAGO

Term Project - Autumn Quarter

Sociology 770

Official Score Sheet

[Handwritten notes and calculations]

[Signature]
ADJUSTMENT OF MEXICANS IN CHICAGO

Term Project - Autumn Quarter
Sociology 270
WITH CHICAGO'S NEW MEXICAN CHURCH
The Story of a
Difficult Task
in South Chicago

Nearly four thousand Mexicans have been brought to South
Chicago during the past fifteen years by employment superintendents of
the industries and steel mills in this district. Most of them were peons
on the ranches and farms of Mexico, uneducated, and not the upper class
of Mexico. All of them are Catholic in their religious background, and it
is a highly superstitious, fanatical religious belief.

The First Mexican Congregational Church, newest Congregational
church of the city, is working against this background in South Chicago.
For several years this Mexican group was a division of the Bird Memorial
work in South Chicago. In 1925 a formal church was organized, and in
June, 1926, this church was recognized by the Chicago Association. While
still holding its meetings and activities in the Bird Memorial building,
the new enterprise is now an independent organization, under the leader-
ship of its Mexican pastor, Rev. Jose O. Velasco.

Mr. Velasco reports that 75 Mexican children and young people
are enrolled in the Sunday School, which meets from 3 to 4 every Sunday
afternoon. The worship service is held from 4 to 5, with an average at-
tendance of 40. At the same time, a Junior worship service is held for
young people each Sunday.

Interesting week-day religious activities have been developed
by the church's leader. (Social and recreational work for the Mexicans
in South Chicago is part of the responsibility of the Bird Memorial
Church and South Chicago Community Center.) On Monday the Mexican Women's
Auxiliary meets; Tuesday night cottage prayer meetings are held in the
homes of these people, — a valuable, informal service for 10 or 15 men
A Life Story Written and
Typed by a Young Mexican

Quemado, Sonora.

A few days after I had left Douglas, Arizona, I
reached Nogales, Arizona, where I stayed a day and a half.
Leaving Nogales, in company of other Mexican fellows
I came within the reach of Sierra Madre, this mountain
one of the most dangerous of the all.

The railroad track being a bit too far, perhaps a
hundred miles further than the mountain trail, I decided
to take a chance and see a shorter route across the mountain.

Five days later I came into a little shabby town in
the State of Arizona, which is called Fairbanks; here in
this country town I worked as a water boy on the Southerwestern
Railroad.

A few months of hard labor, in Fairbanks, and with the
aid of a little money I saved, I drifted into Benson, of
the same state. I did not like Benson, a prosperous
town, decided to struggle out again. Hence I went to Doug-
las, also in Arizona, where I worked hard in a metal found-
ry. Being alone and with rules that might stop me from roam-
ing from town to town, I left Douglas, and within a few days
found myself a little more than fifty miles distant at Mass-
cala, Arizona, a mission of about three hundred miles from
either Benson or Tucson.

Within a few days after starting to work in this
isolated camp, I began to get very sick with pains which
where you learn languages and all that. My mother wants me to go to nearly all the schools there are. She wants me to learn a lot of things.

My mother and father both want me to be an artist who paints good pictures and nice big pictures. I can draw an Indian and a sailor. I like to draw and I want to be an artist. Here are an Indian and a sailor.
Burgess’s Papers, thus, constitute a survey of many surveys of Chicago. An output of this was Edward Baur’s 1938 M.A. thesis on “Delinquency among Mexican Boys in South Chicago.” He claimed that: “The Mexican boy adults in South Chicago have come from lower and middle class backgrounds. Few of them are peons with a rural background and
none are Indians from a tribal type of society.” He found evidence of conflict between
Mexicans and Polish immigrants, Mexicans and Blacks. Yet by and large, Mexicans were not
part of the larger problem of criminality observed by the Chicago style of social science.
Most Mexicans with criminal records had earned them by public drunkenness or street
brawling. Sex and miscegenation, of course, were part of these sociological preoccupations.
And in Burgess’s archive one can find evidence of Mexicans’ miscegenation in the U.S. --
“Mexican intermarriage with a more desirable race, for assimilation into American life and
opportunity.” Judiciously for the time, though, this paper claimed: “Interrmarriage will not be
the usual thing. The Mexican is the last ‘greenhorn,’ and has a low status in the eyes of other
nationalities.” For scholars in Chicago and elsewhere, miscegenation would remain taboo
well into the twentieth century.
*
Out of this original urban, sociological, preoccupation emerged another one, rural and
anthropological. Redfield never completed his 1924 study of Mexican immigrants and
convinced his father in law, Park, that the thing to do was to study Mexicans in situ—in their
communities of origin. Thus his landmark study on Tepoztlán. This work represented the
beginning of another Mexico for the University of Chicago: the anthropological Mexico of
Redfield and his students, Sol Tax and Alfonso Villa Rojas. The first—urban—Mexico
prospered as a sociological topic, leading to a scientific conceptualization of “The Mexican
Problem” in the U.S. Meanwhile, the second, rural, anthropological Mexico became the
setting for an important chapter in the history of anthropology in both the U.S. and Mexico.
In addition to Chicago protagonists --Redfield, Tax, and Villa Rojas-- there were two other
central characters in this story, both trained at Columbia University: Manuel Gamio, and a
later addition to the cast, Oscar Lewis (whose papers are at the University of Illinois, Urbana-
Champaign).
As we have seen, in 1924, Robert Redfield did some “field research” in Chicago’s South Side. He examined Mexican immigrants according to the methods advanced by his professors, especially Park, Thomas, and F. Cooper-Cole. In this way, he found that most Mexicans in Chicago came from Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Michoacán; also that they did not come directly from Mexico, but from an earlier migration to Texas. He found this out through the innovative life stories methodology he pursued. Unlike Starr’s notebooks, Redfield’s notes were carefully crafted to match the scientific criteria of the new Chicago sociology. (Thanks to Patricia Arias and Jorge Durán, Redfield’s notes on Mexican migration are now published in Spanish, together with other Chicago-related papers —*Mexicanos en Chicago*).

Redfield’s data collection proved something unexpected: Mexican immigrants were not illiterate rural people. They came from small cities. They knew how to write and were even familiar with other U.S. cities. Redfield seems to have used University of Chicago connections, social workers, and bilingual immigrants—such as Manuel Bueno. As is clear from the notebooks, Redfield did not have then a full command of Spanish. He drew his first blueprint of the a Mexican community in Chicago with the help of a Jewish friend, whose family had a business in Brighton Park, and who had earlier drafted a map of the displacing of Jews by incoming Mexicans.
R. Redfield’s Map, Redfield papers.

Redfield never completed his research on Mexicans in Chicago. He did, however, make one great contribution to the issue: He assisted Gamio in procuring grants for his research on Mexican immigrants and helped get it published as a pair of University of Chicago Press
books: *Mexican Immigration to the United States: A Study of Human Migration and Adjustment* (1930), and *The Immigrant, his Life-Story: Autobiographic Documents Collected by Manuel Gamio* (1931). The English publication of these works was crucial, since Spanish-language scholarship was then—and still is—largely invisible for mainstream social scientists. In a sense, Redfield was playing Starr’s old role of cultural broker, still necessary after so many years.

Thanks to Redfield and F. Cooper Cole, Gamio gained access to U.S. funding and institutions. As Franz Boas’ student, Gamio commanded the new language of U.S. social science, and seemed to always be in need of more resources and more prestige. The questions of immigration and assimilation continued to grow in importance at Chicago. Thanks to generous sources of funding, Gamio was able to pursue these questions—even if they had not been, until then, his own intellectual concerns. In fact, he never personally engaged in the new hand-on methods such as participant observation, collecting life stories, or administering interviews. He rapidly trained several surveyors to take on these tasks. Regardless, Gamio delivered the work Redfield never completed.

Redfield sponsored Gamio, arguing that he indeed offered the Mexican perspective on the matter. “Rather than on the effect of the Mexican immigrant upon the economic and social organization of the United States,” Redfield wrote, “Dr. Gamio looks at the matter from the south of the Rio Grande, although his experience with North America makes it also possible for him to consider some problems raised by the Mexican in our environment” (Redfield, “The Antecedents of Mexican Immigration to the United States,” *Journal of Sociology*, 1929). What Gamio offered to Mexican social science was different: it was another chapter in the formation of a national culture based on *mestizaje* and education: good mestizos, exposed to industry and modern mentalities, yet still mestizos after all—since they sidestepped any further miscegenation once they arrived in the U.S.
Gamio’s responses to the UCP questionnaire are very telling of his original goals. He wrote: “El problema más importante para el futuro del continente americano consiste en el carácter de las relaciones raciales, culturales, económicas, etc. que existen entre los pueblos de origen anglo-sajón y los pueblos indo-europeos.” Using money orders, interviews, and mapping, Gamio produced a “scientific” study filled with charts, statistics, and a second volume of life narratives. Along with the UCP, Redfield carefully monitored the book’s production. He had to explain to the Press why Gamio’s first volume did not cover the whole project, but also why, due to funding onuses, Gamio had the obligation to publish a second volume containing the translated life stories.

The clippings of reviews kept by the UCP records show that the book had a great critical reception in the U.S., albeit mixed reviews in Mexico. Rogerio de la Selva—a Nicaraguan intellectual who, together with his brother Salomón, was close to the Mexican government and well acquainted with American radical circles—used the occasion to state what Redfield and other Chicago scholars must have wanted to state: that the University was committed to progressive causes as well as serious scientific analysis and the improvement of U.S.-Mexico relations. De la Selva argued that UCP was already established as a Press that truly cared about these issues, demonstrating, he thought, that the U.S. was not only a place for reactionary capitalists, but was also the home of publications like *The Nation, The Masses*, and the UCP. In turn, Pablo González Casanova, writing in Mexican daily *Excélsior*, opposed Gamio’s optimism about the Mexican immigrant as an agent of modernization. Quoting Vicente Lombardo Toledano’s judgment of “repatriados” in the state of Michoacán, González Casanova argued that the returning immigrants represented either unfair competition in the labor market or a potential criminal element. What Gamio showed, thought González Casanova, was that the immigrants idealized Mexico upon arriving in the U.S., but would turn around and worship the U.S. as soon as they got back to Mexico. “Eso
es anhelo insatisfecho,” he wrote, “a fermento de revuelta” that “el futuro añadirá al capítulo de Gamio sobre inmigración y revolución.” Undeterred, UCP marketed the book enthusiastically, aiming it at such concerns of progressive Americans as protection of immigrants and yet fears of miscegenation and lack of assimilation. Thus UCP used the phrase of an informant –“Rather cut my throat than change my Mexican nationality”—to highlight the peculiarities of a growing Mexican immigration that, it was implied, was threatening but controllable. So the book marketing read: “because of inherent racial conflicts permanent migration from Mexico should be discouraged, but transient migration encouraged for the industrial benefit of both countries.”
Manuel Gamio’s University of Chicago Press questionnaire, UCP record.
UCP marketing of Gamio’s book. UCP records.
UCP cover Gamio’s book. UCP records.
Departing from his original “Chicago” preoccupation with the urban “Mexican Problem,” Redfield took a different path. Elena Landázuri, a unique character who has not received enough scholarly attention, seems to have worked under Gamio at some point in the 1910s. Afterward she became Park’s student at the University of Chicago and got involved in the social work sponsored by Jane Addams at Hull House. Through Landázuri, Park and his family traveled to Mexico sometime in 1923. Redfield, who was Park’s son-in-law and a lawyer at the time, came along. The trip seems to have been a major inspiration for Redfield’s decision to pursue a Ph.D. investigating Chicago’s Mexicans. Unsatisfied with his findings, Redfield convinced his father in law of the scientific convenience of studying the bees, not at the flowers, but in the honeycomb. Thus taking advantage of his connections with Landázuri and Gamio, he made his way back to Mexico.

Apparently, it was Gamio who recommended Tepoztlán. It was an “Indian” community, yet still conveniently located near Mexico City. (After all, if one is to engage in participant observation, one need not be more participant than observer). During the research, the family stayed in the city while Redfield himself traveled back and forth between Mexico City and Tepoztlán. The town was indeed not a safe place in the 1920s. In fact, Park was constantly worried for the wellbeing of the Redfields, as we can see in their correspondence in both R. Park and R. Redfield collections. These letters are full of personal, political, and academic misgivings about the project. It seems that Park even contacted the U.S. consulate in an effort to protect the Redfields. Throughout this period, Park was becoming increasingly eminent as a sociologist and as Chicago faculty. Meanwhile, his Tepoztlán correspondence continued. Redfield sent long letters informing his father in law, “Pop,” about the family situation, local conflicts in Tepoztlán, and research difficulties. Redfield and Park; Mexico and the University of Chicago: this constellation would soon become an institution. Once
Redfield completed his Ph.D., Park recruited him as an assistant professor. There he would stay, becoming Dean of Social Science, remaining a Chicago faculty member until his death, in 1958.
December 2, 1926

Dear Pop,

This morning Mom received from you a nice letter written just after Thanksgiving, a letter so full of interest in us and support for us, that I feel that I cannot help sitting down and writing to you, even if it is only a few words. As you have never said the much I do at Queen or many days, that we are not looking at it, because the news I deal with too for a little. It would continuity ranges all the time it is.

We are at last on the brink of our exploit, because tomorrow very early we intend that all of us to go down to Tepoztlan together. Some boxes of supplies, the necessary beds and cooking utensils, a small kerosene stove and a charcoal brazier are up at the pueblo, and this afternoon I will check a suitcase and a small trunk to the railway station from which runs the little steep rocky path, about three miles in length, which is the road to Tepoztlan. Sr. Conde, the educated Indian, has promised to meet us with four horses. We shall make an unusual cavalcade.

So far this trip has been so much what I had for so long imagined it, that it sometimes feel like a repetition of an experience in some earlier avatar. There it all is, the difficulties and the interest, the minor sicknesses, the unavoidable expense, the weakness one feels at this altitude, the difficulty and delay in getting into the graces of the Tepoztecos, the innumerable problems involved in getting into the pueblo those things which can make it possible for us to live there.

Lisa is recovering from an upset stomach, she is old enough to have resilience, and today she seems very well. The cold of long duration MMMM from
AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

Mexico City, Mexico, January 14, 1937.

Mr. Robert Redfield,
Tepotzlan, Estado de Morelos.

Dear Sir:

I have received a visit today from Mrs. Robert Park, who tells me of your presence near El Parque, Tepotzlan, Morelos.

Mrs. Park has asked me to write to you concerning the advisability of your remaining where you are. I do not wish to write in any sense in an alarming way, but I think I may say to you privately that the situation in Mexico is extremely bad from many standpoints. It may be that we will go through the existing crisis without any real upheaval which might endanger the lives of foreigners. On the other hand I would consider it a part of prudence, if I were in your position, to place myself and family in some center where protection might be more easily afforded than in a remote district.

It is suggested that the next time you are in Mexico City you call at the Consulate General and make application for registration as an American citizen.

Yours very truly,

[Signature]

Alexander W. Redfield,
American Consul General.
It might have been convincing enough for Park and Redfield to kick-start Chicago’s involvement in rural Mexico, but the idea that Mexican immigrants in the U.S. came from Tepoztlán was patently false. It is unlikely that Gamio could ever have suggested such a thing. Having spent some time there, Redfield stated that Tepoztlán’s family organization was similar to that of Mexican immigrants to the U.S., but that it could not be seen as a place of origin for those who crossed the border. In any case, Redfield became the preeminent U.S. interpreter of indigenous Mexico in the first half of the twentieth century, as he presented Tepoztlán as the archetype of the racially and culturally homogenous small “community,” doggedly resisting the advance of westernization and modernization.

The University of Chicago Press was at the vanguard of this new trend, starting with Redfield’s now classic book: *Tepoztlán, a Mexican Village: A Study of Folk Life* (UCP, 1930). It was a condensation of science and U.S. common sense about the country. Its methodological and anthropological approach to Mexico flourished for many decades. “Community” studies became the new fashion, with Chicago-style anthropology and the UCP as its trailblazers. The UCP promoted its volumes on “community” at book shows: tomes by Elsie Parsons, Edward Spicer, and Charles Wisdom, as well as Robert Redfield, who further expanded on the topic in *The Little Community: Viewpoint for the Study of a Human Whole* (UCP, 1955).
Stuart Chase, an MIT economist and progressive social theorist, found in Redfield’s Tepoztlán a paradigm to discuss the dichotomy of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*—Tepoztlán vs. Chicago. His 1931 *Mexico, A Study of Two Americas* became a bestseller. The book contrasted Redfield’s Tepoztlán with Middletown, Indiana, whose rapid industrialization had been studied by Columbia sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd. Meanwhile, Berkeley economist Paul S. Taylor supplemented his *Mexican Labor in the United States* with the kind of study of “the bees in the honeycomb” Redfield had originally proposed: *A Spanish Mexican Community: Arandas in Jalisco* (University of California Press, 1933). The work had lot of the Chicago sociology –race, immigration, assimilation—and was sponsored, though Abbot recommendation, by a new agency, The Social Science
Research Council (SSRC), which through its founder, Chicago professor Charles E. Mirriam, was akin to the Chicago style of social science.

In sum, there were two sides to Chicago social science. On the one hand, the old concern with the urban and with conflicts arising from modernization. On the other, a new interest in rural, ethnically and culturally homogeneous “communities.” Two laboratories; two ideal types—and in both, Mexico was present. This perennial dualism of the social sciences led to a very specific conceptualization of the “Mexican problem” in the U.S: it was an issue of poor or nonexistent assimilation; of the constant reproduction and uncontrolled growth of an endlessly ethnic “community.” The “Mexican problem” was indeed a racial concept. And yet, it must be remembered that it was conceived in opposition to the racism of the old social science. In the Chicago school’s definition of assimilation and its failure, race did not depend on biological attributes—it was not a scientific truth. It was instead a product of prejudice, imagined as a sociological problem of the United States. This approach in turn came under fire in the 1970s, as the ideas and methods of a Burgess or a Redfield were questioned, first by Oscar Lewis, then as part anthropology’s political and epistemological self-criticism, ongoing for the last three decades. In the end, for all their problems, the Mexicos of Chicago social science made a significant impact on the way U.S. talked about its “Mexican problem.”

* Redfield’s papers constitute a true archaeological prospection of the history of anthropology, both in Mexico and the U.S. Scattered about this rich collection are clues, such as Redfield’s many contacts in Mexico, such as Gamio. But beyond him are other names, for example, the well-known “gringa” of Mexico City, Paca (Frances) Toor, director of the influential Mexico City-based periodical Mexican Folk-Ways, and a pioneer publicist who turned the Mexican Revolution into a commercial brand. In the papers we can also find Redfield’s
correspondence with informants and assistants who he recruited in Mexico following the scientific conception of fieldwork he developed in two books, *Chan Kom, A Maya Village* (Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1934) and *The Folk Culture of Yucatan* (UCP, 1941). These characters often left traces of their discontent with Redfield’s exotic fixation with the Tepoztecos. There was, for example, Sr. Conde, a Tepozteco who seems to have helped Redfield in Tepoztlán, who wrote to Redfield objecting to the labeling of Tepoztlán as exotic-traditional, a characterization the anthropologist had used in comments made to Mexico’s national media. Of all these clues, perhaps the most important one to be found in Redfield’s papers deal with his two illustrious students: Sol Tax (1907-1995) and Alfonso Villa Rojas (1897-1998).
September 25th, 1935

Dr. Robert Redfield,
The Chicago University,
Chicago, Illinois, U. S. A.

Dear Mr. Redfield:

I've been to write you ever since I received
your note. I have been reading into it—haven't
finished it yet, but like it very much. It is,
as you yourself said, much better than "Tepoztlan",
not that Tepoztlan is not good enough to stand on
its own; it is! I am working on a special Yaqui
number, and wish you would get someone to write a
review for me for that number.

I have also received the Tarahumara book by Zingg
and Nettl, which seems very well done to me. I
should also like a review of that and wonder if you
would care to write one for me.

And, now, for a bit of personal news. I am going
to New York, and on my way, plan to spend a week
or so in and around Chicago, arriving there about
28th of October. I shall have to give some paid
talks, in order to be able to make the trip, as
the amount of pesos that one has to exchange for
dollars are out of my sight just now; in fact I
am too much in debt. So I am wondering if you could
pull any strings for me anywhere in or out of the
University.

I shall have slides and textiles, and should be
willing to accept $50.00 as a fee. Mr. Wayne McMillen,
one of your colleagues says that is not much, but for
these hard times, it would be all right. He also sug-
gested the Renaissance Society. Do you know anyone
connect with it? Or does your own department do any-
thing like that? Anything you can do without trouble,
I shall appreciate very much.

With greetings to all of you and the new member of the
family,

Sincerely yours,

Frances Toor
F. Toor’s pamphlet, Mexican talks.
The papers of both Redfield and Sol Tax guard a vast correspondence, a true history of the discipline. They chart the transformation of a relationship between a teacher and his
pupil into one between equally eminent scholars in a field rife with polemics, changing paradigms, and huge egos. In these exchanges we can also observe that Villa Rojas as well as Tax remained faithful to their mentor until the end of their lives, despite moments of intellectual and personal tension. Other voices make themselves heard in this three-way conversation on Mexico and Guatemala between Redfield, Tax, and Villa Rojas: Gamio, F. Cooper-Cole, John Collier (influential chief of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs during the New Deal), and with Collier’s wife, anthropologist Laura Thompson (1905-2000). This correspondence has been partially published in Robert A. Rubinstein’s Doing Fieldwork, the Correspondence of Robert Redfield and Sol Tax (Westview, 1991).

Tax originally came to the University of Chicago to study under Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, the anthropologist who—departing from Boas—developed a functionalist, synchronic approach to the study of traditional cultures. But in those years, Radcliffe-Brown left Chicago, just as Redfield was becoming increasingly prominent in the field as well as Dean at the University. Tax’s early work thus followed Redfield’s steps. Taking on Mexico’s southern neighbor, Tax tried to test Redfield’s idea of the “folk-urban” continuum in his first book, Penny Capitalism: A Guatemalan Indian Economy (Washington, D.C., U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1953, republished by the UCP in 1963). As it turns out, Tax failed to encounter Redfield’s idealized traditional types. Instead, he found the Indians to be pragmatic, individualistic, and profit-oriented. What a surprise. This was indeed cause for some tension between Redfield and Tax, but regardless, their careers remained closely linked. Tax had not engaged in a frontal assault on Redfield’s work, as Oscar Lewis would later do in his own Tepoztlán study.

In due time, Tax became a University of Chicago professor and an advocate of “action anthropology.” This latter notion was bound up with his so-called Fox Project: which consisted of studying Iowa Indians while aiding them in their adaptation to modern times.
The Tax-Redfield correspondence is shot through with preoccupation with issues of method, such as the role of informants and the very notion of fieldwork. There are also debates on issues such as Indian-Ladino differences in Mexico and Guatemala, and academic politics at the University, among other clues.

Unlike the Redfield-Tax correspondence, the exchanges between Villa Rojas and Redfield have not yet been published. Important clues may be found in Paul R. Sullivan’s *Unfinished Conversations: Mayas and Foreigners between Two Wars,* (1989), and in Andrés Medina Hernández’s “Alfonso Villa Rojas: el etnólogo” (*Ciencia Ergo Sum,* July-October 2001). This vast correspondence details the fascinating story of conflict and cooperation in the gradual making of a Chicago-style scholar out of a rural teacher. Originally Redfield’s local informant, Villa Rojas became so indispensable that he ended up as co-author of the resulting book, *Chan Kom, a Maya Village* (UCP, 1934).

Redfield met Villa Rojas while doing fieldwork in Yucatán. Both got involved with the Carnegie Institute project in Yucatan, Chiapas, and Quintana Roo. Then in 1933 Redfield brought Villa Rojas to the University of Chicago so he could pursue a Ph.D. in anthropology. Villa Rojas became a devoted follower of the Chicago school of social science—though another important influence was Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942).

This archival clue is too rich to be succinctly summarized. Aside from its wealth of fieldwork photography, it includes a vast correspondence lasting between 1930 and Redfield’s death in 1958. It is a bilingual correspondence, with Villa Rojas writing in Spanish, and Redfield in English. (Oddly, there are a few typed English translations of Villa Rojas’s letters). This exchange deals with four main issues. First, Villa Rojas’s training, his course selection at Chicago, readings, research ideas; here Redfield is the mentor, while Villa Rojas is a Mexican student trying to navigate the University of Chicago’s mores and intellectual trends. Second, there is the research data they shared, linguistic interpretations,
ideas about their respective ethnographies in Yucatan, Chiapas, and Quintana Roo. Among these traces are descriptions of kinship, economic figures, translations from various Maya languages, contacts, and informants, clarifications of local products and habits, etc. In this regard, Villa Rojas appears very much the master, while Redfield cautiously picks his student’s brain. Third—as in the Tax-Redfield correspondence—there is a long dialogue on the meaning and ethos of fieldwork and on the development of scientific criteria for anthropological research. Fourth, the correspondence includes an exchange on the topic of Mexican academic, national, and local politics. In this conversation, Villa Rojas essentially worked as Redfield’s interpreter of Mexican “grilla” (nitty-gritty, ground-level political conflict) especially in the realm of indigenista policy and theory, which Villa Rojas disdained as unscientific and lacking in rigor. This was especially so by the late 1930s, when Villa Rojas would often tell Redfield about the “politización” of anthropology in Mexico by Marxist scholars and by the input of the official party’s “socialist” line. Finally, Villa Rojas’s letters display a very Chicago-style preoccupation—only partially shared by Redfield—with the philosophical status of social science: was a science of the social really possible? What kind of knowledge is anthropological knowledge?
Chicago, Enero 10 de 1938.

Dr. Robert Redfield.
Agua Bebéndida.

Muy estimado amigo:

He resaltado decirle que por correo ordinario está
yendo ahora mismo otra parte de mi reporte; la nota sobre
falsos y cellos que aparece en la página 10, puede ser su-
primida si Ud. la cree innecesaria, me acercan a llegar los a
diagramas; a mediados de otra semana se los devolveré junto
con otras notas.

Por un error de mi parte, supuse que la Carnegie
me pagaría mis cursos en el presente "carta". Pasado en ésto,
y necesitando urgentemente algún dinero para poder inscribir-
me, le escribí al Sr. Valera la carta que aquí le adjunto y
con que respuesta encontrará aquí también. Por creerlo correcto
le escribí una nota al Dr. Kidd informándole del caso; to-
davía no me llega su respuesta. De todos modos, en caso de
que Ud. pueda hacer algo para que se me mande algún dinero,
se lo habría de agradecer después; me podrá descontar de mi
rendido con 50 dólares cada mes. Para hacer el pago de mi
"tuition" me han concedido hasta el día 19 del actual. En esto
me ayudó mucho Miss Groeter y otra Secretaría igualmente amas-
ble.

Estoy tomando 3 cursos: uno de Lloyd Warner ("The Family")
y dos de Fred Eggen ("The American Indian" y "Social Organi-
zaion of the American Indian"); el primero es el que más me
interesa; lo maquinan que se enseña en "down town" lo cual
me perjudica un poquito.

Deseo que Jimmy esté ya sin grippe y tan travieso
como siempre; recuerdos afectuosos para todos. Le incluyo
aquí los retratos tomados en Windy Pines; como vera, salieron
muy.

Su amigo de siempre

[signature]

No encuentro la regla del Sr.
Valera; su escuela debe que es comunicaría al Dr. Kidd a su paso por
Washington en esta semana. La carta
que tiene amable y lógica.
Villa Rojas’s letters to Redfield. Redfield Papers.
The Villa Rojas-Redfield correspondence encapsulates a particular functionalist moment in Mexican anthropology, a mid-point in the transition between the old founding fathers of Mexican social science (Alfonso Caso, Manuel Gamio, Miguel Othón Mendizabal, José Vasconcelos) and the emergence of a new generation of Marxist or radical indigenista anthropologists (Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Arturo Warman, Ricardo Pozas, Guillermo Bonfil Batalla). It may be the case that, at a distance, Villa Rojas appears to be on the losing side of that equation, despite his devotion to a professional and disciplined social science, and despite his first-hand knowledge of local “communities.”

Early on, when Villa Rojas was studying in Chicago, he wrote letters to Redfield, who was in Mexico at the time, asking for course recommendations and seeking advice on other graduate school matters. But once Villa Rojas returned to Mexico, he began to report on the country’s unfavorable environment for Chicago-style social science. In 1935, he wrote to Redfield about his unpleasant encounters with Mexican social scientists. Miguel Othón de Mendizabal (1890-1945) berated U.S. anthropologists, saying that [the U.S. anthropologist] “no profundiza,” “no analiza con detenimiento, además de cómo su cultura es totalmente distinta a la nuestra, jamás podrá entendernos.” Villa Rojas told Redfield of his difficult meetings with Malinowski in Mexico City coffee shops and of the constant “grillas” in the Instituto Indigenista and in the Escuela de Antropología. By the time of the indigenista Congress of Pátzcuaro, in 1940, Villa Rojas had soured official indigenismo. It was too unscientific, too leftist. As he wrote to Redfield, Luis Chávez Orozco’s indigenismo was no more than a scientific “bluf.” This characterization is extremely telling of the kinds of conflicts faced by a Chicago scholar in Mexico:

“los hombres de estudio sólo sirven de pantalla para disimular las teorías comunistas de los dirigentes. En las sesiones privadas que precedieron al congreso indigenista de
Pátzcuaro, pude darme cuenta de que la inspiración teórica de Chávez Orozco venía de los escritos de José Carlos Mariátegui ( . . . ), joven comunista peruano, de vida bohemia y sin ningún entrenamiento científico. Causa asombro que sus escritos mediocres y sofistas hubiesen influido tanto en los indigenistas de aquí y Perú.”

Moreover, in 1939, Villa Rojas wrote to Redfield that in Mexico, sociology was practiced by “filósofos metafísicos” such as “Caso, Vasconcelos, Ramos, y los Españoles recién llegados” (José Gaos and Joaquim Xirau). Very different from “lo que se enseña en Chicago.” “No sé cómo es posible que estos sociólogos puedan estar tan desconectados de los investigadores norteamericanos. En cambio, están al corriente de las ideas procedentes de la sociología alemana.” This was because, “Entre los sociólogos oficiales,” “diletantes,” “se divirtien jugando con las teorías de la personalidad,” sponsored by Edgar S. Brightman, Nikolai Berdyaev or Jacques Maritain. These ruminations must have been important to Redfield, as parts of them can be found in his papers, translated, typed, and labeled: “Extract of a letter written to Robert Redfield by a correspondent in Mexico City, February 28, 1941.”

Even more interestingly, Villa Rojas openly shared his ruminations on the status of science and philosophy in anthropology. He was up to date with contemporary philosophy of science, and contrasted it with accounts of epistemology of social science by Chicago professors, concluding, “cada día me siento más positivista y más materialista.” His Chicago-inspired criticism was directed against what he called Bergsonian accounts of science and official “socialist” indigenismo: “los filósofos son gentes mal ajustadas o inadaptadas a su ambiente y de psicología semejante a la de los day-dreamers,” they don’t search for the “verdades chiquitas” that scientists ought to seek.
Turning to quite another matter, I will write something about the present political situation here with reference to Indian affairs. It is in the first place a radical change has occurred in the number of studying “the native problem”. The new chief of the Department of Native Affairs is Colonel Isidro Camina, who is a stout man with large mustache and an energetic disposition. His first declaration when he entered his position was that “true now on this department is through with demagogues. We don’t want words, but deeds. We don’t want theorists, but practical men”. (attached in a newspaper clipping containing these statements.) As may be supposed the first “theorists” who went into the street were obvious, Kirchhoff and Borbolla. Now the “brains” of the department is Professor Angel Corro, who has always been opposed to Redfield’s project to revive the native languages. So that you may have an idea of this gentleman’s point of view I enclose an article he wrote. Although he knows nothing whatever about anthropology, “Professor Corro has very definite ideas; at the least I like his ideas somewhat better than those of Redfield.

There was in the time of Chavez Gómez there was some effort to do things “scientific” but really this was simply “bluff”; the scholars only served as a means to conceal the cosmopolitical theories of the bosses. In the private sessions which took place before the native Congress at Petrolero I could see that the theoretic inspiration of Chavez Gómez was derived from the writings of José Carlos Mariátegui (1897-1930), a young Peruvian communist who led a robust life and who had no scientific training. It is to be regretted that his mediocre writings have influenced so much those both here and in Peru who are interested in native affairs.

From talks which I have from time to time with Kirchhoff I have learned of the antagonism which exists between certain teachers of the Institute of Anthropology. It is interesting to know that Canso tried to take Casso’s place by political maneuvering and failed; that Mendivil and Casso are now regarded as enemies, each depreciating the worth of the other; that if almost anybody should be substituted for Borbolla as director of the anthropology school all the other teachers would be happier and the school would go along better. There is much unfavorable comment upon Borbolla because of what occurred in Guatemala between him and Villaseñor. In a word, trouble of this sort is plentiful and as you may see not much time is left to any real scientific work.

With sociology the case is no better. Here the sociologists are in the first place philosophers and concerned with metaphysical problems, such as speculation “if the atom consists of the solar system in miniature, of a probably curve, or of an infinite rectangle, etc.” Please do not think I am exaggerating; it is only enough to mention the names of the leading sociologists here, Antonio Canso, Frosconcelos and

Redfield’s translation of one of Villa Rojas’s letter

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There is yet another clue to be found in the Redfield and Tax papers, one that needs to be succinctly explained. It has to do two historical contexts: the immediate aftermaths of the first and second World Wars. These were moments of reconstruction when people sought to lay
down the foundations of, as it were, better human scenarios. In the 1920s, the University of Chicago was a center for discussion for a better U.S. understanding of the world; In the years after 1945, it was a site for discussion of such post-Holocaust ideas as a world Constitution, and post-nationalist, post-racist forms of civic pride. Then again, University of Chicago scholars were of course part of the Cold War intellectual and academic consequences.

After World War I, the University of Chicago partook in the liberal-progressive concern with the consequences of isolationism, such as nativism, xenophobia, and the possible rise of fascism. There was also concern with the new balance of power in the face of Wilsonian calls for decolonization. The University thus began to open new forums to address these issues. For instance, in 1922 the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, a civic organization, partnered with the University for academic and public promotion of these concerns. The UCP records include traces of this partnership in its series on American foreign policy abroad. This is the origin of *American Policies Abroad: Mexico* (UCP, 1928), edited by J. Fred Rippy. This work had the credentials necessary to certify its liberal, “objective,” character: It was published by a prestigious University Press; its editor, Rippy (1892-1977) had been a Chicago professor specialized in Latin American diplomatic history; it contained contrasting national perspectives, back to back, with articles by the Mexican José Vasconcelos and the American Guy Stevens.
The NORMAN WAIT HARRIS LECTURES

1926
SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS. By Moises Saenz and Herbert I. Priestley.
An outline of the program of the Mexican government and of the problems confronting Mexico.

ASPECTS OF MEXICAN CIVILIZATION.
By Jose Vasconcelos and Manuel Gamio.
Mexican civilization in both its Latin-American and Indian aspects.

1925
ORIENTAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE FAR EASTERN PROBLEM. By Count Michimasa Soneshima and Dr. P. W. Kuo.

Count Soneshima contributed three notable lectures: "The Political, Economic, and Social Aspects of Modern Japan"; "Japan's Policy in the Far East"; and "Japan's Relations with the United States."

Dr. Kuo's lectures are on the same subjects as they apply to China. Dr. Kuo is President of Southeastern University, Nanking, China, and one of the best-known educators in that country.


"China's Finances," "Extraterritoriality in China," and "Domestic Politics in China" are Mr. Woodhead's subjects. He is editor of the Peking and Tientsin Times and of the China Year Book, an Englishman of twenty years' residence in China.

Mr. Norton, business man, publicist, author, contributes one chapter on the Russians in the Far East; and Mr. Arnold, American Consul in China, discusses her economic resources.

1924
THE OCCIDENT AND THE ORIENT. By Sir Valentine Chirol.

Through his former position as director of the foreign department of the London Times, Sir Valentine Chirol has had a remarkable opportunity to study the changing relations of the East and West.

GERMANY IN TRANSITION. By Herbert Kraus.

Dr. Kraus gives a skilful analysis of German problems that cannot fail to help one understand present-day Germany. This book is a discussion such as only a German who knows his native land could present of Germany in transition from war and revolution.

THE STABILIZATION OF EUROPE. By Charles de Vischer.

A logical treatment of the problems of nationality, security, and international communications, problems that are most vital to the moral, political, and economic rehabilitation of Europe.

Each $2.00, postpaid $2.10

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO / ILLINOIS

N. W. Harris Lectures, UCP records.
Rippy’s own piece for the volume was a history of U.S.-Mexico relations. It timidly explained past U.S. policy mistakes and attempts at intervention and saluted the arrival of the new ambassador, Dwight D. Morrow, and the policy changes that came with him. Gestures of goodwill abounded: while the Mexican Supreme Court ruled along the lines expected by U.S. oil companies, Charles Lindbergh in turn paid a visit to Mexico. For his own contribution, Vasconcelos predictably took the opportunity to blame Madero’s downfall on the U.S., displaying an unsuspected mastery of the English language in his invective: Huerta was a “bloodstained drunkard,” Carranza an “obscure personage,” who had an “undeniable incapacity for the task that chance had put into his hands.” Meanwhile, “Obregon gave up the glory of being a successful unrecognized president of Mexico in order to become a recognized ruler at a price that history may not judge worth paying.” As for Calles, he was a sell-out to U.S. interests. Meanwhile he used his knowledge of the United States to defend the Mexican Constitution of 1917: “Only our military weakness can explain the fact that we are singled out and accused of hating foreigners because we establish limitations to the right of foreigners to purchase our lands; and yet we are doing nothing else but copy American laws. Some even more drastic than ours do exist against the ownership of lands by foreigners in some states of the American union.” Small wonder then—as clippings kept by UCP show—that Ernest Gruening, writing for The Nation, did not recognize the book as a show of moderation and tolerance, reading it instead as proof of irreconcilable positions. But before the post-World War II consensus, if ephemeral, on antiracism, peace, and global Constitutions, the best clue about the Mexico-Chicago connection was a series of lectures on Mexico that took place in the summer of 1926 at the University of Chicago. They were delivered by Moisés Sáenz (1888-1941), then “subsecretario” of Education in the Calles government, and by distinguished historian and librarian at Berkeley, Herbert I. Priestley.
(1875-1944) in what was known as the Third Institute on the Harris Foundation at the University of Chicago. In fact, the Norman Wait Harris Memorial Fund is today one of the University of Chicago’s oldest endowments, granted by the family of banker Norman Wait Harris with the stated purpose of helping Americans better understand other peoples of the world (http://internationalstudies.uchicago.edu/nwh). In the 1920s the lectures dealt with such important post-war topics as the future of U.K. imperialism, “oriental interpretations of the far Eastern problem,” “occidental interpretations of the Eastern problem,” or “Germany in transition.” The 1926 Harris lecture took on the subject following a decade of difficulties between both countries, and resulted in the publication of two volumes by UCP: Some Mexican problems, Lectures on the Harris foundation, 1926 by Moisés Sáenz and Herebert I. Priestly (UCP, 1926); and Aspects of Mexican Civilization, Lectures on the Harris Foundation, 1926 by José Vasconcelos and Manuel Gamio (UCP, 1926).

Sáenz came to Chicago as a visiting lecturer sponsored both by the University and by the Mexican consulate. As his piece in Some Mexican Problems attested, he came in a dual capacity: as propagandist for the Calles government in the context of tense diplomatic negotiations, and at the same time as a convinced admirer of Chicago social science. Sáenz was an educator, trained in Mexico and Columbia University. His educational philosophy was strongly influenced by John Dewey, as well as by protestant social thought. He combined these with a strong faith in science and its utility for national unity and for the incorporation of Mexico’s Indian population into a modern, liberal development. His goal was to get “the tempo of the Tahuantinsuy synchronized with that of President Roosevelt.” (The Indian, Citizen of the Americas, Pan American Union, 1946).
In his lecture, he defended the Calles regime against the common U.S. attacks: “we have been called Bolsheviks, reds, socialists! It would be far nearer the truth to be simply called humanists.” And yet he praised Chicago social science, Dewey, and believed in the importance of these ideas for Mexico:

thirty years ago, your great philosopher and teacher John Dewey was giving in this very university a series of lectures describing to the parents the educational policies followed by him in the Experimental (sic) school closely connected with the
University of Chicago. John Dewey had gone to Mexico. He was first carried there by his pupils at Columbia; he went later in his book, *School and Society* is a book we know and love in Mexico. And now he is going there personally; when he gets to Mexico he will find his ideas at work in our schools” (*Some Mexican Problems*).

Indeed, after his 1920s visit, Dewey saw Mexico as a laboratory where his ideas could be put to the test. He believed that his philosophy was being applied, proving its universalism and utility. Yet democracy, the most normative and universal dimension of his thought, was not included in the experiment. Dewey knew this but showed little concern, as if the formula of science-democracy were indeed only reproducible in its natural scenario, the United States.

Only partially translated—Vasconcelos’s chapter, “El evangelio del mestizo” (*Istor*, no. 25, Summer 2006)—*Aspects of Mexican Civilization* is an important document in Mexico’s intellectual history. Gamio’s contribution was a repetition of his belief in the incorporation of Indians into national development, peppered with criticisms of U.S. policies toward Mexico in the 1920s. (In 1926 Gamio was still hoping to serve Calles as unofficial intellectual representative of the regime in the world. This was before their falling out in 1928). Vasconcelos’s talk and visit had more lasting consequences. He became a visiting professor at the University in 1927, and hoped to stay for a longer period. Still, as Daniel Cosío Villegas suggested in his memoirs, he never prepared classes and he disliked U.S. students, who were in his mind beneath the level of a Mexican “preparatoriano” (D. Cosío Villegas, *Memorias*, 1976). Vasconcelos’s Harris lectures were part of a larger mood—his “hora del mestizo”—which as it turns out, was partly inspired by Chicago. It was a bizarre pro-mestizaje manifesto, proposing the overcoming of racial conflict by means of miscegenation. But while in previous tracts on the subject he sought to vindicate the “spiritual” superiority of Spain, in Chicago he predictably switched to a more “scientific” register: “If we observe human nature closely we find that hybridism in man, as well as in plants, tends to produce better types and tends to rejuvenate those that have become static.” Hence: “There is nothing left for us to do, but to follow the Spanish tradition of eliminating
the prejudice of color, the prejudice of race…” He was living in Chicago—South Side Chicago—when he wrote this. So even though he was arguing for a collaboration between races, he made a point of emphasizing that this was a necessary measure in order to avoid being “overwhelmed by the wave of the Negro, of the Indian, or the Asiatic” (Aspects of Mexican Civilization). Of course.

UCP records show that the Harris lecture books were read and reviewed by all those luminaries of the American left who were caught up in the moment’s enthusiasm for Mexico and its Revolution: Ernest Gruening, Carleton Beals, E. M. Simpson. Even that “old gringa” of Mexico, Katherine Anne Porter, contributed with her own ironic comments on academic liberal trends: “No unbiased opinions, liberalism has a bias of its own. The main virtue of the liberal temperament is its almost pious regard for facts, the wonder of the liberal temperament is that no amount of findings can upset its preconceived theories. Earth hath no sorrow that a firm mild course of popular education cannot cure.” She argued that the volumes were good propaganda for Mexico, albeit written by very boring men. “I only wish that these honest men and good investigators could manage to be half so entertaining as the liars and hotheads. There must be some way of making facts attractive! Why don’t these liberals find it?”

These books circulated among intellectuals in Mexico City, Chicago, and New York. Traces of their silent but vital interactions remain, for example in the old University of Chicago library card—as in that for Xavier Clavijero’s History of Mexico. A copy of the book was signed out at different times by characters in our story such as Manuel Bueno, José Vasconcelos, and Luis Leal.
Before moving on to the World War II manifestations of these universalist hopes of social science, there is one more Vasconcelos-related clue to examine. Back in 1927, to be sure, Vasconcelos was yet to launch his presidential campaign, becoming for a brief moment a Messiah of democracy—far from what he would eventually become in his post-election exile: a fanatic of his own idiosyncratic brand of Catholicism, virulently anti-American, anti-Protestant, and anti-Semitic. It is thus intriguing that the Regenstein Library holds yet another Vasconcelos clue—this one from this late period. The papers of Morris Cohen (1880-1947) include the records of Cohen’s daughter and his biographer, Leonora Cohen Rosenfield (1910-1982).

Cohen was one of the most prominent liberal philosophers and legal thinkers of the first half of the twentieth century, a member of the Conference on Jewish Relations, and a mentor of various prominent scholars over his many years at the City College of New York. For a time in the late 1930s, he also worked at the University of Chicago. Leonora Cohen was
originally trained as a scholar of French literature and taught at the University of Maryland for many years. Educated in the Romance-language tradition, she seems to have had a reading command of Spanish—at least in her 1958 correspondence with Vasconcelos. She also seems to have been committed to the spread of her father’s ideas in Spanish—something she tried to do through her contacts with Vasconcelos and the Mexican representative at the Organization of American States in Washington D.C., the poet Luis Quintanilla.

What is intriguing about this clue is to see Vasconcelos, already in his seventies, engaging with the very liberal thought of a very academic logician, a Jewish American scholar, mentor of characters as distant from Vasconcelos as Sydney Hook and Ernest Nagel—Cohen’s students. A year before his death, while he was director of the Biblioteca México, Vasconcelos seems to have been a bit more at peace with himself. As José Ortega y Gasset in his later years, he seems to have been nostalgic for true philosophical achievement. He appears to have wanted a philosophical legacy that went beyond *Ulises criollo* (memoirs), or *La raza cósmica* (travel writing/historical essay/civilizational manifesto). Having been self-consciously throughout his life a kind of George de Santayana—the Hispanic philosopher fully acquainted with the U.S. philosophical tradition—he kept reading more than his Santayana, his William James or his Josiah Royce (he disliked John Dewey). He thus became acquainted with Morris R. Cohen’s philosophy, which was liberal yet still critical of Dewey. In fact, before the Vasconcelos-Leonora Cohen correspondence, some of Cohen’s books had already been translated into Spanish. There was *Introducción a la lógica*, translated by Elí de Gortari (Mexico City, Brevarios del Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1952), and *Razón y naturaleza*, a translation of Cohen’s major work, with an introduction by none other than Gino Germani (Buenos Aires, Paidós, 1956). Vasconcelos found in Cohen—especially in his autobiography, *A Dreamers Journey*—a mirror that reflected his own blend of science, reason, intuition, and idealism. Thus his introduction to what is, to my knowledge, an

Predictably, Vasconcelos felt the need to cleanse Cohen from his Russian, Jewish origins. As a student in the City College of New York, said Vasconcelos, interacting with
Irish Catholics and Protestants, Cohen “dejó de ser hombre de secta para convertirse en lo que habría de ser toda su vida: ciudadano espiritual del mundo.” Then he used Cohen’s autobiography to go back to his phantom, Santayana, as well as his own past achievements as a great “memoirist”: “El filósofo de inclinaciones literarias tiene el escape de la literatura. Santayana se hizo rico con una novela justamente famosa, ‘THE LAST PURITANS’” (sic). And then Cohen’s blend of rationalism and idealism led Vasconcelos to write: “…se puede tomar la posición de Cohen como una prueba, como un ejemplo de mi propia tesis filosóinformada a su vez en [Alfred North] Withehead, cuando afirmó: ‘que la filosofía está separandose de su etapa tradicional de subordinación al Logos, la razón, para entrar de lleno al dominio de la armonía, entendida como que dijera Platón en el Timeo” (“Morris R. Cohen—Ensayo de interpretación…”).

In reviews and commentaries here and there, Cohen was strongly critical of “mystics” of the Hispanic persuasion, thinkers of Vasconcelos’s lineage, such as Salvador de Madariaga and Miguel de Unamuno. One can only imagine what it was like for old Vasconcelos to read Cohen’s *Reason and Nature*: “I am a rationalist in believing that reason is a genuine and significant phase of nature; but I am an irrationalist in insisting that nature contains more than reason. I am a mystic in holding that all words point to a realm of being deeper and wider than the words themselves.” And one can only picture his recall of the un-linguistic revelations of his beloved Fray Luis de León when reading Cohen’s words: “Genuine mysticism always holds fast to the idea that the substance of reality is altogether beyond the power of language.” We can guess his reaction at reading, in a *Dreamer’s Journey*, about Cohen’s hope “…to rescue the word ‘liberal’ from its association with laissez-faire economics, superficial politics, or mushy-minded sentimentality, and instead show liberalism as simply scientific method stubbornly at work on human problems.”
Returning to social science at the University of Chicago, it is clear that in the immediate aftermath of World War II, ideas of universalism achieved a renewed relevance, yet in a different fashion than in the 1920s. Thus, Robert Redfield was part of a Committee to Frame a World Constitution. Redfield collection, as well as those of philosopher Richard McKeon and sociologist Edward Shils, is filled with clues about why this project became important to the world and to the University of Chicago. Redfield and Tax participated in the UNESCO projects and were involved in post-war efforts to define post-racial societies. Tax’s papers include traces of this concern, as in his report “Democracy in Middle America,” which blended the post-war universalist preoccupation with the Cold War agenda of worldwide democracy. Tax viewed social science as action anthropology toward a better life, as he wrote in “The Credo of the Social Scientist”: the process wherein the determinism of nature is understood, rationally controlled, and harnessed for a better life.
701 19th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C.
June 9, 1941

Professor Robert Redfield
Dean, Division of Social Science
University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

Dear Professor Redfield:

To keep you informed concerning my efforts toward a morescientific approach to the problem of democracy in the present crisis,
I am enclosing a copy of a tentative plan for organizing a research
council on democracy which is receiving some favorable comment here.
The main problems in regard to organizing such a council are of course
funds and personnel. The idea is that it would cooperate with the
N.S.C., S.S.R.C., A.C.L.S., the Office of Education, the Office
of Civilian Defense, etc. I would appreciate your comment.

Since leaving Chicago I have spent most of my time in Washington
working on this and related aspects of the morale problem. Interest
in these problems and awareness of the crisis are growing daily, it
seems to me. We have, however, very far to go.

The meeting on applied anthropology at Cambridge was interesting
and, I believe, successful. We now have our society and it remains to
be seen what comes of it. I am hoping to gain the backing of the society
in this project.

I was delighted to meet Mr. M.L. Wilson and had quite a chat
with him. Also heard his excellent work at the Nutrition Conference.

My plans are indefinite but I am trying to get support for a
research project concerning a special phase of the problem of personality
development and democracy, namely discipline for democracy. I would like to
show how the spread of democracy is allied with the spread of the
scientific attitude and how an objective, experimental attitude may be
developed in the child by the progressive use of directional rather than
restrictive types of discipline, the work to be written in simple terms for
the use of teachers and parents. I think this more important just now than
the work on educational problems in Hawaii and would like to work on it
at the Summer Workshop on Individual Development at Chicago. This plan
is, however, confidential since I have not relinquished my A.A.U.W. fellowship
for the Hawaii project.

Yours very sincerely,

L. Thompson
Tax’s the Credo of the Social Scientist, S. Tax papers.
June 6, 1946

Recommendations of UNESCO Committee based on the Report of the Sub-committee Meeting of SCC of
June 1, 1946.

Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 as recorded are parts of an important proposed activity that should be given a high priority by UNESCO, except as there are still more urgent needs in the liberated countries. Change priority from (2) to (1) on numbers 5 and 6.

Add to Number 1, following word “attitudes”: “developing methods of evaluation of projects, etc., aimed at promoting international understanding”.

Number 6 - read as follows:
UNESCO be charged with the immediate formulation of plans which will lead to the earliest possible establishment of an Institute to study processes, purposes and problems of UN. This Institute of specialists in the social sciences would be composed of a faculty functioning in the dual capacity of (1) serving as liaison between UNESCO, UN, and other specialized international agencies, and (2) assisting in the preparatory training of people engaging in work of international significance. The Institute, as focal point, would promote the study and understanding of world service and the social art of living together by offering training in those fields of social science recommended by the specialists in charge. The opportunity would be available to all nations on an exchange basis.
Curiously, the very first Congreso de Historiadores de Mexico y Estados Unidos, which took place in Monterrey in 1949, belongs to these kinds of efforts. Lewis Hanke (Hispanic Foundation, the Library of Congress), and Silvio Zavala began the efforts for such an encounter between U.S. and Mexican historians. It was part of an internationalist and
universalist agenda of which Chicago humanist tradition was very much a part. Redfield, Tax, and McKeon in the University of Chicago were part of the effort, as was Silvio Zavala, Jaime Torres Bodet (UNESCO director 1948-1952), and Edmundo O’Gorman in Mexico. There were in Chicago and other U.S. universities people preparing to rewrite history in a post-racial and post-nationalist way, as well as drafting a world Constitution (McKeon papers). The encounter between Mexican and U.S. historians was thought in this context, very much as had happened in 1935 with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which financed the rewriting of the history of U.S. – Canada relations. Certainly, the idea for the 1949 meeting in Monterrey was about dialogue between two historical experiences and two historiographical traditions, the U.S. and Mexico. Gradually, however, these meetings became encounters of historians of Mexico of various nationalities. Clues for this transformation can be found in other archives, such as the Stanley Ross Papers, at the N. L. Benson Latin American Collection University of Texas, Austin, and The Lewis Hanke Papers at the Special Collections of the University of Massachusetts Library, Amherst.

One last clue: the role of Mexico in the transformation of such universalist aspirations in to the plain and simple agenda of the intellectual Cold War. Traces can be found in the records of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) at the Regenstein Library’s Special Collections. The CCF was a liberal organization founded in 1950, against the excesses of U.S. imperialism and Soviet totalitarianism. For two decades, it became a front of the liberal anti-communist cause, though its close relation to the CIA (discovered in the 1960s) made it into a bête noire of the Latin American left. In fact, as Patrick Iber’s work has shown (The People’s Republic of Letters, forthcoming), the CCF was at the center of the civil war among progressive Latin American intellectuals. The Mexico-Chicago connection contains clues about this war. The CCF papers include essays and letters written by prominent Mexican intellectuals in and around the main CCF publication, Cuadernos del Congreso por la
Libertad de la Cultura (later Mundo Nuevo). The collection also includes information related to the CCF congress in Mexico City in 1956, and of seminars held by the CCF’s Latin American Institute for International Relations in Mexico. There are also two important Mexico-based Spanish exiles, and a Mexican labor leader and intellectual: Julián Gómez, aka Julián Gorkin; Pere Pagès, aka Victor Alba; and Rodrigo García Treviño. From Mauricio Magdaleno to Octavio Paz; from Rufino Tamayo to Juan Soriano; from Alfonso Reyes to José Emilio Pacheco—many intellectuals were involved with CCF activities. Its records, as well as those of sociologist Edward Shils, include the traces of this bizarre but important moment in the Cold War. Photographs of the meeting of the Inter-American Conference for Cultural Freedom in Mexico City (September 1956) show Mauricio Magdaleno, Sara de Ibáñez, Rómulo Gallegos, Salvador de Madariaga, Pedro de Alba, and Alfonso Reyes.

Inter-American Conference for Cultural Freedom, September 1956, in Mexico City. IACF collection.

* It is worth mentioning, if succinctly, another collection from Chicago social scientist; another anthropological image of Mexico: Manning Nash. He was a graduate of the University of
Chicago, and later a faculty member. He taught at the Graduate School of Business before joining the Anthropology Department. There, he developed an image of Mexico inspired, more than anything by the modernization theories of the 1950s. His graduate work at Chicago, assisted by Tax, had been on Guatemala: *Machine Age Maya: The Industrialization of a Guatemalan Community* (UCP, 1958). Later, as part of the National Science Foundation’s project, “Man in Nature,” he studied Tzeltal-speaking people. A number of young Mexican anthropologists were involved in this project and their reports can be found in Nash’s archive, for example “El paraje y la familia en Tenajapa,” by Andrés Medina Hernández. Most interesting are his notes for a study—never actually undertaken—of the oil-industry’s impact on Villahermosa.
Manning Nash’s notebook, oil project, Villahermosa.

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Robert Redfield wanted to be a poet. So revealed his son, James Redfield, Chicago professor of Classics and at the Committee of Social Thought, commenting on the poetry of Chicago anthropologist Paul Friedrich (“Paul Friedrich: Ethnographer as Poet and Poet as
Indeed, México and Chicago style social science shared a level of interaction beyond the sometimes arid realm of social science. A connection also existed in poetry, language, and literature.

Edward Sapir (1844-1939), a student of anthropology and linguistics under Boas, revolutionized the study of cultures through the careful documenting and analyzing of languages. There was at the time a growing concern in Chicago anthropology with native languages of the Americas. Sapir taught in Chicago during the late 1920s, then later at Yale, where he trained distinguish linguist Norman McQuown (1914-2005). McQuown in turn taught at Chicago in the 1950s and 60s, leaving a lasting legacy in the study of the native languages of México. It was through such odd sociological, anthropological, and literary connections that Paul Friedrich (1927-) became professor of anthropology at Chicago in the 1960s. A linguistic, anthropologist, and poet, Friedrich brought serious political and linguistic considerations into the Chicago style study of “communities.” In this sense, his greatest contribution was the way he was able to combine a mastery of political theory with deep and rigorous ethnographic engagement in his studies of Tarascan “communities” in Michoacán.

It was only natural that such “dangerous liaisons” between poetry, literature, language, and social science would take place in Chicago. The university had gradually become a center of professionalization for the disciplines of linguistics and linguistic anthropology—and México was there from the beginning. In addition, poetry and literature were bound up in the University of Chicago’s prominent philological tradition. This tradition included Spanish language studies and a deep engagement with poetry and literature. The study of romance languages at Chicago had an established tradition by the 1920s. Spanish literature, however, was studied within the limits of the German-style Roman-languages tradition, with its focus on Spain’s golden age letters and on philological matters. This tradition went back to the earliest years of the University, when Karl Pietsch (1869-1930), a
prominent German philologist specialized in the Spanish language, established the study of Romance philology, with his publications on the Spanish fragments of the French Grail.

In fact, Pietsch contributed yet another clue about the Chicago-México connection: one of his students at the University was philologist Aurelio Espinosa (1880-1958). Born in Colorado, Espinosa became the most eminent scholar on the question of the Spanish language in the United States—focusing especially on New Mexico. As such, he formed part of the exclusive, international network of hunters of Spanish words, which included Pedro Henríquez Ureña and Franz Boas in México, along with Ramón Menéndez Pidal in Spain.

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1. The New Mexican call "venado" a short (usually of four or six lines) popular composition in verse on varied subjects, recited or sung with guitar accompaniment at fairs during social gatherings or on stages. The author has collected over 500 of these "venado", which will be published at some future time.
It was until the 1920s, however, that Mexican literature began to truly be studied in Chicago, thanks to pioneer scholar Carlos Castillo. The work of Carlos Castillo and his Chicago student, Luis Leal, is one of the least studied, but most important—and noble—moments in the institutionalization of the study of Mexican letters in the U.S. Later, in the 1940s, Chicago became the home of some of the most prominent exiled philologists and literary critics of Spanish letters: Joan Coromines, Francisco Ayala, Amado Alonso, Ricardo Gullón—all of whom taught at the University. This in the context of Chicago as an important center for discussion of twentieth-century American literature and among a faculty that has counted with some of its luminaries: Saul Bellow, Adam Zagaweski, and Mark Strand—the latter with important Mexican connections.

Small wonder, then, that Regenstein Special Collections contain the large archive of one of the most important poetry magazines of American modernism, *Poetry: a Magazine of Verse*, an institution since 1912. Harriet Monroe (1860-1936), a poet, cultural impresario, and great traveler, directed the magazine until her death in in Macchu-Picchu in 1936.
Monroe’s large archive includes a travel diary of her 1933 trip to México. She mentions her promenades through the city, Teotihuacán, and Xochimilco, guided by an elegant and interesting engineer and painter, Cecil O’Gorman (father of Juan and Edmundo). Monroe narrates her interactions with the México of Rivera, Simpson, and the legends of Hart Crane and other inhabitants of that old capital of revolutionary and aesthetic hopes. The *Poetry* archive also includes poems by, and complicated correspondences with, two women poets for whom México was both home and leitmotif: Mariam Storm, who lived in Uruapan and Guadalajara and wrote poems such as “Michoacán Scenes”; also Idella Purnell, based in Guadalajara, who along with Witter Bynner and Agustín Basave edited another important, though less well-known poetry magazine of American modernism, *The Palms* (1923-30).
Th guitarists house permits no noise, grand appearance.

Fri. Feb. 17 — I take Marion Davis to Tula xmacan — a lovely drive. We climb the first stage of Pyramids of the Sun, built of large boulders, roughly surfaced, with projections on Wh. stone slabs were fastened. We lunch in a grotto, give up the Pyr. of the Moon, & explore the big quad angular Temple of Quetzalcoatl, also the sacred serpent & other sculptures behind the central flight of steps, while Marion climbs but has to be helped down. Very hot. hot day.

Thur. — The English Setter runs with Donna, Pett. & I — a very up to coming young man who represents Crane’s Inst. of Int. national Relations at $1500 a month. His attractive wife is a dancer.

Stone of Natl. Crane!!

Fri. Feb. 17 — A Ho. — see above.
Another clue is worth mentioning, if only in passing: the 1970s photographs of Mexican authors by the poet and photographer Layle Silbert (1913-2003); Octavio Paz, La China Mendoza, Sergio Nudelstejer, Sandro Cohen, and others.
As Luis Leal recalled, there were two professors of Spanish language at the University of Chicago in the late 1930s, Salvador Narciso Treviño and Carlos Castillo (Luis Leal: Auto/Biography by Mario T. García, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2000). According to don Luis, Castillo was a Spaniard, but had lived in México, and was one of the few Spanish professors in the U.S. teaching literature beyond the Golden Age period. The University of Chicago Press archive includes correspondence, reviews, and papers related to Castillo’s projects: The University of Chicago Spanish Dictionary; a New Concise Spanish-English and English-Spanish Dictionary of Words and Phrases Basic to the Written and Spoken Languages of Today (UCP, 1948, reissued many times); and the pioneer Antología de la literatura Mexicana (UCP, 1944), coauthored with Luis Leal. “Before I left for war,” recalled Leal, “Professor Castillo had asked me to collaborate with him putting together an
anthology of Mexican literature.” It was published because it was, as Carlos Castillo wrote to UCP, the only one of its kind in the United States: “The anthology does not include the young poet or prose writers of the present generation, but it does include certain living writers whose work has achieved wide recognition.” It was none other than prominent Colombian intellectual Germán Arciniegas, then visiting professor at Chicago and a prominent member of the CCF, who read and approved the anthology, though he suggested the inclusion of other authors, such as Mariano Azuela, Martín Luis Guzmán, Carlos Pellicer, Julio Torri, Antonio Caso, and Samuel Ramos –which Castillo did not include.
Castillo’s book cover, UCP records.
Mr. J. T. McNeill
University of Chicago Press
Faculty Exchange

Dear Mr. McNeill:

I have looked over Professor Castillo’s manuscript entitled
Antologia de la literatura Mexicana. It seems to me that it
is a valuable book, of great assistance for teachers and
students of Mexican literature. The choice of pieces is very
well done and the colonial period seems to me especially complete.
My advice is that the book would be a good one to publish.

Nevertheless, I want to make a few suggestions. The first is
that at the end of each piece Professor Castillo should list the
book from which it is taken, as he did in some of the selections
like Amado Nervo’s. Second, I think that in the last part of
the anthology Professor Castillo ought to include some other
authors. You can suggest to him the following:

Novelists – Mariano Azuela, Lopez Fuentes, Martin Luis Guzman,

Poets – Carlos Pellicer,


Sincerely yours,

German Arciniegas
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Castillo was an intriguing case. On the one hand, he pioneered the study of Mexican literature in the U.S. His greatest legacies were perhaps the dictionary and the training of Luis Leal, who became a key personality in the institutionalization of the U.S. study, not only of Mexican letters, but also of Mexican-American literature. On the other, he seems to have been a true iberista, in the mold of José Vasconcelos in Mexico, R. Menéndez Pidal in Spain, or Aurelio Espinosa in the U.S. In iberista fashion, Castillo had a purist view of the essential Hispanic character of Mexican culture. In the Antología, he wrote about Mexican governments:

…han dejado infiltrar en el país un anglosaxonismo, ora saludable, ora nocivo, que ha diluido su latinidad e hispanidad. Empero, la lengua castellana ha conservado incólume, a tal grado que México sigue siendo lingüísticamente más castellano que algunas provincias de la península, pudiendo sus pueblos de la altiplanicie rivalizar con los de la mesa de Castilla en tesoros de rancia dicción. . .

With these views in mind, his text for the book Mexico (Chicago, Wheeler Publishing Company, 1939) becomes doubly intriguing. Castillo wrote the book in order to accompany the photos by well-known travel photographer Burton Holmes. From the turn of the century to the early 1940s, Burton Holmes was a prominent travel writer and photographer who published books on all sorts of places—full of exoticist views of alien civilizations. His pictures of Mexico included, for example, interesting exoticist depictions of children. As for Castillo’s argument, it was not very different from the majority of U.S. books published about Mexico between the 1880s and the 1940s. Yet the mystery of this text lies in the way it deals with women. Whereas travel accounts of the U.S. by Justo Sierra, Francisco Bulnes, or José Vasconcelos often spoke negatively of the power of the American Woman, Carlos Castillo depicted Mexico City as “A city ruled by woman.” At the same time, he deployed the exoticist imagery common to many U.S. accounts of Mexican travel: “…driving out of a boulevard, you find the traffic very heavy. Yet down the middle of the street, in the
midst of this traffic, you are as likely as not to see an Indian, driving a flock of turkeys to market. You cannot believe your eyes, but he goes, walking along slowly, quite unconcerned, his flock before him no more disturbed than their owner.”
In 1946, Norman A. McQuown joined the University of Chicago Anthropology Department. He studied under Sapir at Yale, and completed his dissertation under Leonard Bloomfield, one of the most distinguished philologists and linguists of the first part of the 20th century (also a Chicago professor from 1927 to 1940). As Mexican linguist and editor of McQuown’s work in Spanish, Paulette Levy, explains, the Chicago anthropologist dealt with “a grammar of the hitherto un-described Totonac language, the variety then spoken in Coatepec, Puebla. He was the first technical descriptor of any language of this linguistic family.” (P. Levy, personal communication.) He worked in the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, and established the University of Chicago into one of the places where one could train to get to the field with enough knowledge of the most important languages for the Mesoamericanist. In fact, upon arriving in Chicago, McQuown found a vast quantity of material on various languages of contemporary Mexico and Guatemala, all collected in the 1930s by Manuel J. Andrade (1885-1941). According to historian Terry Rugerley (Of Wonders and Wise Men, Austin, Texas University Press, 2001), Andrade was a Cuban, though he might have been from the Dominican Republic. What is certain is that he was a student of Sapir, and close to Boas. Aside from his collection of materials for the University, Andrade elaborated a grammar of Yucateco Maya, which McQuown made accessible posthumously. As McQuown recalled:

“In September, 1946, I was placed in charge of Carnegie Institution of Washington's Mayan Linguistic Research Program, initiated by Manuel J. Andrade, and carried forward by Abraham M. Halpern after Andrade's death in 1941. Andrade collected materials extensively in the various languages of the Mayan family, including over 500 phonographic recordings (300 in Mam, 112 en Yucatec, 55 in Quiche, 37 in Kanjobal, 32 in Huastec, 23 in Quekchi, and 5 en Aguacatec), dictated texts in these (and in Lacandone, and Pokoman), a volume of Cakchiquel texts written by Juan de
Dios Rosales, grammatical and vocabulary materials in all the foregoing (and in Ohuj, Bachahom, Palencano, Pokoman, and Tzutuhil). A Yucatec grammar based on intensive analysis of 214 Yucatec texts was prepared by Andrade before his death and is at present being processed for publication” (Presentation to M. Andrade, *Yucateco Grammar*).

McQuown organized and microfilmed Andrade’s material, along with reports by Tax, Redfield, Villa Rojas, Ricardo Pozas, Fernando Cámara Barbachano and others, thus gathering an important archive of Mesoamerican languages. (Microfilm collection of Manuscript in Cultural Anthropology, [http://moca.lib.uchicago.edu/moca.pdf](http://moca.lib.uchicago.edu/moca.pdf)). He also founded the Language Laboratory (now Language Laboratories and Archives), along with Eric P. Hamp. As Levy explains, McQuown’s input in the study of the languages of Mexico was invaluable. He was a true cultural broker, a man who could write in English, Spanish, and German. In a spirit very unlike that of our contemporary U.S.-centered scholarship, he immersed himself in Mexico’s intellectual life, publishing and writing in Spanish. As Levy put it: “Most institutions dealing with Mexican Indian languages have, at their origin, either the participation of McQuown himself, or of one of his students: Hopkins at CIESAS, Thomas Smith-Stark at El Colegio de México, T. Kaufman documenting Indian languages for INALI. McQuown himself had two extended stays at Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, UNAM. . .”

Chicago professor John Lucy has continued this work at the University of Chicago, teaching and collecting invaluable material on Yucatec and other languages. He is currently directing the digitizing of the material, making it available at the Center for Latin American Studies ([http://cailla.uchicago.edu/?page=home](http://cailla.uchicago.edu/?page=home)).

*
Another clue about this language-anthropology-México constellation is Paul Friedrich collection. Friedrich joined the faculty at the University of Chicago in 1963, and over the years held appointments in the departments of anthropology, linguistics, and the Committee on Social Thought. Trained in languages and ethno-logy, he joined the war effort, offering his linguistic skills (just as McQuown, knowing German and Russian, had done). Professor Friedrich is a unique character. He read Tolstoy in Russian while doing fieldwork in Michoacán, in the mid 1950s. Two important anthropological and historical works dealing with agrarian conflict resulted from this fieldwork, *Agrarian Revolt in a Mexican Village* (1970); *The Princes of Naranja: an Essay in Anthrohistorical Method* (1986). On top of this he also studied the Tarascan language (*A Phonology of Tarascan, 1975*).

To examine Friedrich’s papers is to catch a glimpse of a renaissance man at work. The son of a prominent Harvard political theorist and a poet versed in classical Greek and Latin, as well as modern American and Russian literatures, Friedrich became interested in México when he read Redfield’s Tepoztlán as a Harvard undergraduate, although the young Friedrich was also bothered by many of Redfield’s conclusions. Years later, reflecting on these years in *The Princes of Naranja*, he wrote, “While fascinated by Redfield’s ideas about what he called the “folk-urban” continuum, and while very taken by his precise and literary style, I rebelled most fundamentally against his views on politics, leadership, and political history… I wrote in my personal notebook as follows: ‘I wonder off-hand whether or not Redfield oversimplifies the homogeneity, the uniformity, the contentment and the resignation of the Tepoztlatecos (sic)…”

Indeed, throughout the Tarascan period of his scholarship, Friedrich became absorbed with the larger question of Chicago style anthropology, and felt the need to challenge it. The first installment of his dissertation, *Agrarian Revolt*..., consisted of a political, ecological, economic, and psychological history of Primo Tapia’s *cacicazgo*. (Perhaps another clue about
the México-Chicago connection, as Michoacán is one of the most common places of origin for Chicago’s Mexican immigrants and Tapia was for a while an immigrant in the U.S.) The book laid bare complex networks of violence, at local, state, and national levels—decades of caciques and assassinations. This very non-Redfield take on a small Mexican village was, needless to say, a healthy antidote to so many “community” studies.

Friedrich—whose papers and books are not short in autobiographical data—thought of returning to Naranja to write something else—an essay, more of a “think piece” on method and politics, using his 1950s ethnography as a point of departure. As the years passed, he worked on Russian literature, poetics, and other topics, often thinking of a new book on Naranja. Curiously, as he explains, it was in the Spring of 1981, in the context of the sixth Congreso de Historiadores de México y Estados Unidos, in Chicago, that “…Friedrich Katz crossed my path behind the Rockefeller Chapel (…) and urgently asked me to discuss the methods used in Agrarian Revolt with Jean Meyer, a French anthropologist (sic) specializing in México, who happened to be in Chicago for a two-day conference. I agreed and made a breakfast appointment. But then, feeling I didn’t fully understand or even remember the method, called the thing off, feeling guilty.” (The Princes of Naranja).

It was not until the death of his father, the political theorist, that Friedrich was able to write The Princes of Naranja, in order to reconnect, as he put it, with his prominent father… and with the Machiavellian moment he had experienced in Naranja (he found a copy of Machiavelli’s Prince, in Spanish, in the school library of Naranja). Friedrich’s papers include his field notes, among them annotations about Machiavelli in Naranja politics. His characters were far from the “traditional” Tonto, Listo, of Redfield’s Tepoztlán and of subsequent “community” studies.
It would be farfetched to say that Friedrich founded a school at the University of Chicago, the way Redfield and Tax did. His approach is unique—difficult to include in any
typology of anthropological or historical schools due to its literary, personal, psychological and historiographical nuances. But this makes his works all the more interesting. His papers at the Regenstein Library Special Collections include the careful narrative of daily experience, written in a poetic style, as well as complicated analyses of Tarascan Terms, where he tried to decipher, for instance, the different words used to refer to genitals. It includes intriguing pictures of Naranjas inhabitants in the 1950s, as well as poetry. Friedrich is among the selected few anthropologists—Renato Rosaldo, Stanley Diamond, and Michael Jackson among them—who have found secrets of language revealed in poetry, uncovering unsuspected dimensions of anthropological and social knowledge. (Friedrich wrote about this process in “The Culture in Poetry and the Poetry in Culture,” *Culture/Context*: *Explorations in Anthropology and Literary Studies*, edited by E.V. Daniel and J.M. Peck, 1996).

These anthropological, linguistic, and literary clues have led us to the topic of poetry. Let us complete our investigation by following this trail.

The records of Poetry include what are, to my knowledge, the earliest English versions of Ramón López Velarde’s poetry. As it turns out, they were translated by a historian/anthropologist, H.R. Hays (1904-1980). He traveled to Mexico in 1939, knowing little Spanish. There he met the Revueltas brothers, learned Spanish, and translated José Revueltas’ *El Luto humano* (published as *The Stone Knife*, 1947). He became fascinated by poetry in Spanish and became one of the most influential translators of Neruda’s poetry into English. His 1943 translation of two poems by López Velarde (1888-1921) for *Poetry*, made the strange, complicated metaphors of the Zacatecas poet accessible in English:

What delightful madness to be saying
in my poverty, in my forsakenness,
I am most rich, richer that a grand vizier:
the heart that loved is turned into a beacon!

¡que adorable manía de decir
en mi pobreza y en mi desamparo:
soy muy rico, muy más, que un gran visir:
el corazón que amé se ha vuelto faro!

The poetry clues do not end there: in the Regenstein Library’s Special Collections, the papers of Drew McCord Stroud (Ryu Makoto) (1944-) also display an important Mexican connection. To this poet and translator, expatriate in Japan, a great connoisseur of Mexican letters, we ought the translation of Xavier Villaurrutia’s poetry. In his papers, one can witness the careful editing of the various versions of his translations, attempts at making accessible a poet who represented the cutting edge of the Mexican avant-garde while remaining a sort of formal classicist.

Where Villaurrutia (1903-1950) writes (“Inventar la verdad”) “Oigo mi corazón latir sangrando,” Stroud experimented with “I hear my wounded bloody heart,” but feels happier in the more poetic “I hear my heart beat as it bleeds.” And, in translating the conceptual deepness of Villaurrutia’s music, Stroud decided to highlight the music in translation:

¡Qué prueba de la existencia
habrá mayor que la suerte
de estar viviendo sin verte
y muriendo en tu presencia!
Esta lúcida conciencia
de amar a lo nunca visto
y de esperar lo imprevisto;
este caer sin llegar
es la angustia de pensar
que puesto que muero existo.

What better proof of being
than to have the luck in essence
to be dying n your presence
while I live you without seeing;
In this love without excrescence
just to wait without defying.
And this fall without bottom
in the anguish of a Sodom
where the proof of love is dying.
WHAT DELIGHTFUL MADNESS

Santo López Velarde (Mex.)
tr. by H. R. Hay

What delightful madness to be saying
In my poverty, in my forsakenness
I am most rich, richer than a grand vizier:
The heart that loved is turned into a beacon!

When my flesh is wearied
Of tasting love beside the living flesh
And when I perish in amazement
Seeing the sword in the sand
My sex leaves in perennial supplication:
Suddenly I see the world transformed
Into a lovesick mausoleum...

And my heart drinks a black wine in its torture
And an echoing migratory skeleton
Like a lute goes walking down the road.

And so that I may know the password,
Beneath its skull are tied
The ribbons of the pastor's hat.

Within its empty aromatic cranium
An eternal essence of viaticum is borne
And, lastly, in the depths of its bright breast,
Bright with Zion and with Purgatory,
In the spot where once it had a heart,
It lets me drink the radiance of a beacon.
As the clues lead us through the connections between poetry-anthropology-Chicago-México—let us end with Paul Friedrich who in the midst of Naranja in 1953, ventured to lay down a poem among his sacrosanct scientific field notes:

A Leading Quatraine for Acculturation.

I know not who this Indian is
A bow within his hand,
But he is standing by a tree
and watching white men land.

***

When Daniel Boone goes by at night
the phantom deer arise
and all lost wild America
is turning their eyes.
Paul Friedrich, anthropologist, lover of the classics, scholar of the Tarascan language, explorer of a purepecha Machiavelli and of the knowledge powers of poetry, reached a higher poetic pitch in the 1970s, leaving behind the nostalgia of lost traditions,
(Neighboring Leaves Ride This Wind, Chicago 1976):

Poesis and Community

the poem arises as I reciprocate an Indian
who cannot read but hears the wind in the maize
and the language for that wind
from his shingled house outside an actual village
of wherever there lives an ensemble in empathy
of those who preserve
the essential cocked ear
for the code’s margin
where sounds tilt a bit toward a nakedness of vowels
and the antennae, unsigned, pick up what I intended
you should hear.

*

There are many more clues about the connections between the University of Chicago and Mexico in these archives. There are, for instance, the papers of my colleague and friend Friedrich Katz. But I have neither the perspective nor the detachment to sail those waters. Deceitful remembrance and reckless admiration would be my only guides. Let us leave these clues for a later time and sharper sleuths. The clues will certainly keep piling up at the Regenstein Library’s Special Collections.