

**Honoring Racism:
The Professional Life and Reputation
of Stanley D. Porteus**

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In the Spring of 1998, the University of Hawai'i (UH) Board of Regents (BOR) voted to remove the name of former UH Professor Stanley D. Porteus from its place of honor on the Mānoa campus' Social Science Building. This was the culmination of more than two decades of on-again, off-again activism on the part of UH students and faculty – spearheaded in the end by the 1997-98 Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i (ASUH).

It was all done rather quietly. In the Fall of 1997, following an overwhelmingly supported ASUH resolution on the matter, UH President Kenneth Mortimer directed that a faculty-student committee be appointed to study Porteus' work and to reconsider the appropriateness of honoring him with a campus building in his name. That committee's report was issued in March of 1998. It recommended removing Porteus' name from the Social Science Building, but it carefully avoided any detailed discussion of his work, and thus it provided no in-depth rationale for the serious action it advocated.

Following in this line, Vice President for Academic Affairs Dean Smith conveyed the committee's report to the Board of Regents with his assent, but also with an accompanying brief introduction that denied that Porteus' work was – as ASUH and many scholars had long claimed – virulently racist and violent in its policy implications. Going one better than the substantially non-committal faculty-student committee, the Vice President's remarks actually served to deny and undermine the recommendation with which he was concurring – the recommendation that the Regents should take the extraordinary step of removing Porteus' name from the Social Science Building after two decades of its presence there.

After reading the committee's very brief report, and listening to the Vice President's short comments, some members of the Board seemed confused. Was Porteus a racist or not? Why were they being asked to take this important action on such flimsy grounds? In the end, the Board voted to approve the deletion of Porteus' name from the building, but the lack of any clear, justifying statement on the part of the faculty-student committee, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the UH President, or the Board of Regents led many people in the larger community to believe that the University had succumbed to the alleged contagion of so-called "political correctness."

A common misconception that soon appeared in print was that Professor Porteus' reputation had fallen victim to inappropriate and unjust standards – that his ideas on race had been conventional and well-received scientific opinion when he first propounded them, in the 1920s and 1930s, and that he himself had changed those opinions in later years. The discussion that ensued quickly became focused on whether or not it was fair to employ comparatively liberal present-day attitudes toward race when evaluating admittedly offensive research and writing that now was more than fifty years old.

This was a wrongheaded debate that was based on false premises – false premises resulting from the muddled official rationale in support of the name change. As the record clearly shows, Porteus was a lifelong professional racist. In his early political and scholarly life, in the 1920s and before, he was an anti-immigration activist and a crude advocate of eugenics, or the belief in socially mandated policies aimed at pseudo-scientific race "improvement." In his later years, up through 1970 and his last published writings and political involvements, he continued to hold these beliefs while publicly joining forces with an assortment of neo-Nazis and other white supremacists in advocating a variety of violently racist policies, including the coerced sterilization of African American women. Moreover, and contrary to what was becoming conventional wisdom on the subject, from as early as the 1920s onward, Porteus was thoroughly out of step with leading scientific thinking on matters of race, and his professional work on racial issues was for decades publicly dismissed as crackpot and dangerous by those authorities in the field who bothered to comment on it.

The university officials who, in the Spring of 1998, reported to the Board of Regents their recommendation that Stanley Porteus' name be removed from the UH Mānoa Social Science Building knew these facts. They had been provided with them in a series of professional reports and testimonies that formed the foundation for their recommendation. Why they timidly chose not to include them as accompaniment to their bland recommendation is the subject for another analysis at another time – one concerned with such things as the lingering effects of psychological colonization and white supremacy in Hawai'i today, and the felt need to maintain the myth of Hawai'i as a racial paradise. But it is important that the record show why the University – when faced with reality – had no choice but to do what it did.

There are important lessons to be learned about the history and contemporary status of academic racism in Hawai'i from a consideration of the career of Stanley Porteus, and the naming and unnamings of a UH building in his honor.

The pages that follow contain a report that I submitted, upon request, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the University committee considering the Porteus matter in December of 1997. I have been asked by the editors to publish it in this issue of Social Process, an issue honoring Marion Kelly, whose lifelong devotion to anti-racist struggles and to social justice in general stands in stark contrast to the commitment to racism and social injustice that marked Stanley Porteus' professional life for more than half a century. I am delighted to have this report appear in a publication dedicated to Marion and to her continuing efforts to make the world a better place.

A Report on the Proposed Renaming of Porteus Hall

On July 18, 1974, the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i voted in favor of naming the Social Science Building on the Mānoa campus in honor of Professor Stanley David Porteus. Between 1922 and his retirement in 1948, Porteus had been a professor at the University of Hawai'i. From 1948 until the time of his death in October of 1972, he held the title of Emeritus Professor of Psychology. In describing the scholarly accomplishments of Professor Porteus that justified bestowing on him so distinguished an honor, the Regents' statement gave particular emphasis to his 1926 book, *Temperament and Race*, "which," the Regents said, "has since become a classic in its field."

At the start of the fall semester of 1974 – less than two months after the Regents' vote on this matter – a group of students and faculty calling itself the Coalition to Rename Porteus Hall organized a large-scale effort to convince the Regents to remove Porteus' name from the building. The coalition wrote letters, held forums, and circulated petitions to advance their position. Like the Regents, the Coalition also placed particular emphasis on Porteus' book, *Temperament and Race* – but unlike the Regents, they denounced the volume as a flagrantly racist attack on all non-white peoples, and as particularly insulting to the indigenous and non-white immigrant groups who, then as now, make up the overwhelming majority of the population of Hawai'i. Porteus, of course, had his defenders, and they spoke up in reply to the attacks.

For the remainder of the 1974-1975 academic year, the debate continued. On March 14, 1975 the Regents voted to reaffirm their decision to name the building in honor of Stanley Porteus. And, because the controversy persisted following their March decision, they stated their reaffirmation a second time at a meeting on May 15, 1975.

Throughout the next two decades the matter seemed settled, although it was not uncommon for students and faculty alike to refer to the building not by its formal name, but as "Racism Hall." Then, on October 20, 1997, the Associated Students at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa revived the issue and voted unanimously, with two abstentions (16-0-2), to urge the Board of Regents, once again, to rename Porteus Hall. Their enumerated reasons were many, but they all focused on the allegedly racist nature of Porteus' professional work and the particular inappropriateness of honoring such a person at a university with a student population that is 85 percent people of color – and a university that is officially committed to ethnic diversity and equal opportunity.

In response to the ASUH vote, On November 21, 1997, UH President Kenneth P. Mortimer notified the University community that he planned to "follow through on the ASUH proposal as expeditiously as possible," and he invited "as much input as possible from UHM students, faculty, staff and administration, as well as external constituents who may have an interest in the matter" (*Kū Lama* 1997:1).¹

The remainder of this report focuses on the charges and countercharges that arose on this matter in 1974-75, and that have come to the fore again today. Specifically, the report first examines the claim against Porteus that his major work, *Temperament and Race*, published in 1926, is a racist volume, and the contrary claim by Porteus' supporters that it is unfair to make this charge against a work that, they allege, was wholly consistent with prevailing scholarly opinion at the time it was produced. Next, this report examines Porteus' scholarly career from the 1930s to the time of his final publications in 1969 and 1970. This is of particular importance in light of the claim of Porteus' critics that he displayed racist proclivities and biases for the entirety of his adult life – and the counterclaim of his defenders that he

revised his opinions significantly after 1926. The report then concludes with a summary and recommendations.

Porteus' Writings Through and Including *Temperament and Race* (1926) and *The Maze Test and Mental Differences* (1933)

All the available written commentaries regarding the central document in the Porteus controversy agree on at least one point: contrary to the 1974 BOR description of *Temperament and Race* as "a classic in its field" (unless one defines that field as pseudo-scientific racism), for many years the book has almost universally been regarded as, at the very least, a scholarly embarrassment.

Temperament and Race is the principal volume on which Porteus' critics have focused their attention, leading them to conclude, as one of them has put it, that his work was such a "virulent contribution to the field of 'racial psychology'" that "in naming the University of Hawai'i's social science building after Stanley D. Porteus we have done a disservice both to our institution and to the people of Hawai'i" (BOR testimony of former UH Professor of Political Science Robert S. Cahill, May 15, 1975:2,19; reproduced in Cahill 1998). The responses of Porteus' defenders have varied, but they do – in one way or another – invariably concede at least this particular point. Emeritus Professor of Psychology Ronald C. Johnson – a close friend of the Porteus family for many years, Porteus' most vigorous faculty supporter for more than two decades, presently an active defender of another UH-affiliated psychologist who is under investigation by a committee of the American Psychological Association for his own promotion of pseudo-scientific racism, and himself a researcher engaged in work on racial supremacy in cognitive functioning – admitted in his testimony before the Regents that Porteus' book *Temperament and Race* "is, in my opinion, a disaster" (BOR testimony May 15, 1975:5; reproduced in Johnson 1998).² In a 1974 editorial supporting Porteus, the *Honolulu Advertiser* acknowledged that "it is hardly surprising that he once held views that today are considered racist." And in a laudatory 1991 biography of Porteus, including an assessment of his professional writings, his daughter-in-law Elizabeth Dole Porteus makes perhaps the most eloquent concession of all: silence. Not only does she not discuss *Temperament and Race* anywhere in her text, but she also *deletes* it from the otherwise exhaustive bibliography of his works printed at the end of her book, as though making believe it never happened will make it go away.³

The defense that Porteus' supporters mount against the charge (which no one denies) that *Temperament and Race* is a racist volume, is the claim that such social attitudes were conventional among psychologists and other scholars at the time that the book was published. Whether this by itself is an adequate defense is questionable. It is unlikely that the administration at, say, Brandeis University would agree to name a building in honor of a voluble and professional anti-Semite – Houston Stewart Chamberlain, for instance – so long as anti-Semitism was a common attitude among intellectuals at the time that he was publishing his anti-Jewish fulminations. But in any case, scrutiny of the text and of the state of relevant scholarship at that time reveals that Porteus' racial ideology was *not* consistent with scholarly opinion when *Temperament and Race* was published. Indeed, far from being a leader in the field of psychology, Porteus was out of step and distantly behind his more eminent colleagues on virtually every substantive scholarly issue that he addressed throughout his lifetime – becoming more and more remote from them as time went on, beginning, at the latest, in the early 1920s. To recognize this requires a brief review of his work up through the publication of *Temperament and Race* and a few years thereafter. (His subsequent writings will be treated in the second section of this report.) Although Porteus' earliest writings may not immediately seem relevant to the question at hand, knowledge of their content is essential for understanding the framework of thought that he would subsequently bring to bear in various writings on the matter of intelligence, "temperament," and race.

Stanley David Porteus was born in Australia in 1883. After graduating from secondary school, he became an apprentice teacher at several small rural schools in Australia, finally winding up in 1913, at the age of thirty, teaching at an institution for so-called "mentally defective" or "feeble-minded" children.⁴

Eight years earlier, in 1905, the French psychologist Alfred Binet had published the first "intelligence test." Binet intended his test as a diagnostic instrument to identify school children whose intellectual growth was less than adequate. Once identified, Binet contended, such children should be put on a program of "mental orthopedics," to increase their intelligence. Importantly, for present purposes, Binet insisted that his test did not measure "inborn" or "innate" or "fixed" intelligence; indeed, as he had argued since at least the mid-1890s, he did not believe in the concept of fixed intelligence, which he called a "brutal pessimism" against which "we must protest" (Binet 1913:140-41; see also Binet & Henri

1985:411-15). In the United States, however, a handful of psychologists, in the words of Stephen Jay Gould, soon “perverted Binet’s intention and invented the hereditarian theory of IQ. . . . They assumed that intelligence was largely inherited, and developed a series of specious arguments confusing cultural differences with innate properties.”⁵

Halfway around the world, Stanley Porteus, working in a school for mentally retarded children located in an industrial suburb of Melbourne, agreed with those who contended that intelligence and other mental functions, such as “temperament,” were capacities and characteristics that were predominantly inborn. Then he added an idea of his own. He decided (in “a flash of insight,” as he later put it in his autobiography) that the fundamental characteristic of all the truly retarded children at his school lay in their inability to propose and to carry out long-range plans. With this in mind, he developed what he called his “maze test,” modeled on the idea of the hand-drawn urban street maps that he routinely prepared for his students when sending them on errands in town. For the next half-century, until the time of his death, Porteus was obsessed with proving to the world the superiority of his maze test over all other intelligence tests. He was not very successful. The test never was used as widely as he had hoped and, as he admitted in 1959, on several occasions it was close to falling into disuse and losing “its psychological significance” altogether.⁶ But, whatever the discouragements, he never gave up on it.

Porteus at that time also was gripped by another obsession: measuring heads. He did this – measuring at least 10,000 of them in a few short years – in the mistaken belief that there was a correlation between large head size and large intelligence, and small head size and mental retardation. This was a notion that was well over 100 years old by the time Porteus became engaged in his head-measuring mania. It had been started in the late eighteenth century by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (the “father of craniology”), and it was an idea that had been thoroughly discredited in a famous scientific article many years earlier, when it was shown to be nothing less than “preposterous,” to use Thomas F. Gossett’s word in his standard review of the literature. But that did not stop Stanley Porteus. So, for decades to come, at least into the 1950s, he continued to insist – against all the commonly accepted scientific opinion to the contrary – that a big cranium meant a big brain, which in turn meant a high intelligence.⁷ By itself, this shortcoming hardly renders Porteus ineligible to have a university building named after him, but it does demonstrate two fundamental aspects of his thinking that would mark his entire career and have direct bearing on the consistently racist nature of his research and writing: his unwavering belief in the largely physiological nature of intelligence, and his steadfast refusal to accept overwhelming scientific evidence that was contrary to the discredited ideology that drove his scholarship.

While still in Australia, Porteus had published several articles on education and the use of his maze device for the testing of “mental defectives.” Because of this, his name began making the rounds in schools for the mentally retarded whose philosophies were in line with the hereditarian view of intelligence. One of these schools was the Vineland Training School for the Feebleminded in New Jersey. This is the school referred to as “then a world leader in the field of mental testing and the study of the mentally retarded” by the UH Board of Regents in its July 1974 statement honoring Stanley Porteus. In fact, the Vineland School was the research home of H. H. Goddard, described by Stephen Jay Gould, in his seminal study of scientific racism, as “the most unobvious hereditarian of all . . . [who] used his unilinear scale of mental deficiency to identify intelligence as a single entity, and [who] assumed that everything important about it was inborn and inherited in family lines” (Gould 1981:160).

Goddard was the inventor of the term “moron.” He regarded this newly created category of mental defective as composed of individuals who were higher on the scale of intelligence than “idiots” or “imbeciles,” but actually of more danger to society because of their relative hierarchical proximity, in intellectual terms, to the “merely dull.” (See, for example, Goddard 1912a). Morons were dangerous, Goddard thought, because, like Porteus, Goddard at that time believed in a direct link between intelligence and immorality – criminals, alcoholics, and prostitutes were largely of moron-level intelligence, he claimed – and he further contended that both intelligence and immorality were imbedded in a person’s biological heritage. In a phrase, both men believed, as historian of science Hamilton Cravens has put it, “that innate mental defect caused antisocial conduct,” and that morons in particular – though able to function socially in many ways, most troublingly in their desire and ability to breed – “did not possess sufficient intellect to have developed a moral sense” (Cravens 1987:161,163).⁸

For some time, Goddard had been convinced that recent waves of immigrants, especially those from Mediterranean and Eastern European countries, were of inferior biological stock – an inferiority that threatened to pollute and, in time, to degrade the “quality” of the American population at large. In 1912, he published a lurid (and, as is now known, intellectually dishonest) book entitled *The Kallikak Family* (1912b) in which he purported to demonstrate once and for all the biological heritability of low intelligence

and a related predisposition of people with low intelligence to lead lives of crime and social deviance. In Hamilton Cravens' words, the mythical "Kallikak family," in Goddard's disingenuous account, "was comprised chiefly of high-grade mental defectives who were *for that reason* criminals, degenerates, prostitutes, and other kinds of offenders" (Cravens 1987:164, emphasis added).⁹ This book – combined with subsequent works by the same author, such as *Feeble-mindedness: Its Causes and Consequences* (1914) and *The Criminal Imbecile* (1915) – created great excitement, not to say social panic, outside scientific circles and was a major influence on the rash of laws soon passed by the federal government and various states limiting immigration and directing the forced sterilization of purportedly feeble-minded persons.

Riding the crest of his public prominence, Goddard left the Vineland School for a much larger salary in March of 1918 as the head of the Ohio Bureau of Juvenile Research. The man selected as his replacement at Vineland was, not surprisingly, a person of like opinions – Stanley D. Porteus, lately of the Bell Street School for retarded children in Fitzroy, near Melbourne.

Porteus remained at the Vineland School for several years, although almost from the start he was spending a part of his time in Hawai'i, which he had visited in the course of his initial trip to the United States, and to which he was determined to return. During his time at the Vineland School, however, he continued to publish work on his initial *idée fixe* – cranial capacity and intelligence – in addition to the supposed success of his maze test in locating the biological roots of such social problems as "Truant, Backward, Dependent and Delinquent Children," "Social Mal-adjustment," and "Mental Deviations," to cite some titles from his writings of that time. He also was still collaborating with an Australian colleague – the infamous racist and eugenicist R. J. A. Berry – on the feeble-minded of Australia and what should be done with them. Berry and Porteus claimed that at least fifteen percent of the Australian population was feeble-minded. So dangerous was this menace, they argued, that it would be necessary to establish "a colony of segregation" to forcibly "eliminate" such people of "subnormal mentality" (quoted in Cawte 1986:48-49).¹⁰

In sum, Porteus was then convinced, as he would be until the day of his last published work more than a half century later, that low intelligence and dangerously deviant social behavior were causally interconnected, largely inbred, biologically heritable phenomena – and inbred and inherited with potentially predicable differentiability among the races and nationalities of the world.

By the early 1920s, however, Goddard – Porteus' predecessor at the Vineland School – had joined the growing exodus of most prominent psychologists from this theoretical position, since it was increasingly recognized as pseudo-scientific. From his work with Florence Mateer at the Ohio Bureau of Juvenile Research, almost as soon as he left the Vineland School, Goddard embarked on a steady retreat from the central underpinnings of virtually all the work that had made him famous (or, in some circles, infamous): he now argued that "mental defect and antisocial conduct were independent of one another from a causative point of view"; he started emphasizing the importance of environment over heritability as a cause of both problems; and he began moving away from the notion that these matters were best studied by examining groups and their different "evolutionary pasts," and toward the position that social deviance was best addressed by recognizing the personal experiences of individuals. As Hamilton Cravens remarks, "it had been the artificiality of social convention and scientific ideology that had created [the] concept of a natural hierarchy of superior and inferior groups in the national population in the first place, whether such groups signified socioeconomic class, ethnic nativity, color of skin, religious identification, sex, or such categories as 'delinquent' or 'genius'" (Cravens 1987:174-80). Now, however, Goddard – along with others in what Gossett calls the "Scientific Revolt Against Racism" of the 1920s – was in the process of completely reversing direction: "In effect the man who had become famous in the early 1910s for propagandizing that scheme [of scientific racism] was now turning it on its head, and loudly proclaiming that it was careless science and callous social policy" (ibid.).

Goddard, in the company of his most outstanding colleagues at the time, was in essence recognizing belatedly the wisdom of Alfred Binet's warning, a decade and a half earlier, that the notion of inborn or inherited intelligence was both wrongheaded and a "brutal pessimism."¹¹ Among the rapidly shrinking *minority* of psychologists who continued to disagree was Stanley Porteus. Two years after Goddard began publishing a series of articles demonstrating the falsity of his earlier position, Porteus proceeded to resign his post at the Vineland School and to accept a permanent position at the University of Hawai'i. Ironically, Porteus' new post was created, as Porteus himself recalled in 1969, because the UH's "Dr. Arthur Andrews, professor of English, had read with fascination Goddard's *Kallikak Family* [published ten years earlier], but was horrified to be told how neglect of the problem of the feeble-minded threatened to lead the nation to the threshold of ultimate disaster." Here in Hawai'i, now swimming directly

against the changing tide of mainstream scientific opinion nationally, Porteus remembered in his later years how, finally, and unlike elsewhere, “I could concern myself with groups rather than with individuals” (Porteus 1969:77,81).

Porteus readily admitted that his was now the minority opinion among professionals in his field. By the time he composed the opening words of the chapter entitled “Race Differences in Maze Performance” in his 1933 book *The Maze Test and Mental Differences*, he was openly acknowledging that most psychologists (whom he dismissed in that text as nothing but “race levellers”) had for years rejected his contentions regarding the innate inferiority of African Americans. But, he added in his defense, at least “the man in the street” agreed with him. “Even if all the psychologists were unanimous in holding the contrary view,” Porteus wrote, “he [the man in the street] would not be convinced that the average negro is the intellectual equal of the average white.” He continued:

It is possible that the attitude of many psychologists toward this question is influenced by their anxiety not to be found on the side on which so much popular prejudice is enlisted. Common opinion, however, even though ill-grounded in reason, is sometimes right, and the scientist must not feel averse to siding with the popular view if the facts point that way (Porteus 1933:101-02).

Never one to be overly anxious about being identified with “popular prejudice,” from the start of his work in Hawai’i, Porteus had made it a point to see that the “facts” did indeed point his way. While a great deal of work was then proceeding elsewhere in the United States on the *individual* problems of mental retardation, previous efforts to study the possibility of ethnic or *racial* mental defectiveness had been hampered by increasingly effective scientific criticisms that the groups targeted for study varied so greatly in their social and educational backgrounds that comparison among them was inherently biased. In Hawai’i, however, Porteus claimed that all racial groups except whites lived in similar social conditions, and, since education was compulsory in the Territory, all groups enjoyed sufficiently equal opportunities (excluding, again, whites), so that any differences in intelligence or “temperament” that he could find among those groups were bound to indicate *fundamental* and thus permanent racial distinctions.

Porteus also came to Hawai’i, it is worth remembering, with two very strong convictions, even before he began his work here. The first conviction was that his maze test was superior to all other measures of human intelligence and ability – the opinion of the rest of the psychological profession to the contrary notwithstanding. His second conviction – also against the grain of prevailing and increasing professional opinion – was that deep and important “inbred” mental differences did indeed exist across racial lines, and that what now was needed was proof of this assumed fact. Hawai’i, he wrote, “provides a better proving ground for the hypothesis of racial differences than can be found elsewhere” (Porteus 1933:109).

Needless to say, Porteus found what he had come looking for. His approach was twofold: second-hand social observation and deployment of his maze test. Taking the second of these first, he and his assistants initially gave the famous Binet examination – what he regarded somewhat presumptuously as his competitor’s test – to different groups of local children. The children’s intelligence, as measured by the Binet test, was as he put it “approximately equal” across racial lines. Then he gave them his own maze test and, to no surprise, the groups of children showed marked racial differences in measured abilities – differences, he simply asserted, that could not be “explained away” on the basis of “cultural or educational inequalities” (Porteus 1933; esp.:112-18).

From the moment that he first devised the maze test, as already noted, the key to Porteus’ definition of superior intelligence and temperament was the ability of a person or a group to engage in long-range planning. Thus, he was especially pleased to note – with an astonishing scientific naïveté or ignorance or both – that the maze test’s ranking of the races in Hawai’i correlated marvelously well with such other indices of “prudence and planning capacity” as home ownership and bank savings accounts. The absurdity of this sort of backwards logic may have reached its zenith with Porteus’ methodological summary of what he had achieved with his research. He had proved the superiority of the maze test over the Binet test, he said, and his alleged “evidence” for its superiority was nothing more than the simple fact that whereas the Binet test had found an equality of ability among the races studied, the maze test had apparently identified distinctive gradations of racial-group inferiority – and racial-group inferiority due *not* to “cultural or environmental handicaps,” he asserted boldly (and without evidentiary support) but to racially inherited and thus deeply embedded inferiority in “native ability” (Porteus 1933:123,134).

Bumbling and biased as this so-called research and its foreordained conclusions were, the maze test portion was actually almost sophisticated in comparison with the utterly preposterous findings of his work based on second-hand social observation. Here, Porteus was after something more than

“intelligence” or “mentality”: he was seeking to identify “differences in mental energy to which emotional, volitional and temperamental traits contribute” – “psychosynergic traits,” he called them, which “we consider to have become engrained in racial character through heredity, environment inter-acting to select and perpetuate certain temperamental types” (Porteus & Babcock 1926:327).

Mimicking a procedure pioneered by Goddard years earlier, Porteus began this phase of his work in Hawai‘i by selecting twenty-five supposedly knowledgeable “observers” of “the various [non-white] racial groups” in Hawai‘i. In setting his example, Goddard had hastily “trained” a small team of women, beginning in 1913, who then visited Ellis Island and used their supposedly heightened intuition to *visually* select out of the groups of incoming immigrants those who represented “average” immigrant intelligence as opposed to those who were “normal” – the “average” immigrant presumably being of “subnormal” intelligence. After giving Binet tests to these so-called average immigrants, the hypothesis seemed proved: the women reported the astonishing fact that fully “83 percent of the Jews, 80 percent of the Hungarians, 79 percent of the Italians, and 87 percent of the Russians were feeble-minded” (Gould 1981:165-66).

Goddard’s Ellis Island experiment was, of course, ludicrous. But at least the women who worked for him were “trained” (whatever that meant) and actually administered some sort of test to their subjects. Porteus’ “observers” were neither given guidance nor even asked to interact with those on whom they were reporting. They simply relied on what they already ostensibly “knew” about the various non-white races in Hawai‘i in providing Porteus with their opinions. All of the observers were white, sixteen of the twenty-five were plantation managers, and the rest were what Porteus described as “head workers of social settlements, plantation doctors, and several educationists.” It was based on the reports of these people that Porteus devised what he proudly, and with what can only be called delusions of grandeur, christened his “Racial Efficiency Index” (Porteus & Babcock 1926:90).

The results of Porteus’ investigation were actually a comical parody of scientific research – then as well as now. Taking what he admitted with understatement were “rough and ready estimates” of his subjects’ racial characteristics and abilities, as provided by his “observers,” Porteus then assigned spuriously precise quantitative equivalents to these observations, and proceeded to scale and graph them. Thus, on the measure of “prudence” the Chinese “scored” 4.28 compared with the Japanese average of 4.24, while on “tact” the Hawaiians did best, scoring 4.72 as opposed to the next-highest Chinese average of 3.96 – while the apparently utterly tactless Japanese came in last with 1.88, higher even than the frequently bottom-scoring Filipinos, “Porto Ricans,” and Portuguese, whose respective “scores” on “tact” were 2.8, 2.3, and 2.28 respectively. (The Filipinos and the Puerto Ricans generally “vie with one another,” Porteus wrote, “for the invidious distinction of being last on the list in almost all traits.”) Moreover, as he put it in the most straightforward language, so as not to be misunderstood: “These traits evidently have an organic basis and are thus part of man’s original endowment” (Porteus & Babcock 1926:96-97,324,339).

It is difficult to find words sufficiently contemptuous to describe this sort of mindless nonsense. But there is more. In his famously florid prose describing what the numerical rankings “meant,” Porteus then produced the cascade of racist attributions of inherent intelligence and character that are by now well known to those even minimally familiar with his work: page after page – hundreds of them – describe, for example, “the inborn . . . submissive retrovert temperament” of the Chinese; the “racial immaturity” and “reasoning deficits” of the Hawaiians; the “absolute inferiority of the negro”; and the “lack of resolution and trustworthiness” of the Puerto Ricans – due in large part, he said, to their being “a hybrid of blood strains” that “out-Mexicans the Mexican.” Of course, there also was the “aggressiveness and unscrupulousness” of the Japanese, who scored relatively high on tests of mental ability as young children, but who supposedly rapidly fell behind white people after the age of twelve. And the “educational retardation” of the Portuguese, who ostensibly were white – but who ranked next to last on this measure, barely beating out the Hawaiians – was of course attributable to their “considerable mixture of negro blood” and the suspicion that the Portuguese who migrated to Hawai‘i were the descendants of “political and other prisoners.” Then there was the “primitivism” and “jungle fear” of the Filipinos, who also displayed their inborn inferiority by being remarkably “super-sensitive,” Porteus quite seriously said, to such things as “the suggestion that [they] are in any way racially inferior.” Filipinos also, according to Porteus, are “little addicted to reflection or to the inhibition of impulse,” noting that in this regard they are “at the very opposite extreme from the taciturn, canny, long considering Scotchman” (Porteus & Babcock 1926:64; Porteus was himself, unsurprisingly, of Scots ancestry.) And so on and so forth.

When all was said and done, Porteus totaled up and averaged the “scores” of all Hawai‘i’s non-white (including Portuguese) racial groups on his Racial Efficiency Index. “Assuming 100 percent efficiency for the Caucasian other than Portuguese,” he wrote (“assuming,” that is, without any testing of

non-Portuguese Caucasians at all), he calculated that the combined average score for all Hawai'i's non-white peoples was only 73.3. This was less than three-quarters of the presumed average score of white people. He was shocked – especially since “low social efficiency indices are thoroughly characteristic of the mentally defective and psychopathic” (Porteus & Babcock 1926:110-12).

Noting that “feeble-mindedness being a social condition, the ability to manage oneself with ordinary prudence, which is the distinctive mark of normality, is largely dependent on one's possession of resolution, planning capacity, resistance to suggestion, self control, stability of interest, and the ability to ‘get along with people,’” Porteus wondered aloud about the disturbing situation he had uncovered in Hawai'i: “What then are the results if a community possesses a low average capacity in these important respects?” His answer was not hard to guess: inevitable “economic waste, poverty and shiftlessness and social dependency” – all of these traceable not to oppression and economic exploitation, of course, but to the inborn racial inferiority of Hawai'i's non-white citizens. Education might help some, he thought, but given the fundamental defectiveness of most non-white groups in Hawai'i, attempting to educate them was akin to “helping lame dogs over stiles, and when they are over they are still lame” (Porteus & Babcock 1926:112-14).

Although Porteus had flamboyantly derogatory things to say about all non-white groups in Hawai'i, he seemed especially disdainful of the capacities of Filipinos. The Philippines were then still under American control, but it was a far from unchallenged hegemony, so his comments were intended to be more than racially insulting. In enumerating the varied “racial defects” of the Filipinos – including “their distrust of each other, their instability of purpose, their lack of foresight and organizing ability” – Porteus warned that “if the traits that we have found to be characteristic of the Filipinos in Hawaii are also typical of the Filipino at home then we are forced to the conclusion that they are a long way from the stage of development at which they could be safely entrusted with self-government. A single glance at their list of racial defects should be sufficient to demonstrate the wisdom of this conclusion” (Porteus & Babcock 1926:68).

In addition to its outright racism, this pessimistic summary (based on “data” that were nothing more than the subjective comments of white plantation overseers, it must not be forgotten) is a classic example of what historian George M. Fredrickson has described as the nineteenth century “pseudo-Darwinian conception that the contest of human races entailed a ‘struggle for existence’ leading to the survival or dominance of ‘the fittest.’” This “late Victorian shibboleth,” Fredrickson adds, “helped to rationalize the notion that in some instances, especially where Europeans were faced with large populations of racial ‘inferiors,’ it might be necessary to rule the latter with a firm hand and deny them access to full citizenship” (Fredrickson 1981:188).

Of course, Porteus was not writing in the “late Victorian” period, although like the “pseudo-Darwinians” of that era he too was fond of describing the ongoing “ceaseless racial struggle for dominance that no number of platitudes about brotherly love will obviate . . . [the] struggle for dominance [that] is by no means waged on equal terms.” Nor did the draconian prescriptions regarding the sorts of political and social policies that Porteus wished to see following from his racial categorizations stop with Filipinos. For others (particularly the Japanese) he suggested a policy of “rigid exclusion from Canada, the United States, and Australia” – all of these being, in his words, “lands that belong to the white race by right of peaceful conquest.” “Nordic strongholds,” was what he approvingly called North America and Australia, lands that must be kept under the dominance of what he also liked to refer to as people of northern European “natio-racial” ancestry, lest they otherwise succumb to the “race suicide” that is an inevitable consequence of allowing immigration by inferior peoples (Porteus & Babcock 1926:327,335-36).

For other “inferior” groups, a carefully orchestrated policy of confinement and sterilization was the answer. Although Porteus frequently expressed approval of the ideas of Madison Grant (at the time the leading and most extreme racist ideologue in the United States), he considered extreme Grant's proposals for a massive, Nazi-like sterilization campaign to be “applied to an ever-widening circle of social discards, beginning always with the criminal, the diseased and the insane and extending gradually to types which may be called weaklings rather than defectives and perhaps ultimately to worthless race types” (Grant 1922:51).

Porteus did agree with Grant that something should be done to eliminate “the heaviest handicap that western civilization still carries” – the “humanitarian impulse . . . towards preserving and perpetuating the unfit.” But in contrast to Grant, Porteus contended that mandatory sterilization should not be carried out wholesale against particular races, but only against “defectives with anti-social tendencies who cannot be institutionalized, and the worst types of sex offenders.” Needless to say, if certain racial groups happened to have an especially high proportion of their members who appeared to possess these or

other related predispositions (as allegedly was revealed in depth by the psychological testing Porteus was carrying out in Hawai'i), then those groups would be much more disproportionately affected than others by his forced sterilization plan. But, of course, that would be an "inadvertent" consequence, merely reflecting the realities of racial difference. While, in the end, such a plan would "by no means rid the world of its troubles," Porteus admitted, it would at least "provide a small measure of directed selection which may partly take the place of that natural selection which medical science, both curative and sanitary has largely overcome" (Porteus & Babcock 1926:331-33).

This is only a small sampling of the grossly offensive and dangerously racist propaganda that flowed from Porteus' pen in the name of "scientific research," mostly during the 1920s and early 1930s. Previous criticisms of Porteus and proposals that his name be removed from the UH Social Science Building, have focused almost entirely on this period of his life and on the writings reviewed here, especially *Temperament and Race*. This has led defenders of Porteus, as noted earlier, to claim that such criticisms are flawed for two reasons: first, they are said to be misplaced because Porteus allegedly was only expressing the conventional scholarly wisdom of his day; and second, they are said to be unfair because in time Porteus supposedly changed his mind about these matters. Here, we will examine only the first of these defenses, holding scrutiny of the second defense for the second part of this report.

In 1933, Stanley Porteus turned fifty years of age. The claim that during the preceding decade, the work of this supposedly mature scholar reflected the professional opinion of his time is *false*. Indeed, from the very start of his career, Porteus was clumsily out of step with conventional wisdom within his claimed profession – beginning with his head-measuring obsession and his false belief that cranium size correlated with intelligence, a long-discredited notion that he claimed legitimacy for at least half a century after it had been abandoned by most serious psychologists.

In addition, the bulk of the work that he did in attempting to compare the supposed racial intelligence and personality characteristics of non-white people in Hawai'i was published in his book *Temperament and Race* in 1926 – and immediately it was denounced by professional reviewers in the leading scholarly journals for, among other things, its confused and contradictory uses of such terms as "race," "intelligence," and "temperament" (a distinct liability for a book with that title); its overall poor scholarship; and its ignoring (or being ignorant of) the work of other scholars and of a vast body of well-established scientific fact. As the reviewer for the *American Journal of Psychology* warned in 1928, at the conclusion of a withering review, Porteus' work demanded attention, but only because it "may do much harm to the development of psychology" (Peterson 1928; also see reviews and commentaries by Pinter 1927 and Hankins 1927).

This was a typical reaction to his supposed scholarly research *at the time that it was published*. That is hardly supportive of the spurious claim that his research and writing at the time was in the mainstream of scholarly opinion, nor does it come close to confirming the UH Regents' statement of July 18, 1974 that *Temperament and Race* is "a classic in its field."

Indeed, as noted earlier, at the beginning of his chapter on "Race Differences in Maze Performance" in the 1933 volume *The Maze Test and Mental Differences*, Porteus *himself* acknowledged that, in its assumption of inborn "negro inferiority," his work was fundamentally at odds with the overwhelming opinion of psychologists at the time. These were the mainstream and leading professionals whom he dismissed by curtly referring to them as mere "race-levellers" and saying that he preferred what he presumed to be the racially prejudicial but more accurate opinion of "the man in the street" (Porteus 1933:101-02). But in fact, on even this point Porteus may have been wrong – at least if a national opinion poll released seven years later had any relevance to attitudes at the time Porteus was writing. This poll, published by the National Education Association, showed that when a cross-section of the nation was asked, "Do you think that the same amount of tax money should be spent in this state for the education of a Negro child as for a white child?" Southern whites were split evenly in their responses, while Northern whites responded in the affirmative by a nearly nine to one margin (report by Myrdal 1962:893-94). In contrast with the opinions of what Porteus regarded as benighted "men in the street," whose thinking he had called "ill-grounded in reason" – and who strongly supported equal educational opportunity for all races – Porteus had written with much sarcasm and cruelty in *Temperament and Race* that money spent on schooling for Filipinos, like that expended on "the idiot or the imbecile," as he noted elsewhere (Porteus & Babcock 1926:307), was essentially money wasted (op.cit.:69-70). Indeed, he added, more than wasted, money spent on the education of such people, pushing them beyond their low native intelligence levels, was likely to produce nothing but "malcontents" (ibid.).

What is important to realize here is that the 1920s and the early 1930s was a time of enormous growth and change in the field of the psychology of race. One survey of the 1927 volume of *Psychological Abstracts* demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of work published in that year – the year

immediately after Porteus' *Temperament and Race* was published – “explicitly rejected genetic explanations [for racial differences in intelligence], insisting instead that differences in scores of racial groups were most likely attributable to differences in a range of environmental and experiential factors” (Cahill 1998:10). In point of fact, and directly contrary to the false claims of Porteus' would-be defenders, the dominant scholarly opinion being formed at this time was a rapidly growing reaction *against* pseudo-scientific racism of the Porteus variety. Centered around the work of people like Franz Boas and Otto Klineberg, the majority opinion of leading professionals reflected the assertion of Boas in 1927 that “all our best psychologists recognize clearly that there is no proof that intelligence tests give an actual insight into the biologically determined functioning of the mind” (1927:681).

Even writers who earlier had been identified with ideas similar to Porteus' were by this time publicly abandoning them en masse. Goddard continued his dramatic turn, begun around 1920, away from his earlier positions on group intelligence and the biological heritability of mental and social character. By 1928 he was happily admitting that he had “gone over to the enemy” and now fully supported environmental explanations for observed race differences (1928:224). Others joined in. C. C. Brigham, who at one time claimed, like Porteus, that Nordic immigrants were of a superior “race” to southern Europeans, had completely reversed himself by 1930. Writing in the *Psychological Review*, he noted that “comparative studies of various national and racial groups may not be made with existing tests,” adding that “in particular one of the most pretentious of these comparative racial studies – the writer's own – was without foundation” (1930:165). The following year, in his book *Race Psychology*, Thomas Russell Garth reported on his findings after an exhaustive survey of the existing literature. While admitting that he had begun the project with “a silent conviction” that he would find “clear-cut racial differences in mental processes,” all the evidence led him to conclude that “there are no sure evidences of real racial differences in mental traits,” adding that “it is useless to speak of the worthlessness of so-called ‘inferior peoples’ when their worth has never been established by a fair test” (1931:211).¹²

Examples of this sort could be cited for pages on end. The only remaining question is *why* this dramatic change in scholarly opinion occurred during the 1920s. Thomas Gossett has an answer:

The shift of the scientists and social scientists with regard to race did not occur because of any dramatic or sudden discovery. Racism had developed into such a contradictory mass of the unprovable and the emotional that the serious students eventually recognized that as a source of explanation for mental and temperamental traits of a people it was worthless. Once this point was accepted, the top-heavy intellectual structures of racism began to topple, one after another (Gossett 1965:430).

But Stanley Porteus remained unconvinced. Never a figure of true eminence in his field, now – following the publication of *Temperament and Race* – he was reduced to consorting with cranks and other eccentrics on the fringes of scholarship, sharing his bitter complaints with them about “race-levellers” and “race suicide” and the like. He clung to his dogma of a hierarchy of racial ability and social fitness – of the “natio-racial” inferiority of non-whites and non-Nordics – even as the rise of Nazi Germany was demonstrating to the world what the ultimate political consequences of such thinking might be. And, to his shame, he defended that discredited dogma for the rest of his life.

Psychosurgery, Eugenics, and *The Mankind Quarterly*

We have seen that the first defense of Porteus against charges of racism – the claim that his work, however offensive in the present, was consistent with scholarly opinion and attitudes at the time that it was published – is baseless and contrived. It is time now to turn to the second major line of defense: the assertion, to quote Professor Ronald Johnson, that “Porteus changed mightily in his opinions between 1926 and the time of his death” (1998:6), along with the allied assertion, as expressed in a 1974 *Honolulu Advertiser* editorial, that his views on race need to be viewed “in the light of his magnificent total record.”

In *Temperament and Race* and elsewhere, Porteus repeatedly referred to the largely innate and “organic” nature of intelligence and temperament, while at the same time making sweeping attributions regarding the mental capacities and character traits of specific races and nationalities. It was because of these beliefs that he feared diluting the bloodlines of those “Nordic strongholds” of North America and Australia by the large-scale immigration of less mentally endowed races and nationalities and by

unchecked birth rates among inferior peoples already living within those lands. To permit free immigration was to court “race suicide,” he warned (Porteus & Babcock 1926:339). Unlike the infamous Madison Grant, however, who concluded his violently racist *Passing of the Great White Race* on a pessimistic note, blaming the racial “altruism” of the United States for driving the white race “toward a racial abyss” (1922:263), Porteus found grounds for optimism. “It may be true, it unfortunately is true,” he wrote in the final paragraph of *Temperament and Race*, “that the more intellectual stocks are losing ground, numerically speaking, through voluntary birth control” (Porteus & Babcock 1926:351). “However, he believed, the means were at hand to assure “race survival,” and thus, “we need fear no racial competition, no rising tide of colour, if we can conserve our existing strength” (ibid.).” (“We” and “Our” in every case of course refers to white people, specifically those of Nordic ancestry: it never seems to have occurred to Porteus that anyone else might be reading his work.)

The term for what Porteus was advocating is “eugenics.” The word was coined in 1883 by Francis Galton, who defined it as “the science of improving the stock,” adding that the eugenics movement should aim to give “the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable” (1883:24). A more recent writer puts what in time became “the eugenics movement” in sharper historical focus. Eugenics, writes Sheila F. Weiss, is

a political strategy denoting some sort of social control over reproduction. In the interest of ‘improving’ the hereditary substrata of a given population, this supposed science seeks to regulate human procreation by encouraging the fecundity of the allegedly genetically superior groups (‘positive eugenics’) and even prohibiting so-called inferior types from having children (‘negative eugenics’) (Weiss 1987:1).

Recent research by German and American historians has shown how closely allied and mutually supportive American proponents of eugenics and Nazi race propagandists were during the 1930s, the decade leading up to the Holocaust. As Stefan Kühl points out in his 1994 book, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism*, racism was “at the core” of the American eugenics movement. Some American eugenicists openly praised Hitler and expressed admiration for the Nazi sterilization laws, while others – sensing the dangerous extremes to which affairs were heading in Germany – became more circumspect. But overall, notes Kühl, within the international eugenics movement, “no other country played such a prominent role in Nazi propaganda” as did the United States. And central to that propaganda campaign were such pseudo-scientific writings as H. H. Goddard’s *The Kallikak Family* (Kühl 1994:37,40).

Of course, by this time Goddard (who lived until 1957) had long since abandoned his eugenicist views and the scientifically discredited notions that undergirded them: belief in the biological and hereditary nature of intelligence and feeble-mindedness, and the sweeping attribution of mental abilities and inabilities to entire nationalities and races. But Stanley Porteus was still at it. After a trip to Australia, to assess the racial intelligence and temperament of Aborigines (or “Australids,” as he called them), in 1934 he headed for Africa, where he administered his maze test to the so-called “Bushmen” of southern Africa. These were people who had suffered so terribly from white violence that they appeared to be on the verge of extinction, and were at that time being herded into reserves where they might survive as “living fossils.”¹³ After administering the maze test, Porteus found that his African subjects possessed an average mental age of precisely 7.56 years (Porteus 1937:257).

Prominent scholars in the field now understandably regarded much of Porteus’ work to be worthy of ridicule. Thus, the leading American student on the subject of “race differences,” Otto Klineberg of Columbia University, in 1935 had some fun at Porteus’ expense by pointing out the incredible cultural ignorance and personal insensitivity Porteus displayed when conducting his maze experiments – such as, in his study of Australian Aborigines, his including “among his subjects one convicted murderer whose test performance was complicated by the presence of a chain on his leg and a police constable standing over him with a gun” (Klineberg 1935:156). Indeed, Porteus’ work is among those most singled out by Klineberg as representing the failure of some writers still to accept the clear scientific evidence “that there is nothing in the brain or blood of other races which justifies our ill-treatment of them,” adding that “every single one of the arguments used in order to prove the inferiority of other races has amounted to nothing” (op.cit.:348-49).¹⁴

But Porteus soldiered on, publishing work on “racial group differences in mentality” as late as 1939.¹⁵ This, of course, is the year that Germany invaded Poland, thus initiating the Second World War. Eugenics lost what few scraps of scientific credibility it still had at that time. And even among the

American eugenics advocates who remained true to the cause, as Stefan Kühl points out, relations with “German racial hygienists began to cool in the late 1930s,” in large part because of “gradual recognition by the public and the scientific community that anti-Semitism was at the core of Nazi race policy” (1994:97-98). Not that the American eugenics movement was not thick with anti-Jewish sentiment – it was. But “with the increasing American criticism of the anti-Semitic policy in Nazi Germany, it became difficult even for mainline eugenicists to support Nazi race policies openly and to maintain close relationships with their German colleagues” (ibid.).

For the next two decades the eugenics movement in the United States went into hibernation, damaged by its earlier association with Nazi scientists and propagandists who had provided scholarly justifications for what became the systematic extermination of millions of innocent people. Porteus turned to writing novels and informal essays – which, of course, themselves were filled with racist comments and stereotypes.¹⁶ Then, much to his relief, he found another and more socially acceptable outlet for deployment of his maze test: psychosurgery, in particular the rising interest during the 1950s in prefrontal lobotomies. And when that fad passed, he found uses for the maze test in experimenting on psychiatric patients who were being treated with tranquilizing drugs, especially chlorpromazine (see Porteus 1959 for discussion).

But the anti-eugenics mood of Americans did not last forever. And in July of 1960 a new publication appeared in Britain and the United States dedicated to the eugenicist agenda. Its name was *The Mankind Quarterly*, a publication of the Pioneer Fund – a foundation that was formed by Harry H. Laughlin and Frederick Osborn in 1937 to support Nazi Germany’s racial policies and to import that ideology to the United States. Laughlin was an unrelenting activist in the campaign to initiate a massive sterilization campaign against “undesirables” of every sort, describing himself as a “racial hygienist” dedicated to ridding the country “of the burden of its degenerate members.” In 1936 Laughlin received an honorary degree from the University of Heidelberg, upon the specific recommendation of Carl Schneider, a leading scientific advisor in the Nazi campaign for the extermination of handicapped people. As for Osborn, more of the same: publicly praising the Nazi eugenics program as the “most important experiment which has ever been tried,” he described the massive German sterilization program as “apparently an excellent one” and, with Laughlin, got the Pioneer Fund to finance national distribution to American high schools of a Nazi propaganda film entitled *Erbkrank* (“Hereditary Defective”) that celebrated the forced sterilization of mental defectives and moral degenerates, and claimed that “Jews were particularly susceptible to mental retardation and moral deviancy” (Kühl 1994:24-25,48-49,87).

Thus, when the Pioneer Fund got behind the launching of *The Mankind Quarterly* in 1960, it was no surprise that its list of editors and advisors read like a “Who’s Who” of what UH historian Idus Newby has called “The Field Marshalls of Scientific Racism.” The journal’s editor was a Scotsman, one Robert Gayre (listed on the masthead as “R. Gayre of Gayre” who also liked to refer to himself by what he called his official title, “The Laird of Nigg”). Gayre was a longtime associate of Nazis, a champion of apartheid in South Africa and white rule in Rhodesia, who had been arrested in Britain under the Race Relations Act for distributing materials “likely to stir up racial hatred,” and who had testified in court on behalf of the British Racial Preservation Society by “offering his expert opinion that blacks are ‘worthless’” (Newby 1967:91-117, see also 118-45; Lane 1995:126; Linklater 1995:142-43; Sautman 1995:209).

The Associate Editors and Advisory Board of the *Quarterly* were cut from the same cloth. They ranged, among numerous others of like background, from Henry Garrett, a former pamphleteer for the White Citizens’ Councils, to Corrado Gini, the leader of fascist Italy’s eugenics movement under Mussolini; from R. Ruggles Gates, a scientist-poseur singled out in a 1948 issue of the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* as not merely a “racist,” but a “super-racist” (1948:385-87), to Count Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer, a leading race scientist in Nazi Germany whose one time assistant, Joseph Mengele, Auschwitz’s reviled “Angel of Death,” used to send him sample body parts (including pairs of eyes) from his experiments on prisoners in the death camps. And so on and so forth – on down to and including one Stanley David Porteus, Emeritus Professor of Psychology at the University of Hawai’i (Lane 1995:126-27; Kühl 1994:102-03).¹⁷

From the opening pages of its very first issue to the present (it is still being published), *The Mankind Quarterly* has produced a non-stop stream of proudly racist and anti-Semitic propaganda – alleging, among other things, that African blacks possess the same level of intelligence as mentally retarded European children; that the various races in the United States should be forced into separate geographic enclaves to prevent interbreeding; that racism is a natural and “virtuous” inborn human trait, designed by nature to prevent race mixing; that the idea of equality is a nonsensical, communist-inspired

notion, particularly supported by Jews, who, since their “persecution” by Hitler, have become “greatly oversensitized . . . toward anything which smacks of racial distinction” – and much more.¹⁸

Also, it is important to point out that no sooner had its first issue appeared than numerous reputable scientists, writing in legitimate scholarly journals, attacked *The Mankind Quarterly* for its reprehensible use of false scholarly trappings to thinly conceal a blatantly racist, anti-Semitic, and at times even pro-genocide agenda. In 1961, writing in *Man*, the journal of Britain’s Royal Institute of Anthropology, G. Ainsworth Harrison noted that “few of the contributions [to the new journal] have any merit whatsoever,” most of them being “trivial and third rate” – “no more than incompetent attempts to rationalize irrational opinions” (1961:163-64). Harrison concluded by expressing his “earnest hope” that “*The Mankind Quarterly* will succumb before it can further discredit anthropology and lead to even more harm to mankind” (ibid.). In that same year the prestigious American journal *Current Anthropology* carried an extraordinarily detailed attack on the *Quarterly*, entitled “‘Scientific’ Racism Again?” by the distinguished Mexican anthropologist Juan Comas, who expressed his “profound concern” over the recent appearance of *The Mankind Quarterly*, with its “racist orientation” that harked back to a time before “the downfall of Nazism and Fascism” (Comas 1961). And again in 1961, in *Science*, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Santiago Genoves denounced the *Quarterly* for “distorting facts” and attempting to use “science, or rather pseudoscience, to try to establish postulates of racial superiority or inferiority based on biological differences” (Genoves 1961).

Of course, care must always be taken to avoid unfair attributions of guilt by association. It is always possible that one or more of the persons whose name appeared on the journal’s inaugural masthead became involved with this racist enterprise by accident – not knowing what he was getting into. And, indeed, that is what at least one original member of *The Mankind Quarterly*’s advisory board, the Yugoslav anthropologist Bozo Skerlj, said had happened to him. So he resigned, publicly stating that he had become a member while unaware of what he called the journal’s “little concern for facts” and its “racial prejudice,” a matter of particular concern to him, he said, since he had been prisoner in Dachau. When *The Mankind Quarterly*’s editor refused to print his letter of resignation from the Advisory Board, Professor Skerlj had it and an appended commentary published in *Man*, so concerned was he that “the widely circulated association of my own name and status with this editorial policy could, as I see it, reflect in an adverse way on my personal and professional integrity” (Skerlj 1960:163-64).

Unlike Bozo Skerlj, Stanley Porteus correctly did not feel that his integrity was compromised at all by his public association with this instantly infamous racist journal. Indeed, Porteus defended *The Mankind Quarterly* against attack and happily stayed on as an enthusiastic advisor until the day that he died. From the very beginning he was one of the journal’s most productive contributors on such predictable matters as inborn racial and ethnic group differences, as measured, of course, by his now long-moribund maze test (an article that subsequently received wide distribution by the Mississippi White Citizens’ Councils (see Newby 1967:87)) and on the backwardness of Australian Aborigines (Porteus 1960, 1961a, 1962, 1964, 1965a).

In the first of his *Quarterly* articles, which appeared in the journal’s premiere issue, Porteus went out of his way to express regret that the rise of Hitler had made “the climate” for this sort of work “unfavorable” for such a long time – a theme often replayed by *Mankind Quarterly* editors and authors during its early years. And in his defense of the *Quarterly* from Juan Comas’ attack in *Current Anthropology*, he conceded that low intelligence can occur among all races (“obviously, since imbecility can occur in both Australian Aborigines and Whites,” he wrote, “the *lowest* racial levels are equivalent”), but whites alone inhabit the high intelligence zones, or at least so he said he would believe “until, of course, there appears an aboriginal Shakespeare or Einstein or even a few Edisons” (Porteus 1961b:327, emphasis added).

Other Porteus contributions to the *Quarterly* resulted from a collaboration with A. James Gregor (born Gimigliano), at the time a young assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Hawai’i. Gregor was also, writes I. A. Newby, “in many respects [the] most distinctive of the prominent scientific racists” of the moment, and he was already a productive contributor of articles to such pro-fascist and eugenicist publications as Oswald Mosley’s *The European*, Corrado Gini’s *Genus*, and *Eugenics Review*. A member of *The Mankind Quarterly*’s Advisory Board, like Porteus, Gregor had distinguished himself on several counts, including his arguing in print that “racism” is a natural and beneficial human trait, and openly admitting an intellectual kinship with the ideas of European fascists, demonstrating in particular a friendship for Nazi race doctrines (Newby 1967:121-29).¹⁹

After publishing an appreciative essay on Porteus’ maze test in *The Mankind Quarterly* – asserting its “enormous potential value in the study of group differences in mentality” (1962:199) – Gregor

joined Porteus on a trip to Australia where he administered the test at an Aboriginal settlement about two hundred miles north of Alice Springs (Porteus 1962). Although the results showed a relatively high level of mental ability among these rural “Australids,” at least when compared with recent age-level scores of between 7.44 years and 9.63 years found among “jungle tribes in India,” in the Qualitative Test the Aborigine score was barely in the range of an earlier-tested group of Honolulu juvenile delinquents (Porteus & Gregor 1963). This led Porteus to conclude that the prospects for Aborigine “assimilation” into white Australian society were dim (Porteus 1964, 1965b:220) – a finding that no doubt was greeted happily by his research collaborator, who long ago had insisted that “racial harmony will come only when whites and Negroes agree to live together – separately” (Newby 1967:124).

Returning, then, to the question of guilt by association: to cite Stanley Porteus’ association with *The Mankind Quarterly* in the 1960s and early 1970s as evidence of his persistent scientific racism and his sympathy for racist eugenics is no more a case of guilt by association than is pointing out the fact that David Duke was a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Both men were open and active and ardent supporters of organizations and ideas that were dedicated to white supremacy and to the urging of physical separation of the races and/or assault upon the bodies of people of color.

Porteus’ activism in the 1960s and early 1970s on behalf of the resurrected eugenics movement, and his support for racist ideas in general, was not limited to his work with *The Mankind Quarterly*. He continued to publish ideologically racist essays in pro-eugenicist volumes (Porteus 1967) – such as one anthology that introduces itself by condemning the anti-racist program of UNESCO as “a veritable bible for egalitarians” and opens with a list of edifying quotations from leading scientific racists to the effect that human beings are not, in fact, all of the same species; that any man who believes in racial intermarriage should “be prepared to marry his daughter for example to an Australian aboriginal”; that “arguments for racial equality” are “positively harmful”; and that race-mixture inevitably leads to “the production of physiologically inefficient individuals” and “less harmonious and well-balanced types” (Kuttner 1967:xvii,xxiv-xxvii).

The editor of this volume, which included a contracted piece by Porteus on “Ethnic Groups and the Maze Test,” was Robert E. Kuttner, a well-known racist, anti-integration political activist, and the president of the International Association for the Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics (IAAEE). Although, as Stefan Kühl points out, in the post-World War Two era most eugenicists had turned to calling themselves “population scientists,” “human geneticists,” and the like, to avoid association with the taint of Nazism, some, like Kuttner, were proud to be associated with the term eugenics (Kühl 1994:105). So was Stanley Porteus, who was pleased to serve as one of America’s leading scientific racists (along with his then-collaborator, A. James Gregor) on the Executive Committee of the IAAEE – the single organization, in Idus Newby’s words, writing in 1967, that “has done more than any other ‘scientific’ body in the country to facilitate the use of science and scientific literature by segregationists and anti-Negro racists” (Newby 1967:119,129).

There is not space here to recount all the other racist endeavors and associations of Porteus during the very decade before the Board of Regents saw fit to name the Social Science Building after him. But it is worth noting at least that he became an official advisor to the Foundation for Education on Eugenics and Dysgenics – the racist organization put together by William Shockley to promote his ideas on the biological inferiority of black people and on the need to pay “bounties” to poor black women who would agree to let themselves become sterilized. And it is noteworthy that one of Porteus’ final articles, published only four years before his being honored by the UH Board of Regents, was an effort to explain the alleged “ethnic group retardation” of people who live near the equator (that is, Africans, Polynesians, and other dark people) by attributing their supposed intellectual deficits to the “extreme speed of the rotational spin” they endure as inhabitants of the outer edge of the earth as it turns on its axis – compared with the more comfortable “medium” rate of rotational speed experienced by white people who live in the temperate zones (Porteus 1970).²⁰

If we can learn to understand this “ethno-cyclotronic” phenomenon, Porteus wrote with hopeful anticipation in 1970, perhaps “the Africans in the USA would not be averse to returning to Africa if only it could become a better environment.” Indeed, he thought that wholesale “remedial re-distribution of global populations” might be a good idea. As for his adopted home, Hawai’i, he was not sanguine, noting that its location “just on the margin of the tropical belt . . . may be a handicap,” and suggesting that, since its indigenous population was obviously mentally inferior (like the Filipinos, he wrote elsewhere at this time, the Hawaiians “have lived too long in the tropics to attain toughness of mental fiber”) “those of [the University of Hawai’i’s] alumni who have shown creativity may have brought their mental energy with them (Porteus 1970; see also 1969:85).

This, of course, was as crackpot and wildly racist a set of ideas – and as out of tune with the mainstream of science at the time – as was his head-measuring obsession of a half century earlier. But these strange notions did at least possess the virtue of consistency: like all of his life's work, they were directed toward explaining why people who weren't white, like him, were so defective, so deficient, and so deprived.

He was not alone in this, of course. At the end of his 1969 autobiography, Porteus singled out one person in particular with whom he had always found himself “strongly allied” regarding “the principle of racial differences.” That person was Henry E. Garrett – a one-time White Citizens' Council activist who testified against school integration before the US Supreme Court on the grounds that black people are genetically inferior, and the author of the earlier-cited article in the first issue of *Mankind Quarterly* (of which he was one of the chief editors) on the great damage done by belief in the equality of humankind – a communist-inspired idea, he wrote, promoted largely by Jews who, since the rise of Hitler, had become overly sensitive on matters of racial distinction (Garrett 1960).

This was Stanley Porteus' self-described “strong ally” on “the principle of racial differences.” Was Porteus a racist? Here is the world's most widely accepted and straightforward definition of racism, from the 1967 UNESCO Statement on Race and Racial Prejudice: “Racism falsely claims that there is a scientific basis for arranging groups hierarchically in terms of psychological and cultural characteristics that are immutable and innate” (cited in Kühn 1994:3). It's as if it were written with Porteus' work specifically in mind. *Of course* Porteus was a racist – and he was one throughout all of his professional life. A racist and much more – a promoter, as well, of eugenicist ideas that at times were potentially genocidal, according to the United Nations definition of genocide, which includes “public incitement” toward “imposing measures intended to prevent birth” within “a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group” as one of the Genocide Convention's prohibited acts.

Two final points are worth making, because they are likely to be cited in support of Porteus by his defenders. The first of these concerns the fact that Porteus was fond of describing his position on the matter of inherent racial inferiority as occupying the “middle ground” between extremes. But what were those extremes? Like his compatriots at *The Mankind Quarterly*, his “middle ground” or “middle position” was one stipulated as being between the “Nazi doctrine of racial superiority” and the allegedly equally wrongheaded reigning ideology of “racial egalitarianism” (*The Mankind Quarterly* 1961:82). That is hardly the conventional golden mean. As for Porteus' related admission late in his life that the hereditary racial differences supposedly uncovered by his maze test were “slight,” he was insistent on adding that “this does not mean that they were insignificant” (Porteus 1969:79-80). As with “athletic contests,” he added, so with race: “the team that wins consistently is the best, even though the margin of victory may be small” (ibid.). And, as his maze testing allegedly showed, “Anglo-Saxons” were consistently the “winner” (Porteus & Babcock 1926:293).

The final possible last-minute defense that Porteus' supporters might offer is the fact that, following World War Two, Porteus frequently referred to his quite obviously racist writings as not supportive of the idea of racial inferiority and superiority, but only of racial *difference*. This assertion invariably is belied by his larger thesis promoting hierarchical, inbred, and even spuriously quantified racial “rankings” within which it is always embedded, but more than that it needs to be pointed out that this was the official line of pseudo-scientific racists in the post-Nazi era who, as Newby points out, sought “to avoid the appearance of overt racial bigotry” (1967:98). It is a canard with an ancestry that harks back to the middle of the nineteenth century, when the proslavery polemicist Samuel Cartwright, wanting to denigrate blacks as inferiors but also to justify their being put to forced hard labor, promoted the idea of their mental inferiority existing in *contrast* with their (in some respects) superior physical bodies (cited and discussed in Hoberman 1997:145). Indeed, the idea is traceable back even further than that – at least to the mid-sixteenth century, when the Spanish magistrate in Peru, Juan de Matienzo, justified the enslavement of the native peoples of the Andes because “such types were created by nature with strong bodies and were given less intelligence, while free men have less physical strength and more intelligence” (cited in Stannard 1992:219-20). And it has a contemporary provenance as recent as David Duke (Hoberman 1997:152-53).

Whenever Porteus claimed that his work was devoted to studying race differences rather than inequalities, he simply was spouting the approved damage-control slogans of the editors of *The Mankind Quarterly*, who insisted as a matter of policy that while they “rejected racial egalitarianism,” they did not, “on the other hand, subscribe to doctrines of racial superiority or inferiority,” claiming only that “in respect of some characters various stocks will be superior to others, and in other cases inferior” (1961:80-81). It just so happens, they then noted, that the areas in which whites are superior include the higher mental faculties of reason and logic and organization, while blacks (or as they put it “Melanoids”) and other

darker skinned peoples excel in such areas as “humor, music, art, ability to live a communal life and existence (as distinct from the competitive form of civilization which the Caucasoids tend to erect), feeling for emotional religious expression, or physical ability in boxing, running, and much else” (ibid.).

Henry E. Garrett, Porteus’ self-described “close ally” regarding the “principle of racial differences,” enjoyed arguing (in words that echo Porteus’ own on numerous occasions) that “the weight of the evidence favours the proposition that racial differences in mental ability (and perhaps in personality and character) are innate and genetic,” while efforts “to help the Negro by ignoring and even suppressing evidences of his mental and social immaturity” are misguided at best (Garrett 1960:257). But this same man, again like Porteus, persisted in maintaining the falsehood that he was not speaking of racial inferiority or superiority, but only of the unique abilities possessed by whites to “create a modern technical society,” such as the ability “to think in terms of symbols – words, numbers, formulas, diagrams” (Newby 1967:100). As for non-whites, and especially blacks, their areas of superiority are such that – to cite a more recent recipient of the Pioneer Fund’s fascist largesse – they most closely resemble Neanderthals (Rushton 1995:233).

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no question that Stanley D. Porteus is, by any measure, not deserving of having a building on any university campus named in his honor. Porteus’ *sole* possible claim to professional or scholarly distinction is the pseudo-psychological work to which he devoted his life, the work that is undeniably racist in its near-entirety, and the work that was *recognized* as wrongheaded and racist by his more eminent peers throughout the whole of his academic career.

From the time that he left the Vineland School for the Feeble-minded in 1922 to take up residence at the University of Hawai‘i until his final days in the 1960s serving as a director of various violently racist and eugenicist organizations (while still, to the end, writing shoddy and at times nearly lunatic “explanations” for the alleged mental defectiveness of non-white, non-Nordic peoples), Porteus’ work was at intellectual and ethical odds with both emerging and mainstream scholarship. Largely ignored, reviled, or ridiculed by leading scholars in his field, much of his work, understandably, was published by marginal or even vanity presses.

There is not a single legitimate reason why Stanley Porteus should be honored by having a respectable university name a building after him, and there are compelling reasons why his name should be removed from the UH Social Science Building as soon as possible. Since Porteus’ only professional activities of significance were as a pseudo-scientific racist and as an activist on behalf of the post-Nazi era eugenics movement, having a building at UH Mānoa named in honor of him is inherently a major statement of institutional support for racism – it can be nothing else – and an insult to the majority of students on this campus and the majority of citizens in the state of Hawai‘i. Honoring Professor Porteus with a building in his name is no less outrageous or morally offensive than would be the naming of a building on a predominantly Jewish campus after a professional anti-Semite. Or the naming of a building on a predominantly African American campus after a lifelong anti-black racist ideologue.

At the time of his death, Stanley Porteus was a socially prominent man in Honolulu, with friends and family in high places in the business and political communities. It is apparent that the Board of Regents, in naming the Social Science Building for Porteus, was guided by the efforts of influential family members and associates of the recently deceased emeritus professor to have this honor bestowed on him. It also is evident that the BOR did little or no research of its own on Porteus’ professional life or work.

But years have passed, and now we know better. It is time to change the name of Porteus Hall. Other universities have done it. At the University of Colorado at Boulder a number of years back it was discovered that the man whose name had always adorned the main administration building – David Nichols, the principal founder of the university – had been an advocate of mass murdering the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians. The Colorado Regents promptly removed Nichols’ name from the building and renamed it Cheyenne-Arapaho Hall. At this moment, at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, a specially-appointed committee is deciding whether to remove from a dormitory building the name of a once esteemed professor of electrical engineering – who, it turns out, was a leader of the local Ku Klux Klan a century ago.

Examples of similar name changes abound. And not always for reasons such as this. There once was a time, for instance, as many on this campus will recall, when the words Thomas Jefferson Hall were emblazoned in large letters across the top of what is now called the Imin Center on East-West Road.

Although certainly the name Porteus deserves to be stripped from the Social Science Building immediately, it may be possible to make the change more positive than negative by agreeing from the start as to what the new name of the building should be. Some on campus have been urging the adoption of the name “Lili’uokalani,” in part because of the dearth of both Hawaiian and female names on campus buildings, and in part because the dignity with which Queen Lili’uokalani carried herself during the extraordinarily trying times of governmental overthrow and annexation represents behavior most deserving of honor. And the timing would be felicitous, since 1998 is the centennial of Hawai’i’s annexation by the United States

If such a transition can be effected gracefully, with ceremonial emphasis on the positive re-naming, rather than the removal of Stanley Porteus’ name, so much the better. If not, the name Porteus must still be removed from the building with all possible haste. Every day that it remains represents another day in which the powers that be at the University continue to tolerate a gross racial offense against the majority of students, an affront to the humane sensibilities of everyone, and an implicit insult to the very motto of the University itself.

Notes

1. References to BOR statements are from Regents’ minutes of the relevant meetings. For more information on the history of this debate, see files in the UH Department of Ethnic Studies Resource Room and Document Series 5, *Testimony on Renaming Porteus Hall*, compiled by the Center for Research on Ethnic Relations, UH Social Science Research Institute, on file in the Hamilton Library Hawai’i-Pacific Collection.
2. Professor Johnson’s closeness to the Porteus family is discussed in Elizabeth Dole Porteus, *Let’s Go Exploring: The Life of Stanley D. Porteus* (1991:172-73). The comment on Johnson’s current efforts to rehabilitate the reputation of another UH-affiliated psychologist who has been accused by professional colleagues of racism (and more) refers to his defense of Raymond B. Cattell; the best review of Cattell’s work is Mehler (1997:153-63). Johnson’s own work on the racial bases of intelligence includes a brief article written with Craig Nagoshi, “Cognitive Abilities Profiles of Caucasian v. Japanese Subjects in the Hawaii Family Study of Cognition” (1987:581-83). This piece is cited in an essay on the recent turn of some racist scholars toward the notion of there being two master races, Europeans and East Asians; see Sautman (1995:216n42).
3. The excision of *Temperament and Race* from the bibliography in Elizabeth Dole Porteus (1991) is evident on page 187.
4. For this and other general biographical data on Porteus, see E. D. Porteus (1991) and S. D. Porteus (1969).
5. For brief discussions, and references to these citations, see Gould (1981:146-58); and Lewontin et al. (1984:83-85).
6. See discussion in the Preface to Porteus’ *Maze Test and Clinical Psychology* (1959). We will return to this matter later.
7. Porteus’ extraordinary commitment to pursuing the alleged link between head size and mental ability is recounted in E. D. Porteus (1991:32-33,39). Porteus was still embarked on this dead-end venture decades after Franz Boas and others had demolished the notion as absurd. For Porteus’ continued efforts to make long-out-of-date craniological linkages as the years went by, see, for example, his books, *The Matrix of the Mind* (1928:450), and *The Porteus Maze Test and Intelligence* (1950:111). Boas’ famous series of demonstrations that there is no validity to the notion began before the turn of the twentieth century, at least as early as his article “The Cephalic Index” (1899). The quotation from Thomas Gossett regarding Boas’ work making “all attempts to classify races on the basis of craniology so impossible as to be preposterous” – although Porteus was still at it fully half a century later – is in his *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (1965:421).

8. The title of Cravens' piece, "Applied Science and Public Policy: The Ohio Bureau of Juvenile Research and the Problem of Juvenile Delinquency, 1913-1930" (1987) refers to the fact that, upon leaving the Vineland School in 1918, Goddard became the director of the Ohio Bureau of Juvenile Research. For Porteus' views at this time, see his "Mental Tests for the Feeble-minded: A New Series" (1915:200-13), where he discusses the alleged failure of the Binet test (as compared with his own maze test) to measure the multiple social and moral dimensions of intelligence "which count so much in the individual's adjustment to the complexities of daily life," including "instability of temperament, peculiar emotional conditions, general unreliability and lack of sense of proportion and the fitness of things."
9. On the dishonesty of certain data produced and discussed in *The Kallikak Family*, see again Gould (1981:168-71).
10. See the bibliographies of Porteus' writings for this time printed in Porteus (1969:262-67) and E. D. Porteus (1991:188-90).
11. See, for instance, publications by Goddard at this time (1920a, 1920b, 1920c, 1921), reversing positions he had taken previously.
12. All of these works are cited and discussed in Gould (1981:172-74,191-92,232-33); and in Gossett (1965:424-26).
13. For an important analysis of the historical collaboration of scholars in the racial politics of South Africa, and in their help with the oppression – and near-extirpation – of the "Bushmen," or San peoples of southern Africa, see Gordon (1992), esp. pp. 147-54 for discussion of the time when Porteus did his work among the San.
14. For other references to Porteus in this volume (Klineberg 1935), see pp. 81, 91, 155, 159-62, 171, 180, 279, 282, 289.
15. See, for example, Porteus (1939). I am grateful to Professor Barry Mehler, Director of the Institute for the Study of Academic Racism at Ferris State University, for this and several other bibliographical references.
16. See especially Porteus (1947) for page after page of anti-Japanese racist propaganda that is only partly attributable to wartime xenophobia.
17. For more extensive discussion of both Mengele and Verschuer, see Lifton (1986:337-83, esp. pp. 339-58).
18. This last contribution appears to be something of an editorial policy statement, since it represents a theme that repeatedly recurs in the pages of the journal, and since it is the work of one of its two senior editors, Henry E. Garrett, and was published in its opening volume (1960:253-57).
19. Subsequent to Newby's discussion of his work, Gregor took unsuccessful legal action in an attempt to have *Challenge to the Court* (Newby 1967) removed from circulation.
20. Publication of this piece "was kindly supported by a grant from the University Foundation." Porteus' alliance with and support for Shockley is mentioned in "Defendant's Exhibit 110," in Shockley's lawsuit against the *Atlanta Constitution*. The material was submitted by Shockley himself. Though hardly a story that would be picked up by the national media, the Bay Area press, where Shockley lived and worked, did cover the formation of Shockley's eugenics organization and Porteus' signing on as an early advisor. See, for example *Berkeley Gazette* (1970). Again, I am grateful to Professor Barry Mehler for this reference.

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