Investigation Into the History of Eugenics at UCL

Town Hall Meeting 2
Friday 11th October, 2019
Welcome! Goals of Town Hall Meeting 2

PRESENTATION OF SOME FINDINGS

FEEDBACK & DISCUSSION

Q&A
Structure of Meeting

• Context of Inquiry
• Introduction of Members
• Galton’s mission
• Terms of reference
• Commission Activity
• Outline of hearings and ongoing empirical research
• Findings on the historical role of UCL in the study and teaching of eugenics
Context of the Inquiry

Internal:
- UCL & relationship with Galton
- UCL’s Archives, Collections, Legacies, named Chairs & spaces
- UCL Conference on intelligence
- UCL’s student demographics (53% BME)
- UCL’s goal to create an aspirational environment for ALL of its students

National and International:
- UCL’s international status & reputation in a post-Empire world
- Decolonisation agenda (UK – Oxford, Glasgow, Nottingham)
- Universities Studying Slavery Symposium (USA)
Members

Students Union
• Black & Minority Ethnic Students Officer, UCL: Sandra Ogundele (2019 - 20), Samira Abdalla (2018-2019)
• Womens Officer, UCL: Nilisha Vashist (2019-20); Abeni Olayinka (2018-19)

Professional Services
• Ben Meunier (Secretary) (Library Services, UCL)
• Marcia Jacks (Co-Chair, Race Equality Steering Group) (Womens Health, UCL)
• Ash Talwar (Equalities & Diversity, UCL)
• Fiona McClement (Head of Equalities & Diversity, UCL)

Research Fellows
• Monica Bernal Llanos (Empirical Researcher)
• Maria Kiladi (Archivist)

Academics
• Iyiola Solanke (Chair) (Law, U. of Leeds)
• Caroline Bressey (Geography, UCL)
• Joe Cain (Head, Science & Technology Studies, UCL)
• Subhadra Das (Collections, UCL)
• Tom Fearn (former Head, Statistical Science, UCL)
• Peter Fonagy (Head, Psychology & Language, UCL)
• Tamar Garb (History of Art, IAS)
• Ann Phoenix (Psychosocial Studies, IoE)
• Mark Thomas (Evolutionary Genetics, UCL)
• Ijeoma Uchegbu (Provosts Race Envoy)(Pharmacy, UCL)
Galton’s Mission I - definition of eugenics

• *Inquiries into the Human Faculty, 1883* (p24):
  
  • “the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which...takes cognizance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had.”

• *Nature, 1904*:
  
  • “Eugenics is the science which deals with all influences which improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those which develop them to the utmost advantage.”

Galton’s Mission II (Nature, 1804)

• “...3 stages to be passed through before eugenics can be widely practiced. First, it must be made familiar as an academic question, until its exact importance has been understood and accepted as a fact. Secondly, it must be recognized as a subject the practical development of which is in near prospect, and requires serious consideration. Thirdly, it must be introduced into the national conscience, like a new religion. It has, indeed, strong claims to become an orthodox religious tenet of the future, for eugenics cooperates with the workings of nature by ensuring that humanity shall be represented by the fittest races...I see no impossibility in eugenics becoming a religious dogma...
Galton’s mission III

- Pearson, *The Life, Letters, and Labours of Francis Galton* (1924), iiiia. 412

  “We must remember that Galton had set before himself in the last years of his life a definite plan of eugenics propagandism. He wanted to appeal to men of science through his foundation of a Eugenics Laboratory; he had definitely approached separate groups like the Anthropologists in his Huxley Lecture and the Sociologists in his lecture before their Society and in his subsequent essays, he had appealed to the academic world in his Herbert Spencer Lecture at Oxford, and to the world that reads popular quarterlies in his Eugenics Education Society. But there are strata of the community which cannot be caught even by these processes. For these he consented to be interviewed, and for the still less reachable section who read novels and only look at the picture pages of newspapers, he wrote what they needed, a tale, his ‘Kantsaywhere’. His scheme for proselytism was a comprehensive one, but I think Galton knew his public better than most men.”
Galton, ‘Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development’ (Preface, 2nd edn, 1907)

• “…the book has by no means ceased to live, for it continues to be quoted from and sought for [...] it became the starting-point of that recent movement in favour of National Eugenics [...] which is recognised by the University of London, and has its home in University College.’
Terms of Reference

Examination of the study and teaching of eugenics:
• UCL’s historical role [->global reach]
• current status at UCL [-> Psychology, GEE]
• current benefit to UCL from financial instruments [->legal issues]

Recommendations on:
• UCL’s current position be on the teaching, dissemination and study of eugenics and its inherent link to modern day racism [-> classism, sexism, disabilism]
• Management of naming of spaces and buildings after prominent eugenicists [->Task and Finish Group on Naming of Spaces at UCL]
• findings and advice by the end of July 2019 [-> December 2019]
Commission Activity Dec 17 – Oct 18

Bibliography

Archival researcher – Dr Maria Kiladi

Empirical researcher – Monica Bernal Llanos

Inquiry hearings and submissions from expert witnesses

• 9 witness sessions
• 43 witnesses invited; 33 heard in person; 26 written submissions
  • 8 students and alumni/ 26 staff
  • 11 BME/ 22 white
  • 3 disabled persons/ 30 able-bodied
  • 17 female/ 16 male
Hearings:
3 questions

Question 1: how did you become aware of the history of eugenics at UCL? What does this mean to you and did the knowledge of this history change your perception of UCL?

Question 2: How do you think UCL should address this going forwards? Action on prizes, spaces, endowed professorships named after persons who founded and zealously promoted eugenics?

Question 3: How do you think UCL should approach its historical role in the teaching and research of eugenics in the future?
What does ‘eugenics’ mean to you?

• ‘study of genetics, the cleaning out of weak links in society’

• ‘selective breeding, human breeding to improve human species’

• ‘well-born’

• ‘science of statistics around theories of race’

• ‘improving genetic stock of mankind’
Empirical research

Three online surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UCL staff and students</th>
<th>members of the public</th>
<th>UCL alumni</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/07 to 31/10 2019</td>
<td>22/07 to 31/10 2019</td>
<td>03/10 to 31/10 2019</td>
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design and activation - OPINIO
host - UCL Information Services

38 questions (including demographics). Each question had five optional answers organised as a 5-point Likert scale (Agree/Disagree).
ONLINE SURVEY

Section 1 (786)

Introduction (937)

Section 2 (736)

Section 3 (722)

Section 4 (709)
Focus Groups & Online Forum
26 July to 31 October 2019

Academic Staff (26 July 2019 - 8 participants)
Postgraduate students x 3 (31/07/2019 - 4 participants; 07/08/2019, 6 participants; 11/09/2019 - 4 participants)
BME students (14 August 2019 - 6 participants)
Administrative Staff (21 August 2019 - 6 participants)
BME staff (28 August 2019 - 6 participants)
Outsourced staff (04 September 2019 - 4 participants)
ENABLE[1] (25 September 2019 - 2 participants)

Undergraduate Students (No.1_16 October 2019)
Undergraduate Students (No.2_23 October 2019)

Alumni Online Forum (03 to 31 October 2019)
Eugenics in the History of UCL: Archival Research
Main tasks

- Divide archival material in themes to facilitate research
- Produce a Finding Aid for researchers
- Research the role of eugenics in the history of UCL
- Promote engagement with eugenics-related material from our Archives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins of Eugenics at UCL: Pearson &amp; the Galton Laboratory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eugenics Record Office, 1904, suggested by Galton to the University of London</td>
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<tr>
<td>UoL creates committee: Galton, Pearson, Halford Mackinder (LSE Director), Sir Edward Busk (UCL lawyer in UoL Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edgar Schuster first fellow, resigned (fired?) in 1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906: End of Eugenics Record Office, Galton turns to Pearson for advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson suggests ‘The Francis Galton Laboratory for the Study of National Eugenics’ to UoL</td>
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UCL or UoL?

- ‘UCL not responsible of the oversight of the [Eugenics Records] Office’
- ‘Legally the money was left at University of London, but supervision by Pearson and shared accommodation made it difficult not to be perceived as UCL’
- University College Transfer act, 1905: Effective from 1907
- UCL controlled by committee of the UoL Senate thereafter
- 1911: Galton Bequest - UoL mentioned as ‘the residual legatee’
- Post-1911: UCL takes firm administrative control of the laboratory, Pearson referred to as ‘unable to prevent it’
### Archival findings: historical role of UCL in research & teaching of Eugenics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Founding of the Eugenics Records Office</td>
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<td>1906</td>
<td>Founding of the Francis Galton Laboratory for the Study of National Eugenics</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Galton Bequest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Merger: Department of Applied Statistics with Biometric Laboratory and the Francis Galton Laboratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Galton Chair</td>
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Archival findings: historical role of UCL in research & teaching of Eugenics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1925</th>
<th>1933</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karl Pearson Retires</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Statistics and Eugenics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galton Professor: R A Fisher</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WELDON BENEFACITION</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Haldane: Professor of Biometry and Zoology</td>
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**ANNALS OF EUGENICS**

- Founding of Annals of Eugenics
Early research of the Galton Laboratory


Karl Pearson (1928) *Biometrika*, Vol. 20A, 294-300: ‘The application of the coefficient of Racial likeness to test the character of samples’ (comparisons between Chinese and Indian cranial series)

Karl Pearson (1928) *Biometrika*, Vol. 20A, 389-400: ‘On the importance of the type silhouette for racial characterisation in Anthropology’ (with Ida McLearn and G M Morant) [comparisons between types given for men and women English students and West African “negroes”]
## Archival findings: historical role of UCL in research & teaching of Eugenics

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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>L S Penrose succeeds R A Fisher as Galton Professor. Penrose editor of Annals of Human Genetics. <strong>NB: Name Change</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Penrose becomes Galton Professor, Head of Department of Eugenics, Biometry and Genetics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Haldane retires from Weldon Chair of Biometry.</td>
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<td>1958</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>MOVE TO WOLFSON HOUSE: DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN GENETICS AND BIOMETRY, AND GALTON LABORATORY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Penrose retires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harry Harris = Head of Department of Human Genetics and Biometry, Galton Professor and Galton Laboratory director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C A B Smith = Weldon Professor of Biometry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HH and CAB = joint editors of the Annals of Human Genetics</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Harry Harris resigns</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Bette Robson becomes Galton Professor, Director of the Galton Laboratory, Head of Department of Human Genetics</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Weldon Chair in Abeyance</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
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Archival findings: historical role of UCL in research & teaching of Eugenics

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>J S Jones becomes Head of Department of Genetics and Biometry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Bette Robson retires</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Nicholas Wood becomes Galton Professor of Genetics</td>
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*Galton Chair unfilled for 15 years (1994 - 2009)*
The spread of Eugenics: UK and abroad

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<tr>
<th>Eugenics Education Society (1907)</th>
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<tr>
<td>UK: Liverpool, Haslemere, Southampton, Glasgow (1910-1911); Cambridge, Belfast (1911-1912); Manchester, Birmingham; Brighton, Oxford (1913-1914)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Mental Deficiency Act, 1913</td>
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Global dissemination eg. Australia

- The Eugenics Society of Victoria (1936 – 1961)
  - Professor Wilfred Eade Agar, University of Melbourne, Biology Department -> founder, Eugenics Society of Victoria (29/10/ 36)

- Members:
  - Sir Walter Spencer FRS (1860 – 1929. Lancashire, England → Australia 1886)
  - Richard Berry FRSE (1867-1962. Lancashire, England → Australia 1905)

- Eugenics Society of Victoria supported by Eugenics Education Society (books, funds)
Eugenics in the USA

• Binet’s intelligence test (1905) - ‘special needs’ carried to US:
  • Lewis Terman (Stanford), Henry Goddard (Vineland Training School, New Jersey), Robert Yerkes (Harvard)

• Conclusion: ‘test offered a fixed measure of innate intelligence [...] to detect the genetically inferior’

• ‘Their involvement in the eugenics movement predated the collection of [I.Q.] data [...] We can trace the force of that idea – and its utter divorce from any meaningful scientific data – in the successful efforts of the eugenicists to enact sterilisation laws’

• First Sterilisation Laws adopted: Pennsylvania, 1905 & Indiana, 1907
What should be the approach of the Commission to history?

1. In the Wake: acknowledge the ‘afterlife’ of eugenics (Christina Sharpe)

2. The Go-Between: accept the past as a foreign country where they do differently (J. P. Hartley)

3. A combination of both:
   • the past as past
   • the past as the wake