

CONTINUITY
& CHANGE

THE COLLEGE AS A
SPONSOR OF RESEARCH
AND TEACHING

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OCCASIONAL PAPERS
ON HIGHER
EDUCATION III

THE COLLEGE
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

C O N T I N U I T Y & C H A N G E :

*The College as a Sponsor
of Research and Teaching*



warm welcome to all of you for this, the final academic year of the twentieth century. Last year was an exciting and intense year, and I would like to thank all the colleagues who worked so hard through the debate on the future of the curriculum and on the important issues involving the calendar and the issues of retention and attrition. I am most grateful to the Collegiate Masters and Divisional Deans—Philippe Desan, Dennis Hutchinson, Sidney Nagel, José Quintans, Steve Walt, Philip Gossett, David Oxtoby, Richard Saller, and Glenn Steele, Jr.—and I offer special thanks to Leora Auslander, Bert Cohler, Kathleen Conzen, Dottie Hanck, David Jablonski, Rashid Khalidi, Mike LaBarbera, Carole Ober, Moishe Postone, Bob Rosner, Ted Steck, Lorna Straus, and Bob Zimmer for their leadership in our deliberations. I am grateful to John MacAloon, Sander Gilman, and Philippe Desan for wise counsel on the issues of international and second-language education. Dennis Hutchinson, with or without his personal copy of Robert's *Rules of Order*, was truly remarkable.

The result of our efforts will be a curriculum of thirds, affording an intensive general-education experience in the first two years in the College followed by an array of strong concentrations, a modestly enhanced

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number of free electives, and important new approaches to second-language acquisition and international study. A highlight of the new program is increased attention to and confidence in free electives. I believe that there was broad, although certainly not unanimous consensus that it was a good thing to expand modestly the number of free electives, and that free electives should not be viewed merely as an afterthought, what's left over after our students complete the faculty's regime of prescription. Rather, as our colleagues in the 1930s realized, electives are opportunities for students to pursue the excitement of discovery, to take responsibility for the shaping of their own education, and to build upon the common learning of the first year in ways that create a personal intellectual trajectory for each of them.

Perhaps one of the most important innovations to come forth from the review was a refocusing and expansion of our efforts on second-language education and international education, and, indeed, the conviction that we should view both of these areas as closely and even inextricably linked. Robert Redfield once observed that "We are all islanders to begin with. An acquaintance with another culture, a real and deep acquaintance, is a release of the mind and the spirit from that isolation. It is to learn a universal language." Cross-cultural and second-language education are thus intellectual and instructional domains where I personally believe we can properly and justifiably encourage our students to use some of their additional free elective space with considerable profit.

For a transitional year, we made extraordinary progress in these areas. This summer we inaugurated the new Foreign Language Acquisition Grant (FLAG) program, awarding twenty-five grants to College students to work in total-immersion, intermediate, and advanced language training at foreign-language institutes all over the world. Chicago students studied Breton, Chinese, Czech, French, Gaelic, German, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Polish, Russian, and Spanish. This coming summer—1999—we will

award fifty FLAG grants, and for the summer of 2000 we have assembled funds to award one hundred FLAG grants. Our long-term, steady-state goal beginning in the summer of 2001 is to be able to offer at least two hundred FLAG grants each summer, which will put us well on our way to achieving the goal that I articulated last February of having at least one-third and hopefully one-half of each graduating class attain communicative fluency in a foreign language.

A rising third-year student, with two years of Russian at the College and who had selected Russian Civilization for her Civ requirement recently reported enthusiastically to me about her experience in St. Petersburg on a FLAG grant, living with a family of artists and studying advanced Russian. She found the experience of learning in Russian about many of the places and events first introduced in Russian Civ quite illuminating, and she reported that, even though many aspects of daily life in Russia were difficult (the unreliable running water, for example), the direct experience with the language, the culture, and the people offered her much more that was positive. This student plans now to double major in History and Russian Civ. I can think of no better testimony to the value to our students of what we are doing.

In addition, I am delighted to report that forty-seven College students were among the first cohort of winners of our new Foreign Language Proficiency Certificate. The Chicago Certificate program is more rigorous than that recently adopted by Harvard and Princeton, since in addition to a formal competency exam adapted from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, Chicago also requires students to spend at least three months living outside the United States and improving their language skills *in situ*. In support of this venture we have recently established intermediate level language programs in Pisa, Toledo, Tours, Cologne, and Costa Rica, and we hope to establish similar programs for the less commonly taught languages in the near future.

This coming summer we will launch intensive, Middlebury-style residential language programs on campus, as a complement to the FLAG program.

Our new language programs were complemented by new programs in Civilizational Studies in the world. Last year saw the successful operation of programs in Barcelona and Tours, and this year Rome and Athens will join the list. Next year we hope to have programs organized in Buenos Aires and in Vienna, all taught by our own faculty, using our own courses and course materials.

We will also have research internships for students in the Biological Sciences in Mexico City, research internships for students in the Physical Sciences in Strasbourg, and two internships with the European Community headquarters in Brussels, open to all students. In the years ahead I believe that the College should substantially expand the number of summer research and professional internships in foreign countries, thus providing our students with even more concrete opportunities to gain direct knowledge of another culture and experience with a second language. International internships also provide a wonderful complement to our mushrooming programs of domestic research and professional internships, programs that have been organized and sustained by the generous efforts of many Chicago alumni/ae under the aegis of the Jeff Metcalf Internship Program, the Smithsonian Research Internship Program, and the new program of internships at Steppenwolf Theater organized by Curt Columbus and Herman Sinaiko.

This summer the College received a grant of \$1.3 million from the Mellon Foundation to support the on-campus infrastructure of language study in the most frequently taught languages. I thank Sander Gilman, Karen Landahl, and all of the other colleagues who collaborated on this proposal. Over the course of five years, the grant will support the hiring of

specialists in the teaching of some of the most frequently taught languages (in the first year: German, Russian, and Chinese or Japanese), renovation of our language laboratory and the creation of new language learning centers in the residence halls, curriculum development grants in support of language instruction, and the appointment of a new Associate Dean of the College for International and Second-Language Education. The Associate Dean will oversee the full range of new and existing initiatives in international and second-language education both on and off campus. Searches are now in progress to fill all of the new positions, and I am very hopeful that the new Associate Dean will be hired and in place not later than February 1999.

In addition to these many and important initiatives in international and second-language education, I hope that individual faculty and groups will come together to develop other new and stimulating courses and course clusters that have strong interdisciplinary orientation and that we can make available to students on the level of advanced free electives. Although Chicago has never had a formal system of minors, I believe that Wayne Booth was correct when he urged the faculty in September 1965 to think about “[a]s rich a program of ‘general electives’ as possible, to be available to those students who, though not ‘majors,’ have developed a strong secondary interest in a given area. Students often complain now that having an interest aroused in a general [Core] course, they find no way of pursuing that interest short of entering a field of concentration.” It would be very advantageous if our various concentration programs and indeed our departments were to take up Wayne’s challenge, now over thirty years on the table, and in so doing exploit fully the possibilities created by our enhancement of elective opportunities.

It would be especially good if we could develop courses appropriate for fourth-year College students that would provide interdisciplinary capstone experiences beyond their general-education and concentration

courses. I am therefore particularly grateful for initiatives like that proposed by Bill Wimsatt and J. Paul Hunter to develop a set of what Bill Wimsatt has intriguingly called “Big Problems” courses. The purpose of the “Big Problems” courses will be to bring faculty and advanced College students together around issues that cut across disciplinary boundaries in a setting that will encourage the kind of courageous and integrative questioning that we expect in our community. I hope that colleagues will rise to the interesting and fascinating challenge of developing team-taught courses that we could offer to our graduating seniors, thus re-creating in a context and with a structure appropriate to our time the original intent of the OII—that is, Observation, Interpretation, and Integration—and the Western Civilization courses as they existed in the later 1940s and early 1950s. The recent success enjoyed by the new interdisciplinary Human Rights course, developed under the leadership of Rashid Khalidi, Robert Kirschner, Jacqueline Bhabha, and Michael Geyer, suggests that when our faculty design attractive and challenging interdisciplinary courses, our students will respond in an extremely positive and enthusiastic manner.

Another innovation in last year’s reform was the overt sanctioning of the idea of two-quarter course clusters, or in Sid Nagel’s felicitous phrase, “doublets.” The idea of such gen-ed doublets actually has a reasonably long history, dating at least to the late 1950s. Indeed, in the late 1950s and early 1960s the Civ requirement in the College was a two-quarter requirement. At a meeting of the College Faculty in January 1959, Knox Hill observed that “[w]e think the Faculty should remember that a 2-quarter course at the University of Chicago amounts to more than one might think in comparison with one-year courses at other colleges.” The idea reappeared during the 1965–66 curriculum debates, during which both Wayne Booth and Richard Lewontin (who is now the Agassiz Professor at Harvard University but at the time was Professor of Biology at

Chicago) proposed the idea of a series of two-quarter gen-ed courses that would build upon a common first-year experience. Wayne Booth urged the College faculty in November 1965 to “free ourselves from the necessity of thinking only of year-long courses.” Booth’s and Lewontin’s proposals were too radical for the time and were immediately shot down (crushed would probably be a more accurate description), but the idea arose again in the early 1980s when the SSCD faculty again considered the possibility of two-quarter Civ courses, an idea that in turn was in play during the early and middle stages of the 1984–85 curriculum debates as well.

Such “doublet” courses could have the immense advantage in today’s College of being much more likely to be taught by the same faculty member. Of course, such an element of progress would depend on the willingness of some of us to return to teaching at least two general-education courses each academic year, which I very much hope that more faculty will be willing to consider doing. Such courses could afford teams of faculty constituted as staffs the chance to develop innovative new courses within reasonable time horizons; by encouraging more faculty participation, they would allow us to reduce somewhat our now quite heavy reliance on graduate students as stand-alone lecturers. I hope that we will see a number of new and revised courses in this new format, and I hope that we will also see many, if not most of them taught by us, the faculty. That would be good for our students and exciting for the faculty, and would help to strengthen our precious heritage as a faculty-taught College.

The idea of doublets leads naturally to the structure of the calendar. The report of the Rosner Committee last year revealed widespread support on the part of both faculty and students for retaining the quarter system. Like the curriculum debate, the calendar debate was honestly resolved. The majority won, which is how the process should work, and even though I personally favored shifting to a semester system, I have no

desire to second guess that decision. Truth be told, the quarter system does allow great flexibility for students and even greater flexibility for the faculty. Having sanctioned the retention of the quarter system, should we not seek ways that would allow us to exploit the flexibility of the quarter system to the advantage of our students? For example, in the case of gen-ed doublets, what about fusing two ten-week quarter courses into a single twenty-week block and structuring examination, paper-writing, and grading requirements accordingly? In my department we routinely teach our graduate seminars over two quarters, and the results are impressive from a pedagogical perspective. From personal experience I can report that a twenty-week course is not the same as two ten-week courses, since one thinks completely differently about the basic design of the course. Or, to move in a different direction, why not develop intensively taught courses in one quarter for double credit (six as opposed to three credits)? Surely this would make eminent sense in second-language acquisition, but it might be appropriate elsewhere as well. I urge more creative thought about how to make the best use of our venerable structural flexibility.

Finally, a word on our uniqueness, a word that was much discussed and invoked last year. Uniqueness, like all mystical values—nationalism and religion might be other examples—can be good, but it can also be bad. It all depends. What is esteemed as unique by one generation can be viewed as relic-like and even stifling by another. We might want to remember that new and innovative academic programs can also result in new forms of uniqueness. A College that can claim—as I hope we will be shortly able to do—that nearly half of its students graduate genuinely fluent in a second language with substantial cross-cultural knowledge of another society and culture would also be unique, and unique in a way particularly appropriate for the global challenges of the twenty-first century.

All this is to suggest that we live in a historic time, but we also live in our time and not someone else's time. As I have read through the various archives relating to the history of the College over the past several years, I have been impressed by how historically dependent we have been upon the creativity and energy of non-tenured and recently tenured faculty members. It is not too much of an exaggeration to argue that much of what we currently value in the College was work first undertaken by colleagues when they were assistant and associate professors.

And so, I conclude the first part of my remarks today with an appeal to the current generation of assistant and associate professors. As much if not more than the College of my generation, this should be the College of your generation. I urge you to commit yourselves to its work, to bring your enormously creative energies to bear in shaping our future, and to take possession of the curriculum by developing new courses and indeed new programs that make sense to you and to which you are passionately committed. Do not be intimidated by the invocations of the virtues of worlds long gone. The brilliance of what past generations accomplished was appropriate to their time, and we honor and will continue to honor those colleagues for their work. But just as they used their time well, I urge you to use your time well, to take possession of the College, to shape its courses and programs, and to contribute your energy and your vision for its work. I urge you especially to take up the responsibilities of cooperative course design and to help us broaden the work of electives to provide interdisciplinary opportunities for students from outside your particular concentrations. This is a wonderful College with a great history, but its future is even more promising. That future should have strong elements of continuity with the past, but it should also have some shocking surprises and unexpected twists and turns. Help us with the continuity, but give us some shocking surprises and unexpected twists and turns as well.

**INNOVATION, TEACHING,
AND FACULTY RESEARCH**

would like to devote the remainder of this report to three themes that are, at first glance, seemingly unconnected: that we are a College existing within a major research university, sharing faculty almost exclusively nowadays with the graduate divisions; that we have always been a College deeply interested in international education; and that our College has always felt the need for ongoing curricular innovation informed by faculty research on the level of individual courses and clusters of courses.

I would like to link these themes by telling a story. The story that I am about to tell affords an instructive example of a teaching and research project, born in the general context of a College course, traveling through an extremely ambitious program of faculty research funded by a major foundation, and ending up back in other and newer College courses. So, my story leads from teaching, to research, and back to teaching again, and demonstrates the power of pedagogical innovation sparked by combining scholarly research and new formats of collegiate instruction. It also demonstrates that in our tradition the most innovative courses have arisen from a combination of faculty research acumen and individual or small-group faculty leadership, not from top-down ideological dictates from the Dean's Office.

I will focus on the origins of the non-Western Civilization courses in the mid-1950s as a conceptual and operational enterprise, and this fits rather nicely with the points I made today about the importance of cross-cultural and second-language learning opportunities in today's College.

This has always been a University and a College interested in the world, but the immediate post-war period of the late 1940s was a time

to be particularly interested in the world. One of the earliest systematic ways of looking at the world beyond the United States was through the lens of civilizational studies. The idea of Civ teaching began here in the 1930s, when the Humanities General Education course and what we now know as the History of Western Civilization course were essentially one and the same, taught jointly by historians and scholars of literature and philosophy.

As a result of the curricular reforms that occurred in the early 1940s, the professional historians essentially found themselves disinvented from the Humanities sequence, and when they fought their way back into the curriculum in 1947–48 with a separate Western Civilization course, they did so by clashing with a group of colleagues led by Richard McKeon who advocated a more analytical and conceptual structure for the new course, one more fitting to the overarching design of the Hutchins College curriculum.¹ Following Hutchins's departure from the University in 1951 and the slow, but inevitable political collapse of their neo-Aristotelian rivals, the professional historians were able to declare victory and eventually take full possession of "their" course, which led Daniel Bell in his book *The Reforming of General Education* to observe that, ironically, one of the longest surviving courses from the epoch of the Hutchins College has been the one most divorced from that curriculum's original intellectual

1. The essential narrative of this conflict is described in Neil J. Wilkof, "History and the Grand Design. The Impact of the History of Western Civilization Course on the Curriculum of the College of the University of Chicago." M.A. thesis, Department of Education, The University of Chicago, 1973. But see also William H. McNeill, *Hutchins' University. A Memoir of the University of Chicago 1929–1950* (Chicago, 1991), pp. 112–114, 152–55.

aims.² The real innovation of the Western Civilization course of 1947–48 was its method—the systematic use of original documents as the basis for small-group discussions. In substance, Western Civ soon settled down to become a rather conventional if attractive and popular introduction to major topics in European history, and its capacity to innovate evolved over time, as subsequent generations of younger scholars tried to and continue to try to reinvent its presentation based on new trends in scholarship.

A much more arresting intellectual narrative occurred, however, on the front of the non-Western Civs, and here the story leads us again back to the College of the 1940s. As a part of the curricular changes effected in 1942, the Social Sciences General Education course from the 1930s was completely redesigned. Under the New Plan that Chauncey Boucher developed in the early 1930s, the College's general education program consisted of year-long courses in the Humanities, in both of the Natural Sciences, and in the Social Sciences. When the grades-eleven-to-fourteen College was fully established in 1942, encompassing the last two years of high school as well as the first two of college, these year-long courses were transformed and expanded into multi-year sequences. Within the domain of the Social Sciences, Social Sciences 1 was devoted to the study of American institutions and American public policy by means of extensive reading of original documents. The noted documentary collection known as *The People Shall Judge* was generated by this course, under the initial leadership of Robert Keohane and Bernard Drell. Social Sciences 1 was then followed by Social Sciences 2 which focused on the themes of “personality and culture” and Social Sciences 3 which explored the themes of “freedom

2. Daniel Bell, *The Reforming of General Education* (New York, 1966), p. 36; Gilbert Allardyce, “The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course,” *American Historical Review*, 87 (1982): 712–14.

and order.”³ In *The Idea and Practice of General Education* published in 1950, Milton Singer, who then served as chair of the Social Sciences Staff, described the special role that Soc 2 came to occupy:

In the division of labor among the three courses, the task of examining the possibilities and limitations of studying human nature and society in a scientific spirit falls largely to Social Sciences 2. This task is focused on the relation of an individual’s personality to his culture, a problem which naturally interests the student at this stage of his life. And it so happens that this is one of the liveliest fields in the social sciences, with many established classics available on our own and other cultures and many relevant works appearing in cultural anthropology, psychology, and sociology. Moreover it is a field in which scientific analysis can and does lead to better human understanding of interpersonal and intergroup relations. . . . Unlike the first course, Social Sciences 2 is concerned not exclusively with the student’s own society and culture but with societies in general and with widely contrasting types of culture. The student is thus led to view his own society as but one member of the species “society” and to look for the common characteristics of all societies. . . . Finally, the question of deliberate social change and maintenance is raised. . . . The consideration of such questions invites the student to look at his society’s development in broad perspective and to start thinking about the problems of policy which he will encounter in Social Sciences 3.⁴

3. F. Champion Ward, ed., *The Idea and Practice of General Education* (Chicago, 1950), p. 124.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 127–129.

The course Singer described had taken shape in the 1946–47 academic year under the leadership of a group of young Chicago College social scientists chaired by David Riesman. Riesman has written about his effort, supported by Singer, to incorporate extensive empirical material into the course: “I looked for unprocessed data which students and their mentors could interpret (for example, unprocessed field notes from community studies, or life histories, or the actual questionnaires used in a public opinion survey).”⁵ The result was a course that mixed iconic works in social theory with the materials of empirical social science, including treatments of race in America, child rearing among the Hopi, and the organization of industrial society, but the context was decidedly theoretical. The point of the course was to use materials from the students’ own and from other cultures to raise fundamental issues about social scientific reasoning and social scientific methodology.

Among the senior faculty members serving as lecturers during the first year of the new Soc 2 was Robert Redfield, a professor in the Department of Anthropology, from 1934 to 1946 the Dean of the Division of the Social Sciences, and in 1952 the first holder of the Robert Maynard Hutchins Distinguished Service Professorship. Robert Redfield had undertaken his graduate work in Anthropology at Chicago in the 1920s under Fay-Cooper Cole but was also influenced by the sociologist Robert Park (who was his father-in-law). Redfield’s scholarly career took decisive shape during field work at Tepoztlán near Mexico City. This was one of the first anthropological studies of a modern “peasant” community as opposed to an isolated “primitive” group. At Tepoztlán Redfield came to develop his model of the self-contained peasant community or folk society.

5. John J. MacAloon, ed., *General Education in the Social Sciences* (Chicago, 1992), p. 188.

Although a folk society such as that at Tepoztlán retained a locally self-sustaining life and structure, he also saw it, and other communities in subsequent years, as coming gradually under the influence of urban life. His earliest work was therefore an account of social change along what he came to call the folk-urban continuum. During the 1930s, Redfield and others extended this fieldwork to several villages in Yucatán and Guatemala. This decade-long project, funded by the Carnegie Institution, was a detailed empirical study of what the villagers believed, how they lived, and how all that changed as they became, through conquest, migration, or economic development, urbanized.

Writing in 1942, Redfield characterized the folk societies he had been studying as “traditional, spontaneous, and uncritical,” where “what one man does is much the same as what another man does,” and “patterns of conduct are clear and remain constant throughout the generations.” He added: “The value of every traditional act or object or institution is, thus, something which the members of the society are not disposed to call into question. . . . This characteristic of the folk society may be briefly referred to by saying that it is a sacred society.”⁶ Redfield observed and documented the disintegrating process of the transition from folk society to urbanization. Near the end of his retrospective 1942 lecture Redfield said:

The principal conclusion is that the less isolated and more heterogeneous communities of the peninsula of Yucatán are, the more secular and individualistic and the more characterized by disorganization of culture. It further appeared probable that there

6. Margaret Park Redfield, ed., *Human Nature and the Study of Society. The Papers of Robert Redfield. Volume 1* (Chicago, 1962), p. 245.

was, in the changes taking place in Yucatán, a relation of interdependence among these changing characteristics, especially between the disorganization of culture and secularization. “People cease to believe because they cease to understand, and they cease to understand because they cease to do the things that express the understandings.” New jobs and other changes in the division of labor bring it about that people cannot participate in the old rituals, and, ceasing to participate, they cease to share the values for which the rituals stood. This is, admittedly, however, only a part of the explanation.⁷

Redfield’s last sentence anticipates a powerful transition which the war and the post-war world would force on his thought and on his collaborations with his colleagues. The coming of World War II affected American universities in many and sundry ways, and one of the most intriguing was the phenomenon of the wartime area studies programs developed on university campuses. Robert McCaughey has characterized this period in the development of international studies in America as the “Years that were Fat,” alluding to the fiscally and intellectually rewarding partnerships that evolved between various governmental agencies and the American research universities during World War II.⁸ These programs were marked by urgency and ad hoc innovation, since their goal was to mobilize and

7. Ibid., pp. 251–2. (Internal quotation is of Redfield’s own *The Folk Culture of Yucatán*, p. 364.)

8. Robert A. McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise: A Chapter in the Enclosure of American Learning* (New York, 1984), pp. 113–39; Richard D. Lambert, et al., *Beyond Growth: The Next Stage in Language and Area Studies* (Washington, D.C., 1984), pp. 4–10.

to train experts in the languages and the cultures of localities crucial to the war effort. This was not the first and certainly not the last urgent national effort to close a gap between America's tasks as a world power and the nation's resources as developed in the context of peacetime.

Not surprisingly, the success of wartime area studies and the dangers of the American position in the immediate post-war world created a strong demand for continued government and University support for international education after the war. Robert Redfield had been Dean of the Division of the Social Sciences in 1943 when the University established an Army Specialized Training School for language and area study and a Civil Affairs Training School.⁹ In late April 1944, Redfield participated in a Social Sciences Research Council conference in New York on the future of area studies. Redfield was critical of the intellectual narrowness of the wartime projects, and he urged that the post-war continuation of area studies be placed on a more solid scholarly footing in a context that demanded not only the immediately useful of faculty and of students: "[t]he ends of universities are not the same as the ends of the wartime area programs. The ends of a university are education and research. The ends of the wartime area programs are training and more training." In this essay Redfield considered the possibility of using an area studies approach in collegiate general education programs, weighing the costs as well as the benefits of inviting young American students to study something other than or in addition to American culture and history. He believed that

the area program does offer the opportunity to devise a fresh plan for a general education. It does involve a degree of coordination

9. Richard H. Davis, *South Asia at Chicago: A History* (Chicago, 1985), pp. 18–19.

of effort on the part of teachers representing different subjects. It does take a complex subject matter—the customs, institutions, language, and literature of a country—and treats this subject matter as the natural whole that it is, bringing to bear upon it the illumination provided by the established disciplines. It may be less atomistic, more integrated, than many programs offered in colleges and universities. . . . It may [also] communicate something of the manner of thought of a people different from ourselves, and it may do so, in some part at least, through the medium of the language of that people.

But it was the end of his essay, where he took up the issue of the need for substantial new scholarly research to make such collegiate educational programs even possible, that is most relevant for us today. Redfield argued that

one university or another might well seriously make an effort in that direction with an Institute of Far Eastern Studies, or Russian Studies, or Latin American Studies. Such an enterprise would look to the long future, and would be content to develop a few first-rate scholars dealing with one aspect or another of the region chosen, and talking often with each other about their work. Such an enterprise would combine the study of books and texts with field study of the people living in the area today. The organization would include both representatives of the humanities and social scientists. For the conception which would give unity to the effort would be not so much the spatial fact that China or Russia or Latin America is one part of the earth's surface, as the fact of culture. These students would all

be concerned with a traditional way of life that had maintained a distinguishing character over long time, to great consequence for mankind. A literate people expresses its traditional way of life in what is written; and every people expresses it in institutions and customs and everyday behavior. Ultimately the conception of culture as a naturally developed round of life and the conception of culture as enlightenment through mental and moral training, go back to the same reality: a people with a way of life that is or can be a subject of reflective study. The regional program of research may take the form of long study of the great world cultures.¹⁰

Clearly, Redfield believed that comparative cultural studies should play an important role in post-war university educational programs, and his thoughts in 1944 contained the germ of the research project that was to preoccupy him in the 1950s as well as an early articulation of the place of social scientific cultural studies in general education which was to influence the development of Soc 2.

The end of the Second World War by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 accelerated the importance of internationalist thinking for many members of the American academy. A number of leading Chicago scholars in 1945 and 1946 became deeply preoccupied with the idea of world government or at least of international control of nuclear weapons and technology. Redfield joined Hutchins's Committee to Frame a World Constitution, and that work, as well as the deeply pessimistic

10. "Area Programs in Education and Research," April 27, 1944, pp. 3, 8, 14. Box 60, Robert Redfield Papers. See also Milton Singer, "Robert Redfield's Development of a Social Anthropology of Civilizations," in John V. Murra, ed., *American Anthropology. The Early Years* (St. Paul, 1976), pp. 191-95.

trajectory of world affairs in the early Cold War and the direction of his own scholarship, led him to think increasingly of the importance of comparative civilizational studies—fleshing out the ideas of his April 1944 memorandum and seeking for the right institutional responses from the world of learning. Two weeks after the explosion of the first atomic weapon, he wrote to his daughter Lisa about the dangers of a world gone mad:

What does one think of now but the new world, with its fear, and the hope that grows large out of the very bigness of the fear? One muses, and one wonders why this crisis in the world, the immense leap in the preposterous acceleration of man's technology, this threat, greater than all other threats, to man's existence—and one wonders why it should come when you and I are alive, just now, in this generation.¹¹

Milton Singer has characterized the shift in Redfield's intellectual perspective in the years after 1945 as away from "a synchronic, functionalist comparison along the folk-urban continuum and towards direct historical studies of a folk-civilization continuum."¹² George Stocking has described Redfield's move as one of going beyond the study of local folk societies to the study of the great traditions "in which these societies

11. Letter of August 19, 1945. The first two pages of the letter are reprinted in George W. Stocking, Jr., *Anthropology at Chicago: Tradition, Discipline, Department* (Chicago, 1979), p. 30.

12. Milton Singer, "Robert Redfield, 1897–1958," in Edward Shils, ed., *Remembering the University of Chicago. Teachers, Scientists, and Scholars* (Chicago, 1991), p. 421.

were encompassed. . . . He hoped that a comparative study of the actual ‘constellations of characteristics’ produced historically by this transformation would permit generalization about the circumstances ‘that tend to give rise to a civilization.’ . . . [H]e was also interested in characterizing cultures as wholes in terms of their fundamental values or modes of thought.”¹³ Clearly Redfield’s work developed from an effort to document the evolutionary mechanisms of movement along the folk-urban continuum into a study of how different human communities have negotiated the relationship between daily cultural life and the great traditions—political, literary, religious—that influenced and are influenced by them. Another way to describe this move is to note that in the 1950s Redfield came to think more in terms of a folk-civilization continuum than a folk-urban continuum. Civilization represents the ideals and values of the great traditions, whereas folk society embodies those of the little traditions. But if a theoretical impulse to refine the possibilities of scientific comparison was integral to this project, it was also driven by a forthright and passionate internationalism as well.

These challenging ideas eventually led Redfield to formulate an ambitious research program on the comparison of cultures, and in late November 1949 Robert Hutchins presented a proposal to Charles Dollard, President of the Carnegie Corporation for an Institute of Cultural Studies that was to provide the resources to operationalize Redfield’s research program. Hutchins argued that “[t]he study of nations is proposed in terms that will not offend academic, religious or national prejudices. The study of values should lay the foundation for that rapprochement between diverse cultures which is the crying need of our contemporary

13. Stocking, *Anthropology at Chicago*, p. 35.

world.”¹⁴ Unfortunately, this ambitious recasting of Redfield’s ideas of 1944 was rejected by the Carnegie Corporation. But two-and-a-half years later—in August 1951—Redfield was more successful and saw a proposal for a research program in comparative intercultural studies approved by the board of the Ford Foundation. Though the Ford Project never achieved the scale of the original vision, we are still enjoying the institutional and intellectual fruits of Robert Redfield’s reimagining of wartime area studies.

In 1946 Redfield completed twelve years as Dean of the Division of the Social Sciences. After stepping down from the Deanship, Redfield agreed to chair temporarily the Social Sciences program in the College, and in 1947 he drew upon his 1944 essay and his subsequent experience to write an essay on “The Study of Culture in General Education.” Here he argued:

To describe this process of getting acquainted with people with a culture different from our own is to recognize the experience as liberalizing. We are all limited in our understanding of our own conduct and that of our neighbors because we see everything by the preconceptions offered by our own culture. It is a task of education to provide a viewpoint from which the educated person may free himself from the limitations of these preconceptions. We are all islanders to begin with. An acquaintance with another culture, a real and deep acquaintance, is a release

14. Hutchins to Dollard, November 23, 1949, Box 5, Robert Redfield Ford Foundation Cultural Studies Papers. This collection, as well as all other archival materials cited in this report, is located in the Department of Special Collections, The University of Chicago Library.

of the mind and the spirit from that isolation. It is to learn a universal language.¹⁵

Redfield's views of the importance of comparative cultural studies had a wide intramural influence. Milton Singer later reported that "[w]hen I succeeded Redfield as chairman of the College social sciences staff and program, I circulated a manuscript copy of the 'The Study of Culture in General Education' among the staff. It was discussed by the faculty of the second-year social science course ('Soc. Sci. 2') who were at that time considering a major revision of the course under the direction of David Riesman." In September 1948, Morton Grodzins openly acknowledged the staff's gratitude to Redfield, "whose views on general education—especially as expressed in his paper 'The Study of Culture in General Education'—have substantially influenced the present direction of the course."¹⁶

If Robert Redfield contributed much to the new shape of Soc 2 at Chicago, there was a reciprocity in that Soc 2 provided a critical collaborator and fellow comparativist for Redfield in Milton Singer, a young American philosopher turned social theorist. Singer had received his Ph.D. from our Department of Philosophy in 1940 with a dissertation on the history of formal method in mathematical logic. However, even in graduate school Singer was also interested in the philosophy of the social sciences, and in 1941 he was hired to teach in the College's Social Sciences program. As Redfield's successor as Chairman of the Social Sciences Staff between 1947 and 1952, Singer helped David Riesman and others

15. Margaret Park Redfield, ed., *The Social Uses of Social Science: The Papers of Robert Redfield. Volume 2* (Chicago, 1963), p. 113.

16. "Preface," in *Social Sciences 2. Syllabus and Selected Readings. September 1948* (Chicago, 1948), p. 1.

refashion Soc 2 into a broad interdisciplinary course whose principal theme became the comparative study of personality and culture. He later had a distinguished career as a member of the Department of Anthropology, which he joined in 1955; as a founding father of the Committee on South Asian Studies; and as the architect of the New Collegiate Division's fascinating concentration program in civilizational studies.

In late 1982, a group of Soc 2 colleagues led by John MacAloon organized a symposium on the fortieth anniversary of the Soc 2 course, and Milton Singer was an honored guest. After the conference Singer wrote a private letter to David Riesman remarking that the period 1946 to 1953 was considered by many subsequent staff members to have been something of a "golden age" but that, at the same time, this had also engendered a bit of resentment because of its "intimidating effect."¹⁷ Singer himself remembered it as a lustrous time, filled with interesting ideas and interesting colleagues.

If Milton Singer had only genial memories of the "golden age" of Soc 2 in November 1982, the situation looked slightly different to him thirty years earlier, in late 1951. In October 1951, Singer sent then Dean of the College F. Champion Ward a long, thoughtful memo in which he wrestled with several problems associated with the course, focusing especially on staff morale. Singer wrote:

I am even more impressed by our shortcomings on the intellectual front. For I do not think that high ranks and salaries, lush offices and secretaries are going to help us much if our best people lose the sense of being involved in a vital intellectual adventure in which they can grow and be creative. As our program has tended

17. Singer to Riesman, December 12, 1982, Box 56, Milton Singer Papers.

to stabilize we have, I think, begun to recognize the danger of intellectual impoverishment and have sought remedies in such devices as preceptorials, special seminars, a generous policy of granting leaves and lend-leases, greater mobility within and among staffs, and the like. While all these things have been important and useful, they do not really solve the morale problem since they do not provide a permanent and continuing source of intellectual stimulation and growth for the staff. It is probably only a matter of several years before we run out of such makeshifts and have to face the morale problem head-on. What we need to do is to build into the college program itself the sources of growth and refreshment.¹⁸

Singer thought that this could be done in two ways. The first was to provide more positive incentives and opportunities for faculty members to undertake their own individual research and scholarship, and Singer was rather curtly dismissive of those colleagues who might not know what kind of research they should undertake: “If the individual faculty member does not have sufficient maturity to know what he wants to do and cannot distinguish between significant and trivial research, he should not be on the staff at all.”

A second, complementary option was to provide “some regular way for the research and scholarship of the staff to help solve the actual teaching and curriculum problems of the courses.” Singer proposed a faculty seminar for the Study of Culture and Character. This faculty seminar would bring together colleagues to share research insights and work-in-progress on the general theme of the relationship between personality

18. Singer to Ward, October 9, 1951, Box 93, Singer Papers.

and culture and help create a loop-back effect that would enrich teaching in the College.

The memo is a fascinating period piece in that Singer felt compelled to spend two pages defending his position against possible assertions of disloyalty to the College on his part because of his plea for the independent validity of research. Singer argued that “general education is not a field of theoretical science or scholarship, but a practical art, and its problems, like the problems of education in general, concern the selection and organization of fundamental fields of knowledge into appropriate teaching units. The qualifications needed to deal with such problems are not a Ph.D. in a hypothetical ‘science’ of general education, but a participant’s familiarity with at least one of the basic fields of knowledge.” Singer also doubted that the College could long sustain itself merely by hiring teachers who were not active scholars: “I am rather concerned to get recognition for the indispensability of some research and scholarly activity to good teaching. . . . To the extent that these teachers lose touch with the development of their subject matters and themselves have little sense of what is involved in the growth of science and scholarship, to that extent we may expect their teaching, whether they use discussions or any other devices, to degenerate to a level of empty pedagogical ‘tricks’.” To put Singer’s defensiveness in context, we might recall another memo from Dean Ward to senior College faculty members in January 1949 in which Ward suggested criteria that might be used to determine the award of permanent tenure in the College and which contained not a single reference to the importance of or even the necessity of scholarly publications.¹⁹

19. Ward to Staff Chairmen, January 28, 1949, Box 21, Dean of the College Papers.

Milton Singer had highlighted his personal belief that the College would profit from greater scholarly activity on the part of its faculty and from their willingness to apply and integrate the results of their individual research investigations into their teaching programs. Singer himself had tried to mobilize a small group of his Soc 2 colleagues to undertake an interdisciplinary research project on the “Interdisciplinary Study of Culture and Social Character,” and he also tried his turn as grantsman, drafting a proposal that Chancellor Lawrence Kimpton circulated in the spring of 1951 to the Rockefeller Foundation. That Singer’s request for external research support met with a frustrating and finally a negative evaluation by the staff of the Rockefeller Foundation during the summer of 1951 at the same time that Robert Redfield approached him with the offer of collaboration on the Ford intercultural studies project was doubly fortuitous, both for Singer in the short run and for the College in the long run. Doubtlessly, Redfield found many attractive features in Singer’s qualifications, including a remarkable organizational ability, but his obvious intellectual curiosity and his evident scholarly ambition made him an obvious candidate for collaboration on the project. As Redfield wrote to Hutchins in June 1951, Singer’s research on national character and “group ethos” was a project in whose “soundness and importance” he had “much confidence.”

Robert Redfield had been a close collaborator and admirer of Robert Maynard Hutchins throughout the latter’s presidency at the University of Chicago. Once Hutchins had left Chicago for Pasadena in early 1951 to become an associate director of the newly created Ford Foundation, his reciprocal respect for Redfield was soon evident in his encouragement that the latter apply for Ford support to undertake the intercultural studies project they had advocated in vain to Carnegie two years earlier. In June 1951, Redfield sent Hutchins a detailed letter sketching the operational

outlines of the project he had in mind, and less than three months later the board of the Ford Foundation agreed to provide an initial \$75,000 grant to permit Redfield to launch his program of comparative studies in intercultural relations. The project was designed to prime a worldwide pump of comparative cultural studies through the energy of the faculty of the University of Chicago and for the sake of nothing less than world peace and the education of a generation that would make world peace possible.²⁰ Indeed, the Annual Report of the Ford Foundation from December 1951 listed the grant under the rubric of awards in support of “Peace” as opposed to awards in support of “Education” or of “Strengthening Free Institutions.”²¹ Dwight Macdonald made intelligent fun of this high-mindedness in an essay in *The New Yorker*, observing laconically that “[t]he budget [of the Redfield program] reads like an academic W.P.A.”²² But learning for world peace had a practical quality to Redfield, since he meant to affect the whole world via individuals, scholars and students—rejecting the safer middle ground of area studies devoted to the national economy and the national defense. We might properly call his strategy the internationalism of liberal learning. Between the initial award in 1951 and the official conclusion of the project in 1958, the Ford Foundation approved grants totaling \$375,000 in support of the Redfield-Singer intercultural studies research project. In today’s dollars that would be a grant of over \$2 million, a huge sum of money. Dwight

20. Redfield’s initial proposal is in his letter to Hutchins, June 7, 1951, Box 5, Ford Foundation Cultural Studies Papers.

21. *Annual Report of the Ford Foundation for 1951*, p. 13.

22. Dwight Macdonald, *The Ford Foundation. The Men and the Millions* (New York, 1956), p. 165.

Macdonald's skepticism notwithstanding, I believe that it would be fair to say that this grant was some of the best money the Ford Foundation ever spent.

Redfield's and Singer's project in intercultural studies encompassed a series of interrelated ventures that would "affect the work of scholars and scientists so that their characterizations and comparisons of the great contemporary civilizations become more valid and significant. The resulting good will be improvement of understanding of the persisting and influential characteristics of the principal cultures of mankind and of the humanity that is common to all of them." The project would also advance "the movement toward common understandings among the peoples of mankind at the level of systematic thought brought into relation with the special knowledge of the scientist and scholar. It holds a hope of modifying in some degree the separateness with which study of Western Civilization has been carried on, and of supplementing, through a more central vision, the efforts made in UNESCO and elsewhere to develop a world community of ideas."²³ As we have seen, the project was defined by Redfield's interest in furthering research that would "help the study of the 'great traditions' and of other cultures to develop toward greater comparability."²⁴ But just beneath the surface was a more programmatic and "practical" concern for international understanding. In Singer's words, the project's central intellectual problem was to evaluate and to develop methods "to characterize and explore living civilizations, with a view to improving international understanding and international

23. "A Short Description of the Project," Box 5, Ford Foundation Cultural Studies Papers.

24. Redfield to Hutchins, June 7, 1951, Box 5, Ford Foundation Cultural Studies Papers.

security.”²⁵ On the one hand, Singer and Redfield wanted to explore ways by which civilizations might be compared and classified, with a goal of establishing a comparative approach to the study of cultures and civilizations; on the other hand, the project immediately supported research ventures in the study of specific historic civilizations. This duality between the general and the specific, the comparative and the regional, provided the flexibility to support a variety of different approaches.

On campus, the central activity of the project was the now famous Redfield-Singer seminar. This biweekly seminar, bearing the course number of Anthropology 342, was taught at least annually and brought together both local and visiting faculty and graduate students to discuss and evaluate concepts and methods for characterizing and comparing civilizations like “world view,” “total cultural pattern,” “ethos,” and “national character.” The seminar quickly emerged as one of the most productive components of the grant, and it might be seen as a modified and enriched version of the original College-based faculty research seminar Singer had proposed to Ward in 1951.

In addition to the seminar, Redfield and Singer also sponsored a series of scholarly conferences which resulted in major book publications, edited by such distinguished scholars as John Fairbank, Gustave von Grunebaum, Arthur Wright, Harry Hoijer, and others, some of them published in the series entitled *Comparative Studies of Culture and Civilization*. That series was the brainchild of Singer, who wrote to Redfield in October 1952 arguing that “[a]s our various projects develop I wonder whether we should not give thought to some form of publication which will make their results available to interested scholars quickly and inexpensively. . . . This is particularly true in the field of comparative cultural studies which

25. Singer, “Robert Redfield,” p. 420.

is new, without an established list of ‘classics’, and which draws upon so many different disciplines. Many important exploratory studies which would contribute by their timely stimulation and as concrete models to the crystallization of a converging field of scholarship are without effect because either they do not get published at all or are stale by the time they come out.”²⁶ The grant also supported the work of scholars like Marshall Hodgson, McKim Marriott, Surajit Sinha, N. M. Srinivas, Edward Kracke, and Bernard Cohn, all of whom were to go on to distinguished scholarly careers and to complete major publications on various aspects of cultural studies.

In 1955, at Milton Singer’s urging, the two directors decided that the relationship between great and little traditions that had so intrigued Redfield might best be studied by focusing the project’s resources on India.²⁷ As early as 1953, Singer had argued that “India is a particularly good place to pursue such a study since it has a very ancient civilization and contains a variety of subcultures of distinct world views sufficient to permit controlled comparison and the testing of hypotheses concerning cultural change.”²⁸ With the support of the Ford grant Milton Singer was able to travel to the University of Pennsylvania and to Berkeley during the 1953–54 academic year for postdoctoral training in South Asian studies and then to India in 1954–55 for nine months of field research. He later observed to Murray J. Leaf that these trips constituted “critical turning points in my career.”²⁹

26. Singer to Redfield, October 20, 1952, Box 11, Ford Foundation Cultural Studies Papers.

27. Davis, *South Asia at Chicago*, p. 38.

28. “Anthropology 342. Summary and Analysis of Spring Quarter 1953,” p. 7, Box 94, Singer Papers.

29. Singer to Leaf, April 2, 1985, Box 100, Singer Papers.

Interestingly, the extensive archival documentation about the grant and the project in the University Archives contains no specific information about any initial plans to transform the insights of the project back into the undergraduate classroom, aside from the general intent to do so that informed Redfield's original April 1944 memorandum on the future of area studies. But the excitement of intellectual discovery and Singer's eagerness to see the results of his and Redfield's work translated back into the classroom were not long in revealing themselves. A fortuitous opportunity came during the 1955–56 academic year when the College again found itself in one of its seemingly interminable debates over the curriculum. As Singer later wrote, "Freshly returned from my first trip to India, where I had gone to enlist Indian scholars and to undertake some field research in Redfield's project, I was eager to make the study of non-Western civilizations a part of a liberal education."³⁰ In January 1956, a joint SSD-College committee whose members included Milton Singer and William McNeill recommended that a new baccalaureate degree program be authorized between the College and the Division of the Social Sciences under which students would not only study the history of Western civilization but would also be asked to study a non-Western civilization. The report put special emphasis on the non-European courses, arguing that "[i]t would, we believe, not only familiarize a student with a civilized tradition other than his own, and thus permit him to glimpse the world and his own civilization as others see them, but might also enable him to understand better his own cultural heritage by comparing it with another."³¹

30. Singer, "Robert Redfield," p. 423.

31. "Recommendations for a Joint College–Social Sciences B.A. Program," January 6, 1956, Minutes of the Faculty of the College.

With the support of a second major grant, this one for \$123,000 from the Carnegie Corporation and running from 1956 to 1959—a grant which Singer also played an important role in securing—the College was able to launch sequences in Islamic Civilization, Chinese Civilization, and South Asian Civilization during the 1956–57 academic year.

The links between the Ford cultural studies research project and the Carnegie-sponsored teaching project were many and varied. Singer's role was critical, and the first years of the Indian Civilization course were deeply influenced by his leadership. In May 1957, Singer and Redfield organized a national conference—Introducing India in Liberal Education—to celebrate their work in course design. The University of Chicago Press published the proceedings, which included papers on contemporary sociology, anthropological field work, philosophy, music, pedagogy for courses on Indian civilization, and general reflections on civilizational studies as a whole. Approximately seventy colleagues attended the conference, forty from universities and colleges other than our own.

Another and equally salient example was the work and influence of Marshall Hodgson, who became the principal architect of the new Islamic Civilization course. On the recommendation of Gustave von Grunebaum of the Oriental Institute, his dissertation supervisor, Hodgson was hired in March 1953 by Redfield and Singer as a research associate and lecturer to assist them and von Grunebaum on the Ford project as well as to continue work on revising his doctoral dissertation on Islamic sects for publication as a book.³² From the first, Hodgson thought the Redfield-Singer project sounded “very, very noble,” so noble in fact that Hodgson remained on their payroll for three years. When the time came

32. *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizârî Ismâ'îlis against the Islamic World* (s-Gravenhage, 1955).

to develop the syllabus for the new Islamic Civ course, it was natural that Hodgson would perform most of the work, and in fact the Ford Project underwrote Hodgson's salary in 1955–56 to permit him to do the early curricular planning necessary to launch the course in the autumn of 1956.³³

To chronicle Hodgson's distinguished scholarly career would require a full lecture unto itself, but it is perhaps sufficient to recall that Hodgson's brilliant three-volume masterpiece, *The Venture of Islam*, emerged from the syllabus that he developed for the Islamic Civ course and that both versions—the course syllabus and the final book version edited by Reuben Smith and published after Hodgson's death—revealed how engaged Hodgson was with many of the questions raised by the Redfield-Singer project. As Edmund Burke III has argued, *The Venture of Islam* is a searching history of Islamic culture and civilization, but it is also a profound exercise in comparative world history since Hodgson relentlessly sought to understand Islam in the comparative perspective of world history.³⁴

33. See Marshall Hodgson, "A Non-Western Civilization Course in a Liberal Education with Special Attention to the Case of Islam," *Journal of General Education*, 12 (1959): 39–49.

34. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *Rethinking World History. Essays on Europe, Islam, and World History*. Edited by Edmund Burke III. (Cambridge, 1993), p. 307.

C O N C L U S I O N



hat does this story tell us or perhaps even teach us? First, like the recent success of the Human Rights program, the Redfield-Singer comparative cultures project and the various non-Western Civilization courses to which that project gave intellectual birth were born out of an agenda of substantial faculty research set in the context of a major research university. However gifted Marshall Hodgson may have been—and he was an extremely gifted scholar and teacher—it is hard to imagine a book like *The Venture of Islam* emerging out of the atmosphere of a small liberal-arts college. Rather the book emerged out of the confluence of the pedagogy of our particular liberal-arts college—standing at the center of a great research university—and a distinguished tradition of graduate teaching and scholarly research best epitomized by the fact that when he died, in June 1968, Marshall Hodgson was the Chairman of the Committee on Social Thought. Hodgson himself acknowledged his intellectual gratitude to Chicago scholars like Redfield and Singer and von Grunebaum and McNeill and countless others. But it is worth remembering that in a letter to Redfield in September 1954 Hodgson anticipated that his future scholarly career would involve either additional research on Shi'a studies or general work on interregional history.³⁵ The way his career did in fact evolve—resulting in the magnificent work of synoptic interpretation that is *The Venture of Islam*—would likely have been impossible without the special program in Islamic Civilization born of the Redfield-Singer project and firmly rooted in our traditions of interdisciplinary liberal education.

35. Hodgson to Redfield, September 23, 1954, Box 8, Ford Foundation Cultural Studies Papers.

But this was not merely a story of creative individualism, for the Redfield-Singer project and the resulting civilizational studies courses also brought colleagues from a variety of disciplines to work together. Boundaries such as “the Social Sciences” or “the Humanities” or even “the Natural Sciences” were not irrelevant to the project, but they were not paralyzing either. The list of faculty participating in the teaching of the first non-Western Civ courses is impressive in the diversity of disciplines represented—these were clearly not professional “history” courses in the sense that the History of Western Civilization course had become by the later 1950s. Nor did the courses, once launched, remain the property of Social Sciences students. Students from the Humanities and other areas of the University quickly became attracted to the courses, and, to the extent that these courses helped define new kinds of interdivisional area studies programs, they benefited both divisions equally. Such a coming together has always been part and parcel of the life of our intellectual and professional community, and it has characterized especially the work of the College.

In his preface to the Proceedings of the May 1957 conference on Indian Civilization, Milton Singer offered similar reflections on the results of what was by then for him almost a decade of innovative thinking, teaching, and institution building on behalf of liberal education at Chicago:

This is perhaps the most significant if least tangible result of our Conference discussions on introducing India into the liberal education curriculum: the fact that, in trying to understand the nature of Indian civilization and to communicate that understanding to undergraduates, humanists and social scientists have succeeded in understanding each other a little better. Perhaps, as Gilbert White remarked, the significance of the current effort

in American universities and colleges to give greater attention to Asia is to be measured not so much by the effects of a particular kind of course on a particular body of students, or, indeed, by the proliferation of courses on Asia, but rather by the change in intellectual climate which this effort indirectly brings to the universities, and by the redirection of interest and work among its faculties.³⁶

Of course, there is nothing either in nature or in civil law that dictates that we as a faculty must or should come together and collaborate. Indeed, most universities find such systematic collaboration difficult to stage. But we have believed that such interdisciplinary collaboration is good, not only for our students but also for ourselves. And because in the case of the non-Western Civs the operational interdisciplinarity resulted from the excitement of ongoing faculty research, we confirmed our reputation of being an “experimental” college in the best and most classic sense of the word.

Unfortunately, I only met Milton Singer very late in his life, and I never had a chance to discuss with him his involvement in the Redfield project. The story I have tried to tell today has come to me from the extensive archives that he left behind—he was a copious keeper of his own and other people’s correspondence, notes, jottings, and other literary records. It is clear that he took considerable pride and pleasure in what he and his colleagues had crafted. In the above cited letter to David Riesman in 1982 he observed with undue modesty that “[w]hen I accepted Redfield’s invitation to join him in the comparative civilizations project in 1951,

36. Milton Singer, ed., *Introducing India in Liberal Education* (Chicago, 1957), p. ix.

I gave up the chairmanship of Social Sciences Staff and soon was too busy traveling and helping Redfield with the planning and administering of the Ford Project to keep up with Soc 2. . . . However, I was not being disloyal to Soc 2, only trying to do some of the research that both Redfield and you thought was needed for the study of culture in general education. Some of the benefit to Soc 2 and the College of this effort began to emerge in 1956 with the creation of the non-Western Civ courses.”

Certainly by the later 1950s Milton Singer had effectively responded to the challenge that he had posed to Champ Ward and to himself in October 1951: he had helped to generate much new research knowledge, new scholarly publications, and new ways of research collaboration (which he continued with an equally intense determination after Robert Redfield’s untimely death in 1958) and then he had helped to ensure that that new knowledge informed and enriched the undergraduate teaching programs of the University of Chicago.

In 1944, Robert Redfield may have been skeptical about the capacity of American universities to generate, at least in the short run, the necessary scholarly resources to sustain coherent area studies programs. Yet within fifteen years, our College had demonstrated a remarkable capacity to rise to the occasion by combining excellent scholarly research and innovative interdisciplinary teaching in developing the South Asian, the Islamic, and the Chinese Civilization programs. That this marriage of scholarship and teaching was encouraged by truly remarkable achievements on the front of external fund raising made our success all the more delightful.

Dedicated scholar-teachers, enthused by their research but also committed to broadening the effect of that research by translating it into our liberal arts curriculum; College students impressed by the zeal of their teachers and fascinated by the new academic studies they were undertaking; the College at the forefront of educational innovation. A wonderful

model of pedagogical and scholarly cooperation that clearly served our College well in the past and—I hope—an esteemed model to be treasured for the future of our College as well.

I thank you for your support of the work of the College, and I wish you a productive and enjoyable academic year.

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