

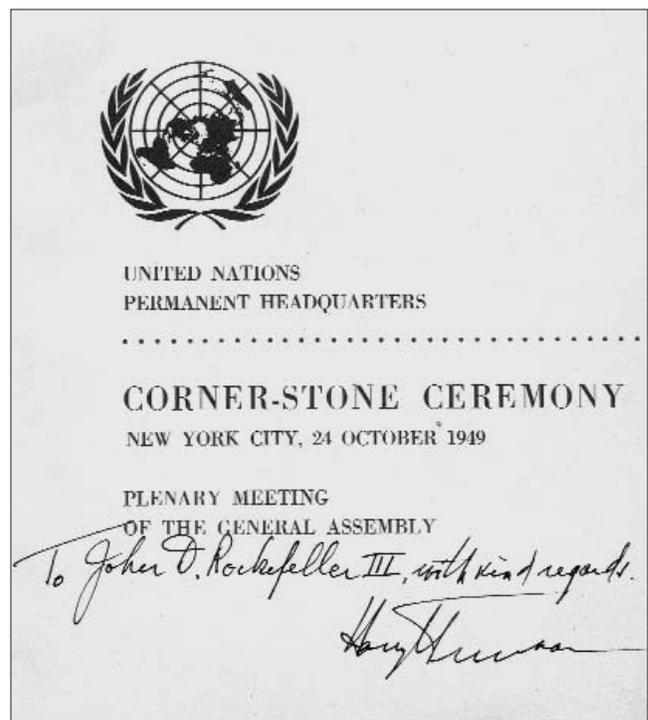
The Search for the “Capital of the World”

by Charlene Mires

In 1946, a gift of \$8.5 million from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (JDR Jr.) made it possible for the new United Nations organization to acquire a headquarters site along the East River in Manhattan. Now, nearly sixty years later, the landmark building in the heart of New York City may seem like the only possible location for the U.N. In fact, the gift from Rockefeller brought an end to a nationwide flurry of civic boosterism aimed at attracting the U.N. to any one of more than one hundred United States cities and towns. The gift, tied to the purchase of the property in Manhattan, also dissolved the popular notion that the U.N. would occupy a new “world capital” city somewhere in the United States.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr.’s gift to the U.N. often has been portrayed as a quickly-executed, dramatic act of philanthropy. Indeed, the final decision about the gift and the Manhattan site came together in just a few days in December 1946. However, as collections at the Rockefeller Archive Center show, Rockefeller family members were involved with the question of where to place the headquarters from the earliest days of the U.N., which held its organizational conference in San Francisco from April to June 1945. While attending that conference, Nelson A. Rockefeller, then Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, received information from representatives of several “world capital” hopefuls. In 1946, along with his uncle, Winthrop Aldrich, and a family associate, the architect Wallace K. Harrison, Nelson Rockefeller took an active role in the United Nations Committee of the City of New York, which sought to secure the headquarters for the city.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., meanwhile, received solicitations for his support for potential United



From the Rockefeller Family Archives

Nations headquarters sites. Even as the U.N. grappled with such difficult issues as the threat of nuclear weapons for the postwar world, the prospect of a new U.N. “capital of the world” captured the imaginations of civic boosters across the United States. Without invitation, cities including San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, and St. Louis, along with such seemingly isolated locales as the Black Hills of South Dakota, launched into a competition to host the new “world capital” city. JDR Jr.’s mail included appeals to support a location in the State of Maine or in Fort Tryon Park, the Manhattan park which he had developed and donated to New York City. From farthest afield came a letter promoting the idea of transforming Tuskahoma, Oklahoma – capital of the Choctaw Nation – into the “capital of the world.” Closest

to home, officials in Westchester County, location of the Rockefeller family estate at Pocantico Hills, were preparing their own proposal and expressed interest in Rockwood Hall, the property of the late William Rockefeller. In all cases, JDR Jr. diplomatically declined to become involved.

Meeting in London during the fall of 1945, the U.N. Preparatory Commission selected the United States over Europe for the headquarters site. (In doing so, the U.N. rejected Geneva, home of the failed League of Nations, to which JDR Jr. had donated a library.) Europe remained a factor, however, as Great Britain urged the U.N. to seek a U.S. headquarters site within the shortest possible travel times for European delegations. In January 1946, a committee of U.N. delegates inspected possible locations in suburban areas around Boston and New York. The committee's whirlwind tour of sites yielded two recommendations, both adopted by the U.N. General Assembly: First, the organization would establish a temporary headquarters in New York City; second, a permanent headquarters would be constructed within the adjacent counties of Westchester, New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut. Both decisions triggered a series of events which led to the Rockefeller gift at the end of the year.

Although officials in Westchester County, New York, as well as Stamford, Connecticut, had actively sought the U.N.'s attention, the prospect of making room for the "capital of the world" stirred sharp controversy among local residents, especially homeowners whose properties might be affected. With suburban homeowners mobilizing to fight the U.N., activism by Nelson Rockefeller, Winthrop Aldrich, and other members of the United Nations Committee for the City of New York sought to seize on the opportunity to secure the headquarters for the city. Under the leadership of Robert Moses, the parks commissioner of New York, the committee devoted its greatest efforts to promoting the Flushing Meadow site of the 1939-40 World's Fair as the future home of the United Nations. Nelson Rockefeller, JDR Jr., and others contributed funds to commission an architectural plan for a New York City "world capital" at Flushing Meadow.

The highly publicized resistance to the U.N.'s interest in the New York/Connecticut suburbs became an embarrassment for an organization which had been created to resolve disputes, not create them. The U.N. found temporary meeting places in New York at first at Hunter College, then divided its work between Lake Success on Long Island and the Flushing Meadow site favored by the New York committee. However, office space for delegations was difficult to find, some delegates disliked Flushing Meadow, and U.S. diplomats began to fear that the U.N. might flee the increasingly unpleasant circumstances and relocate to Europe.

In October 1946, Nelson Rockefeller intervened to secure needed office space which had been vacated by the federal government in the Empire State Building. He then left for Brazil to launch his new venture, the International Basic Economy Corporation (IBEC). Meanwhile, the U.N. embarked on its own new journeys, giving up on the New York suburbs and reopening the headquarters question. While Nelson Rockefeller pursued his work in Brazil and then attended the inauguration of Mexican President Miguel Alemán, the U.N.'s site committee came back with two new possibilities for the headquarters: San Francisco, a sentimental favorite as the site of the organizing conference, and Philadelphia. Both cities had been campaigning for the prize since early in 1945.

As Nelson Rockefeller returned from his Latin American trip, New York was on the brink of losing the United Nations. The Soviet Union had blocked selection of San Francisco, but Philadelphia remained the preferred choice of the U.N.'s new site selection committee. In Philadelphia, the U.N. had been promised not only a controversy-free welcome but also a no-cost site for the headquarters in the city's Fairmount Park. New York's boosters had little time and few options. Nelson Rockefeller conferred with his father about what might be done. The family pondered the prospect of giving Pocantico Hills over to the U.N., and JDR Jr. went so far as to begin drafting a letter – never sent – offering the estate.

Meanwhile, a new option presented itself in

New York. A real estate developer, William Zeckendorf, suggested to Robert Moses that he had an ideal site for the United Nations. He and his firm, Webb & Knapp, had assembled properties along the East River for a project labeled “X- City” – a Rockefeller Center-style “city within a city.” As portrayed in *Life* magazine in October 1946, Zeckendorf’s development would have included office buildings, apartment houses, a convention hall, opera house, hotel, heliport, and subterranean parking.

On December 9, 1946, with the offer of Pocantico Hills already partially drafted, JDR Jr. asked his son which site would be best for the U.N. In the father’s recollection, written shortly after the events, Nelson’s answer was quick and to the point: “The East River site. . . without any question.” Wallace Harrison tracked down William Zeckendorf at a Manhattan club, where they huddled over a map, outlined the properties to be acquired, and wrote the option for purchase directly on the map. Meeting the terms of the option, JDR Jr. agreed to give \$8.5 million to the United Nations for acquiring the site. Recalling the federal tax he had paid on his earlier gift to the League of Nations, Rockefeller stipulated that this new gift would have to be exempt from U.S. gift taxes.

Within days, the United Nations accepted John D. Rockefeller, Jr.’s gift, which secured the permanent headquarters site for New York. Stunned by the seemingly sudden developments, Philadelphia civic boosters claimed they had been robbed; they had prevailed in the site selection process, but the prize had been whisked away. Among the general public, some protested that \$8.5 million would be better spent on feeding the poor, helping veterans, or solving the postwar housing shortage. But many more praised Rockefeller for his generosity to the United Nations, which they saw as a necessary act to secure the future of the U.N. and prospects for a world at peace. Around the United States, meanwhile, in cities as sizeable as Chicago and Denver, and in towns as small as Claremore, Oklahoma, civic boosters set aside their visions for transforming their own home towns into the United Nations’ “capital of the world.” **RAC**

Lincoln Center, The Rockefellers, and New York City

by Julia L. Foulkes

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts on the west side of Manhattan accrued many names in its years of development: Athens on the Subway, Colossus on Broadway, Monumental Vampire, Monument to Culture, Tomb of the Future, Lincoln Square Folly, and, from President Dwight Eisenhower, A Mighty Influence. The enormity of the project – five buildings covering three “super” blocks housing opera, symphony, ballet, theater, a museum/library, and a school, costing \$185 million dollars at its completion in 1969 – could be expected to inspire a range of opinions about its worth. The epithets also expose the social and political issues entangled in the development of Lincoln Center, including the middling of highbrow culture, the controversies aroused by urban renewal plans, the changing demographics of cities, and the pervasiveness of Cold War tensions. With the enormity of such a project and all the accompanying challenges, why, then, did John D. Rockefeller 3rd, become its leader?

Rockefeller explained his interest in Lincoln Center both by the particularities of the historical moment and the legacy of the arts beyond those particularities. He reasoned that postwar society in the U.S. was in an era of prosperity, with more leisure time available to more people than at any other time in history. The arts served to fill leisure time fruitfully, and spiritually. For while economic needs were being met and scientific advances in medicine had increased longevity, people’s spirits were diminished, and the arts could satisfy yearnings for fulfillment on a deeper, more meaningful level. Rockefeller also noted that famous cities in history – Rome, Athens, Paris, Kyoto – were known for their arts, not their political, economic, or business successes.

Rockefeller was concerned with the international dimensions of the United States' power and recognized that most countries did not think highly of America's culture. In his view, Lincoln Center would feature the best of the performing arts from the U.S. and provide a place to present the best of the performing arts from countries around the world to U.S. audiences. For Rockefeller, then, the performing arts in the 1950s fused the specific needs of the historical moment with a long-lasting, worldwide legacy.



From the Rockefeller Family Archives

William M. Robbins, Clarence Francis and John D. Rockefeller 3rd at a campaign meeting for support of individuals for Lincoln Center, October 20, 1960.

The moment was also ripe for patrons of the arts to look to John D. Rockefeller 3rd. In 1953, Rockefeller wanted to become involved in a philanthropic project in New York City, hoping to contribute something to the city he loved and which had been home to much of his family. Although it is unclear who first brought the idea of an arts center to him, New York University began to research the possibility of a center of postgraduate training in the arts and had approached both John and David Rockefeller about supporting such an idea. This request probably prompted John to ask trusted people in the office of the Rockefeller brothers, such as Dana Creel and Lewis Strauss, Dean Rusk (president of the Rockefeller Foundation), and Wallace K. Harrison, the “family” architect, about whether the family should back an arts center.

There was even speculation about locations, such as north of the United Nations or in between Rockefeller Center and the Museum of Modern Art. But extended discussion about involvement in the arts began in 1954 when Lincoln Kirstein, then Managing Director of City Center, began conversing directly with John D. Rockefeller 3rd, trying to convince him to join its board.

City Center – and Lincoln Kirstein – are more crucial to the development of Lincoln Center than has been noted. Not only was City Center beginning discussions about creating a larger cultural center, perhaps associated with a university, but it already was a kind of model for what Lincoln Center wanted to become – a house that offered opera, drama, dance, and music that drew a varied audience of mixed income levels. The Metropolitan Opera, Philharmonic Society, and Robert Moses overshadowed the role of City Center, however, when, in 1955, these players set their sights on a plot of land available on Manhattan's west side for a new cultural complex. While the story of a new home for the Met and the ever-impending doom of Carnegie Hall, then home to the Philharmonic, are well-known, the years-long negotiations with City Center frame one of the crucial issues at the heart of the development of Lincoln Center: who are the arts for?

Mass vs. Class

“Mass vs. Class” was the way that Edgar B. Young, the associate of John D. Rockefeller 3rd most involved in the project, put it. City Center began as a city-sponsored institution in 1943 and pledged in its charter to maintain a low ticket price policy so as to attract the widest possible audience for its opera, theater, and dance. Lincoln Center had similar aims in terms of attracting a wide audience, but was less firm on its commitment to low ticket prices. Whether the arts served the “carriage” trade, the elite classes, or the masses was the debate that shaped Lincoln Center – in architecture, politics, fundraising, and choosing constituent companies. Critics of Lincoln Center, then and now, often dismiss it as an institution bound to elitist notions of art, perpetuating all the attendant social discriminatory practices of class politics in the United States.

But this understanding of Lincoln Center fails to grapple with the serious and concerted intention of its developers to subvert that notion of the arts. Exactly what ideals did Lincoln Center embody? And were those ideals realized?

In 1960, with only one building in progress, Lincoln Center began a promotional campaign. In part, this was a way to advance the steep fundraising campaign; it also demonstrated the centrifugal force of the ideals fueling the project. In one ad, a picture of two mimes, the text of the advertisement claimed that Lincoln Center “will be great theater, great music – and great fun,” a place “to look, to listen, to think, and to laugh.” One critic likened this “hawking” of the arts to “a side-show at the circus.” The way Lincoln Center promoters envisioned emphasizing mass over class was to broaden the audience base for opera, symphony, and theater, not change what kind of cultural offerings might be included.

The grand vision of Lincoln Center – the largest home and monument to the performing arts ever constructed – called for a populist appeal in a country dedicated to democratic ideals at a time when the arts were utilized as a weapon in the Cold War. Cultural programs financed by the State Department went to countries in Africa and Latin America teetering on the edge of communist rule. Featuring jazz by African Americans and abstract expressionism by visual artists, these programs proclaimed that art flourished in the individual freedom guaranteed by democracies. Lincoln Center played both sides of the cultural Cold War, first by claiming “high” culture for everyone, bringing beauty to a broader, larger audience. “The arts are not for the privileged few, but for the many,” Rockefeller wrote, words that adorn a plaque in his honor at Lincoln Center. Secondly, Lincoln Center aimed to best European countries, especially Germany and Russia, in their heralded traditions of opera, classical music, and dance.

In many ways, the ambiguous goals of democratizing the arts were best dramatized in the architecture of Lincoln Center. The three large theaters faced in to a plaza that was supposed to resemble the Piazza San Marco in Venice but has had much less success in drawing

the public to it. The complex sat up on a kind of pedestal, with steps leading up to it from the street. Walking to it required persistence in crossing up to eight lanes of traffic, including a lane for taxis and chauffeured cars at the front of the plaza. This design favored those arriving in cars, either in the lane at the front or the garage directly underneath. A “pedestrian island in a sea of cars,” one writer called it in 1962, prescient at the completion of the first building. The pedestal floated on cars, too, sitting atop a garage for 700 vehicles and one level to which the patrons of taxis and “private cars” had “sheltered access” to the theaters. Similarly, although the complex opened up to the intersection of Broadway and Columbus Avenues, it was closed off at its back and presented a cold, high wall to Amsterdam Avenue and the housing projects across the street from it. The box-like shapes of the theaters, covered in travertine marble that unified their facades, offered little warmth and invitation.

In many ways, Lincoln Center represented the endpoint of high modernism in architecture and prompted attacks from critics and architects of the emerging school of postmodernism. Even as early as 1958, Jane Jacobs ridiculed the design, claiming that “Lincoln Center is planned on the idiotic assumption that the natural neighbor of a hall is another hall.” She thought the city would be better served if cultural institutions were dispersed around the city, spreading improvement in a variety of neighborhoods. Isolated from pedestrians and the surrounding neighborhood, cold and imposing in its absolutist forms, Lincoln Center’s architecture reflected its emphasis in programming on traditional performing arts. “A Highbrow Ideal, Lincoln Center Is A Likely Middlebrow Monument,” Ada Louise Huxtable, the architecture critic of the *New York Times*, titled her review of it.

Lincoln Center’s status as a monument – beckoning worldwide attention to cultural aspirations of the United States – overwhelmed its neighborhood. As an urban renewal project, Lincoln Center incurred the social costs of many other such projects, demolishing homes and livelihoods of lower income people, many of whom were African Americans and Puerto

Ricans. The relocation process stirred some controversy, but less than other projects of greater magnitude, such as the Cross Bronx expressway. While the center paid some attention to its surrounding neighbors – repairing an arch of a church nearby, for instance – its primary focus lay beyond the neighborhood. No local or community people sat on its board; the very few representatives of the city on its committees were those with broader political power. And, perhaps more enduring, the masses Lincoln Center hoped to attract rarely encompassed the people removed from the site or those who remained nearby in low-income housing. The masses that gathered more attention from Lincoln Center promoters were those middle-class audiences who had recently moved to the suburbs. The people driving to the center from New Jersey received priority over those who lived on 66th Street who missed the small shops and well-known faces that had made the neighborhood.

Organizers for Culture

The architecture and organization of Lincoln Center displayed the grand – and contradictory – ideals of its developers. The 1960 photo album of John D. Rockefeller 3rd includes titles to the pictures and one in this album features a group of businessmen sitting around a large, dark mahogany square table, most likely at the Century Club in Manhattan, and entitled “Organizers for Culture.” To a large extent, these men created Lincoln Center; they had the power to push conservative, recalcitrant institutions like the Met to be a part of a shared endeavor and they had both the political and financial acumen to rally necessary partners, such as Robert Moses and Mayor Robert Wagner. Almost all of them, however, were businessmen with an avocation for the arts and little direct experience beyond spectatorship. The locution of the title is intriguing for its recognition of this: these men are organizers for culture – builders, promoters – rather than of culture – producers, impresarios. This may have given them an advantage in that they had managerial, practical minds instead of temperamental artistic souls. They spent considerable time number-crunching and focused

on the hard work of pulling together the huge amount of money needed and overseeing the long, difficult construction of so many buildings that had very precise and often conflicting specifications.

But they also spent a great deal of time consulting with people in the arts, relying on others’ visions of what such a complex might be. In fact, one of Rockefeller’s first moves was to hire a consulting firm, Day & Zimmerman, to conduct an extensive review of the project. He



From the Rockefeller Family Archives

Organizers for Culture, February 1960

then held two crucial meetings early in 1956, one with leaders in the performing arts, primarily businessmen and politicians, and the other with arts educators. Even in this attempt to draw upon others’ expertise, however, artists themselves were rarely included, and, when they were, rarely accorded much say. This tension between needing others’ opinions and yet spearheading the project was, perhaps, most manifest in the decision to have a different architect in charge of each building. “Six Architects in Search of a Center” was how a 1959 *New York Times* article characterized the struggle. Even though Wallace Harrison served as head architect, Rockefeller and others questioned his ability to corral the group – and to come up with a compelling design for the Met. Harrison’s lack of ideas, difficulty in working with the demanding Met staff, and inability to curb a ballooning budget led Rockefeller to contemplate firing him in 1961. Rockefeller stuck with Harrison, a decision that reflected many others he made when faced with choices that were equally problematic.

The debate of mass vs. class foundered on the determination to insure “quality” in architecture and the arts, and this became one of the ways that Lincoln Center retained an elitist element. Quality is an inherently elusive, ill-defined characteristic, and nearly impossible to quantify or plan. In Lincoln Center, it translated to grandiosity. The architecture of Lincoln Center, for example, may be a better harbinger of the idea of what culture should be rather than culture itself, or impressive in scale rather in content. Some of this criticism occurred during the first conversations about the center at the Rockefeller Foundation. The request for a significant grant to Lincoln Center – that would include the expenditure of capital funds – roused dissent in November 1956. Some officers were unconvinced of the main premise of Lincoln Center: that placing music, theater, opera, and dance next to one another would inspire greater creativity. They felt that such placement could, indeed, lead to more competition and hostility. Others questioned the need for multiple theaters rather than one multi-use hall and the prognosis that audience numbers for the performing arts were increasing steadily and, even, dramatically. And those dissenting hinted that treating this request from a member of the Rockefeller family with rubber-stamp approval would exert a heavy toll on trustee and officer morale. Despite these concerns, the foundation granted ten million dollars to Lincoln Center at the December 1956 board meeting. In its 1957 annual report describing the gift to Lincoln Center, the foundation recognized that “brick and mortar” were not what it sought to support, believing instead that the “dynamic functioning of the institution is the important thing.” But the foundation believed (or perhaps more accurately hoped) that “the interplay of related arts at the Center and the associated education work may well offer a unique stimulus to creative development.”

Brother's Helpers

If the Rockefeller Foundation's significant contribution rested, in part, on a Rockefeller being at the helm of the project, the supportive role of many Rockefellers provided even more

necessary aid in the realization of Lincoln Center. In money alone, Rockefeller family and foundations gave almost 45% of the cost of the entire project (with John D. Rockefeller 3rd, himself, providing about 7.5% of the total). As president of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in the early 1960s, Laurance S. Rockefeller ensured that Lincoln Center received a significant contribution of \$2.5 million in 1962 at the time when the fundraising campaign was suffering from repeated requests, ever-rising construction costs, and one building not yet fully complete. David Rockefeller solicited Greek shipping tycoons for contributions and also commissioned the artwork “Archangel” by Seymour Lipton for Philharmonic Hall.

Nelson Rockefeller, however, provided perhaps the most crucial aid. One of his first acts as governor of New York, was to host a dinner at his home on January 9, 1959, with Robert Moses, Mayor Robert Wagner, City Center officials, and his brother John. This meeting covered a range of issues, from the size of the park that Moses insisted upon on the southwest side of the complex to the financial contributions of the city and the state. Nelson pushed for the city to underwrite the cost of the library/museum building and, by 1960, had committed the state to paying for construction of the dance building to be used for the World's Fair of 1964-65 and named the New York State Theater. Throughout Nelson's years as governor, John consulted with him on Lincoln Center affairs. He asked for help in prodding Mayor Wagner to come through on the city's payment of the library building and relied heavily on Nelson and his assistant, William Ronan, in the final, bitter negotiations between City Center and Lincoln Center over the terms of its constituency.

A Rockefeller City

John D. Rockefeller 3rd, worried that Lincoln Center would become known as a Rockefeller venture, sought to dispel that idea throughout his years as leader of the project by giving money anonymously and consistently speaking of the other people, foundations, and, most of all, the institutions of arts involved. The support of the

Rockefeller family, particularly the brothers, was critical to the completion of Lincoln Center, however. In fact, I was most struck by how much the history of 20th-century New York City owed to the entire Rockefeller family, a debt that New Yorkers occasionally acknowledge. “This morning I took a taxi in front of the United Nations building to Lincoln Center to attend the Ground-Breaking Ceremony and on the way I passed Rockefeller Center. It was a trip which brought home to my mind very strongly how much the City of New York owes to you, your father and your brothers,” wrote Clark M. Eichelberger to John D. Rockefeller 3rd, on May 14, 1959. At that time, Eichelberger could have added Riverside Church, Morningside Heights, the Cloisters, and the Museum of Modern Art to the tally, and the World Trade Towers would join the list within fifteen years. It is a record of re-invention of the city that is surpassed perhaps only by Robert Moses. Lincoln Center serves as a window on to both the obvious and subtle ways in which the Rockefellers shaped New York City. As home, the base of business and politics, and a crossroads of international interests, New York City bears the indelible and long-lasting imprint of the philanthropy, activism, and ideals of the Rockefeller family. 

A Vision for the Life Sciences: Dixy Lee Ray, Paul Weiss, and René Dubos

by Erik Ellis

In the spring of 1961, at the illustrious but financially distressed Stazione Zoologica de Napoli, Paul A. Weiss offered a potential solution for the marine laboratory’s perennial cash woes that differed radically from the obvious alternative of reducing expenditures. Considering the proliferation of marine stations around the world, a development which had produced greater competition for patronage, Weiss argued that the best course of action would be to dramatically

increase the budget with the aim of making Naples, once again, “the international marine biological institute of the world.” Drawing a lesson from CERN (the European nuclear research consortium established in 1954, Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire), Weiss argued that, as science increasingly became a large-scale operation, biologists needed more than ever a state-of-the-art place for meeting in person, engaging in research and discussions, and cementing fruitful working relations. Never one to shy from the grand statement, Weiss believed that convincing patrons to build the Stazione Zoologica into the finest marine biological laboratory would be possible since “the life sciences, after all, are the most important of all.”

Paul Weiss (1898-1989), an eminent 20th century biologist, gained his professional distinction through studies of nerve development and regeneration, but he also concerned himself with numerous larger social, political, and institutional issues attendant to science. As in other professions, with status and accomplishment came the opportunity to play a pivotal role in the direction, emphasis, and conduct of the discipline. In this Weiss seemed to find considerable satisfaction.

From the late 1950s through the 1960s Weiss led a number of efforts to bring financial stability to marine laboratories in Europe. Although the Naples Zoological Station never did become the international center for zoological research, analogous to what CERN or the United States’ National Laboratory system represented for physics, the latter half of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of the life sciences as, arguably, the most important of all. While work for the marine stations of Europe had local and institutional implications, Weiss also labored for the intellectual and conceptual coherence of the discipline of zoology through leadership of international congresses of zoology. And, believing that science could help society successfully deal with the challenges of the modern age, Weiss considered it vitally important (as did many other scientists) to reach out to the general public. Over these years he assisted in designing exhibits for the World’s Fair of 1962,

held in Seattle, Washington, and subsequently provided guidance for the permanent Pacific Science Center that resulted from the Fair. Activities such as these, which engaged much of the scientist's time, provide a telling window into the culture of science and some of the ways in which scientists tried to organize and promote their disciplines.

Dixy Lee Ray (1914-1994), the primary subject of my dissertation, became involved in many of the same kinds of activities as Weiss over the course of her scientific career. Significant efforts to popularize science, to organize disciplines, and to manage the institutional structures of science brought her into varying degrees of contact with longtime Rockefeller University scientists Paul Weiss, Edward Tatum, and René Dubos. A study of Ray's scientific career, the networks of people with whom she worked, and with careful attention to the social and cultural milieu, offers a compelling portrait of the social significance and cultural motivations of science in the mid 20th century.

A marine biologist by training, Ray took advantage of the long-standing opportunities available to women scientists at Naples. Here she conducted much of her early research on the life-cycle and physiology of *Limnoria*, a wood-boring marine organism. Considering her graduate training at Stanford's Hopkins Marine Station, followed by her efforts to re-invigorate zoological research at the University of Washington's Friday Harbor Marine Laboratories, and then her time spent at Naples, it is little wonder she became, like Weiss, a staunch defender of the importance of zoological research stations. For Weiss, seaside research stations were pleasant and productive places for zoologists to work (primarily in the summer), while for Ray marine laboratories represented the primary base for doing marine biology – a discipline she strove to demarcate and legitimize. Yet from these different perspectives, Ray and Weiss worked together to organize and rejuvenate marine stations. Weiss could call upon his significant prestige, connections developed over a life-time of networking both in Europe and the United States, and the resource base of a private patron; Ray, a younger scientist – and a

woman – made up for her (relative) lack of scientific prestige through zeal, political maneuvering, and by securing influence with a new and significant patron of science, the National Science Foundation. Together these scientists (and a handful of other leaders of marine stations around the world) worked diligently to provide ample resources for the study of life, a venture both considered the most important of all.

Much of Ray's organizing work for science revolved around her effort to define the boundaries of marine biology. This had become an important issue following World War II as the federal government became the primary patron of science, and as scientists competed with each other for these resources. In this competition, a vague and ill-defined venture could seldom attract the means to prosper. For those who studied marine organisms – such as Ray – the lure of securing some of the money being offered to oceanographers became irresistible. Yet physical and chemical oceanography had long dominated in the United States, especially as the Cold War provided the primary rationale for government patronage. With this backdrop in mind, the time seemed ripe to promote biological oceanography. From the late 1950s onward, a handful of marine biologists made a concerted effort to define marine biology and biological oceanography as one and the same: the study of all life in the marine environment. For Ray and her colleagues, this broad definition allowed marine biologists to both clean up their conceptual identity and, at the same time, command a greater share of the resources being allocated to those sciences deemed important for American national defense.

As Ray defined and broadened the scope of marine biology, in the context of oceanography, Weiss worked to re-ground zoology as the study of the organism. The rise of molecular biology, with its spectacular achievements regarding the structure and function of fundamental biological components, had caused many biologists to question what the unifying focus of the life sciences should be. Was it important, any longer, to know the difference between a starfish and a zebra fish? For some the days of naming and classifying organisms should have long passed;

the advance into a truly scientific biology had begun with the study of genes, the elucidation of DNA, and the biochemical analysis of fundamental metabolic processes. However, for Weiss, the prospect of reducing biology to molecules, chemical transformations, or genetic mechanisms threatened to remove a natural unifying theme that could bring coherence to the study of life, from ecology to biochemistry. The individual organism, that traditional focus of the zoologist, must be re-emphasized, Weiss argued, if the life sciences were to remain the most important of all the disciplines. For the 1963 International Zoological Congress, held in Washington, DC (incidentally, at the exact same time as the March on Washington), Weiss and the other organizers structured the Congress around the theme of the “organism.” To Weiss, the success of this unifying theme was crucial “either to make or to break zoology” as the fundamental discipline within the life sciences. Symbolizing the return of an older tradition, but in a new context, organizers selected the Phoenix as the emblem of the congress. For these zoologists, this mythical creature fully captured their vision for the congress, namely “the revived union of the whole organism from the ashes of disintegration.”

Weiss and Ray worked cooperatively for the Naples Zoological Station (and other marine stations), on separate issues regarding the coherence of their particular disciplinary concerns, and then together again on science popularization. While most World’s Fairs prominently featured the wonders of science and technology, events of the late 1950s provided the United States with ample justification for generously funding an extravagant display of science. The successful launch of Sputnik in 1957 handed Seattle organizers the perfect justification for their pitch: in a competition for scientific and technical supremacy, Americans needed to know more science and more young Americans needed to be inspired to become scientists. A World’s Fair would be the best place to get them excited about the accomplishments, and promise, of science and technology. With the federal government funding a United States Science Exhibit, which would be the leading



Photo by W.H. (Bill) Houlton, Seattle, Washington. From the Rockefeller University Archives

René Dubos with the Arches of Science award from the Pacific Science Center, October 1966.

exhibit at the fair, American scientists rallied to represent their work. Among the many scientists involved in devising exhibits, Ray and Weiss contributed their expertise for those pertaining to the life sciences. Following what all observers considered to be a stunningly successful Fair, Seattle area community leaders converted the large Science Exhibit buildings into a permanent science education center and convinced Ray to direct what they were calling the Pacific Science Center. Ray, in turn, convinced a prestigious group of colleagues, including Weiss and the Nobel laureate Edward Tatum, to act as permanent scientific advisors, lending credibility, prestige, and their varied experiences in popularizing science to the present job. Weiss gave the task of communicating science to the general public a “high priority.” In a letter to his editor, Weiss expressed his general feelings in regard to the need for more thorough and life-long educational opportunities for Americans, such as those provided by the Pacific Science

Center. For education to be useful, he believed, there needed to be some kind of unifying theme, a unification that science could best provide. In short, the “primary objective must be to demonstrate to a large part of an uninitiated population the superiority of knowledge over ignorance in a variety of disciplines so as to endow ever more people at a much faster rate than population increase, with a deep faith in rational behavior and with disciplined guidelines for its exercise.”

The various projects undertaken by scientists – studying the development of nerve tissue; organizing and re-organizing research stations; devising themes for international congresses; creating exhibits to exemplify the fundamental knowledge of science – may seem quite disconnected. Yet for these scientists each activity justified and relied upon the other, all under the project of advancing and promulgating science. Faith in the power of science, and in the need for modern society to be fully versed in its methodologies, values, and disciplines, motivated scientists to communicate their science-based vision to the public at large. To these advocates of a modern humanism, the future lay in science. And to that end, as one biologist was known to say, “every citizen a scientist.”

René Dubos, the final link in this survey of the practice and culture of science, would have both agreed and disagreed with that statement. As a distinguished microbiologist at the Rockefeller University, he had built his career on the study of micro-organisms and the complex interactions that took place between organism and environment. Building on this fascination with the complexity of organismal behavior, Dubos argued in popular writings (and particularly during the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s) that the prospect of making scientists out of all humans was a narrow and simplistic goal. Rather, while modern society must depend on science and should become conversant with it, there was even more need to “supplement knowledge of things and of the body machine with a science of human life.” In other words, science needed to become more inclusive of traditional human values that, while not always rational, had become central to human existence through the evolution of life.

For his efforts to bring a timely scientific discourse to the general public, Dubos earned the Pacific Science Center’s “Arches of Science” award in 1966. His message to the public, as Weiss’s had been to his zoologist colleagues, affirmed the notion that the life sciences were the most important of all.

For Dubos, as for Weiss, Ray, and many others, the grand scientific project entailed much more than simply performing a set of laboratory or field experiments. The ultimate purpose of science in the modern world cut to the very heart of human existence and required that scientists convince the wider public of the importance of rational knowledge while continually organizing and re-envisioning the day-to-day practices upon which modern science had built its foundation. **RAC**

The Temperance Philanthropy of Harvey B. Spelman and JDR: The National Temperance Society and Publication House

by H. Paul Thompson, Jr.

It is well established that the Rockefellers and Spelmans were teetotalers. But little research on Spelman and Rockefeller philanthropy highlights their support of the 19th century temperance movement. My research into late 19th century southern black temperance led me to research Rockefeller’s southern philanthropy. While at the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) I discovered a close relationship between Rockefeller, his father-in-law Harvey B. Spelman, and the New York-based National Temperance Society and Publication House (NTS). It is likely that Spelman introduced Rockefeller to the NTS, and over the next twenty years Rockefeller became arguably the most important supporter of temperance literature distribution among the freedmen.

An October 1865 meeting in the offices of William E. Dodge’s Phelps, Dodge, & Company, gave birth to the National Temperance Society and Publication House. Dodge, one of the major

19th-century Christian philanthropists, chaired the meeting, which included Rev. Theodore Cuyler, pastor of Brooklyn's Lafayette Street Presbyterian Church, and publisher John N. Stearns. The NTS promoted the "cause of total abstinence from the use, manufacture, and sale of all intoxicating drinks as a beverage" by publishing and circulating literature, encouraging the use of the abstinence pledge, and "all other methods calculated to remove the evil of intemperance from the community." The constitution required members to pledge total abstinence from all intoxicating beverages, as well as to not traffic in or serve them to others. The NTS provided its literature free or at cost to individuals and organizations. Temperance reformers labeled the NTS's approach as "moral suasion" because the NTS's primary aim was to use a variety of arguments to persuade people, one-by-one, to become teetotalers. Although the NTS supported legal prohibition, it was non-partisan and never endorsed the Prohibition Party (formed in 1869) or called for a particular party to endorse prohibition.

The NTS had a president, treasurer, publishing agent, secretary, and a thirty-member Board of Managers. There was also a long list of vice-presidents (81 initially) whose actual involvement is unclear, although they obviously endorsed its mission. Dodge was the first president and served until his death in 1883.

Several NTS officers corresponded with Rockefeller. John N. Stearns served as secretary and publishing agent, among other positions, until his death in 1895. Following Dodge's death former Williams College president Mark Hopkins served as president for two years, and then Rev. Cuyler filled the office from 1885 to 1893. Harvey B. Spelman joined the Board of Managers in 1877, after having moved from Cleveland to Brooklyn to work for the Standard Oil Company. From 1879 to the spring of 1881 Spelman served as treasurer. According to the RAC records Spelman, Hopkins, Stearns, and Cuyler all corresponded with Rockefeller about donating to the NTS, and their letters highlighted the fact that his contributions supported the organization's work among the freedmen.

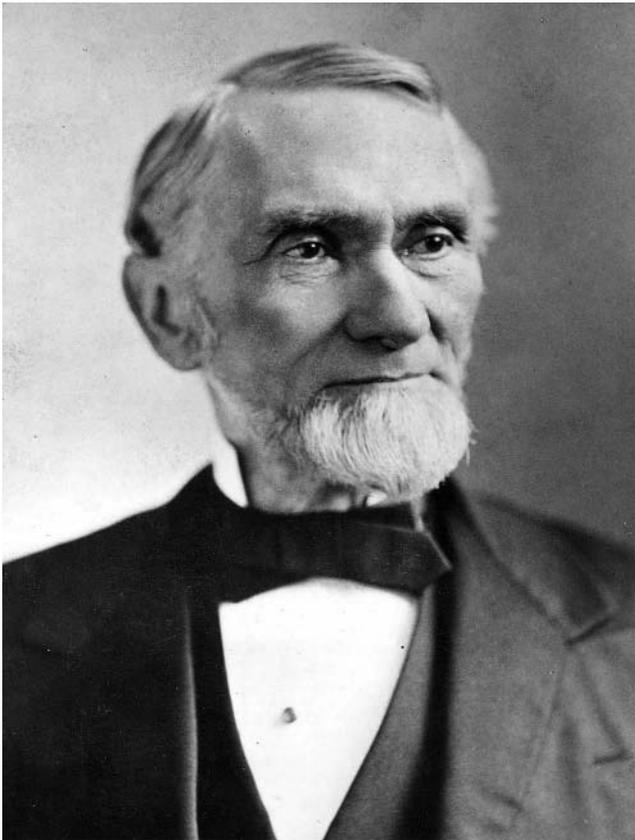
Like many other reform-minded people in

antebellum America, the Spelman family understood abolitionism and temperance as complimentary reforms. Their devout Congregationalist faith inspired their abhorrence of both slavery and intemperance. Before the Civil War, while living in Cleveland and other Ohio cities, the Spelmans' home was a "station" on the Underground Railroad. In honor of the Spelman family's commitment to blacks, the Atlanta Female Baptist Seminary, whose major benefactor was Rockefeller, was renamed Spelman Seminary in 1883. Harvey's wife, Lucy, eagerly marched and prayed with hundreds of others in the Woman's Crusade of 1874 in Brooklyn. By praying in front of and within saloons, and using other pressure tactics, between 1873 and 1874 American women persuaded many liquor purveyors to close their doors, at least temporarily. Inspired by their successes, in the fall of 1874 veterans of the crusade organized the famed Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

The Charities Index Cards and the papers of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. suggest that Rockefeller began his twenty-year relationship with the NTS as a result of Harvey Spelman. Rockefeller's initial donation – \$100 – coincides with the first year his father-in-law served as treasurer. In 1880 and 1881 Rockefeller sent his \$1,000 and \$500 "subscriptions," at Harvey Spelman's request, "to my order as treasurer."

In March 1885 President Hopkins requested a donation toward the Society's annual fundraising goal of \$10,000 for freedmen missions. Hopkins stressed the non-sectarian and non-partisan nature of the NTS, but for some reason Rockefeller ignored the appeal.

Later in 1885, after Rev. Cuyler became president, he also solicited Rockefeller for a donation. In his letter Cuyler underlined this sentence: "Our work among the Southern Freedmen also has great demands for help," but said the drive to raise the money was for "immediate needs." This letter, dated November 28, 1885, followed by a few days the successful prohibition referendum in Atlanta, Georgia, which had received much national press. Cuyler bragged that prohibition had prevailed in Atlanta



Harvey Buel Spelman

on a non-partisan basis, meaning neither political party took a stand on it. During the Gilded Age elections were closely contested, and both parties found prohibition too divisive to openly endorse. Industrialists and others committed to both the Republican Party and prohibition had to find other ways to advance their cause. NTS support of Atlanta's successful grass roots prohibition campaign proved the effectiveness of its non-partisan approach and strengthened the organization's appeal to Rockefeller. Within three days of Cuyler writing his letter, Rockefeller mailed a \$500 check.

During Cuyler's tenure as president Rockefeller began to donate regularly to the NTS. Early in 1886, apparently impressed with the organization, Rockefeller inquired about the progress of its fundraising. Cuyler informed him that by February they had received half of the \$10,000, and that J. P. Morgan and Cornelius Vanderbilt were among the donors. That year Rockefeller gave three more donations of \$250. In one of

Cuyler's 1886 letters he made sure to brag about the Georgia governor's claim that without NTS literature the legislature would never have approved the "local option" bill that made possible the Atlanta referendum. Rockefeller's relationship with the NTS deepened in 1886, as he attended the annual meeting/ anniversary celebration and was made a vice-president. When the Society hosted receptions for visiting temperance reformers, Rockefeller always received an invitation.

Cuyler annually solicited Rockefeller for donations and updated him on fundraising efforts. His letters frequently included nostalgic references to Harvey Spelman. In 1887 he said that Rockefeller's donations the previous year aided the Society's "important missionary work in the South," and in 1889 he called Rockefeller's "big heart and generous purse" the "driving wheels" of the NTS.

The NTS had been supporting temperance missionaries among the freedmen since 1882. They spoke primarily at schools, churches, and ministerial meetings. Starting in 1886 they began using southern blacks as missionaries. The most acclaimed black missionary was the African Methodist Episcopal Zion educator and minister J. C. Price of North Carolina. Price was so highly regarded that the NTS arranged a ten-day tour of northeastern cities for him to address mostly white audiences. A reception held in Price's honor at the Broadway Tabernacle in Manhattan on January 20, 1887 climaxed the tour. Rockefeller attended the reception, and three months later, Stearns asked him to increase his subscription. Stearns said it would go towards \$100 worth of books for Spelman Seminary and supporting Price's speaking tours in Tennessee and North Carolina, two states preparing for prohibition votes. The next month Rockefeller donated \$500. In Stearns' thank you letter he discussed further how the money would spread temperance among the freedmen.

Rockefeller's donations peaked between 1888 and 1897, when he donated \$1,000 annually, in four equal quarterly installments. But he went even further and offered President Cuyler help whenever the Society "got into a pinch." The

Society's liberal literature distribution program and lackluster fundraising resulted in perpetual budget deficits. By its 25th anniversary, in 1890, the NTS had a \$4,000 debt, and Cuyler asked Rockefeller to pay it off before the anniversary. Rockefeller volunteered to pay \$1,000 of it if Cuyler could get others to pledge the rest, which he did.

But financial problems continued, and within two years the Society had accumulated a \$10,000 debt. On November 7, 1892 Cuyler asked Rockefeller to help "save our noble society from disaster" with a \$5,000 contribution on top of his regular subscription. Concerned about the ongoing need for extra donations, Rockefeller asked his advisor Frederick T. Gates to look into the organization's finances. Gates reported favorably on the Society and its financial affairs, except for its fundraising. He found the NTS raised \$9,000 in 1892, and that Rockefeller's annual \$1,000 gift made him the single largest donor. The problem, according to Gates, was that "one after another the old friends and supporters of the Society have died out and the giving constituency of the society [is] gradually diminishing. No adequate efforts have been put forth to secure the interests of new men."

Gates counseled that a \$5,000 gift would make the NTS too dependent on Rockefeller, so Rockefeller agreed to give \$2,500 if the rest could be raised from others. Within two months, (by January 24, 1893) the NTS raised the money and received Rockefeller's coveted check.

Following Cuyler's resignation in 1893 and Stearn's death in 1895, correspondence between the Society and Rockefeller ceased. Gates' assessment proved accurate, for by the mid 1890s the NTS had entered into a long period of decline, even though Rockefeller's contributions continued until 1897. Undoubtedly sensing the decreasing activity and effectiveness of the NTS, from 1898 and 1902 he halved his annual donation. The last year Rockefeller gave to the NTS was 1902. Between 1879 and 1902 Rockefeller had given \$19,877.55 to the National Temperance Society. Between Dodge's death in 1883, and 1900, Rockefeller was probably the largest single NTS benefactor. Although during

these years Rockefeller gave larger donations to the Cleveland Non-Partisan WCTU and the Ohio Anti-Saloon League, neither of these organizations had the national status or reached African Americans like the NTS. The people who comprised the NTS represented a wide variety of positions on temperance, but the correspondence suggests that its non-partisan and moral suasion positions were particularly appealing to Rockefeller, as well as the opportunity to help make freedmen teetotalers. Total abstinence from intoxicating beverages was not just a personal habit of the Spelmans and Rockefellers; they genuinely believed that widespread teetotalism would make America a better place, and like so many other endeavors, they were willing to invest their time and money to that end. RAC

Personality and Culture and Rockefeller Philanthropy

by Dennis Bryson

During the 1920s and 1930s, a significant impetus was given to the study of personality and culture by various facets of Rockefeller philanthropy, especially by means of its sponsorship of a series of projects conducted under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC). Themes pertinent to personality and culture were expressed 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 1930-31, 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 organized the Seminar on the Impact of Culture on Personality, held at Yale University in 1932-33 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 1930s in formulating the personality and culture approach, as we will see below. Finally, the Hanover Conference of 1934, organized by Frank with General Education Board funding, also elaborated the personality and culture approach. Among those attending this conference were Dollard, Margaret Mead, Mark A. May, Robert S. Lynd, and W. Lloyd Warner.

During my recent research visit to the Rockefeller Archive Center, I focused on the establishment and activities of the SSRC's Committee on Personality and Culture from its origins in 1930 to its discontinuance in 1940. Although the committee was not successful in 1934 in convincing the SSRC to adopt its proposed comprehensive program, the committee nevertheless did much to launch personality and culture as a major social scientific approach. The personality and culture committee went through two incarnations: first, as the Advisory Committee on Personality and Culture (February 1931 to September 1934), and, second, as the Research Committee on Personality and Culture (October 1934 to September 1940).

Prominent U.S. and Canadian social scientists and specialists were involved in both incarnations of the committee. Members of the Advisory Committee included Bott, who acted as the chair during its whole four-and-a-half-year span of existence, Canadian psychiatrist Clarence M. Hincks, Columbia psychologist Robert S. Woodworth, anthropologist W. Lloyd Warner, Chicago psychologist Charles H. Judd and Sapir. Members of the Research Committee included psychologists Mark A. May (who chaired it during its span of existence), Gordon Allport, and Gardner Murphy; anthropologists Robert Redfield, Melville J. Herskovits, and Ralph Linton;

and sociologists Thorsten Sellin and E. H. Sutherland. Margaret Mead and John Dollard were employed as research assistants for a subcommittee of the Research Committee. A number of important publications resulted from the Research Committee's activities, including *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples* (1937), edited by Mead, and Dollard's *Criteria for the Life History* (1935). The Advisory Committee on Personality and Culture originated in a special conference called on this topic at the 1930 Hanover Conference. A number of major figures in psychology, psychiatry, and the social sciences attended the Conference on Personality and Culture, which took place from 29 August to 2 September 1930. These included anthropologists Edward Sapir and Robert Redfield; psychiatrists Harry Stack Sullivan and Adolf Meyer; and psychologists Mark May, John Anderson, Floyd Allport, Gardner Murphy, and Bott.

The Conference on Personality and Culture was an attempt to explore interdisciplinary approaches pertinent to the study of personality in its inter-relationship to culture. Robert S. Lynd, then secretary of the SSRC, saw the field as a "melting-pot" in which research in sociology, cultural anthropology, and social psychology could interact. Lively discussion and debate characterized the conference, as several research proposals were considered and presentations were given by Murphy, Anderson, Sullivan, Frank, and others on topics pertinent to personality and culture. The participants in the conference adopted a memorandum written by Sapir that recommended that the SSRC set up a "Committee on the Interrelationships of Personality and Culture," and sent it on to the Council for consideration.

The actual achievement of the committee – which was ultimately designated the Advisory Committee on Personality and Culture – was, until its discharge in September 1934, to focus the attention of a number of prominent North American social scientists on the field of personality and culture and to stimulate debate and discussion among them with regard to the orientation of this field and its meaning for social science and social policy. To be sure, new

members were added to the original committee – as it expanded from the initial core of three to seven members. Moreover, sociologist William I. Thomas was employed to write a comprehensive report on personality and culture during 1932-33. Furthermore, a series of meetings and conferences were called to discuss and formulate the committee’s program, and a number of memoranda and reports were written. Beyond this, however, the Advisory Committee on Personality and Culture seemingly accomplished little. Nevertheless, the importance of this committee with respect to formulating and promoting the field of personality and culture should not be underestimated.

Themes pertinent to the field of personality and culture were elaborated in detail in the conference discussions, reports, and memoranda associated with the Advisory Committee on Personality and Culture and its activities. These materials provide considerable insight into the personality and culture approach as it was formulated during the 1930s by social scientists affiliated with the SSRC. Most importantly, contrary to the standard account of the emergence and trajectory of personality and culture, there was little emphasis on such concepts as “basic personality structure,” “modal personality,” or “national character” in the deliberations held in the context of the Advisory Committee’s activities. The stress was rather on what anthropologist Clark Wissler referred to as “the problem of the individual and individual differences.” That is, individual variability and difference within various cultural contexts, both modern and “primitive,” was emphasized. To be sure, there was an interest in the issue of how pervasive particular personality traits were in given societies – but this interest did not result in the formulation of such comprehensive concepts as “basic personality structure,” which seemed premised upon a sense of the relative homogeneity of personality traits and types within the societies in question. There was also an interest in the adjustment or lack of adjustment of the individual’s personality with respect to the cultural patterns prevailing in the community – but this did not seem to imply that personality

variation was in itself uncommon or undesirable. Given the stress on the individual, it is not surprising that during the 1930s, SSRC social scientists referred to “personality and culture,” not “culture and personality.”

The dichotomy between the normal and the abnormal was challenged by the social scientists involved in the SSRC efforts in personality and culture. Notwithstanding this challenge, however, I would argue that these social scientists maintained a “normalizing approach” on personality. For example, they were very much concerned with measuring personality and its development with regard to an array of different dimensions – in terms of the development of its physical and physiological aspects, mental skills and aptitudes, psychological qualities and traits, propensity for various modes of social interaction, “attitudes” towards social and political institutions, and so on – and coordinating these varied measurements in order to comprehend the individuality of the person. Nevertheless, they did not see the normal and the abnormal as polar opposites. Rather, human traits and qualities were seen as spread over a continuum and possessing a certain significance insofar as they affected the adjustment of the individual to his or her environment. As W. I. Thomas put it in his 1933 report to the committee: “It is . . . desirable that no formal separation should be made of the so-called ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ aspects of personality and behavior. The two phases should be taken as aspects of a process and as representing different degrees of adjustment.” Along such lines, though considerable emphasis was placed on the normal, everyday aspects of personality and behavior, there was also a strong interest in dealing with problems posed by various forms of deviancy – such as juvenile delinquency and mental disorder. The psychiatrist was to play an important role in the study of personality and culture, and psychoanalytic concepts and theories were to be scrutinized and tested in such study.

For SSRC social scientists, the focus of the study of personality and culture would be on the interdisciplinary approach to the behavior and development of the personality within its cultural

settings – preferably within the context of small-scale communities. Accordingly, it was proposed that teams including cultural anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists go into communities – such as those of the Navajo in the southwest or into immigrant communities in urban centers – and intensively study personality over relatively long spans of time within these communities. Personality and culture was thus seen as having important affinities to the study of communities conducted by sociologists such as W. Lloyd Warner and the Lynds, on the one hand, and to the field of child development as it was being elaborated in the child welfare centers established during the 1920s, on the other hand. Instructively, both kinds of research endeavors were being sponsored by Rockefeller philanthropy during this period.

In September 1934, the Advisory Committee on Personality and Culture presented a report to the SSRC outlining an ambitious program focused on the study of personality within the context of small-scale communities. Citing financial considerations, the Problems and Policy Committee of the SSRC rejected the program outlined in the report. The Advisory Committee on Personality and Culture was thanked for its efforts and discharged. Nevertheless, the SSRC decided not to abandon the field of personality and culture. A Research Committee on Personality and Culture was constituted to follow up the efforts of the Advisory Committee. The Research Committee was to pursue a new plan of action. Instead of attempting to pursue research within the entire field of personality and culture, it would focus on specific segments of the field and attempt to fill in the gaps in existing knowledge and move forward on the formulation of new knowledge on the “frontiers” of the field. Work in the field of personality and culture was thus to be continued under the auspices of the SSRC, but not on the scale envisioned by the report.

The original members of the Research Committee on Personality and Culture, appointed in October 1934, were psychologists Mark May, Gordon Allport, and Gardner Murphy. The new committee was to pursue a highly systematic approach to research. Subcommittees were to be

constituted in order to address specific and well-delineated fields within the overall field of personality and culture. Each of the subcommittees was instructed as follows: “(1) to make a critical examination of what research has already been done in its field, an analysis of the state of knowledge, (2) to formulate an outline of promising frontiers of inquiry in relation to their center of interest, and (3) to list immediately feasible research problems needed to fill gaps and to advance the frontiers.” Eventually, several subcommittees were established – on competitive-cooperative habits, acculturation, delinquency, and, lastly, on cultural hybrids. The chair of each subcommittee was designated as a member of the central Research Committee. Research assistants – drawn from various disciplines in order to encourage interdisciplinary approaches to problems – would assist the subcommittees. The plan for a new, systematically-organized Research Committee seems to have been effective. During its six-year span of existence, it spawned a number of publications, including *Criteria for the Life History* (1935), by John Dollard; *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples* (1937), edited by Margaret Mead; and *Acculturation: The Study of Culture Contact* (1938), by Melville J. Herskovits.

The Subcommittee on Competitive-Cooperative Habits – consisting of May, Allport, and Murphy – was the first subcommittee to be established; indeed, it began work in October 1934, simultaneously with the Research Committee itself. The issues addressed by the subcommittee seemed especially pressing during the depression years. In the aftermath of the stock market crash in the fall of 1929, the system of competitive capitalism seemed to have collapsed – and cutthroat competition seemed to intensify with the deflationary pressures of the early years of the depression. For many of the social scientists of the SSRC – as with many Americans in general – a new cooperative industrial system and culture was needed. Thus, according to a report written by May: “In the Western World competition seems to have produced a rich technologized culture which now, because of radically altered conditions, can be enjoyed by men only if they

learn to displace certain no longer productive competitive practices with new, as yet only partially discovered, cooperative ways of living.”

Various research topics were pursued by the research assistants involved in the Subcommittee on Competitive-Cooperative Habits. Barbara Burks of the University of California at Berkeley was assigned the task of examining and assessing the research literature on children from infancy to adolescence. Leonard Doob of the Yale Psychology Department dealt with quantitative studies of competitive and cooperative habits among adults. The sociological approach to competitive and cooperative behavior was assigned to two Harvard sociology graduate students (J.H. Useem and C.Q. Berger). Another Harvard graduate student (D.W. Oberdorfer) examined the literature on economic cooperatives in the U.S. and elsewhere. J. W. Boldyreff, also a Harvard graduate student, was assigned the field of Russian studies. Most importantly, John Dollard of the Yale Institute of Human Relations examined competitive and cooperative behavior in the context of life history materials, while Margaret Mead of the American Museum of Natural History studied the literature relevant to such behavior in primitive cultures. Their books were the result of these efforts. On the basis of the reports submitted by the research assistants, Mark May and Leonard Doob prepared two documents: a mimeographed memorandum and a monograph. The mimeographed memorandum summarized the literature reviewed by the assistants and provided a list of research projects and problems; the monograph presented a “conceptual system” based on the work of the assistants. The monograph was published as *Competition and Cooperation*, by Mark A. May and Leonard Doob, SSRC Bulletin No. 25, in 1937.

The two other major subcommittees of the Research Committee on Personality and Culture – the Subcommittee on Acculturation and the Subcommittee on Delinquency – also addressed what were perceived as significant social problems of the day. The Subcommittee on Acculturation was established in January 1935;

it consisted of three anthropologists: Robert Redfield (chairman), Melville J. Herskovits, and Ralph Linton. The focus of this committee was on the impact of the cultural contact of diverse groups and subsequent cultural change on the individuals which constituted these groups. With the aid of a research assistant, this committee examined the anthropological literature on acculturation, especially as it concerned the influence of acculturation on the personalities and behavior of individuals. The committee also expended effort on the clarification of basic concepts, including acculturation, assimilation, disorganization, and deculturalization. Two books eventually resulted from the committee’s work: Herskovits’ book on acculturation and Linton’s *Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes* (1940).

The Subcommittee on Delinquency was constituted in March 1935 and consisted of sociologists Thorsten Sellin (chairman) and E. H. Sutherland. The committee decided not to attempt an exhaustive review of the massive literature on delinquency, but to focus on surveys dealing with the causes of crime. In examining such surveys, the committee discovered much inconsistency with respect to explanations of the causes of crime. The committee also worked on the clarification and definition of basic concepts, believing that without “a logically consistent set of scientific concepts,” progress could not be made in research. One major publication resulted from the work of this committee: Thorsten Sellin’s *Culture Conflict and Crime*, published in 1938 as SSRC Bulletin No. 41.

The Research Committee on Personality and Culture became increasingly inactive during the late 1930s. The Subcommittee on Competitive-Cooperative Habits was discharged in September 1937; the subcommittees on acculturation and delinquency were discontinued in July 1938. A new subcommittee, dealing with “cultural hybrids,” was established in March 1937. It consisted of only one member, Louis Wirth, and its activities seem to have been limited. In September 1940, the Research Committee

on Personality and Culture was officially discontinued.

The SSRC committee that came to be seen as the successor of the Committee on Personality and Culture focused on social adjustment – a key concept elaborated by the personality and culture committee. Deliberations on forming a new committee concerned with social adjustment were already underway during the spring of 1939. Mark May was involved in these deliberations. On 20 April 1939, he wrote to Donald Young of the SSRC that he felt that the Council should drop the rubric “personality and culture” and find some other means by which to address the “specific frontier problems that lie overlapping psychology and anthropology” – including psychological studies of the social interaction of people in primitive cultures, community studies such as those conducted by the Lynds and Warner, a study of families occupying government housing projects, and perhaps the study of psychological issues pertinent to social security. Shortly thereafter, May wrote a memorandum to the SSRC in which he suggested that these topics could perhaps be addressed by Council efforts in the field of social adjustment. Along such lines, Young, in a letter written to Clark Hull in January 1940, indicated that the best way to obtain funding for interdisciplinary research oriented toward sociology, cultural anthropology, and social psychology would be to address problems of social as well as research relevance. Social adjustment, it seemed to Young, was a convenient rubric under which to advance such efforts.

The SSRC’s Committee on Social Adjustment was constituted in the aftermath of these deliberations. Its initial members were sociologist Ernest Burgess, eugenicist and administrator Frederick Osborn, and psychologist A. T. Poffenberger; anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn joined the committee in 1942. The committee dealt with issues pertinent to criminology, adjustment to old age, the adjustment of the physically handicapped, the development of special aptitudes, heredity and environment, and psychoanalytic concepts. 

About the Contributors

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From the Rockefeller Family Archives

Groundbreaking ceremonies, May 14, 1959, for Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, one of the many New York City landmarks that Rockefeller family members have helped to build. See the articles on page 1 and page 3.

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