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# Measuring "Problems of Human Behavior": The Eugenic Origins of Yale's Institute of Psychology, 1921-1929

John Doyle  
*Yale University*

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Yale University

**Measuring “Problems of Human Behavior”:  
The Eugenic Origins of Yale’s Institute of Psychology, 1921-1929**

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John (Jack) Doyle

History of Science, History of Medicine Senior Essay

Advisor: Dr. Toby Appel

April 7, 2014

The Institute of Psychology at Yale was established in 1924 to study what its founders perceived as “problems of human behavior.”<sup>1</sup> The Institute was Yale President James Angell’s first major step towards making the University a pre-eminent center for psychological research in the 1920s and 1930s. Endowed for a five-year term by the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund, the Institute brought three distinguished faculty to Yale: comparative psychologist Robert M. Yerkes, anthropologist Clark D. Wissler, and psychologist Raymond Dodge. While the Institute has been briefly cited in the historical literature as a precursor to the larger Institute of Human Relations established in 1929, its founding and five-year existence have never been described.<sup>2</sup> This essay will use archival collections to explore the origins of the Institute of Psychology and show how it was born from the ideological union of experimental psychology and American eugenics.

The nascent field of experimental psychology included many eugenicists in the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While today eugenics is seen as a racist pseudo-science, it was a widely held position among educated, academic professionals of Anglo-Saxon and Northern European heritage in the 1910s and 1920s. American eugenicists feared the degradation of the American gene pool due to the proliferation of “undesirable traits” in the population—caused especially by the massive influx of southern and eastern European immigrants at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Eugenicists stressed inherited, mental characteristics as a determinant

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<sup>1</sup> Roswell Angier, “Report on the work of the Institute of Psychology, Yale University, for the Academic Year 1925-26, for submission to Rockefeller Foundation,” Box 102, Folder 1924, Robert M. Yerkes papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>2</sup> For a brief discussion on the Institute of Psychology as a precursor to the Yale Institute of Human Relations, see J. G. Morawski, “Organizing Knowledge and Behavior at Yale’s Institute of Human Relations,” *Isis* 77 (1986): 227.

of individual fitness, and experimental psychology research seemed particularly well-suited to quantifying mental and behavioral traits in a way that would enable identification of “unfit” segments of the population. With the rise of intelligence testing and other aptitude examinations, American psychologists were able to produce purportedly objective data that supported the eugenic idea that educated, native-born Americans were the most intelligent and fit members of American society. Citing psychological research, American eugenicists promoted two modes of preserving American genetic purity: immigration restriction and reproductive control—via sterilization and contraceptives—of the socially unfit.

Experimental psychology and eugenics had an especially sympathetic administrator in Yale President Angell, as this essay will discuss. Angell recruited Dodge and two leading eugenicists—Yerkes and Wissler—to the Institute of Psychology to conduct collaborative research on what he saw as pressing societal problems of human behavior. While eugenics was not explicitly cited as a mission of the Institute, Angell and the three faculty infused the Institute’s founding research plan with contemporary eugenic priorities. Specifically, the Institute was organized to house the psychological research projects of the Committee on Scientific Problems in Human Migration and the Committee on Research Problems in Sex, two organizations initiated by Yerkes at the National Research Council that fostered scientific research with eugenic underpinnings on immigration and reproduction, respectively. Yerkes and Wissler also became involved in the American Eugenics Society, headquartered just blocks away from the Institute in downtown New Haven, where they helped shape a research agenda for the eugenics movement that

closely mirrored that of the new Institute. By the end of the Institute's five-year funding term in 1929, however, its founders' vision of solving social problems through collaborative psychological research had not materialized; due to re-organized funding, the Institute was absorbed into the new Institute of Human Relations and ceased to exist as an autonomous entity. Nonetheless, this unexplored chapter in Yale's history is historically significant, not only because the Institute established Yale as pre-eminent in the field of experimental psychology, but because it represented the institutional consummation of the intimate relationship between eugenics and experimental psychology in the early 1920s.

## **SECTION I: EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY, EUGENICS, AND JAMES ANGELL, 1890-1921**

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### **Ia. Applying Experimental Psychology to American Eugenics**

The term "eugenics" was first described in the psychological work of Francis Galton. A prominent British statistician during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Galton analyzed the variation and distribution of mental characteristics in groups of individuals in Great Britain.<sup>3</sup> Heavily influenced by the evolutionary theory of his half-cousin, Charles Darwin, Galton believed that genius was an inherited, measurable entity that could be traced from one generation to the next.<sup>4</sup> It was in this context in 1883 that he introduced the concept of "eugenics": the breeding of the intelligent elite to improve the overall mental and physical quality of a human population's stock.

Upon the rediscovery of Gregor Mendel's studies of the heredity of dominant and

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<sup>3</sup> Diane B. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995), 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

recessive genes in pea plants at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Galton's idea of eugenics garnered support in the scientific community.<sup>5</sup> By selective breeding of society's most mentally fit, many biologists believed, it would be possible to genetically engineer a superior human race.

Galton's statistical and scientific approach also influenced the new, quantitative field of experimental psychology.<sup>6</sup> Long considered a branch of mental philosophy, psychology was breaking from its philosophical tradition and being redefined as a natural science in the 1880s and 1890s by pioneers such as Wilhelm Wundt in Germany, Galton in England, and G. Stanley Hall and William James in the United States.<sup>7</sup> To legitimize their budding field, American experimental psychologists in the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century sought to demonstrate the usefulness of their discipline to society as a whole.<sup>8</sup> Their push was informed by the values and spirit of the Progressive Era, in which civic leaders embraced the latest advances in science, medicine and technology to solve problems of societal welfare. American psychologists jumped at the opportunity to apply their discipline to education, advertising, industry and mental hygiene. The newly redefined field of psychology was to become an influential contributor to American theories and policies of social order and control.

In this spirit, many experimental psychologists were excited by the application of their discipline to the social movement that was eugenics. In his 1913

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<sup>5</sup> Daniel Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985), 43.

<sup>6</sup> Wade Pickren and Alexandria Rutherford, *A History of Modern Psychology in Context: Incorporating Social, Political, and Economic Factors into the Story* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2010) 160-161.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Hothersall, *History of Psychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 330.

<sup>8</sup> Pickren and Rutherford, *A History of Modern Psychology in Context*, 84.

essay for the *Eugenics Review*, Harvard psychologist William McDougall urged eugenicists to embrace the new science:

“Psychology is taking shape as an observational and experimental science which pursues its own problems by its own methods. And it is therefore of the first importance that the applied science of eugenics should take pains to establish intimate relations with psychology, and that it should apply [psychology’s] results and adopt and adapt its methods of research for application to its own problems.”<sup>9</sup>

Psychology’s focus on mental and behavioral characteristics was thus important to the eugenic effort. Many American psychologists, such as Henry Goddard, viewed poor, disabled, or deviant individuals as mentally “unfit” for society. In 1912, Goddard famously described mental deficiency and socially deviant behavior in children as a trait called “feeble-mindedness,” which he believed could be inherited and traced through a family pedigree.<sup>10</sup>

In America, the use of experimental psychology for eugenics reached its height in the application of intelligence tests. Eugenicists eagerly adapted tests as a tool to identify the most and least mentally fit populations of society. In 1908, Goddard brought one of the first intelligence scales, the Binet-Simon test, from France to the United States, where he used it to assess racial differences in intelligence.<sup>11</sup> The Binet-Simon scale was then modified by psychologist Lewis M. Terman of Stanford University in 1916 to create the Stanford-Binet Scale.<sup>12</sup> A noted

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<sup>9</sup> William McDougall, “Psychology in the Service of Eugenics,” *Eugenical Review* 5, no. 5 (Jan 1914): 295.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Goddard, *The Kalikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1912), accessed October 3, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1133393>.

<sup>11</sup> Leila Zenderland, *Measuring Minds: Henry Herbert Goddard and the Origins of American Intelligence Testing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 235.

<sup>12</sup> Ramond E. Fancher, *The Intelligence Men: Makers of the IQ Controversy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company), 4.



eugenicist, Terman believed that the nation's overall intelligence might be increased with the use of his test, since individuals with below-normal intellects might be identified and prevented from having children.<sup>13</sup> While historians have shown that these early tests were scholastically and culturally biased, intelligence testing, at the time, offered eugenicists a purportedly proven method to characterize the mental fitness of distinct races and ethnicities.

With the help of psychologists, American eugenicists lobbied for immigration restrictions and reproductive control to preserve American homogeneity. Harry H. Laughlin, director of the Eugenics Record Office, testified to Congress in 1923 as an expert witness, citing psychological research to argue that immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were endowed with inherently poor "germ-plasm."<sup>14</sup> The hearings led to the National Origins Act of 1924, which implemented annual immigration quotas that limited migration from southern and eastern European countries.<sup>15</sup> In addition, American eugenicists sought to control reproductive behavior and curtail the proliferation of individuals they deemed unfit. To this end, eugenic organizations promoted sterilization and birth control for the "feebleminded" and "socially unfit."<sup>16</sup> In California and Virginia, where alone a combined 20,000 individuals were sterilized by 1944, inmates of mental hospitals and prisons were disproportionately foreign-born.<sup>17</sup> In each of these endeavors,

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<sup>13</sup> Fancher, *The Intelligence Men*, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth M. Ludmerer, *Genetics and American Society: A Historical Appraisal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 33.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>16</sup> See H. H. Laughlin, *Eugenical Sterilization: Historical, Legal, and Statistical review of the Eugenical Sterilization in the United States*. New Haven, CT: American Eugenics Society, Inc., 1926.

<sup>17</sup> Andre Sofair and Lauris C. Kaldjian, "Eugenic Sterilization and a Qualified Nazi Analogy: The United States and Germany, 1930-1945," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 132 (2000): 315.

American eugenicists used research by psychologists and psychiatrists to provide scientific support for their claims.

Thus, as experimental psychology and its perceived utility grew in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so too did the American eugenics movement. The overlapping interests of the two movements were perhaps best exemplified in the Second International Congress of Eugenics, held in 1921 at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Hundreds of the world's most prominent eugenicists attended the conference, and a one-month exhibition of scientific research related to eugenics was mounted at the Museum.<sup>18</sup> Besides genetics, psychology was the most represented discipline in the exhibition.<sup>19</sup> Psychologist Knight Dunlap, who would become president of the APA the next year, hosted an exhibit at the Congress on “using psychology as the chief means of improving the race physically and mentally.”<sup>20</sup> Psychologist Thomas R. Garth, of the University of Texas, traveled to New York to display his work on “Racial Differences in Mental Fatigue” in groups of “White, Indian, and Negro children.”<sup>21</sup> In addition, the *Journal of Applied Psychology*—whose editorial board included eugenicists such as Terman, Carl C. Brigham, and Edward Thorndike—was displayed prominently at the Congress, immediately adjacent to major eugenic publications such as *Eugenics Review*, *Journal of Heredity*, and Charles Davenport's *Heredity in Relation to*

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<sup>18</sup> H. H. Laughlin, *The Second International Exhibition of Eugenics held September 22 to October 22, 1921, in connection with the Second International Congress of Eugenics in the American Museum of Natural History, New York; an account of the organization of the exhibition, the classification of the exhibits, the list of exhibitors, and a catalog and description of the exhibits* (Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins Company, 1923).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Laughlin, *Second International Exhibition of Eugenics*, 31.

*Eugenics*.<sup>22</sup> The Congress was an apt demonstration not only of psychology's perceived respectability but its close ties to eugenics.

Besides cementing psychology as an allied field of eugenics, an important result of the Second International Congress of Eugenics was the formation of the American Eugenics Society (AES). Prior to the Congress, two organizations--the Eugenics Research Association and the Eugenics Record Office--had formed the heart of the American eugenics movement. But a small cadre of American eugenicists sought a separate association to advance political and educational goals rather than just research. In 1922, Irving Fisher, Charles Davenport, C. C. Little, Fredrick Osborn and others created the Eugenics Committee of the USA—later to be renamed the American Eugenics Society—and appointed Fisher as its first president.<sup>23</sup>

Fisher, a Yale professor of economics, chose New Haven as the headquarters of the new AES. The headquarters, which held the first national meeting of the society in 1922, was located at 185 Church Street in New Haven, adjacent to Yale's Old Campus; later, the headquarters moved directly onto Yale's campus at 4 Hillhouse Avenue, just a few houses away from the present-day Office of Admissions, President's house, and other Yale academic and administrative buildings.<sup>24</sup> In his presidential speech to the society in 1926, Fisher argued that the "national vitality" of the American race needed to be saved from "defectives,

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<sup>22</sup> Laughlin, *Second International Exhibition of Eugenics*, 60.

<sup>23</sup> Barry A. Mehler, "A History of the American Eugenics Society, 1921-1940," PhD diss., University of Illinois Urbana, 1988. Accessed November 10, 2013, <http://www.ferris.edu/isar/dissertation.htm>, 60.

<sup>24</sup> S. Wayne Evans, *Organized Eugenics* (New Haven, CT: American Eugenics Society, Inc., 1931), vii.

delinquents, and dependents,” adding that the “awful contamination can be saved the race by a wise application of eugenics.”<sup>25</sup> Under the leadership of Fisher, Yale professor Ellsworth Huntington, and others, the AES became a cornerstone of the American eugenics movement throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The proximity of the AES—and the heavy involvement of Yale faculty in the society—would play an important role in bringing the heart of the eugenics movement to Yale’s campus.

### **Ib. Yale’s New President: A Psychologist with Eugenic Ideals**

In the summer of 1921, the Yale Corporation appointed Dr. James Rowland Angell as the 14<sup>th</sup> president of Yale University. With an impressive record of leadership and intimate connections to national funding institutions such as the National Research Council and the Carnegie Corporation, Angell was instrumental in increasing Yale’s standing as a research university. During his 16-year tenure, graduate school education and training were transformed, particularly in the scientific and medical disciplines.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps no discipline flourished more—or held a place closer to Angell’s heart—than that of psychology. As a trained psychologist and a progressive reformer, he sought to make Yale a center for scientific research into problems of human behavior that might be applied to societal reform.

In many ways, Angell’s early career embodied the interconnection of experimental psychology and eugenics. Trained in psychology at the University of Michigan and Harvard University in the 1890s, Angell was one of the early proponents of the new, distinct field of experimental psychology. “Although I had

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<sup>25</sup> As quoted in Richard Conniff, “God and White Men at Yale,” *Yale Alumni Magazine* 05 (2012): 36.

<sup>26</sup> Gerad Burrow, *A History of Yale’s School of Medicine: Passing Torches to Others* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 120.

come up to psychology through philosophical channels and was reasonably familiar with the main metaphysical problems and solutions which the European tradition has recognized," Angell reflected later in his life, "I early came to accept the practical wisdom of setting psychology apart as an independent empirical science, a branch of biology, exactly as physics and chemistry had earlier been set off."<sup>27</sup> This was a firm conviction: Angell accepted a professorship at the University of Chicago in 1904 on the strict condition that the psychology department become its own entity distinct from the department of philosophy.<sup>28</sup> In his research on such subjects as the reaction time of mental processes, Angell became a father of the functionalist school of psychology.<sup>29</sup> In his 15 years at the University of Chicago, Angell was a strong proponent of a research-driven, empirical approach to psychological investigation, and he helped move psychology from a philosophical to a scientific discipline.

Like other functional psychologists at the time, Angell's conception of mental phenomena was rooted in Darwinian theory. Angell posited that, like other physiological features of human anatomy, the human brain and nervous system evolved from lower animals.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Angell argued that certain races of humans represented different stages in the evolution of intelligence. In "The Evolution of Intelligence," Angell wrote:

"There is fairly definitive evidence that extant human races differ appreciably in their native intelligence and those which are living most nearly in the state of nature which we believe to have characterized the early history of our own

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<sup>27</sup> James Rowland Angell, "James Rowland Angell," in Carl Murchison (ed.) *A History of Psychology in Autobiography* Vol 3. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), 5.

<sup>28</sup> W.S. Hunter, *James Rowland Angell, 1869-1949, Biographical Memoir* (Washington D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1951), 199.

<sup>29</sup> Hunter, *James Rowland Angell*, 200.

<sup>30</sup> James R. Angell, "The Influence of Darwinism on Psychology," *Psychological Review* 16 (1909), 152.

racial stock are, generally speaking, marked by apparently lower general average intelligence and by relatively fewer intellects of high grade. It seems therefore a reasonable inference that the forefathers of our own particular racial stock, could we but penetrate far enough into past history, would be found, like the more primitive races today, in possession of somewhat lower degrees of intellectual capacity.”<sup>31</sup>

To Angell, just as the process of evolution had shaped the color of eyes and the complexion of skin unique to distinct races, so too did it result in different mental capacities, distinguishing “civilized” racial groups from “primitive” ones.

Angell’s theory of the evolution of intelligence and his faith in empirical science underpinned his broad support for eugenics and other scientific reforms. While Angell rarely took part in radical eugenic advocacy, he firmly believed that certain races—namely his own Anglo-Saxon stock—should use their highly evolved intelligence for the betterment of mankind. “The more active and progressive minds find through the accumulated knowledge of the race...and through the amazingly rapid development in the technique of the sciences, the tools at hand for a literally unlimited evolution in the actual conditions of human life,” he claimed. “From this practical point of view, therefore, the evolution of intelligence may be considered as close to its beginnings rather than in any sense drawing near to its close.”<sup>32</sup>

Convinced that science and psychology could be used to accelerate the evolution of human intelligence, Angell saw eugenics as a reform movement that could facilitate widespread, positive change for mankind.

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<sup>31</sup> James R. Angell, “The Evolution of Intelligence,” in *The Evolution of Man: A Series of lectures delivered before the Yale chapter of the Sigma Xi during the academic year of 1921-1922* (New Haven, CT, 1922), 115.

<sup>32</sup> Angell, “The Evolution of Intelligence,” 125.

Angell's prominence as an experimental psychologist and his belief in science as a solution to societal problems propelled him to the national stage. Eager to follow in the footsteps of his father, who was president of the University of Michigan, and his maternal grandfather, who was a founder of the National Academy of Sciences, Angell left the University of Chicago to become Chairman of the National Research Council (NRC) in 1919.<sup>33</sup> The NRC had been established three years before by President Woodrow Wilson to increase scientific and technological services during World War I, and Angell particularly admired the Council's use of intelligence testing during the war effort.<sup>34</sup> A year later -- attracted by the opportunity to use private funds for research on social problems -- Angell became president of the Carnegie Corporation.<sup>35</sup> In both positions, Angell helped direct the application of biology, chemistry and psychology to issues of national importance.

Angell came to Yale in 1921 with a mission to improve the University's stature in the scientific, medical and -- especially -- psychological communities. Yale's psychology division was still under the umbrella of the philosophy department and had been responsible for little research, producing just eight Ph.D.s in the previous two decades.<sup>36</sup> By Angell's retirement in 1937, Yale was among the most robust centers of psychological research in America, with a department that fostered important connections to the related fields of psychiatry, physiology, anthropology and mental hygiene.<sup>37</sup> Reflecting on his presidency in 1936 he noted

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<sup>33</sup> Hunter, *James Rowland Angell*, 202.

<sup>34</sup> See James R. Angell, "The Organization of Research," *Sci. Monthly* 11, (1920), 30.

<sup>35</sup> Angell, "James Rowland Angell," 30.

<sup>36</sup> J.G. Morawski, "Organizing Knowledge and Behavior at Yale's Institute of Human Relations," *Isis* 77, no. 2 (June 1986), 226.

<sup>37</sup> Angell, "James Rowland Angell," 22.

“The acceptance of the position has at least allowed me to exercise a significant influence in the promotion of psychology and the allied scientific interests.”<sup>38</sup> This influence was manifested most directly in the Institute of Psychology, founded at Yale in 1924. Designed to foster psychological research into “fundamental problems of human behavior,” the Institute’s mission was rooted in Angell’s belief that psychology could be used to solve societal problems of the era. The Institute of Psychology became the focal point of Angell’s influence on Yale psychology, and in many ways represented a culmination of his career-long commitment to social science investigation.

In a speech to Yale’s Sigma Xi Scientific Research Society in his first year as president, Angell made his vision for the Institute clear. “If we compare the normal civilized man of any of the more advanced races with those savages lowest in the human scale,” he said, “the former is distinctly superior in the power of sustained attention and thought, in the range of things which interest him, and in his powers of analysis, abstraction, and inference.”<sup>39</sup> Through programs such as the Institute of Psychology, Angell believed, Yale men of the “more advanced races” could contribute not only to advancement of the social sciences, but also to the greater welfare of the American population. “The scientific mastery of the facts of man’s own nature and the laws which control society linger far behind the corresponding insight into the nature of the processes of the physical world,” Angell observed to his fellow Yale scientists. “But surely it is only a matter of time when these social sciences, so-called, will also have perfected a technique enabling man to secure

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<sup>38</sup> Angell, “James Rowland Angell,” 22.

<sup>39</sup> Angell, “The Evolution of Intelligence,” 124.



mastery over himself and his social relations.”<sup>40</sup> Angell thus began his tenure at Yale with bold and decidedly eugenic ideals for the progress of both the University and American society at large, and the Institute of Psychology was to be a centerpiece of his vision.

## **SECTION II: THE FOUNDING OF THE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY AT YALE UNIVERSITY, 1921-1924**

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### **Ia. Robert Yerkes and Intelligence Testing**

The Institute of Psychology was conceived years prior to its official launch in the fall of 1924. The idea emerged from correspondence between Angell and his old colleague at the NRC, Robert M. Yerkes, who wanted to leave his largely administrative position in the NRC Research Information Service and return to an academic institution to resume his research in comparative psychology.<sup>41</sup> Angell had admired Yerkes’s leadership in the psychological testing of American troops in World War I, and in 1922 Angell sent letters detailing his interest in “psycho-biological research which might demand the whole of your time at Yale.”<sup>42</sup> Yerkes was attracted by Angell’s desire to create an Institute for the sole purpose of psychological research. “We are considering what will presently turn out to be a great opportunity for some progressive university,” Yerkes wrote. “If Yale is the right one then I hope that the opportunity may come to it.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Angell, “The Evolution of Intelligence,” 124.

<sup>41</sup> Robert M. Yerkes to James R. Angell, July 11, 1922, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>42</sup> Angell to Yerkes, May 23, 1922, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>43</sup> Yerkes to Angell, Dec 5, 1923, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

Yerkes had studied under famed eugenicist Charles Davenport at Harvard. Although Davenport was strictly a biologist, Yerkes developed an interest in what he referred to as “psychobiology:” the biology of mind and behavior.<sup>44</sup> A friend and admirer of Angell, Yerkes took a functionalist approach to the study of consciousness and behavior of animals, particularly non-human primates. He believed that understanding the physiology and sexual habits of primates might elucidate an understanding “of minor social groups, peoples and races.”<sup>45</sup> With a strong desire to apply his comparative psychology research to problems of human welfare, Yerkes began looking for a respected, academic institute that might house his work on chimpanzees and gorillas.

Yerkes saw World War I as a unique opportunity to showcase the applicability of psychology to social engineering. He was head of the American Psychological Association (APA) when the United States entered the war in 1917, and became a primary organizer of psychologists in the war effort. In particular, Yerkes spearheaded the APA’s Committee on Psychological Examinations of Recruits.<sup>46</sup> As a Major under the Surgeon General of the Army, Yerkes helped develop and implement standardized examinations to analyze the intelligence of American recruits. By war’s end nearly 1.5 million soldiers had been tested, and Yerkes published an analysis of the results in *Psychological Examining in the United*

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<sup>44</sup> Kersten Jacobson Biehn, “Psychobiology, sex research, and chimpanzees: philanthropic foundation support for the behavioral sciences at Yale University, 1923-41,” *History of the Human Sciences* 21, no. 2 (May 2008), 23.

<sup>45</sup> Robert M. Yerkes, “Progress and Peace,” *The Scientific Monthly* 1, no. 2 (Nov 1915), 199.

<sup>46</sup> Daniel J Kevles, “Testing the Army’s Intelligence: Psychologists and the Military in World War I,” *The Journal of American History* 55, no. 3 (Dec 1968) 566.

*States Army* in 1921.<sup>47</sup> The testing program brought national recognition for both psychology and for Yerkes himself. It helped establish the young field of psychology as a quantifiable science that could be applied to problems of human welfare.<sup>48</sup> In the 1918 Report of Activities of the Psychological Committee in the NRC, Yerkes wrote that experimental psychology “has incidentally established itself among the other sciences and demonstrated its right to serious consideration in...human engineering.”<sup>49</sup>

The eugenics movement, in particular, embraced the potential of psychological testing for human engineering of national populations, and Yerkes was a fervent supporter of the application. Yerkes was an outspoken advocate of applying psychology to eugenics prior to his work in the Great War, and he proudly held membership in the Galton Society, the Eugenics Record Office, and the Eugenics Research Agency.<sup>50</sup> Yerkes’s army examinations, however, and the national attention which they received, vaulted Yerkes to pre-eminence within the eugenics community. Eugenicists eagerly adopted the tests as a tool to identify the most and least mentally “fit” populations of society, for the tests—which were purportedly objective—revealed significant differences in intelligence among different classes and races of American men.<sup>51</sup> Leonard Darwin, the head of the Eugenics Education Society in London, was excited about the potential of Yerkes’s tests for the eugenic cause. “I myself look forward to the day when we shall have some sort of physical

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<sup>47</sup> Robert M. Yerkes, *Psychological Examining in the United States Army* (Washington, D.C. 1921).

<sup>48</sup> Kevles, “Testing the Army’s Intelligence,” 580.

<sup>49</sup> As quoted in Kevles, “Testing the Army’s Intelligence,” 581.

<sup>50</sup> See membership files for each organization in Box 80, Yerkes Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>51</sup> As Daniel Kevles argues, Yerkes’ beta and alpha psychological examinations during the army were in fact both culturally and scholastically biased. See Kevles, “Testing the Army’s Intelligence.”

and mental measurement of the people,” he wrote to Yerkes in 1921, “which would, when compared at long intervals, enable a judgment to be made as to whether a nation was moving backwards or forwards.”<sup>52</sup> In 1922, at the request of Darwin, Yerkes wrote a review of the intelligence tests and their usefulness to the eugenics movement in the *Eugenics Review*.<sup>53</sup> “Aside from spreading information about our methods and results among laymen with eugenic interests,” Yerkes wrote to Darwin, “I am pleased to have this opportunity to suggest the importance and practicability of a periodic census or inventory of the mental resources of countries, nations or races.”<sup>54</sup>

Yerkes’s work during the war was applauded in New Haven as well. Angell had been part of Yerkes’s APA Committee on Psychological Examination of Recruits, and after the war Angell embraced the committee’s findings. “The psychological tests employed in the American army during the war exhibited the amazing range of capacity in a cross section of our population,” he explained in a 1922 lecture at Yale. “Certain of the recruits in the army exhibited an intelligence capacity which marked them as morons and accordingly comparable with the most backward races.”<sup>55</sup> More broadly, Angell appreciated the impact that Yerkes’s tests had on the credibility of applied psychology. Philanthropic agencies such as the Carnegie Institute and the Rockefeller Foundation were intensely interested in fostering social science

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<sup>52</sup> Leonard Darwin to Yerkes, April 4, 1922, Box 80, Folder 1545, Yerkes Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>53</sup> Darwin to Yerkes, April 4, 1922, Box 80, Folder 1545, Yerkes Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT; Robert Yerkes, “Eugenic bearing of measurements of intelligence in the United States,” *Eugenics Review* 14 (1923), 223-245.

<sup>54</sup> Yerkes to Leonard Darwin, May 13, 1922, Box 80, Folder 1545, Robert M. Yerkes Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>55</sup> Angell, “The Evolution of Intelligence,” 123.

research for the purposes of social engineering and human welfare.<sup>56</sup> As funding increased, Angell felt that the time was ripe for an Institute that could unite psychologists to improve human relations.

### **Iib. Immigration Restriction and Reproductive Control: A Research Proposal for the Institute**

In the winter of 1923, Angell and Yerkes began to formulate concrete plans for a psycho-biological institute at Yale. Yerkes, from his perspective as chairman of the Research Information Service, saw the need for a permanent Institute. “For the conduct of fundamental research in psycho-biology—especially with reference to analysis of behavior, development of methods of mental measurement, and safe application of the results—provision of a suitable academic center is highly desirable,” he wrote to Angell.<sup>57</sup> Angell saw the opportunity to give a much-needed boost to Yale’s graduate faculty and reputation in psychology. In January of 1923, Angell approached Abraham Flexner of the Rockefeller Foundation’s General Education Board, and told Yerkes that Flexner was “in a mood to give serious consideration to the possible establishment here at Yale as headquarters of such a psycho-biological enterprise as you and I discussed.”<sup>58</sup> In preparation for a meeting his meeting with Flexner, Angell asked Yerkes to provide a detailed proposal outlining the work to be done at such an Institute.<sup>59</sup> Unsurprisingly, the research that Yerkes proposed for the Institute had strong eugenic leanings. Yerkes believed that the Institute would be best used to house work from two NRC committees that

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<sup>56</sup> Biehn, “Psychobiology, sex research, and chimpanzees,” 24.

<sup>57</sup> Yerkes to Angell, “Proposed Academic Center for Psycho-Biological Research,” July 29, 1923, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>58</sup> Angell To Yerkes, January 25, 1923, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

he chaired: the Committee on Scientific Problems of Human Migration (CSPHM), and the Committee on Research in Problems of Sex (CRPS).<sup>60</sup>

The CSPHM was founded in 1922 by four prominent eugenicists to foster biological, psychological and anthropological research of “migrating groups.” Its goal was to affect public policy on immigration.<sup>61</sup> In addition to its founding members, the researchers on the board of the CSPHM read like a “who’s-who” of American eugenicists, including Charles Davenport and Samuel J. Holmes of the Eugenics Record Office and Henry Pratt Fairchild, Edward Thorndike, and Carl C. Brigham of the American Eugenics Society. According to the annual Committee report, the CSPHM researched methods of mental measurement of migrant groups, behavioral traits of “Mediterranean peoples,” and racial mixing between “new European and old American stocks,” for they believed “that in any approach to the comparison of immigrant stocks and estimation of their fitness to join in any form of culture, consideration must be given to these factors.”<sup>62</sup> The CSPHM’s scientific research into selective immigration aligned identically with the eugenic agenda, and the Committee even funded research used by H. H. Laughlin in Congressional hearings to support the National Origins Act of 1924.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Yerkes, “Proposed Academic Center for Psycho-Biological Research,” July 29, 1923, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>61</sup> There were five founding members of the Committee on Research Problems of Human Migration, and four of them were well-known eugenicists. They included Robert Yerkes (Galton Society, Eugenics Record Office, American Eugenics Society), Clark Wissler (Galton Society, Race Betterment Society, American Eugenics Society), Frank R. Lillie (American Eugenics Society), John C. Merriam (Galton Society and American Eugenics Society), and Raymond Dodge. See Robert Yerkes, “The Work of Committee on Scientific Problems of Human Migration, National Research Council,” *The Journal of Personnel Research* Vol. III, No. 6 (October, 1924), 189.

<sup>62</sup> Clark Wissler, “Final Report of the Committee on Scientific Problems of Human Migration, National Research Council,” *Reprint and Circular Series of the National Research Council*, No. 58, (1929), 13.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

The CRPS was conceived in 1922 at a Conference on Sex Problems sponsored by the Rockefeller Institute's Bureau of Social Hygiene, organized to enlighten social policy on matters of venereal disease, family counseling, birth control, and eugenics.<sup>64</sup> The committee supported research on the inheritance of delinquent traits, contraception, sex endocrinology, and sexual behavior with the goal of controlling sexual behavior among American people.<sup>65</sup> Like the human migration committee, the CRPS board was filled with prominent eugenicists, including Frank Lillie and E. G. Conklin of the American Eugenics Society, and Simon Flexner, C.C. Little, and Adolph Meyer of the Committee on Eugenic Birth Control.<sup>66</sup> Yerkes, as an anthropoid expert and the Committee chair, was the leading proponent of psychology's role in the CRPS; during the 1920s, Yerkes and his fellow psychologists became the new, national experts in sex research and behavior, a field previously dominated by physicians.<sup>67</sup> At least one historian has characterized the work of the Committee as an attempt at "human engineering."<sup>68</sup>

Yerkes believed that the psychological work of both committees might thrive under the auspices of an established university. "A well located research center with strong personnel would immediately afford urgently needed opportunity to provide for important projects which at present are 'homeless,'" he wrote in his proposal to Angell. Yale's Institute, Yerkes suggested, could house these "homeless" projects of

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<sup>64</sup> Adele E. Clarke, *Disciplining Reproduction: Modernity, American Life Sciences, and 'the Problems of Sex'* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998) 91.

<sup>65</sup> Clarke, *Disciplining Reproduction*, Appendix 2.

<sup>66</sup> Clarke, *Disciplining Reproduction*, 92.

<sup>67</sup> Wade Pickren, "Robert Yerkes, Calvin Stone, and The Beginning of Programmatic Sex Research by Psychologists, 1921-1930," *The American Journal of Psychology* 110 (1997): 605.

<sup>68</sup> Pickren, "Robert Yerkes, Calvin Stone, and The Beginning of Programmatic Sex Research by Psychologists," 603-19.

the CSPHM and CRPS. "The Committee on Scientific Problems of Human Migration...is interested in promoting analysis of human behavior and the development of more satisfactory methods of mental measurement," he wrote in his proposal for the Institute, adding that "it is also considering provision for the study of methods of selecting immigrants." "Although funds have not been sought by the Committee for these projects," he told Angell, "it is highly probable that they could be obtained if an adequately equipped and well-manned laboratory were prepared to undertake research."<sup>69</sup> Similarly, he urged Angell that his own psycho-biological research on sex in primates, if connected with Yale, would surely receive funding from the CRPS. Yerkes stressed that the psychological work "might be furthered by the establishment of an institute for psychobiological research in New Haven."<sup>70</sup> He encouraged Angell to form an Institute of Psychology not only to increase Yale's stature as a research university, but to further progress of research in the two central objectives of the American eugenic agenda: selective immigration and reproductive control.

Angell fully supported Yerkes's proposals and continued to use his connections with national foundations to secure funding to establish the prospective Institute. As previous chairman of the NRC, Angell was favorably disposed to the idea of housing under one roof the research being funded by Yerkes's two committees.<sup>71</sup> "So far as concerns the Psycho-Biological project," he wrote to Flexner

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<sup>69</sup> Yerkes, "Proposed Academic Center for Psycho-Biological Research," Yerkes to Angell, July 29, 1923, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>70</sup> Yerkes to Angell, May 29, 1923, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>71</sup> Angell wrote to Yerkes: "I have read your letter with great interest and I shall take an early opportunity to discuss with Mr. Flexner," Angell wrote to Yerkes. "I shall be more than glad to take



of the Rockefeller Foundation upon receiving Yerkes's proposal, "my attitude is one of sincere interest and of cordial disposition to care for the work here."<sup>72</sup> When funding from the General Education Board fell through for budgetary reasons, Angell approached John C. Merriam, his successor at the Carnegie Institution. Angell knew that Merriam--a member of the Galton Society and American Eugenics Society and a well-known eugenicist--would be sympathetic to the purpose of the Institute. "I have talked Yerkes's plan over with him frequently," Merriam wrote Angell. "I can only say that if he were to be located at Yale in connection with such a department as you are establishing you could be assured of my desire to have the closest cooperation in the work which you would be undertaking and also my full sympathy with your program."<sup>73</sup> While Merriam could not provide the large amount of funding that Angell sought, he saw the Institute as a promising and unique opportunity for psychology and eugenics.

Angell finally secured funding for the Institute by stirring the interest of Beardsley Rummler, director of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund. Rummler was an American statistician who had helped Yerkes design and analyze the intelligence and aptitude tests during World War I, and, conveniently, served as Angell's former assistant at the Carnegie Corporation.<sup>74</sup> Rummler had become director of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund in 1922, and he funded research in

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advantage of any opportunity which your own movements may permit to discuss the situation with you also...I shall be, of course, gratified to fall in with any possibilities of going ahead." Angell to Yerkes, December 13, 1923, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>72</sup> Angell to Abraham Flexner, Feb 19, 1923, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>73</sup> John C. Merriam to Angell, Feb 8, 1923, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>74</sup> Biehn, "Psychobiology, sex research, and chimpanzees," 25.

psychology, mental hygiene, and other disciplines that might be applied to social welfare.<sup>75</sup> In May of 1924, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund agreed to fund the Yale psychology initiative, pledging \$10,000 to help create the Institute and \$40,000 per year for five years to support its faculty and research activities.<sup>76</sup>

Yerkes, overcome with what he described as a “boyish enthusiasm,” assured Angell that funding for research of such social import in New Haven would definitively establish Yale as “a prospective academic center of progress.”<sup>77</sup> Clark Wissler, an American eugenicist and friend of Angell’s, saw the funding as the president’s first major accomplishment at Yale. “I wish to congratulate you upon the generous support the Memorial has given for this research project,” he wrote to Henry Graves, Yale’s Provost. “I know it has been a subject near to the heart of President Angell and, for his sake, I am especially glad.”<sup>78</sup>

### **Iic. “D + W + Y”: The Founding Faculty of the Institute of Psychology**

With funding for the Institute secured, Angell and Yerkes focused on recruiting pre-eminent faculty that shared their dedication to progressive psychological research. Angell and Yerkes agreed that the faculty should focus solely on research, unhampered by teaching or administrative duties. They singled out three men to join Yerkes: Clark Wissler, an expert on anthropological racial science; Carl C. Brigham, known for mental aptitude testing; and Raymond Dodge, a leader in

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<sup>75</sup> Biehn, “Psychobiology, sex research, and chimpanzees,” 24.

<sup>76</sup> Henry S. Graves to Beardsley Ruml, June 23, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>77</sup> Yerkes to Angell, May 29, 1923, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>78</sup> Clark Wissler to Henry Graves, July 18, 1924, Box 114, Folder 1170, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

psycho-physiological psychology.<sup>79</sup> Not coincidentally, the three men and Yerkes were four of the five founding members of the Committee for Scientific Problems of Human Migration (CSPHM); between them, the Institute would have expertise in every area considered central to the perceived problems of human migration, intelligence, and reproduction.<sup>80</sup>

Clark Wissler, an anthropologist at the American Museum of Natural History, was an old acquaintance and friend of Yerkes, and the two had worked together for various eugenic causes. Educated in behavioral psychology at Indiana University, Wissler came to New York in 1901 as a professor at New York University and Columbia University.<sup>81</sup> Wissler was an outspoken eugenicist, and when he came to New York he quickly joined a cadre of eugenic leaders such as Charles Davenport and Madison Grant. He was an early member of the Galton Society and the Eugenics Research Association, and in 1921 he was on the Executive Committee of the Second International Congress of Eugenics.<sup>82</sup> Wissler's research focused on racial intermixture and inheritance of racial traits, and as a curator at the Museum of Natural History he was considered the nation's foremost expert on racial characteristics of Native American populations.<sup>83</sup> He gained recognition in 1923 for his treatise *Man and Culture*, which was a collection of his anthropological lectures on the superiority of the Nordic stock in relation to other races of the world; in it he

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<sup>79</sup> Henry S. Graves to Beardsley Ruml, June 23, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>80</sup> Yerkes, "The Work of Committee on Scientific Problems of Human Migration," 189.

<sup>81</sup> "The Institute of Psychology," *The Yale Alumni Weekly*, (October 24, 1924), 156, in Box 102, Folder 1923, Robert Yerkes Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>82</sup> Laughlin, H. H. *The Second International Exhibition of Eugenics*, 2.

<sup>83</sup> "The Institute of Psychology," *The Yale Alumni Weekly*, 156.

thanked “the members of the Galton Society for many illuminating suggestions.”<sup>84</sup> In both his research activities and his political advocacy, Wissler conveyed a clear eugenic message that appealed to Yerkes and Angell.

Yerkes and Angell agreed that Wissler could make a vital contribution to their initiative as a “racial psychologist and anthropologist.”<sup>85</sup> “If Wissler can be secured,” Angell confided to Yerkes, “success of our project is assured.”<sup>86</sup> In May of 1924 Angell sent Roswell P. Angier, the head of Yale’s Department of Psychology, to offer Wissler a position as a founding faculty member of the Institute. Wissler was excited about the opportunity to rid himself of his administrative duties at the Museum of Natural History and to dedicate himself fully to research activities. He was especially supportive of Yerkes’s research focus on human immigration and reproduction, issues about which he felt passionately. Wissler saw the Institute as an opportunity to legitimize the application of anthropology to social problems of the time.<sup>87</sup> Wissler wrote to Angell, “If successfully launched, such an Institute would be the best thing that ever happened for anthropology. It almost seems too good to be true.”<sup>88</sup>

Likewise, Raymond Dodge eagerly agreed to join the Institute as soon as funding was received, attracted by the prospect of being part of a collaborative

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<sup>84</sup> Clark Wissler, *Man and Culture* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1923), vi.

<sup>85</sup> Yerkes assured Angell that Wissler would be “deeply interested in the proposed institute,” and Yerkes was “heartily in favor of seeing him appointed to the staff.” Yerkes to Angell, May 24, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>86</sup> Angell to Yerkes, May 5, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>87</sup> “He seemed very enthusiastic about the new Institute and desirous of connecting himself with it,” wrote Angier. “His main interest is a full scope for his research activities with as much relief from administrative work as possible.” Roswell P. Angier to James Angell, May 1, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>88</sup> Clark Wissler to James Angell, May 19, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

psychological research community. During World War I, Dodge had been a consulting psychologist in the Chemical Warfare Service, and the experience instilled in him a belief in the power of organized and cooperative research.<sup>89</sup> He was also a strong supporter of the intelligence testing during the war effort.<sup>90</sup> Dodge was one of just two experimental psychologists at Wesleyan University when Angell approached him in 1924, and he was glad to join what would become a more robust community at Yale.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, Dodge had long wanted to focus only on the laboratory rather than the classroom, writing to Yerkes as early as July 1921 that the country needed “not a professorship or even half a dozen of them, but a research faculty or two.”<sup>92</sup> The proposed Institute of Psychology at Yale promised everything he was looking for: a research faculty position with like-minded psychologists, without obligation to teach.

Dodge was also pleased that his research in human variability and psychopsychology was so valued by the prospective Institute. While Dodge never publicly identified as a eugenicist, he applauded the National Origins Act of 1924 and was a proponent of applying psychological research to public discourse on selective immigration.<sup>93</sup> At Wesleyan, Dodge investigated the primitive responses of the human nervous system, such as reflex reactions and inhibition. The CSPHM considered Dodge’s work “to be of fundamental value in the study of ethnic groups” and a complement to mental tests. “If selective immigration is to be what the name

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<sup>89</sup> “The Institute of Psychology,” *The Yale Alumni Weekly*, 156.

<sup>90</sup> Raymond Dodge, “Mental Engineering during the War,” *American Review of Reviews*, LIX (May 1919), 506.

<sup>91</sup> Dodge to Angell, May 5, 1924, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>92</sup> Raymond Dodge to Robert Yerkes, July 31, 1921, Robert M. Yerkes Papers, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>93</sup> Wissler, “Final Report of the Committee on Scientific Problems of Human Migration,” 11.

implies,” said Wissler, “there is need of a clearer insight into and a satisfactory method of estimating such abilities.”<sup>94</sup> By measuring the primitive human response systems, Dodge would provide the Institute a critical technique for the comparison of different racial stocks.

Angell and Yerkes believed that the final, missing piece to a comprehensive psychological institute could be supplied by Carl C. Brigham of Princeton University. Brigham had worked with Yerkes during the U.S. Army psychological examinations, and in 1923 Brigham published a detailed analysis of the results in *A Study of American Intelligence*.<sup>95</sup> In the treatise, Brigham argued that native-born Americans, particularly those of the “Nordic Race,” possessed intellectual superiority over “Alpine,” “Mediterranean,” and “Negro” races. In true eugenic form, Brigham used the findings to argue for immigration restriction and warned against miscegenation, the mixing of different racial groups. “We must now frankly admit the undesirable results which would ensure from a cross between the Nordic in this country with the Alpine Slav, with the degenerated hybrid Mediterranean, or with the negro, or from the promiscuous intermingling of all four types,” Brigham declared. “The evidence is undeniable.”<sup>96</sup> Brigham’s study, like Yerkes’s initial findings, was received enthusiastically in eugenic circles, and Brigham accepted an appointment to the Advisory Council of the American Eugenics Society.<sup>97</sup> After the war, Brigham went to Princeton University, where he continued to refine the methods of mental

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<sup>94</sup> Wissler, “Final Report of the Committee on Scientific Problems of Human Migration,” 13.

<sup>95</sup> Carl C. Brigham, *A Study of American Intelligence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1923).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>97</sup> Evans, *Organized Eugenics: American Eugenics Society*, vii.

testing and began developing aptitude tests for the College Entrance Examination Board.

While few psychologists doubted the usefulness of aptitude tests, many had begun to recognize the inherent cultural and scholastic biases in Yerkes's tests in the years following the war. In response, the members of the human migration committee made it a priority to modify and "internationalize" intelligence tests so that they might be used to determine the fitness of different immigrant classes. "In the case of Professor Brigham I beg to say as Chairman of our Committee on Scientific Problems of Human Migration that I have discovered no reason why his work on the internationalizing of methods of mental measurement should not be transferred to the Institute of Psychology," Yerkes wrote to Angell. "I beg to express for Professor Dodge, as well as for myself, the earnest hope that in case the Institute is immediately organized, Professor Brigham may be included in the initial staff to represent practical mental measurement."<sup>98</sup> Mental aptitude testing was recognized as the most readily applicable aspect of psychological research to eugenics, and Brigham's work was a centerpiece of the human migration committee which was so central to the Institute of Psychology. Wissler too admired Brigham's work on measuring intelligence, and the contributions of his research to eugenics more broadly. As Wissler wrote to Angell, "Brigham has in hand a kind of work our Institute should promote."<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Yerkes to Angell, May 24, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>99</sup> Wissler to Angell, June 10, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

While Dodge and Wissler officially accepted their positions as founding members of the Institute of Psychology in the summer of 1924, Brigham regretfully turned down Angell's offer to join Yale's faculty. "The thought of the Institute as a place to work appeals to me all too strongly," Brigham assured Angell, and "if I were entirely free of obligations...I would be quite willing to accept."<sup>100</sup> Yerkes affirmed this sentiment after meeting with Brigham personally in an attempt to recruit him. "Brigham, I discover," Yerkes wrote to Angell, "is delighted with the Institute prospect and eager to have a share in the undertaking."<sup>101</sup> In the end, however, Brigham's professional commitments and family obligations were too pressing for him to abandon Princeton. Nonetheless, Angell's attempt to recruit Brigham demonstrated his desire to bring Brigham's research and eugenic beliefs to Yale's new Institute, and Yerkes and Angell maintained their high regard for Brigham's psychological testing throughout his career at Princeton.

Despite the loss of Brigham, the acquisition of Yerkes, Wissler and Dodge was Angell's first impressive step in establishing Yale as a nationally renowned center for psychological research. "From the character of the men I have mentioned, you will observe that we plan to make Yale through this Institute the great center for research in all those fields which may be described in the broad term of Psycho-Biology," Angell wrote to a friend in 1924. "We take pardonable pride in thinking that under the conditions which I have outlined no University will be able to offer

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<sup>100</sup> Carl C. Brigham to Angell, June 5, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1333, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>101</sup> Yerkes to Angell, May 12, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.



similar opportunities for research and for practical work.”<sup>102</sup> Yerkes, Dodge, and Wissler were each national and academic leaders in their field, linked by an interest in using their research to solve what they saw as societal problems of immigration and reproduction. Yerkes and Wissler, in particular, were leaders in the vibrant eugenics movement in the early 1920s, a cause for which Angell held particular sympathy and support. Brigham, another eugenicist, assured Angell that their collaboration would energize the eugenics movement and the field of psychology. “I wonder if there is any combination of psychologists the sum of whose talents would equal D + W + Y,” Brigham wrote to Angell, referring to Dodge, Wissler and Yerkes. “Yale is certainly to be congratulated.”<sup>103</sup>

#### **IId. Coordinated Research on Immigration and Sex**

The Institute of Psychology was designed as a cooperative initiative: faculty had the freedom to pursue their own research problems, but also had the resources and connections to collaborate with researchers with complementary interests. “The scientific policies of the Institute would necessarily be determined by the members of the Institute,” Angell wrote to Yerkes, “and the predominant consideration must be the establishment of conditions under which they could work with the greatest possible freedom and in the most intimate co-operation.”<sup>104</sup> To this end, three large laboratory rooms were constructed in a renovation of Kent Hall on High Street. The labs were designed to provide Yerkes, Wissler and Dodge ample

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<sup>102</sup> James Angell to Dr. C Macfie Campbell, May 31, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1333, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>103</sup> Brigham to Angell, June 5, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>104</sup> Angell to Yerkes, March 26, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1334, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

space for their own research, but also proximity to one another to facilitate cooperation and a sense of community.<sup>105</sup> Angell hoped that putting the researchers under one roof would foster a collaborative environment for a coordinated study of human behavior.

To further encourage collaboration, the Institute established a Governing Board consisting of Angell, Yerkes, Dodge, Wissler, and Roswell P. Angier, a long-time Yale College administrator and a professor in the Department of Psychology.<sup>106</sup> Angell appointed Angier as Chairman of the Board, and his role was strictly administrative: while he was not a researcher within the Institute, he was responsible for managing the Institute budget and reporting progress to the Rockefeller Fund.<sup>107</sup> Further, Angell saw Angier as a critical link between the Institute and the Yale graduate school. “The reinforcements afforded by the men in allied fields of work in the University is no negligible part of the situation,” Angell wrote. “The biologists, physiologists, men in education, in medicine, and so forth, are all eager to co-operate with the Institute.”<sup>108</sup> The Governing Board, which met weekly, was designed to form a cohesive unit that might direct cooperative efforts both within the Institute and with faculty in the Yale School of Medicine, the Sheffield Scientific School, and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Angell envisioned an Institute whose research into problems of human welfare would

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<sup>105</sup> Roswell Angier, “Report of The Institute of Psychology of Yale University, 1926-1927,” Box 102, Folder 1924, Robert M. Yerkes Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>106</sup> Catalogue of Yale University, 1926-1927 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1926), 312.

<sup>107</sup> Letter from Graves to Dr. Beardsley Ruml, June 23, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>108</sup> James Angell, *The Institute of Psychology at Yale* (Pamphlet to American Psychological Association, June 1925), in Box 111, Folder 1132, Folder 1924, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

extend beyond the walls of Kent Hall and into the laboratories of faculty throughout Yale's campus.

Angell also hoped that the complementary interests of the new faculty would lead to collaboration on big social problems. He argued that the Institute's new faculty represented the "major divisions of interest" required for comprehensively attacking problems of human immigration and reproduction. "We believe that a group of men working side by side on problems which are in the nature of the case intimately intertwined one with another will profit by such companionship," wrote Angell. "It is planned that the scientists shall, working in these several fields...supplement one another's research and direct their investigations toward a co-ordinated program."<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, having worked together at the NRC and through various eugenic organizations, Yerkes, Dodge and Wissler were deeply respectful of each other's individual contributions to the progressive agenda of the early 1920s. In its organizational design and research agenda, the Institute thus was a concerted effort to attack perceived problems of open immigration and reproduction.

Incorporating Wissler's anthropological work into the psychological research at the Institute would be key to this collaborative research effort. Wissler assured Angell that anthropology and psychology could be applied synergistically. Wissler felt his research in race biology and race intermixing was obviously applicable to the

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<sup>109</sup> James Angell, *The Institute of Psychology at Yale* (Pamphlet to American Psychological Association, June 1925), in Box 111, Folder 1132, Folder 1924, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

issues of sex and immigration that the Institute would study.<sup>110</sup> The benefits of using cultural anthropology in conjunction with psychology, however, were more subtle.

As Wissler wrote to Angell:

“The work of the psychologists is presumed to furnish ways and means of determining the relative fitness of peoples to learn and to perform the specific tasks our civilization requires, but leaves one important matter untouched: the immigrant to the United States leaves one type of civilization and comes to another; when is he ready to assume the responsibilities of citizenship? How shall his fitness be determined?”<sup>111</sup>

Wissler, then, saw his anthropological research as entirely complementary to the psychological work of the Institute: While Dodge’s work measured primitive human behaviors, Wissler’s work measured cultural assimilation. With his characteristically eugenic perspective, Wissler believed that together, the psychologist and the anthropologist could determine the “fitness” of aspiring immigrants so that ultimately only the most qualified might enter the American gene pool.

## **Ile. Introducing the Institute of Psychology: Attempts to Prevent Accusations of Racial Bias**

In the summer of 1924, Yale officially announced the Institute of Psychology to the public.<sup>112</sup> The announcement by the Yale University News Service was sent to a handful of newspapers and psychological journals around the country, including

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<sup>110</sup> Wissler to Angell, Jan 21, 1925, Box 114, Folder 1170, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>111</sup> Clark Wissler, “Anthropological Studies of Migration: A Research Project Submitted to the Committee on Problems in Human Migration, National Research Council,” Wissler to Angell, Jan 21, 1925, Box 114, Folder 1170, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>112</sup> “Yale University News Statement: Definite Announcement by Yale of Important Development in Psychological Research,” *Yale University News*, August 7, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

the *New York Times*, the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, and *The Journal of Heredity*.<sup>113</sup>

“The Institute will be devoted to research in problems of animal, human and racial behavior,” the announcement’s first draft read. “The need of such research has been increasingly felt in medicine, in industry, in education, in social work, in child welfare, and in various public problems.”<sup>114</sup> Similarly, an article introducing the Institute to Yale alumni observed that “the useful aspects of psychology have been so widely exploited within recent years, with application in education, mental hygiene, criminology, industry, national defense, and other ways.”<sup>115</sup> The Institute of Psychology, it assured, would continue this trend, and produce research that might be readily applicable to society.

The Institute’s formation was presented as a milestone in improving both Yale’s stature as a research institution and the field of experimental psychology as a whole. It was stressed in Yale’s official public announcement of the Institute that “the initiation of this enterprise is a step of the first importance toward improving facilities for psychological research and training” at the University.<sup>116</sup> Similarly, in an article for *The Yale Alumni Weekly*, the Institute was touted as “the first organization of its kind in this science,” and the article noted that “such an organization would give Yale extraordinary and preeminent advantages for

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<sup>113</sup> The *Journal of Heredity* and the *Journal of Applied Psychology* were both publications with close ties to the American eugenics movement.

<sup>114</sup> Henry Graves, “First Draft: An Institute of Psychology at Yale,” June 1924, Box 111, Folder 1133, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>115</sup> “The Institute of Psychology,” *The Yale Alumni Weekly*, 155.

<sup>116</sup> “Yale University News Statement: Definite Announcement by Yale of Important Development in Psychological Research,” *Yale University News*, August 7, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1134, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

psychological work as compared with any institution in the world.”<sup>117</sup> In June of 1925, Yale mailed a pamphlet introducing the Institute to over 500 members of the American Psychological Association. In the pamphlet, Angell underscored that the Institute’s cooperative research in psychology would “forward scientific knowledge in the whole field.”<sup>118</sup> “I wish to say that the administration of the University conceived the establishment of the Institute from no merely selfish point of view,” Angell assured members of the APA. “We wish it to contribute as fully as possible to the general progress of psycho-biological science.”<sup>119</sup> The message was clear: the Institute of Psychology would not only make Yale a center for psychological research, but its program would have a significant impact on experimental psychology in America.

While the Yale announcement did not mention the word “eugenics,” eugenic leaders celebrated its formation. Eugenicists praised the teaming of Yerkes and Wissler, two outspoken advocates and core members of the American eugenics movement, and the Institute’s proposed focus on immigration and reproduction control perfectly aligned with the two most pressing issues of the eugenic agenda at the time.<sup>120</sup> “I am greatly interested in your plan for psychobiological work at Yale

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<sup>117</sup> “The Institute of Psychology,” *The Yale Alumni Weekly*, 155.

<sup>118</sup> Angell, *The Institute of Psychology at Yale*, (Pamphlet to American Psychological Association, 1925), 13.

<sup>119</sup> Angell, *The Institute of Psychology at Yale*, (Pamphlet to American Psychological Association, 1925), 13.

<sup>120</sup> In the issue that announced the Institute’s founding in August of 1924, the *Journal of Heredity*—a monthly publication devoted to animal “breeding and eugenics”—made clear how important research into these matters would be for the future of the American race. “Is there any subject in the world of greater importance than building of a better race?” asked Marian Bell Fairchild in an editorial. “The question of limiting immigration into this country is one of tremendously far-reaching importance,” she wrote, and “facts and discoveries which most profoundly influence the future of the race is a matter of the utmost importance.” Marian H. B. Fairchild, “Note from an Editor,” *Journal of Heredity* 15, no. 8 (1924), 336.

University...your plan fits closely into the scheme of research in which I have been interested," wrote John C. Merriam, a founding member of the Galton Society and the American Eugenics Society. "I feel that it is exceedingly important to have these problems taken up in the near future."<sup>121</sup> Brigham—a member of the Advisory Council on the American Eugenics Society—also believed that the Institute's formation was important for the eugenic cause. "Your group there can have anything we are working on, and I will be glad to cooperate in any way I can," he assured Angell, indicating his awareness that his work on mental testing was paramount to the eugenics agenda. Despite turning down the faculty position at the Institute, he told Angell that "I am sure we can arrange it so that my particular contributions to your work can be made."<sup>122</sup> Thus, among fellow researchers that supported eugenics, the formation of the Institute—and the collection of like-minded faculty—was a promising development in their field. The Institute would fulfill the eugenics movement's need for a first-rate organization to attack problems of immigration restriction, racial inheritance, and reproductive behavior.

The connections between the Institute and the eugenic movement as well as the attention the launch received in eugenic circles, were so prevalent that the Governing Board feared accusations of biased psychological research. By the mid-1920s, psychologists and geneticists who overemphasized the eugenic application of their research were coming under scrutiny within the scientific community.<sup>123</sup> As

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<sup>121</sup> John C. Merriam to James Angell, Box 111, Folder 1133, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>122</sup> Carl Brigham to James Angell, Box 111, Folder 1131, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>123</sup>Pickren and Rutherford, *A History of Modern Psychology in Context*, 163.

more and more immigrants and minorities climbed the social ladder of American society, scientists were becoming increasingly aware of the role of environment and education in shaping mental phenomena, and many questioned the eugenicists' oversimplification of the role of heredity in determining psychological abilities.<sup>124</sup> While the majority of the Institute's faculty personally supported the eugenics movement, they were aware that overtly eugenic claims might elicit negative reactions. They took deliberate steps to position their research intentions in the broad context of human welfare rather than in terms of eugenics or racial science.

Angier, in particular, worried about connecting the Institute too closely to eugenics or racial psychology. When the Institute had invited Brigham to join the Institute in the winter of 1924, for instance, Angier warned Angell that many critics believed Brigham's research to be "racially inspired."<sup>125</sup> He was further concerned that Yerkes, Dodge, and Wissler, all with eugenic leanings, might throw their support behind Brigham because he was a eugenicist. "They may be somewhat inclined to over-estimate the value of men who are in general agreement with them," Angier wrote, "or for whom for one reason or another they have a liking."<sup>126</sup> In addition, when asked to edit an initial draft of the Institute announcement written by Henry Graves, Angier crossed out the words "racial behavior" as one of the Institute's main aims and replaced it with "human behavior."<sup>127</sup> As Chairman of the

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<sup>124</sup> Pickren and Rutherford, *A History of Modern Psychology in Context*, 163.

<sup>125</sup> Angier to Angell, April 21, 1924, Box 111, Folder 1133, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Henry Graves, "First Draft: An Institute of Psychology at Yale," June 1924, Box 111, Folder 1133, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.



young institute, Angier wanted to make sure that its research was not perceived as racially slanted or biased.

Wissler, too, was wary of being directly linked to racial psychology. After being appointed “Professor of Racial Psychology” upon the Institute’s founding, Wissler wrote to Provost Graves and asked to change his title:

“I prefer to be known as Professor of Anthropology. This follows tradition and will call for no explanations, whereas racial psychology does, and also invites controversy. There are a good many other reasons why I believe it would be wisest to speak of the racial, primitive end of this plan as anthropological. In that way we would not be committed to any particular slant in the problems the Institute takes up.”<sup>128</sup>

Wissler’s change in title, then, did not reflect a personal change of heart, but rather a calculated move to avoid awkward defenses of his controversial work. His work in fact was to be entirely focused on areas of “racial psychology” and the fitness of different racial groups, but he wanted his positions with Yale and the Institute to be free of racist or eugenic connotations.

Thus, instead of explicitly linking the Institute with eugenics or racial psychology, the Institute’s board positioned its research in broad terms. The language used in various Yale publications stressed the general social benefit of the Institute’s planned work. “We are persuaded that the need for basic research in the field of psycho-biological science is one of the more pressing of our time,” Angell wrote when he introduced the Institute to the APA. “It is not along the fate of the individual in our complex and much over-strained civilization which is at stake,” he argued, but rather “society itself”—in all of its institutions of government, education,

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<sup>128</sup> Clark Wissler to Henry Graves, July 18, 1924, Box 114, Folder 1170, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

and religion. With immigration and reproduction rapidly altering the American demographic, Angell maintained that societal institutions were undergoing “drastic reorganization.” “The forces at work are utterly unrecognized, or misunderstood,” he proclaimed, “and any contribution which scientific investigation can make to these points will not only push forward the boundaries of knowledge, but will aid in stabilizing the progress of social institutions and organizations.”<sup>129</sup> With grandiose and epoch-defining prose, then, Angell introduced the Institute as much more than an organization for psychological research: It was depicted as a center of progress, a development of profound, far-reaching societal import. The genetic fabric of America was changing rapidly, and the Institute of Psychology at Yale was to be a centerpiece in science’s attempt to understand, control, and stabilize the phenomenon.

### **SECTION III: RESEARCH AT THE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY, 1924-1929**

#### **IIIa. Wissler, Yerkes, and the American Eugenics Society**

The grand vision for the Institute of Psychology in 1924 was, perhaps, too ambitious for any Institute to achieve—let alone an Institute with just three research faculty. Nonetheless, in the first few years of the Institute’s existence the Governing Board made every attempt to position their research as a response to broader societal problems of human behavior. In one of the first board meetings in Kent Hall on March 26, 1925, the first item on their agenda was the “relation of the

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<sup>129</sup> Clark Wissler to Henry Graves, July 18, 1924, Box 114, Folder 1170, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

Institute to anthropological work under Migrations' Committee."<sup>130</sup> Wissler had taken over the chair of the CSPHM from Yerkes in 1924, and Wissler and Dodge sought to apply their work at the Institute directly to the goals of that Committee. Yerkes anthropoid research, meanwhile, was funded generously by the CRPS when he moved to Yale. He put nearly all of his energy into it, which he insisted to be the most effective way to understand fundamental problems of sexual behavior. The Institute's focus on immigration and reproduction caught the attention of the leaders in the American Eugenics Society, headquartered just blocks away from Kent Hall in downtown New Haven.

Upon moving to New Haven in 1924, both Yerkes and Wissler became heavily involved with the AES. The Society had been formed in 1922 for the "improvement of the American population" through research, education and legislation in eugenics.<sup>131</sup> Irving Fisher, a Yale professor and President of the AES at the time, sought to establish an Advisory Council for the Society composed of professional experts in eugenics and the allied sciences. The Advisory Council was to offer guidance to the AES, participate in standing committees within the Society, and—importantly—legitimize the AES by bringing together leading scientists and professors.<sup>132</sup> Fisher considered Yerkes and Wissler—both outspoken eugenicists and established figures in their disciplines—perfect candidates for the Advisory Council. "The time is ripe for a strong public movement to stem the tide of threatened racial degeneracy," Fisher wrote to the prospective Advisory Council

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<sup>130</sup> "Agenda: Meeting of the Governing Board of the Institute of Psychology," March 26, 1925, Box 111, Folder 1131, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>131</sup> Evans, *Organized Eugenics*, 2.

<sup>132</sup> As quoted in Mehler, "A History of the American Eugenics Society," 61.

members. “America needs to protect herself against indiscriminate immigration, criminal degenerates, and...race suicide.”<sup>133</sup> Yerkes and Wissler eagerly accepted Fisher’s invitation to join the Advisory Council. In addition to establishing New Haven as a center of the American eugenics movement, the AES provided an outlet for eugenics work for both Yerkes and Wissler in conjunction with their work at the Institute.

Yerkes and Wissler were joined on the Advisory Council by dozens of other prominent biologists and psychologists who supported the eugenics movement. Most of the Council members were of old American and Anglo-Saxon origin, and almost all were professional, middle-class progressives involved with academia.<sup>134</sup> Leaders in the field of psychology were particularly well-represented on the Advisory Council of the AES. There were ten psychologists appointed to the 100-member Council, and five of them—including intelligence testers Yerkes and Terman—served as president of the APA.<sup>135</sup> The presence of the leading psychologists on the Council was a testament to the eugenic thinking that dominated the field of psychology at the time. Together, Fisher argued, their expertise in psychological methods could lead eugenics “against the forces...of racial deterioration and for progressive improvement in the vigor, intelligence, and moral fiber of the human race.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> As quoted in Mehler, “A History of the American Eugenics Society,” 61.

<sup>134</sup> Kevles, *In the Names of Eugenics*, 104.

<sup>135</sup> The five presidents of the APA on the Advisory Council of the AES were Carl Seashore (1911), Edward Thorndike (1912), Robert Yerkes (1916), Knight Dunlap (1922), and Lewis Terman (1923). Other prominent psychologists on the Advisory Council included Henry Goddard and Truman Kelley. Mehler, “A History of the American Eugenics Society,” 172.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

Since the members of the Advisory Council held leadership positions in all facets of American academia, there were ample opportunities to insinuate the eugenic agenda into national research and funding institutions. Like Yerkes and Wissler, many members of the Council were involved with other organizations of the American Eugenics movement, holding membership in the Eugenics Research Association or the Eugenics Record Office. The most elite cadre of eugenicists was part of the Galton Society of New York, which met monthly at the home of Yale graduate Madison Grant, author of the influential eugenic text, *The Passing of the Great Race*.<sup>137</sup> There, leading eugenicists such as Charles Davenport of the Eugenics Record Office, J. C. Merriam of the Carnegie Institution, Edwin Embree of the Rockefeller Foundation, and H.F. Osborn of the American Museum of Natural History would discuss projects or aims of the American eugenics movement that they wanted to implement.<sup>138</sup> From powerful positions in American academia, government and philanthropy, they often attempted to advance eugenic priorities in their various institutions.

Yerkes and Wissler, themselves members of the Galton Society, helped link the research agenda of the AES to that of the Institute of Psychology at Yale. Both men volunteered as board members of the AES Committee on Research, a standing

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<sup>137</sup> Jonathan Peter Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant*, (Burlington, VT: University of Vermont Press, 2009), 319.

<sup>138</sup> Historian Barry Mehler explains the influence of the elite cadre of American eugenicists in his text on the American Eugenics Society. He writes: "Interlocking directorates meant that programs and plans could be worked out informally. For example, during the monthly meetings of the Galton Society, Clark Wissler, Charles Davenport, Charles Stockard, H.F. Osborn, Edwin Embree, J.C. Merriam and others would discuss projects they would like to see carried out...Since members of the committee served on the boards of a number of large foundations they could easily decide which foundation ought to fund which project and then recommend that the project be accepted...These people often arranged for eugenic concerns to be given top priority within other organizations." Mehler, "A History of the American Eugenics Society," 158.

committee that included other well-known psychologists such as Brigham and Lewis M. Terman.<sup>139</sup> The Committee was set up to define areas of research in eugenics or the allied sciences that would advance the mission and goals of the AES. The Committee outlined these areas in their 1926 report, “Research Problems in Eugenics,” and, unsurprisingly, their recommendations overlapped significantly with the research proposed at the Institute of Psychology. The report specified research on race intermixture related to immigration, standards of measurement in mental ability and intelligence, and research into the fundamental sexual behaviors of humans and infra-humans.<sup>140</sup> “First of all is the question, so pregnant for America, of the consequences of the mixture of races,” read the report. “With these tools might be studied such questions as the comparative value of the children in this country of Italian and Balkan parentage, as compared with the children of Scotch, Scandinavian and North German stocks.”<sup>141</sup> The Committee also encouraged research on the heredity of intelligence, birth regulation, and the net increase of “inferior stocks.” “The number of problems which deserve investigation is vast but the number of workers is few and the funds available are inconsiderable,” said the report. “Yet the social consequences of definite knowledge upon these topics is beyond measure.”<sup>142</sup> In language reminiscent of the Institute’s founding, then, the Committee focused on easily applicable methods of psychological and anthropological research for the ostensible betterment of the human race. As board

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<sup>139</sup> Evans, *Organized Eugenics*, 28.

<sup>140</sup> *Research Problems in Eugenics: A Report of the Committee on Research of the American Eugenics Society* (New Haven, CT: American Eugenics Society, Inc., March 1926).

<sup>141</sup> *Research Problems in Eugenics: A Report of the Committee on Research of the American Eugenics Society* (New Haven, CT: American Eugenics Society, Inc., March 1926).

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

members of both organizations, Yerkes and Wissler helped shape research agendas for the American eugenics movement and the Institute of Psychology that mirrored each other.

Of the three main faculty members at the Institute of Psychology, however, only Wissler persisted in eugenics-based research throughout the lifetime of the Institute. In his years at the Institute—concurrent with his chairmanship of the CSPHM at the NRC—Wissler continued his prolific work in racial inheritance and race mixing. To address the biological aspects of the “migration problem,” in 1925 Wissler began collecting “immigrant data” on select ethnicities, including Italians, Swedes and Danes. This “immigrant data” consisted of anatomical characteristics, such as head size, body proportion, and face size, in “pure and crossed national and racial stocks,” to determine the inheritance of certain characteristics from generation to generation.<sup>143</sup> Wissler also made it his goal, as he had promised to Angell in the founding of the Institute, to create “a series of tests to determine the degree of assimilation to American civilization” of different immigrant classes.<sup>144</sup> In studying fundamental race characters and heredity of anatomical traits, Wissler’s overarching goal during his time at the Institute was to assess the changing composition—both racially and genetically—of the changing United States population.

As such, Wissler’s years at the Institute from 1924 to 1929 were highly productive and beneficial to the eugenics effort. His faculty position at the Institute

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<sup>143</sup> Clark Wissler, “Anthropological Studies of Migration: A Research Project Submitted to the Committee on Problems in Human Migration, National Research Council,” Wissler to Angell, January 21, 1925, Box 114, Folder 1170, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

allowed Wissler to shed his administrative duties at the Museum of Natural History, but he kept close research ties to his former colleagues in New York, including H.F. Osborn, his old boss and fellow member of the Galton Society.<sup>145</sup> The Institute of Psychology also provided funding for a number of his research assistants, such as Beatrice Blackwood, who studied the “sexual life of primitive and semi-primitive peoples” by surveying “American Negroes and Mulattoes” in Nashville, Tennessee.<sup>146</sup> Wissler’s studies, such as “Eye Color Among Hawaiian Crosses,” “Race and sex differences in growth and head form,” and “Evidence of White Blood among the village Indians of southwestern United States,” were all applauded by the eugenics community through the periodical of the AES, *Eugenical News*.<sup>147</sup> In some situations, Wissler’s intimate relations with the eugenic community even helped initiate research projects. For example, in the fall of 1925 Wissler wanted to travel to Australia to study the “primitive” racial traits of Australian Aborigines.<sup>148</sup> When the idea was suggested at the Galton Society, Edwin Embree, who was secretary of the Rockefeller Foundation at the time, secured funding for the trip.<sup>149</sup> Wissler’s research at the Institute, then, married his interests in anthropology and eugenics, and his work remained relevant to the AES into the mid 1930s.

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<sup>145</sup> Angell wrote to Yerkes: “I may add that I suppose we all appreciate the potential value of his connection with the American Museum as an asset in the training of our people at the Institute and in keeping contact with interesting and significant lines of research.” Angell to Yerkes, Jan 22, 1925, Box 114, Folder 1170, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>146</sup> “Budget for the Institute of Psychology, 1927-1928,” in a letter from Yerkes to Angell, 16 May 1930, Box 114, Folder 1170, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>147</sup> See Clark Wissler, “Inheritance I the epicathnic fold,” *Eugenical News* 11 (1925), 162-163; Wissler, “Eye color among Hawaiian crosses,” *Eugenical News* 11 (1926), 191; Wissler, “Race and sex differences in growth of head form,” *Eugenical News* 12 (1927), 81-83; Wissler, “Evidence of white blood among the village Indians of southwestern United States,” *Eugenical News* 14 (1928), 127-128.

<sup>148</sup> Wissler to Angell, June 1926, Box 114, Folder 1170, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>149</sup> *Eugenical News* 10, no. 12 (December 1925) p. 160.



### IIIb. Yerkes and Dodge Shift from Eugenics-Shaped Research

Yerkes and Dodge, meanwhile, were also productive, but their research during the five years of the Institute's existence shifted increasingly away from issues of immigration and reproduction. Dodge's research at the Institute focused on sensory-motor responses to various stimuli, such as the consequences of spinning or oscillating on eyeball movement.<sup>150</sup> In his experimental research, Dodge also focused on creating technical instruments to record minute reflexes of the eye and head, and his devices attracted national attention.<sup>151</sup> "Dr. Dodge points out in his report that investigators in different parts of the country have sought technical advice in regard to various problems with which they were concerned," wrote Angier in his 1926 annual report on the Institute. "It might lead to the Institute's becoming a center for the elaboration and duplication of instruments of precision to facilitate psychological work in other laboratories."<sup>152</sup> Dodge's work on psychophysiological behavior, then, was influential.<sup>153</sup> Although his work was still considered part of the CSPHM, Dodge never sought to compare fundamental human variability between immigrant groups, which had been his intention in the early

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<sup>150</sup> Raymond Dodge and Travis, "Sensory-Motor Consequences of Passive Rotary and Rectilinear oscillation of the body," *Proc Natl Acad Sci* 13, no. 12 (Dec 1927), 843-846.

<sup>151</sup> Raymond Dodge, "Fundamental Steps in the Development of Adaptive Behavior of the Eyes," *The Journal of General Psychology*, Volume 4, no 1, (1930), 3-14.

<sup>152</sup> Roswell Angier, "Report of the Chairman on the work of the Institute of Psychology, Yale University, for 1925-26, for submission to Rockefeller Foundation," Box 102, Folder 1924, Robert M. Yerkes Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>153</sup> Dodge also published theoretical articles arguing against the theory of inhibition by drainage, a theory in which a concrete amount of energy within the nervous system is concentrated in certain neural paths and "drained" from others. See Dodge, "The Hypothesis of Inhibition by Drainage," *Proc Natl Acad Sci* 11, no. 11 (Nov 1925), 689-691; Dodge, "The problem of Inhibition," *Psychological Review* 33 (1926), 1-12.

years of the Committee. As such, Dodge's research during the mid-1920s was significantly less applicable to the eugenic cause than was Wissler's.

Yerkes, meanwhile, dove whole-heartedly into work with anthropoids and into establishing a Primate Research Laboratory on Yale's campus. Beginning in 1925, the Institute used funds to reconstruct the Mason Barn on 135 Prospect Street for the housing of anthropoid apes for Yerkes's research.<sup>154</sup> As chair of the CRPS, Yerkes also received ample funding to conduct research on sexual behavior in chimpanzees.<sup>155</sup> Yerkes published a number of scientific articles and books on anthropoid behavior in his first few years at Yale, including *Almost Human* and *The Great Apes*.<sup>156</sup> He consistently attempted to link his anthropoid research to benefits for human society. In a proposal to set up an anthropoid breeding and observation station in 1927, for instance, Yerkes argued that "the Yale Center for psychological studies of sex in infrahuman organisms may most importantly contribute to the progress of sex research and to the solution of certain other important yet difficult problems in social biology."<sup>157</sup> Yerkes was thus convinced—or at least wanted funding agencies to be convinced—that his research was relevant to the human condition. "The anthropoid apes are available for scientific study in larger degree and in more varied ways than are human infants and children," he told a group of researchers at the Social Science Research Council in 1927. "We can in

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<sup>154</sup> Roswell Angier, "Report of the Chairman on the work of the Institute of Psychology, Yale University, for 1925-26, for submission to Rockefeller Foundation," Box 102, Folder 1924, Robert M. Yerkes Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>155</sup> Biehn, "Psychobiology, sex research, and chimpanzees," 22.

<sup>156</sup> Robert Yerkes, *Almost Human*, (New York: Century Co., 1925); Robert Yerkes and Ada Yerkes, *The Great Apes: A Study of Anthropoid Life* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970).

<sup>157</sup> Robert Yerkes, "Relation of Anthropoid Research to Social Science," Hanover Conference of the Social Science Research Council, (Hanover, NH: September 1927), Box 124, Robert M. Yerkes Papers. Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

them, if you like, induce or produce mental defects, mental diseases, or any other condition which it is desired to study experimentally. In ourselves, of course, it would have to be done secretly.”<sup>158</sup> Yerkes saw the ape as an ideal model organism for research into pressing human problems.

While Yerkes always attempted to relate his research on anthropoids to social welfare, by the end of the 1920s his work gradually became less relevant to issues of social hygiene and, especially, eugenics. First, much of Yerkes’s effort in his first few years at the Institute was foundational, focused not on research itself but on establishing facilities for anthropoid breeding stations at Yale and in Florida. Second, as historian Kersten Biehn explains, by the 1930s the Rockefeller Foundation—which funded the CRPS through its Bureau of Social Hygiene—began decreasing funding of infra-human subjects for sex research and began instead focusing on hormonal or biochemical research.<sup>159</sup> Just as his research effectively was deemed less applicable to the fundamental problems of human sexuality, it became less relevant to eugenics as well. In January of 1930, a secretary from the AES asked Yerkes if he might prepare an article about his research for publication in the magazine, *Eugenics*. “With regrets and hearty good wishes for the continued and increasing success of *Eugenics*,” Yerkes replied, ““my life is just now so filled with the necessary work of developing our resources for Anthropoid research and my interests are so definitely directed toward things which for the moment are rather

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<sup>158</sup> Yerkes, “Relation of Anthropoid Research to Social Science,” Hanover Conference of the Social Science Research Council, (Hanover, NH: September 1927), Box 124, Robert M. Yerkes Papers. Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>159</sup>Biehn, “Psychobiology, sex research, and chimpanzees,” 30.

remote from matters eugenic.”<sup>160</sup> Despite his continued support for the AES and the eugenics movement, Yerkes’s own path in research by the end of the Institute had strayed significantly from the eugenic agenda.

### **IIIc. The Hope of Collaborative Research on Eugenics Is Not Fulfilled**

Although Wissler, Yerkes, and Dodge were productive individually, the collaboration and cooperation that Angell had envisioned when forming the Institute of Psychology was not realized by its end in 1929. While the Governing Board continued to meet monthly to establish the overall direction of the Institute, each faculty researcher was largely left to his own devices. “When the Institute of Psychology was started in 1924, problems of the scope and character of its work were left largely flexible,” explained Angier in his final report to the Rockefeller Foundation in 1929. “They would crystallize into definite endeavors largely in line with the specific interests and the accumulated intellectual capital of the three major appointees to the staff.”<sup>161</sup> In the five-year funding term of the Institute, Yerkes, Wissler, and Dodge did not co-author a single scientific article.<sup>162</sup> While Angier argued that the Institute faculty was united by a common interest in “fundamental problems of human and infrahuman behavior, including anthropological study of the behavior of primitive racial groups,” there was minimal collaboration in research projects.

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<sup>160</sup> Yerkes to Mr. Ives, January 21, 1930, Box 80, Folder 1518, Robert M. Yerkes Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>161</sup> Angier, R. “Report on the work of the Institute of Psychology, Yale University, for the Academic Year 1928-29, for submission to Rockefeller Foundation.” Box 102, Folder 1924, Robert M. Yerkes papers. Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

There was also discontent among certain faculty members that the Institute had not been more aggressive in appointing a psychologist in the field of intelligence testing. Testing methods and statistical analysis of American intelligence was seen at the Institute's founding as perhaps the most useful application of experimental psychology, and Yerkes, Dodge, and Wissler all thought that a psychologist specializing in the field was crucial to their complementary attacks on social problems of human behavior. Although he had tried and failed to recruit Brigham to Yale at the Institute's founding, Angell again reached out to the Princeton psychologist in 1927. While he had stressed the cooperative nature of the Institute in his recruitment effort three years earlier, by 1927 Angell emphasized the individuality of the post. "Were you to join this group, it would, of course, be under conditions giving you the greatest possible freedom in your goings and comings and in the range of your work," he wrote to Brigham. "This is characteristic of all the men connected with the Institute and constitutes no small part of the attractiveness of the post."<sup>163</sup> Angell's letter reflected both the Institute's dire need for a psycho-technician with a specialty in aptitude testing and the Institute's increasingly individualized approach to research. Brigham again politely turned down the invitation to join the Institute's faculty, citing his commitment to Princeton.

Yerkes became particularly frustrated by the lack of major appointees and publicity surrounding the Institute. In a confidential letter from Angier to Angell in 1929, Angier confided that Yerkes "spoke frankly of certain dissatisfactions that he

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<sup>163</sup> Angell to Brigham, February 3, 1927, Box 111, Folder 1131, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

had had with the conduct of the Institute.”<sup>164</sup> While the Institute allied closely with Arnold Gesell, a pediatrician and psychologist in the field of child development, and Arthur Ruggles, a psychiatrist for the Yale student body in the Department of University Health, neither man was devoted solely to the Institute like Yerkes, Wissler, and Dodge were.<sup>165</sup> Yerkes complained to Angier that they had not been aggressive enough in attracting leading psychologists to join him and make the Institute the pre-eminent center of social research that he had envisioned when coming to Yale. “He felt that only so can an institution secure a pervasive prestige,” Angier wrote to Angell.<sup>166</sup> There was clearly a certain amount of discontent among the Institute’s faculty, then, that more efforts hadn’t been made to make their organization stronger and more socially relevant.

Although its three founding faculty members were each productive, the Institute of Psychology at Yale did not fulfill Angell’s grand vision of a collaborative attack on problems of human behavior that have societal impact. While he recognized its shortcomings, however, Angell remained hopeful that the Institute’s potential might be realized in time. In a speech to the Yale Corporation in 1928, he acknowledged that “the major appointees represented three relatively diverse interests,” and that as a result they worked in their respective fields rather than focus on the same human problem. Indeed, Yerkes’s anthropoid work, Wissler’s anthropological studies of race, and Dodge’s research in measuring reflex behavior

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<sup>164</sup> Angier to Angell, Jan 17, 1929, Box 111, Folder 1130, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>165</sup> *Catalogue of Yale University, 1927-1928* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1927).

<sup>166</sup> Angier to Angell, Jan 17, 1929, Box 111, Folder 1130, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

rarely—if ever—overlapped. Angell believed, however, that “combined attack on a single problem has not been, and need not be, excluded. It will certainly develop in time as a corollary of the other kinds of intimacy.”<sup>167</sup> In Angell’s eyes, then, the Institute did not need drastic transformation, but merely more time to pursue its original research agenda. “Our staff is convinced that if permanence of status can be secured,” he proclaimed to the Yale Corporation, “the Institute can, and will, become an outstanding center for varied attack upon the fundamental problems of human behavior.”<sup>168</sup>

#### **CONCLUSION: THE LEGACY OF THE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY**

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Beginning in the 1929-1930 academic year, the Institute of Psychology ceased to exist as a separate entity within Yale University. Yerkes and Dodge were incorporated into Yale’s new Institute of Human Relations in the Section of Psychology along with other Yale psychologists, and Wissler joined the new Department of Anthropology within the same Institute.<sup>169</sup> The Institute of Human Relations, funded by a generous \$7.5 million grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, was an effort to bring together the arts and sciences to deal with broad problems of social welfare. The goal, as stated in the Catalogue of Yale University, was to bring together sections of the Medical School, Law School, and Graduate School such that “existing barriers between disciplines will be broken down” and so that “a link will

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<sup>167</sup> James Angell, “Memorandum on early statements of the Purpose of the Institute,” (New Haven, CT: Angell to the Yale Corporation, October 5, 1928), Box 162, Folder 1708, James R. Angell Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> *Catalogue of Yale University, 1929-1930*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1929), 377.

be formed between such fields as psychiatry, psychology, medicine, public health, and nursing on the one hand, and law, industry, government, and religion on the other.”<sup>170</sup> Yerkes, Wissler, and Dodge continued their research efforts as members of the Institute of Human Relations, and their projects became part of Yale’s broad, progressive attempt at solving problems of social welfare in the 1930s. The Institute of Psychology and its Governing Board dissolved, however, and it no longer functioned as an autonomous division with independent research aims.

Despite the brevity of its existence, the Institute of Psychology left a lasting impact on psychology at Yale. The presence of eminent researchers such as Yerkes, Dodge, and Wissler—supported wholeheartedly by President Angell—initiated a new era of experimental psychology at Yale that was entirely distinct from its philosophical tradition. A total of 111 scientific papers in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, and anthropology were produced in the Institute’s five-year existence.<sup>171</sup> “The accumulated effect of the publications of the Institute and the distribution of its temporary members to positions in various parts of the world,” Angell told the Yale Corporation in 1928, “will undoubtedly begin increasing numbers of applications for admission from people of a high order of ability, for paid, as well as unpaid, positions.”<sup>172</sup> Indeed, the number of psychology doctorates produced by Yale and trained at the Institute increased dramatically throughout the 1920s. “Those who have left the Institute are spreading its influence in the different positions that they have secured,” Angier wrote to the Rockefeller Foundation in his fifth and final

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<sup>170</sup> *Catalogue of Yale University, 1929-1930*, 377.

<sup>171</sup> Angier, R. “Report on the work of the Institute of Psychology, Yale University, for the Academic Year 1928-29, for submission to Rockefeller Foundation.”

<sup>172</sup> Angell, “Memorandum on early statements of the Purpose of the Institute.”



report on the Institute of Psychology. “There is never any difficulty in placing at once the products of the Institute. The demand exceeds the supply.”<sup>173</sup> Yale’s influence and standing in the field of psychology were demonstrated in September of 1929 when Yale hosted the ninth International Congress of Psychology, an event largely arranged by Angier and Dodge.<sup>174</sup> Just eight years after Angell became president and five years after the Institute of Psychology was formed, Yale welcomed the top experimental psychologists in the world to New Haven.

The Institute’s positive impact on psychology at Yale, however, should not obscure the eugenic, racist agenda on which it was founded. By the early 1920s the field of experimental psychology was replete with eugenicists who sought to apply their young discipline to problems of human welfare and human engineering. While the Institute itself never launched a coordinated program to justify and realize eugenic ideals, the Institute’s formation was comprehensively influenced by them. Angell, sympathetic to the eugenic cause, brought two of the country’s leading eugenicists to Yale’s campus. Yerkes, Wissler, and Dodge, united by a desire to use psychology to solve the perceived problems of immigration and reproduction, infused the Institute’s research plan with the contemporary eugenic agenda. This previously unexplored chapter in Yale’s history, then, embodies the close alliance with eugenics that characterized the redefined discipline of psychology in the 1920s. Perhaps more sobering, however, is that it offers a concrete example of institutionalized eugenic thinking at Yale.

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<sup>173</sup> Angier, “Report on the work of the Institute of Psychology, Yale University, for the Academic Year 1928-29,” for submission to Rockefeller Foundation.”

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

The Institute of Psychology at Yale University has never been thoroughly described in the historical literature. This might be due to two reasons: first, because of its relatively short, five-year existence from 1924 to 1929; second, because it has been overshadowed by its much larger successor, the Institute of Human Relations. As such, I happened upon the Institute of Psychology accidentally late in the fall of 2013: while looking through the Yale University Course Catalogues of the 1920s, I came across a one-page blurb about the Institute of Psychology. “The Institute of Psychology was established in Yale University in 1924, by appropriation from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, to promote psycho-biological and anthropological research with special reference to the problems of human behavior,” read the blurb in the 1926-27 Catalogue of Yale University.<sup>175</sup> I noticed that of the five founding members of the Governing Board, at least three of them were eugenicists. It was at that point, in late November, that my exploration of the Institute of Psychology at Yale tentatively began.

The initial plan for my senior essay was to explore, generally, Yale’s involvement in the American eugenics movement during the 1920s and 1930s. I originally became interested in the topic in the summer of 2012 when I read Richard Conniff’s short piece on Irving Fisher, “God and White Men at Yale,” in the *Yale Alumni Magazine*. Conniff explained that Fisher, a well-respected professor of Economics at Yale, was also one of America’s most outspoken eugenicists, and he

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<sup>175</sup> “Institute of Psychology,” *Catalogue of Yale University, 1926-1927*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press (1926): 312-313.

mentioned other Yale men, such as President James Angell and Robert Yerkes, who joined Fisher in the eugenic cause. Fisher had been the founding president of the American Eugenics Society (AES), located just blocks away from Yale's campus in downtown New Haven. I had also learned in a HSHM lecture that Ellsworth Huntington, a Yale faculty member, had been president of the AES in the 1930s. It struck me that, perhaps, there was something that linked Yale to the racial theories of the eugenics movement, and I wanted to explore it for my senior essay.

Daniel Kevles's *In the Name of Eugenics* provided a terrific and thorough background on the American eugenics movement. His book introduced me to the main characters of American eugenics and provided context for their claims. I found Barry Mehler's "A History of the American Eugenics Society, 1921-1940," to be an useful dissertation to learn about the AES and its leadership in New Haven. I started looking into the primary literature of Fisher, Huntington, Yerkes and Angell, but I struggled to connect the many eugenicists at Yale in a cohesive way to structure my essay. That's what made stumbling upon the Institute of Psychology so exciting: it provided a lens to narrow my focus on a specific division within Yale that happened to foster a number of researchers with eugenic leanings. I searched the secondary literature for information about the Institute, but I didn't find any thorough descriptions of it. J.G. Morowski, in "Organizing Knowledge and Behavior at Yale's Institute of Human Relations," briefly mentioned the Institute of Psychology as a precursor to the Institute of Human Relations, but he did not go into any depth about how or why it was founded. I decided to start digging into the Institute of

Psychology, and discover how—if at all—it was influenced by the eugenics movement.

I quickly realized that my essay would become an institutional history of sorts. Without secondary source material on the Institute of Psychology, I began digging through the archived papers of James Angell and Robert Yerkes, both in Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University, to build a concrete history of the Institute. Box 111 of the Angell Papers had four folders on the Institute of Psychology, and they formed the backbone of my research. There were letters between Angell and Yerkes as early as 1922 addressing the possibility of Yerkes coming to Yale. There were also letters from Angell to Clark Wissler and Raymond Dodge, who were the two other founding members of the Institute. Finally, there were exchanges between Angell and a number of philanthropies, such as the Carnegie Institute and the Rockefeller Foundation, seeking funding for the Institute of Psychology. With these various correspondences, I was able to piece together the founding of the Institute of Psychology from its conception in the early 1920s to its establishment in 1924. The Yerkes Papers proved useful for discovering more about the Institute of Psychology. Box 102 of the Yerkes papers contained the annual reports of the Institute of Psychology to its financial supporter, the Rockefeller Foundation, from the years 1924-1929. The reports, written by Yerkes and the Chairman of the Institute, Roswell Angier, were thorough, annual reviews of work being housed at the Institute of Psychology. With the Angell and Yerkes Papers, I was able to describe a part of Yale's history that hasn't yet been elucidated in the historical literature.

As I analyzed the Yerkes and Angell Papers with my background knowledge in the eugenics movement, I began to detect a eugenic influence in the Institute's formation. In a letter from Yerkes to Angell in 1923, for instance, Yerkes described the possibility of using Yale to house projects fostered by the Committee for Scientific Problems on Human Migration and the Committee for Research Problems in Sex. When I looked into the publications and yearly reports of these two National Research Council Committees, I began to see connections between the Committee work and the goals of the American eugenics movement as a whole. I also discovered, from an AES publication in Yale's library, that both Yerkes and Wissler became part of the Committee of Research in the AES when they moved to New Haven to join the Institute. It became apparent to me that the research agenda of the Institute of Psychology, at least in its founding, was infused with the eugenic agenda.

A limitation to my research was that my sources came so heavily from Angell and Yerkes, and not as significantly from the other two main figures of the Institute: Wissler and Dodge. This shortcoming was, in part, because I changed the focus of my essay in the beginning of the Spring semester, and had to spend my time at the beginning of the Spring semester gathering whatever information I could about the Institute from Yale Manuscripts and Archives. It also was due to the fact that the Dodge and Wissler Papers were not located conveniently to New Haven. If I had more time, it would have been useful to look at the Raymond Dodge Papers, located at the University of Akron in Ohio, and the Clark Wissler Papers, located at Ball State University in Indiana. Nonetheless, there was enough correspondence from these two men in the Angell and Yerkes Papers that I was able to gain a solid sense of their

role in the Institute. Another area that might be interesting to explore in future analyses of the Institute is how, if at all, Yerkes, Dodge and Wissler collaborated in the Institute of Human Relations, which absorbed the Institute of Psychology in 1929. That question, however, was largely beyond the scope of this essay.

A number of secondary sources helped confirm that the themes I saw emerging from the Institute of Psychology were common in the contemporary field of experimental psychology. Wade Pickren's and Alexandra Rutherford's *A History of Modern Psychology in Context* was particularly helpful to ground my research in the history of psychology. Diane Paul's *Controlling Human Heredity* and Kevles's "Testing the Army's Intelligence" were also useful in determining how experimental psychology as a field lent itself to the broader eugenics movement. Kersten Biehn's "Philanthropic foundation support for the behavioral sciences at Yale University, 1923-41" provided an incredibly useful context for the funding received by the Institute from the Rockefeller Foundation in the early 1920s. Together, these secondary sources helped ground my story of the Institute of Psychology into the general field of psychology as a whole, and helped me connect eugenics and psychology at the Institute to larger societal trends. I hope that this essay on an unexplored chapter in Yale's history might add to this larger historical discourse.

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