“PROGRESSIVE” MOTHERS: FEMINIST EUGENICS AND LETA S. HOLLINGWORTH

MICHAEL J.H. STEAD

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PSYCHOLOGY
YORK UNIVERSITY
TORONTO, ONTARIO

AUGUST 2024

©MICHAEL JOHN HEWGILL STEAD 2024

Abstract

Leta S. Hollingworth was an early 20th century U.S. Psychologist, active during what is commonly referred to as the *Progressive Era*. While initial scholarship on Leta Hollingworth during the 1960s and '70s had celebratory aims geared towards her role as a feminist Psychologist, more recent scholarship has attempted to unpack her engagement with the eugenics movement. Using archival materials *and* drawing inspiration from scholars that challenge the limits of the archive, the present thesis explores Hollingworth's scholarship and activism, fleshing out her own feminist and eugenic ideologies. I then forward the argument that Hollingworth did not hold feminist and eugenic ideologies together with tension, but reconciled them through the logic of another movement, *feminist eugenics*. This thesis ends with a discussion of how studying the life and scholarship of an early 20th-century feminist eugenicist serves as a cautionary tale for contemporary bioethical debate.

Acknowledgments

I want to start by thanking my supervisor, Dr. Alexandra Rutherford. None of this would have been possible without you seeing my potential two years ago, and your *incredible* mentorship since then.

Thank you to Dr. Michael Pettit. You encouraged me to think bigger than I had previously thought I was capable of.

Thank you to all my professors for the lessons I carry with me inside and outside the classroom.

Thank you to my friends for providing me with much-needed distraction. All work and no play would have made me quite dull.

Thank you to the Psychology graduate office. You kept me caffeinated and on schedule more times than I care to count.

Finally, thank you to my family for their unwavering support as I pursued this massive undertaking. You reminded me that I am worthy of kindness, patience, and capable of accomplishing anything I set my mind to!

Table of Contents

Abstract .... *ii*

Acknowledgments .... *iii*

Introduction *1*

Political Viewpoints **3**

A Note on Methodology **7**

The Progressive Era and Early Feminisms **10**

What is Feminist Eugenics? **22**

The Progressive Citizen *24*

Early Days and Academia **24**

A Feminist in the Making **27**

A Consummate Professional **30**

Hollingworth the Feminist Eugenicist *35*

Conclusions *42*

Contemporary Relevance of Feminist Eugenics **42**

Final Reflections **45**

References *49*

Introduction

"Stated briefly, 'the woman question' is how to reproduce the species and at the same time to work, and realize work's full reward, in accordance with individual ability"
- Leta S. Hollingworth (1926, p.348)

In 1915, readers of *Forecast: A Magazine of Home Efficiency* could read the lyrics to *A Modern Lullaby.* Sung to the tune of "Rock-A-Bye, Baby", parents could learn lines like, "Before your eugenic young parents were wed, they had decided how you should be fed" and "Mamma's scientific she knows all the laws, she kisses her darling through carbolized gauze" (Apple, 2006, p.34). Unsettling by today's nursery rhyme standards, these lyrics highlight the pervasiveness of eugenics in early 20th century U.S. motherhood, during what is now referred to as the Progressive Era. As these lyrics indicate, this era within the U.S. also saw the meteoric rise of eugenics in daily life, invoking expertise from developing scientific psychology. Notably, both scientific psychology and eugenics unfolded concurrently with the cresting of first wave-feminism in the United States, which is typically said to have started with the historic Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 and "ended" with (some) women gaining the right to vote in 1920.

In the historiography on women in psychology that began to appear during the so-called "second wave" of feminism in the 1970s, one of the first women – and feminists – to be recovered from this period of budding eugenic and psychological thought was Leta Stetter Hollingworth (see Benjamin, 1975; Shields, 1975). It may come as a surprise given the well-developed historiography that now analyses the life and scholarship of Leta S. Hollingworth, but this Progressive Era U.S. feminist Psychologist was once considered a "forgotten voice" (Klein, 2002). While initial research celebrated Hollingworth's feminist activism and scholarship within Psychology, relatively recent scholarship has explored her complicity within the eugenics movement (Kasper, 2003; Yohannan, et al., 2021; Jolly & Robins, 2022).

Being interested in the entanglements of both feminism and eugenics within the context of U.S Psychology, I gravitated to Leta Hollingworth as a natural starting point for this project. Beginning with Ann G. Klein's *A Forgotten Voice: The Biography of Leta Stetter Hollingworth*, I followed Leta's journey from her birth in 1886 through her early days on the prairie frontier of Nebraska, to her final breath at 6:05 PM on November 19th, 1939, in the Harkness Pavilion Medical Centre, New York (Klein, 2002). What drew me to Klein's work was the richness of detail with which Hollingworth was presented in its pages. No detail was too small, no truth too unsavory. Hollingworth was a product of her times and the people around her. However, while dedicating some time to Leta's affiliations with the eugenic movement, this was only a small mention relative to the entire book. For more answers, I turned to the work of Kasper (2003), titled *Feminist and Eugenicist Thinking in A Woman Educator: The Case of Leta Stetter Hollingworth*. More specifically, I was interested in their work on Leta's feminist and eugenic viewpoints, which are outlined towards the end of their paper. And while I certainly gained a deeper understanding of Hollingworth's eugenic ideologies as expressed through her pioneering work with gifted children, something still felt missing. While both authors had outlined the ways in which Leta Hollingworth was both a feminist and eugenicist, a degree of separation between these two identities remained. They outlined two ideologies that are historically entangled, but described the actual feminist and eugenic views of Hollingworth as seemingly distinct entities that did not interact/impact each other. Reflecting on Hollingworth's dual ideological allegiances, Klein (2002) remarks that "…it is curious that on the one hand Leta believed that bright women should have children, but on the other hand she recognized the constraints that childbearing placed upon the likelihood of a woman being able to obtain achievements" (p.112). Kasper (2003) offers a similar remark, noting that "These two lines of thinking had to create some tension for Leta" as she weighed "the eugenic needs against the rights and needs of females" (p. 152).

How did Leta Hollingworth's eugenics influence her feminism? How did her feminism influence her eugenics? What sources and methods might a historian use to answer these questions? Taking limited inspiration from critical and creative historical narratives, the following thesis makes a case for Leta Hollingworth's subscription to a less commonly invoked ideology that gained popularity during the Progressive Era: *Feminist Eugenics*. An ideology that, when applied to the various texts of Leta Hollingworth, makes sense of her dual allegiances to the feminist and eugenic movements. By speculating on personal relationships, cross-referencing texts, and reading against the grain of the archive, I will attempt to construct a narrative casting Leta Hollingworth as a feminist eugenicist.

Political Viewpoints

Despite her numerous contributions to the field of Psychology, including her dedication to the study of gifted children (Hollingworth, 1924a; Hollingworth, 1924b; 1926; Hollingworth & Cobb, 1928; 1929; 1930) and the challenging of scientific sexism (Hollingworth, 1914; 1927; Lowie & Hollingworth, 1916), Leta Hollingworth once languished in a state of relative historical anonymity. Prior to the late 1960s, the field of U.S women's history did not exist. Reflecting on an article she wrote on the state of women in U.S. history in 1969, Lerner (2004) quotes herself as saying "The striking fact about the historiography of women is the general neglect of the field." She recalls counting the number of "books concerning women in U.S. history published by 1960. There were thirteen." (Lerner, 2004, p.10). Leta Hollingworth, along with the individual lives and works of many other women throughout history, were not "rediscovered" until the 1970s and '80s during what is now referred to as the reclamation/compensatory project of feminist text, marking a "significant moment in feminist scholarship" (Seitler, 2003, p.63). This significant moment existed within the rising academic popularity of conducting social history, which sought to pull focus away from the histories of great men/events, which was the primary subject of political history (Stearns, 1985). Instead, social history brought attention to those who had been historically silenced, beginning with the working-class, and eventually moving to women and people of colour (Hobsbawm, 1971). Leta Hollingworth was one of the first women – and feminists – to be recovered during this moment, as women's historians tackled psychology. The work done by Stephanie Shields (1975; 1982; 1987) and Ludy T. Benjamin (1975) during this recovery period helped lay the foundation for the Hollingworth historiography that we have today. In an interview hosted by *Psychology's Feminist Voices* (PFV), Shields recalls the work involved in writing a paper on these "lost women", working from their original documents since no one else had published on them (Shields, 2011, p.7)[1].

That said, it is important to recognize that this reclamation work was conducted from a particular political viewpoint. The reclamation work of the 1970s and '80s employed a celebratory lens, likely meant to invigorate further discussion and research into the lives of women whom these historians felt deserved more attention after prolonged neglect. Unfortunately, these celebratory aims came at the cost of excluding some of these early feminists' involvement in movements that did not paint them in the best light. Movements like eugenics.

---

[1] In another PFV Oral History interview, this time with Elizabeth Scarborough (2004), she said that "there was nothing" when asked about the state of the history of Psychology as it pertains to women during her own early research.

Lack of acknowledgement of their participation in movements like eugenics persisted until another shift occurred roughly around the 1980s and 90s. Around this time, feminist historians and writers of women's history began to explore the intersections of the feminist and eugenic movements explicitly, and/or why certain marginalized experiences remained underwritten in the feminist historical record (Allen, 1988; Newman, 1999). These scholars aimed to highlight how "Anglo-Protestant feminism developed as an integral member of the family of discourses that emerged as a response to laissez-faire versions of social Darwinism" (Newman, 1999, p.138). Allen (1988) addresses the ideas of some German radical feminists, who embraced a social-radical eugenic theory which, unlike the main-stream eugenics that was often hostile towards the feminist movement, "took a clearly feminist stance" (p.35). They were responding to previous historians who had "insufficiently explored and often misunderstood" the relationship between eugenics and feminism during this era, particularly German historians whose assessments of these radical feminists ranged from apologetic to non-existent (Allen, 1988, p.32).

Broadly speaking, Newman (1999) brings our attention to the development of U.S. feminism at the turn of century, exploring an overarching theme of how issues of race and gender were navigated by white women and women of colour, more specifically, how white feminists have simultaneously A) disregarded intersectional issues brought forward by women of color on the grounds of them only being issues of race, and B) Established and maintained racial hierarchies between white women and women of colour (Newman, 1999). This exploration of feminist and eugenic intersections has continued into the early 2000s. According to Rutherford and Pettit (2015), this historiographical shift between the 1970s/80s and 1990s/2000s could be attributed to the “disjuncture between how second- and third-wave feminists interpreted the legacy of the first wave” (p.227). While many second-wave feminist scholars attempted to create an ideological family tree, interpreting the work of first-wave feminists as anticipating “their concerns and interventions”, third-wave feminists responded to the work of first-wave feminists by pointing to their active roles in silencing marginalized women (Rutherford & Pettit, 2015, p. 227).

This legacy of complicating and questioning the past beginning in the 1990s/2000s has continued. In the journal *Canadian Psychology*, Moss and colleagues (2013) explore how the women’s suffrage movement in Western Canada and the eugenics movement “exerted a significant influence on one another during their respective inceptions” (p.105). In *History of Psychology*, Harris (2021) offers a case study of Isabelle Kendig, who was a “leading figure in feminist and antimilitarist campaigns” and was previously involved in the eugenics movement as a eugenic field worker (p. 350). What interested me with the story of Isabelle Kendig was that both Hollingworth and Kendig were second-generation Psychologists who held interests in eugenic and feminist movements. As noted by Harris, while it’s not uncommon to find instances of eugenic and feminist ideology intersecting during this period, “What is rare is seeing this combination of attributes in the biography of a woman in the history of psychology” (2021, p.352).

One could argue that more recent interests in evaluating the intersections of eugenics and feminism within Psychology is due to Psychology’s larger interest in acknowledging its past complicity “in contributing to systemic inequities” and harming “many through racism, racial discrimination, and denigration of people of color” (American Psychological Association, 2021). The present thesis is no exception to this trend. Leaning into this viewpoint on the history of women in Psychology, this thesis continues the legacy of complicating the celebratory aims of the feminist reclamation and contributes to the growing number of works that situate this complication within the field of Psychology.

A Note on Methodology

To accomplish this task, this project took limited inspiration from scholars like Hartman (2021) and Fuentes (2016). Hartman (2021) uses methods of critical fabulation to explore the lives of Black women in Philadelphia and New York during the 20th century. The narrative forwarded by Hartman (2021) is not “a consequence of discovering new documents, but rather by engaging with extant archival materials critically and creatively” (2021, p.129). Fuentes (2016) explores the perspective and position of enslaved women within urban Caribbean slavery. They accomplish this by “questioning the archives’ veracity and filling out miniscule fragmentary mentions or the absence of evidence with spatial and historical context our historical interpretation…” (Fuentes, 2016, p.4).

The proposed narrative within this thesis is not a “transparent representation or copy of a sequence of past events” (Carroll, 1990, p.134). Rather, it is composed of carefully selected materials from fragmented supplies to include in its explanation, and at times “filling in links that are not available in the evidential record” (Carroll, 1990, p.134). Applying these methods to the archive and published record available for Leta Hollingworth seems appropriate. According to Chaudhuri et al. (2010), “As historians discovered that many groups seemed to be underrepresented in or excluded from archives, they began to critique the very conception of the archive as an objective, neutral, and disinterested institution" (p.xiv). Methods that emphasize critical thinking and creativity can be seen as a direct response to this early questioning of the objectivity of the archive.

All that said, I want to stress that the work of scholars like Hartman and Fuentes only served as *limited sources of inspiration* for this project, not complete guides that were referenced throughout. Readers should not expect engagement with these concepts beyond what is being discussed in this introduction, and a few reflections offered at the end[2]. The reason being that the life of Leta Hollingworth is markedly different from the lives explored in these works. The life and historical materials of Hollingworth occupies a space that is both limited *and* privileged. Yes, she faced challenges as an outspoken woman from a working-class upbringing who fought scientific sexism when it dominated the field of the Psychology. She was also a U.S. Anglo-Saxon Protestant woman who was allowed to pursue higher education and achieve a position within academia, securing both financial stability and relative social acceptability. This also means that her materials were more likely to find their way into the archive. Extensive work within academia meant that Hollingworth was able to publish in multiple journals and magazines, leaving multiple copies of her work to be recovered. This can be contrasted to figures who worked in clinical Psychology, who did not have such a luxury (Harris, 2021). Not to mention that after her death, her husband had the means to write an entire autobiography dedicated to her life (Hollingworth, 1943), but as her interlocutor. It's also known that Harry Hollingworth destroyed many of his late-wife's personal correspondence and papers after she died in 1939 (Klein, 2002). What survived was partially scattered, with some materials sent to the University of Nebraska, and others to Teachers College, Columbia. It is also unclear if Virginia Florence[3] kept and donated all the Hollingworth materials between Harry Hollingworth's death in 1956, and their donation to the archive 1966[4]. Perhaps Virginia Florence destroyed and/or donated materials like Harry Hollingworth, though this is only speculation.

---

[2] Inclusion of these concepts still felt necessary in the discussion for the sake of transparency.

What is not speculation is that the legacy of Leta Hollingworth has been irreversibly filtered by multiple hands, leaving historians to tangle with a curated history that straddles the line between privileged and limited. The voice of Leta Hollingworth, relative to the women of colour explored in the works of Hartman and Fuentes, had multiple points of amplification and support in reaching the historical record that many women during her time were outright barred from. Therefore, when attempting to assemble an alternative narrative for the life and scholarship of Leta Hollingworth, this thesis cannot adhere strictly to the methods utilized by previous scholars. Instead, it establishes an alternative narrative that occasionally dips into the critical/creative narrative approach exemplified by Hartman and Fuentes before returning to the more conventional narratives of Hollingworth's dual allegiance to eugenic and feminist causes based on archival materials. It continues the legacy of complication by making a case that Leta Hollingworth did *not* subscribe to two separate ideologies found within two separate movements. Instead, this thesis presents a narrative that fuses these two ideologies into something cohesive.

---

[3] Virginia Florence was Harry Hollingworth's stepdaughter. Florence seemingly held onto the Hollingworth materials for 10 years before donating to the institution that would become the Cummings Centre for the History of Psychology (CCHP), at the request of Dr. Popplestone.

[4] While curation of materials by archivists is common practise, it is likely that the Hollingworth materials received little-to-no exclusionary treatment. This based on correspondence from Dr. Popplestone to Virginia Florence expressing that "Archival procedures are quite non-selective. That is, we like to take everything available• without editing or other selection." (Popplestone, 1966).

A singular ideology known as *feminist eugenics,* which held that achieving equality for (white) women was the key to preventing the degeneration of the race.

The following section will begin with an overview of Progressive Era historiography, followed by discussion of early feminisms and feminists during this period. The challenges of defining both will be addressed. This will be followed by an overview of *feminist eugenics*. Having set the stage with key players and terms, we will then dive into the life of Leta Hollingworth, positioning her within larger cultural currents of the Progressive Era. Once a shared sense of Hollingworth is established, an argument will be made that positions her as a feminist eugenicist. The thesis will end with a discussion of the contemporary relevance of this project within biotechnological debate and some concluding reflections.

The Progressive Era and Early Feminisms

Few periods in U.S history have been so scrupulously explored as the Progressive Era (Leuchtenburg, 2017). This comes with advantages and disadvantages. While there is a near limitless supply of articles, journals, and books that can be referenced, this plethora of possible references comes with varying interpretations. Even *as* the Progressive movement was unfolding, scholars were aware of the difficulty of pinning down what unified individuals. In 1915, Benjamin Park DeWitt forwarded that "The term 'progressive movement' has been so widely used, so much discussed, and so differently interpreted that any exposition of its meaning and principles, to be adequate, must be prefaced by careful definition."(DeWitt, 1915; as cited in Kennedy, 1975 p.453)[5].As of 1999, Steven J. Diner noticed that scholarship of the Progressive Era "developed on two largely separate tracks". He notes that while “One group of historians continues to explore the politics of the era…another looks at how workers, immigrants, African Americans, women, and others lived, worked, and experienced social change.” (Diner, 1999, p.5). This split in focus results in different questions being asked, source materials being used, and periodization varying by roughly *30* years. Even invoking the name “Progressive Era” is to align yourself with a particular track of historiography. In other words, by simply using “Progressive Era” within the title of this thesis, I’ve likely already made some enemies. Following in the steps of Diner (1999), I’ve chosen to “use the term…because historians routinely use it and readers recognize it more readily than any other” (p.5). So, what has been said about the Progressive Era?

---

[5] In Peter G. Filene's *An Obituary for "The Progressive Movement"* (2007), they call for the term " The Progressive movement" to be "discarded" given its vagueness (p.443).

The lines drawn by Diner (1999) follow the broader movement from political to social history as discussed in the introduction. Progressive era political history “debated *at length* [emphasis added] the social origins and backgrounds of progressive politicians, reformers, and supporters of reform” (Diner, 1999, p.5). These works include, but are not limited to, Richard Hofstadter’s *Age of Reform* (1955), Gabriel Kolko’s *Triumph of Conservatism* (1963), and *The Search for Order 1877 – 1920* by Robert Wiebe (1967). Further historiographical distinctions can be made between these three works[6], but for the purposes of this thesis, it is fine that they fall under the same banner. Guiding questions for these scholars revolved around defining progressivism, identifying the demographic, motivations, and values of progressivists, and figuring out where the desire for political reform came from (Diner, 1999). Beginning in the 1970s, Progressive Era social history made its appearance, shifting “from a focus on politics to a focus on the lives of ordinary Americans” (Diner, 1999, p.7). It also around this time that more critical historiography for the Progressive Era as a whole emerges (Kennedy, 1975; Lynch, 1977). These social history works discussed typical Progressive Era themes like professionalization, but through lenses of Cincinnati Physicians (Marcus, 1979) and New York/Chicago Teacher (Urban, 1976). In their essence, the work of Progressive Era social historians have “have nudged us beyond the “sound bites” of progressive political rhetoric to a fuller picture of the ways Americans of all kinds experienced politics and social change” (Diner, 1999, p.8).

---

[6] For an earlier and more refined historiographical distinction between these works, see *Overview: The Progressive Era* by David M. Kennedy (1975).

All that said, discussion of the Progressive Era within this thesis was informed very early on by the political history of Wiebe (1967). This work resonated with me because of its general interpretation of the Progressive Era as a transitionary period from a “simple, rural, traditional, undifferentiated social system…into a complex, urban, secular, highly-differentiated social system.” (Lynch, 1977, p.180).[7] A common critique of social histories is that within their “richly textured and nuanced case studies”, they can sometimes forgo unifying themes, making it difficult to get a wide picture of this period (Diner, 1999, p.7). For the present thesis to progress[8], *some* shared sense of the Progressive Era is needed.

Broadly defined, the present thesis defines the Progressive Era as lasting from the late 1890s to early 1920s, with the United States undergoing immense socio-political change to address perceived corruption in public life and relieve social and economic distress, often through what were considered “progressive” reforms (Kennedy, 1975; Rothbard, 2017). Reformers during this era were following the reform impulse known as *Progressivism,* which "reflected a growing concern about the physical, economic, and moral problems created by industrialization, urbanization, and the concentration of economic power" (Robertson, 2014, p.42)[9]. More specifically, the Progressive era was a transitional period marked by mass industrialization and urbanization, pulling the U.S. population from what they describe as "island communities" to the unfamiliar urban centers (Wiebe, 1967)[10]. Exemplifying this is the massive amounts of population growth within cities. Lewthwaite (2010) describes how between 1890 and 1930, the total population of Los Angeles sky-rocketed from 50,000 to 1.2 *million*. Contributing to this rapid population growth was a tidal wave of immigration, with roughly 7,500,000 immigrants arriving between 1891 and 1910 from Eastern and Southern Europe (Cabán, 2001). Rapid and disorganized expansion made it increasingly difficult to meet the communities' fundamental needs and made social action impossible through the destruction of the neighborhoods that previously sustained them. Rather than having these rural support networks many had grown accustomed to, those living in the urban cores could only rely on their earned wages to support themselves (Robertson, 2014). Problems for these citizens quickly piled up. Various economic recessions and panics left many U.S citizens impoverished, with little hope for groups who were unable or blocked from pursuing work. This was only exacerbated by local officials diverting their focus on enticing vital industry into growing metropolitan areas with lower taxes, rather than fighting for civic improvements. According to Wiebe, the result of this was that "Essential services became the playthings of private profit, and a busy people paid the price of danger, dirt, and disease." (1967, p.24).

---

[7] Tyrrell (2018) notes that *The Search for Order* “preceded the rise of the ‘new social history’ and the emergence of second-wave feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s”. Tyrrell continues by saying “it is not surprising that Wiebe’s treatment of women included them as cogs in the organizational synthesis and no more” (2018).

[8] Pun intended.

---

[9] That said, according to Fishback (2007) "There was no unified program to which all Progressives subscribed".

[10] "Island Communities" are described as rural communities characterized by their isolation and limited communication network (Wiebe, 1967).

Contributing to these issues was a lack-of-fit between the value systems that governed rural and urban environments. The smaller size and isolation of towns meant that rural community members could be seen as individuals on a (more-or-less) levelled socioeconomic playing field, capable of holding one's neighbor accountable. Additionally, people in charge of education and medicine were less likely to have received any form of standardized training. All that was seemingly required to pursue these fields was either self-dedication to the craft, or a brief apprenticeship. This made it seem like "almost anyone with incentive…could acquire the skills of a profession" (Wiebe, 1967, p.13). The values that often governed these rural communities and individuals became increasingly difficult to apply within the dense and unfamiliar urban landscape. In response, some "Progressives tried to expand the role of government and reign in the worst aspects of industrial capitalism by passing state and federal legislation, such as child labour laws, laws mandating school attendance, and laws stipulating maximum hours and minimum wage." (Parker, 2009, p.118). Women predominantly filled the progressive landscapes concerning child and maternal welfare (Frankel, 1991). Across the U.S, women reformers created and joined "municipal improvement associations" and "civic clubs" to protest corporate and political corruption. Some of these women-led reform movements relied on arguments based on "separate sphere" ideology, a widespread belief that women were best suited for the sphere of private, domestic life which included motherhood and child-rearing, and men were best suited to the public life of politics. Middle-class women, however, often invoked their "duties to protect children and care for the poor" (Frankel, 1991, p.1), to leverage their place in the political arena (Parker, 2009). These women tended to support and lead reforms geared towards antiprostitution, prohibition, and prevention of venereal disease (Lemons, 1973). That said, at the turn of the century, we also begin to see more women *refusing* to rely on “the ideology of separate spheres, or true womanhood, upon which most clubwomen’s and reformers’ maternalist politics were based” (Parker, 2009, p.118). Some of these more radical feminists shared a commitment to reforms based in “women’s rights, individualism, free speech, economic and psychological independence, and sexual freedom” (Parker, 2009, p.127).

Before I continue, I would just like to say a quick word about the complexities of discussing the early feminist movements of the Progressive Era. Keen readers might have already picked-up that I am deploying a pluralized *feminisms* or women’s *movements* whenever possible (or when I remember). The reasoning behind this is that I was inspired by the work of Marino & Ware (2022), who have attempted to acknowledge the problematic “origin” story of feminism and concept of “waves” when attempting to reconstruct the history of feminism.[11] Instead, these scholars use *feminisms* to denote the pluralism of feminist thought at the turn of the century. In the words of Cott (1986), “The one word - feminism - is bound to be inadequate to capture the multifarious ways that women through the ages have protested male domination or attempted to redefine gender hierarchy” (p.809). Marino & Ware (2022) also highlight a variety of scholars who have extended the historical narrative both geographically and chronologically[12]. Examples of this kind of work include that of Waggoner (2022) and Corinealdi (2022) who explore the life and scholarship of black feminist scholars and activists who were active from the 1920s and beyond. Waggoner analyzes the work of Marita Bonner, an early black feminist scholar, to

---

[11] The often cited “origin” story of first-wave feminism begins with the 1848 Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls and ends in the 1920s with the passage of the 19th amendment (Marino & Ware, 2022).

[12] Moving beyond the 1920s, Marino & Ware (2022) argue that black women’s quest for full citizenship did not end until 1965 or later, marked by the passing of the Voting Rights Act.

"elucidate how white women's literatures of madness in the early twentieth century, as well as feminist criticism, utilize racialized madness to frame the recovery and liberation of their white feminist protagonists" (2022, p.885). Corinealdi (2022) explores the trail-blazing legacy of one Linda Smart Chubb, a West-Indian and Panamanian international feminist.

Despite the differences of more maternalistic and radical feminists as described above, both feminisms shared the common goal of improving women's status within U.S society, often through education and health reforms. However, *who* they included in their conception of woman was very specific. When White, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant (WASP) women from the middle class made claims of "universal sisterhood", it typically only extended to women like them. In the words of Davis (2003), "Black women were relegated to a place outside the ideological construction of 'Womanhood'"(p. 229). This WASPy trajectory of early U.S feminisms was influenced by earlier developments in evolutionary science and rifts caused by black men's emancipation (Newman, 1999; Hamlin, 2014). Early feminisms relied on their own interpretations of the theory of evolution to forward their arguments. Despite Darwin's own interpretations of evolutionary theory demanding "subservience to men and total devotion to maternity", some early feminisms were quick to realize that Darwin's theory "contained the seeds of radical interpretations as well as conventional ones" (Hamlin, 2014, p.3).The theory of evolution gave them the opportunity to redefine what was "natural" and break-free from the chains set by Adam and Eve (Hamlin, 2014). In the words of Floyd Dell, "the woman's movement is a product of the evolutionary science of the nineteenth century…it is modern science which, by giving us a new view of the body, its functions, its needs, its claims upon the world, has laid the basis for a successful feminist movement." (Dell, 1913; as cited in Hamlin, 2014, p.34).

That said, as alluded to before, while some feminists utilized evolutionary theory to argue against the idea of separate spheres for men and women, some feminists utilized theory in *favour* of it. For these feminists, they used "evolutionary principles as a way to interpret, not reject, the Bible." (Hamlin, 2014, p.38). Feminists like Catherine Waugh McCulloch blended religious *and* scientific arguments, reasoning that "scientists of today quite agree with the Genesis parable concerning the creation; that creation was in the ascending scale, first the lower creatures, then the higher animals, then man, and last at the apex the more complex woman." (McCulloch, n.d.; as cited in Hamlin, 2014, p.39). That said, embedded in Darwin's theory of evolution were narratives of a racial hierarchy. Regardless of their utilization of evolutionary theory in their quest for women's emancipation, feminists absorbed these narratives. As noted by Hamlin (2014):

> The women who were most enthused by Darwinian evolution, as previous scholars have established, also internalized these racial hierarchies and often drew on them to assert that their rightful place was at the top of the evolutionary ladder, together with white men. (p.19)

The belief in racial hierarchies from WASP women was only exacerbated in the late 1860s with the ratifications of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments (Newman, 1999). Some feminists claimed they could "empathize with enslaved peoples because they, as women, experienced similar oppression due to their sex" (Newman, 1999, p.5). However, due to "legal recognition of black male citizenship" beginning in the late 1860s, white women could no longer claim "common victimhood"(p. 5). According to Newman (1999):

> Blending religious conviction (the ideal of Christian evangelical benevolence) with science (social evolutionary theories) and political ideology (progressivism), white proponents of woman's rights helped create new roles for themselves that explicitly maintained the racial hierarchies that were based on the presumption that Anglo-American Protestants were culturally, as well as biologically, superior to other peoples. (p. 7)

The racial hierarchies of early WASP feminists were only deepened by similar rhetoric of another social movement gaining traction during the Progressive Era, *eugenics*. The term "eugenics" was coined by Englishman Sir Francis Galton in 1883 and derived from the Greek word[13] meaning "well-born" (Liscum & Garcia, 2022). Like some of the early feminists of the late 19th century, Sir Francis Galton was influenced by the evolutionary theory of Darwin[14]. Galton showed *so* much enthusiasm for evolutionary theory that he was "encouraged to investigate questions that had long interested him that 'clustered round the central topics of Heredity and the possible improvement of the Human Race'" (Galton, 1909; as cited in Gillham, 2001, p.87). Galton initially defined eugenics as:

> …the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had. (1883, p.25)

---

[13] "Ευγένιος" or "Eugenes" combines the prefix "eu" (meaning "noble" or "well") and "genes" ("birth" or "born").

[14] Sir Francis Galton was also the younger cousin of Charles Darwin (Gillham, 2001).

This was not Galton's last attempt at defining eugenics, however. In 1904, Galton re-defined eugenics as "the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also, with those that develop them to the utmost advantage" (Galton, 1904, p.1). Four years later, in *Memories of My Life*, Galton again re-defines eugenics, arguing that "Eugenics is officially defined in the minutes of the University of London as the 'study of the agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations either physically or mentally'" (Galton, 1908, p. 21)[15]. A definition of eugenics can be further refined into positive or negative eugenics. Positive eugenics strives to promote socially desirable characteristics within a population, while negative eugenics strives to reduce socially undesirable characteristics (Harwood, 2020). Unsurprisingly, the U.S. eugenic movement of the late 19th and early 20th century was supported by academics, lobbyists and financial backers who were predominantly – though not exclusively WASPy middle-to-upper class men and women who feared their respective place within the racial, classed, and gendered hierarchy[16]. As noted by Cohen (2017) when discussing the fears of this demographic:

> Record levels of immigration were transforming the nation's ethnic and religious makeup. And with increased industrialization and urbanization, community and family ties were fraying. These anxieties were being redirected and expressed in the form of fears about the unfit. (p. 4)

Those labelled as "unfit", "mentally defective" or "feeble minded" were often only "…those who failed to manage themselves and their affairs with 'ordinary prudence' and were 'unable to keep up with the social procession and [were] interfering with the march'" (Davies, 1923 as cited in Kennedy, 2008, p.24). Put plainly, the feebleminded and mentally deficient were people who did not meet the moral/social/intellectual standards and expectations designated by those administering the test. Kennedy (2008), in their intersectional feminist study of eugenic field workers, highlights that young, female, poor, non-Anglo-Saxon, and urban individuals were most often the targets of eugenic surveillance, stigmatization, and social control. As noted by Dyck (2014), "The burgeoning field of [eugenics] attracted attention from a wide array of scientists, policy makers, philosophers, and social reformers across the political spectrum"(p.8). Given the history of different feminisms adopting their own racial hierarchies, it was easy for many early feminists to adopt eugenic philosophies that went together with their feminist arguments. Well-known feminists like Margaret Sanger, Charlotte Perkins Gilman exemplify this uneasy combination.

---

[15] Petersen (2007) describes as the rhetorical power of the term "eugenics" partly lies in its own definitional ambiguity.

[16] Some eugenicists explicitly argued that "it is neither extreme of the economic ladder which is the hope of the future, but that great mass of useful citizens between these extremes. Rational methods of increasing the fertility…of this great middle class should be considered" (Noyes, 1920, p.88).

Born in 1860, Gilman was a prominent writer of both fiction and non-fiction during the Progressive Era. Whether it was through her own monthly periodical, the *Forerunner,* or her various texts such as *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892/2022), Gilman used her writing to question the androcentric culture of her time. For Gilman, women were "…uneducated, underdeveloped, and stunted by the prevailing system of gender roles and therefore could not be good mothers." (Ziegler, 2008, p.226). Many of the feminist arguments forwarded by Gilman included ideas of race salvation depending on access to birth control, better educational and employment opportunities, and the opportunity to reject marriage (Ziegler, 2008). It's worth noting, however, that Gilman had mixed feelings about the label of feminism. Despite including her work under the "rubric of feminism" earlier in her career, near the end of her life, Gilman has been recorded as saying that "I abominate being called a feminist." (Gilman, 1929 as cited in Rensing, 2006, p.119). It's also worth noting that Gilman defined women by their responsibility towards reproducing the race (Rensing, 2006). Her eugenics was not strictly hereditarian however, and believed environmental reform could lead to positive change "the future hereditary make-up of society" (Rensing, 2006, p.125).

Born in 1879, Sanger is most well known for her pioneering work on birth control reform and advocacy, publishing a monthly newspaper titled *The Woman Rebel* (1914) and opening the first U.S. birth control clinic in 1916 (Wardell, 1980). Sanger's newspaper ranged from discussing women's emancipation, child labour, and the "results of having too many babies", all of which going directly against the Comstock laws of the time (Wardell, 1980, p.739). Sanger's feminism reflected a Malthusian logic of overpopulation and resource scarcity (Green, 2004). For Sanger, her birth control "…though prudent, practice must lead to a higher individuality and ultimately to a cleaner race." (Sanger, 1918, as cited in Ziegler, 2008, p.229). In her work, *Woman and the New Race* (1920), she argues that women's sexual inequality and ignorance of birth control were at the root of racial degeneracy. Again, it's worth noting the *who* Sanger was discussing when advocating for women. According to Gordon (1978), Sanger's involvement within the "Negro Project", and more general interest in providing contraceptives to black Americans, was motivated by racism. And while some have come to the partial defence of Sanger, arguing that Gordon took her writing out-of-context and that Sanger did not want to exterminate the black population (Valenza, 1985), the goals of eugenicists were ultimately met through Sanger's birth control project (Roberts, 2009).

What is Feminist Eugenics?

Given the overlap of early U.S feminist and eugenic reformers to create and maintain racial hierarchies, it should not be surprising to learn of the fringe movements known as *eugenic feminism* and *feminist eugenics*. First coined by British eugenicist, Caleb Saleeby, “eugenic feminism” was an attempt to “…shape the scope of feminism and limit its focus to motherhood and breeding for racial betterment…” (Rensing, 2006, p.115). This was a branch of eugenics which strove to restrict women’s liberty. Devereux (2006) has noted that Saleeby’s eugenic feminism was “…partly a deceptive rhetorical strategy seeking to draw middle-class women's rights activists back to home and duty…”(p.43). Not to say that Saleeby was against the feminist movement entirely, but that it should be confined to the needs of the eugenic movement first and foremost. This is evidenced by his statement that “…the very first thing that the feminist movement must prove is that it is eugenic” (Saleeby, 1911, p.6) That, and his utter condemnation of certain feminist demands that not only “…ignore eugenics, but are opposed to it, and would, if successful, be therefore ruinous to the race.” (Saleeby, 1911 p.7). Saleeby was *adamantly* against the higher education of women and the idea of married women working (Saleeby, 1911).

This contrasts with what Rensing (2006) describes as *feminist eugenics*, which could be seen as the direct inverse of eugenic feminism. Feminist eugenics held that gender equality was positively correlated with racial improvement (Rensing, 2006). In the words of Ziegler (2008), a common thread amongst eugenic feminists was that economic, sexual, social, and political equality for women was the key to preventing the degeneration of the race. Rather than feminism shaping itself in relation/service to eugenics, feminist eugenics calls for a reshaping of eugenics in service of feminism. However, this distinction between eugenic feminism and feminist eugenics is not always acknowledged, and some scholars use the term eugenic feminism to describe what Rensing (2006) would describe as feminist eugenics, while meaning the same thing (Ziegler, 2008; Seitler, 2003). Thus far, only a few figures have been *explicitly* identified by contemporary scholars as feminist eugenicists, such as Gilman and Sanger. Only recently has this research extended into the context of Psychology (Harris, 2021). The present thesis hopes to expand this limited body of research by making a case for the inclusion of a prominent figure within the history of Psychology, namely, Leta Stetter Hollingworth. Having sketched the broad sociohistorical and political contexts in which she was embedded, I now describe the life of Leta Hollingworth as a Progressive Era feminist, eugenicist, and psychologist.

The Progressive Citizen

Early Days and Academia

Leta (Stetter) Hollingworth was born May 25th, 1886, in Chadron, Nebraska. After her mother's death in 1890, Leta and her siblings lived with their paternal grandparents in the town of Valentine[17]. In many ways, the early childhood environment of Leta Hollingworth exemplified Wiebe's "island communities" (1967). The towns of Chadron and Valentine were small, isolated communities nearing state lines, with roughly 150 miles of separation (Klein, 2002). In addition to their isolation and limited communication network, these communities were maintained by White Anglo-Saxon and Protestant ideals where "God had ordained modesty in women, rectitude in men, and thrift, sobriety, and hard work in both." (Wiebe, 1967, p.14). Given Hollingworth's maintenance of "a very deep, personal Christian belief throughout her life", and listing "her religion as 'Protestant' in a biographical dictionary of notable women", it is likely safe to assume that Hollingworth was raised in devote Christian-Protestant household (Klein, 2002, pp. 20, 191). Finally, Hollingworth's childhood on the prairie frontier of Nebraska was also likely influenced by the pervasive nativism, racism, and antisemitism common in a time and place known to deliver its own frontier justice to people of colour[18]. According to Hollingworth's youngest sister, there is reason to suspect that Leta was both racist and antisemitic (Klein, 2002, p.31). In other words, the life of Leta Hollingworth serves as an exemplar of the WASPy population and ideals that dominated the rural U.S very early on.

Within these island communities of Nebraska, Hollingworth began her childhood education, something that had only just become compulsory for children in the state of Nebraska in 1887 (Grimes, 1922). Excelling in her academics, Hollingworth was accepted into the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1902 (Klein, 2002). Remembering that Wiebe (1967) characterizes the Progressive Era as a transitional period of rapid urbanization, we can roughly situate Leta as being part of this larger transition from rural communities to urban cores. After being named the state capital in 1869, the population of Lincoln, Nebraska increased from 2,700 in 1870 to 55,000 by 1890 (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2008).

---

[18] In 1887, A black man named Jerry White was charged for the rape of a white woman. He was then jailed and lynched in the nearby town of Long Pine by a "group of vigilantes alleged to be from Long Pine or Valentine".

While Hollingworth was among a generation of women whose presence in academia was slowly being accepted, anxieties around women's role in society persisted. Women's pursuit of higher education was continuously questioned on the grounds of their mental ability and proper role as child-bearers. Edward Thorndike, a prominent Psychologist and Hollingworth's future graduate supervisor, believed that "Of the hundred most gifted individuals in the country, not two would be women" (Seller, 1981; from Klein, 2002). That said, women were not discouraged from *all* forms of higher education during the Progressive Era. Women typically received encouragement "to enter sex-segregated programs" that were "essentially extensions of domestic care" (Klein, 2002, p.34). Despite their success within these fields and tentative acceptance on the grounds of fulfilling their natural roles, stigma continued. Thorndike believed that even "though women should capture the teaching profession, they would hardly fill its most eminent positions" (Seller, 1981; from Klein, 2002, p.33)[19]. If it was not a question of women's mental abilities, it was a concern for their health and the health of the race. According to many white, male eugenicists, while *some* education for women was advised, white women's pursuit of higher education was to be discouraged in the belief that it would make them less interested in marriage and procreation (Leslie, 1911; Sprague, 1915). Others argued that it was not that college made women less interested in marriage and procreation, but rather that colleges were more appealing to women who were already disinterested. Instead of catering to these women, "the college should also provide for the needs of [women] whose domestic and motherly instincts seek…full development and expression" (Banker, 1917, p.212). Academics like A.E. Hamilton (1916) wrote we need not abandon women's colleges to combat the seemingly low number of women pursuing marriage inside academia. Instead, colleges should allow women the opportunity to care for temporarily adopted college babies, developing the wonder of motherhood which lies "…in the nature of every normal girl."(p.394). College babies would remind women stuck in the "…nunny, feminine isolation…" of higher education "…what [they] are in the world for" (Hamilton, 1916, p.394). G. Stanley Hall, one of the most prominent Psychologists during this period, was one of many academics who asserted that women's intellectual achievement was limited due to the diversion of blood "from the brain to the uterus." (Shields, 2016, p.358). Hall also asserted that women should not pursue higher education on the grounds that "over-activity of the brain during the critical period of the idle and later teens would interfere with the full development of mammary power and of the functions essential for the full transmission of life" (Hall, 1906; sourced fromYakushko, 2021, p.195)[20].

---

[19] As mentioned, Thorndike eventually accepted Hollingworth as a graduate student. He also accepted other women as well under his supervision, occasionally coming to their defence when other psychologists questioned their abilities.

Despite the accusations and health warnings from many of her academic contemporaries, Hollingworth went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree and a teaching certificate for English literature and writing in 1906 (Klein, 2002). Roughly two years after her graduation from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Leta Hollingworth moved to New York City to start a new life with her fiancé, Harry Hollingworth, who was completing his graduate studies in Psychology at Columbia University (Klein, 2002).[21]

---

[20] While G. Stanley Hall showed opposition to women pursuing higher education, he also supervised various female graduate students over the course of his career education (Diehl, 1986).

Hollingworth's time in New York was a period of brief professional stagnation and personal growth for her. It was in New York that Hollingworth learned the hard truth of being a married woman attempting to work within the New York education system. Under the policy of The Board of Education of the City of New York, married women were prohibited from teaching regardless of their qualifications. This was not exclusive to New York though. Married women across the U.S. were barred from teaching throughout the 19th and 20th century, "although policies varied from locality and region" (MacDonald, 1999, p.450). For example, in 1896, the school committee of Providence, Rhode Island passed an amendment that a teacher's marriage would be considered a formal resignation of their position (MacDonald, 1999). Interestingly, while Boston was seemingly among the first cities in the U.S. to implement a marriage ban for teachers, it also recognized "exceptional cases" that would allow married women to teach. Unfortunately for Leta Hollingworth, New York's teaching laws at the time contained no loopholes or exceptions for a woman in her position to utilize. During this period of unemployment, Hollingworth became a charter member of the Feminist Alliance and the Heterodoxy Club (Klein, 2002).

A Feminist in the Making

The Heterodoxy Club was Founded in 1912 by Mary Jenny Howe, and served as a safe space in Greenwich Village for intellectual women to share and discuss their unorthodox ideas with one another. Mabel Dodge Luhan, a member of the Heterodoxy Club, famously described it as a club "for unorthodox women, women who did things and did them openly." (Schwarz, 1986, p.1). The club was not a place for women to gather and engage in idle chit-chat, but an opportunity to forge unique and life-long networks with like-minded peers (Scutts, 2022). The group "…provided a setting for a cross-fertilization of ideas between social scientists within the academy and independent activists…" who were engaged with feminist politics (Wittenstein, 1989, p.33). Unfortunately, not much is known about the form, attendance, or content of club meetings since an official record was never kept. One reason for this was to hold space for doubt and disagreement amongst members (Scutts, 2022). Also worthy of mention is that roughly five years after its inception, the Heterodoxy Club came under the scrutinizing gaze of the Red Scare. With the harassment, surveillance, and arrest of several of its members, one can only imagine the heightened desire to keep such a club secretive, and its content off the record (Scutts, 2022). That said, what can be pieced together about the club's form is that meeting attendance was limited to 40 members (which alerts us to the small size and exclusive nature of this secretive club), men were sometimes invited to meetings for husbands' evenings, and each discussion was organized around a particular topic (Scutts, 2022).

---

[21] Perhaps Leta was following the advice of Puffer Howes who advocated women to marry people who shared a field of study, enabling collaboration in both personal and professional spheres Johnston & Johnson (2008).

Hollingworth's membership within Heterodoxy also gives us insight into her life through the lens of other members. For example, according to a letter sent from Mrs. C. B. Pinchot describing a Heterodoxy meeting where she attended as a guest, Leta Hollingworth apparently included "'…in her definition of perfect feminist a woman happily married and with children…'" (C.B Pinchot Collection, retrieved from Schwarz,1986, p.38). We'll return to the implications of this comment later, but I would like to mention now that such a comment coming from Hollingworth is *incredibly* surprising given that the Hollingworth's never had children of their own. Some speculate that Leta Hollingworth was unable to have children, or that it was a "conscious decision to practise birth control" (Klein, 2002, p.111). Harry Hollingworth's own unpublished autobiography lends support to the latter, describing how their similar experiences of poverty and desire to pursue personal interests made the thought of a child unwelcome (Klein, 2002).

It was within the Heterodoxy club that Leta Hollingworth encountered some of the periods most (in)famous feminists of her time. Charlotte Perkins Gilman was an early member of the Heterodoxy club, and Margaret Sanger frequented club meetings as a guest. Like her fellow feminist contemporaries, Hollingworth acknowledged "the scores of obstacles that keep women from living freely even in our democratic land" (Hollingworth, 1917; sourced from Klein, 2002, p.62). That said, given what has been said about these early WASPy feminists, it is reasonable to suspect that Hollingworth's idea of women was *severely* limited.

Support for this also comes from Hollingworth's *The New Woman in the Making* (1927), where she discusses the impact of Biology on the woman question. She makes direct references to Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859), commenting that it "indirectly affected women's status by promulgating the conviction that human beings had not been divinely ordained once and for all" (Hollingworth, 1927, p.18). Hollingworth rarely touched on the issue of race within her academic writing. When discussing the relationship between race and intelligence, Hollingworth believed that "we have few facts" (Hollingworth, 1926, p.75). That said, in the next line she discusses how U.S "negro children furnish relatively few of the gifted, and that children of Italian parentage furnish nearly as few" (p.75). She contrasts these low frequencies with the higher frequency of gifted U.S children with "English, Scotch, and Jewish" parentage (p.75). And while Hollingworth admits to a high frequency of gifted children with Jewish parentage, she also characterizes this frequency as being a "marked *excess* [emphasis added]"(Hollingworth , 1926, p.70)[22]. Not to mention that Hollingworth also broadly characterized 17th century immigrants as literate, who were distinguishable from the recent illiterate immigrants of the 20th century (Hollingworth, 1926)[23]. Perhaps Hollingworth felt that it was enough to say that scientists were "ignorant of the facts" to combat the scientific racism of her time. Or perhaps Hollingworth felt, like many early feminist thinkers during the Progressive Era, that issues of race were separate and less important than issues of gender for white women. Regardless, Hollingworth believed that the frequency of giftedness as related to race was a subject "of great importance to education and to politics, and deserves thorough study" (Hollingworth, 1926, p.71).

A Consummate Professional

After a few years of unemployment and days filled with feminist discourse within the Heterodoxy Club and Feminist Alliance, the Hollingworth household secured substantial funds from the *Coca Cola* Company to undertake a study of the cognitive and psychological effects of caffeine (see Benjamin et al., 1991; Klein, 2002). These funds allowed Leta to return to school and pursue a graduate degree studying educational Psychology at Columbia University. When she graduated in 1913 with a Masters, Hollingworth was officially a part of a new generation of professional Psychologists. More specifically, Leta was part of the second-generation of U.S women Psychologists, as defined by Johnston & Johnson (2008)[24]. While the more modern and

---

[22] Given the culture Hollingworth was raised in, and the possible contents of some unofficial correspondence, Hollingworth's word choice for describing the frequency of gifted Jewish children is not too surprising.

[23] Hollingworth also noted that the samples used to make such conclusions represented a small and very specific kind of individual that cannot speak to the "mother populations" (Hollingworth,1926, p.46).

[24] Roughly defined as have earned their PhD degrees between 1906 to 1945. Interestingly, in an analysis of 107 second-generation women Psychologists, Columbia University hosted 23% of them.

scientific version of Psychology was not introduced to the U.S until the latter-half of the 19th century, *practitioners* of Psychology were already hard at work. Working under titles such as "Mind Reader", "Mental healer", "Phrenologists, and "Psychologist", early 19th century U.S citizens had plenty of options when seeking counsel for their marriage and/or careers (Benjamin et al, 2003). When the science of Psychology finally landed in the U.S, academic psychologists worked fiercely to establish professional boundaries that would separate their scientific work from the pseudo-scientific practises of those who came before them. However, given the immense restructuring of U.S society and the host of problems (perceived and real) that came with it, the U.S "clamored for an applied social science to solve the problems of the new society" (Benjamin et al., 2003).

Around the turn of the century, the markers of a budding profession were beginning to show for Psychology[25]. In 1883, G. Stanley Hall opened the first U.S Psychology laboratory at Johns Hopkins University, establishing a specialized education and knowledge site that would grant authority to the new professional Psychologist. Hall continued their work by publishing the first periodical academic journal for Psychology, the *American Journal of Psychology* in 1887, creating a system of knowledge exchange for Psychologists (Green & Feinerer, 2015). Finally, the American Psychological Association (APA) was founded in 1892 (Benjamin, 2018) and in 1915 adopted a resolution that marked its "first attempt to regulate psychological practice" (Farreras, 2019, p.193). Hollingworth herself was a dedicated agent in the fight to establish a professional identity for Psychology. In 1917, the American Association of Clinical Psychologists (AACP) was founded with Leta Hollingworth as its secretary (Klein, 2002;

---

[25] According to Goldstein (1984), these "markers" are the creation of a body of knowledge that requires mastery, establishing a monopoly for the professionals, control over who does the work and how it's done, and a commitment to the client.

Farreras, 2019). The goal of the AACP was to raise "the standards of qualification [of those engaged in clinical work] and the professional status of clinical psychologists [vis-à-vis "Binet testers"]" (Wallin, 1938; as cited in Farreras, 2019, p. 194).

After graduating from Columbia University, Hollingworth was offered a role as a clinical Psychologist at the Clearing House for Mental Defectives, administering Binet-Simon mental tests to patients (Klein, 2002). During her time here Hollingworth gained access to a large data pool of participants to investigate questions of sex differences. It was partly because of her work at the clearing house that Hollingworth was able "…to scientifically prove that theories of male superiority based upon Darwin's theory of variation from the norm were wrong." (Klein, 2002, p.83). And while this work undoubtedly helped combat the pervasive scientific sexism of during her lifetime, it's vital to interrogate the assumptions and population used to acquire such findings. Likely participants of Hollingworth's foundational research were the "feeble minded" or "unfit" who were targeted for not fitting into the status quo. Hollingworth's engagement in administering tests within the Clearing House for Mental Defectives was hardly out of the ordinary for a budding 20th century psychologist. When the relationship between U.S. Psychology and eugenics is being discussed, conversation often centres on the role of intelligence testing. U.S. psychologists had a particular fascination with the deployment of intelligence tests during the early 20th century, with Benjamin (2018) noting that "if any word characterized American psychology in the twentieth century, it was testing." (p.64)[26] Intelligence tests were deployed for a variety of purposes, such as a form of military evaluation with army alpha and beta tests[27], and academic assessment within schools. Many of these purposes were overtly eugenic. Intelligence testing was used as a method of immigration control for the U.S-Mexico border (Stern, 2016; Benjamin, 2018) and for the immigrants arriving from Europe at Ellis Island (Farreras, 2019). Farreras (2019) recently discussed how the Binet-Simon "empowered psychologists… to carve out a niche for themselves in the courtroom… as 'experts' when testifying as to the feeble-mindedness of individuals." (p.184). All of this is to say that Leta Hollingworth was at the forefront of Psychology's professionalization in the early 20th century.

---

[26] Perhaps unsurprisingly, Leta Hollingworth was apparently fond of quoting the motto "test all things" (Piechowski, 1990) and claimed that her family motto was "I love to test" (Hollingworth, 1940, as cited in Hertberg-Davis, 2013).

Hollingworth continued her post-graduate education at Columbia under the supervision of Dr. Edward Thorndike, eventually earning her Ph.D. in 1916. After graduating, Hollingworth accepted a faculty position at Columbia University, where she officially began her journey into studying gifted children. It was in the "spring semester of 1918-1919 academic year when [Hollingworth] began teaching 'Education 254,' which she described as 'the study of fortunate variants, the generally and specifically gifted" (Klein, 2002, p.120). Hollingworth's interest in studying gifted children was not unprecedented. On the opposite U.S. coast from Hollingworth, Psychologists such as Lewis B. Terman, often considered the "father of gifted education" (Warne, 2019, p.3), were also conducting research on gifted children (Terman, 1906; 1919; 1926)[28]. Terman was also a noted eugenicist, especially early in his career (see Stern, 2016).

---

[27] They were also utilized to "confirm the correlation of mental and moral qualities" of disobedient soldiers (American Genetic Association, 1920, p.189).

[28] Near the end of her life, Hollingworth and Terman collaborated on two articles (see Hollingworth, L. S., Terman, L. M., & Oden, M. (1940); The significance of deviates; Hollingworth, H. L., Terman, L. M., & Kelly, E. L. (1939). Psychological factors in marital happiness.).

Hollingworth began her first series of experiments on the study of gifted children at Public School (P.S) 165 from 1922 to 1925 (Klein, 2002). The time spent and observations gathered by Hollingworth during this three-year period laid the foundation for much of Hollingworth's *Gifted Children: Their Nature and Nurture*, the first textbook devoted to gifted children's education and psychology (Klein, 2002). In 1934, Hollingworth was finally permitted to open a gifted school of her own within the vacant building of P.S 500, what is now more commonly referred to as the Speyer School. Leta was actively involved in the Speyer school until her death in 1939 (Klein, 2002). Given the times in which the Speyer school was developed, and the individual leading it, it should not come as a surprise that the educational philosophy of the Speyer school was that of social reconstructionism, emphasizing a curriculum that developed students' understanding of contemporary issues to create better, more democratic, citizens (Klein, 2002).

Hollingworth the Feminist Eugenicist

While Hollingworth never explicitly labels herself as a feminist eugenicist, there are several pieces that, when put together in a particular order, create a convincing case for her feminist eugenic ideology. The first piece is Hollingworth's charter membership in the Heterodoxy Club of Greenwich Village. More specifically, her membership alongside Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Margaret Sanger, two well documented feminist eugenicists. While the presence of Gilman and Sanger within the Heterodoxy Club during the same time as Hollingworth does not mean they took up each other's ideas of feminist eugenics, given what is known about the nature of the club, it is likely that their ideas were, at the very least, known and shared with one another. This is partially supported by the praise offered by Hollingworth towards Sanger within her academic work. Hollingworth noted that "…The most notable contribution to the psychology of motherhood, in the matter of family limitation, is that by Margaret Sanger…" (Hollingworth, 1929, p.5). Additionally, Hollingworth and Gilman likely presented their articles, *The New Woman in the Making* (Hollingworth, 1927) and *Woman's Achievements Since the Franchise* (Gilman, 1927), as speakers for a *Current History* symposium titled *The New Woman*. One engagement we can feel quite confident in is the discussion of group member backgrounds within the heterodoxy club meetings, seemingly aimed at bringing members closer together. When recalling these discussions, one group member, Inez Irwin, noted that these conversations ranged from discussing the "middle-western farm" of Leta Hollingworth's childhood, to the "inherited rebelliousness" of Charlotte Perkins Gillman (Schwartz, 1986, p.20).

With Leta Hollingworth at a time and place to have engaged in feminist eugenic ideology with established feminist eugenicists, we can proceed to the matter of Hollingworth's various publications that demonstrate a feminist eugenic ideology. Through careful comparison of her various feminist and eugenic writing, a case can be made that Hollingworth subscribed to feminist eugenic ideology. The first step is to understand the *kind* of eugenics Hollingworth favoured. While there is room for Hollingworth to have engaged in both positive and negative eugenics[29], Hollingworth's extensive involvement in the study/education of gifted children creates a convincing argument that Hollingworth was more in favour of *positive* eugenic policy than negative eugenic policy. This is also supported by Hollingworth's critiques of the eugenic movement, noting that "The foundations organized to promote human welfare have millions for the least improvable members of society, but not one cent for the conservation of the gifted" (Hollingworth, 1940; as cited in Kasper, 2003, p.122). Additionally, when Hollingworth offers her own understanding of eugenics[30], she outright emphasizes the importance of positive eugenics, noting the pitfalls of negative eugenics (Hollingworth, 1926). Hollingworth acknowledges that more eugenicists are urging the "positive side of eugenics" since it is incredibly difficult to convince societies undesirables to legislate themselves into a state of nonexistence (Hollingworth, 1926 p.199).

The importance of teasing out Hollingworth's feelings towards the eugenic movement, and whether she was more positive or negative, is that it will help us understand the kind of *feminist* eugenic ideology she might have held (if any). If Hollingworth was more of a *positive* eugenicist, then we could reasonably expect her practise of feminist eugenics to reflect this.

---

[29] Hollingworth's employment within the New York Clearing House for Mental Defectives highlights that she was not totally opposed to the idea of negative eugenic policy. However, one could argue that this adds even greater weight to her critique of negative eugenics since she had seen first-hand the resources dedicated to negative eugenic policy.

[30] Hollingworth defines eugenics for herself as "the art or technique of being well-born" (Hollingworth, 1926, p. 198).

Modifying our previous understanding of feminist eugenics, we'd expect Hollingworth to believe that economic, sexual, social, and political equality *for society's most valuable* women was the key to preventing the degeneration of the race. Furthermore, the method of achieving equality would be through positive eugenic policy. With an understanding of what Hollingworth's feminist eugenic ideology might have looked like, we can now begin to look for clues that support this within the text!

As previously stated, Hollingworth was more concerned with the promotion of desirable traits of the population rather than the prevention of negative ones. For Hollingworth, if the eugenic project were to be successful, it had to study the motives of the gifted parents who gave birth to gifted children. More specifically, the motives of gifted women who would bear those gifted children. For Hollingworth, it appears that it was never a question of *if* women should bear children, but *why*. According to a letter sent from Mrs. C. B. Pinchot describing a heterodoxy meeting where she attended as a guest, Hollingworth apparently included "'…in her definition of perfect feminist a woman happily married and with children…'" (C.B. Pinchot Collection, retrieved from Schwarz,1986, p.38). There was also Hollingworth's understanding of the woman question, which was "…how to reproduce the species and at the same time to work, and realize work's full reward, in accordance with individual ability" (Hollingworth, 1926, p. 348). A question she felt was being asked "primarily of the gifted" (p.349). Hollingworth also understood that, given the social standing of women during her time, there was little-to-no incentive for women to grow the population through childbirth, however important she acknowledged it to be. She dedicated an entire paper to this topic, appropriately titled *Social Devices for Impelling Women to Bear and Rear Children.* Here Hollingworth describes various institutions for controlling women's reproduction, such as law, education, and belief, and argues that "…if a surplus population is desired for national aggrandizement, it would seem that there will remain but one effective social device whereby this can be secured, namely, adequate compensation, either in money or in fame"[31] (29). Again, Hollingworth is not talking about compensation for just *any* parent, but is specifically referring to the "most intelligent women of the community, who are the most desirable child-bearers". (29) From this support, we can see that Hollingworth was not just concerned about the eugenic project in isolation from her feminist agenda, but that they were working together. For Hollingworth, if eugenicists wanted gifted women to grow the population, they had to pony up some cash or social standing to society's gifted women.

Hollingworth was not done writing about the issue(s) of uncritically encouraging gifted women to have children. She believed that gifted parents, and women especially, "are doubtless impelled to avoid childbearing for reasons which will become clear to anyone able to give the matter serious and consecutive thought." (Hollingworth, 1926, p. 200). For example, women must consider the implications of having a child, such as sacrificing physical well-being[32]. For women more likely to have gifted children, there is also the question of whether they are willing to sacrifice their chance to live "intellectually and morally" (Hollingworth , 1929, p.8). For Hollingworth, when having a child, the gifted mother must decide if she is to "…be reduced to nonentity, partial or complete" (Hollingworth , 1929, p.8). Calls for women to self-sacrifice their own wellbeing for the wellbeing of the population is deemed "…insane when it is considered that the offspring for whom the sacrifice is urged may be girls, who in turn must sacrifice their possibilities, and so forth in a viscous circle of sacrifice…" (Hollingworth, 1929, pp.8-9). In other words, why should women sacrifice physical, intellectual, moral health, and the opportunity to live a fulfilling existence, to bear a daughter that will only be expected to make the same sacrifice until a son was born? By bringing light to the absurdity of this cycle, she is simultaneously critiquing the current system and calling for an alternative. An alternative that would likely be found by intellectual women (Hollingworth, 1929).

---

[31] Hollingworth was not the only individual who felt that greater compensation was needed to increase the birthrate. Dr. Hilda H. Noyes argued that "recognition and the bestowal of honor upon parents of superior children might tend to augment the birth rate in this group" (Noyes, 1920, p.88).

[32] The significance of death due to childbirth was a complicated matter for some eugenicists. While it was desired to keep women alive to produce more children, it was also argued that "the women who die are on the average mentally, if not physically, inferior to those who survive….The fact that the maternal death rate is twice as high among negroes as whites lends weight to this view" (American Genetic Association, 1917, p.167).

Finally, Hollingworth believed that gifted parents who have attended college would likely "…have assimilated the biological facts about the regression of offspring" (Hollingworth , 1929, p.7). During this period, there was the theory that the children of "deviating parents" are likely to be less deviant than their parents. In other words, the children of gifted parents are likely to be *less* gifted.

If Hollingworth believed that gifted women should have children, but also recognized the *numerous* pitfalls and challenges involved in encouraging gifted women to have children, what was the way forward? In addition to her call for financial compensation[33], Hollingworth offered us more explicit recommendations. She addressed health first, with calls for improvements in obstetric science to answer questions such as the ideal age for women to bear children, the possibility of delaying birth until the final decade of fertility, and whether intelligent women remain fertile longer (Hollingworth, 1929, p.10). She also called for improvements in pediatric research, forwarding the question of whether infants can be safely fed while simultaneously liberating the mother from the task.

---

[33] The benefit of receiving financial compensation when having a child is now a benefit of the present, although not to the same extent that Hollingworth was possibly proposing. with the Child Tax Credit available in the U.S and the Canadian Child Tax Benefit (CCBT) in Canada.

The next wave of recommendations falls under the banner of security. Here she teases out her ideas of financial compensation more thoroughly. Financial compensation would be given to parents of children who test "…above a set minimum in the qualities desired, a bonus amounting to the probable value of such a child." (Hollingworth, 1929, p.10)[34]. However, Hollingworth felt that financial compensation may not be enough. Instead, Hollingworth argued that "Social attitudes and institutions persisting and favouring self-realization for mothers might be even more effective than money." (p.10)

Hollingworth concludes by saying that of all the places resources could be spent in the "practical promotion of eugenics", research that would be of interest/benefit to gifted women should be given a large place. Other resource spending, such as propaganda and exhortation targeted at women to bear children, she considered a waste of resources (Hollingworth, 1929, p.11). This final point is particularly important, as it lays bare what Hollingworth believed to be of importance. If eugenics was to succeed in its goal of improving the race, then it needed to cater to the interests/benefits of intelligent women. Throughout the article, Hollingworth explains why this is the case, citing a plethora of reasons why intelligent women should have children, but remain unconvinced by society's pleas. Hollingworth calls for an increase in economic and social standing for gifted women. Only then would the nation's best and brightest women be persuaded into having the number of children being called for by the eugenic project. In other words, based on Hollingworth's writing, she believed that the eugenic project needed to reshape itself in service of the feminist project, ensuring women receive financial security, physical health, and social equality. This adheres to what was laid out by Ziegler as the common thread amongst feminist eugenicists. Taken all together, the entanglement of Hollingworth's feminist and eugenic ideologies offers us enough material to weave a convincing feminist eugenic narrative within her life. With this accomplished, we can turn to the present and reflect on what this narrative of feminist eugenics can teach contemporary scholars.

---

[34] In this same section, Hollingworth mentions that Cattell estimated that the financial value of a child from an eminent person is $100,000 in 1921.

Conclusions

Contemporary Relevance of Feminist Eugenics

To echo the words of Harris, this thesis highlights how the life and scholarship of Leta Hollingworth "shows an unusual blend" of feminist and eugenic ideological components that fall under the lesser-known banner of feminist eugenics. It continues the work of addressing a gap in the historiography of psychology and eugenics that has avoided discussing women's roles in the eugenic movement, and a gap in the historiography on women in psychology, which has avoided discussing women psychologists' roles in the development of eugenics.

But beyond the historical significance of this project, highlighting the history of feminist eugenics has contemporary significance as well. This project speaks to an uncomfortable issue: that seemingly contradictory views can coexist and meld within the work of, by all accounts, "progressive" thinkers. Based on this re-interpretation of the life and scholarship of Leta Hollingworth, the proposed paper could serve as a cautionary tale for those engaged in debate about developing biotechnologies– namely, assisted reproductive technologies (ART) – that views placed under the "progressive" banner of feminism are not necessarily immune to the influence of possible eugenic policy.

ARTs are defined by the *Centres for Disease Control and Prevention* (CDC) as "all fertility treatments in which either eggs or embryos are handled" (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). Examples of ART procedures include *in vitro fertilization, cryopreservation,* and *ectogenesis*. Looking closer at the etymology of "ectogenesis", the term is the combination of the Greek words "ecto" (outside) and "genesis" (beginning) and broadly refers to development outside the womb (Dasaolu et al., 2022). It can be refined into either "full" ectogenesis (total development of embryos outside of the human body) or "partial" ectogenesis (partial development of embryos outside of the human body in conjunction with traditional bodily pregnancy) (Di Stefano et al., 2020) [35] [36]. And while eggs or embryos would be handled within the ectogenesis/ectogestation procedure, encompassing it within the definition of ART, some scholars have taken to alternative titles to characterize ectogenesis, like Assisted Gestational Technology (MacKay, 2020) or Artificial Womb Technology (De Bie et al., 2023). Despite a successful trial of full ectogenesis appearing "to be a long way off", a 2017 study suggests that a successful procedure of partial ectogenesis is on the horizon (Di Stefano et al., 2020, p.372).

Ectogenesis offers an interesting and relevant doorway into discussion of contemporary biotechnological debate because many of the reasons forwarded by feminist scholars in support of ectogenesis address the concerns Leta Hollingworth has within her text. Recall that Hollingworth felt that the gifted women were enduring immense physical and existential sacrifice to bear children for a patriarchal system. Her recommendations involved liberating women from certain child-rearing tasks and improving women's opportunities for self-realization. Proponents of ectogenesis highlight the liberatory potential of the technology. For scholars like MacKay, ectogenesis represents an opportunity to "radically challenge dominant notions of gender categories and family roles by allowing us to break the conceptual links between 'woman', 'mother' and female biology" (2020, p.347). They go further into suggesting ectogenesis as an alternative to gestational surrogacy, a practice that is "morally and legally fraught" (MacKay, 2020, p.349).

---

[35] Dasaolu and colleagues (2022) note that partial ectogenesis is often discussed within the context of A) Transfer of a developing embryo from the body to the artificial embryo, and/or B) placement of premature babies within an artificial womb environment until its nurtured to full term.

[36] The term "ectogenesis" was coined by British science-fictionist and known eugenicist, J.B.S Haldane, in their 1924 work titled *Daedalus* (Paul, 1984)

Despite the radical liberatory potential forwarded by feminist scholars, ectogenesis is also faced with various moral and legal questions that carry eugenic undertones that must be addressed openly. Most notably, who will have access to this developing procedure? It's easy to have the intention of universal access, but the reality might look starkly different. Segers (2021) notes:

> If the context within which ectogenesis is developed and provided is blind to inequalities that set higher bars for certain potential beneficiaries to access it (such as members of ethnic minorities, disabled and socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals etc.), ectogenesis might actually serve to reinforce social inequalities. (p.6)

Cavaliere (2020) goes further by discussing the implications of uncritical access to this procedure. Highlighting that "Both historical and contemporary examples of control over women's (gestating) bodies indicate that control is exercised much more on the bodies of disadvantaged members of society", there is the risk that ectogenesis could become another tool to reinforce control and oppression. If women from marginalized communities experience a greater degree of challenges during the gestation process, under this new technology, they could be viewed as "substandard gestators" (Cavaliere, 2020,p.79). What happens when marginalized women's bodies are no longer trusted to by medical professionals in terms of their reproductive health? While I was initially tempted to say that there is no way of knowing the answer to such a question, I was reminded of past and present investigations of forced medical sterilization amongst indigenous women across Canada (Cheng, 2023). While I do not have the time to dive into the complexities of enforced ectogenesis within indigenous communities here, I encourage readers to consider the cultural value some indigenous communities place on traditional pregnancy processes (Hayward & Cidro, 2021), and how enforced ectogenesis might partially or fully infringe on this.

Ultimately, this is not to advocate for seizing development of these technologies in *any* capacity. Rather, it is a call to more seriously address the potential disparities that lay hidden beneath the liberatory calls of feminist scholars that will likely affect present and future reproductive technologies. Cavaliere (2020) captures this beautifully:

> "Assisted reproductive technologies such as ectogenesis could promote equality and freedom, but whether they turn out to be able to do so depends on the conditions under which they become available, on the context in which they are introduced, on who is involved in these processes and on the sort of values that frame their introduction" (p.79)

As we conclude our investigation of Leta Hollingworth's feminist eugenics, we cannot rest that such logic is a relic of the past.

Final Reflections

This project has situated itself within a more recent historiographic trend of acknowledging the limits of the ground-breaking work of the 1970s reclamation project, working with Leta Hollingworth at the intersection of eugenics and feminism within her psychological research. After positioning Leta Hollingworth as a prototypical Progressive Era citizen, we introduced and cross-examined several of her academic works to justify her categorization as a feminist eugenicist. In my attempt to critically and creatively trouble the past of Hollingworth by providing a parallel, but distinct, alternative to some of the more dominant narratives, I have come across multiple points of reflection and discomfort that feel worthy of mention as I conclude this project.

For the first point, let me begin by saying that the material provided by the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology was instrumental in writing this project. While it was not referenced as much as one might expect, the Hollingworth archival materials that *were* referenced were incredibly insightful. That said, I also felt some discomfort when accessing the Leta Hollingworth materials, specifically, acknowledging the voice in which the materials were written. We've already discussed the ways in which the Leta Hollingworth collection has been filtered through multiple hands. What remains to be discussed is the self-filtering that likely occurred by Hollingworth herself. The body of surviving material is composed primarily of academic articles published in various locations, and, to a lesser extent, official transcripts/meeting minutes from the Speyer School. While a voice can still be found in both these kinds of materials, it is ultimately just that, *a* voice. One that was likely filtered through a sense of professionalism that academics and authors are so often taught to do. I admit, there is not much to substantiate this concern. Perhaps the voice and ideas used within her articles and transcripts were an exact reflection of those used outside of the professional setting. That said, I remain suspect. What would be incredibly helpful in putting this concern to rest, and what is notably missing within the archival record, is some kind of personal correspondence to/from Leta Hollingworth; material written in a voice that could potentially be used to contrast with her academic writing and shine some light onto the person that existed outside of the professional sphere. I have heard whispers that such correspondence has been found, but it is unconfirmed and unavailable at this time. That said, it seems that Leta Hollingworth might have a few more surprises for interested scholars.

For the second point, I am reminded of Bradley's (1999) own reflections on the archive. Drawing on Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1996), Bradley explains "the ultimate intoxication of the archive: that leap of imagination beyond listening to the voices that clamour within it into that sense of the recovery of the lost and at one and the same time the discovery of one's better self" (1999, p.111). Having dedicated two years of my life to the study of Leta Hollingworth, I have begun to "slide towards identification with them" (Bradley, 1999, p.110)[37]. I see my academic goals in Hollingworth's deployment of psychological expertise to advocate for a feminist cause. I see countless summers spent on the prairies of Saskatchewan through Hollingworth's own fondness of the "limitless prairies" of Nebraska (Hollingworth, 1943; as cited in Klein, 2002, p.5). Perhaps this is a side-effect of opening myself to a more intimate engagement with the archive, even in the very limited sense as I have done here. Hartman (2021) describes the process of narrative generation as "radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created" (p.134). Through the process of discovery, identification, and construction of Leta Hollingworth as a feminist eugenicist, I suspect I have also engaged in these processes for myself. Unfortunately, Bradley (1999) and Hartman (2021) do not offer much guidance on when your subject was a feminist eugenicist. Am I able to pick-and-choose what aspects I see reflected in Hollingworth? Or do I have to confront the entire reflection? I'm unable to provide answer at this time but know these questions will continue to occupy my mind.

In a similar vein, contemporary Psychology must continue to confront its own reflection shown by its "forgotten" voices. If it wishes to avoid repeating the same mistakes, Psychology must continue to acknowledge its history of creating and maintaining sexist, classist, racist, ableist, and antisemitic practises under the banner of eugenic policy, and reconcile with the communities it has historically harmed. Western Feminist Psychologists must also acknowledge the complicated figures of their own history, and not rest easy behind the progressive banner of feminism. Progressive for whom? And at whose expense?

---

[37] I understand that two years is actually quite short compared to some historical projects, but this has been the longest one I have had the opportunity to lead!

References

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation . (2008, March). *Lincoln, Nebraska*. https://www.achp.gov/preserve-america/community/lincoln-nebraska#:~:text=Lincoln's%20population%20of%202%2C500%20in,population%20of%2080%2C000%20by%201930

Allen, Ann Taylor. "German Radical Feminism and Eugenics, 1900-1908." *German studies review* 11.1 (1988): 31–56. Web.

American Genetic Association (1917). Deaths Due to Childbirth.The Journal of Heredity, 8(4), 167. [Box No. 1, Cummings Centre Books and Periodicals], Archives of the History of American Psychology, The Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, The University of Akron.

American Genetic Association (1920). Moral Qualities and Eugenics.*The Journal of Heredity*, *11*(4), 189. [Box No. 1, Cummings Centre Books and Periodicals], Archives of the History of American Psychology, The Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, The University of Akron.

Apple, R. D. (2006). *Perfect motherhood: Science and childrearing in America*. Rutgers University Press.

Banker, H. J. (1917). COEDUCATION AND EUGENICS: Women Graduates of Syracuse University Have Very Low Marriage and Birth Rates—Those of Men Graduates Are Much Higher—Colleges Perhaps Receive an Abnormal Type of Woman and Nature of Education Can Effect Little Change in her Unmarriageable Character. *Journal of Heredity*, *8*(5), 208-214.

Benjamin, L. T. (1975). The pioneering work of Leta Stetter Hollingworth in the psychology of women. *Nebraska History, 56*, 493-505.

Benjamin Jr, L. T. (2018). *A brief history of modern psychology*. John Wiley & Sons.

Benjamin, L. T., DeLeon, P. H., Freedheim, D. K., & VandenBos, G. R. (2003). Psychology as a profession. *Handbook of psychology*, *1*, 27-45.

Benjamin Jr, L. T., Rogers, A. M., & Rosenbaum, A. (1991). Coca-Cola, caffeine, and mental deficiency: Harry Hollingworth and the Chattanooga trial of 1911. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, *27*(1), 42-55.

Bradley, H. (1999). The seductions of the archive: voices lost and found. *History of the human sciences*, *12*(2), 107-122.

Cabán, P. (2001). Subjects and immigrants during the Progressive Era. *Discourse*, *23*(3), 24-51.

Carroll, N. (1990). Interpretation, history and narrative. *The Monist*, *73*(2), 134-166.

Chaudhuri, N., Katz, S. J., & Perry, M. E. (Eds.). (2010). *Contesting archives: Finding women in the sources*. University of Illinois Press.

Cheng, M. (2023, July 12). "*Canada's Indigenous women forcibly sterilized decades after other rich countries stopped*". CTV News. https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/canada-s-indigenous-women-forcibly-sterilized-decades-after-other-rich-countries-stopped-1.6476708

Cohen, A. (2017). Imbeciles: The supreme court, American eugenics, and the sterilization of Carrie Buck. Penguin.

Corinealdi, K. (2022). Being Fully Human: Linda Smart Chubb and the Praxis of Black Feminist Internationalism. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *47*(4), 931-955.

Cott, N. F. (1989). What's in a Name? The Limits of'Social Feminism;'or, Expanding the Vocabulary of Women's History. *The Journal of American History*, *76*(3), 809-829.

Dasaolu, B. O., Ofuasia, E., & Olasunkanmi, I. S. (2022). Perceptions of Ectogenesis among Prominent African and Western Feminists. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies-Multi-, Inter-and Transdisciplinarity*, *17*(2), 84-99.

Davis, A. (2003). Racism, birth control and reproductive rights. *Feminist postcolonial theory: A reader*, 353-367.

De Bie, F. R., Kim, S. D., Bose, S. K., Nathanson, P., Partridge, E. A., Flake, A. W., & Feudtner, C. (2023). Ethics considerations regarding artificial womb technology for the fetonate. *The American Journal of Bioethics*, *23*(5), 67-78.

Derrida, J. (1996). *Archive fever: A Freudian impression*. University of Chicago Press.

Devereux, C. (2006). *Growing a race: Nellie L. McClung and the fiction of eugenic feminism*.

Diehl, L. A. (1986). The paradox of G. Stanley Hall: Foe of coeducation and educator of women. *American psychologist*, *41*(8), 868.

Diner, S. J. (1999). Linking politics and people: The historiography of the Progressive Era. *OAH Magazine of History*, *13*(3), 5-9.

Di Stefano, L., Mills, C., Watkins, A., & Wilkinson, D. (2020). Ectogestation ethics: the implications of artificially extending gestation for viability, newborn resuscitation and abortion. *Bioethics*, *34*(4), 371-384.

Dyck, E. (2014). History of eugenics revisited. Canadian Bulletin of Medical History, 31(1), 7-16.

Farreras, I. G. (2019). The professionalization of psychologists as court personnel: Consequences of the first institutional commitment law for the "feebleminded". *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, *55*(3), 183-198.

Filene, P. G. (2007). An Obituary for "The Progressive Movement." In *The Progressive Era in the USA: 1890–1921* (1st ed., pp. 431–445). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315237589-20

Frankel, N. (1991). *Gender, class, race, and reform in the progressive era*. University Press of Kentucky.

Fuentes, M. J. (2016). *Dispossessed lives: Enslaved women, violence, and the archive*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Galton, F. (1883). *Inquiries into human faculty and its development*. Macmillan.

Galton, F. (1904). Eugenics: Its definition, scope, and aims. *American Journal of Sociology*, *10*(1), 1-25.

Galton, F. (1908). *Memories of my life*. Routledge.

Gillham, Nicholas W. "Sir Francis Galton and the birth of eugenics." Annual review of genetics 35.1 (2001): 83-101.

Gilman, C. P. (1927). Woman's Achievements Since the Franchise. *Current History (1916-1940)*, *27*(1), 7-14.

Goldstein, J. (1984). Foucault among the Sociologists: The "Disciplines" and the History of the Professions. History and Theory :Studies in the Philosophy of History, 23(2), 170–192. https://doi.org/10.2307/2505005

Gordon, L., & Mass, B. (1978). Woman's body, woman's right: A social history of birth control in America. *Science and Society*, *42*(3).

Hamilton, A. E. (1916). BABIES IN THE CURRICULUM: Education Given Girls in Separate Colleges Dwarfs Instead of Developing Their Emotional Nature—An Example of Natural Education That Was Successful. *Journal of Heredity*, *7*(9), 387-394.

Hamlin, K. A. (2014). *From Eve to evolution: Darwin, science, and women's rights in Gilded Age America*. University of Chicago Press.

Hartman, S. (2021). Intimate history, radical narrative. *The Journal of African American History*, *106*(1), 127-135.

Harwood, K. (2020). Which "New Eugenics"? Expanding Access to Art, Respecting Procreative Liberty, and Protecting the Moral Equality of All Persons in an Era of Neoliberal Choice. *IJFAB: International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics*, *13*(2), 148-173.

Hayward, A., & Cidro, J. (2021). Indigenous birth as ceremony and a human right. *Health and human rights*, *23*(1), 213.

Hertberg-Davis, H. (2013). Leta Stetter Hollingworth: A life in schools (1886–1939). In *A century of contributions to gifted education* (pp. 103-124). Routledge.

Hollingworth, H. L. (1943). *Leta Stetter Hollingworth*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Hollingworth, L. S. (1914). Variability as related to sex differences in achievement: A critique. *American Journal of Sociology*, *19*(4), 510-530.

Hollingworth, L. S. (1916). Social devices for impelling women to bear and rear children. *American Journal of Sociology*, *22*(1), 19-29.

Hollingworth, L. S. (1924a). An introduction to biography for young children who test above 150 IQ. *Teachers College Record*, *26*(4), 277-287.

Hollingworth, L. S. (1924b). Provisions for intellectually superior children.

Hollingworth, L. S. (1926). *Gifted children: Their nature and nurture*. Macmillan.

Hollingsworth, L. S. (1927). THE NEW WOMAN IN THE MAKING. *Current History & Forum*, *27*(1), 15-20.

Hollingworth, L. S., & Cobb, M. V. (1928). Children clustering at 165 IQ and children clustering at 146 IQ compared for three years in achievement. *Teachers College Record*, *29*(10), 3-34.

Hollingworth, L. S. (1929). The production of gifted children from the parental point of view. *Eugenics*, *2*(10), 3-7. [Box No. M2, Folder No. 28, Hollingworth papers], Archives of the History of American Psychology, The Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, The University of Akron.

Hollingworth, L. S. (1930). The child of very superior intelligence as a special problem in social adjustment. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *149*(3), 151-159.

Johnston, E., & Johnson, A. (2008). Searching for the second generation of American women psychologists. *History of Psychology*, *11*(1), 40.

Jolly, J. L., & Robins, J. H. (2022). History of gifted education. In *Introduction to gifted education* (pp. 19-33). Routledge.

Kasper, L. M. (2003). *Feminist and eugenicist thinking in a woman educator: The case of Leta Stetter Hollingsworth*. Indiana University.

Kennedy, A. C. (2008). Eugenics,"degenerate girls," and social workers during the progressive era. *Affilia*, *23*(1), 22-37.

Kennedy, D. M. (1975). Overview: The Progressive Era. *The Historian*, *37*(3), 453-468.

Klein, A. G. (2002). *A Forgotten Voice: A Biography of Leta Stetter Hollingworth*. Great Potential Press, Inc.(formerly Gifted Psychology Press, Inc.), PO Box 5057, Scottsdale, AZ 85261.

Leuchtenburg, W. E. (2017). Progressivism and Imperialism: The Progressive Movement and American Foreign Policy, 1898–1916. In The Progressive Era in the USA: 1890–1921 (pp. 363-384). Routledge.

Lemons, J. Stanley. "Social Feminism in the 1920s: Progressive Women and Industrial Legislation." *Labor history* 14.1 (1973): 83–91. Web.

Leslie, R. M. (1911). Woman's progress in relation to eugenics. *The Eugenics Review*, *2*(4), 282.

Lewthwaite, S. (2010). Race, place, and ethnicity in the Progressive Era. *A Companion to Los Angeles*, 40-55.

Liscum, M., & Garcia, M. L. (2022). You canot keep a bad idea down: Dark history, death, and potential rebirth of eugenics. *The Anatomical Record*, *305*(4), 902-937.

Lynch, F. R. (1977). Social theory and the progressive era. *Theory and Society*, *4*(2), 159-210.

MacDonald, V. M. (1999). The paradox of bureaucratization: New views on Progressive Era teachers and the development of a woman's profession. *History of Education Quarterly*, *39*(4), 427-453.

MacKay, K. (2020). The 'tyranny of reproduction': Could ectogenesis further women's liberation?. *Bioethics*, *34*(4), 346-353.

Marcus, A. I. (1979). Professional revolution and reform in the progressive era: Cincinnati physicians and the city elections of 1897 and 1900. *Journal of Urban History*, *5*(2), 183-208.

Marino, K. M., & Ware, S. (2022). Rethinking "First Wave" Feminisms: An Introduction. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *47*(4), 811-816.

Moss, E.L., Stam, H.J., & Kattevilder, D. (2013). From suffrage to sterilization: Eugenics and the women's movement in 20th century Alberta. *Canadian Psychology/psychologie canadienne* , *54* (2), 105.

Newman, L. M. (1999). *White women's rights: The racial origins of feminism in the United States*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Noyes, H. H. (1920). The Development of Useful Citizenship. *The Journal of Heredity*, *11*(2), 88-91. [Box No. 1, Cummings Centre Books and Periodicals], Archives of the History of American Psychology, The Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, The University of Akron.

Parker, A. M. (2009). Clubwomen, Reformers, Workers, and Feminists of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. *Women's Rights: People and Perspectives*, 117-132.

Paul, D. (1984). Eugenics and the Left. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, *45*(4), 567-590.

Perkins Gilman, C. (2022). *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Toronto Metropolitan University.

Petersen, A. (2007). Is the new genetics eugenic?: interpreting the past, envisioning the future. *New Formations*, (60), 79.

Piechowski, M. M. (1990). The heart of Leta S. Hollingworth. *Roeper Review*, *12*(3), 228-234.

Popplestone, J. A. (April 29, 1966). [Letter from John A. Popplestone to Mrs. Benjamin H. Florence]. [Folder "Florence, Virginia", AHAP Correspondence Files] Archives of the History of American Psychology, The University of Akron.

Rensing, S. M. (2006). *Feminist eugenics in America: From free love to birth control, 1880–1930*. University of Minnesota.

Roberts, D. (2009). Margaret Sanger and the racial origins of the birth control movement. *Racially writing the republic: Racists, race rebels, and transformations of american identity*, 196-213.

Robertson, D. B. (2014). The Progressive Era. In *Oxford Handbook of U.S. Social Policy*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199838509.013.009

Rothbard, M. N. (2017). *The progressive era*. Ludwig von Mises Institute.

Saleeby, C. W. (1911). *Woman and womanhood: A search for principles*. M. Kennerley.

Schwarz, J. (1986). *Radical feminists of heterodoxy: Greenwich Village, 1912-1940*. New Victoria Pub.

Scutts, J. (2022). *Hotbed : Bohemian Greenwich Village and the secret club that sparked modern feminism*. Seal Press.

Segers, S. (2021). The path toward ectogenesis: looking beyond the technical challenges. *BMC medical ethics*, *22*(1), 59.

Seitler, D. (2003). Unnatural Selection: Mothers, Eugenic Feminism, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Regeneration Narratives. *American Quarterly*, *55*(1), 61-88.

Shields, S. A. (1975). Ms. Pilgrim's progress: The contributions of Leta Stetter Hollingworth to the psychology of women. *American Psychologist, 30*, 852-857.

Shields, S. A. (1982). The variability hypothesis: The history of a biological model of sex differences in intelligence. *Signs, 7*, 769-797.

Shields, S. A., & Mallory, M. E. (1987). Leta Stetter Hollingworth speaks on "Columbia's legacy". *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 11*, 285-300.

Shields, S. (2011, March 4). Interview by A. Rutherford [Video Recording]. Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History and Online Archive Project. Pennsylvania, PA

Shields, S. A. (2016). X. Functionalism, Darwinism, and intersectionality: Using an intersectional perspective to reveal the appropriation of science to support the status quo. Feminism & Psychology, 26(3), 353-365.

Sprague, R. J. (1915). EDUCATION AND RACE SUICIDE: Women's Colleges Have Heavy Responsibility for Disappearance of Old American Stock in the United States—Reforms That Are Needed. *Journal of Heredity*, *6*(4), 158-162.

Stearns, P. N. (1985). Social history and history: A progress report. *Journal of Social History*, *19*(2), 319-334.

Stern, A. M. (2016). *Eugenic nation: Faults and frontiers of better breeding in modern America* (Vol. 17). Univ of California Press.

Terman, L. M. (1906). Genius and stupidity: A study of some of the intellectual processes of seven "bright" and seven "stupid" boys. *The Pedagogical Seminary*, *13*(3), 307-373.

Terman, L. M. (1919). *The intelligence of school children: How children differ in ability, the use of mental tests in school grading and the proper education of exceptional children*. Houghton, Mifflin.

Terman, L. M. (Ed.). (1926). *Genetic studies of genius* (Vol. 1). Stanford University Press.

Tyrrell, Ian. "ROBERT WIEBE'S THE SEARCH FOR ORDER, FIFTY YEARS ON." *The journal of the gilded age and progressive era* 17.2 (2018): 397–411. Web

Urban, W. (1976). Organized teachers and educational reform during the progressive era: 1890–1920. *History of Education Quarterly*, *16*(1), 35-52.

Valenza, C. (1985). Was Margaret Sanger a Racist?. *Family Planning Perspectives*, *17*(1), 44-46.

Waggoner, J. (2022). Race, gender, and sanism: remapping mad feminist genealogies. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *47*(4), 885-904.

Wardell, D. (1980). Margaret Sanger: birth control's successful revolutionary. American Journal of Public Health (1971), 70(7), 736–742. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.70.7.736

Warne, R. T. (2019). An evaluation (and vindication?) of Lewis Terman: What the father of gifted education can teach the 21st century. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *63*(1), 3-21.

Wittenstein, K. E. (1989). *The Heterodoxy Club and American Feminism, 1912-1930*. Boston University.

Yakushko, O. (2021). On the dangers of transnational influences of Western psychology: Decolonizing international perspectives on women and therapy. *Women & therapy*, *44*(1-2), 193-211.

Yohannan, J., Crossing, A., Aguilar, L., & Proctor, S. L. (2021). Use of critical race theory to understand exclusion of Indigenous students from gifted education. In *Critical theories for school psychology and counseling* (pp. 101-116). Routledge.

Ziegler, M. (2008). Eugenic feminism: Mental hygiene, the women's movement, and the campaign for eugenic legal reform, 1900-1935. *Harv. JL & Gender*, *31*, 211.