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Dennis Bryson

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INTELLECTUAL HISTORY AND THE HUMAN SCIENCES

TOWARDS A NEW SCIENCE OF MAN ROCKEFELLER PHILANTHROPY AND THE RENOVATION OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES IN THE UNITED STATES

DENNIS BRYSON

Bilkent University, Ankara (Turkey)

dennis@bilkent.edu.tr

In recent decades, scholars have examined in some detail the immense influence exerted on American intellectual life—and especially on the human sciences—by philanthropic foundations during the 20th century.¹ Scholars as diverse as Olivier Zunz, Lily Kay, Donald Fisher, Judith Sealander, Martin Bulmer, and John M. Jordan have explored the impact of the foundations on the social and life sciences in the U.S. In doing so, they have demonstrated that the Rockefeller philanthropies—particularly the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, the General Education Board, and the Rockefeller Foundation—played an especially significant role with regard to the elaboration and promotion of the human sciences.²

As Olivier Zunz has noted, these organisations, along with other foundations, were an essential component of the new ‘institutional matrix of inquiry’ that emerged in the U.S. in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and came to play a key role in the production of knowledge in the human sciences and the application of such knowledge to economic as well as social issues and problems.

This paper will explore how the various Rockefeller philanthropic organisations—particularly the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (LSRM) and the various divisions of the Rockefeller Foundation—addressed themselves to the renovation of the human sciences in the U.S. during the 20s and 30s. These efforts involved what could be called the ‘modernisation’ of the human sciences—insofar as such efforts entailed

the jettisoning of outmoded speculative and conceptual perspectives and the furthering of a direct approach to the study of the phenomena of human life.³

They also involved interdisciplinary collaboration—as scientists in various disciplines in the social and life sciences were mobilised to participate in co-operative initiatives aimed at the understanding and control of human behaviour. Finally, and most interestingly, scientists in both the social and life sciences focused on the study of the underlying processes within the micro-dimensions of life. Their intent was to study on the one hand, how these underlying micro-processes affected overall social processes and structures, and on the other, the human organism and its functioning. It was believed by the officers and trustees as well as by many of the scientists associated with the foundations that the elaboration of knowledge within these micro-realms would promote human welfare as they conceived it.

I will focus on two very different fields in which Rockefeller philanthropic initiatives provided a significant impetus toward the development of two particular branches of knowledge namely molecular biology and the study of personality and culture. Admittedly, my comparison of these two fields may seem rather speculative but perhaps such speculation will shed light on the unique manner in which the history of the human sciences developed during the 20th century.

Both fields isolated an elementary unit to study within the context of its interaction with its wider environment—the macro-molecule of the protein (and eventually the DNA macro-molecule) in one case, and the personality of the individual, in the other. Thus, molecular biology focused on the molecule and its interaction with other molecules by means of physicochemical processes, while personality and culture thematised the personality of the individual within its socio-cultural environment as it took shape by means of the cultural processes of child rearing and education, social interaction with other personalities, and so forth. In both cases, a kind of micro-terrain became the object of knowledge and the target of intervention, promoting a socio-political agenda oriented toward the control of human behaviour and social control more generally. The emphasis on the miniature would thus be the privileged route to the control of human behaviour and social life.

The emergence of the two fields of molecular biology and personality and culture was due, in great part, to the largesse of Rockefeller philanthropy. Molecular biology was promoted by the Natural Sciences Division of the Rockefeller Foundation during the 30s and later under the direction of mathematician Warren Weaver; indeed, it was Weaver who coined the term 'molecular biology'. As Lily Kay has noted in *The Molecular Vision of Life*, the program in molecular biology was conceived of as part of an overall Rockefeller Foundation agenda for the creation of a 'new science of man' geared toward the understanding and control of human behaviour. The ultimate consequences of this program were quite spectacular—it laid the groundwork for knowledge of the structure and self-replicating properties of the DNA macro-molecule.⁴ The personality and culture approach was also given impetus by various facets of Rockefeller philanthropy, especially by a series of projects and programs conducted under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council during the 20s and 30s. Like the program in molecular biology, it was thought of as possessing important implications for social control. The field of personality and culture did not, of course, thrive in the manner of molecular biology; it was subject to much criticism during the 50s and later—and eventually came to be seen as a moribund field.⁵ Nevertheless, the vision of the micro-social elaborated by personality and culture was to have a lasting impact.

The history of Rockefeller philanthropy⁶

It may be useful at this point to glance briefly at the relevant aspects of the history of Rockefeller philanthropy. The first major effort of the latter to

focus on the human sciences in a systematic manner was the inauguration of the social science program of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (LSRM) in 1922. Under the direction of Chicago-trained psychologist Beardsley Ruml, the LSRM provided funding for an array of important social science projects in the U.S. during the 20s. The LSRM funded a series of community studies initiated by the Chicago social scientists Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and Charles E. Merriam and sponsored important studies in industrial sociology conducted by Elton Mayo at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company in Chicago. The Memorial also funded the organisation of the Institute of Human Relations at Yale University. Perhaps the LSRM's most important achievement, however, was the creation and support of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) in 1923.

The SSRC was dedicated to the promotion, development, and coordination of the social sciences in the U.S. More specifically, the organisation attempted to foster interdisciplinary research on human behaviour and its management. Political scientist Charles E. Merriam aptly described the research agenda of the SSRC when he observed, in 1931, that social scientists had recently been involved in efforts to 'bridge the gap between social research and the domain of biological research, including... the biological, the medical and the fringes of psychiatry and psychoanalysis'. He went on to note that such an 'approach points toward a comprehensive and intensive study of human behaviour, focusing upon it all the techniques and skills of the social and the biological sciences'.⁷

The foundation officials and social scientists who developed and worked with the LSRM social science programs had definite socio-political aims in mind. Often supporters of Progressive Era reforms, the administrators and social scientists were generally from middle-class backgrounds, trained in psychology and the social sciences. They wanted to reform society, but along technocratic lines; they distrusted politics and wanted to see experts such as themselves set the agenda for social reconstruction. They were perhaps especially bothered by the class conflict (the violent clashes, strikes, and the rise of militant labour organisations such as the Industrial Workers of the World), the racial strife (the race riots and lynchings, especially during and immediately after World War I), the perceived arousal of gender antagonism by the militant feminist movement of the 1910s, and the terrifying violence unleashed by World War I. They longed for a pacified world in which conflict and violence would be quelled and social stability would prevail.

The LSRM thus aimed not simply at elaborating on knowledge of society, but at the reconstruction and control of social life. Social scientific knowledge was not merely to describe the social, but to produce it. As Beardsley Ruml, the LSRM's director, put it in the 1933 *Final Report* of the foundation: 'It was felt that through the social sciences might come more intelligent measures of social control that would reduce such irrationalities as are represented by poverty, class conflict, and war between nations'.⁸

The Rockefeller boards were restructured in the late 20s, and the LSRM was discontinued as a separate organisation. The social science program of the LSRM was incorporated into the reorganised Rockefeller Foundation's Social Sciences Division, which continued to fund the SSRC. Several other new divisions of the Rockefeller Foundation were also created, including the Natural Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Humanities Divisions. As the goals of the Rockefeller Foundation were reformulated in the late 20s and early 30s, it was stressed that the foundation would be dedicated to the advancement of knowledge, especially insofar as such knowledge involved 'promoting procedures in the rationalisation of life'.⁹ It was also emphasised that the different divisions of the Rockefeller Foundation should co-ordinate their efforts in order to create a unified program. Max Mason, the president of the Rockefeller Foundation, described the overall goal of the foundation's unified program in these words: 'The salients of concentration... are directed to the general problem of human behaviour, with the aim of control through understanding'.¹⁰

The program for molecular biology

As Lily Kay has stressed, it was part of this overall agenda in the human sciences that the program in molecular biology was elaborated in the 30s and later, under the direction of Warren Weaver, the program in 'vital processes' as it was initially dubbed, was established in 1933. This program attempted to focus on those aspects of the life process shared by living organisms in general; it came to envision the life process as being based on the physicochemical realm of molecules and their interaction. The program was interdisciplinary, involving not only the various sub-fields of biology, but relevant aspects of physics, chemistry, and mathematics; accordingly, it would entail the co-operation of the Natural Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Social Sciences divisions of the Rockefeller Foundation. As Kay has noted, implicated in the 'molecular vision' is an approach based on 'upward causation', that is, an approach that explained life in terms of molecules and

molecular processes, of the smallest units and processes of living matter. Life could best be understood and controlled, it was believed, by focusing on the molecular level.

The Rockefeller program in molecular biology clearly made major advances in the understanding and potential control of the life process. Centred at the California Institute of Technology it included researchers such as geneticists Thomas Hunt Morgan and George Beadle, chemists like Linus Pauling, and physicists like Max Delbrück. Although the Cal Tech program tended to focus on the protein molecule, it laid the groundwork for the discovery of the structure and function of DNA. Thus, with extensive Rockefeller backing, Cal Tech pioneered in assembling interdisciplinary teams oriented toward research on the architecture of the macro-molecules involved in life processes; indeed Cal Tech became the most important international centre in this field. More particularly, James Watson—who, along with British physicist Francis Crick, announced the double-helix structure and self-replicating features of DNA in 1953—worked extensively with Max Delbrück. Watson was also much influenced by the work on molecular structure conducted by Pauling.¹¹

In *The Molecular Vision of Life*, Kay has questioned whether the molecular vision is really the only valid approach to understanding the life process. There are, after all, contending approaches, including the evolutionary, the ecological, and the organismic (with its stress on homeostasis). Why should the molecular be privileged as somehow getting at the essence of life? Her answer to this question is instructive:

A biology governed by faith in technology and in the ultimate power of upward causation is far more amenable to strategies of control than a science of downward causation, where elements cannot be fully understood apart from the whole. There is seductive empowerment in a scientific ideology in which the complexities of the highest levels can be fully controlled by mastering the simplicity of the lowest. The rise of molecular biology, then, represented the selection and promotion of a particular kind of science: one whose form and content best fitted with the wider, dominating patterns of knowing and doing. The molecular vision of life was an optimal match between technocratic visions of human engineering and representations of life grounded in technological intervention, a resonance between scientific imagination and social vision.¹²

Identifying personality and culture for a world of insecurity

The field of personality and culture was advanced under the auspices of the SSRC and other facets of Rockefeller philanthropy during the 20s and 30s. Themes pertinent to personality and culture were

discussed in the 'First and Second Colloquia on Personality Investigation', held in New York City in late 1928 and 1929 respectively, and attended by an array of psychologists, psychiatrists, social scientists, and specialists in the biomedical fields.

In 1930, two key SSRC committees on personality and culture were established: 'The Advisory Committee on the Study of the Impact of Culture on Personality', chaired by foundation officer Lawrence K. Frank, and the 'Advisory Committee on Personality and Culture', chaired by Canadian psychologist Edward A. Bott. The first committee eventually planned and organised the Seminar on the 'Impact of Culture on Personality', held at Yale University in 1932–3 under the supervision of anthropologist Edward Sapir (with the assistance of sociologist John Dollard). The second committee was the direct result of the deliberations of the 'Conference on Personality and Culture', which was held as part of the SSRC's Hanover Conference of 1930; this committee played a major role during the 30s in formulating the personality and culture approach, as we will see below. The Hanover Conference of 1934, organised by Frank with General Education Board funding, also elaborated the personality and culture approach. Among those attending this conference were Margaret Mead, John Dollard, Mark A. May, Robert S. Lynd, and W. Lloyd Warner.¹³

In order to understand what they were attempting to achieve it is necessary to define the term 'personality and culture' which coupled two concepts that had gained currency in the human sciences in the United States during the first few decades of the 20th century. During the early 20th century, 'personality' became an important concept in psychology and other American social sciences. Given impetus by the requirements of personality selection during World War I in the work of psychologist Walter Dill Scott and others, the concept of personality also proved useful for business and education in the assessment of individuals for vocational and pedagogical purposes.

The concept was broken down into smaller and more precise parts by Gordon Allport, who examined personality 'traits' and eventually came to focus on the manner in which such traits were integrated with each other to form unique personalities. The mental hygiene movement also gave an important impetus to the study of personality, particularly during the 20s and 30s, well-funded by the Rockefeller and other philanthropies, the mental hygiene movement focused on the individual personality—and the formation of personality during childhood—as the key for dealing not only with personal difficulties but pressing social problems. As Kurt Danziger has

observed, 'Interpreting social life in terms of metaphors of health and illness, the mental hygiene movement projected hopes of a better future that was to emerge, not through the conflict of collective social interests, but through the 'treatment' of individual maladjustment by the appropriate agencies of social control'.¹⁴

The anthropological writings of Franz Boas and his students were a major source of the culture concept utilised in the American social sciences. It was during the 30s, Warren Susman has noted, that the culture concept attained widespread currency in the U.S.—in the work of popular writers as well as scholars and social scientists. An especially notable event in the elaboration and diffusion of the culture concept was the publication in 1934 of *Patterns of Culture* by Ruth Benedict—a student of Boas' and an innovator in the field of personality and culture. A key reason for the increasing currency of the concept of culture was the special role many assigned to it during the depression years. As the result of the fragmentation of society and culture during these years it came to possess, in the minds of many, an important socio-political function. Culture would provide meaning and coherence in a world which seemed to be falling apart and in which people had lost faith in the dominant political and economic institutions, it would assist in creating the social solidarity and unity needed to mount an effective political initiative for dealing with the depression.¹⁵

By the 30s, social scientists and foundation administrators had combined the concepts of personality and culture into a more or less unified interdisciplinary approach that fitted well with the socio-political agenda advanced by Rockefeller philanthropy. In a world plagued by economic insecurity, crime, labour and social unrest, and other manifestations of social disorder—as well as by the rise of fascism and increasing international tensions—personality and culture seemed to offer social scientists and foundation administrators hope that social conflict and disorder could be ameliorated and a new society created. It thus seemed to them that an approach oriented to the fostering of 'normal' well-adjusted, co-operative personalities by means of scientifically informed child-rearing and educational practices would provide the key to social order and stability. It was hoped by social scientists and philanthropic administrators that the latter would be achieved by means of the reconstruction of cultural practices, especially those geared to the formation of personality.

Lawrence K. Frank, an officer with the General Education Board during the 30s, suggested that the field of personality and culture could assist in the revision of cultural practices pertinent to parenting

and education in order to foster a healthy superego and set of ego-ideals, based on co-operative as opposed to competitive values, within the adolescent's psyche. By means of such cultural reconstruction, Frank noted, the fiercely competitive practices that had led to the depression and other forms of social disorder would be replaced by co-operative practices more appropriate to modern industrial society.¹⁶

Along such lines, Frank and others made enthusiastic pronouncements about personality and culture during the 30s and later, Sociologist Robert S. Lynd, for example, proclaimed in 1939: 'the precise significance of personality and culture is that it is not an additional field for study but that *it is the field of all of the social sciences*. Here lies the key to the strengthening of social science by the 'cross-fertilising of the disciplines', which an agency like the Social Science Research Council was established to encourage'. Moreover, Lynd continued, a social science informed by the personality and culture approach could play a major role in evaluating and re-shaping American culture in order to re-orient it to the needs of individuals. Frank, Lynd's old friend, was also quite optimistic with regard to this approach, writing in 1943 'the possibility of improving human life and achieving some more humanly desirable and valuable social order rests upon our ability to modify personality development in the growing child and to reconstruct our traditional culture toward more desirable patterns'.¹⁷

The SSRC's Committee on personality and culture: deliberations and activities

During the period 1930–40, a number of prominent North American social scientists were involved in the various conferences and projects sponsored by the committee. These figures included anthropologists Edward Sapir, Robert Redfield, Melville J. Herskovits, and Ralph Linton; sociologists Ernest Burgess, William I. Thomas, Thorsten Sellin, and E.H. Sutherland; psychologists Mark A. May, Gardner Murphy, Gordon Allport, Edward A. Bott, and Charles H. Judd; and psychiatrists Harry Stack Sullivan and Clarence M. Hincks. Margaret Mead and John Dollard were also involved, a number of publications eventually resulted from the work of this committee (actually two committees: the Advisory Committee, Feb 1931–Sept 1934, which was replaced by the Research Committee, Oct 1934–Sept 1940), including *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples*, edited by Margaret Mead, and *Criteria for the Life History*, by John Dollard.¹⁸ Perhaps the main achievement of the committee was to focus the attention of a number of prominent social

scientists on the field of personality and culture and to stimulate debate and discussion among them with regard to the orientation of the field and its meaning for social science and policy.¹⁹

Key topics discussed and elaborated within the conferences, reports, and memoranda were the concepts of personality, culture, and community, as these concepts and their inter-relationships were elaborated, the domain of the micro-social came to be articulated as an object of social scientific knowledge. Thus, SSRC social scientists came to believe that it was, in large part, by means of the micro-social processes of child-rearing and educational practices, marriage and family life, neighbourhood interaction, and so forth, that the personality of the individual took shape. The micro-processes were culturally-patterned; indeed, the word culture in the anthropological and sociological sense came to refer precisely to such micro-processes and others characteristic of the everyday life of ordinary people within communities. Along such lines, the best way to study personality formation, according to the SSRC social scientists, would be to study the impact of culture (that is, of the culturally-patterned micro-processes) on the individual within the context of small-scale, relatively homogeneous communities.

As Sapir and others stressed, the individual's personality was not simply the product of cultural patterning; there was a persisting substrata of personality that somehow eluded cultural patterning and was the consequence of 'inner' constitutional and organic factors. The point was to study the interaction of the culturally-patterned micro-processes and the inner components constituting the individual's personality. In any case, what was involved in such study was the construction of the realm of the micro-social as an object of knowledge. Within the domain of this knowledge, the individual could be seen as the fundamental unit (analogous to the molecule of molecular biology), while the culturally-patterned micro-practices (such as child-rearing, going to school, and growing up in a particular neighbourhood) could be seen as the underlying processes of social life (equivalent of the physicochemical processes operating on molecules). From the standpoint of the micro-social—as formulated by the personality and culture approach—a perspective emphasising large-scale political and economic events and trends tended to be pushed aside, though perhaps not necessarily totally disregarded.

In 1930, Edward Sapir wrote a memorandum proposing the establishment by the SSRC of a 'Committee on the Interrelationships of Personality and Culture' it provides a succinct but important outline of the personality and culture approach as it

was elaborated by the Committee on Personality and Culture, and it is worth examining here. The memorandum stressed the value of the study of personality for the social sciences, as these sciences were concerned with the actions of specific human personalities, it would be necessary for them to focus on 'the description of specific behaviour manifestations and... the discovery of the processes that enter as factors into the differentiated behaviour manifested by the person'. The factors which shaped the 'behaviour manifestations' and the personalities of individuals could be classified either as 'inner' components—'constitutional' organic factors, the neurological system, drives, and so on—or as cultural patterns, mores, customs, and so forth. What would be important to study was the manner in which these two sets of factors were integrated with each other: 'Personality research must study the interdependence of 'inner' components and available cultural patterns'.

While various approaches had been developed to study the behaviour of people, it was nevertheless emphasised in the memorandum that adequate approaches to the study of 'behaviour manifestations as they occur in daily life', the 'ordinary behaviour of every-day people', had not yet been developed. Certain approaches—including the scientific observation of various types of behaviour; autobiographical documents such as diaries, journals, letters, and so on; performance tests; 'guided interviews supplemented by free-fantasy, as used by the psychiatrists'; and historical records—could be valuable. They would be especially useful if they were applied to the study of specific communities, that is, 'relatively small groups possessed of well-developed cultural patterns', such as the communities of the Navajo or Plains Indians or the communities of specific immigrant groups in the United States.

Investigating personality within the context of specific communities would require an interdisciplinary approach involving the study of the group life of the community; 'intensive personality studies' of members of the community; and studies of how various cultural factors were manifested in the group and were incorporated within specific individuals. Accordingly, 'This sort of study will require the active team work of the cultural anthropologist, the sociologist, the psychologist, and the psychiatrist, each sensitive to the viewpoints of all the others'.²⁰

Lake George Conference, 1934

The personality and culture approach and its implications were concisely summarised in a report submitted by the Committee on Personality and Culture for consideration at the SSRC's Lake

George Conference in September 1934. It will be instructive for our purposes to look at the final section of this report. It was noted in this section that 'vast changes in the material conditions of life' had been produced by scientific and technological innovation. According to the report, what was really important to understand, was not necessarily such vast changes in themselves, but rather the changes in cultural patterns affected by these large-scale changes. The report thus suggested the importance of techno-economic factors as causes of social change, but nevertheless indicated that the micro-social processes, or, as the report put it, the 'typical minor patterns'—presumably cultural patterns pertinent to child-rearing, family and community life, and so on—provided the best terrain for elaborating modes of knowledge and techniques for enhancing human welfare and happiness:

The main thesis of the present report is that there is a possibility of greatly increasing knowledge with regard to the changes which are taking place in cultural patterns and in individuals affected by these patterns. Not only is it urged that there is a possibility of increasing knowledge about cultural patterns and individuals, but it is further urged that only through detailed studies of typical minor patterns [such as the rearing and education of children, family life, neighbourhood interactions, etc.] will it be possible to arrive at an adequate understanding and ultimate control of the larger patterns of collective life.²¹

The Committee on Personality and Culture was discharged in September 1940 and was succeeded by the SSRC's Committee on Social Adjustment—a key concept elaborated by the social scientists involved in the Committee on Personality and Culture—in the context of such issues as crime, the onset of old age, physical disability, the possession of special aptitudes, and so on. Attempting to foster an interdisciplinary perspective on such issues, the committee involved social scientists from various disciplinary backgrounds; the initial members were sociologist Ernest Burgess, psychologist A.T. Poffenberger, and eugenicist Frederick Osborn.

Meanwhile, work on personality and culture continued—and in fact reached its heyday after the discharge of the Committee on Personality and Culture. Cora DuBois' *The People of Alor* was published in 1944, and the next year marked the appearance of Ralph Linton's *The Cultural Background of Personality*. Various studies of 'national character' were made during World War II and the Cold War era by social scientists such as Ruth Benedict, Geoffrey Gorer, and Margaret Mead. Most significantly, Mead popularised aspects of the personality and culture approach by means of the

numerous books and articles that she published during the post-war era.²²

Mapping the history of this period of social science

The intent of this paper has been to identify key definitions and their use in discussing the problems at hand and not to disqualify the new knowledge of the various micro-dimensions of life promoted by Rockefeller philanthropy. It has not been to subject such knowledge to the critique of ideology, but to map and situate it historically—to trace the contours and the genealogy of the concepts and approaches implicated in it in order to provide a sense of critical perspective.

The new knowledge—especially that of the micro-social—had deeply polyvalent implications and it possessed both positive and negative ramifications. For example, for administrative uses the concept of personality has had a long history of use during the 20th century for categorising and managing individual difference in accordance with the administrative needs of various economic, government, and educational bureaucracies.²³ On the other hand the concept of personality proved useful to the civil rights movement in the U.S. during the 50s and 60s, as civil rights advocates used the concept to argue that segregation and racism damaged the personalities of African Americans. For African Americans during the 60s, the notion of culture was similarly polyvalent—associated with both the much-criticised notion of the ‘culture of poverty’ as well as with the valorisation of black culture and identity.

What concerns me is that with the widespread diffusion of the emphasis on the micro-social within American culture during the 20th century—to which personality and culture undoubtedly has contributed—there has occurred a neglect of the wider structures of power operating within our world.²⁴ While encouraging interest in such issues as child rearing, marriage and family life, as well as human relations more generally, the stress on the micro-social has perhaps also fostered a sense of passivity and perplexity with regard to the larger political-economic processes and structures which dominate our lives today.

Michigan Press, 1993); Judith Sealander, *Private Wealth and Public Life* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Martin Bulmer and Joan Bulmer, ‘Philanthropy and Social Science in the 20s: Beardley Ruml and the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, 1922–9’, *Minerva* 19, no. 3 (1981); and John M. Jordan, *Machine-Age Ideology* (University of North Carolina, 1994). Also see my *Socialising the Young: The Role of Foundations, 1923–41* (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 2002).

- 1 For a useful treatment of the ‘modernist impulse’ and the American social sciences, see Dorothy Ross, ‘Modernist Social Science in the Land of the New/Old’, in Dorothy Ross (ed.), *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences, 1870–1930* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 171–89. The perspective on the modern elaborated by Michel Foucault is also instructive to note here. According to Foucault, the advent of modernity entailed the deployment of knowledge and technologies oriented to the discipline of the body and the regulation of the population. Thus, the emergence of the modern involved ‘the entry of life into history, that is, the entry of phenomena peculiar to the life of the human species into the order of knowledge and power’. See Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), pp. 141–2.
- 2 See Lily Kay, especially introduction and the first chapter.
- 3 Accounts of the rise and decline of personality and culture in the social sciences can be found in Milton Singer, ‘A Survey of Culture and Personality Theory and Research’, in Bert Kaplan (ed.), *Studying Personality Cross-Culturally* (Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson and Co., 1961); Steven Piker, ‘Classical Culture and Personality’, in Philip K. Bock, *Handbook of Psychological Anthropology* (Westport: Greenwood, 1994); and Thomas C. Patterson, *A Social History of Anthropology in the United States* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2001).
- 4 Bulmer and Bulmer deal in detail with the ISRM program in social science. For the impact of the Rockefeller Foundation on the human sciences, see Raymond B. Fosdick, *The Story of the Rockefeller Foundation* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1952).
- 5 Charles E. Merriam, *New Aspects of Politics*, 3rd edn (University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 34, 35. This edition is a reprint, with some additions, of the 1931 edn.
- 6 Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, *Final Report* (New York, 1933), pp. 10–11.
- 7 Proposed Future Program, part of The Rockefeller Foundation Agenda for Special Meeting (11 April 1933), Rockefeller Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY, record group 3.1, series 900, folder 168, 61.
- 8 Quoted in the Report of the Committee on Appraisal and Plan (11 Dec 1934), Rockefeller Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Centre, record group 3.1, series 900, folder 184, p. 25.
- 9 Kay, especially pp. 3, 12, 256, 269–77. The Rockefeller program in molecular biology had been anticipated by the work of German-born biologist Jacques Loeb (1859–1924). Loeb, who taught at the University of Chicago for a number of years and mentored behaviourist psychologist John B. Watson and others while there—championed an engineering approach directed at the control the life process. Later in his career, while at the Rockefeller Institute in New York City, he became concerned with the laws of chemistry and physics underlying the life process and increasingly abandoned biology for the study of protein chemistry. See Philip J. Pauly, *Controlling Life: Jacques Loeb and the Engineering Ideal in Biology* (University of California Press, 1990).
- 10 Kay, pp. 17–18.

¹ This paper represents a revised and expanded version of a paper I gave at the 24th Annual Conference of the European Society for the History of the Human Sciences, Moscow Sept 2005. I thank the audience of the panel which I participated for its perceptive comments and criticisms.

² See Olivier Zunz, *Why the American Century?* (University of Chicago Press, 1998); Lily E. Kay, *The Molecular Vision of Life* (Oxford University Press, 1993); Donald Fisher, *Fundamental Development of the Social Sciences* (University of

- ¹¹ The Hanover Conferences were sponsored by the SSRC with Rockefeller backing and were held annually from 1925–30. The conferences assembled important representatives of the human sciences in order to discuss key issues and approaches involving these sciences. The Hanover Conference of 1934 though not formally sponsored by the SSRC, included social scientists active in the SSRC.
- ¹⁴ Kurt Danziger, *Constructing the Subject* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 164. See also David G. Winter and Nicole B. Barenbaum, 'History of Modern Personality Theory and Research', in Lawrence A. Pervin and Oliver P. John (eds), *Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research*, 2nd edn. (Guilford Press, 1999), pp. 3–27.
- ¹⁵ The modern anthropological concept of culture—as distinguished from notions of the 'high culture' of the educated elite—was aptly defined by Robert S. Lynd in 1939 as 'all the things that a group of people inhabiting a common geographical area do, the ways they do things and the ways they think and feel about things, their material tools and their values and symbols'. See Robert S. Lynd, *Knowledge for What?* (Princeton University Press, 1939), p. 19. Although Boas was not consistent in his use of the term culture, he, and especially his students, elaborated the culture concept with respect to such issues as the integration of culture, its determining impact on human behaviour, its historicity, and the plurality and relativity of cultures. See George W. Stocking, Jr., 'Franz Boas and the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective', in his *Race, Culture and Evolution* (University of Chicago Press, 1982), especially pp. 230–1. For the significance of the culture concept during the 30s, see Warren I. Susman, 'The Culture of the 30s, in his *Culture as History* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 150–83.
- ¹⁶ See especially Lawrence K. Frank, 'Society as the Patient', *American Journal of Sociology* 42, no. 3 (Nov 1936).
- ¹⁷ Lynd, p. 52; Lawrence K. Frank, 'Research in Child Psychology: History and Prospect', in Roger G. Barker, Jacob S. Kounin, and Herbert F. Wright (eds) *Child Behaviour and Development* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 1943), p. 43.
- ¹⁸ Margaret Mead (ed.), *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961, originally published by McGraw-Hill in 1937); John Dollard, *Criteria for the Life History* (New York: Peter Smith, 1949, originally published by Yale University Press in 1935).
- ¹⁹ The rest of my paper will be based on my archival research in the Social Science Research Council Archives, Rockefeller Archive Centre.
- ²⁰ Edward Sapir, 'Memorandum to the Social Science Research Council', From the Conference on Acculturation and Personality, Social Science Research Council Archives, Rockefeller Archive Centre (Hanover, Aug–Sept 1930).
- ²¹ 'Lake George Report', Social Science Research Council Archives, Rockefeller Archive Centre (Sept 1934), p. 15.
- ²² Archival materials on the Committee on Personality and Culture & the Committee on Social Adjustment, Social Science Research Council Archives, Rockefeller Archive Centre; Fisher, p. 185; Patterson, pp. 88–9, 94–5; Singer, pp. 43–57; Piker, pp. 11–13.
- ²³ See Annie Murphy Paul, *The Cult of Personality* (New York: Free Press, 2004).
- ²⁴ See Nikolas Rose, *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood* (Cambridge University Press, 1998) for the diffusion of 'psy' knowledge and technologies in modern societies. The field of personality and culture is, I would argue, closely related to (if not a branch of) such psy knowledge and technologies.

Brief Annotated Bibliography

- Danziger, Kurt. *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (Cambridge University Press, 1990). This book examines the construction of psychological knowledge during the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe and the United States. Chapter 10, 'Investigating Persons', is especially useful.
- Fisher, Donald. *Fundamental Development of the Social Sciences* (University of Michigan Press, 1993). A detailed history of the Social Science Research Council and its sponsorship by Rockefeller philanthropy.
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- Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage, 1979). Foucault deals with discipline in the context of prisons and other institutions in this book. Most interestingly, he traces the origins of the social sciences to disciplinary practices.
- Haraway, Donna J., *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1991). In chapter 3, Haraway elaborates on the contrast between a paradigm of the life sciences based on 'a bioscience of organisms' and a paradigm based on 'an engineering science of automated technological devices'. The former paradigm would encompass personality and culture, according to Haraway.
- Jordan, John M., *Machine-Age Ideology* (University of North Carolina Press, 1994). A highly useful treatment of the agenda of 'rational reform' associated with Rockefeller philanthropy during the early 20th century.
- Kay, Lily E., *The Molecular Vision of Life* (Oxford University Press, 1993). Kay deals with the emergence of molecular biology in this volume. She demonstrates how molecular biology was promoted by Rockefeller philanthropy as part of its overall effort to create a 'new science of man'.
- Rose, Nikolas, *Inventing Our Selves* (Cambridge University Press, 1998). Inspired by the work of Michel Foucault, Rose examines how knowledge and techniques associated with psychology have shaped our sense of selfhood.
- Ross, Dorothy (ed.), *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences, 1870–1930* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). Her own chapter in this volume makes an especially significant contribution to the explanation of how the modernist impulse influenced the human sciences. Other chapters, especially those by David A. Hollinger, Ruth Leys, Philip J. Pauly, and Olivier Zunz, are also useful.
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- Zunz, Olivier, *Why the American Century?* (University of Chicago Press, 1998). Account of the role of philanthropy and social science in fashioning the 'American Century'.