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## Engineering American society: The lesson of eugenics

Eugenics, Webster's English Dictionary defines this word as, "A science that deals with the improvement of hereditary qualities in a series of generations of a race or breed esp. By social control of human mating and reproduction" (Webster's Third New International Dictionary, pg.783). You, the reader should be aware that this word comes from the meaning "well-born". You might be confused as to why such a pure derivative can turn into such a wicked, barbaric, and powerful practice of one's society. That is unambiguously due to the fact that the creator of eugenics Sir Francis Galton created the practice of eugenics to help encourage healthy people of high intelligence to be able to bear more children. Galton's focus was to simply improve the human race. Now, if you decide to go onto your computer and search the word Eugenics for yourself, you will discover several examples and websites based on how Nazis created this doctrine and or practice.

The Eugenics movement started in the 20th century where Galton hoped to raise this concept to be morally correct and sensitive to mankind. However, not every person believed in eugenics, it was treated like a religion is today, yet some people could envision the evil it would bring upon us, while others felt it was their duty to help grow the population, and somehow breed excellence. The evil of the science was not present until the Nazis started the practice. Turning Galton's idea of eugenics into something he never envisioned.

However, Eugenics grew as a powerful ideology in the United States in the 19th century, after being effective to several demographic conditions in that specific period. Eugenics in America was bred by the widespread immigration and imperial power, which helped eugenics rise to its highest potential in the U.S as well as during the 1920s around the world. "Oxford" explains that Eugenics included, "intelligence testing, immigration restrictions, compulsory sterilization of the feeble minded, and other social practices." You see, eugenics turned into diagnosing the "badly born". The people whose characteristics were not such as the ideal white person at the time were immediately put under this practice. The people who were of an African descent were targeted especially.

Eugenics was such a powerful movement in the United States that it found its way across the political spectrum as well as racial lines, despite its origins in elitism and white supremacy. Eugenics was appealing to so many people that showed very modern intellect, regardless of race because unlike general discourses of race, it circumvented the tension between the majority of the people, from the individuals who thought differently on the topic.

Eugenics, as a human history is, like I have already mentioned, a disturbing topic as part of

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American history. I was able to find a book that included the study of eugenics, it is called "Justice and the Human Genome Project," by Timothy F. Murphy. In this book it discusses the human rights side of Eugenics, which explains that the existence of eugenics in America was not inspired by German research like many online sources claim, which strengthens the point that the internet is not a reliable source especially for topics like such. Instead, it was the German Nazis that were inspired by the Americans, although the Nazi's brought the practice to a more inhuman and evil level. In my opinion, this practice that our country helped raise will constantly be a reminder of how horrible our history is. To make a bigger point, eugenics in America held the same exact goals as did racial purification, and all the supporters of eugenics such as scientists, and an overwhelming number of Americans believed in the utilization of forcing euthanasia as a "solution to the problem" (Daylanne, 2004).

To help better my understanding on the topic of eugenics, I was recommended to read parts of a book called "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" by Rebecca Skloot. Skloot's book is about a specific type of eugenics called HeLa cells. This was automatically a surprise to me, because I wasn't aware that this practice was so large that it had different branches. Skloot also includes the story of humans that were involved in the practice of eugenics. But to give a more detailed explanation this book talks about a mother of five who died in her 50s. The cancer tumour that caused her death was cultured and never died off, which made them extremely useful in modern medicine as well as science. These are the cells I mentioned called HeLa cells, which are used in aid research today, they also helped create the polio vaccine, and have been sent into outer space as well as having been exposed to nuclear radiation. This is just a section of what eugenics could do, and a more humane practice as well. So, as you can see the idea of Eugenics has not died off just yet, the morals and use of it have just changed since the 20th century when it was first created.

The moral issue that this book emphasized on were deficiencies of the US Health system in the 50s, as well as the lack of say over patients (especially poor black patients) treatments or even the use of their cells in certain cases. "The Immortal Life of Henrietta" explains how Henrietta never got paid or recognized for her contributions. This book also includes the mistreatment of experiments conducted by the Nazi doctors. As I mentioned earlier in this paper Nazis were the ones who made eugenics a more evil practice, and gained more followers which helped expand the practice.

Fredrick Osborn's 1937 journal article "Development of Eugenic Philosophy" framed it as a social philosophy- that, a philosophy with implications for social order. That definition is not universally accepted. Osborn advocated for higher rates of sexual reproduction among people with desired traits, or reduced rates of sexual reproduction and sterilization of people with less desired traits. Alternatively, gene selection rather than " people selection: has recently been made possible through advances in genome editing, leading to what is sometimes called new

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eugenics, also known as neo-eugenics, consumer eugenics, or liberal eugenics. Since joining Professor Robertson's class I can now say I have become more attuned to the understatement of this kind of political posturing that revolves around African American history, as well as World History. I put my 100% belief into the fact that the structured power used to force sterilization on citizens that were mainly minorities was driven by coercive and legitimate power by the U.S as which they do with changing the history of African Americans, and as taught, the same for the truth that East Africa is the genesis of humankind.

Like the practice of eugenics, we as African Americans were forced by the educational system, as well as historical institutions to believe that our ancestors were not the creator of our existence for lack of a better term. After reading about eugenics I began to also believe that every ill intents that rulers bring unto our African ancestors rich history was driven by leaders who possess an exhaustive knowledge on a subject and followers defer to this knowledge in a situation that presents a need that can be met through the expert knowledge.

After researching literature throughout this paper, I can now say I am officially waked. In other words, I was once lost, but now I am found. It is very visible that civilization in America is troublesome, and learning from my professor's lectures that the world was falsely accused of being powered by white settlers made me even more skeptical on what I didn't know, or in better sense, what I wasn't truthfully taught. I am now feeling like history is a lie when being told by the majority of America. Because of the eugenics epidemic, I now can express more on how African Americans as well as others were treated poorly without having to mention slavery as my main point. I am now set on the fact that due to the power of businessmen exploiting fears and plenty of biases based off of racial and social dominance, these scientists set the path to turn pseudoscience into prejudice, and then into legislation to make it impossible to avoid the situation.

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