Milton C. Winternitz and the Yale Institute of Human Relations: A Brief Chapter in the History of Social Medicine

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This paper considers the antecedent events that led to the development of Yale's Institute of Human Relations, the program of interdisciplinary research and teaching established, and the principal protagonists, James Rowland Angell, President of Yale University, and Milton C. Winternitz, Dean of the School of Medicine, both of whom were committed to the concept that medicine is a social science.

“We will never reach the point where we really govern ourselves and master the world until the universities are made centers of communities; until they become civically constructive.”

— René Sand
“The Rise of Social Medicine”
Modern Medicine 1:189, 1919

Some time back I published a paper which considered the early years of the Yale Department of Public Health, 1915–1925 [1]. I now plan to consider a later period, 1925–1935, and examine the Institute of Human Relations, a controversial entity comprising the graduate Division of Psychology, the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Hygiene, the Division of Research in Economics, Sociology, and Government, and the Division for Research in Child Welfare and Development. At one time or another in its history, the Institute has been referred to as “a revolutionary advance,” an innovative bold step” [2], on the one hand, and on the other as an interdepartmental stew [3], an insignificant froth [4], a concocted scheme far ahead of its time [5], something analogous to Leacock’s gallant warrior “who mounted his steed and galloped furiously in all directions” [6].

This episode in the history of the medical school is interesting as it presents all the elements of drama: an intelligent, gifted cast of players, the emergence and implementation of an innovative plan, large sums of money, humor, and disappointment. To tell the story is also to examine the medical school’s Dean, Milton C. Winternitz, “that steam engine in pants,” as Yale's President, James Rowland Angell, called him half in jest and half in earnest [7].

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Milton C. Winternitz was certainly someone worth knowing. (See Fig. 1.) Liebow and Waters describe him as "a vital, vivid man, an intense of fountainhead of energy, an inexhaustible generator of ideas and constant stimulator of the imagination" [8]. Winslow, a life-long friend, confidant, and ally, speaks of Winternitz's "leaping vision" and of the miracles that he achieved [9], while others, freely acknowledging Winternitz's contributions and accomplishments, describe him less lovingly as a "martinet," someone who "taught by the method of terrorism," a "terrible little guy who dissipated the financial resources of the school on impractical schemes" [10].

Winternitz was elected Dean in 1920, a time when the school faced its most "disheartening prospects" [11]. The outlook was as unpromising and depressing as could be imagined [12]. (See Fig. 2.) But within a few years of his arrival, Winternitz steered the school in a direction leading to excellence and financial stability. His accomplishments were numerous and momentous and a mere listing reveals Winternitz's whole achievement. He first brought the medical school "into" the university by organizing medical school departments as university departments, opening the medical school and graduate school to each other's students, and assuring that medical faculty met the academic standards of the university; he established the full-time system; found new sources of money for buildings and facilities; designed an "elastic" curriculum, one that "liberated" the students' time and was adaptable to individual abilities and needs; established in addition the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Hygiene, a School of Nursing, and institutes devoted to Psychobiology and Neurology; and, all the while, succeeded in assembling a first-rate faculty that elevated Yale to the front rank of medical institutions in the nation [13].

Trained at Johns Hopkins, a disciple of William Henry Welch, and a dedicated biomedical scientist, Winternitz's complex personality also revealed a social dimension that is often overlooked when considering the medical school. It is Winternitz's
broader, social ideas, which emerged in the 1920s and which found expression and partial fulfillment in the Human Welfare Group and its most controversial and publicized component, the Institute of Human Relations, that are the subject of this paper.

The Human Welfare Group, incorporating the schools of nursing and medicine, the New Haven Hospital, New Haven Dispensary, and the Institute of Human Relations [14], derives from three specific but interrelated roots. The first is the emergence of the social sciences as an academic discipline, including the principle that medicine itself is a socially significant science [15]; the second from the programs of the National Research Council established during and immediately following World War I [16]; and the third from an emerging concept having antecedents in Western Europe which may be called "Social Medicine" [17], a concept further embellished in the 1920s by educators as divergent in training and outlook as Lewellys Barker [18], Richard Cabot [19], and C.-E.A. Winslow [20] and which appeared as medical school programs in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s [21].

The story of the ravelling of these three roots will take us beyond our allotted time, but, stated simply, emerges as principles established first at the University of
Chicago at the turn of the century: that interdisciplinary social scientific research would promote a better understanding of society and help resolve some of its main problems such as waste, inefficiency, and societal and personal maladjustments [22]; that the social sciences would force the university to extend its resources and consider community and societal problems of a practical nature [23]; and that the university, to achieve such ends, would have to break down the barriers erected between departments, programs, and schools [24].

World War I, said the Chicago social scientists, resulted from the breakdown of the political and social agencies designed for the controlling of international relations; similarly, they argued, there was an apparent breakdown in human relations. Some form of "human engineering" was necessary to address and resolve these failures. The question asked was: "How can society deal with the problems of its own organization so that the proportion of human happiness and satisfying accomplishment may be higher, the proportion of human suffering and failure be lowered" [25]?

This question and ones similar to it were addressed by social scientists in academe, in the Social Science Research Council, and in the National Research Council. The need, wrote Angell, who prior to his Yale appointment had been associated with both the University of Chicago and the National Research Council, was for a more "penetrating and usable knowledge of human nature" [26]. Given this rather expansive agenda, society itself was the object of study and, as it turned out, Yale was to be its academic locus.

II

Why Yale? In the early 1900s, Yale was a quaint and venerable institution, but not as distinguished as it purported to be. George Pierson, writing about the Yale of the 1920s, suggested that its core and justification was not learning or books. You did not come to Yale for an education; instead, you came for the real things that Yale offered: contacts, polish, and a sense of style [27]. Other than the Sheffield Scientific School, Yale's schools of medicine and law were merely adequate. And it is into this anachronistic and smugly patrician Yale that Angell appeared as its President, Winternitz as its medical school dean, and Robert Maynard Hutchins as Dean of the Law School.

Angell was an outsider who throughout his tenure as President considered himself a "raw interloper" [28]. He was born in Vermont but spent his formative years in Ann Arbor, where his father served as President of the University of Michigan. Angell attended some of the most prestigious academic institutions in the United States and Europe; was a student or colleague of James, Royce, Dewey, Wundt, Ebbinghaus, and Paulsen; advanced "functionalism" as a school of psychologic thought [29]; served as professor, chairman, Dean, and Provost at the University of Chicago, Chairman of the National Research Council, and President of the Carnegie Corporation, the holding organization for all the Carnegie philanthropies. Angell was only the second non-Yale man to be appointed a Yale President and, although eminently qualified, he remained for some time a "stranger," winning few friends with his proposals to raise academic standards, develop graduate education, and curb the excesses of intercollegiate football. He lacked, what some said with a straight face, the "patrician arrogance" of the Yale aristocracy and he never touched the university as did his more popular and open predecessor, Arthur Twining Hadley. (See Fig. 3.) Nevertheless, Angell's tenure at Yale is considered by most historians as the most important for the future development of modern Yale [30].
Winternitz we have already met, but Hutchins, whose part in the story is briefest, deserves mention. Whereas Angell was "distinctly Midwestern," Winternitz a "martinet," Hutchins was the quintessential Yale man. He received his Yale bachelor of arts degree in 1921, was a member of Wolf's Head, the debating team, the Elizabethan Club, Alpha Delta Phi, and was elected Class Orator. Following his commencement, he served for a year as headmaster of a private school in Florida and was then called to succeed the Reverend Anson Phelps Stokes as Secretary of the University, a post he assumed when he was twenty-three years old. A year later he succeeded Thomas Swan as acting dean of the law school and, two years later, was named its Dean. When Max Mason stepped down as President of the University of Chicago, Hutchins was named his successor, becoming thereby the youngest president of a major university and a legend in the history of American higher education.

How Angell strengthened the university, Winternitz the medical school, and Hutchins the law school is worthy of three distinct papers. Each worked miracles and the Human Welfare Group and its Institute of Human Relations was to be their greatest success. As it turned out, however, it was the only miracle they were unable to achieve.
Angell was the prime mover. As chairman of the National Research Council (NRC), he was dedicated to interdisciplinary research and the setting of national agenda, addressing issues such as energy, transportation, forest preservation, and food production. He established NRC divisions of anthropology and psychology, biology and agriculture, chemistry and chemical technology, and industrial relations [31]. At Yale, Angell also fostered the idea of collaborative research. There were societal problems apparent in “every corner of the corporate body of human society.” It was the university's obligation to address societal issues instead of ignoring them by turning inward. Universities may be slow to change, he said in his Yale inaugural address, but they are still “plastic.” They are “living organisms subject to the principles of evolution” [32].

Angell's university was an integral part of the society it served; it could not be oblivious to the necessities of the social order.

The university must constantly face, and honestly deal with, the changing obligations which arise from shifting circumstances, and it must be particularly sensitive to those requirements of a given era which are especially urgent, as is in our day a more thorough and scientific understanding of the social and economic fundamentals of civilization [33].

There would always be a place for the “scholarly recluse” who wished to work in comparative quiet and retirement, he concluded; “lone scholars of this type must be sheltered and protected.” But:

large areas of the most significant university work in our day neither invite, nor permit, such complete seclusion, and, while the world may indeed be too much with us, many of the most crucial problems of our generation can only be approached through contacts with the forum and marketplace [34].

Yale was to be the laboratory to support Angell's thesis.

Angell had his difficulties fitting in, but he was a man of conviction. He allied himself with Wilbur Cross and Edgar Furniss of the graduate school [35] and strengthened the departments of economics, international relations, and history. He sought money to raise academic salaries, raised morale, and drew faculty in each discipline “across departmental and school boundaries.” He also turned his attention to the medical school and assisted Winternitz in obtaining money from the Commonwealth Fund in support of a program in mental hygiene, and from the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial Fund for the establishment of an Institute of Psychology, capturing in the process the eminent psychobiologist, Robert Yerkes, and additional monies to enhance the work of Dr. Arnold Gesell.

Angell was intrigued by the medical school. He found that much of the research and clinical work of the discrete medical school departments was related, in his word “correlative,” to university departments. Activities in the departments of pediatrics and public health, the departments of psychology, sociology and government, economics, and anthropology, the divinity school, the school of nursing, and the division of industrial engineering were all relevant to activities in the Institute of Psychology and the Child Guidance Clinic. Even in the law school, Angell noted that Hutchins was initiating plans to bring into the focus of legal studies certain problems of psychology as they affected the law, problems of economics as they
related to the field of trade regulation, taxation, and finance, and problems of
government as these related themselves to legislation, administration, and the inter-
pretation of constitutional law. Hutchins, much to Angell's delight, had even begun
major programs of research into the practical procedures of the courts and into the
causes and effects of business failures (a study under the direction of William O.
Douglas) [36].

But it was Winternitz who captured his imagination. What Winternitz was doing
to elevate the medical school was nothing short of miraculous, without parallel in
American educational history [37]. And what pleased Angell most was Winternitz's
affirmations that medicine was a social science and that the school was not merely a
technical institute, but an integral department of the graduate school. Both prin-
ciples fit into Angell's grand plan to reform Yale. For example, if the departments of
the medical school were university departments, then the same criteria for excellence
and scholarly merit would apply to even the clinicians; and if Winternitz believed, as
his annual reports revealed, that the Yale medical students would be concerned not
only with diseased organs but with the whole man, not only with sickness but health,
not only with biology but with "man's entire social and economic environment,"
then indeed medicine was a social science.

Medicine, wrote Winternitz, in 1929, had made great advances [38]. Marvelous
methods and instruments for the study of the physical organism had been perfected.
But this expansion of knowledge regarding specific functions and organs of the body
had necessitated the division of medicine into many specialties. As more and more
time had been required for the mastery of a single phase or subspecialty of medicine,
"the physician's attention has been diverted increasingly from the patient as an in-
dividual." He continued:

> The old fashioned doctor who was not a specialist, but who knew all about
> your passion for fishing, who always asked about your son Billy, or who car-
> ried away most of your troubles in his little black bag, has become a dim
> figure on the horizon. It has long been clear that something of the attitude
> which the old family physician had toward his patients should be restored to
> medicine [39].

Medicine was in too many bits and pieces. It was necessary, Winternitz believed,
to reassemble the scattered parts of the human organism. Individuals were not only
aggregations of cells and organs. They lived in a society. They worked, married, had
children. They were happy or unhappy. They encountered disease. They were "psy-
cho-physical entities," no part of which could be dealt with satisfactorily except with
due consideration of all its functions.

This idea, to regard both the individual and his social environment, to consider
both the biological and sociological aspects of life, was not a new concept. Richard
Cabot expressed similar ideas in 1909 [40]; René Sand did so in 1919 [41], as did
C.-E.A. Winslow in 1910, 1920, and 1926 [42], and Lewellys Barker in 1924 [43].
But the ideas had not been expressed quite as forcefully as they had been by Winternitz
in 1928, nor had they found such receptivity in the financial offices of the private foundations.

Angell, of course, found Winternitz's ideas absolutely in tune with his. The ques-
tion was how to implement these desultory concepts into a coherent program. The
first need was to gain the support of a number of influential faculty and, accord-
ingly, Winternitz and Hutchins met with colleagues within their respective schools
and in other university departments. At these informal occasions, Winternitz and Hutchins pressed forward their ideas with great vigor. Wilbur Cross, then Dean of the graduate school, reminisced about one such meeting during which Winternitz and Hutchins shared their ideas of promoting a synthesis of the biological with the social sciences with such enthusiasm that Cross felt as if he were "a snowball between two balls of fire which in an instant would consume him" [44]. Cross survived many such meetings and was brought on board, as were Furniss, Cross's successor, Dodge of Psychology, Dunlop Smith of Industrial Engineering, and Goodrich of Nursing.

As the plans evolved, teaching and research programs began to emerge. In the Institute, the medical student, for example, was to have an opportunity to consider actual problems of human conduct—such as crime, divorce, unemployment—from legal, social scientific, and medical points of view. The medical student was to be working and studying with students of law, religion, economics, government, and psychology. In this way, Winternitz believed, the student would constantly meet with the attitude that the individual is at one and the same time a physical, mental, and social organism, and that he cannot be properly dealt with unless all of these aspects were considered [45]. "In his intensity the physician has lost his perspective," wrote Winternitz:

. . . . He has come to be more and more a specialist in a part of the organism rather than a doctor for the whole man. He has become blinded to the psychological and sociological aspects of human well-being overlooking the part played by mind and the environment in reaction with the physical organism [46].

One of the pamphlets issued by the Institute asked the reader to think of the program as "a house," the "foundation" of which consists of university sections interested in the fundamental studies of sociology and biology. Resting on this foundation and constituting "the main floor" of the structure are the applied branches, such as law and medicine, with its affiliated hospital and clinic. On this level contacts with the community are made. The University Health Service would serve as a laboratory for psychological, sociological, and economic studies of patients conducted by students and experts of law, medicine, and sociology. Information obtained would be taken "to the upper floors" where, with a broader perspective, sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, economists, and biologists on the Institute staff would apply themselves to the task of determining the relative significance of the assembled facts [47].

The hope—"more than that, the expectation"—was that light would be shed upon societal problems, for example, the connections between physical health and family income, mental stability and occupation, crime and the need for recreational facilities, child training and mental growth, economic conditions and divorce, and legal procedures and respect for the law. The pamphlet concluded with a sentence that became an epigram for the entire program. If the plan were successfully implemented the hope was that it would be possible to bring about a "readjustment" between the individual and his environment which would lead to "greater happiness" [48].

The teaching program was also described in detail. The proposal was for medical students to be required during their first two years to take a general course in sociology and psychology, a course which would be open to any student in the
graduate or professional divisions of the University. Medical students would thus be kept in touch with the problems of life as a whole, a unique proposal, as this was the time in the curriculum usually reserved for the basic sciences [49].

The sociology course was considered important because it would enable medical students to deal more satisfactorily with human beings when, in their third year, they came into contact with patients for the first time. What Winternitz ultimately proposed and for which he sought funding [50] was a program in "Clinical Sociology," one in which medical students, for example, would be trained in how to be "social physicians"; that is, how to be "cognizant of the fundamentals of psychology, biology, and sociology, as well as of traditional legal education" [51].

Faculty from all disciplines were to pool their resources; students were to be exposed to problems crossing departmental lines; collaborative and interdisciplinary research were to examine societal problems; knowledge was to be correlated. On paper, at least, it was a coordinated, unified program, calling for not only the movement of faculty, but of entire schools and programs. It was recommended, for example, that the law school be relocated to new facilities adjacent to the medical school on Cedar Street. Similarly, the divinity school, then wishing to move from crowded quarters to a new location, would also be built on property located near to the medical school. Neither school made the move, but consideration of the proposal is an indication of the magnitude of the plan the founders had set forth [52].

Among the Institute's first publications was a proposal for research revealing the scope of societal concerns to be considered. Research would be undertaken in the following areas: social organization; the structure and function of the central nervous system; prevention of mental illness; the neurological, psychological, and biological mechanism of behavior; the family, race, and demographic patterns in New Haven [53].

IV

Such then was the plan, as set forth in pamphlets, press releases, and speeches. Fund raising, as can be imagined, was a full-time activity. Letters were sent to philanthropic foundations, and Angell and Winternitz, joined by other Yale officers, personally visited the Carnegie Corporation, the Children's Fund of Michigan, the Conrad Hubert Trust, the Falk Foundation, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the Russell Sage Foundation, the Twentieth Century Fund, and the Josiah Macy Foundation [54].

A travelling road show was organized, designed to educate the Yale community, alumni, and civic groups. Dinners were held in Hartford, Waterbury, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, St. Paul, Chicago, New York, Boston, and Baltimore. Winternitz, Angell, and Yale's treasurer, George Parmly Day, spoke before the Loyal Sons of Yale, the Massachusetts Psychiatric Association, the Mt. Sinai Hospital School of Nursing, the Brotherhood of Temple Mishkan Israel in New Haven, and countless Kiwanis Clubs and meetings of the League of Woman Voters [55].

The speeches presented before those groups conveyed the same themes: knowledge has become compartmentalized; barriers between disciplines must be broken; the goal is to promote human welfare; we are not seeking bits of information but the "revealed pattern"; our plan is large but not grandiose; we intend to succeed; we need your financial support [56].

To further assist in the fund raising, an Advisory Committee was established composed of scientists and civic leaders, chaired by William Henry Welch, who could
not resist "the call from his alma mater" [57]. Also agreeing to serve on this Committee were Harvey Cushing, Lewellys Barker, Clifford Beers, Franz Boas, George Crile, Surgeon General Hugh Cumming, John Dewey, Haven Emerson, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Lee Frankel, Charles Evans Hughes, Robert Maynard Hutchins, David Lawrence, Walter Lippmann, William Mayo, Adolf Meyer, Adolf Ochs, Ida Tarbell, Ray Lyman Wilbur, and other notables [58]. Conspicuously absent from this list was Abraham Flexner who, as we shall soon see, was opposed to the Yale plan from the start.

The fund-raising campaign was successful, aided in part by the support of the Advisory Committee and specifically by the generous contributions of the Rockefeller Foundation. Seven and a half million dollars was raised [59] and the Institute building constructed adjacent to the existing School of Medicine building located on Cedar Street. A Yale dedication ceremony was planned for 9 May 1931, complete with speeches, tours, a catered luncheon, and even a visit to view the Institute's ape colony. Participating in the ceremonies were Winternitz (who presided at the luncheon), Angell (who presided at the dedication ceremonies held in the inner courtyard of the Institute building), Wilbur Cross, now Governor of Connecticut, Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior (substituting for President Hoover), and George E. Vincent, former President of the Rockefeller Foundation and a member of the Yale class of 1885. (See Fig. 4.)

The speeches were matter-of-fact but conveyed a sense of purpose and optimism.

FIG. 4. Addresses Delivered at the Dedication of the Institute of Human Relations, Yale University, May 9, 1931, page 6, Papers of James Rowland Angell, 1/108/1103. Courtesy of Yale University Library.
Angell spoke of entering "upon a new educational procedure" which would exercise a powerful influence throughout Yale and upon educational methods the world over. The Institute, he said, was not a new and separate school; instead it is merely "an organization devised to bring together into effective voluntary cooperation the various men in the existing University departments of the sciences and arts which bear upon the knowledge and control of human nature and the social order." Urgent human problems of contemporary life—industrial, medical, economic, legal, educational—would be "more effectively attacked." The Institute, he continued, stands more for "team play than for purely individual endeavor" [60].

Angell further emphasized the essential nature of the plan. The varied University disciplines have examined only parts of the problem:

But the understanding of man . . . as an active human being involves all . . . disciplines . . . and cannot be achieved by considering him simply as a body, or as a mind, or as a bank account . . . Medicine deals with him when he is ill, law concerns itself with his civil and social behavior, education with his growth and training, theology with his spiritual interests, engineering with his adjustment to the physical environment. But the solution of the more important concrete problems with which men are confronted, either as individuals, or as social groups, almost invariably involves two or more . . . sciences or professions. In a given instance poverty may be quite as much a medical problem as an economic one, and even as an enduring social issue it inevitably involves many different factors. Crime has in it psychological, medical, economic, legal, and social elements . . . and it cannot be dealt with adequately, either preventively or remedially, without bringing to bear upon it the focalized knowledge and skill involved in a great variety of sciences and professions. And so it is with all the compelling problems of modern life [61].

The other speakers pursued similar themes. Cross, for example, spoke of "harmony" and the benefits of "collective thought"; Wilbur expressed pleasure that the "vast fund of knowledge," which has been "pigeon-holed" would now be collected and better understood [62]; and Vincent waxed eloquent about "cooperation," "physical contiguity," "group association," the "deepening sense of comradeship," and the "stirring adventure" [63]. It was a great day for Yale, and a finer one for Angell and Winternitz. The one cloud on the horizon was the relentless, often acerbic criticism of Abraham Flexner.

V

Flexner in 1931 was Director of the Institute of Advanced Study at Princeton and a legendary figure in American higher education. Flexner had great admiration for Winternitz, whom he knew well, and great respect for Angell, whom he knew mainly by reputation. Flexner's contacts with Yale were through George Blumer, Winternitz's predecessor as Dean of the medical school, and then Winternitz himself. Flexner felt possessive about Yale. In 1910, in the famous Report Number Four of the Carnegie Commission, Flexner had written that Yale's medical school was capable of doing better [64] and he saw to it, as the principal officer of the Rockefeller Foundation's General Education Board, that it did. It was Flexner who supported and helped negotiate the closer association of the medical school and the New Haven Hospital and he who favorably reviewed the requests for programmatic assistance.
Winternitz, he believed, was "the boldest and most enterprising" dean he had encountered and the two remained fast friends, despite their falling out over the Institute, until the 1950s. Winternitz had every right to be upset that Flexner was abandoning them, and Flexner similarly felt put out, acting as does a parent seeing his child go off in pursuit of "pipedreams."

Flexner learned of the Institute in Winternitz's 1928-1929 Annual Report. He was appalled:

I read your Annual Report with interest. I wish more fervently than I can express that I could follow and agree with you in the line that you are taking . . . but for the life of me I cannot see it, and none of the successive publications which you have [sent] me has as yet cleared the matter up [65].

Winternitz expressed surprise, and his letters carry the tone of sadness and abandonment.

I am awfully sorry that you feel as you do. . . . Rumors come to me from time to time from various sources, and some of them have been quite disturbing, but of course I know that now, as always, you are actuated only in my best interests [66].

"Why not suspend judgment," he asked, "until the Institute is actually in physical existence and the staffs in place?"

Flexner replied:

I am simply not sympathetic. I share your concern with many things, including the high cost of medical education, and indeed this is one of the reasons why I am sorry to see that you have divided your energy and attention at a critical moment in the history of the enterprise which will forever be associated with your name. Even if we grant that the Institute is worthwhile, I cannot believe it is worth your while at this time, for your hands were full with the medical school and, as you say, you are becoming overburdened. . . . I am not thinking of the Institute from any personal point of view, yours or mine. But I confess that it worries me as one more of the many instances of vast undertakings commenced without penetrative or sufficient thought and without regard to other obligations of American universities [67].

All through the early months of 1930, Flexner was revising for publication three lectures on higher education that he had delivered at Oxford in 1928. In 1930 Oxford University Press brought out his Universities: American, English, German, in which Flexner documents the errors and follies of some of America's finest universities, not excluding from his sting those in Europe as well.

Flexner's ideal university, unlike that of Angell's, was more in tune with John Henry Newman's [68]. In the ideal university, wrote Flexner, "we should see to it that in appropriate ways scholars and scientists would be conscious of four concerns: the conservation of knowledge and ideas; the integration of knowledge and ideas; the search for truth; the training of students who will practice and 'carry on'." These were the responsibility and sole purpose of a university; anything else, "however important they may seem, may be carried on elsewhere." The university was the standard, the home of sweet light and reason. "There are intellectual standards by which quality may be judged," he wrote. "Subjects change; activities
change. But ideas and quality abide. The difference between froth and depth, between material and immaterial, between significant and insignificant—that difference persists” [69].

By the froth, the immaterial and insignificant, Flexner meant institutions such as the teacher's colleges, disciplines such as sociology, and selected “Institutes” devoted to educational research, international affairs, and child welfare research. The most recent and to Flexner's thinking “the most incomprehensible development” in the way of an Institute was then taking place at Yale [70].

Flexner was primarily concerned with the Institute's research agenda and the Institute's assault on “departmentalization” [71]. Flexner believed that little would ever be learned by studying mental stability and occupations, crime and recreation, or child training and mental growth because these were “practical tasks,” of “no concern to a university” [72]. If the research agenda were pure “folly,” Flexner was totally exasperated by the Institute's organization chart. Why attack departments, he asked. “Knowledge advances in the first instance only by artificial simplification; departments are set up, not because life in the physical world is simple, but because no progress can be made by observation or experiment unless one's field is circumscribed” [73].

The Institute, Flexner believed, ignored the necessary individualistic character of genuine thinking.” He wondered if “really first-rate minds,” working in various fields, would be “artificially or mechanically” brought to cooperate in their studies. “Science,” he wrote, “is fundamentally and in the end always an affair of the individual.” Too much planning, too much articulation, he believed, would destroy the freedom of the individual “upon which in the last resort progress depends” [74].

At Yale, Flexner's criticisms were taken up by William Harlan Hale, editor of the iconoclastic and forward-thinking Harkness Hoot. Hale offered the opinion that the Institute was “an inter-departmental stew” containing everything from infant psychology and Pauline doctrines of revelations to divorce and thermodynamics:

No man would dispute the need for a synthesis of human knowledge in a day when specialization is so rampant as is this. But since integrating activities are a matter of the individual, they are to be performed by scholars themselves, not by organizations and grinding machinery. Genuine thinking does not need artificial correlation; that function is itself the unconscious product of clear minds and able workers” [75].

Angell, Winternitz, and others protested. Angell was so incensed by Flexner that he told Winternitz that, if Flexner continued to write disparagingly about the Institute, Winternitz should “write him a very sharp note suggesting that he give his attention more fully to his own affairs” [76]. Even the Yale Daily News came to the Institute's defense. In response to Hale's essay, an editorial writer offered a contrasting point of view. “Yale had not lost sight of the importance of men and become lost in the administration of machinery,” as Hale had suggested:

The Institute [instead] . . . is the empirical philosopher; it is the bygone family practitioner. But before it can diagnose and prescribe, it must know causes and effects. It teaches the successful lawyer, or the doctor, or the specialist, or the clergyman—in fact anyone interested in human welfare—the essential unity of knowledge [77].
VI

The criticism, however, began to develop an uneasy momentum. Internal disension and jealousy were present almost from the start. I have just had a meeting with "the stormy petal," wrote Angier to Angell; "Winternitz seems to hold the mistaken idea that, because the Institute building is in his domain, he controls space allocation. He does not." Angell agreed and so wrote rather bluntly to advise Winternitz [78].

The unified organizational structure also broke down. At first an Executive Committee of the Institute was formed, composed of Angell, Yale's provost, Charles Seymour, Furniss of the graduate school, Charles Clark (who had succeeded Hutchins as Dean of the School of Law), Winternitz, and Angier of psychology. An Executive Secretary was appointed to handle day-to-day administration, but, when this structure proved unwieldy, Angell reduced the Committee in size and reappointed only Angier, Winternitz, and Seymour, adding a well-regarded psychologist, Mark May, as Executive Secretary to oversee discordant points of view [79].

The publications of the Institute and the media attention were also a cause of concern. Written by the Institute's Director of Publicity, the bulletins and pamphlets had an odd fuzziness about them. What exactly was the Institute about? And how was it to relate to the Human Welfare Group? More important, what was meant by the term "human happiness," a phrase which appeared not only in the pamphlets but in the many speeches presented by Angell, Winternitz, and the others. "I wish I had interrupted you to ask a definition," wrote Henry Covell of Rochester. "I thought I followed you but I'm not sure" [80]. Winternitz was prompted to reply to such queries, especially when they were written by wealthy alumni.

I am not surprised that you should ask what we mean by "happiness." The term, used often by our group, needs defining. I have pondered the question of happiness ever since college and have finally reached a fairly satisfactory conclusion. Happiness may be measured only to the degree to which the psychophysical organism becomes adapted to its environment. The process of adaptation involves an exchange of stimuli between the individual and his environment. Embodied in this definition is recognition of the fact that freedom from dominating physical pain is a prerequisite of happiness . . . [81].

Such problems of definition were expected and could be addressed, but other letters found in the Institute's archives reveal that something far more troubling had resulted from the Institute's overly zealous publicity campaign. "I am in prison on a murder charge," wrote a man from Kansas. "I swear I was out of my mind. Can you help me?" Another wrote of his research on breathing, another was concerned about his failing sex drive, while another believed himself an ideal "case" and sought admission as an inpatient. Even the popular ukelele performer May Singhi Breen wrote to inquire if the Institute could train a mouse for her night club act [82]!

The letters were stashed away in a file and never answered, but two administrative officers of the Institute, Byron Shimp and Henry Lund, realized what their excesses had wrought. Shimp wrote to Angell: "We must tone down our account of the proposed work" [83]. More important, as many of the newspaper accounts were based on the extemporaneous speeches given by Winternitz and even by Angell himself, Shimp recommended that his office review all drafts of speeches presented on the Institute's behalf. Angell agreed, but the damage had been done. In their endeavor to
raise funds for operating expenses and endowment, Institute spokesmen had simply promised more than they could deliver.

There were other problems inherent in the design. Too many of the original Institute faculty brought their own research with them and never gave a thought to collaborating, except to present, at most, a seminar. As a result eighty percent of the monies raised by Institute-funded projects were initiated by individuals and not collaborative groups [84]. Despite geographic proximity and professed interest, the "larger pattern" never emerged.

Many of these issues were addressed in 1930 when Mark May took over as Executive Director. May found a distinguished faculty, but observed that most were working, Gesell, for example, "in splendid isolation as far as the rest of the Institute is concerned." Funds were always in short supply, especially during the Depression years, but what about the funds that had been raised? Could funds be used as "the impetus for cooperative work?" "Does being a member of the Institute mean that all problems will perforce be of an interdisciplinary nature?" May asked. And a final concern: "How are we to conserve those elements of individual freedom, initiative, inventiveness, and imagination, which are regarded as essential in scientific discovery, and at the same time follow a formal program" [85]?

The problem was that no one had thought through more than superficially the mechanisms by which mere geographic proximity would work its magic. Moreover, no one wished to abrogate the academic right to work on problems that were of personal interest only. When Angell was Chairman of the National Research Council he was able to establish a bureaucratic plan for research owing to the exigencies of World War I, but once the war ended the scientists resisted administrative control of their research. Jacques Loeb in 1920, for example, wrote to Ernest Rutherford that National Research Council staff were reviewing every research proposal to root out duplication of effort, or to establish a policy of targeted research. Such information was to be provided "voluntarily," wrote Loeb, "but given a good American political machine, and the money to back it with, and I should like to see which young men will dare to stand up against it" [86]. Bureaucracy would ruin science and many believed that this would happen at Yale.

VII

And what of Winternitz and the medical school? What went wrong with the ideas he had set forth in 1928? Yale, he wrote in his Annual Report, is not interested in training "doctor-technicians"; here we favor "the development of physicians and humanitarians" [87]. At Yale there was to be a "fostering of interrelationships of the many specialties and sciences upon which medicine depends." For too long, he wrote, our students' attention has been "concentrated on fragments of the biological organism." We are "endangering the broader aspects of medicine." The Yale plan calls for an "integration of knowledge." Yale's "pure objective" is nothing less than "the well-being of man" [88]. Winslow in 1935 summarized the essence of Winternitz's theses as follows: Medicine is a social science; medicine should deal with the welfare of the patient through his whole life and should visualize the promotion of health as a positive ideal; medicine should be concerned with the whole man as a human personality, with a mind and emotions as well as the heart and lungs [89].

The entire plan signified that the time had come for "a new synthesis inspired by a new humanism" [90]. It was perhaps a "synthetic humanism" [91] to be sure, but fundamental principles were being set forth at Yale about the roles in society of both medicine and the university. The great advances in the adaptation of the sciences to
diagnosis and therapy leading to specialization had led to the narrowing of physicians' interests. The patient had been reduced to mere bits and pieces. Societal influences, such as housing, employment, poverty, bankruptcy, class status, all had been pushed to one side. Public health and preventive medicine in the medical curriculum suffered the worst fate of all, indifference. And this was not just true of the medical school. University departments had also turned inward. Those programs that did attempt interdisciplinary work, venturing across the impenetrable membranes that contained cognate disciplines, were ridiculed for abandoning the main objectives of higher education. René Sand and others argued just the opposite. Universities, Sand wrote in 1919, should be “civically constructive” [92]. Angell, with a pedigree rooted in the University of Chicago, “functionalism,” and the National Research Council, agreed, and went a step further, arguing that the survival of the University was dependent upon the recognition of the peculiar exigencies of the present and needs of the future [93]. The Human Welfare Group and its Institute of Human Relations were looking for the revealed pattern, a “fresh synthesis” [94], in Mark van Doren’s felicitous phrase, “the connectedness of things” [95].

Winternitz set the program in motion, but confronted insurmountable problems in his parent institution. He was respected for his brilliance and dynamism, but many of the allies he had assembled soon deserted him, considering his policies autocratic and misguided. Rumblings in the Board of Permanent Officers, the governing body of the medical school composed of the senior faculty, were evident early in his first term. Implementing the full-time system opened many wounds that never healed. Faculty found it necessary to appeal directly to the President and a palace revolt was barely averted when Winternitz, counting the votes, was forced to establish a number of standing committees, the principal recommendation of a governance committee that had been appointed to review administrative procedures but, as everyone knew, took as their charge the design of a plan to decentralize authority [96].

Winslow and a few others remained loyal. When in 1929 Winternitz had been reappointed, Winslow wrote him a note of congratulations. Winternitz replied:

When I got back from St. Paul last night there were two letters, one from the University and the other from you, both conveying my reappointment. The first was a statement like a newspaper notice for a birth or a death and then your kind note which took the bitter taste out of my mouth. Do you know it is, I think, the only expression of opinion I have had from any of our B.P.O. not only about this but about anything that has ever happened in this year at Yale. And so it touched me the more deeply. After all we are children and like to get a pat on the back like the rest occasionally [97].

Winslow’s friendship and loyal support was especially expressed in an inspiring address he presented on the occasion of Winternitz’s “retirement.” It was a bittersweet occasion because it signaled not a retirement but a defeat and abrupt ouster. It is evident that Winternitz knew he would not be reappointed to another term in 1934, but he resisted the inevitable for some time. The B.P.O., composed of many faculty whom he himself had brought to Yale and nurtured, had simply grown weary of his policies and continued bold schemes and refused to vote in favor of reappointment. Winternitz appealed to Angell, inquiring about the possibility of a Presidential or Corporation reappointment [98]. Angell, however, also counting the votes, refused to go over the head of the medical school’s senior faculty and Winternitz finally accepted reality. No one mentioned these events and referred to the occa-
sion only as Winternitz's "retirement," which is why Winslow's eloquent testimonial address delivered on Alumni Day, 17 June 1935, was so moving [99]. Winternitz wrote immediately to Winslow:

Dear Charlie:

What a man! The evening is over as is the night and I am still trembling. Nothing but the most loyal, most sincere devotion could inspire a man as you were inspired yesterday. The hours you must have labored in the preparation of the masterful address—enough in itself—is as nothing compared to the power, the feeling, the magnificence of your delivery. It will live all my life as a burning torch of friendship such as few men have the privilege of knowing. I am deeply grateful [100].

VIII

Winternitz gave many more years of devoted service to Yale [101], but he was mortally wounded by the events of 1935. Had he never entertained the idea for the Institute would he have been more successful? Probably not. John F. Fulton, one of Winternitz's most important and famous medical school and Institute appointments, and a loyal friend, probably said it best. In a letter to C.N.H. Long written in 1942 about Winternitz's plan for an "atypical growth program," which "Winter had developed in his mind's eye and [had] much to be said for it," Fulton reminded Long "not to forget" Winternitz's plans for the Institute of Human Relations "and the fact that Winter finds it a constitutional necessity to draw up broadly conceived over-all programs about once a month" [102]. Winternitz, to many, had simply moved too fast. The ideas he expressed in the 1920s and 1930s were simply too diffuse, bold, and idealistic to resist the scientific and technological imperatives of modern medicine. In each of the Yale basic science and clinical departments great advances were taking place in neurophysiology, pharmacology, infectious diseases, endocrinology, metabolism, clinical trials, and surgical and medical interventions and innovations. These were the subjects that captured the interest of the young medical students. Winslow, since his arrival at Yale in 1915, had tried to infuse a "pervasive preventive spirit" into the curriculum and, in part, he was successful; but not a single medical student took the opportunity, which the Yale curriculum offered, to enter course work leading to a joint degree in public health [103]. What soon mattered in the Winternitz years, despite the Institute and its champions, was not prevention but cure; not the community but the patient; not health but sickness—each a negation of the principles upon which the Institute had been founded.

And this takes us to the present. What is Winternitz's and the Institute's legacy? Not surprisingly, as with most things, the spores of the ideas originally set forth are finding fertile soil. The principles espoused by Winternitz and his colleagues, for example, are similar to the principles upon which Yale's Institution for Social and Policy Studies have been based [104]; they are the rationale behind interdisciplinary cooperation and integrated research, as found, for example, in Yale's Comprehensive Cancer Center and Whitney Humanities Center [105]; they are the principles which are now reappearing in today's call for curricular revisions designed to produce more broadly and humanistically educated physicians [106]; they appear again in academic speeches at Yale and elsewhere, as in Michael Sovern's Columbia University inaugural presidential address, in which he calls for "a grand synthesis" in education [107]; and they form the basis for our contemporary health care "composites" known as academic health centers [108].
Seen from our present perspective, the plans of Winternitz, Angell, Hutchins, and their colleagues were not a negation of science and specialty training, for each recognized the importance and need for specialists in society, but were rather an attempt to place the powerful engine of science on a more humanistic and socially oriented roadbed, to reverse a tendency in medicine to the particular at the expense of the universal, and to harness the creative energies of the university on behalf of society.

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