
Catharine Cox Miles: 1890–1984

Catharine Cox Miles, Clinical Professor of Psychology Emerita at Yale University, died at Friends Nursing Home in Sandy Spring, Maryland, on October 11, 1984. Dr. Miles is most widely known for her famous study of eminent historical persons conducted in association with Lewis M. Terman. She was born in San Jose, California, and attended Stanford University, receiving the bachelor of arts degree in 1911 and the master of arts in 1913 in German language and literature. She spent the following year at the University of Jena and the University of Berlin, and then returned to San Jose to teach German and physical education at the College of the Pacific. She remained there until 1920, rising from instructor to full professor.

A birthright member of the Society of Friends (Quakers), she was deeply distressed by the starvation and suffering among German children that came as an aftermath to World War I, and she joined the American Friends Service Committee in its relief efforts. Herbert Hoover's Committee (formerly for the Relief of Belgium) provided food, and for many months Catharine Cox and her associates distributed it in Berlin.

She returned to Stanford in 1920, her interests having shifted to psychology, and she began work on her doctorate at Stanford, using a teaching appointment in the German Department for necessary financial support. Terman was just starting his massive study of gifted children, a project that strongly attracted her interest. The beginning stages of this longitudinal study did not offer an appropriate dissertation opportunity, however, so she undertook a complementary study—a retrospective analysis of the childhood mental accomplishments of 301 historical geniuses.

This study in biographical psychology was a serious and very successful attempt to determine whether people who had achieved high eminence, by historical standards, had also shown the precocity and intellectual vigor in childhood and youth that were associated in the early twentieth century with high IQs. She searched more than 3,000 biographical sources for evidence of intellectual performances that could be scored on items appearing in the Stanford-Binet battery of tests. Dr. Cox's meticulous attention to reliability of measurement and validity of evidence has made the study a model of historical and biographical research. The net result was a clear demonstration that whatever other factors may have entered into the achievement of eminence, high IQ was indubitably present for those whose careers lay in statesmanship, literature, philosophy, the fine arts, and science—though not in the military realm. The study was perhaps as important as a validation of contemporary methods of measuring intellectual performance as it was in fulfilling its retrospective purpose.

After completing her PhD at Stanford, Dr. Cox became the chief psychologist for the Central Mental Hygiene Clinic in Cincinnati General Hos-

pital, the Children's Hospital, and the Diagnostic Center of the Veterans Bureau. She relinquished clinical work temporarily, however, when she returned to Stanford in 1927 to become research associate to Terman on the project leading to the construction of the Terman-Miles M-F Test, described in *Sex and Personality* (McGraw-Hill, 1936). Their first paper on this project, dealing with "Sex Differences in the Association of Ideas," was published in this *Journal* in 1929 (Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 165–206).

In 1927 she married the recently widowed Walter R. Miles, then Professor of Experimental Psychology at Stanford. With the admirable efficiency and organizational skill for which she had been known by her fellow graduate students, she joined in the rearing of his three teen-aged children, within a short time had one of her own, and by 1932 had completed her share of the research project.

Sex and Personality offered not only a standardized test of gender role for adolescents and adults, but some valuable normative findings. Occupations for both men and women were found to vary systematically in the extent to which they attracted persons with high or low masculinity or femininity. Higher levels of education were associated with less pronounced gender role differentiation. Aging was associated with a similar decrease. Cross-parent "fixation" was associated with a cross-sex gender role emphasis. Passive male homosexuals showed a highly feminized pattern of interests and feelings.

In 1932, Catharine and Walter Miles moved to Yale, where Walter succeeded Raymond Dodge in the Institute of Psychology (shortly to be absorbed into the Institute of Human Relations), and Catharine became Clinical Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry. Both held joint appointments in the Department of Psychology and the Medical School. Until after World War II, she was Yale's only senior clinical psychologist, though she had a number of well-known part-time younger students or associates, among them Lillian Wolfe, Marianne Jacobsen, Pauline Sears, and Dorothy Marquis. She also carried on an active private practice, entirely diagnostic, as was customary for clinical psychologists at that time.

During her first decade at Yale, she was mainly burdened by the development of clinical service in the Medical School. Nonetheless she found time to publish a major review for C. Murchison's *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Clark University Press, 1935) on sex differences, sex typing, and sex behavior. Somewhat later she did another one, on gifted children, for L. Carmichael's *Manual of Child Psychology* (Wiley, 1954).

Catharine and her husband retired together in 1953, and the following year they went to Turkey, where for three years he taught at the University of Istanbul. Thereafter they lived in Gales Ferry, Connecticut, close to the submarine base at New London, where Walter served for more than a decade as Scientific Director of the Medical Research Laboratory.

Dr. Catharine Cox Miles was one of that sturdy band of post-World War I women psychologists, among them Goodenough, James, Mary Jones, Wellman, Hollingworth, Lois Stolz, and Sullivan, who were the models for many of today's professional women psychologists. Her easily remembered re-

search on genius and on gender role must not be allowed to shade another considerable achievement: For more than two decades she was chief of psychological services of the Yale Department of Psychiatry and the only woman to serve as full professor on that faculty.

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