

1-1-1989

## Correspondence between Dean Milton C. Winternitz of the Yale School of Medicine and Michael M. Davis, Director for Medical Services of the Julius Rosenwald Fund

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### Recommended Citation

Winternitz, Milton C. and Davis, Michael M. (1989) "Correspondence between Dean Milton C. Winternitz of the Yale School of Medicine and Michael M. Davis, Director for Medical Services of the Julius Rosenwald Fund," *Clinical Sociology Review*: Vol. 7: Iss. 1, Article 7.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/csr/vol7/iss1/7>

# **Correspondence between Dean Milton C. Winternitz of the Yale School of Medicine and Michael M. Davis, Director for Medical Services of the Julius Rosenwald Fund**

## **(December 1931)**

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December 3, 1931

My dear Winter: I have read your report and it makes me look forward to the time when, as you become freer from administrative and financial demands, you will assume your due leadership in educational thinking, and not merely in the medical field.

Your brief section on clinical sociology shows that you are enriching and maturing the idea even while you listen for the jingling of the guinea that will bring it to realization.

In your incisive opening discussion of university organization, one point challenges me. On page 7 you say: "Universities should be interested primarily in providing opportunity for learning and not in giving instruction. Teaching need enter only in so far as there is failure to learn." Do you mean to imply that the university professor need think only as an investigator? Has he not also responsibility for thinking out his subject matter in terms of its relation to the learning capacities and interests of young men and women?

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He is justified in assuming that they have the desire to learn, but after all, they are immature even if they have the A.B. degree.

Facts accumulated through research have thousands of possible relations and points of significance. Selection of certain sets of relationships is the essence of all intellectual analysis; in other words, of constructive thinking. The same subject matter must be subjected to analysis from several points of view, even for purely intellectual purposes. My point is that every member of a university faculty has an obligation to think through his subject matter from the point of view of pedagogy, using that abused term in its best sense, as well as to think the subject matter through from the standpoint of other scientific interests.

A school of education has responsibility for special studies and experiments in pedagogy and in a measure, for their practical application. But every member of a faculty, it seems to me, has responsibility for making intellectual contribution to the same end.

Sincerely yours,

Michael M. Davis

MMD:MR  
Dr. Milton C. Winternitz, Dean  
Yale University School of Medicine  
New Haven, Connecticut

December 7, 1931

Mr. Michael M. Davis  
Julius Rosenwald Fund  
900 South Homan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Davis:

No, I do not mean to imply that the university professor only needs to think as an investigator. I can readily understand how what I said may have conveyed this viewpoint, because I am so sensitized against the present dominant methods of cramming people full of information and of making technicians both in tasks that require manual dexterity and in so-called intellectual conversations about many academic fields. This professor may well assume that students have the potential desire to learn, but in many institutions the young student is already conditioned by his preliminary experiences so that he attempts to please his instructor and to remember the thing desired by his instructor rather than think clearly for himself. The instructor must think, and he must show the student how he thinks; then he must adapt his thinking to his interpretation of the mental capacity of his audience. I am in absolute agreement with your criticism. All that I have to say is that I was not writing a thesis on education; rather, I was merely trying to emphasize points, which always is a dangerous thing to do because it affects such a limited aspect of the question.

It was good of you to write me so kindly. Now write me again and tell me the Julius Rosenwald Fund is going to help out in clinical sociology.

As ever sincerely yours,

M.C. Winternitz, M.D.  
Dean

December 12, 1931

Dear Dr. Winternitz:

I am certainly in sympathy with your scheme of clinical sociology and during my last visit you removed doubts which I had had regarding your particular plan of organization.

But when I think of it from the point of view of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, it is another story. What you want is \$1,000,000 as endowment or its equivalent in annual payments over a period of years. This would have been a substantial proportion of the total capital of this fund even before the stock market crash. Yale is one of the wealthiest universities in present endowments and probably as rich as any in the financial potentialities of its alumni and friends.

The Julius Rosenwald Fund is embarked on a large program with limited resources. In putting money forth, we must consider where it will do most in consideration of the program on the one side and of the resources of local agencies on the other. Of course, the officers of this Fund happen to be educated through you on this particular subject and Yale alumni and friends may not as yet have reached our admirable level. But they will.

I know you want me to tell you just what I think. You appreciate that I am writing you personally and not officially, although I shall show this letter to the president of the Fund to find out how a Yale man will react to such a blast.

Sincerely yours,

Michael M. Davis

Dr. Milton C. Winternitz,  
Dean Yale University School of Medicine  
New Haven, Connecticut

December 14, 1931  
Mr. Michael M. Davis  
Julius Rosenwald Fund  
900 South Homan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Davis:

You have no idea how much I appreciate your writing me so frankly and so clearly as you have concerning clinical sociology, and I shall write to you in just exactly the same vein.

I do want \$1,000,000, or its equivalent in annual payments over a period of years, for clinical sociology, but I realize very thoroughly what the present financial situation is, and I am trying to get portions of this sum through different sources. Just this morning I have received a most encouraging note indicating that some part of this money probably will be forthcoming. If this develops—as I feel sure it will—we still shall be in a terrible hole because it will be impossible to get the right kind of a person as the head of the department without the financial support that he will feel necessary to launch the work. I wonder, therefore, how you would personally react to the suggestion that the Julius Rosenwald Fund might make a contribution towards the total sum required, either as endowment or in the form of annual payments. I don't want to be annoying about this, but as you know the situation is pressing and the times are hard.

With all good wishes, believe me

Sincerely yours,

M. C. Winternitz, M.D.  
Dean

December 28, 1931

Dear Dr. Winternitz: Absence from the city has delayed answer to your letter of the 14th. I am glad to hear that you have in sight some part of the money needed for establishing clinical sociology at Yale.

Expressing merely a personal opinion, as you suggest, I think the Fund would not give any endowment. As to contribution for a period of years, the project is one which would fall in a general way within our scope and which, therefore, might be considered. But other projects, already pending before us, would be likely to have priority. Moreover, we have restricted our program because of financial limitations and specified our budgets for some time ahead in a way which would preclude any gift this fiscal year (ending June 30, 1932) and any substantial gift next year. Beyond that, nobody can tell anything about anything.

I am sorry I cannot write you a better New Year's letter than this. I am, however, becoming expert in praying for my friends.

Sincerely yours,

Michael M. Davis

MMD:MR

lmr

December 31, 1931

Mr. Michael M. Davis  
Julius Rosenwald Fund  
900 South Homan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Davis:

Thank you so much for your good letter of the 28th. I understand the situation, I think, but I shall appreciate it if you will bear us and our needs in clinical sociology in mind. I am not pressing at all, but I want some expression of your approval of our work. It may be small, it may be delayed, it may be only a promised thing, but I want it, so anything you can do to aid will be appreciated greatly.

With best wishes for your happiness in the New Year, believe me  
As ever sincerely yours,

M. C. Winternitz, M.D.  
Dean