



SPECIAL ISSUE

FERNANDO ORTIZ: CARIBBEAN AND
MEDITERRANEAN COUNTERPOINTS

BALEARIC BEGINNINGS

A network of networks

Fernando Ortiz, crossroad between cultures

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This article analyzes the role that Fernando Ortiz played in the articulation of transatlantic intellectual and academic networks between different Latin American countries, and between these and Spain. The intellectual community formed in the first three decades of the twentieth century, as also did the circuits through which knowledge was transmitted; these circuits are studied here through Ortiz's correspondence with other thinkers. Studying this correspondence between intellectuals often also reveals the origin of certain theories and their diffusion, which was, through the correspondence, sometimes faster than through the publication of articles or books. Letters have an added value to scholars and researchers as they are often the quickest way of transmitting ideas and weaving networks.

Keywords: Fernando Ortiz, transatlantic intellectual community, cultural networks, twentieth-century intellectual history

The Spanish-American intellectual community at the beginning of the twentieth century

My research fits within studies of intellectual networks that have, at times, led to academic structures. These networks gave rise to further, new networks, and to sustained discourses that nourished a national, regional, and Latin American identity. In many cases, individual volition and personal contacts are the origin of these networks, encouraging exchanges of correspondence. Sometimes, institutions gathered up these initiatives and brought them together into shared efforts that generated common projects.

A network was slowly woven together, one that aspired to Latin American unity through shared culture, and which took shape in correspondence full of news, projects, and ambitions. The idea of intellectual networks has been used by other authors, such as Eduardo Devés-Valdés, who defines such a network as “a group of people engaged in intellectual activities who contact each other, get to know each other, exchange work, write to each other, develop joint projects, improve communication channels and, most importantly, establish bonds

of mutual trust” (Devés-Valdés 2007: 30).¹ Therefore, when I refer to networks I mean the reciprocal relations between people over a long period of their lives, carried out in correspondence, ideas, experiences, meetings, congresses, publications, projects, and institutions. All of these, in these instances, contributed to building and strengthening the network(s). In other words, we are looking at a map of polycentric and interwoven, national, transnational, and transatlantic networks in which some agents were nodes of an intellectual community. This study of such networks in and beyond Latin America is based on written correspondence that allows us to go back to the origin of some institutions, journals, and book collections, and that encouraged relationships and led to the emergence of new ones. Through such epistolary

1. “el conjunto de personas ocupadas en los quehaceres del intelecto que se contactan, se conocen, intercambian trabajos, se escriben, elaboran proyectos comunes, mejoran los canales de comunicación y, sobre todo, establecen lazos de confianza recíproca.”





study, we can trace the intellectual connections and the cultural fabric that was created. The letters contain the agreements, discrepancies, and logical tensions within the networks that led to disagreements and ruptures, and the abandonment and appearance of new spaces of communication and collaboration (Pita 2017: 44).

As part of an intellectual community, intellectuals were able to generate forms of action, institutions, and materials that aimed at contributing to their countries' regeneration. What is more, they were agents of Hispanic Americanism. All of them, united by the idea of culture and education as the ultimate goals of their work, were enriched by their different experiences of travel and periods of residence in various American and European countries. They were connected by their interests in researching, educating, and disseminating. Therefore, with their research, classes, and conferences, they built transatlantic bridges and developed new ways of thinking and of understanding culture and cultures, with both their own and shared characteristics (Abellán 2005, 2007; Naranjo Orovio and Puig-Samper 2002).

A trust in the idea that civilization (understood as a shared culture) was one of the main instruments of regeneration prevailed in these intellectuals' work, many of them being Arielists.² Hailing from diverse American and Spanish settings, they agreed that regeneration and modernization were some of the primary goals they sought to achieve, and that education was the most appropriate way to do so. Those who thought education was the underpinning that would encourage change raised their voices from Spain to America, supporting a shared culture and promoting dialogue among Hispanic Americans and between them and Spaniards based on new content and projects. According to Pedro Henríquez Ureña, a civilizing ideal and cultural unity were the foundations for building *Nuestra America*:

Our America must affirm its faith in its destiny in the future of civilization. . . . Let us expand the spiritual field: let us give the alphabet to all men; let us give each one the best tools to work for the good of all; let us make the effort to approach social justice and true freedom;

2. José Rodó Enrique was one of the most important Latin American intellectuals of the early twentieth century. In *Ariel*, the most popular of his books, published in 1900, he argued that Latin America had its own culture and thought, different from the values of Anglo-Saxon culture. The Latin American intellectuals who followed his ideas were known as Arielistas (Rodó 1900).

let us move forward, finally, towards our utopia.³ (Pérez 2010, CXIV [158]: 160)

Writing from Cuba in 1913, Fernando Ortiz encouraged establishing a dialogue based on culture and civilization:

And this is what Spain had to do, bring us culture, a great deal of it, because when Spain reigns due to its culture and the scientific genius of its new men, then, yes, all of America will be genuinely Spanish, even the one that speaks English, because at the present time civilization is what unites peoples, moves races, breaks up continents, amalgamates the faithful of different religions, spreads all languages, and gives life, gives hope and future.

Without an intense and dominant civilization, race is a true armor without a warrior to pull it along; language, a mouth without a tongue to encourage it; religion, a bell without a clapper. . . . Culture for all, otherwise we would continue in this macabre spectacle of ambitions and nullities, of spite and arbitrariness surrounding a dying nationality.⁴ (Ortiz 1913: 187–88)

Like other intellectuals, Ortiz was critical of the lack of interest in culture and education that existed in Cuba. In response to this, he confessed, in a letter sent to his friend José María Chacón y Calvo on December 27, 1922, that in order to evade the present, he took refuge

3. “Nuestra América debe afirmar la fe en su destino en el porvenir de la civilización. . . . Ensanchemos el campo espiritual: demos el alfabeto a todos los hombres; demos a cada uno los instrumentos mejores para trabajar en bien de todos; esforcémonos por acercarnos a la justicia social y a la libertad verdadera; avancemos, en fin, hacia nuestra utopía.”

4. “Y esto es lo que debía hacer España, traernos cultura, mucha cultura, porque cuando España impere por su cultura y por el genio científico de sus hombres nuevos, entonces, entonces sí, la América entera será verdaderamente española, hasta la que hable inglés, porque en los tiempos que corremos la civilización es la que une a los pueblos, la que mueve a las razas, la que rompe los continentes, la que amalgama fieles de religión distinta, la que difunde todos los idiomas la que da vida, la que da esperanza y porvenir.

Sin civilización intensa y dominante, la raza es una verdadera armadura sin guerrero que la arrastre; el idioma, una boca sin lengua que la anime; la religión, una campana sin badajo. . . . Cultura para todos, so pena de seguir en esta farándula macabra de ambiciones y de nulidades, de despechos y de arbitrariedades alrededor de la nacionalidad agonizante.”



in the study of the past, and worried that if illiteracy continued to prevail, Cuba was heading towards an abyss. The same skeptical and pessimistic tone appears in the letter he sent to Chacón y Calvo on May 23, 1923 (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 30–31). Notwithstanding these intimate confessions, Ortiz kept his faith in culture and maintained his desire to cooperate with other countries throughout his life. His scholarly work is the expression of such faith and desire, and of a spirit that encouraged unity based on his broad conception of culture and his integrated idea of nationhood. In 1928 Ortiz wrote “the man who has nothing to learn from another country is an ignorant man who is not prepared to receive the mental nuances that each people has as its own, inherent in its personality.”⁵

Intellectuals like Ortiz, who shared the idea that culture would be the starting point for encounters, developed projects promoted by economic sectors, institutions, and universities and were supported by Latin American and Spanish ones such as the Universidad de Puerto Rico (University of Puerto Rico), the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Buenos Aires (School of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Buenos Aires), the Instituto de Filología de la Universidad de Buenos Aires (Institute of Philology of the University of Buenos Aires, created in 1923), and the cultural institutions founded in Buenos Aires (1914), Montevideo (1918), Mexico (1925), Havana (1926), San Juan de Puerto Rico (1928), and La Paz, Bolivia (1931). In Spain, the Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas (JAE), founded in 1907, was the main institution in charge of educational and scientific renewal. Several research institutes that were created during these years depended on this institution. One of them was the Centro de Estudios Históricos (Center for Historical Studies) in Madrid. Its founding in 1910 coincided with the enactment of the Real Orden (Royal Decree) of April 16 1910, which entrusted the JAE with the promotion of Latin American relations. This ambitious project of exchange and cultural promotion fell in part on the Centro de Estudios Históricos (López Sánchez 2006).

These institutions promoted a dialogue based on new ways of viewing and understanding each other, and shared

common goals, like cultural extension and bibliographic and educational exchange. These were solid platforms of rapprochement which generated other crossed and connected networks (Naranjo Orovio 2007).

An integrating ideal through education and culture

The intellectuals who were part of this intellectual community in Latin America and Spain were convinced that culture was the key element for society’s progress, along with its role in fostering dialogue between peoples. With regard to Latin America, culture was also the thread weaving a web that crafted unity for the Latin American world. This was a unity arising from the diversity and heterogeneity of its peoples and cultures; a unity arising from respect for differences and the belief that heterogeneity provides cultural wealth. For the intellectuals engaged in this project, as Pedro Henríquez Ureña indicated in 1914, “the ideal of civilization is not the total unification of all men and all countries, but the total preservation of all differences within a harmony”⁶ (Henríquez Ureña 1952: 203). In defense of the Hispanic community, the Dominican writer highlighted the significance of culture as one of the principal components that would make Hispanic America a community with its own identity and strength, capable of dialogue with both Spain and the United States. “En busca de nuestra expresión” (in search of our expression) was how he defined the recovery and valorization of all the elements that shaped Hispanic American identity, which was the goal of much of his work (Henríquez Ureña 1976–1980 [1980: t. X]).

Fernando Ortiz thought of Cuba in similar terms to those used earlier by some of his Hispanic American peers. Like them, his commitment was not only that of an intellectual but also that of a politician, as had been that of Alfonso Reyes, José Vasconcelos, or Pedro Henríquez Ureña, among others. Ortiz dissected the problems that his young nation had to face and put forward some proposals to solve them, so that “Cuba y su independencia se salvaran para la civilización y la libertad” (Cuba and its independence would be saved for civilization and freedom). He denounced the lack of national integration and the danger to the country’s sovereignty and independence from the early years of the

5. “el hombre que nada tiene que aprender de otro país, es el hombre ignorante que no está preparado para recibir los matices mentales que tiene cada pueblo como cosa propia, constitutiva de su personalidad.” Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Havana (BNJM), Colección de Manuscritos (CM) Ortiz, Folder 259.

6. “el ideal de la civilización no es la unificación completa de todos los hombres y todos los países, sino la conservación completa de todas las diferencias dentro de una armonía.”



twentieth century. In 1923, in the midst of an economic crisis, while analyzing its origin, he wrote “Our homeland is going through a dreadful crisis. It is not a government crisis. It is not a party’s crisis, it is not a class crisis, it is the crisis of a whole people,”⁷ pointing to the lack of education of the people as one of the country’s main problems: “Cuba’s future is, therefore, undermined at its core. . . . national defenselessness due to ignorance [is] more dangerous. . . . In Cuba, more than other peoples, to defend culture is to save freedom”⁸ (Ortiz 1924: 6).

In his writings, Ortiz pinpointed some of the key characteristics of society that endangered national integrity and sovereignty. These included ethnic heterogeneity and socioracial tensions, which were the result of the structure of the slave-owning society of previous centuries and the racialization of social relations and cultural practices. And, like other Hispanic American intellectuals influenced by regenerationist thought, he condemned decadence and felt that culture and education were the means that could generate a new society. At the beginning of January 1914, at the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País (Economic Societies of Friends of the Country), Ortiz reflected on education and work in a conference called “Seamos hoy como fuimos ayer” (Let’s be today as we were yesterday). In this speech he stressed that both were the pillars by which peoples achieved progress:

“The former good Cubans of the Sociedad Económica, by founding magazines, newspapers, schools, chairs, museums, botanical gardens; funding scholarships abroad; importing teachers; publishing books, memoirs and reports on all Cuban problems, show us how the work of a group of men of good faith can turn a depleted factory into a people and a nationality”⁹ (Ortiz 1914).

Over the years, Ortiz tenaciously stressed the power of education, which made peoples strong and free, and only

7. “Nuestra patria está atravesando una pavorosa crisis. No es la crisis de un gobierno. No es la crisis de un partido, no es la crisis de una clase, es la crisis de todo un pueblo.”
8. “El porvenir de Cuba está, pues, minado por su base . . . más peligrosa [es] una indefensión nacional debida a la incultura. . . . En Cuba, más que otros pueblos, defender la cultura es salvar la libertad.”
9. “Los antiguos buenos cubanos de la Sociedad Económica fundando revistas, diarios, escuelas, cátedras, museos, jardines botánicos; costeando becas en el extranjero; importando profesores; publicando libros, memorias e informes sobre todos los problemas cubanos, nos demuestran cómo la labor de un grupo de hombres de fe puede hacer de una factoría esquilhada un pueblo y una nacionalidad.”

in “la verdadera cultura,” “puede hallarse la fortaleza necesaria para vivir la vida propia sin servidumbres” (true culture, can one find the strength needed to live one’s life without bondage) (Ortiz 1919). Ortiz emphasized that education and culture were the key elements for society’s transformation and the bringing together of peoples, and were the basic instruments with which Cuban people would have to fight so as to fortify and consolidate their nationality (Ortiz 1940a, 1991). He defended the idea of the regenerating power of culture in several of his works and speeches, such as in “La decadencia cubana” (Cuban decadence), a lecture given on February 23, 1924: “In Cuba, more than in other nations, to defend culture is to defend freedom. . . . [Let us strengthen the homeland] with all the cultural weapons, through the only plan capable of renewing Cuba and giving it a new sense of glory; opening prisons for the past, roads for the present, and schools for the future”¹⁰ (Ortiz 1924: 6, 33).

Ortiz’s activities as a politician (he was a member of the Liberal Party where he held several positions in the House of Representatives between 1915 and 1926) and as an intellectual were marked by the events of the time, when some like himself considered that patriotism and civility were the means that would help Cuba overcome its economic and social crises and strengthen its sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States. Regenerationism also influenced his actions, as he was concerned about ethnic and cultural integration as the basis for building a new society. His civic attitude and regenerationist convictions led him to consider the culture and education of citizens as the starting points for progress. On April 2, 1923, he promoted the establishment of the Junta Cubana de Renovación Nacional Cívica. The renewal and regeneration of the political, cultural, and moral environments were concerns that brought together associations of different character and ideology to make up the Junta Cubana de Renovación Nacional Cívica, whose manifesto was announced in several print media, such as the *Revista Bimestre Cubana* and the *Heraldo de Cuba*. Other organizations appeared that year, such as the *Movimiento de Veteranos y Patriotas* (Movement of Veterans and Patriots) and the *Grupo de los Trece* (the Group of

10. “En Cuba, más que en otros pueblos, defender la cultura es defender la libertad. . . . [Fortifiquemos la patria] con todas las armas de la cultura, mediante el único programa capaz de renovar a Cuba y darle nueva virilidad de gloria; abriendo cárceles para el pasado, carreteras para el presente y escuelas para el porvenir.”



Thirteen)—protagonist of the Protesta de los Trece. In their programs they called for the fight for *virtud doméstica* (domestic virtue) and denounced economic dependence on the United States, the lack of sovereignty, and the monopoly of the country's wealth and assets by foreign capital.¹¹

At the 1924 speech that Ortiz gave at the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País de la Habana entitled “La decadencia cubana” (Cuban decadence), he condemned “el pavoroso riesgo de disolución que corría la patria . . . (apartada) del fulgor de la civilización” (the dreadful risk of dissolution the country was taking . . . [separated] from civilization's radiance):

The Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País cannot remain silent and inactive in this extremely serious period our country is going through, without denying its luminous past and without affronting the memory of its founders, great Cuban rulers and patricians, who, in the darkness of a slave-holding and absolutist colony, were able to light the flame of national culture, and enliven it, and sustain it when the onslaught of tyranny and corruption sought to humiliate and defeat Cuba's nascent conscience.¹² (Ortiz 1924: 5)

Obsessed with Cuba's cultural and ethnic integration, Ortiz turned to history, ethnology, and anthropology to find the foundations on which to build a strong and sovereign nation. Ortiz assigned history great value as an instrument of knowledge about Cuban society and culture and he looked to it to discover the origins of peoples and

their cultures and traditions. He outlined a method of observation and recovery of the past as early as 1905, in the article “Las supervivencias africanas en Cuba” (African survival in Cuba), published in the *Cuba y América* magazine. In it he urged researchers “to initiate increasing observation of its determining elements [of African survival], isolate true African from other [cultural forms] deriving from different races, and trace them back until pinpointing their overseas location and their expressions in the native environment. The field is wide and as one gradually observes, African leavening is found in many aspects of our customs and ways of being.”¹³ (Ortiz 1905: 8).

This article also pointed out the need to study scientifically the ethnic and social components of Cuban society, as well as to analyze its characteristics in order to arrive at a proper definition of its psychology. Only in this way

can the psychological synthesis of Cuban society be successfully attempted, without taking the risk [of] giving opinions based on false prejudices. . . . The task of gathering all possible positive observations on the black factor, in its African origins, must be done soon. [Their study] must be based on the observation of African survivals, which, assimilated to varying degrees, can still be discovered, or have already disappeared.¹⁴ (Ortiz 1905: 8)

Although during these first years Ortiz had not yet developed the kind of inclusive imaginary in which a positive valuation of all the island's cultural contributions could be found, in this text he did already point out the need to study the participation of the “black

11. In the 1920s, different civic groups and associations emerged in Cuba. The Veterans and Patriots Movement and the Group of Thirteen were some of them. The Group of Thirteen was composed of students and intellectuals: Julio Antonio Mella, Juan Marinello, Jorge Mañach, Rubén Martínez Villena, José Antonio Fernández de Castro, etc. In 1923, the Group of Thirteen held a protest at the University of Havana. This protest was known as the Protest of the Thirteen. They demanded reforms in the University, for example, university autonomy.

12. “La Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País no puede permanecer callada e inactiva en este gravísimo período que atraviesa nuestra patria, sin renegar de su luminoso pasado y sin afrentar la memoria de sus fundadores, grandes gobernantes y patricios cubanos, que en las tinieblas de una colonia negrera y absolutista supieron encender la llama de la cultura nacional, y avivarla, y sostenerla cuando los embates de la tiranía y de la corrupción querían humillar y rendir la conciencia naciente de Cuba.”

13. “Iniciar la observación ascendente de sus elementos determinantes [de las supervivencias africanas], aislar los genuinamente africanos de otros de distinta raza, y remontar el estudio hasta precisar la localización ultramarina de aquellos y sus manifestaciones en el ambiente originario. El campo es vasto y poco a poco que se observe, se encuentra la levadura africana en muchos de los aspectos de nuestras costumbres y modos de ser.”

14. “podrá intentarse con probabilidades de éxito la síntesis psicológica de la sociedad cubana, sin incurrir en el riesgo [de] dar opiniones fundadas en falsos prejuicios. . . . El trabajo de reunir todas las posibles observaciones positivas en torno al factor negro, en su originalidad africana, debe hacerse pronto. [Su estudio] debe partir de la observación de las supervivencias africanas, que asimiladas en diverso grado pueden descubrirse todavía, o han desaparecido ya.”



race” in society’s evolution alongside the study of the other foundations in order to, as he said, “definir sociológicamente lo que somos, lo que hemos sido y ayudar a dirigirnos con fundamentos positivos hacia lo que debemos ser” (sociologically define what we are, what we have been and help guide us on a positive basis towards what we should be) (Ortiz 1905: 8).

History provided Ortiz with the data to unveil the function of each phenomenon and its transformation. From knowledge about the origin of each event and element that had contributed to the formation of Cuban culture, he was also able to make comparative studies that demonstrated the proximity and contact between different cultures, and their structure. In history he found the origins of the Cuban nation, and based on these he created an inclusive national imaginary. Careful study enabled him to retrieve the foundations on which nationality, forged slowly and continuously over the centuries, rested.

As were other intellectuals, Ortiz was aware that to consolidate nationality—the integration of all social forces and the country’s sovereignty—it was necessary to build a project in which all the heterogeneous parts, sometimes in conflict and tension, would find their space (Puig-Samper and Naranjo Orovio 1999; Naranjo Orovio 2001; Palmié 2010).

However, unlike others, Ortiz did not base nationality on a historical community but on the evolution of all the communities that at some point inhabited Cuban soil. This national project was drawn up through the concept of transculturation. Via transculturation, Ortiz explained the processes of contact between different cultures in which dissimilar elements were combined and transformed into new ones. These new elements, which emerged in historical developments, were the foundations that shaped and defined Cuban nationality. Ortiz was interested in the result of the process, and therefore he attributed the same importance and function to each of the elements. For Ortiz, the nation’s strength and the prospect of its sovereignty relied on their harmony.

On the other hand, the tension that arose when trying to reconcile different traditions and combine conflicting factors surfaces in the “counterpoint” that Ortiz depicts in his writings. Here, the historical, ethnographic, lexicological, and anthropological study of each different element precedes the analysis of the final result. Ortiz’s definition of culture and nationality did not come from the concept of “race,” but from the study of pasts and the analysis and assessment of each of the components found in the cultures that had populated the country. For him,

Cubanness was a category of culture. This culture was the outcome of the fusion of all the country’s ethnic contributions. In “Los factores humanos de la cubanidad” (The human factors of Cubanidad) Ortiz referred to the process of continuous identity formation in Cuba as a “caldo denso de civilización que borbotela en el fogón del Caribe” (thick broth of civilization that bubbles on the Caribbean stove). Through the metaphor of food, of a stew called *ajiaco*, Ortiz explained the formation of Cuba’s identity as a continuous process in which the components are diluted, transformed, and come to enrich a whole: the transculturation process (Ortiz 1940a). Just as other Mexican and Brazilian intellectuals did—José Vasconcelos and Gilberto Freyre—Ortiz devised an inclusive national imaginary that would serve more than just to explain the formation of culture and nationhood in Cuba. Through this nationalist and inclusive imaginary, he tried to give coherence to a young country that was beginning its journey as an independent nation, with the burden of its recent past, and financially linked to a powerful foreign nation. By forming this nationalist imaginary, in which culture was seen as an integrated whole, Ortiz attempted to overcome the socioracial tensions that, in his eyes, were endangering the country’s independence. In his works *El contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* (Cuban counterpoint: Tobacco and sugar) and “Los factores humanos de la cubanidad” (The human factors of Cubanidad), both published in 1940, Ortiz defined transculturation as the way to “express the wide variety of phenomena that arise in Cuba due to the highly complex transmutations verified here; without knowing these, it is impossible to understand the evolution of Cuban people, not only in the economic sphere, but also in the institutional, legal, ethical, religious, artistic, linguistic, psychological, sexual and other aspects of their lives”¹⁵ (Ortiz 1978: 93).

In the *El contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* Ortiz stated:

No human factor was more transcendental for Cubanness than the inhabitants’ ongoing, radical and contrasting geographic, economic and social transmigrations; than that perennial transience of purposes

15. “expresar los variadísimos fenómenos que se originan en Cuba por las complejísimas transmutaciones que aquí se verifican, sin conocer las cuales es imposible entender la evolución del pueblo cubano, así en lo económico, como en lo institucional, jurídico, ético, religioso, artístico, lingüístico, psicológico, sexual y en los demás aspectos de su vida.”





and that life that is constantly uprooted from inhabited land, always at odds with the sustaining society. Men, economies, cultures and desires, everything here felt foreign, provisional, changeable, “birds of passage” over the country, at its expense, against it and to its displeasure.¹⁶ (Ortiz 1940b: 255)

Ortiz dug into all the national and international archives that kept documentation on the country’s history. For this work in Spain, as president of the Academia de la Historia de Cuba (Cuban Academy of History) Ortiz chose José María Chacón y Calvo in July 1925 as the director in Spain of the Comisión Misión Permanente (Permanent Mission Commission), formed in Cuba that year to find the documents related to the island’s history. Chacón y Calvo’s official appointment guaranteed a monthly salary for carrying out this job. The correspondence between Chacón y Calvo and Ortiz contains traces of the monthly shipments of the documents that Chacón y Calvo had collected in the Spanish archives and sent to Cuba. Among these documents were some from the Archivo General de Simancas and the Archivo General de Indias in Seville. In the list of documents obtained in Seville, there were some about the first years of the conquest, as well as photographic reproductions of the island’s cartography.

Chacón y Calvo’s appointment to this position was not accidental, but due to the friendship that had united them for years, which lead Ortiz also to appoint him as his representative managing the publishing rights of some of his books in Spain. Ortiz also admired the intellectual stature of Chacón y Calvo, and the work he carried out after his arrival in Spain. They were united by the projects they shared and the idea that they had about culture and nationality: culture as one of the main pillars of the nation’s cohesion. Culture was a “patriotic enterprise” for Ortiz, or as Chacón y Calvo said, “an imperative to save nationality. . . . an area of national coexistence. . . . where the most diverse ideologies can converge, as long as they affirm the postulates of Cuban-

ness and the values of a spiritual and free culture”¹⁷ (Balboa Pereira 2011: 82–85).

Some aspects of this shared story are illustrated in the following pages. In 1923, recently elected president of the Sociedad de Amigos del País de La Habana (Society of the Friends of the Country of Havana), Ortiz founded, jointly with Chacón y Calvo—its promoter—the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano, an institution whose headquarters was at the Sociedad de Amigos del País. With its founding, Chacón y Calvo fulfilled the idea he had set out in 1913, as president of the Sociedad Filomática, of forming an Inter-American network of folklore societies that would contribute to organizing “el alma de la unidad étnica de América” (the soul of American ethnic unity) (Mesa Olazábal 2010). Chacón y Calvo’s project was to establish the society in Havana and for it to have branches in other cities of the country: “No es un folklore local ni regional, lo que quiere formarse: es un folk-lore nacional, un folk-lore cubano” (It is not local or regional folklore: what is wanted to be formed is national folklore, Cuban folklore) (Chacón y Calvo 1914a, 1914b).

The *Archivos del Folklore Cubano* was founded in 1924 as a journal for the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano. The articles in *Archivos* were an important means of disseminating the image of Cuban society that Ortiz wanted to present, in which transculturation had generated a rich cultural mix. Some of his studies reflect how the “diálogo entre lo general y lo científico occidental, y lo creativo y lo mestizo local” (dialogue between what is general and what is western scientific, and what is creative and what is local mestizo) was articulated (C. Ortiz 2003: 710). Other publications that contributed to the creation of the national imaginary and diffusion of Cuban culture were *Revista Bimestre Cubana* and *Estudios Afrocubanos*. The first issue of *Archivos del Folklore Cubano* provided readers with guidance on the journal’s objective: to recover the rich traditional heritage of Cuban legends, rites, languages, music, and romances in which Hispanic and African traditions had become intertwined.

Ortiz promoted Cuban culture, the “patriotic” enterprise, through the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano, the *Archivos del Folklore Cubano*, and the Institución Hispano-Cubana de Cultura founded on November 22,

16. “No hubo factores humanos más trascendentes para la cubanidad que esas continuas, radicales y contrastantes transmigraciones geográficas, económicas y sociales de los pobladores; que esa perenne transitoriedad de los propósitos y que esa vida siempre en desarraigo de la tierra habitada, siempre en desajuste con la sociedad sustentadora. Hombres, economías, culturas y anhelos todo aquí se sintió foráneo, provisional, cambiadizo, ‘aves de paso’ sobre el país, a su costa, a su contra y a su malgrado.”

17. “un imperativo para salvar la nacionalidad. . . . la zona de convivencia nacional. . . . donde pueden coincidir las más diversas ideologías, siempre que las mismas afirmen los postulados de la cubanidad y los valores de una cultura espiritual y libre.”





1926.¹⁸ This latter institution's connection with Spain, especially through the JAE, is important to the study of the formation of scientific and cultural networks and, in this particular instance, the creation of a Latin American intellectual community. Through the Institución, as I will explain later, an academic exchange between Cuba and Spain was made possible and the beginning of a new way of dialoguing was established, in which science and culture were fundamental, prevailing over religion and race.

Cuba and Spain: Dialogues based on culture

The new transatlantic cultural relations, encouraged since the earliest years of the twentieth century by intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic, were not without conflict. As in any intellectual community, differences and disagreements arose within it, which on some occasions were ironed out and on others were the cause of rupture. Ortiz's relationship with Spain and its intellectuals was also marked by these encounters and misunderstandings triggered by the clash of the different ways of conceiving Hispanic-American unity, the significance of Spanish heritage in America, and the role that Spain had to play in a new framework of relations with Latin American republics. The relation with Spanish intellectuals and Ortiz's debates with Rafael Altamira or Miguel de Unamuno are well documented¹⁹; therefore, in this paper, I focus on the dialogues that were established on the basis of a broader conception of culture and science.

The intellectuals' interest in popular traditions was undoubtedly one of the topics of study that contributed to the establishment of a transatlantic intellectual community. Among the most active groups in Spain was the one led by Ramón Menéndez Pidal. As director of the Centro de Estudios Históricos in Madrid, Menéndez

Pidal managed to articulate an academic project that gradually expanded with the participation of Spanish and Latin American philologists and historians, and which was nourished by new projects and ideas coming from Latin America. Most of the Spanish professors were trained under his direction and, together with their colleagues in the Americas, they contributed to establishing a dialogue between American and Spanish worlds, weaving two-way networks that served to debate jointly the shared history of Spain and the Americas. Supported by other institutions and colleagues from Latin America and the United States (in particular from Columbia University), new philological schools were founded (such as the Instituto de Filología in Buenos Aires) and paths were laid, on which Spanish Republican exiles during and after that country's civil war travelled years later when wandering around the Americas. Several distinguished Latin Americans studied and worked at the Centro de Estudios Históricos in Madrid, including Alfonso Reyes, José María Chacón y Calvo, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Silvio Zavala, Ángel Rosenblat, Rodolfo Barón, Antonio S. Pedreira, Aníbal Bascuñán (Naranjo Orovio 2007).

There are abundant examples of the intellectual network generated around common intellectual concerns. One of them is the correspondence between Menéndez Pidal and Mexican Alfonso Reyes during the latter's trip through Extremadura, where Reyes heard a popular song being recited—a Spanish romance brought to the Americas, and sung by some girls playing in a circle in the plaza of Cáceres, Extremadura, where he recognized it.²⁰ The numerous letters that Menéndez Pidal exchanged with Latin American intellectuals hold within them the intellectual network nodes that I have been commenting on. In the case of Cuba, Chacón y Calvo was in contact with Menéndez Pidal from 1913 to 1914, to whom he sent some of his work and offered himself as a collaborator for the project of the *Romancero General del Mundo Hispánico* that Menéndez Pidal had started in 1900. Chacón y Calvo's letters and studies about Cuban folklore and the publication of several works about the island's romances encouraged him to collaborate with the group of philologists at the Centro de Estudios Históricos after his arrival in Madrid in 1918, where he had been appointed as secretary of the Cuban Legation. From then on, Chacón y Calvo was Ortiz's direct correspondent in

18. For a study of journals as propagators and articulators of intellectual networks, see Pita 2009; Granados 2012.

19. For studies of the relation with Spanish intellectuals and Ortiz's debates with Rafael Altamira, Miguel de Unamuno, and Pedro Dorado Montero, see Ortiz 1910; Serrano 1987; Naranjo Orovio and Puig-Samper 1998, 2005. Part of the correspondence between Ortiz and Unamuno is included in Ortiz 1987. In this book you can read the letters on pages 5–15: “Carta abierta al ilustre señor Don Miguel de Unamuno, Recto de la Universidad de Salamanca” (5–10); “A Unamuno” (11–13); “No seas bobbo” (14–15).

20. Letter from Alfonso Reyes to Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Cáceres 3 de mayo de 1920. R024006. Archives of Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Madrid.



Spain, and the interlocutor for many projects that Ortiz undertook in Cuba. Within a few years, the network of Latin American philologists, scholars of popular traditions and romances, had expanded and connected with others interested not only in Spain or Latin America but also in the United States through the Hispanic Society of New York. These included Max Leopold Wagner, and some other anthropologists from North American universities, such as Aurelio Macedonio Espinosa, who maintained constant contact and carried out joint projects with Menéndez Pidal (C. Ortiz 2007). One of the projects that Fernando Ortiz had begun in Havana was to demonstrate African influence on Cuban culture. He thought that it would only be possible to value African influence in its proper measure by knowing about it, at a time when the only valued components of Cuban culture were those coming from Hispanic culture and, to a certain extent, from indigenous culture. In just a few years, Ortiz's studies on Cuba's African-derived traditions and lexicon showed how much the legacy of African cultures helped shape Cuban culture. The creation of the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano, as already mentioned, and of its communication channel, the *Archivos del Folklore Cubano*, were essential in the recovery of the country's entire cultural legacy, including the African legacy (Moore 1997).

The *Archivos* are not only interesting for their contents. They make it possible to follow the intellectual network set up by Ortiz with other countries and colleagues. Although Ortiz had a strong relationship with anthropologists and jurists from Spain and Italy from the very beginning of the twentieth century, through the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano and the *Archivos*, he strengthened his cooperation with colleagues from the United States, Great Britain, and some Latin American countries where there were similar societies, such as Chile and Argentina. The influence of his work expanded the scientific community to different countries on both sides of the Atlantic: Brazil, Mexico, France, Spain, etc. Both Ortiz and Chacón y Calvo worked on creating a larger intellectual space that would bring together the institutions that studied folklore. The collection of popular romances and traditions present in popular culture was, for Ortiz, the first phase of a broad and ambitious project that would reflect the cultural wealth of the country, as it had in other countries. These studies were similar to those that Menéndez Pidal's students and the teacher himself had been conducting in Spain since 1910. Ortiz encouraged Latin American scholars in their own countries, who were interested in popular literature, to engage

in this type of fieldwork from the first few years of the twentieth century. They did so, for instance, in Mexico and in Santo Domingo, where romances were still preserved in oral tradition. Some of the letters, whose senders and/or recipients were Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Alfonso Reyes, and José María Chacón y Calvo, refer to the collection of romances and popular traditions, which were carried out in different countries, and to the exchange of their studies. The letters map out knowledge circuits and show the various contact points throughout the world. In the letter that Henríquez Ureña sent to Menéndez Pidal in 1914, he mentioned the works of three young literature teachers from the Escuela Preparatoria in Mexico, Antonio Castro Leal, Manuel Toussaint y Ritter, and Alberto Vázquez del Mercado, who also founded the Sociedad Hispánica de México (Mexican Hispanic Society), which had eight active members, among them Chacón y Calvo.²¹ Ortiz wrote to Chacón y Calvo from New York on May 20, 1924, commenting on sending the *Archivos del Folklore Cubano* to the London-based American Folklore Society, where he hoped it would be well received. The dissemination of culture and knowledge were common goals shared by the intellectual community members:

I think we can get a good representation for the English society. You could write to your colleague Altunaga [Rafael Rodríguez Altunaga], from the London legation about this matter, and get him interested in exchanges, etc. . . . Since we are talking about an enterprise of Cuban cultural diffusion (I was going to use the word 'patriotic,' but it is so wrongly used!), it is convenient to obtain the broadest exchange in all countries.²² (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 36)

In Spain, Ortiz relied on the close collaboration of his friend Chacón y Calvo. Ortiz involved him in all his projects, particularly those related to philological studies. Chacón y Calvo was the one who introduced the

21. Letter from Pedro Henríquez Ureña to Ramón Menéndez Pidal, México 13 de mayo de 1914. H014002 (1–4). Archives of Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Madrid.

22. "Creo que podemos procurarnos una buena representación para la sociedad inglesa. Ud. Podría escribirle a su compañero Altunaga [Rafael Rodríguez Altunaga], de la legación de Londres, sobre el particular, interesando canje, etc. . . . Tratándose de una empresa de difusión cultural cubana (iba a decir 'patriótica', pero ¡está tan mosqueada ya la palabreja!), conviene obtener el canje más amplio en todos los países."



interests of the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano in Madrid. Immediately after its creation, the *Revista de Filología Española*, directed by Menéndez Pidal and published by the Centro de Estudios Históricos since 1914, reviewed it. Excited by the news, Menéndez Pidal solicited more information about the society and about its regulations because the idea of forming a folklore society was present in Spain as well (Gutiérrez-Vega 1996: 307). From Havana, in two letters dated March and May 1926, Ortiz, after asking Chacón y Calvo to request an article for the magazine from Menéndez Pidal, expressed his joy for having achieved it:

Cuban folklore. I swell from reading his paragraphs about our *Archivos*. Menéndez Pidal's praise has me full of vanity. Wouldn't it be possible to obtain some lines of commendation from the master for the *Archivos* so they could be published in them, and serve as a stimulus to the many lazy people around us? (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 55)

I'm very enthusiastic about your news of a collaboration by Don Ramón, the Maestro, for the *Archivos*. High Mass in the cathedral of Toledo! I am waiting for your bibliographical notes on the last books by that hero. (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 58)²³

The collaboration between Menéndez Pidal, Chacón y Calvo, and Ortiz continued ever since. The three are seen together in the Comisión de Folklore Cubano (Cuban Folklore Commission), founded in 1937 as a result of Chacón y Calvo's effort to institutionalize folklore studies on the island, especially after the disappearance of the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano in 1931. Its creation was related to Chacón y Calvo's return to Cuba in 1934 to take over the Directorate or Department of Culture of the Ministry of Education. He combined this job with directing the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas (Institute of

Historical Research) and the Instituto de Altos Estudios (Institute of Higher Studies) in 1937. Although his position did not allow him to carry out other projects—such as founding an Institute of Philological Investigations—it did facilitate the establishment of the Comisión de Folklore Cubano, as well as the trip of the Spanish philologist, who stayed on the island from the end of 1936 until June 1937, invited by Ortiz through the Institución-Hispano Cubana de Cultura (IHCC). It was also Chacón y Calvo, who, from his position at the Cuban embassy, helped Menéndez Pidal and his family leave Madrid after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. During his stay on the island, Menéndez Pidal not only gave lectures but also worked with the folklore groups formed by the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano to rescue romances in Cuba (Bruquetas de Castro 2018).

Attentive to the intellectual and scientific movements developing in Spain, Ortiz strengthened the contact he had with Spanish intellectuals since the early twentieth century. He was a member of several Spanish academies, such as the Real Academia de la Lengua (Spanish Royal Academy), the Academia de Ciencias Morales y Políticas (Academy of Moral and Political Sciences), the Academia de la Historia (Academy of History), and the Academia de Jurisprudencia y Legislación (Academy of Jurisprudence and Legislation). In 1925, he proposed to create an academy on the island, similar to the Spanish one, that would be a “very positive benefit for Spanish culture and the defense of the language.” In this negotiation, Chacón y Calvo mediated with Menéndez Pidal, who supported the idea and took steps towards its implementation with Antonio Maura, president of the Real Academia Española.

At the end of 1926, Ortiz's intellectual commitment to other Spanish-speaking countries and to Spain was embodied in the creation of the Institución Hispano-Cubana de Cultura (IHCC), also called “La Cultural,” which he presided over for as long as it existed until 1947. For Ortiz, a cooperative spirit, science and culture would be the inspirations encouraging the new institution, opposed to the intellectual xenophobia of some Cubans, which he described as mean, ridiculous, and suicidal. He introduced his idea at the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País de La Habana on November 12, 1926, emphasizing that the exchange of intellectual relations with other countries is one of the most powerful means to achieve a country's cultural growth.²⁴

23. Folklore cubano. Me hincho de leer sus párrafos sobre nuestros *Archivos*. Ese elogio de Menéndez Pidal me tiene lleno de vanidad. ¿No será posible obtener del maestro unas líneas de encomio a los Archivos para que fueran publicadas en ellos, y servirían de estímulo a los numerosos zánganos que nos rodean?

Estoy entusiasmadísimo con la noticia que me da de una colaboración de don Ramón, el Maestro, para los *Archivos*. ¡Misa mayor en la catedral de Toledo! Estoy esperando sus notas bibliográficas de Ud. acerca de los últimos libros de aquel prócer.

24. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 217.



The founding act of the IHCC shows the support Ortiz received and its words show how beneficial the institution would be for scientific development, in addition to its “valor inapreciable de fortificar la conciencia de nuestra propia capacidad [en el original aparece tachado de “nuestra raza”] para realizar las empresas más fecundas del saber humano” (priceless value for strengthening consciousness about our own capacity [in the original document “our race” is crossed out] to carry out the most fruitful enterprises of human knowledge). Some of those present at the meeting referred to the role that other Latin American cultural institutions were playing in promoting relations with Spain. Ramiro Guerra, a member of the Sociedad and a leading historian and intellectual, announced the donation of 15,000 pesetas by Avelino Gutiérrez, president of the Institución Cultural of Buenos Aires, so that the IHCC could begin its life and join in the diffusion of Spanish culture, and others highlighted the benefits that both countries would obtain. The institution agreed to appoint the President of the Republic of Cuba and the Ambassador of Spain to the island as honorary members, and to pay tribute or homage to Santiago Ramón y Cajal, president of the JAE.²⁵ With this project, Ortiz managed not only to articulate relations between Cuba and Spain, but also to join the widest transatlantic network in which different countries participated from different professional spheres.

Ortiz was supported by a number of intellectuals in this project. A few days after the founding of the IHCC, in the letter that Ortiz sent from Havana to Madrid on November 24, 1926, he commissioned Chacón y Calvo to send him the statutes of the Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas, since he thought that that institution could be his counterpart in Spain, given the experience that the JAE had demonstrated in the exchange of teachers and scientists between Spain and some countries in the Americas. He also left the negotiation of Menéndez Pidal and Ortega y Gasset’s trip to Cuba in Chacón y Calvo’s hands, with whom the teachers exchange would begin. His aim, and in this Ortiz coincided with other American and Spanish intellectuals, was to create a Hispanic-American exchange circuit that would be sustained by the teachers’ stay: “I believe that in due course it will be possible to establish the Hispanic-American exchange circuit: Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Lima, Mexico and Havana. Could you exchange views on this with the good people of the

Junta de Ampliación?”²⁶ On this matter, Chacón y Calvo answered by saying that in Madrid they thought that the Spanish teachers’ trips could be more useful if the guest teacher gave conferences in different places during one single trip. Therefore, Chacón y Calvo was in charge of sending Ortiz the scheduled trips to other nearby Hispanic-American countries in order to learn if the journey could be extended to Cuba.²⁷ Ortiz also commissioned him to find out if the Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas could be the representative of the IHCC in Spain. On March 3, 1927, Ortiz wrote to Ramón y Cajal, president of the JAE, requesting that the Junta be the representative of the IHCC in Spain (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 66–67). In the letter, he told Ramón y Cajal that the Junta was the institution that scientifically guaranteed him a successful academic exchange project, and gave him the names of some lecturers they hoped to have in the coming months, Flores Lemus, Francisco Bernis, and Américo Castro.

Some conflicts arose in the relationship between the two institutions, mainly due to the choice of professors. The letters between Ortiz and Chacón y Calvo reflect these tensions and how they were overcome each time they surfaced. In order to reconcile interests and maintain the IHCC’s independence and nonpolitical character that Ortiz had defended from the beginning, they agreed that the IHCC would be in charge of selecting the Spanish professors, and it would be done from Spain only when the selection of one was urgent, Chacón y Calvo being responsible for negotiating with a member of the Junta. As agreed, the IHCC would finance the trips of the Spanish professors, who would also be paid 2,000 pesos for their lectures. For this purpose, they hoped to count on the contribution of the Ministerio de Instrucción Pública of Spain and the help of the Compañía Transatlántica Española which had contributed to teachers’ trips to other countries. To cover the expenses, the IHCC also received support from the University of Havana and the economic assistance of some Spanish

25. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 203.

26. “Creo que llegue en su día a ser posible establecer el circuito de intercambio hispanoamericano: Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Lima, México y La Habana. ¿Podría Ud. cambiar impresiones acerca de esto con la buena gente de la Junta de Ampliación?” Letter from F. Ortiz to J.M. Chacón y Calvo. La Habana 24 de noviembre de 1926. BNJM. CM Ortiz, Folder 407. Correspondencia Variada.

27. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 407.



businessmen and regional centers on the island. Throughout the years of collaboration with Spain, the IHCC also received occasional funding from the Ministerio de Instrucción Pública of Spain for tickets to Cuba. On February 21, 1928, Ortiz commented to José Castillejo, secretary of the JAE, on the importance of having established a triangular friendship between Spain, the United States, and Iberian America, and expressed his interest in continuing to foster that friendship.²⁸ In a letter dated August 22, 1927, Castillejo explained to Ortiz that given the mixed nature of the IHCC, as an *Institución de Ampliación de Estudios* and as a *Sociedad de Conferencias*, the speeches would be given at the University of Havana and other venues where the talks would reach a wider audience, such as the members of the IHCC. In the same letter, he mentioned his idea of founding a chair of Spanish culture at the University of Havana, in which professors of different fields would work and also collaborate with the IHCC, where they would give two lectures a month.²⁹ One year later, on July 20, 1928, Ortiz shared with Chacón y Calvo his idea of creating a magazine in Madrid that would be linked to the IHCC in order to further connect both intellectual worlds.³⁰

The relationship between the *Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas* (the Junta) and the *Institución Hispano-Cubana de Cultura* (the IHCC) was not free of problems and tensions, above all because of the selection of professors, but also because of other issues that raised suspicions. One of the most visible moments of tension occurred when Cuban intellectuals Felix Lizaso and Jorge Mañach commented, in May 1936, on the possibility of the IHCC being a subsidiary of the *Instituto de las Españas*, which was founded in 1920 and directed by Federico de Onís, a Spanish professor at Columbia University since 1916, and financed by the Spanish Republican government. In the letters he exchanged with his friend Chacón y Calvo, Ortiz said that he thought that idea was absurd because it would lead to the “Hispanicization” of the IHCC. Ortiz’s nationalist position prompted the words he wrote in the letter to Chacón y Calvo on May 15, 1936. As he had proven at other times in his life, Ortiz knew how to differentiate and value the country’s internal political issues and relations with other colleagues and institutions. His “patri-

otic” sense outweighed the cordial and working relationship he had with Federico de Onís:

I confess I won’t lend myself to that maneuver concocted in New York. Given the nationalist sensibility that currently exists in Cuba, which I will continue to channel in order to defend ourselves against foreign interference, it seems to me that opening an institution with a Spanish flag now is the height of the nonsense, and precisely to the detriment of the effective intelligence between both peoples.³¹

Months later, once the Spanish Civil War had begun, Ortiz insisted that the Spanish teachers who went to Cuba had to be apolitical. On September 1, 1936, he wrote to Chacón y Calvo: “Aquí también estamos todos a uno y otro lado del Guadarrama y falta la serenidad necesaria para oír al adversario” (We are all here too on both sides of the Guadarrama and we lack the serenity required to be able to hear the adversary) (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 110–11).

The idea Ortiz had of culture clashed with “patriotism and vile xenophobia.” He said so in a letter dated January 11, 1928, and sent to Miguel Galliano, a member of the delegation of the IHCC in the city of Manzanillo. In it, he explained the island’s need for culture and openness. Contrary to the opinion of some who thought that Spanish culture was irrelevant and could not contribute much, Ortiz indicated that culture was always valid regardless of where it came from: “Cuba necesita . . . cultura, cultura y más cultura, de España, del Norte, de todos los vientos, si no queremos perecer en el paludismo de cenagosa incultura a muchos quieren reducirnos” (Cuba needs . . . culture, culture and more culture, from Spain, from the North, from all directions, if we don’t want to perish in the ignorant swampy malaria that many would like to see).³²

Ortiz was convinced that culture was the key to the progress of societies and the ambassador between countries, and he did not cease to expand networks to other

28. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 261.

29. Ibid.

30. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 407.

31. “Confieso que yo no he de prestarme a esa maniobra fraguada en Nueva York. Desde la sensibilidad nacionalista que existe actualmente en Cuba y que habré de seguir canalizando para defendernos contra las injerencias extranjeras, abrir ahora una Institución con bandera española, me parece el colmo de los disparates y precisamente el perjuicio de la efectiva inteligencia entre ambos pueblos.” Ibid.

32. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 259.



academies. We find an example in his letter to Chacón y Calvo, on February 23, 1928, in which he tells him that during the conference that James Brown gave at the IHCC, which was attended by several U.S. politicians, including the ambassador, he took the opportunity to put forward the idea of triangular friendship. This idea coincided with the thesis of “triangular friendship” presented by William Shepherd (1928). By “triangular friendship” Shepherd meant the cultural collaboration between Puerto Rico, the United States, and Spain. Puerto Rico would act as the meeting point between two cultures. This project was promoted by the University of Puerto Rico at the beginning of the century, and in the 1920s it took shape on the island with the signing of a collaboration agreement between the University of Puerto Rico, the Centro de Estudios Históricos de Madrid, and Columbia University (Naranjo Orovio, Luque, and Puig-Samper 2002). Considering that Federico de Onís had managed to reach a collaboration agreement with the three institutions mentioned above, Ortiz asked Chacón y Calvo to present this idea in Madrid, since he thought it had been well received by the American authorities in Havana.

During the time that the IHCC lasted, Ortiz achieved the objectives he had in mind. This institution, as well as the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano or the *Archivos del Folklore Cubano*, were platforms for bringing universal culture closer together. The project of forming a folklore association that would transcend national boundaries was a joint project of Chacón y Calvo and Ortiz. In 1940 Ortiz put forward the idea of creating a regional association in which several Caribbean countries would participate during the Second Inter-American Meeting of the Caribbean in Ciudad Trujillo, which they could call the Sociedad Folklórica de los pueblos del mar Caribe. That same year, on May 2nd in Havana, Ortiz submitted the foundations of the project of the Instituto Iberoamericano José Martí, an educational institution for the mutual dissemination of the different cultures of all America.³³ The faculty exchange would involve the whole of the Americas. This time Ortiz left out Franco’s Spain. Instead, he continued to foster the arrival of Republican intellectuals on the island, as far as he could. As of 1936, the Spanish exodus became the driving force of much of the correspondence between various Latin American and Spanish intellectuals. Letters are often calls for help, or sometimes provide news of the whereabouts of several colleagues and friends with

whom they shared projects and classrooms, now scattered around the world. These interwoven relationships helped host many of these Spanish intellectuals. However, the importance of these pages of history, beyond the reality of exile, is seeing how institutions, projects, and publications contributed to the dissemination of knowledge and, while their circuits expanded, new networks proliferated. The incipient intellectual community of the early twentieth century succeeded in breaking down barriers and establishing transatlantic bridges that prevailed over time.

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33. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 411.



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