

The Rockefeller Foundation

111 WEST 50th STREET, NEW YORK 20

THE HUMANITIES

CABLE: ROCKFOUND, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: COLUMBUS 5-8100

July 14, 1961

Dear don Daniel:

In the matter of El Colegio's program of literary studies I have trouble knowing what you and Antonio Alatorre expect of me. The only letter I have received from him reached the office while I was in South America and was acknowledged by Mrs. Kalugerovich. It was a full and much appreciated account of what has been accomplished under the current grant. In it Alatorre expressed the hope that this information would help in getting further support for his seminar but I do not believe any specific suggestions as to the form this support might take have ever been received here.

I have heard, third-hand, several reports that literary studies no longer form a major interest of El Colegio. On challenging this statement I was twice told that El Colegio might not be able to continue publication of the Nueva Revista de Filologia Hispanica. Having no information on this matter I could only remain silent. What, then, is the place of literary studies within the future plans of El Colegio? This would have to be spelled out clearly if we are to consider a second grant that would in essence be "more of the same." Both Alatorre and you are aware, I believe, that the Foundation does not at this time have any defined program interest in philology as such. We have consistently declined requests received from other centers of philological research in Latin America and the United States. Our concerns are more with work in modern linguistics and to a lesser degree with contemporary literary criticism - or at least work with a definable relation to it - and with a preference for comparative studies within Spanish America.

As I understand the literary program of El Colegio, there is no possibility of its ever developing into a modern language program that would provide direction for the language courses for El Colegio's students in other fields, for example international relations and history. (I can understand that the work of Alatorre and his seminar is of an original nature and that he and his colleagues would probably consider work in modern languages as a service program and to this extent demeaning to the importance of their own disciplinary research and teaching. Work in modern linguistics is, I believe, as academically demanding as philology and can be effectively separated from the applied aspects of teaching that it may serve.) Neither do I discern any trend towards concern for comparative studies of Spanish American literature. There is, of course,

July 14, 1961

no reason why the seminar should dilute its present program with elements that may be considered if not distractions at least outside of its main function. Equally, however, it is difficult for us here to provide support for a field that is outside of our program interests. This makes the importance of this literary program within El Colegio and its concept of scholarly service to Mexico and to Latin America generally the strongest argument for further Foundation support.

As I believe you know, I will be away from the office from Monday, July 17, through August. The first two weeks I will be in Washington and after that at home in Fair Lawn. If you and Alatorre have any questions or suggestions you could either write me at home or directly to Burton here at the Foundation after August 7. We will be prepared to discuss whatever you may propose when we are all together again after vacations, that is during September.

Sincerely yours,

John P. Harrison
John P. Harrison *per uwt*
Associate Director

Lic. Daniel Cosío Villegas
Apartado 2123
Mexico, D.F.

JPH:MSK