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# The Great War and Motherhood: Possibilities for Agency Within Motherhood Rhetoric 1915-1920

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THE GREAT WAR AND MOTHERHOOD: POSSIBILITIES FOR AGENCY WITHIN  
MOTHERHOOD RHETORIC 1915-1920

by

Terra Rasmussen Lenox

A Dissertation Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
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## ABSTRACT

### THE GREAT WAR AND MOTHERHOOD: POSSIBILITIES FOR AGENCY WITHIN MOTHERHOOD RHETORIC 1915-1920

by

Terra Rasmussen Lenox

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2018  
Under the Supervision of Professor Leslie Harris

This project seeks to understand possibilities for agency in American motherhood by looking at public motherhood discourses from 1915-1920. To accomplish this task, I use a lens of intersectionality with a mixed-methods approach of critical discourse analysis of newspaper articles and *The Ladies' Home Journal*, and a textual analysis of birth control pamphlets authored by Margaret Sanger. Through these analyses, this project elucidates ways in which ideal motherhood was portrayed and prescriptively enacted through representations of nationalistic motherhood which connects principles of intensive mothering with extreme patriotism and consumerism. Ultimately, these analyses build an argument that due to the complex intersectional identities of American motherhood, birth control advocates like Margaret Sanger needed to use strategic ambiguity to discuss birth control as a tool for agency, but that agency is constrained in ways that are inseparable from race and class.

*Keywords: Motherhood, Agency, Birth Control, Eugenics, Intersectionality*

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## The Great War and Motherhood: Possibilities for Agency Within Motherhood Rhetoric 1915-

1920

*The woman's task is not easy--no task worth doing is easy--but in doing it, and when she has done it, there shall come to her the highest and holiest joy known to mankind; and having done it, she shall have the reward prophesied in Scripture; for her husband and her children, yes, and all people who realize that her work lies at the foundation of all national happiness and greatness, shall rise up and call her blessed.*

*--Theodore Roosevelt, March 13, 1905*

*No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body. No woman can call herself free until she can choose consciously whether she will or will not be a mother. --Margaret*

*Sanger, March 1919*

### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

The concept of motherhood in the United States is a complex construction that seems concrete in definition, yet also fluctuates in response to differing expectations throughout moments in history. In scientific terms, motherhood is a biological process or state of physical being for a woman's body. American motherhood, however, is a form of identity or identities that depend on intersectional allowances regardless of one's ability to achieve the biological process of childbearing. The distinction between biological motherhood and American motherhood identities helps to elucidate ways in which American motherhood identities are utilized to constrain or enable women's bodies in public discourse throughout American history.



As Theodore Roosevelt explained, a mother's "work lies at the foundation of all national happiness and greatness", thus equating motherhood as the foundation of a healthy nation (1905). Motherhood as both a practice and ideal is clearly important to American public culture.

American motherhood is an integral aspect of American culture, yet so is the notion of freedom. Margaret Sanger's quote from 1919 emphasizes the challenges faced by women seeking the right to control their biological processes through the use of birth control. When Sanger first began advocating for women's health it was illegal just to talk about birth control, let alone use it (Gordon, 2007). Birth control advocacy has come a long way in the past century, but is still a controversial topic in America currently as debates about access to birth control, health insurance coverage, and abortion rights continue to foreground political agendas and national news. A prominent debate regarding motherhood today posits the Pro Choice movement against the Pro Life<sup>1</sup>. Without delving into the ideological stance of each group, the naming of each position seems to be at odds. Choice and life are not diametric opposites by definition, yet these groups mark one of the most heated arguments pertaining to American motherhood of our time. Rather than suggest that sociopolitical positions of life and choice are arguing different things, I believe there are deeper meanings within the cultural contexts of these arguments in terms of agency.

This projects asks what are the possibilities for agency in American motherhood? The possibilities for agency within American motherhood appear to always be imbricated in cultural assumptions of race and class. While this deeply intertwined relationship is often masked by a seemingly neutral rhetoric of motherhood, it is most clearly evident in debates about birth control

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<sup>1</sup> Pro Choice refers to advocates in favor of legalized abortion. Pro Life refers to activists in opposition to abortion, as well as euthanasia.

in the years leading up to World War I where the country grappled with the impending conflict within a cultural that privileged the emergent science of eugenics. In this introduction I will first explain the importance of motherhood rhetoric; next, I will contextualize this rhetoric within the important time period of pre-World War I United States; then I will review the methodological decisions that help me delve into motherhood rhetoric during this time period; and finally, I will preview the rest of the dissertation with a brief description outlining subsequent chapters.

### **Importance of Motherhood**

Women's identities are often understood through the lens of motherhood, and as such motherhood is important to understanding the role of women in American public culture. The quotations offered at the beginning of this chapter from Theodore Roosevelt and Margaret Sanger offer varying ways in which women's identities were framed through the lens of motherhood. For Roosevelt motherhood offered women the identity as the foundation for the national happiness and greatness. Sanger, however, viewed motherhood as a means for potential bondage or enslavement of women's identity as free citizens. Both of these examples illustrate ways in which the lens of motherhood assists in understanding women's identities within American culture.

One of the challenges in understanding women's identities through the lens of motherhood, is that motherhood has multiple and sometimes conflicting functions. The term motherhood within the scope of this project draws on Adrienne Rich's (1986) description of motherhood as both an experience as well as an institution. The experience of motherhood is often biological, but cultural norms also influence the experience of motherhood. In scientific terms, motherhood is a biological process or state of being for a woman's body. The experience of motherhood, however, is often dependent on cultural identities of motherhood.

There are many cultural functions of motherhood. The most straightforward function of motherhood is the act of raising children, typically recognized in culture as an act of love and nurturing devotion. Motherhood also functions in culture as a civic role, where mothers are responsible for raising the next generation of citizens for the country. An even more complex cultural function of motherhood is the notion that mothers feel a responsibility for all children, as shown by the high occurrence of organizations such as Moms Against Drunk Driving or Moms Demand Action where motherhood is tied to concern for the safety of others. One commonality within the many functions of motherhood, is that they depend on rhetoric.

Rhetoric shapes cultural expectations of motherhood. Many scholars have explored ways in which public discourse sets standards pertaining to a mother's ability to live up to cultural expectations (Gilchrist & Camara, 2012; Hasian & Flores, 2000; Hayden, 2017; Hurner, 2006; Kennelly, 1999; Kuperberg & Stone, 2008; Ladd-Taylor & Umansky, 1998; Meisenbach, et al., 2008; Medved & Kirby, 2005; Parry-Giles & Blair, 2002). Often times rhetoric frames motherhood with so much focus on a mother's love as contingent to her ability to nurture her child that requires exceptionally high standards of emotional and physical labor. The impact of rhetoric on cultural expectations has shown to be prevalent throughout American history, as evidenced by Barbara Welter's (1966) description of the Cult of True Womanhood in the 1800s as women confined to the private sphere of domesticity to maintain her moral superiority as a mother. More contemporary scholars have pointed to cultural expectations of today through the rhetorical construction of intensive mothering, which emphasizes a mother's responsibility to revolve around her child (Hays, 1996; Michaels, 2004; O'Brien Hallstein, 2006, 2008, 2017). As rhetoric shapes cultural expectations of motherhood, it is possible to see ways in which this rhetoric works in regards to agency for women.

## **Possibilities for Agency in Motherhood**

As a cultural construct, motherhood creates limitations and builds expectations, but there is still space for women's agency. For the purposes of this project, I use Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's definition of rhetorical agency as "the capacity to act" (2005, p. 3). Within this framework, I am looking at ways in which motherhood rhetoric provides the capacity to act for women in American society. Joanne Gilbert and Laura Von Wallmenich describe motherhood in the United States as "a negotiated performance for women who both create and contest the discursive structures that shape their experiences" (2014, p. 66). Motherhood may offer agency through performance. More recent scholars have continued to build on the duality of motherhood as simultaneously empowering and oppressive within discursive and rhetorical relationships (Buchanan, 2013; O'Reilly, 2006, 2007; O'Brien Hallstein, 2006). Looking for agency within motherhood discourses shows how there are still possibilities for action within constrained cultural context. Because motherhood is rhetorically constructed, it provides a complex and changing concept.

Motherhood has been used as a tool to justify educational opportunities for women. Prior to the 1800s education beyond the basic necessity was not considered important for women in America. Motherhood, or more specifically, the rhetorical construction of Republican Motherhood emphasized women's role in society as mothers of a new American society (Kerber, 1976; Lewis, 1987). As America developed a democratic identity, motherhood became incredibly important as educators of morality and virtue for the future citizens of the nation (Flexnor & Fitzpatrick, 1996). Women were able to utilize the acceptance that educated women made better mothers to establish increased educational opportunities for girls as future mothers with a large increase in schools teaching domestic skills along with arithmetic, rhetoric, and

geography (List, 1989). Republican Motherhood offers an example of how even though early motherhood rhetoric constraining as the institution of motherhood confined a women's citizenship to her role of raising a family within the home, women were able to use motherhood as tool for agency for increased education for women.

Motherhood has also been used to justify public engagement in social issues and movements. Early American cultural expectations for women did not permit women to exist in public spaces without permissible reasons or an escort. Barbara Welter identified a cultural stereotype she called the "Cult of True Womanhood" where she described the True Woman as a "hostage within the home" who was judged by the "four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity (1996, p. 1). Welter's findings suggest that the increased presence of women in public during the 1800s exacerbated pressures for women to exhibit virtue and morality in their role as wives and mothers. Welter's development of the True Woman brought forth the notion of a cultural separation of space based on gender, often referred to today as separate spheres: the public sphere and the private sphere. Though examples the concept of separate spheres in society can be found throughout history, modern day feminist scholars often point to Alexis de Tocqueville's description of American separation of sexes within his book *Democracy in America*, which was published in 1840 (Kerber, 1988; Wells, 2009). The Cult of True Womanhood required that women remained within their private sphere of domesticity, many women used motherhood and the four cardinal virtues as a tool for agency as a justification to speak publicly against public issues like slavery, poverty, and child labor.

Motherhood has been used to justify the expansion of political rights for women through the utilization of women's role as mother of the nation (Buerkle, 2008). Women were limited in their political rights, thus used motherhood as a justification for expansion through increased

rights, such as the fight for suffrage. This expansion allowed women access to the public sphere as a mother whose duty and responsibility was to protect and uplift her children. The use of motherhood rhetoric within the nineteenth century explains how women became rhetorically situated as mothers of the nation, which became a foundational component of agency for women's activism in the Progressive Era. However, scholars have shown that representations of True Womanhood and motherhood provide complex and often contradicting depictions for women, which emphasizes the complexity of the possibilities of agency for women within these discursive frameworks (Terry, Shaw, & Hamm, 2012).

### **Limitations of Agency Within Motherhood**

Motherhood has been used throughout history to justify women's advancement, but that agency has always been intersectionally constrained, particularly by race and class. More recent analyses of written depictions of women during the mid-to-late 1800s emphasizes the varying degrees of True Womanhood based on class, where the norms and ideals of virtue and morality were specific to upper-class white women (Harris, 2009; Terry, Shaw, & Hamm, 2012). The connection between morality and class is especially prevalent through the ethic of Christian benevolence that allowed the morally superior True Woman to act in public on behalf of a moral cause (Ginzberg, 1990; Higgins, 2004). Scholars have shown the discourses framing motherhood identity have consistently privileged white, upper-middle class women (Kennelly, 1999; Medved & Kirby, 2005; Gilchrist & Camara, 2012). The classed essence of True Womanhood can be found in motherhood discourses, especially those pertaining to limits on women's agency based on cultural expectations and stereotypes centered around motherhood.

As Malcolm X stated in his Las Angeles speech May 5, 1962: "The most disrespected person in America is the black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the black

woman. The most neglected person in America is the black woman”. Cultural expectations and stereotypes on black women in America seem to especially target the intersections of race and motherhood. The post-Reconstruction racial tensions rose dramatically in the final years of the Progressive era, marked by conflicts such as the “Red Summer” in 1919 and the drastic rise of the Ku Klux Klan and increased Jim Crow laws (Blee, 1991; Corbett, et al., 2014; MacLean, 1994; Rice, 2008). The heightened racial tensions are reflected in colonialist representations of black women, where black women were either hypersexualized or depicted as a mammy figure (Guterl, 2000; hooks, 1992; Kern-Foxworth, 1990; Said, 1979). The hypersexualization of black women framed her as an exotic, sex-crazed tribal woman; whereas the mammy figure was the continuation of American culture that depended on a plump black woman to raise and nurture wealthy white children. Though the mammy may have children of her own, her role as an American icon shown through public representations such as Aunt Jemima was cast within her ability to focus her mothering skills on someone else’s children (Kern-Foxworth, 1990). Agency is severely debilitated when continuous representations position certain populations within such confined boxes. These problematic representations for black women in American culture are continued still today.

Race was not always thought of in terms of skin color, but as Matthew Pratt Guterl explained in his book *The Color of Race in America, 1900-1940*, immigration in America created a challenging social landscape of race relations where whiteness was far more complex (2000). Industrialization brought unprecedented populations of immigrants to America, and even though many of these immigrants were from European countries, the isolationist sentiments of American culture viewed them as outsiders (Kraditor, 1971). Immigrant mothers likely would have felt added pressure to perform American motherhood in order to conform to American society.

Nationalism in this sense did not rely on visible differences, per se, but on a person's ability to conform to American norms. This pressure to become Americanized required mothers to disregard their heritage to raise American children, which emphasizes how motherhood could provide agency in becoming Americanized through one's children, but necessitated the shedding of cultural identity to do so.

Cultural hierarchies in American society are supremely reliant on capitalism, resulting in class systems based on financial status. Socioeconomic class structures heavily impact possibilities for agency in motherhood, especially within social paradigms that include high expectations for mothering. Poor and working class mothers have, and continue to, struggle to balance the duties of motherhood with the need to work outside the home for financial support (Kuperbert and Stone, 2008; Meisenbach, et al., 2008). So frequently within discourses about poor mothers their agency is as constrained as their finances, where lack of resources is often conflated as a sign of lack of attentiveness or ability. The term "welfare queen" is a common trope in current rhetoric about mothers living with financial hardship, placing the burden of fault on the mothers rather than circumstance (Collins, 2000). A study looking at magazine articles from 1929 to 1996 found that depictions of men's dependency decreased over the twentieth century, while racialized and gendered representations of women's welfare dependency as a major public concern has seemingly increased (Misra, Moller & Karides, 2003). The legal and political ramifications of such representation have been shown as mothers facing the power of the state often have to prove they are "good enough" to receive court protections and the increase in laws punishing drug-addicted pregnant women operating through beliefs of "bad mothers" (Chesler, 1991; Roberts, 1997). Often race and class are intertwined, drawing on complex



cultural stereotypes and biases that exacerbate the limitations of agency and motherhood for poor mothers.

One final area of major limitation for agency within motherhood discourses in America that I would like to mention is the ways in which alternative models of motherhood are often rejected. This project primarily focuses on women's possibilities for agency within motherhood, but it is important to note that there are many alternative models of motherhood that deserve recognition. Motherhood identities are increasingly complex, as shown by Katrina Miller in her examination of maternal narratives of lesbian co-parents struggling with the identities and naming of non-biological mothers (2012). Single mothers still face a stigma in society today about their ability to provide for their children. Nontraditional parenting is still typically considered inferior to the discursive framing of motherhood as a component of heteronormative standards (Dubriwny, 2005; Foust, 2004; Hayden, 2003; PerÄLÄ-Littunen, 2007). The limitations of agency within motherhood discourses are intersectional and complex.

### **American Motherhood 1915-1920 US**

To narrow the scope of this investigation, I have opted to focus on motherhood during the final years of the Progressive Era, encompassing World War I (WWI). The Progressive Era, typically considered to have occurred 1890-1920, was a period of great societal changes with the increase of industrialization, immigration, and challenges within maintaining a government capable of managing large changes in short amounts of time (Clapp, 1998; Koven and Michel, 1993). The specific time frame of 1915-1920 offers a glimpse into a crucial moment in American history for women as these are the years leading up to the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution giving women equal rights and responsibilities of American citizenship. These years also mark the beginnings of birth control rhetoric in public discourse found in newspapers

nationwide and written works like Margaret Sanger's *Birth Control Review* that began in 1917. This span of five years offers insight into American culture during international conflict while struggling to assimilate hundreds of thousands of immigrant families into a newly defined identity.

World War I greatly influenced American culture, both before the involvement of the United States because of widespread support of isolationism, as well as the effect on race relations in America after the war. Wartime rhetoric also tends to bring motherhood to the forefront as both means for women to engage in political activism or to participate in nationalism (Heyse, 2010; Johnson, 2002; Mastrangelo, 2017; Rodino, 2005). Wartime rhetoric has also brought motherhood to the forefront as means for women to engage in political activism. Heyse found that women utilized conservative gender ideologies within the context of motherhood to exploit their rhetorical constraints to gain agency as “public commemorators between the official and vernacular spheres of influence” by erecting Confederate memorials and monuments around turn of the twentieth century (2010, p. 32). Mastrangelo argues that “nowhere in the history of the United States has the role of women as both gendered cultural icon and “mother” been used more rhetorically (and more powerfully) than in the culture’s promotion and denigration of women’s involvement in World War I” (2017, p. 217). The rhetoric of motherhood was heavily prominent in social and political discourse, used by women and politicians alike (Brigance, 2005). Michele Rodino explains that politicians militarized motherhood in a way that creates women “advocates for destruction in the name of preservation” (2005, p. 380). Whereas women orators would utilize the rhetoric of motherhood as an ideological narrative to enable their involvement in public speech so that they could watch “over the affairs of the nation as they would their own households” (Johnson, 2002, p. 113). As both those in support and opposition of

women taking on new public roles in society during the World War I era utilized the rhetoric of motherhood, I argue that the use of “good mother” during this time period ultimately demonstrates a societal pressure for women to enact motherhood in specific and socially constructed ways.

It could be argued that women were the heart and soul of the progressive movement with women leading organizations fighting against child labor, sweatshops, and dangerous working conditions while championing fair labor laws, the prohibition of liquor, and women’s rights (Corbett, et al., 2014; Tonn, 1996). The concept of motherhood was a site for identification, unification, which offered access to civil engagement in the public sphere as women’s advocacy was often portrayed as selfless benevolence for socially acceptable issues (Stauffer, 2011). As more women entered the public sphere, new rhetorical tactics developed ways to contain women’s involvement, such as the distinction of class privileges and femininity. The rhetoric of motherhood began to expand beyond its use for women entering the public sphere, but during the progressive era became a central organizing principle. As Ladd-Taylor explains “virtually every female activist used motherhood rhetoric, and virtually every male politician appealed to motherhood” (1994, p. 43). In a sense, motherhood rhetoric became somewhat of a “catch-all” argument, which has created a complex and sometimes competing sense of motherhood identities during the Progressive Era.

The magnitude of advancement for women during this time period is important to understanding the rhetorical backlash against women in public discourse. By 1920 nearly half the university population was made up of women, a drastic increase from previous decades (Kline, 2001). Women were working and living independently from their families, choosing careers over marriage and domestic duties. However empowering, the drastic increase in independent women

incensed antisuffragists who “were defending the ideal of the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, sober, middle-class home in which the mother was queen of a realm that she never left except to perform good works for the less fortunate” (Kraditor, 1971, p. 105). The changing social landscape where women were choosing careers over queendom created a direct challenge to the social hierarchy where women were contained within the home and men ruled the world. The Progressive Era was a time of great advancement for women leading in culmination to women’s suffrage in 1920, but every surge forward throughout history seems to have been met with the exigence for pushback. By looking at possibilities and limitations for agency within motherhood discourses during this time, it is possible to better understand how agency is both advocated and constrained during a politically charged moment in history.

One of the largest challenges for the American identity was the unprecedented amounts of immigrants that came to the United States after the mid-1880s from all over the world to fill the countless unskilled labor positions created with the industrialization boom (Kraditor, 1971). Language barriers, cultural differences, along with poor working and living conditions lead to heightened nationalism among American elites. The notion of nationalism as explained by Leroy G. Dorsey (2007) explains how motherhood was a mechanism of Americanization for immigrants. Although many of the immigrants in America during the Progressive Era were from European countries such as Ireland, Germany and Italy, the isolationist sentiments of American culture viewed them as outsiders (Kraditor, 1971). Nationalism in this sense did not rely on visible differences, per se, as race had less to do with skin color than it does today. Instead, American hierarchies depended on intersections of identities of race, class, ethnicity, religion, education, and the list goes on. Due to these intersectional hierarchies, class is a broader term that often encompassed intersectional oppressions.

**Social Darwinism, Eugenics, and Birth Control.** Social Darwinism and eugenics emerged as one mechanism to enforce cultural expectations during this time period. One of the driving forces behind this project comes from the desire to better understand the impact of Social Darwinism and eugenics on early birth control rhetoric, specifically the rhetoric of Margaret Sanger. This inquiry stems from modern-day attacks against Sanger, and by extension Planned Parenthood, as having eugenic principles resulting in racist practices. While there may be a tendency to think of eugenics in terms of Nazi extremism, the truth of eugenics in America is far more complex. While the public face of eugenics disbanded post-WWII as many of the major eugenics organizations either separated or changed names<sup>2</sup>, many of the rhetorical strategies of eugenics and public health live on.

One of the reasons eugenics rhetoric has persevered is due to the broad definitions and wide range of agendas that were launched “in the name of eugenics” (Lombardo, 2008, p. 2). With Charles Darwin’s publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859, scientific and public rhetorics began to shift toward new discourses pertaining to the human condition with the theory of evolution at the core. Eugenics, a term meant to describe the science of breeding, was coined by Francis Galton in 1886 based on the concept of the survival of the fittest notions in evolution. Around the turn of the twentieth Century, “debates on heredity and the ability to influence heredity emphasized the goal of producing “superior” or “ideal” children” (Hayden, 2013, p. 178). However, Galton’s concept of eugenics did not take off right away as popular ideology. “As society secularized and advances in science and medicine offered interpretations that seemed

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<sup>2</sup> An example of an organization’s attempt at rhetorical distance from the eugenics movement can be seen from the American Eugenics Society, which saw a sharp decrease in membership as the atrocities of WWII became public, eventually was renamed the Society of Social Biology and still exists today (Gur-Arie, 2014).

equally plausible or even superior to religious determinism, degeneracy theory emerged, relying on the authority of science to explain the existence and experience of society's less fortunate members" (Carlson, 2008, p. 14). Prior to Darwin's theory of evolution and increased scientific gains to explain genetics and illness, those who were poor, diseased, or otherwise infirm had been considered charitable cases as "acts of God" sent for benevolent charity. By the 1880s the previous decades of charitable work to help the less fortunate had shown less improvement than progressive reform initiatives such as public sanitation, leading public reformers and physicians to begin promoting a more preventative strategy (Carlson, 2008). Progressive reformers were looking for a way to continue their benevolent work on social issues while incorporating evolving scientific understanding.

One of the most prominent debates within the eugenics movement circulated around reproduction through the concepts of both positive and negative eugenics. While positive eugenics referred to promoting people with desirable qualities to procreate in order to continue those qualities in future generations, negative eugenics referred to the practice of disallowing those with socially deemed undesirable qualities to reproduce, thus halting the continuation of those qualities. Eugenics offered a foundation for people to talk about reproduction from a purely scientific standpoint, or so it seemed. The eugenics movement grew in popularity during the onset of World War I amid strong feelings of American isolationism and nationalism, with fears that war sacrificed the strongest and healthiest men while sparing the weak and unfit. As Darwin's theory of natural selection paired with Galton's concerns of human intervention spread, social observers began to point to women challenging Victorian notions of morality as a scapegoat. There derived an opposition of womanhood, the "mother of tomorrow" and the "feeble-minded woman adrift" where the "mother of tomorrow" symbolized the eugenic ideal, the

“woman adrift” represented the dysgenic threat” (Kline, 2001, p. 15). An important aspect to note about eugenics is that it was often used both in support of women’s rights as well as against women’s rights; showing that science is often manipulated through discourse to support opposing causes.

In Progressive-America, female reformers found eugenic ideology to offer a wide range of interests to support varying agendas. Darwin’s evolutionary theory and concepts of hierarchies as social order found in nature were used in arguments both for and against feminist goals (Hayden, 2013). “Social radicals such as Gilman and Margaret Sanger embraced it as a civilizing force that would further the rights of women, as well as improve the race. Conservatives such as Madison Grant...viewed it as a justification for restraining the liberties of immigrants and procreative powers of sexually promiscuous women” (Kline, 2001, 13-14). With such varying discourses adopting eugenic ideology, it’s no wonder our current perception of eugenics and early birth control debates are murky. As a great deal of the focus of the eugenics movement shifted toward negative eugenics, the birth control discourse began to center around who should and should not be allowed to reproduce.

Reproductive politics during this time period focused a great deal on poor women, especially in regard to how attitudes and policies shifted about abortion, birth control, and sterilization during distinct moments in history, especially in times of national strife. “It was the convergence of degeneracy theory, the replacement of charity with precepts of Social Darwinism, and the popularization of biological measures of “social worth” that allowed supporters to propose sterilization as a rational and enlightened social policy” (Carlson, 2008, p. 11). Thus, socioeconomic class was a major determinant the way eugenics was discussed. Eugenics rhetoric regarding motherhood depended greatly on the class of the woman in terms of

whether she was the “mother of tomorrow” or the “feeble-minded woman adrift”. Often times eugenics was used as a tool against Progressive women by arguing that motherhood was an important aspect of “race progress” in hopes that women would go back to the domestic sphere. The women’s temperance groups were eugenics enthusiasts, firmly believing that alcoholism was a hereditary trait, thus believed that alcoholism could be eradicated if alcoholics refrained from procreating (Hayden, 2013). Infant mortality rates in the early 1900s were disparagingly high, especially within the working class and poor communities (Oppenheimer, 1996). Temperance and infant mortality were already concerns of the nineteenth century benevolent women, but with the new language provided by evolutionary science and eugenics, women’s discourse about how to help was changing.

A combination of factors during the 1890s influenced an “unprecedented outpouring of racism” in the white, middle class America (Kline, 2001, p. 8). Eugenics became increasingly racially and class motivated in the early 1900s, where there grew a shift from positive eugenics, or breeding for better quality children, to negative eugenics, where the emphasis was discouraging breeding within undesirable groups. Concerns about the living conditions, as well as the financial needs of public aid programs fueled debates about the need for public health, birth control, and eugenics practices. “Popular accounts of eugenic history in the media have depicted racist white elites abusing “unfit” populations—specifically the mentally [disabled], lower-class women, and racial and ethnic minorities” (Dorr & Logan, 2008, p. 68). However, this may not have always been the case. Most studies position African Americans as the targets of eugenic control and repression, or as vocal—if disempowered and ignored—critics of eugenics.



These accounts strip black historical actors of their agency and oversimplify the American eugenics movement (Nieves, 2005; Dorr & Logan, 2008). Historical evidence exists that shows African Americans of the time developing rhetoric supporting “racial uplift” through positive eugenics, encouraged by prominent speakers such as W.E.B. DuBois who insisted that members of the elite social community nicknamed the “talented tenth” reproduce, arguing that people of color must breed “for brains, for efficiency, for beauty” (Hayden, 2013, 186). As Angel David Nieves explains “racial uplift became an acceptable forum for women’s activism at the end of the nineteenth century only after women had endured for years the dual biases of racial and gender discrimination, both from within the Black community and from without” (2005, p. 279). That is, racial uplift may have offered a sense of agency to a group that was intersectionally marginalized through forming organizations for social reform, yet did so by further marginalizing other groups. There is clear indication that though racism clearly fueled some of the viewpoints found within the eugenics movement, the social nuances and imbedded hierarchies is far more complex than race alone. The hierarchies of socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, and immigrant status all formed intersectional identities of marginalized groups within this time period that are more easily identified through discourses of class within eugenics rhetoric, as racial hierarchies are mapped onto immigration status and class.

Eugenics ideologies were used as scientific backing for seemingly opposing movements, creating a challenge for modern-day understanding of the discourse within this period in history where our understanding of a term or concept has been significantly shaped by the way events unfolded throughout the time since that moment. Thus, it is important to recognize that current perspectives of eugenics in a post-WWII world has been shaped significantly by the horrors of the Nazi implementation of their belief in a supreme race in that we seem to be inclined to

pretend that some of the positive reforms achieved during the Progressive-era were based on eugenic ideology. This is not to say that eugenicists in the early 1900s were not problematic in their logic, only to recognize that there were many interpretations of hereditary science and the need for eugenics, thus we cannot assume all eugenicists of the time were of the same mind. Eugenics during the early 1900s shaped not only our immigration policies, but also the way in which we talk about sexual conduct and reproductive health.

Early birth control rhetoric intersects the scientific rhetoric of the time with the expectations of motherhood during the Progressive Era. Medical advances paired with increased female involvement in public discourse illuminated medical advancements in birth control technologies and availability. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the birth rate within middle-class and wealthy populations in America had been dropping consistently for a century prior to the Progressive Era, so to say that early birth control rhetoric is a result of new technology would be misleading. Certain technologies, such as condoms, diaphragms, and sponges, had been in use for centuries (MacNamara, 2015). Since the birth rate had been steadily decreasing for the previous 100 years, and the general technologies of birth control had not changed significantly, the drastic increase in public discourse about birth control and reproduction reflects a more complex social shift. I argue that the increased public discourse of birth control and reproduction offers a point of cultural conflict where Americans needed to grapple with the cultural concept of motherhood and the implications of how birth control disrupted the naturalized link between motherhood and womanhood. Specifically, I argue that birth control offered agency for women separate from motherhood through the right of choice.

## **Methods: Intersectional Analysis**

In order to analyze the moment of cultural conflict, I utilized a mixed method analysis. I will fully develop and justify those methodical choices in each individual chapter, but an orientation toward intersectional analysis runs throughout this dissertation. Intersectional analysis examines intersecting identities represented in public discourse that simultaneously reflect society and shape it (Garry, 2011). A key component to intersectional analysis is that it allows a critical lens to recognize systems of oppression from various viewpoints.

Intersectionality illuminates ways in which people have multiple ways of being oppressed, such as race, gender, age, ability, etc. Looking at possibilities for agency in motherhood rhetoric will tease out ways in which birth control and motherhood rhetoric were used to provide agency for some, but constrained or even took away agency for others. This approach delves into intersections of motherhood identities within the systems of hierarchical power in American society at the time.

Intersectionality is a pillar theory in feminist scholarship and works to explore the many divisions of oppression that exist in society. As Ann Garry explains; "Intersectionality helps to point us to fruitful and complex marginalized locations" (2011, p. 828). Marginalization occurs in various contexts based on race, gender, class, age, sexual orientation, beliefs, etc. Delgado and Stefania state "'Intersectionality' means the examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation, and how their combination plays out in various settings" (2012, p. 57). Garry describes intersectionality as a tool to help understand how to draw a road map of the many ways oppression exists and the various ways in which a person may be oppressed in some ways, yet privileged in another. For example, someone may be privileged in terms of socioeconomic class, yet oppressed due to age or race. Others describe intersectionality as interlocked identities that

cannot be separated (Lorde, 1981; Collins, 2000). Crenshaw argues that "political strategies that challenge only certain subordinating practices while maintaining existing hierarchies not only marginalize those who are subject to multiple systems of subordination but also often result in oppositionalizing...discourses" (1993, p 112-113). Despite differing interpretations of the term, it is clear that foregrounding intersectionality draws attention to ways of understanding interlocking systems of oppression where attempting to separate various form of oppression can be problematic, obfuscating the complexities of systemic domination.

Offering a framework for understanding the differing systems of oppression within intersectionality, Crenshaw divides the theory into structural, political, and representational categories (1993). Even as her argument focuses around the intersection of race and gender, Crenshaw explains that this framework can be utilized inclusively for all forms of subordination. As Steiner explains "feminist standpoint theory and intersectionality have emerged as useful theories that avoid dead end assumptions about automatic outcomes and bypass the static and essentialist sameness/difference debate" (2012, p. 218). More recent scholars interpret intersectionality more broadly (Cragin, 2010; Crosby, 2016). Ahir Gopoldas explains that "newer definitions expand the concept of intersectionality beyond race, class, and gender to include age, attractiveness, body type, caste, citizenship, education, ethnicity, height and weight assessments, immigration status, income, marital status, mental health status, nationality, occupation, physical ability, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and other naturalized—though not necessarily natural—ways of categorizing human populations" (2013, p. 91). Thus, intersectionality offers a lens to recognize the complexity of identities and how those identities are constructed and represented.

This relationship becomes complicated, however, when we consider how cultural representations inform lived experiences, and vice versa. According to Meyers, “the news supports the values, beliefs and norms of the ruling elite that wields social, economic, and political power within a hierarchy of social formations” but appears neutral in a way that balances force and consent (2004, p. 96). Critical scholars argue that governing leaders shape society through venues such as the media to implement repetitive hegemonic ideologies through normalization and mass media production of subjectivity through public discourses (Charland, 1987; McGee, 1980). For instance, if a storyline consistently frames women as only content in her role as a subservient to men, one could say that this repeated narrative reinforces hegemonic ideologies within a male-dominant hierarchy. Steiner argues that one key problem with intersectionality as a theoretical perspective is “ahistorical confusion of cause and effect, of disease and symptom” (2012, p. 219). She points to continued dichotomization of gender and ignorance of “larger historical dynamics, including, among other factors, changes in the status of women” calling for future researches to “account for social, political, and economic change with major impacts for news organizations and their audiences” (Steiner, 2012, p. 219). By situating this analysis within the historical context, I hope to overcome this potential problem.

### **Chapter Overview**

The subsequent chapters follow a somewhat funneled representation of my inductive approach for better understanding the possibilities for agency within motherhood rhetoric from 1915-1920. The overall project began with my desire to better understand the historical context through public discourses surrounding the early birth control rhetoric of Margaret Sanger, but I find that by organizing the chapters in a way that explains the broader discourses of the time helps to situate our understanding of the magnitude of Sanger’s rhetoric in regards to women’s

agency. Each chapter takes a slightly different methodological approach designed to best understand the chosen artifact(s), but all use intersectionality as an overarching lens with which to recognize ways in which motherhood rhetoric enabled agency for some while constraining agency for others.

The first analysis chapter examines newspaper publications from five major cities nationwide published from 1915-1920 using critical discourse analysis and intersectionality to find dominant themes in how motherhood is framed pertaining to birth control and eugenics. Newspapers offer a unique artifact when engaging with history, as they offer a glimpse into conversations of the past. Critical discourse analysis is a great tool for recognizing intersections of power within these conversations, as many of the articles used for this analysis are responses to previous articles or commentary on public events. Because newspapers were so heavily consumed and were a frequent (often daily) publication, they provide textual evidence of ways in which depictions of motherhood were both a reflection of society at the time, but also shaped public identities in urban populations. This chapter ultimately finds that motherhood is constructed as a public identity that gives agency to some women and removes agency from others emphasizing how middle-class white mothers were discursively constructed as saviors, giving them agency to save a struggling nation.

The second analysis chapter titled “Becoming the Savior” uses the construction of ideal motherhood in American as a foundation to analyze a text written for middle-class white women: *The Ladies’ Home Journal*. As one of the largest publications of its time, *The Ladies’ Home Journal* gives an understanding about how women considered to be ideal mothers were told to enact American motherhood. Using historicized grounded theory and critical discourse analysis as my approach, I narrowed the scope of this analysis to the summer of 1918 during the height of

U.S. involvement in WWI as well as the beginning months of a national campaign for children. Using an intersectional analysis elucidates ways in which intersecting identities are assumed within the audience. This chapter builds a historicized understanding of the complexity within the possibilities for agency within motherhood, which offers a foundation on which to better understand Sanger's birth control rhetoric.

The final analysis chapter titled "Dismantling the Savior" focuses on Margaret Sanger's discursive attempt to expose the constrained agency of motherhood, specifically targeting ways in which class denies agency for mothers. This chapter also exemplifies the way in which Sanger uses birth control to promote agency for women separate from motherhood by discursively recognizing women as people who have the choice to make the decision to become mothers. Within Sanger's 1918 article entitled "When should a woman avoid having children" she addresses a diverse population of women to redefine motherhood in terms of economic class and choice. Sanger's rhetoric offers a clear understanding of how scientific framing was used to discuss women's bodies and sexual health while incorporating justification for eugenic ideologies on grounds of morality.

## **Conclusion**

By the end of this dissertation I will show that the possibilities for agency within motherhood rhetoric are always implicated in questions of race and class. Using intersectionality as a critical perspective during this time period recognizes motherhood as a means of containment even when seemingly positioning women as saviors of the nation. This inquiry seeks to make sense of how the complex rhetoric of motherhood transformed in an era of immense American nationalism, increasing capitalist consumerism, and social backlash against feminism and progressive reform, while simultaneously seemingly increasing race and class

divides through marginalization and degradation of out-casted forms of motherhood. Ultimately, I argue that the eugenics discourse of motherhood coupled with the American nationalism and consumerism from the early 1900s has shaped our views of agency through motherhood, and helped to shape the intensive mothering culture we live in today that privileges white, upper-middle class, heterosexual women who choose to live child-centered lives, while placing the burden of proof against (and therefore blame) of “bad mothering” on marginalized populations.

## **CHAPTER 2: NEWSPAPERS IN AMERICA: MOTHERHOOD FROM CRISIS TO SAVIOR**

The purpose of this chapter is to uncover an overriding frame of motherhood in America that situates our understanding of dominant discourses about agency and motherhood within historical context. To achieve this framework, this chapter investigates discourses found within large-circulation newspapers from 1915-1920 to determine ways in which the identity of motherhood and the possibilities of agency in the rhetoric of motherhood were constructed during the Great War. Through an intersectional investigation, the dominant discourses cultivate the impression of ideal motherhood in the United States as white, educated, middle-class women. Additionally, motherhood identities were consistently cast as unideal or even dangerous to the nation based on class and race. Within the constructions of the identity of ideal motherhood in America, two major themes emerge suggesting that ideal motherhood was in crisis, and the future of the nation depended on the women as ideal mothers to become national saviors.

Newspapers offer textual evidence of public conversations that took place in a specific moment in time. During the early years of the Twentieth Century, the cost effectiveness of daily newspapers made them the most popular means for the public to consume information (Epstein, 2012; Henkin, 1998). As the world moved toward the impending war, the average American



looked to newspapers for reliable and current information (Smith, 2015). Newspapers functioned as more than simply a relay for news, but as I will soon explain, they also reified cultural norms in an increasingly diverse American population.

Industrialization and urbanization transformed American newspapers in the early 1900s as advertising became the primary financial support of the press, and “urbanization created the need for a newspaper that went beyond political advocacy and attempted, instead, to make sense of a dispersed community” (Baldasty, 1992, p. 139). Included in the dispersed community were large populations of newly arrived immigrants. The scale of population change was immense: by 1900, “26 million people living in the United States were the children of immigrants, 10 million were immigrants themselves, making up 46 percent of the population” (Schudson, 1978, p. 97). Many new immigrants used newspapers to learn English and develop a sense of understanding of their new world.

Newspapers during the span from 1915-1920 changed dramatically, offering insight into a paradigm shift in how society interacted with news sources. World War I propaganda and the large growth of public relations specialists created a new sense of discomfort about journalism, creating an anxiety within the public about the objectivity of the newspaper reporting (Forde, 2007). This anxiety led to the practice of impartial exposure, where news reports were written in neutral tones and facts were meant to speak for themselves to echo society’s conviction to promote scientific knowledge, realism, and the authority of facts (Schiller, 1981; Forde, 2007). Thus, the news reports from 1915-1920 offer a unique shift in print media and the interaction between public opinion and consumerism. Furthermore, newspapers offer a daily print to show repetition of public messages over periods of time. Critical scholars argue that dominant leaders shape society through venues such as the media to enforce repeated hegemonic ideologies

through normalization and mass production of subjectivity through public discourses (Charland, 1987; McGee, 1980). Newspapers not only had broad circulation and legitimacy, but they also reified and helped shape ways of understanding the world. By targeting publications within a certain time frame, it is possible to see themes within newspaper publications that offer insight into how identities, specifically identities of motherhood, are shaped through public discourses.

#### Overview of Articles Analyzed

Texts were selected through a search where “motherhood” was paired with either “birth control” or “eugenics” from 1915 to 1920 within five prominent urban newspapers: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and *The LA Times*. These newspapers offer representations from cities with large populations and large circulation rates. The geographic diversity of these newspapers offers a representative sample of national discourse within urban populations. It is important to take note that the discourses found in urban newspaper publications cannot be considered a broad representation of all discourses in the nation during this time, as rural communities likely had much different communication styles and are not generalizable from urban publications. From this search there were 36 texts ranging from news reports of events, editorial opinions, responses to editorials, play and book reviews, and advertisements. The variance in texts allows for a broader analysis to recognize the way newspapers operate as a space for public discourse, as often the texts would reflect a level of response to the situational context, or a direct response to a previous publication. The majority (30) of the texts were within the years 1915-1917, reflecting the shift in news reporting mentioned previously. It is difficult to say with certainty the demographics of the authors behind the texts, as many are authored anonymously or the newspapers did not include identifying information. However, it should be noted that roughly half the identifiable texts chosen were

credited to women. This is an important factor when considering these texts, as the representations of women as mothers and motherhood were complex and inherently intersectional in their privilege to speak through a public platform.

### Critical Discourse Analysis

To gain a sense of historical context, I opted to use the qualitative method of critical discourse analysis to establish foundational understanding of dominant discourses from 1915-1920. Due to the interpretive nature of qualitative inquiry, an inductive approach to understanding historical discourses helped to create a foundational understanding of American culture during the time period by looking at ways in which motherhood was discussed in a public forum. Discourse analysis is a qualitative method that surveys patterns of language in texts and how those texts are situated within social and cultural contexts (Paltridge, 2012; Gee & Handford, 2012; Peräkylä, 2008). The benefits of using discourse analysis when looking at multiple texts over a certain time period is that texts are viewed as a dialectic process rather than a final product. That is, over a large enough span we can see through the discourse how the audience interacts with the texts.

This project specifically uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a methodological sensitizing agent, which is distinguished from traditional discourse analysis with the addition of “illumination of the ways in which unequal power relations are produced and naturalized” which views “texts not as truths but as discourses that act in the world in ways that both define and distribute power” (Smythe, 2006, p. 23). By recognizing the element of power in discourse, critical discourse analysis seeks not only to understand how the use of language creates meaning, but how that meaning can be created to benefit certain groups over others (Denscombe, 2007; Smith and Bell, 2007). As Park describes: “there is no one way to do critical discourse analysis.

It is a kind of textual exploration that varies according to what is being studied and what frameworks are applied” (2014, p. 51). I am applying this method through an explicit framework of intersectional analysis.

Due to the complexity of intersectionality within newspapers, this analysis borrows from Fairclough’s (1989) approach to CDA by analyzing texts at three levels: Description, Interpretation, and Explanation. This three-dimensional approach offers an interdisciplinary means that Fairclough described as blending close textual linguistic analysis with the sociological practice of relational social structures, and the social practice of how people create collective meaning (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough’s three-dimensional approach offers an analytical framework that is helpful when teasing out intersectional complexities. As Jorgensen and Philips (2002) explain: a textual analysis using CDA should focus on the linguistic structures of the text, the method relating to the production and consumption of the text, and the wider cultural context surrounding the text. To utilize Fairclough’s framework, this analysis offers a description of the dominant themes surrounding motherhood within the chosen newspapers from 1915-1920 by illustrating ways in which mothers and motherhood were framed within the text. Each example is analyzed using intersectionality as an interpretive lens to tease out ways in which motherhood identities were represented and simultaneously constructed within newspaper publications, and finally the analysis will seek to offer explanations for ways in which power dynamics framed and marginalized motherhood in ways to reinforce constructions of hegemonic white masculinity within motherhood identities.

The geographical diversity of newspapers found nationwide offers a large-picture perspective of common discourses of the time period constructing motherhood identities, namely through the discussion of birth control and women’s right and/or obligation to reproduce. Critical

discourse analysis of a wide range of newspaper articles offers a contextual understanding of the dominant themes present in discourse about motherhood, birth control, and eugenics during this time period within the context of public discourse. I consider this piece of the research project to be somewhat ethnographic, as newspaper articles were often conversational, where often an editorial piece directly responds to a previous article, or articles are written about public speeches or events in a way that continues the public dialogue. The discursive themes also hone in on historical contexts through choices of words and phrases to describe motherhood as the foundation of American identity. Joseph Maxwell explains that often within research analysis in an attempt to structure analysis developed categories become disconnected, thus offers a concept of connecting strategies to understand the data in context, “using various methods to identify relationships among the different elements of the text” (2013, p. 112). The attention to discourse within the context of public newspapers across the country offers a way to connect the texts within the larger cultural contexts of this time period.

This method is especially salient in understanding the discourse surrounding birth control and sterilization during a period when eugenics was a dominant scientific narrative. In a similar dissertation project both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze *The Ladies' Home Journal* from 1920-1940 was able to find dominant discourses framing a dialectical dilemma between frugality and consumption (Cicero, 2009). Cicero's study offers an exemplar for how discourse analysis can help make sense of ways in which people talked about particular topics within historical context. A similar analysis of news publications during the same time period will help to establish the dominant public discourse present regarding American motherhood identities—a dominant discourse directed to more diverse audiences than the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Similar to how Cicero found tensions within dominant discourses between

frugality and consumption, similar tensions exist within dominant discourses about motherhood. Deeper analysis teases out themes regarding positive and negative eugenics within the context of American motherhood, that is: who is rhetorically positioned to be worthy of motherhood and who is not? Furthermore, deeper analysis offers insight into how American motherhood is constructed, and thus enacted through American nationalism and consumerism. This perspective creates a foundation from which to build an argument for ways in which eugenics rhetoric and American nationalism and consumerism developed social discourse about motherhood that still exists today.

### Analysis

A dominant theme running through newspaper articles from 1915 to 1920 frames motherhood in terms of crisis and exaltation. These themes almost provide a narrative of problem-solution discourse throughout the time frame, in that a common discursive theme occurs where women's rights activists were creating a national problem by refraining from motherhood which led to discursive strategies to reinforce mothers as saviors of the nation as an apparent solution. The following section offers examples and intersectional analysis of both "motherhood in crisis", as well as "mothers as saviors", that explains how these discourses worked to reinforce patriarchal hegemony within social constructions of motherhood identities.

**National Crisis of Motherhood.** Newspaper articles frequently framed motherhood as a national institution in crisis. Common discourses supporting this notion provoked fear by citing the declining birth rate within educated populations leading to "national decay" or "race suicide". This section emphasizes how intersections of race, class, and sex are framed in relation to choice, how the concept of race suicide reinforces upper-class white motherhood, and how framing of national decay disciplines non-mothers through blame rhetoric.

**The Crisis of Choice.** In “Woman and the Fading of the Maternal Instinct” published in the *New York Times* September 5, 1915 by Mr. and Mrs. John Martin, there is both an implicit and explicit spotlight shone on motherhood and choice in regards to the decreasing birth rates among college women. They refer to childless women as hastening national decay, emphasizing the fears that the “finest women” are not reproducing, leaving only children of “less valuable stock”. Furthermore, the Martins explain that the decrease in birthrates among educated women is because “she cannot be deeply involved both in children and in outside work. As her pursuits become mannish, so will her preferences. And already the results are in evidence in the decay and extinction of families” (Martin & Martin, 1915). Furthermore, they state that “the day work of women has been the death of the home” as if women had only recently entered the workforce. This implicitly excludes working class and most minority women from the category of “women” because many have always been working outside the home. The emphasis here is that only women wealthy enough to obtain higher education and training should be considered responsible for procreating, or risk the decay and extinction of families.

While the Martins seem to be arguing for women to embrace motherhood through bearing and raising children, the Martins further distance working class and minority women from ideal motherhood through their argument against the large families found in the poor and working class populations. They state “[f]eebleminded and degenerate parents, whose progeny would inevitably people our prisons and poorhouses, should, indeed, be safeguarded against marrying” arguing that in terms of birth control “what was meant for the poor has been seized by the rich”. The sweeping generalization here suggests that all women existing outside the margins of white, middle and upper-class socioeconomic states, are pushed outside the category of ideal motherhood and considered “feebleminded and degenerate parents”. Poor and working class

women are framed as bad mothers who need to be “safeguarded against marrying” in order to keep their children from further ruining the nation through their very existence.

The intersections of class (and by extension race) and sex are intertwined with the concept of choice in this article. Educated white women, or rather, white women with the means to pursue higher education are viewed as desirable mothers, but are assumed to be making the choice to refrain from motherhood in order to achieve success in their careers. The choice to work is gendered as “mannish”, disallowing femininity and work outside the home to coexist. The Martin’s blame the decrease in birthrates among educated women on the inability of women to be “involved both in children and in outside work”, but exclude populations of women who do so out of necessity from the category of ideal or good motherhood. Their omission of recognition for the working class mother pushes working mothers to the margins, constituting the identity of a desirable mother as one who is only deeply involved in her children. The construction of motherhood as identity is furthered by the notion of choice as they turn their attention to the “decay of the nation” inciting a discourse of fear. Choice is reiterated as an option for those with privilege, as “feeble-minded and degenerate parents” should not be allowed to marry and become parents. The poor and working classes are framed as they decay of the nation for which the nation needs a safeguard in birth control. Motherhood is in crisis because of choice: educated white women are choosing not to become mothers, while poor and working-class women should have that choice made for them.

The large family sizes of poor and working class populations were often discussed as ignorant of in need of assistance. In a letter to the editor titled “For Birth Control” published in the *Los Angeles Times* February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1917, W.W.C. responds to a recent sermon delivered by a local reverend against birth control and information about avoiding contraception. The author



cites generations of feeble-minded living in poor houses as a need for society to intervene by preventing continued generations of “incompetents”. The author also points out that:

over-multiplication exists principally among the poor, ignorant, and incompetent.

Modern conveniences, sanitation, and all that modest independence brings, do not render women unfit for motherhood, and yet families of these classes are relatively small. They are so by reason of the woman’s knowledge of how to limit offspring. Why, then, should the less fortunate women be deprived of the simple, harmless means of limiting their families (W.W.C., 1917).

Here the emphasis appears to be on aiding women who are less likely to have access to the information necessary to assist them in reducing the amount of children they birth if desired. The crisis of motherhood is emphasized in the inability for poor and working class women to access information about birth control, leaving them with no choice or agency over their motherhood. Categorizing mothers with large families as “among the poor, ignorant, and incompetent” constructs a negative identity around poor and working class women while robbing them of their agency in making the choice to have large families. The assumption seems to be that working class and poor women only have large families because they are ignorant and incompetent, while intelligent wealthy women were choosing smaller families.

Other constructions of motherhood identities eliminate any discussion of choice by forcing the assumption that all women would choose to be mothers if they could. For example, “The War and Polygamy” published in *The Washington Post* February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1915 by Sarah Kumar Ghosh illustrates fears of decreasing birth rates compounded by growing death rates in the war in Europe. Ghosh (1915) cites the disparity between marriageable men and women, arguing that if the war continued society would need to resort to polygamy to allow women the “right of

wifehood and motherhood, legitimately and honorably” as polygamy would be the only alternative to keeping “woman in eternal spinsterhood, and deny her the rights of nature”. To Ghosh, the very war itself is an attack on women’s right to become mothers through choosing the best mate. Ghosh describes similar situations in history where war depleted male populations and described dire ramifications. In one such example, she cites the losses in France under Napoleon stating that “[i]n effect that amounted to the entire virile manhood of France, leaving it to the feeble to continue the race, so that in consequence the stature of Frenchmen was reduced by nearly two inches” (Ghosh, 1915). Further driving her point, she explains the seriousness of the French plight: “In the present war France has yet to oust the invader from her soil, inch by inch, in which, being on the aggressive, her loss will be at least as great as that of the German forces opposed to her” (Ghosh, 1915). The sentiment of superiority over France is clear, as Ghosh places the blame of France’s inability to defend itself against German forces on their feeble population as a result of previous losses in war. Though the U.S. had not officially entered the war, Ghosh points to the possibility that America will also suffer this plight, requiring polygamous marriages with the remaining ‘chosen men’. She concludes by asking:

what other alternative is there? The silken cord for baby girls at their birth, as formerly in China? The cup of oblivion for widows on their husbands’ funeral pyre, as formerly in India? Or the suicide of wives, sisters, daughters, as now in parts of Austria, and perchance Germany, Russia, France, and Belgium? For that is the price of war. Woman always pays—especially in war! (Ghosh, 1915).

This conclusion emphasizes the brutality of war for women by pointing to historic actions while inciting fear about current issues.

Ghosh also seems to be implying that woman's only purpose is procreation, thus her life is meaningless without a husband. The notion that woman's sole purpose is motherhood continues the construction of women's identities as mothers as the only option. However, Ghosh does not discriminate between women within this piece, but focuses attention on what constitutes a desirable male partner. Pointing to the frailty of Frenchmen as a case study for allowing feeble populations to "continue the race" with the result being a country unable to defend itself emphasizes the nationalistic superiority of this time period. With nearly half the population consisting of first and second generation immigrants, the depiction of outside nations as feeble reinforces the identity of American whiteness. Masculinity is inferred, as countries fighting were already doomed to "dire loss of manhood". The French are feminized in their helplessness in contrast to American masculinity, which was almost certain to be required to rescue the struggling European nations. The final segment drives American exceptionalism to the forefront, as women in Eastern nations have historically been forced to infanticide or suicide due to the lack of desirable men. Thus, the article rests the fate of the nation on the shoulders of the right kind of women having children with the right kind of men. Motherhood was framed and not only desirable but also necessary for national security.

The crisis of choice points to a possibility for agency for women. In this instance choice seems to be increasing agency for women, but that agency is highly constricted. Women appear to have agency through their apparent choice to participate or abstain from motherhood, yet the discourses that frame such a choice as a crisis position choice negatively. The negative framing of choice is much of an illusion then, as there is really only one permissible choice: motherhood and domesticity. The possibility for agency in this sense is merely a woman's choice to fulfill her duty to the nation as a mother.

**Race suicide: reinforcement of social hierarchy.** The term “race suicide” was coined by Dr. Edward A. Ross, a sociology professor at the University of Nebraska in his 1901 address at the fifth annual meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Ross’s address, entitled “The Causes of Race Superiority” offers a list of reasons why the descendants from Northern European immigrants have achieved racial superiority in America that appears heavily reflect notions of orientalism, which Edward Said defines as the way in which Western European and American culture has created and reinforced stereotypes and prejudices of all non-Western cultures that positions them as “other” (1979). Ross outlined concerns that due to cultural refinement of Americans resulting in lower birthrates than found in “Asiatics”, that “the silent replacement of Americans by Asiatics go on unopposed until the latter monopolize all industrial occupations, and the Americans shrink to a superior caste able perhaps by virtue of its genius, its organization, and its vantage of position to retain for a while its hold on government, education, finance, and the direction of industry, but hopelessly beaten and displaced as a race” (1901, p. 88). Thus, Ross’s term became an alarmist phrase about the potential obliteration of white social hierarchies during a time of vast immigration to America. It is worth noting that in Ross’s explanation, he specifically states that “race suicide” occurs when “[t]he working classes gradually delay marriage and restrict the size of the family as the opportunities hitherto reserved for their children are eagerly snapped up by the numerous progeny of the foreigner” thus equating the working class with the superior race (1901, p. 88). This distinction is interesting, as the following examples point to “race suicide” in terms of class, as well as ethnicity, emphasizing the interconnectedness of class, race, and ethnicity within social identities in early 1900s American culture.

The depiction of American exceptionalism in opposition to Eastern societies is linked with the concept of “race suicide” in an article titled “Danger in Birth Rate: Race Suicide Invites East to Overrun West, Says Haggard” written by Forbes W. Fairbairn for *The Washington Post* in 1919 which exposes fears that the declining birth rate in Western civilization will bring the end of Western domination as a world power. Fairbairn (1919) argues that “[i]n the educated and professional classes of women many causes have combined to prevent increase—as evidenced by the endless numbers of ‘only sons’ killed in the war. The maternal instinct is not highly developed in a considerable proportion of modern women; nor, for that matter, is the paternal instinct always strong in men”. The perceived lack of maternal instinct in American women is compared to mothers in Eastern countries, stating that “in the east every woman considers it a shame to be barren; considers it indeed her duty to bear as many children as she can” (Fairbairn, 1919). He concludes by saying “[p]erhaps if this vast female electorate is made to understand the facts in their bearing upon the future of the race they would, as a mass, bring pressure to bear upon individual selfishness and ignorance, and thereby effect appropriate changes in the attitude of the Western world towards this vital problem of its increase” (Fairbairn, 1919). The emphasis here is that Western non-mothers are selfish and ignorant of their greater purpose and duty to civilization, whereas mothers fulfill their duty to society despite their individual desires.

Fairbairn continues to cultivate fears that the war will increase the challenges posed by the already declining birth rates among educated classes. The strong currents of American exceptionalism and orientalism positioned with descriptions of Eastern cultures of maternity and emphasis on “her duty to bear as many children as she can” situates the American woman’s choice of motherhood as an act of nationalism. Her failure to bear as many children as possible is thus framed as the cause of a national crisis. The connection within this text implies that the

inability of society to dominate a woman's womb can be seen as a direct threat on the ability of America to dominate the world. Though male paternal instinct is called into question by Fairbairn, men are safe from the accusations of selfishness and ignorance. The term "race suicide" emphasizes the socially constructed fears that white, upper/middle class motherhood is in crisis, as the nation's fate is determined by a specific population of women's ability to continue the population even though the population was already drastically increasing with immigrant groups. Thus, it was not the population itself that was in danger, but the makeup of the population that was so troubling for this author.

With so much of the attention on the low birthrates among the college-educated women of the upper-class, the mother of modest means is a dominant theme as both the implicit 'other' and the discursively explicit downfall of society. A play review by Henry Christeen Warnack published in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1915 titled "'Kindling' Is Real Success" covers a play in which a protagonist white female character yearns for motherhood but lives in a sickly tenement unfit for raising a child. The play centers around the concept of class inequality and motherhood in a way that depicts poor women as victims of their economic situations that prevent them from their sacred right of motherhood. The main character ultimately steals money from her employer so she can move with her husband to a more suitable location to raise a family, justifying her actions by stating that "she is the only kind of woman left who would welcome a child" and that "being right is greater than being good and that it is harder to be right than to be good". The conclusion explains that the lack box office profits for "Kindling" are not because of the quality of the play, but that the typical demographic of theater-goers are typically middle class and "broadly speaking the middle classes are frequently both calloused and ignorant with regard to those conditions which call forth many of the day's most vital themes and their best treatment"

(Warnack, 1915). This perspective lends credence to the notion that though issues pertaining to poor and working class women wanting to participate in motherhood, this was not the typical representation of such women nor was this representation particularly well received by the public.

Warnack's analysis of "Kindling" offers insight into a seemingly controversial conversation of the time, where the play challenges dominant discourses encouraging wealthy women to become mothers while so many in the healthcare field were pushing to restrict working class and poor women from motherhood. In his description of the play, Warnack admits to crying intermittently for hours—a testament to the severity of a woman's inability to achieve her desire of motherhood. However, it is her class, not her body that prevents her agency from becoming a mother. "Kindling" presents a challenge to intersections of class, sex, and motherhood; moving so far as to excuse theft for the pursuit to motherhood. However, it is possible that her whiteness afforded her the audience's understanding, as her only character flaw is her lack of wealth—which is not necessarily a permanent status. When dominant discourses seem to point to upper and middle class women as needing to have children, "Kindling" presents an opposing viewpoint to the argument that working class and poor women were 'over-multiplying'. Contrary to seemingly popular depictions, this working mother-to-be recognized that her living situation was not conducive to raising a child and refrained from motherhood until she found a solution. Though she resorts to theft, she was neither ignorant nor incompetent. "Kindling" is a conversation about motherhood as a national crisis of class that challenged dominant discourses promoting only upper and middle-class motherhood, while simultaneously emphasizing the immorality of the poor who can only steal from the wealthy to achieve their goals.

**National decay: disciplining the non-mother.** The article “Women Without Four Children Termed Slacker: Professor Urges ‘Superior Classes’ to Maintain numbers”, published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in 1918, describes a speech by Professor Roswell H. Johnson of the University of Pittsburgh given to the American Association for the Study and Prevention of Infant Mortality in Chicago. Johnson is quoted as stating “woe to the nation which, like ours, finds its superior women slacking on the job of motherhood. The married woman who does not have more than three children is, except in a few cases, pulling back on the wheels of progress” (1918). Single women were also blamed in their celibacy, as Johnson argues that “they allowed themselves to drive into an inexcusable anti-social misanthropy” (1918). These depict women as responsible not only for mothering, but bearing greater numbers of children.

Continuing the discourse of national crisis, the speech by Professor Johnson places blame on female bodies for not fulfilling their duty to the nation by giving birth to more than three children by calling them ‘slackers’. Motherhood in itself is not enough, a woman must fulfill a quota deemed appropriate for her deemed superiority. In a nation focused on world dominance and exceptionalism, “pulling back on the wheels of progress” is a harsh accusation. The female body is disciplined for national decay, deemed ‘misanthropic’ for not marrying and bearing children. It’s important to note however, that not all bodies are included in Johnson’s scrutiny. Female bodies considered ‘superior’, that is the educated upper to middle-class white women, are disciplined for their ability to choose not to comply.

A clear example of disciplining non-mothers can be found in the *Los Angeles Times* article titled “A Mother’s View on Birth Control” published February 25, 1917 by Mrs. Thomas F. Keating. Keating defends motherhood in a way that positions advocates for birth control as childless spinsters who are “tired of themselves” and fill their time with parading in the streets



and attending useless social functions in comparison with the “sacred trust” of motherhood which is in need of greater reverence. She argues that “mothers have no time to make public speeches or circulate petitions” and that it is “in the hands of the press to sanction the present condition of affairs with its downward tendency or to restore and protect the sacredness of motherhood” (Keating, 1917). In a unique argument of the time, Mrs. Keating explains that wealthy people are not adapted to raising children, and thus God sends children to the less wealthy because they give them love rather than luxury.

Keating’s response to previous articles promoting birth control reflects the sentiment of the time against women’s right to control their body. She positions birth control advocates as childless spinsters, framing their non-childbearing bodies as lacking both legitimacy and respectability. Non-mothers are framed with an air of absurdity: parading in the streets and attending useless social functions, while their mothering abilities are wasted on “little dogs”. Keating draws a connection of the non-mother as physically absurd, through illustrations of their useless existence in the public sphere and attempting to mother dogs instead of human children. These illustrations offer the reader the ability to imagine the absurd images, further connecting the irrationality of the non-mother’s actions to her arguments of birth control and choice. The illegitimacy of non-mothers is further compounded in comparison with the ‘sacred trust’ of motherhood. Keating’s defense of motherhood makes clear the feeling that motherhood is in crisis, yet mothers “have no time to make public speeches or circulate petitions”. Mothers are busy with legitimate concerns: raising children. Keating calls to the press to defend motherhood, emphasizing the sentiment that motherhood is in need of defense. The argument that wealthy people are not adapted to raising children in comparison with less wealthy is a direct challenge to the dominant discourses emphasizing the crisis of motherhood within educated women.

Keating's statement challenges notions of class hierarchies by claiming that the less wealthy are better suited to performing their sacred duty.

**Constructing mothers as national savior.** The following articles offer recognition and a solution to the motherhood crisis through the rhetorical positioning of mothers as saviors. Within the construct of 'saviors' there is great focus on the development of intensive mothers through education, ways in which mothers should be compensated for performing their duties, and finally the positioning of mothers as saints. If the problem is that motherhood is in crisis with declining birth rates among upper to middle class white women, the solution proposed within the newspaper articles is to offer mothers agency through exaltation. That is, within this framework the notion of mothers as saviors provides agency for the institution of motherhood.

**Nationalistic Mothering<sup>3</sup>.** In an article published July 11, 1915 written by Mme. Selma Huldricksen titled "Why the Eugenic Marriages are Turning Out So Badly" the author offers an overview of several issues pertaining to marriage ideals and motherhood. In one such story she depicts a young mother who "had the strongest sense of duty in regard to the making of a human life and consciousness, combined with what is rarer, a sense of the enormous important of environment, all external circumstances, such as air, food and persons" (Huldricksen, 1915). The young mother here is depicted as having a strong sense of duty to her child, with a heavy

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<sup>3</sup> The concept of nationalistic mothering borrows from the term 'intensive mother' coined in Sharon Hays's explanation that intensive mothering is "an ideology that holds the individual mother primarily responsible for child rearing and dictates that the process is to be child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive" (1998). Intensive mothering is a contemporary term, but helps elucidate ways in which motherhood during the WWI era was similar to intensive mothering. In this instance, motherhood centered around nationalistic notions of raising American citizens.

emphasis on her knowledge of scientific needs such as boiling water to kill germs on the baby's bottle. However, the depiction is a cautionary tale:

Worry over these details sent her into moods of melancholia. She was too weak physically, and too temperamental to make a good mother. Her ideals were beyond her power, and now I believe that she was firmly convinced she would never be well enough to bring up the boy right. That she took her life under the circumstances was a beautiful act (Huldricksen, 1915).

This example shows not that the scientific ideals of motherhood necessarily damaging or wrong, but that in this example the woman was “too weak” and “too temperamental” to live up to those ideals. Her failure as mother was a personal failure, not a failing of ideals of motherhood. That she took her own life is not a tragedy in this instance, but, according to the author, a beautiful sacrifice for her child. She became a martyr for her child, freeing her child and husband from her own inadequacy to achieve intensive motherhood. Huldricksen's description of this mother as both a failed and successful continues the notion that women's lives should revolve around their children, and if a woman is not successful in giving the necessary care and attention to her children, her life is not worth living. Her education and class should have prepared her for motherhood, her understanding of scientific needs and the labor-intensive requirements for motherhood were clear. Huldricksen explains, “her ideals were beyond her power”, she was too weak to live up to the status of motherhood. The intersections of race and class are diminished by mental health and ability, in that even a woman of the desired race and class upbringing can fall short if considered to be mentally inadequate.

Other examples of discourse depicting and simultaneously constructing the concept of nationalistic mothering come from critiques of non-intensive mothers that indirectly posits the

nationalist mother as ideal. In an article titled “The Woman Movement and the Baby Crop: Effects of it are becoming so appalling as to threaten seriously the perpetuation of the nation, according to students of the question” written by Mr. and Mrs. John Martin for the *New York Times* in 1915, the focus is on the lack of mothers within college-educated women. Mr. and Mrs. Martin begin their article stating that “[t]he woman’s movement is a movement toward national suicide” and explain that “college training has become not merely respectable, but fashionable” (1915). The name of the article itself points to the science of making babies as “crop”, using an agricultural metaphor that suggests good babies are commodities that signal a healthy nation. The agricultural metaphor as babies as a “crop” also suggest that just like farmers use the strongest plant seeds for the next crop to ensure the best crop for the future, babies can also be genetically chosen as superior for future generations.

Citing previously published articles about birthrates among college graduates, the Martins explained that educated women are choosing not to marry and continue the race by replacing themselves in the population. The inverse descriptions of motherhood stem from the explanations as to *why* educated women are not bearing children, such as the “craving for luxury” or the realization that “children [are] discovered to be a fatal hindrance to a career, health marred or ruined, luxurious standards set up on the income which need support only one, and a twist given to the nature away from domestic life” (Martin & Martin, 1915). These explanations are not offered in a reasonable light, as they are paired with terms like “race suicide” and comparing women’s education to tuberculosis explaining that educated women are falling ill to the “germs of feminism”, and go as far as to say that the “woman’s movement threatens to devote every national energy to making of civilization a soft bed on which to put mankind to eternal sleep”. The focus here is that women need to fulfill their duty by setting aside

desires for luxury, health, and career aspirations; supporting the construct of the selfless mother who does her best for her child and nation. The Martins' echo the argument that wealthy white motherhood is in crisis, as college-educated women choose luxury over continuing the race. Class is in stark emphasis, as women are opting for luxury, not merely survival or even basic comfort. The ideal mother depicted by the Martins, then, cares not about the dangers of childbirth to her health, is not concerned with career success, and financially centered around motherhood.

The article "Romantic Love in Girls Should Be Fostered in Doll Days, Says Expert, To Make Eugenics Practical Success" by Mary L. Read published in *The Washington Post* in 1915 places a great deal of blame for perceived eugenics failures determined by the low birth rates in the educated and upper class population on the lack of romantic ideals and emphasis on education for women. Read explains that "[e]conomic necessity no longer compels her to choose marriage for her support. The matter of training for her own self-support has become the chief consideration with educators and parents, even to the overshadowing or neglect of training for homemaking" (1915). Read explains that the way society needs to overcome the pitfalls of women choosing education and independent careers is to foster a strong sense of romance and idealize homemaking at a young age. She states "If you want the romantic ideals of a young woman to be strong, you must feed her imagination upon strong and noble traits while she is a mere child and her ideals are taking shape... You can teach her in those early years to admire qualities and characteristics that you know make for domestic happiness and eugenics" (Read, 1915). Read asserts that these ideals must be taught at a young age to fully encourage the desire for romance in young women. Further, Read (1915) states "[t]he greatest value of such home economics as is taught in the schools and the college today lies not in its technical training. It lies

in the directing of the attention of girls toward the home, the perspective of life which naturally includes her home and her responsibilities as home-maker”. Here the audience is directed toward the author’s rationale for home economics, in that it cultivates romantic ideals of home-making and motherhood in young women. This continually supports the notion that while education is seemingly the foundation of the problem with low-birth rates in middle to upper-class women, refocusing that education on romantic ideals and home economics will create educated *and* willing wives and mothers. The lack of maternal instincts in women can be prevented by cultivating nationalistic mothers through education and romanticizing marriage for young girls.

**Compensation for mothers.** The concept of compensation occurs again with the article “Asks Compensation for Motherhood” published August 4<sup>th</sup> 1916 in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, which reads as a response to an article printed in the American Journal of Sociology titled “Social Devices for Impelling Women to Bear and Rear Children” written by Leta S. Hollingworth. Though the author of this article is unknown, the context of the response lends credibility to the author as someone well enough read to be knowledgeable of scientific journals at the time. The author responds to the following statement originally written by Hollingworth: “Child bearing is in many respects analogous to the work of soldiers. It is necessary for national existence; it means great sacrifice of personal advantage; it involves danger and suffering, and in a certain percentage of cases, the actual loss of life. It is clear, indeed, that the social devices employed to get children born and to get soldiers slain are in many respects similar.” The author points to myths or rumors surrounding motherhood, pointing to the fact that the artistic representation of happy mothers is a work of fiction. The perceived birth rate crisis is a result of insufficient maternalism, but can be resolved through “adequate compensation, either in money or in fame”.

Hollingworth uses the discourse of war to express similarities of motherhood and soldiering, emphasizing the amount of work required for mothers within the home, as well as the danger and suffering. She points to the myth of the “happy mother”, explaining that the idea that mothers are happy confined to the home is a work of fiction. Her argument is that the answer to the motherhood crisis is by compensating mothers just as we compensate soldiers for their duty to the nation. However, it is clear that only some mothers deserve compensation as Hollingworth focuses her attention on the birth rate crisis within desired populations which reiterates dominant discourses of whiteness and class constructions of motherhood.

In “Doctor Admits Defying Law to Control Births: Physicians Take Advanced Stand in Advocating Limiting of Families” published in *The Chicago Daily Tribune* February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1916 (author unknown), several physicians are cited in a case regarding abortion practices at a meeting of the Chicago Medical Society. One rationale given for physicians’ desire to promote a doctrine of birth control quotes Dr. Anna Blount who stated that “while the Harvard graduate has three-quarters of a son and the Vassar graduate half a daughter, the families of the feeble minded in the United States average eight children” (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1916). The physicians overwhelmingly were in support of lifting the prohibition on birth control information, largely as a means of relief for “overburdened” mothers. Blount is also reported to have said “statistics indicate that scientific and intellectual men are having smaller and smaller families. The rich can get the information by paying a fee to a physician” (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1916). Which emphasizes the fact that families with enough money and education were able to utilize birth control methods that were unavailable to less fortunate populations. Blount is further quoted as saying “We need a propaganda of voluntary motherhood. We need to make it fashionable to have children—good children” (*The Chicago Tribune*, 1916). The concept of voluntary motherhood

reflects a popular feminist notion that motherhood should be a choice, and to persuade women to make that choice there needs to be a cultural shift that popularizes motherhood for wealthy and educated women who are seen as the best women to become mothers of ‘good children’.

There is a fine line within the birth control rhetoric, where it appears advocates for birth control hope to increase access to information for poor and working class women on grounds of relief. Often the narrative of “overburdened” mothers in dire need of relief from excessive childbearing is told, accentuating the overcrowding in tenement homes and the mother’s inability to properly care for her large family. However, Blount does not differentiate rhetorically between who she calls ‘feeble-minded’ and poor/working class women. Voluntary motherhood, therefore, is not voluntary at all, but entirely dependent on class and race. The crisis of motherhood is not that America needed more children, but rather that there was a need for more white, upper to middle class children.

**Mothers as National Savior.** The notion of motherhood as a sacrifice continues in “Religion: The Preachers; Go Into the Highways and Hedges Seeking Sinners” published by The Faithful Reporter in the *Los Angeles Times* May 15, 1916, which gives an overview of several pastoral sermons given in the area on Mother’s Day. The general themes over eight different sermons focused around the power of motherhood as the “safeguard to our country”, the virtues of motherhood, and the sacrifices of mothers in both peace and war. As Dr. Campbell of First Presbyterian stated “the name “mother” inspires courage and hope to thousands and the memory of her noble sacrifices has made the hard and difficult ways of life more easily travelled” (Reporter, 1916). The Reverend C. M. Walton of First Cumberland stated “To our mothers we owe a debt that cannot be paid with money” emphasizing the inability to compensate women for their trials as mothers (Reporter, 1916).



Mother's Day became a national holiday in 1914 as a day to honor the sacrifices mothers made for their children (Antolini, 2014). Through the published overview of area pastoral sermons, the exaltation of motherhood is extended beyond the pulpit and into public discourse. The virtues of motherhood work to constitute the identity of mothers as saviors, inspiring courage and hope to the nation. Mothers are lifted to sainthood, the compensation for their sacrifices comes in the form of a single day of recognition. In this article, pastors echo the scientific rhetoric of the eugenics movement referring to mothers as the safeguard of the country, continuing our race. White Christian mothers are placed on a discursive pedestal, raised up as the ideal mother.

"The Soul-Development of Woman: A bit of a writer's autobiography that is an answer to some of the feminist ideals" was published in *The New York Times* July 11, 1915 as a response to an interview printed previously discussing Miss Henrietta Rodman's feminist ideals. The author describes herself as a woman married at 18 to a man who "proved to be not only a dreamer, but a crank; impulsively cruel, sensual under the mask of domesticity and exalted morality" (*The New York Times*, 1915). She described that "disappointed in her ideals of marriage, motherhood was the sole compensation, the only happiness circumstances permitted" (*The New York Times*, 1915). Her experience as a mother, she explained, taught her that women's souls grow through the practice of self-sacrifice, arguing that "selfishness is the weak point of feminism" (*The New York Times*, 1915). Here it is possible to see the continuation of motherhood as a sacrifice. This sacrifice is compounded when the author states "home is the heart of the nation, and whoever renounces that sphere under the pretense of serving the race cuts the great artery that feeds humanity. Keeping up the home is the primary duty of every woman; cultivating intimacy with

her children the highest privilege” (*The New York Times*, 1915). A mother’s sacrifice is not only for her own soul development, but for the strength of the nation and humanity itself.

The author positions her narrative as a response to Miss Rodman’s feminist ideals as a means of continuing the conversation by explaining her opposing viewpoint. She begins her autobiographical account by sharing that she was unhappily married at 18, but found “compensation” through motherhood. This narrative expresses the notion that motherhood is the only necessary compensation necessary for a woman in life. Though the beginning of her narrative appears to be denouncing the ideals of marriage, she uses her experience as an argument for women to be satisfied with unhappy or abusive marriages because it still affords them the privilege of motherhood. She extends further the selfishness of feminism and non-mothers, framing them as lesser because they have not taken the opportunity to grow their souls. Furthermore, the author pulls the concept of sacrifice for the nation, stating that the “home is at the heart of every nation” positioning non-mothers and feminists as those willing to cut “the great artery that feeds humanity” (*The New York Times*, 1915). The ideals of motherhood constructed in this narrative position motherhood as martyrdom, where a mother’s self-sacrifice in her duty to the nation raises her to sainthood. This narrative of sacrifice and sainthood negate feminist ideals of equality on the grounds that women have the privilege to become saints through their motherhood or otherwise be the end of humanity.

#### From Crisis to Savior

The themes of motherhood in crisis and mothers as saints present a way at understanding how motherhood identities were discursively constructed in newspaper publications, and how public discourse attempted to solve the motherhood crisis through exalting mothers as saviors. Looking at these articles with intersectionality as a lens helps to recognize the complexity within

the representations of motherhood both in explicit and implicit descriptions. Very rarely is race or ethnicity mentioned in any of the publications, as whiteness is typically assumed. Class is heavily integrated within the dominant discourses, pointing to poor and working classes as contributing to “national decay” with large families that cannot survive without public assistance. Each time newspaper publications refer to ideal mothers as college-educated there is an implicit other, where a non-educated mother is tacitly considered unideal. The terms “feeble-minded”, “imbecile” or “idiot” were often used to describe the poor, uneducated, or immigrant people without means or ability to stand up against the dominant culture supporting white, middle to upper class society. Newspapers representing society frequently in articles and editorials as under attack from “race suicide” through low birth rates within the populations at the top of the hierarchy, creates fear propaganda that both creates identification of the in-group of ‘desirable’ mothers in opposition to the ‘other’ mothers and women advocates. These representations of motherhood taken within a greater context of the Great War, as well as the cultural identity crisis in the U.S. with the large populations of new immigrants and urbanization exacerbate the fears of a hierarchical shift.

In examining the chosen articles, one challenge is knowing the specific participants in both production and audience. As explained throughout the textual examples, several publications did not list an author or used only initials. However, all publications had to be approved by an editor at the newspaper, which is a reminder that power is the leading participant in news production (Fairclough, 1989, p. 49). The words and stories published in newspapers carry weight within public viewership, shaping the way people understood the world and their place in it. That the majority of the articles found were between the years 1915-1918 show that the connection between motherhood and war were strong, particularly in regard to fears of

decreasing birth rates in wealthy and educated populations deemed race suicide. The reduction in publications focused on motherhood, birth control, and eugenics in 1919 and 1920 also reflect the shift in news reporting that rejected propaganda in lieu of more impartial coverage (Schudson, 1978; Forde, 2007). The dominant discourses found through this time period, however, may show that war was a strong motivator for publications against women taking part in politics, higher education, and social reform. Though women nation-wide did not obtain national suffrage rights until 1920<sup>4</sup>, the years between the conclusion of the Great War and suffrage for women were relatively silent in comparison to the preceding years.

As a goal of critical discourse analysis, the themes found within the articles point to ways in which newspaper publications reinforce and sustain power structures in society. Throughout all the articles discussing motherhood paired with eugenics or birth control, the dominant discourse found in almost every publication framed motherhood in crisis, whether that is through women's choices to abstain from motherhood, or from the wrong women becoming mothers. The dominant discourses show the construction of motherhood identities to be emphasizing class, race, and even ableism. It is important to differentiate women from mothers in this instance, as often women advocating for birth control were portrayed as childless, spinsters, or man-like. Very rarely are women depicted as non-mothers because they are unable to bear children, her virility is assumed, thus her barrenness a choice. The construction of motherhood in crisis is likely as strategy to reinforce hegemonic ideology supporting a male-centric hierarchical social structure.

This time period represents a moment of change when women were more active in the public sphere, taking on respectable careers previously only for men, and advocating for public

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<sup>4</sup> There were several states where women had the right to vote prior to 1920.

issues. As Wodak explains, discourse constitutes social identities, situations, and relationships between people and groups of people (2001). These articles are representations of ways in which motherhood was constructed as synonymous with the female identity, but was problematized by notions of race, class, and ability. While motherhood was used as a tool for agency allowing women to participate in public action, that agency was limited and as shown through this analysis extremely complex. Within the newspaper articles found within this time period motherhood discursively constrains women's agency by emphasizing their duty to the nation to procreate. Public discourse pertaining to birth control further complicates notions of motherhood and agency, as birth control is a means of preventing the physical probability of becoming a mother. Women were presented with a false choice, that birth control was 'meant' for poor and working class women, yet was truly only available to those who could afford to bypass the laws set in place to limit women's choice. This false choice exemplifies the complexity of motherhood discourse pertaining to national duty and birth control in the United States.

### **CHAPTER 3: BECOMING THE SAVIOR: MOTHERHOOD IN THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL, 1918**

This chapter begins to narrow the scope of discourse to hone in on the way women who were categorized as ideal mothers were given agency to enact motherhood. To do this, I utilized historicized grounded theory as an inductive process to delve deeper into texts that specifically targeted white, middle class, women concerned with homemaking and mothering: *The Ladies' Home Journal* (TLHJ). Continuing the use of critical discourse analysis and intersectionality, specific texts were chosen for an in-depth analysis to better understand the ways in which TLHJ further constructed notions of motherhood as classed and raced that were discussed in the previous chapter while simultaneously offering ways in which TLHJ offered agency for women

by teaching them how to enact ideal motherhood and uphold its socially constructed standards. Specifically, this chapter focuses in on the summer of 1918 as a moment in American history where American motherhood and patriotism became intertwined, solidifying mothers as the saviors of the nation. The following sections of this chapter offer historical context and justification for the texts chosen and specific time period, then discuss ways in which motherhood in America was equated to a form of patriotic sainthood, and finally explicates ways in which *TLHJ* offered agency through means of enacting American motherhood as a form of intensive mothering. The purpose of this chapter is to gain a deeper sense of how white, middle class motherhood as the discursively normalized ideal functioned to offer possibilities of agency for some while constraining agency for others.

#### The Ladies' Home Journal

The journey from large-circulation newspaper articles to *The Ladies' Home Journal* depended largely on the inductive process. As the conclusions of the previous chapter suggest, based on the discursive representations of motherhood in America from 1915-1920, the ideal mother was white, middle class, and educated. The target audience for *TLHJ* was white, middle-class women who “lived with the uncertain legacies of the nineteenth-century women’s movement and who tried to find a comfortable role in the rapidly changing world of the expanding middle class” (Scanlon, 1995, p. 2). The newspaper articles analyzed in the previous chapter emphasize the often combative binary discourses of women’s place in society, as arguments of women’s rights through suffrage and birth control seemed to elicit staunch support or opposition. *TLHJ*’s editor from 1889-1919, Edward William Bok, used his platform to advocate for female domesticity and keeping women in the home (Shi, 1985). The intended audience of *TLHJ* coupled with the intent to promote discourses supporting women’s place in the

home provides a text in which possibilities for agency within motherhood discourses are likely to be prevalent.

Since its inception, *TLHJ* has provided instruction on child rearing, maintaining a household, and broad domestic and fashion advice (Endres & Lueck, 1995). *TLHJ* was one of the primary periodicals of the era and is considered to have “transformed the field of women’s magazines” (Peterson, 1956, p. 11). Scholars have pointed specifically to *TLHJ* as a pivotal publication in defining women’s roles through advertisements and calls for participatory engagement (Ramsey, 2006; Cicero, 2009). One way in which *TLHJ* defined women’s role in the home was to compare housework to running a business, which emphasized the importance of financial management and simple living that made housekeeping a full-time job for women (Scanlon, 1995). The influx of advertisements within *TLHJ* also served to play on women’s role in their job as the primary consumer of the home (Zuckerman, 1998). Advertisements I found from 1915-1920 exemplified consumption and motherhood with pages of cereals, milk brands, lotions, clothing, furniture, etc. that played on a mother’s desire to provide the best for her children.

The following analysis centers around representations of motherhood published in *TLHJ* during World War I, specifically within the summer of 1918. To gain perspective of how *TLHJ* framed motherhood I read through every monthly publication from 1915-1920 and found that motherhood was far more explicitly discussed in association to patriotism. As women consumed news from the warfront, they also consumed messages and advertisements within *TLHJ* offering suggestions and actions to forging their identity as American mothers. As news was coming home of husbands, fathers, sons, brothers facing injury or death, messages in *TLHJ* began to include messages diverging from the previous wartime rhetoric urging conservation and

patriotism. Specifically, discourses surrounding motherhood itself adopted a nationalistic scope focused on motherhood as a duty to perform for the strength of the nation. These discourses provided possibilities for agency by enacting patriotism through motherhood during the war.

## World War I

World War I played a major role in shaping American identity as the first occurrence participating in global conflict, especially through advertising and propaganda to emphasize nationalism and patriotic support of American troops. The war had been raging for several years prior to U.S. involvement in April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1917. The delay in American involvement is indicative of increased American isolationism of the time. However, after Germany continued to attack American ships at sea and information about a possible invasion from Mexico came, it became clear the United States could not avoid the fight. Even though the United States officially declared war in the spring of 1917, most of that year was spent training troops in the U.S. (Thompson, 2014). The year of 1917 marked a period of enormous growth in propaganda to shift the American perspective from a position of isolationism to patriotic support for the war, which typically emphasized the dangerous threat the opposition posed to American values (Kingsbury, 2010). One of the most influential of American values depicted within these messages targeted women and children as the thing American troops were fighting to defend.

During this time period the general tone of women's magazines such as *The Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Woman's Home Companion* emphasized patriotic duty through reducing consumption of certain goods while buying others. This chapter focuses on a specific time period during the U.S. military involvement during the summer of 1918, specifically from May to August. This specific time frame was chosen because it coincides with large increases in American casualties during U.S. involvement during World War I, prior to recognition of a



possible end to the war. By the end of the summer the Allied forces began pushing the Central forces back, giving sight to the end of the war. The war ended with the signing of the armistice Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918. Focusing on this specific time frame highlights how fears of war and death were used to reaffirm the construction of motherhood identities in the United States.

## Methodology

This chapter used historicized grounded theory as an approach to inductively selecting texts for analysis. This style of combined discursive analysis with grounded theory has been shown to elucidate the importance of historical and ideological context when analyzing texts, such as advertisement representations of women (Kates and Shaw-Garlock, 1999). Grounded theory in its simplest explanation is the research approach where theories are loosely developed *a priori*, or prior to data collection and analysis (Glaser and Strass, 1967; Corbin and Strauss, 1990). I use the concept of historicized grounded theory to describe my process in developing a theoretical perspective prior to data collection for this chapter, as I used the themes found within the previous chapter as historical context to shape my understanding of ways in which ideal motherhood was discursively framed in published newspaper articles. Using grounded theory allowed me to approach this chapter to test my theory that because middle class white women were framed as socially desirable mothers, a magazine targeting their specific demographic would work to maximize agency through motherhood through publications that worked to glorify white middle-class motherhood.

It was through the theoretical perspective of historicized grounded theory that I decided to look at *The Ladies' Home Journal*. Based on themes found within the previous chapter, I wanted to look further into ways in which agency functioned within motherhood discourses in publications intended for a target audience made up primarily of women deemed ideal mothers:

white, middle class, educated women. Grounded theory allowed me to work through monthly issues of *TLHJ* from 1915-1920 looking for articles where motherhood was emphasized or mothering was the focus of the article. Once I had selected texts, I narrowed the analysis using critical discourse analysis replicated from the previous chapter to delve deeper into discursive themes pertaining to agency and intersectional power dynamics of motherhood.

One of the texts chosen for analysis offered an image which incorporated visual rhetoric within the analysis. Linda Scott argues that for images to be considered a form of rhetoric they must fulfill three requirements: they must invent complex argument through elements such as metaphor, arranged in specific order to guide argumentation, and “carry meaningful variation in their manner of delivery” (1994, p. 253). The purpose in developing these three criteria for visual rhetoric is to ensure that the images utilized for criticism offer a framework for choosing images for criticism that can illustrate how the image may not only be experienced by an audience, but also may reflect the author’s perceived audience’s attitudes based on symbolic choices in the image. Specifically, the image selected represents the use of visual metaphor as a compilation of literal and figurative representation of reality that depicts motherhood in a complex way with multiple possibilities for interpretation (Kennedy and Kennedy, 1993). The incorporation of visual rhetoric in conjunction with critical discourse analysis helps to draw out possibilities for agency within wartime motherhood rhetoric in *TLHJ*.

#### Texts Analyzed

I inductively chose to look at *The Ladies’ Home Journal* as a text for analysis because it was of the largest distributed publications targeting middle-class white women as the primary audience. To narrow the scope of the analysis, I read through all monthly publications of *TLHJ* from 1915-1920 to both gain an understanding of the historical and ideological context within

*TLHJ*, as well as draw out articles emphasizing motherhood for further analysis. Though there were many advertisements for children's items such as clothing, foods, and bottles, very rarely did *TLHJ* address women as mothers. The articles generally focused on ways women could maintain a household on a budget, giving tips for recipes and sewing patterns. Advertisements were plentiful, offering face creams for clear and youthful complexions, household furniture, cars, and even colleges and universities for women. Along with advice and advertisements, another common style of article within *TLHJ* offered short story anecdotes and reoccurring stories similar to modern-day soap operas. Reading through the magazines from this time period helped to establish an understanding of how *TLHJ* continually framed women's duty within the home.

The summer of 1918 offered a unique time frame within the larger scope of *TLHJ* because of both the heightened involvement of American troops in WWI, as well as the declaration in April 1918 of the Children's Year campaign. According to various articles within *TLHJ*, The Women's Committee of the National Council of Defense and the Federal Children's Bureau began a wartime program to reduce infant mortality and preventable diseases in preschool children. The focus on children's health and increased patriotism led to four articles that were published during the summer of 1918 that explicitly addressed motherhood. These articles were chosen because of how they directly call upon the audience as mothers in a way that uses motherhood as means for agency. These articles offer a complex understanding of how possibilities of agency functioned within the context of American nationalism and patriotic duty, where even women considered to be desirable mothers were still constrained through intensive mothering standards. These particular articles offer insight into how motherhood discourses both

enabled and constrained intersectional identities and agency during WWI for women, but also show how intensive mothering rhetoric disciplined women.

### Analysis

The following sections utilize critical discourse analysis to tease out ways in which the chosen articles within *TLHJ* discursively frame motherhood. Specifically, I use critical discourse analysis to better understand possibilities for agency within the intersectional identities of white, middle class women as the target audience for *TLHJ* and how those possibilities for agency exist within the context of wartime America prior to women's suffrage. This analysis takes a close look at ways in which women within the discursive narrative of ideal motherhood are represented as mothers, as well as how they are told how to enact motherhood in America.

**Motherhood as Saints.** Maternal rhetoric has long embraced notions of nurturing and caring for others. As Mastrangelo explains “these associations were heightened during wartime” (2017, p. 216). One such representation of motherhood utilized as an advertisement for The Red Cross entitled “The Greatest Mother in the World” featured in the May 1918 edition of *The Ladies' Home Journal* (p. 67, appendix 1). The image itself invokes a sense of sainthood, with a woman clad in white flowing gown and red cross clad head-dress that has a satin-sheen, unstained from the battlefield of war. She has taken a knee, perhaps under the weight of her burden with the need from so many. Her gaze upward and expression solemn, yet strong with purpose. She appears almost saintly. Her backdrop is blank, but with the stretcher-bound soldier in her arms the battle is implied. The neutral backdrop may reflect how motherhood itself is not bound to any one place, but can exist anywhere a mother is. Her size draws attention in comparison with the man in her arms. The soldier on the stretcher is the size of a child, and at first glance may be perceived as a child on a cradle board. The soldier's head and hands are

wrapped suggesting trauma, and he is swaddled in a blanket. The mother is holding the soldier close to her bosom, cradling him in protection from harm.

The visual component of the advertisement itself seems to present a metonymic representation of motherhood as saintly, or angelic. The metonymy explains the way in which this image of motherhood represents the American ideal of motherhood as a whole. Motherhood is greater than a mere woman, she is strong enough to carry man like a child and nurture him back to health. This representation presents both the ideal for motherhood, but also problematizes the role of the soldier as weak, or small. Directly under the image is the title “The Greatest Mother in the World” in large print. The way the woman’s clothing is draped around her offers a visual parallel to another iconic representation of motherhood as the Madonna or mother of Christ. The image of the Madonna is iconic, in that most Americans recognize various forms of the Madonna as the mother of God regardless of religious background. Just as the Madonna was more than the mother of a child as the mother of God, the invocation of the Madonna in this image extends motherhood beyond her ability to nurture and care for children. The size difference between the mother and the man she cradles may metronomically represent the soldier or mankind in general, but may also be representative of war. In this image the mother cradles a wounded mankind in her arms with the strength and ability to protect and heal the world. The fighting may seem big and unwieldy, but motherhood is bigger and more powerful.

The text below the title is framed by two bold crosses, containing the explicit message balancing the implicit visual above. The text itself builds on the themes found within the image. Motherhood as larger than mortal sins, unbounded by distance or space. This presents an idealized portrayal of motherhood as only attainable through a collective. A single mother may

not be able to heal thousands, but if mothers unite they are an unstoppable force. This trope has been found in previous rhetorical criticisms, such as Harris's analysis of the *Liberty Bell* Giftbooks where she states "[t]he identity of motherhood was portrayed as emotionally grounded and unifying across race, and even the sisterhood that was thought to unite free and slave women was framed with the context of motherhood" (2009, p. 309). The main difference here is that motherhood is not necessarily being enacted through any one woman, so unlike the narratives of motherhood that created unification in the *Liberty Bell* giftbooks, the exigency exists through the Red Cross as an organization. By herself a woman cannot live up to the title of the greatest mother in the world, but she can join or donate to the Red Cross. That is, the metonymy of motherhood as Madonna of mankind can transfer back to individual women as a form of empowerment with her involvement with the Red Cross. Within the context of *TLHJ*, however, the unification is meant for white women with the financial means and leisure time to consume the magazine.

A secondary concept from the image that is reiterated within the text is the portrayal of men as child. The text describes the mother as "...seeing men in their true light—as naughty children—snatching, biting, and bitter..." which explicitly supports man as inferior to the mother. It is through this trope that men are blamed for the war, but mothers can heal the world through mercy. Though the Sedition Act of 1918 prohibited anti-war messages or criticism of foreign policy, the tone in which men and war within this advertisement emphasizes the sentiment of war as needless bickering. The tone of moral superiority was common within rhetoric of anti-war groups prior to the U.S. involvement in WWI, with the justification of women's superior understanding and respect for human life stemming from their role or ability to engage in motherhood (Mastrangelo, 2017, p. 21). Motherhood is larger than the ability to

procreate, but within this advertisement is conflated beyond caring and nurturing, but a higher understanding of the value of life. While motherhood is not necessarily creating unification across race, *TLHJ* used motherhood as means to unify upper and middle class white women to support the war efforts by reconstructing motherhood as patriotic identity. In this representation in particular, women are asked to support the Red Cross, either by sending money or sewing bandages or other necessary items for the war front.

Motherhood is a frequently used trope within public images that is used both in advocacy of women's perceived purity and ability to nurture as well as a tool for confinement. Visual metaphor of motherhood has been analyzed in many scenarios, but the analysis of anti-suffragette postcards from 1909 by Catherine Palczewski offers insight into just how important the image of motherhood was in defining gender identities in the early 1900s (2005). For instance, Palczewski shows how men were represented as being forced to stay home and take care of the children, whereas women were depicted in public spaces challenging their femininity and moral character, even blurring the lines of gender in images of both men and women. However, in Palczewski's analysis she shows how the postcard representations functioned to defeminize women in public while feminizing men within the home, this image does not quite swap the roles of femininity. The mother is still feminine and nurturing, but she is also represented as larger and stronger than the man as child. Furthermore, she is not a mother within the home, but anywhere the soldier needs her. She reaches her arms across the sea, comforts the men in the trenches, feeds and heals those in 'No Man's Land'. This representation, then, complicates the public image of motherhood as well as the masculinity of the soldier.

Motherhood in this sense is exalted with the helplessness of masculinity. Palczewski's postcards visually feminized men not only by placing them within the home and tending to their

children, but some were represented as doing this *well*. In a society that views nurturing characteristics as feminine, these representations would be a considerable affront to a man's masculinity. This likely explains why men are often represented as incapable of housework or childcare, because even if placed within the home masculinity may remain intact if the man is not capable of feminine domesticity. The Red Cross advertisement, however, is not feminizing the soldier, but rather infantilizing him. This presents an entirely different power dynamic that is represented in the image as well as within the text. Motherhood is depicted as a woman's strength and ability to protect man. Mastrangelo's analysis showed anti-war rhetoric emphasizing the mother's desire to protect her son from war, but here the mother is comforting the fallen soldier. With this image *TLHJ* readers were presented with a high bar for achieving ideal motherhood, but that bar was also achievable by virtue of women's supposedly intrinsic nature.

**Enacting Nationalistic Motherhood.** The following section continues the exploration of ways in which women were told to enact notions of motherhood during wartime America. It is important to recognize that the purpose of *TLHJ* was to provide white middle class women with information about the many facets of homemaking such as cooking for a family, cleaning products, how to furnish and decorate the home, clothing trends and styles, and products to help support women in this role, along with providing bits of news and entertaining stories about popular culture at the time. As America joined the war raging in Europe in 1917, *TLHJ* began to shift topics from how to balance a budget or wear the latest trends, to recipes for conserving butter and meat and how to grow your own garden to conserve resources. As the war continued into 1918 and American troops began fighting in the trenches, *TLHJ* shifted further to support the war effort by advertising for war bonds, posting patterns for bandages for the Red Cross, and promoting children's health initiatives. While the discussion in this chapter thus far has focused



on the metonymic representation as motherhood as saint and protector of mankind, this section turns the attention to how *TLHJ* instructed women as mothers to enact American motherhood focused on physical and moral health of her children.

**Physical health in practice.** The article “Won’t You Weigh and Measure Your Baby for Uncle Sam? The Nation’s Health To-Morrow Depends on the Child’s Health To-Day” published May 1918 under the suggestion of the United States Children’s Bureau and the Child-Welfare Department of the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense to entice mothers to take their children to child welfare station to have them weighed and measured at regular intervals to ensure proper growth (appendix II). The article shows images of children being weighed and measured by nursing staff, as well as how to weigh your child at the grocer and measure them at home. In the center of the page, surrounded by images of children being measured and compared by size, is a text box that offers statistical evidence of illnesses or physical defections of school-age children. In the briefest sense, the statistical evidence suggests that of the 20,000,000 school-age children in the United States, 15,000,000 are “in need of attention to-day for physical defects which are partially or completely remediable” (1918). There is no mention in this article as to *why* Uncle Sam is concerned about the welfare of children, so the reader may assume the goal is simply to assist her role as a mother to monitor her children’s health and growth progress.

As the initial photos and text boxes offer information about where a mother can take her children to be weighed and measured, or how to weigh and measure her children at home and submit a card with the data to the government, the bottom portion of the article offers photos of children for comparison. All the children appear to be boys in the images, which may have been due to the lack of clothing for some of the infant photos, but could also indicate a preference of

need for tracking male growth and health in the population. The first comparison image is of two five-year-old boys of difference sizes, dressed similarly in white with dark socks and shoes. Under the image states “The taller of these children was born in August, 1913, and the shorter in June, 1913. The taller boy is of normal height, weight, and development for his age, while the boy on the right, although older, is shorter and lighter than his companion” (1918). There is no mention of genetics as a role in determining size and stature of children, nor is there any indication that the smaller of the boys has any of the diseases or deficiencies outlined as problems facing 75% of the school-age population. The only clear comparison is that the smaller child is deemed lesser simply because of his size. This presents a challenge to mothers, as images like this create a sense of responsibility for mothers to “grow their children” within the margins defined as normal by the United States government.

Directly below the two clothed boys there are three infants pictured of different size wearing only diapers. The first child on the left is deemed “an UNDERWEIGHT, undernourished and imperfectly fed baby of 10 months, bottle and breast fed and weighing only 14 pounds 10 ounces” (1918). The second baby pictured in the center is described as “an OVERFAT baby—29 pounds and 8 ounces, one-year old—emphasizing the point that weight alone does not mean proper feeding and resistance. This baby was breast fed for two months, breast and bottle fed for two months and bottle fed for the balance of the year” (1918). The final baby pictured on the right of the other two states “A ONE YEAR OLD baby normal in height, weight (21 pounds and 8 ounces), development and nourishment, breast fed for the first year” (1918). Here we are told that the smaller baby is undernourished and “imperfectly fed” as if the mother is to blame for her child’s stature. It should be noted that of all the photographed babies, the undernourished child has the most alert facial expression, thus seems to be incongruous with

the assertion that the baby is deficient. Nothing is noted about the child's development except for weight and that even though the mother was feeding with both breast and bottle, she was still unable to offer the child adequate nourishment. The second baby pictured has little belly rolls and round cheeks, and is labeled OVERFAT. The description of how the baby has been fed gives an impression that bottle feeding has led to the over-feeding of the child, thus being the mother's fault that the baby is deemed overweight. Finally, the third baby is described as normal. Unlike the first two babies, this child is described in more than just weight, including that the child is of normal development as well—which was omitted in the previous baby comparisons. We are left to assume that because of the variant weights of the other children that they are not developed in other aspects because of their weight. The third baby's feeding is described as “breast fed for the first year”, also pointing to the importance of breast feeding babies for adequate nutrition. In this instance bottle feeding is represented as a cause of under or over-nourishment of children.

Breastfeeding itself has been a topic of great discussion from recent scholars, especially in regards to representations of motherhood and women's bodies in public (Beach, 2017; Gearhart & Dinkel, 2016; Hamilton, 2015; Mackert, et al., 2016). The clear preference for breastfeeding as the best means of child nourishment in this article may be viewed as the sort of biopolitics that Linnea Hanell explains causes mothers to feel shame over their perceived failure to perform motherhood through their inability to breastfeed (2017). In this regard, *TLHJ* may be viewed as policing women's ability to perform good mothering through their ability to successfully nourish their children perfectly through breastfeeding and adequate nutrition beyond their infant years. Nationalistic mothering is held to the highest standard, where mothers must be capable of perfectly nourishing their children to peak government standards. The intersectional lens offers the understanding that working women during this time period would be highly

unlikely able to breastfeed their babies, thus would fail to perform motherhood to *TLHJ* standards. All the children pictured were white, emphasizing the reaffirmation of white motherhood within the readership of *TLHJ*. Furthermore, all babies and children pictured appear to be boys, giving the sense of emphasis on male health as more important than female children.

Though the connection between child health and the war may not have an explicit connection in the above article, but the link is made in the June 1918 article “The “In-Between” Child in Wartime” by S. Josephine Baker, M.D., D.P.H. (appendix III). Baker first outlines her definition of the “in-between” child as the time period between the end of infancy and beginning of school-age, roughly age two to six, to explain that mothers often assume the dangers of mortality pass after infancy and fail to recognize the risks during this time period in a child’s life. After establishing her definition, Baker immediately states “Our entry into this great world war has brought us to a realization of our deficiencies in this regard. The report of the Surgeon-General of the Navy for 1916 shows that seventy out of every hundred applicants for enlistment were rejected because of physical deficits” (1918). The very first paragraphs draw an explicit connection between healthy children and healthy soldiers, explaining that the majority of the reasons soldiers were considered unfit to enlist were preventable and had existed since childhood. She furthers the link between the dangers of childhood and war with the following:

War always bears heavily upon children. We may feel that we are keeping them at home and safely protected, but in reality they are not much safer than the men in the trenches. During the first year of the war in England’s armies, nine men were killed every hour on the battlefield; at home, fourteen babies died every hour, most of them from preventable diseases. So far, we have not had great and severe losses on our own account on the battlefield, but, in the United states, twenty-eight babies die every hour. **The way in**

**which war reacts upon the children is through the changes it makes in our way of living. We, too, are facing the possibility of a reduction in our own birth rate** (Baker, 1918, emphasis original).

The impact of child health is heavily laid out by Baker; the dire circumstances of infant mortality are shown drastically against the perils of war, presenting that the dangers to children at home are greater than those faced by soldiers fighting in the trenches. The dangerousness of the home environment for the child in the United States requires mothers to perform their duties of defense to save their children from the peril of mortality. The representation of motherhood continues to draw from the notion that mothers are saviors, protectors of the innocent, and capable of fighting against the direst of circumstances. Baker then points to the importance of milk as a key nourishment for young children, stating that with the high prices and shortages have taken a toll on the young children. Interweaving the importance of nourishment for children, she states that “It has also been found in a study of this age period that the kind of physical defects that have caused your young men to be rejected for enlistment in the army and navy occur first during the pre-school age” (1918). Baker uses nationalism and wartime rhetoric to emphasize the importance of growing healthy children to serve as soldiers for the country.

Baker’s emphasis on undernourished children may appear to be targeting mothers outside the readership of *TLHJ* by talking about children who are not receiving enough milk, but as her article progresses she argues that undernourishment is indiscriminate. She explains that undernourishment is often unconscious:

A short time ago I went to one of the most exclusive private schools for small children in one of our large cities. The children attending this school were from six to ten years of age, and all of them came from ultra-wealthy families, yet of the total number one out of

every five was seriously undernourished. These children did not need food. The trouble in their case was too much care. They needed back yards and mud pies and dirt on their faces and the chance for free and unrestricted play. The way to cure the undernourished child is to find out what he lacks (Baker, 1918).

Baker's assessment is that all children are liable to suffer from undernourishment regardless of class or social stature. Again, however, the onus seems to fall upon the mother's duty to recognize what her child lacks and solve it. Mothers must manage their children's diet to perfection, ensure adequate sleep, free play, exposure to mud, exercise, and fresh air. The importance of raising a healthy child is not purely for the benefit of the family, but to ensure a generation of strong and healthy men capable of enlisting in the U. S. military. Baker's final paragraph offers insight into her perceptions as a public health official, as she argues that the mother alone cannot do it alone. She asserts that communities need to work together to create safe spaces and ample milk for children. Her final words recommend the slogan "No mother's baby is safe until every mother's baby is safe" (Baker, 1918). Baker's notion of motherhood is complicated, as she expresses that mothers need to ensure their children's safety, yet emphasizes that mothers cannot achieve this alone. Baker's assertions likely stemmed from her experiences as the first director of New York's Bureau of Child Hygiene where she worked with working class and poor mothers and children, largely immigrant populations (Baker, 2013). It is clear through the development of Baker's article that she challenges the notions that nourishment is restricted to food, and that the middle-class and wealthy women reading *TLHJ* may also have undernourished children. Her final words, "No mother's baby is safe until every mother's baby is safe" promotes a communal effort in which the readers of *TLHJ* might feel compelled to assist

mothers unable to provide for their children, or to promote public health initiatives to help the future soldiers of America grow healthy and strong.

**Moral health in practice.** “Women: This is Your Job!” is an article written by Dr. Anna Howard Shaw on the page devoted to The Woman’s Committee of the United States Council of National Defense, published in July of 1918 (p. 3, appendix IV). In her article, Shaw highlights the importance of mother’s supervising their children’s recreation, expressing that children are the greatest asset to our nation. Shaw also makes the connection between healthy children and healthy soldiers:

Rejections of vast numbers of our young men as physically unfit for military service proves that the physical development of our people has not kept pace with their mental or industrial attainments. Of those who were found physically fit, the fighting in France is engaging great numbers.

These facts demand that now, more than ever, we take good care of the children with which the nation is blessed. Our present situation requires that we do our utmost to secure the better physical development of our young people.

The responsibility rests on parents, teachers and communities. They should make a united demand that every available lot not under cultivation this year be turned into a children’s playground.

As a patriotic measure, then, for the sake of the future of our country, let women everywhere in this “Children’s Year” insist that every community devote some of its money and all of its available ground to the development of strong and happy children in healthful, wholesome play (Shaw, 1918, p. 3)

These words appear written in large print as an inset into a longer written article detailing the specifics outlined in the above assertions. This article serves as another representation of wartime motherhood, emphasizing the importance of mothers in managing where, when, and how their children play. Shaw connects child development with soldiers in wartime, asserting that soldiers engage in recreation activities to both maintain physical fitness and to avoid “sheer idleness” that “weakens the mind and dulls the spirit”. She explains that children require recreation for the same reasons. Contrary to Baker’s assertion that children need more free play, however, Shaw argues that children need more supervision and organization with their play. One of Shaw’s main concerns is that children attempt to replicate war through imitation games that “mimic attack, defense, wounding, and slaughter” that has a destructive effect on children. Shaw’s solution to this problem is building playgrounds to assist in physical development of children, and have mothers volunteer their service to childhood communities as a “play director” where she can organize children’s play in a constructive manner. She continues explaining that children need to have their time filled with recreation activities, such as Girl Scouts, sporting events, and the Y.M.C.A., calling on mothers to limit commercial recreation such as going to the movies to limit their exposure to war.

Essentially, Shaw takes a similar stance as Baker in that mothers need to be aware of every facet of their children’s lives to ensure they grow up healthy enough to serve their country. Shaw also echoes Baker’s assertion that all community members are responsible for making public spaces safe for child development. Mothering, in Shaw’s argument, is a national duty. Supervising children’s play on a community playground is equated to working a war support job. Shaw touches on her audience’s potential notion for thinking the need to monitor children’s play and develop playgrounds extends only to families in working-class and poor communities by



explaining that she has seen children in wealthy neighborhoods playing in the streets just the same as in poor communities. She thereby links communities separated by class through her argument that all children need safe spaces to play, and that we all must work together to ensure these spaces are clean and safe.

#### Discussion/Conclusion

By looking at how motherhood is represented within *TLHJ* offers a lens into the ways women were told how they should enact motherhood in America. It is important to recognize the purpose and audience of *TLHJ*, as a predominantly middle-class white female population interested in homemaking skills. Though there are several pages of every magazine devoted to advertising for women's colleges and universities, the general sense of *TLHJ* is to offer recipes, home décor advice, fashion trends, entertaining stories, and advertisements for a woman running her household. During the war, the recipes focused on ways to conserve certain items like meat, milk, and wheat, that were needed for soldiers at the front. Articles appeared to talk about planting gardens, how to budget on wartime rations, and sewing instructions for bandages needed by the Red Cross. In a social scientific analysis of *The Ladies' Home Journal* from 1920-1940, scholars were able to find dominant discourses framing a dialectical dilemma between frugality and consumption (Cicero, 2009). Cicero's findings were that even though *TLHJ* published articles promoting frugality throughout the Great Depression, they still published advertisements with the sole purpose of persuading women to buy things. This dialectical tension within *TLHJ* creates a complicated understanding of how magazines can publish messages that are in exact conflict. I argue that even as the Red Cross advertisement offers an empowering representation of American motherhood, the messages for how to enact American motherhood constrained women's agency through intensive mothering as a patriotic duty.

**Motherhood as Saviors.** Depicting motherhood as a form of sainthood within the Red Cross advertisement falls within some of the dominant discourses of motherhood found in the previous chapter. These discourses sought to encourage motherhood within white, upper to middle-class, educated women, which made up the majority of *TLHJ*'s readership. However, in this instance, the Red Cross pictured as a metonym for motherhood challenged social norms by portraying women as stronger and more capable as the men they sought to save. The Madonna imagery suggests mothers are saints, the description of her ability to manage men as bickering children outright states her superiority over men. She understands and values life, because she creates it within her womb, gives birth to life, and nurtures life to grow and prosper. Women as mothers had been revered for their virtue and purity, but the sheer size of the mother in relation to the soldier complicates our understanding of power dynamics based on sex.

The notion of motherhood as sainthood creates a troubling discursive theme for a few reasons. The first is that the description of mothers as superior beings seems to infantilize men. If men are to be equated to acting like children, it is then up to mothers to teach them to behave. Within the context of pre-suffrage for women in the United States, women had not yet been given equal partnership in decision making, let alone the ability to control men's actions. However, the notion that mothers are able to do so draws on the concept of Republican Mothers, where the mother's influence in democracy came from her ability to raise thoughtful and intelligent sons. In this advertisement, however, men are not behaving as the mother would like. They are bickering and fighting across the seas. Mothers now must reach their arms across the world to save her man-children from themselves. Such illustrations could have been dangerous with the Sedition Act of 1918 that was enacted the month prior to this advertisement, which made illegal any negative speech or expression against the government or the war effort. Though the image of

the Red Cross as a mother holding the soldier in her arms like a child gives the appearance of her caring and nurturing, the text below more clearly expresses a sentiment of frustration over the mess that men were making and the mother's role in fixing it. As many women and mothers reading *TLHJ* likely recognized, just because mothers are often considered saints, their sainthood does not eliminate feelings of anger, frustration, and disbelief at a child's ability to wreak havoc. This expression of frustration through infantilization of men appears only once in *TLHJ*, but offers insight into ways in which motherhood was used to frame dissent when doing so had serious ramifications.

Another challenging notion of the Red Cross advertisement as a discursive theme of motherhood is how it fits within the historical context. The previous chapter showed how certain eugenics arguments posited that upper to middle-class, white, educated women were avoiding motherhood in lieu of seeking successful careers or social lives. One of the suggestions for overcoming this in order to convince women of the desired demographic, coincidentally the target demographic for *TLHJ*, was to exalt motherhood to higher social status and celebrate them. While *TLHJ* rarely, if ever, discusses eugenics or argues that women should be having more children within this time period, the representation of the mother as a saint falls within this rhetorical frame.

**Nationalistic motherhood: intensive motherhood as patriotic duty.** The first impression of reading *TLHJ* is that the purpose is to help women by sharing recipes, budgeting advice, sewing patterns or advice for alterations to make dated clothing more stylish. However, in articles focused on mothering and childcare, the increased nationalistic tone during the summer of 1918 seems to come through by means of intensive mothering rhetoric. As explained in the previous chapter, the term "intensive mother" is a relatively modern "ideology that holds

the individual mother primarily responsible for child rearing and dictates that the process is to be child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive” (Hays, 1998). Though the main characteristics were found threaded within the newspaper discourses of the previous chapter, *TLHJ* articles and advertisements are saturated with intensive mothering rhetoric. The sampling articles offered above reflect an overwhelming sense of responsibility as mothers during the summer of 1918. Women are told to weigh and measure their children regularly to ensure proper growth as determined by public health officials. Women are targeted by advertisements for cereals or other foods to ensure proper nutrition. Doctors urge women to make sure children are given enough milk, time to play outside in the fresh air, but not too much free play as children should have organization and structure (but not too much). Mothers are expected to nurture their children in every facet, because it is her duty to her country.

The connection within the articles between intensive mothering and nationalism increases as the war continues in 1918. The messages are not simply “won’t you weigh and measure your baby?”, but rather “won’t you weight and measure your baby for Uncle Sam?”. The concern is not simple for the children, but for the children of America as the future generation. The strength of the nation depends on its children. This influx of nationalism within *TLHJ* representations of motherhood intensifies the commitment necessary to enact American motherhood by increasing her duty to her child as her duty to her country. Motherhood in wartime America is an act of patriotism, though unlike the newspaper articles with a broader readership, *TLHJ* amplifies the duties of motherhood rather than telling women to have more children. Within the messages of *TLHJ*, motherhood is about quality over quantity, as to fulfill her role as an intensive mother she

cannot have so many children that she cannot properly care for them. If her children grow to be unable to serve the country through military duty, she has failed both her child and her country.

One of the most prevalent assertions about the impact of *TLHJ* and other similar magazines focuses on how advertisements within these publications cultivated a consumer culture, even in times of economic hardship (Cicero, 2009). While it is certainly easy to see ways in which advertisers used the nationalistic culture to their persuasive advantage to sell products by targeting a mother's struggle with time management, or fears that her children were not getting enough nutrients, the connection between nationalism and intensive mothering creates another troubling message. The articles emphasizing the need for more attention to children's health use statistics from the U.S. military about the amount of soldiers who were considered too deficient to serve and fight. These deficiencies are explained as preventable diseases or results of poor nutrition or physical development that could have been avoided with proper care as young children. This connection creates a sense in which motherhood is no longer just about taking care of children, but grooming the next generation of American soldiers. In this sense mothers are no longer the consumers, but are the venue of creation for consumables: soldiers. While articles in the newspapers call for women to have more children, *TLHJ* recognizes and cites statistical evidence that the problem is not that there are not enough men to fight, but that they are not fit to fight. The answer then, is not more children, but better children.

*TLHJ* further complicates the distinctions of motherhood and class found in the newspapers, in the sample articles above both Shaw and Baker call for a collaborative effort to help all children regardless of class. They argue that children of wealthy families are just as prone to deficiencies as those in poor and working classes, except that medical data shows that infant mortality rates were significantly higher in poor and rural communities and the nonwhite

infant mortality rates nearly double that of white infants (Moehling & Thomasson, 2014). Perhaps broadening the issue of child mortality and disease to instill a sense of fear in the middle-class white women readers of *TLHJ* was meant to increase involvement and funding for public health initiatives focused on poor and working class children. This tactic may also have been simply to scare middle class women into being more/better intensive mothers who may think that their children are not at risk, but should always be afraid. It could be argued that if the poor and working class are spared from war because of deficiencies, more middle-class children are drafted into service to take their place, thus the collaboration to raise healthy children ensure healthy soldiers from all classes.

This chapter illustrates the ways in which the wartime rhetoric of *The Ladies' Home Journal* during the summer of 1918 to emphasizes troubling connections between motherhood and nationalism, specifically in how nationalism was used to promote a sense of intensive mothering as patriotic duty. The connection between nationalist rhetoric and intensive motherhood provides insight into ways in which more modern social constructs of intensive mothering may also be connected to concerns of national security and the political climate. The representation of motherhood as the savior of men serves to both exalt motherhood while infantilizing men in a way that allowed for rhetorical dissent from women, but could also be seen as cultivating a mindset of superiority among women as having greater understanding and respect for life. Furthermore, this chapter illustrates that *TLHJ* did not only cultivate a consumer culture, but intertwined consumerism within the identity of motherhood during wartime as a creator of children who would grow up to be consumed by war.

## CHAPTER 4: DISRUPTING THE SAVIOR

Thus far this project has developed historical context surrounding the construction of ideal mother identities within newspapers as white, middle-class women and found ways in which publications such as *The Ladies' Home Journal* prescribed enacting ideal mothering identities through discursive representations of American motherhood. This chapter explicates the ways in which activist Margaret Sanger connected agency within motherhood through choice and birth control within her 1918 article entitled "When Should a Woman Avoid Having Children," which specifically challenged notions of American motherhood pertaining to class and consumerism. To understand the nuances between Sanger's rhetorical choices in building agency within her audience of diverse women, I use the theoretical perspective of *persona* as a framework for recognizing possibilities for agency within Sanger's audience. Specifically, I utilize second and third persona to better understand who Sanger is addressing and how her discursive choices connect agency and choice within her rhetoric of motherhood to an audience of diverse classes. To build a case for Sanger's use of birth control as a means for agency in motherhood, I first offer some of Sanger's personal background to situate her within historical context. Then I explain how the use of persona as a form of ideological criticism helps to tease out the nuances of how Sanger connects birth control with agency in regards to motherhood and class. Finally, I explain how Sanger's advocacy for birth control as a means of agency challenges intersectional identities through motherhood discourse.

### Methods

Moments of complex social controversy provide an excellent place to look for textual evidence to rationalize the need for ideological criticism as there are often multiple layers of persuasion occurring in a single text. Ideological criticism is a method of inquiry to understand

the dynamics of power that has been the focus of many rhetoricians (Balthrop, 1984; McGee, 1978, 1980; McKerrow, 1983; Wander, 1984). Giddens (1979) differentiates between “ideology as referring to discourse on the one hand, and ideology as referring to the involvement of beliefs within ‘modes of lived existence’” (p. 183). Raymie McKerrow explains that the goal of critical rhetoric should be to “understand the integration of power/knowledge in society—what possibilities for change the integration invites or inhibits and what intervention strategies might be considered appropriate to effect social change” (1989). When social controversy centers around a perceived moral dilemma, ideological criticism may be the best way to interpret a text, particularly when interested in discursive hegemonic ideologies. Because ideological criticism is inherently attuned to systems of power, this method works well in conjunction with an intersectional lens by paying close attention to the intersections of ideological oppression. This chapter utilizes ideological criticism as a methodological approach to understand the complex dynamics of power within Margaret Sanger’s rhetoric about birth control and motherhood as an argument for social change.

In 1970 Edwin Black put forth a compelling argument describing ways in which rhetorical critics can make moral judgements of a rhetorical text based on the discourse chosen by the rhetor. Specifically, Black states that “what the critic can find projected by the discourse is the image of a man, and though that man may never find actual embodiment, it is still a man that the image is of” (1970, p. 113). The concept of persona emphasizes that though the rhetor may not actually live up to their projections of themselves, the rhetorical critic may evaluate said rhetor based on that projection. Black illuminates the possibilities of how drawing out the first persona, or who the rhetor projects him or herself to be, helping the critic to better understand where the power or values lie within the discourse. Furthermore, the rhetor’s dialectic choices



offer the critic the ability to understand how the rhetor views the audience and is attempting to persuade them. The way in which the rhetor depicts the audience is how Black describes the second persona, as in persuasion the rhetor does not address the audience as they are, but rather as the audience who the rhetor is inviting them to become. The success of the persuasive discourse then depends on the rhetor's ability to move the literal audience from their present state to their potential, or what they could become if they accept the text's argument.

Subsequent scholars have since tried to build upon Black's construction of personae, such as Wander's third persona which is formed by the negation of the Second persona or "the "it" that is not present, that is objectified in a way that "you" and "I" are not" (Wander, 1984, p. 209). Wander's explanation of the third persona is painted in broad strokes, however, which seems to have left critics unsure as to where to draw the boundaries (Crowley, 1992). One of Wander's explanations of the negation that occurs within the third persona is that the negation "includes not only being alienated through language—the "it" that is the summation of all that you and I are told to avoid becoming, but also being negated in history, a being whose presence, though relevant to what is said, is negated through silence" (1984, p. 210). In this definition it seems as if Wander points to the importance of recognizing the exclusionary nature of language, in that by inviting the audience to become the second persona, you are simultaneously erecting an out-group: the third persona. For instance, if the rhetor portrays the second persona as intelligent because they are or will be college-educated, anyone unable to obtain a college education regardless of actual intelligence is omitted and deemed unintelligent.

Wander does not stop at this definition, however, and offers several more throughout his article. However, through his analysis of Heidegger's lectures, he truly only supports the definition that third persona reflects those excluded from the invitation of the second persona by

displaying how Heidegger's dialectic choices reflect a literal audience that excluded others: in this case Jewish populations who were both struggling through hardships in opposition to Heidegger's positive rhetoric, but also were not permitted in public spaces at the time to become his literal audience. Wander explains "the link is even clearer with an audience unable to assemble to hear the lectures, an audience composed of those persecuted by an all-powerful fascist state. For this audience, the uncertainty of bread, joy of withstanding want, trembling before the impending childbed, and the surrounding menace of death would have resonated not only with the past, but also with a problematic present" (Wander, 1984, p. 210). This segment clarifies the difference between literal audiences and the textual persona in that the literal audience may be determined from the rhetorical choices such as drawing on past struggles though current populations were facing those struggles in present-tense, but also emphasizes how the assumed literal audience directly negates those who cannot fit within the second persona offered in Heidegger's rhetoric.

Wander's conclusion summarizes more eloquently this motive: "The Third Persona draws in historical reality, so stark in the twentieth century, of peoples categorized according to race, religion, age, gender, sexual preference, and nationality, and acted upon in ways consistent with their status as non-subjects" (1984, p. 216). If a 'subject' is to be considered an audience that is being discussed, described, or dealt with, then it is a fair assumption that a 'non-subject' be considered an audience that is not being discussed, described, or dealt with. Thus, Wander's third persona describes those who are completely left out of Black's second persona, as they are not invited to the table, let alone to be talked about or negated. Based on this understanding of Wander's third persona, the omission itself is a form of micro-oppression in that the exclusion of an audience both literal and textual perpetuates exclusionary rhetoric that ultimately creates

marginalized out-groups.

When Black brought forth the framework for ideological criticism with his argument for the importance of critical attention to the first and second personae, he opened the door for rhetorical critics to make judgements not only of the text itself, but how the text might create a certain community or reaction (Black, 1970). Recent scholars, such as Celeste Condit, have both clarified how textual communities can be created, as well as expanded on some of the incongruities within Black's analysis (2003). The discursive communities formed within moments of public address create as Condit says a "constitutive perspective, which emphasizes evaluation of the worldview contained in a text rather than the text's spatiotemporally-located effects" (2003, p. 2). Condit's assertion supports the utility of using personae as a rhetorical lens for criticism in that it allows the critic to understand how the rhetor portrayed their worldview through the text to constitute an audience, regardless of who made up the literal audience. This is useful because the literal text is rarely definite, nor with the invention of print and then the internet are audiences stagnant. This is not to dismiss the importance of the literal audience, but the utility of personae as a critical tool in understanding textual audience provides a larger payoff in understanding how constitutive perspective may be developed. Black's attention to the Marxist interpretation of ideology focuses on "the network of interconnected convictions that functions in a man epistemically and that shapes his identity by determining how he views the world" (1970, p. 112). The use of personae allows the critic to recognize systems of power and oppression within the rhetorical text by paying close attention not only to the rhetor and potential of the audience via first and second personae, but by recognizing moments when populations are specifically called out as undesirable or a challenge of the ideal. In this instance, I argue that Sanger's rhetoric constructs two distinct second personae within her discourse in a way that both

unifies and divides her audience in terms of agency and motherhood.

This is where I argue my thesis that the second persona plays an indefectible role by its functioning in recognizing how the multiplicity of audiences inferred in ambiguous address creates a particular resource to the rhetor. To further illuminate the use of these personae, I use Sanger's article "When Should a Woman Avoid Having Children" from the November 1918 edition of *Birth Control Review*, a monthly magazine started by Sanger that she printed and often personally handed out to women because of the legal ramifications of such an "obscenity" (Sanger, 2003, p. 242-245). It is important to recognize that this was a tumultuous period in time for women engaging in political discourse. Women had not yet won the right to vote, the United States was still engaged in World War I, and society seemed to be challenging hierarchical order at every turn. The specific article chosen for this analysis offers an insight into Sanger's use of strategic ambiguity that was broad enough to be read by a diverse audience, and still persuasive in constituting an overarching identity while maintaining social division. The magazine article is more likely to reach readers of all income levels than a conference speech or even a book, as magazines were less expensive and considerably more accessible. Furthermore, due to Sanger's direct address of certain audiences (ie: both women in general as well as working women), it should be safe to assume that the intent of the article was to reach a diverse audience. This text provides an example how there may exist multiple second personae within a single text to persuade different audiences of seemingly similar, yet very different ends.

Margaret Sanger

Margaret Sanger is a historical figurehead for women's reproductive health and birth control debate. As one of the first and foremost social advocates for birth control and sexual health reform for women, particularly of working class women, she has garnered a great deal of

controversy both in her own time and even still today. As mentioned previously, moments of complex social controversy provide an excellent place to look for textual evidence to rationalize the need for ideological criticism as there are often multiple layers of persuasion occurring in a single text. Sanger's texts provide a meaningful text for examination not only as our historical perspective changes and thus our readings of her rhetoric, but also because long after her death there is still confusion about her ideologies (Latson, 2016). Furthermore, due to her desire to preserve her voice, she all but canonized herself by archiving a vast number of her personal correspondences, speeches, journal entries, books, and more. With a wealth of access to one person's rhetorical choices throughout a span of time, rhetorical critics have the ability to explore how a rhetor discursively portrays the message and audience, and how those portrayals shift over time. Large archives also provide critics ample opportunity to find rhetorical texts of intrigue that problematize our understanding of rhetorical theory. Sanger's rhetoric provides an opportunity to investigate ways in which ideological criticism can be used to illuminate cultural hegemony within strategic ambiguity while illuminating possible outcomes of such rhetoric. Strategic ambiguity refers to ways in which language can be intentionally ambiguous to allow for multiple interpretations in order to accomplish multiple goals, especially in situations where the goals may be in conflict (Eisenberg, 1984). Thus, this chapter hopes to illuminate ways in which Sanger's rhetorical choices sought to use birth control as a means of obtaining agency with regard to motherhood, especially with consideration to the broad and sometimes conflicting challenges women faced based on class and childrearing.

**Sanger in Context.** To give context to Sanger's rhetorical choices, the following section offers a brief overview of Sanger's life and the historical moment in time that shaped the ideologies and rhetorical choices of Sanger. Furthermore, understanding the contextual

framework of Sanger's rhetoric illuminates the challenges Sanger faced when trying to rhetorically constitute a Second persona of women who have the right and ability to choose whether/when to have children. Robin Jensen explains that in the early 1900s, sexual health education was primarily limited to knowledge obtained from a family member, such as a girl learning from her mother what to expect as she matures (2010). With stern social pressure focused on preserving purity, many young people were oblivious of sexual health measures necessary to preventing disease or infections. This norm began to shift around the turn of the 20th century, however, as advocates for the "social-hygiene" movement challenged the perception that the best way to maintain purity is by withholding any information about impure activities, such as sex or sexual activities (Jensen, 2010, p. 1). Some of these concepts can be found in the Purity and Truth: Self and Sex Series<sup>5</sup>, a series of books that encompassed a wealth of material concerning hygienic guidance regarding the body, as well as possible expectations or social norms for women and men as they come of age.

Born September 14, 1879, Margaret Higgins Sanger was one of eleven children born to Michael and Anne Higgins in Corning, New York (Katz, 1999). Esther Katz's biographical account of Sanger's life describes her upbringing as the daughter of a stonemason struggling to support a large family, ultimately causing her to attribute her mother's premature death to "the rigors of frequent childbirth and poverty" (1999). Hoping to escape a similar fate, Margaret sought out a college education and training to become a nurse with support from her older sisters (Katz, 1999; Katz, 2003). Her marriage to William Sanger in 1902 halted her formal training in nursing, and though she struggled with tuberculosis they had three children together. In 1911 the

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<sup>5</sup> This series of sexual health education books were written by several physicians and advocates during the late 1800's to early 1900's, and were targeted toward working-class women as a low-cost form of sexual education. Sanger contributed to several of these and similar publications.

Sangers moved to New York city where the “radical activism and bohemian culture that permeated New York in the prewar years created a formative educational environment for Margaret...” (Katz, 1999). In her autobiography, Sanger describes her ideological engagement during this time by explaining that “[o]ur living-room became a gathering place where liberals, anarchists, socialists, and IWW’s could meet” (Sanger, 1938, p. 70). Katz explained that seeking practical outlets for her rebelliousness, she “joined the Women’s Committee of the New York Socialist party and participated in several labor actions undertaken by the Industrial Workers of the World, including the notable 1912 strike of textile workers at Lawrence, Massachusetts. Sanger’s emerging feminist/Socialist interests, coupled with her nursing background, led in 1912 to an invitation to write “What Every Girl Should Know”, a column on female sexuality and social hygiene for the New York *Call*. The series quickly drew the attention of the postal authorities, which in 1913 banned her article on venereal disease as obscene” (1999). Returning to work as a visiting nurse on Manhattan’s Lower East side where her primary patients were poor and working-class immigrant women, she found herself agreeing with Emma Goldman’s “connection between contraception and working-class empowerment” and “became convinced that liberating women from the risk of unwanted pregnancy would affect fundamental social change” (Katz, 1999). Sanger’s subsequent publications frequently reflect her socialist ideologies and belief in empowerment of women through her ability to have control over her body as a site for reproduction.

Sanger is lauded as one of the most influential women’s rights activists in the United States. She was the founder of the American Birth Control League (ABCL), which later became Planned Parenthood Federation of America with the goal of providing women with education about birth control and sexual health during a time where any public information regarding

contraception was considered obscene and illegal under the 1873 federal Comstock law, as well as state laws. Sanger's activism engaged in social controversy connecting contraception and working-class empowerment with the emphasis on women's rights through sexual health and ability to avoid unwanted pregnancy. However, a great deal of Sanger's family planning rhetoric suggests that she was in support of eugenic principles that primarily targeted low income families and minorities. For example, the founding principles for the ABCL were expressed as the following: "We hold that children should be (1) Conceived in love; (2) Born of the mother's conscious desire; (3) And only begotten under conditions which render possible the heritage of health. Therefore, we hold that every woman must possess the power and freedom to prevent conception except when these conditions can be satisfied" (Sanger, 1922, p. 280). Principles such as these exemplify ambiguous language that offers the potential for multiple interpretations depending on the audience.

Sanger's language offers a rich text within a fascinating social controversy during the height of the women's suffrage movement and the subsequent decades that emphasize the rhetorical problem of nuanced dialectic choices that create opposing ideals. Previous scholars have used Sanger's early rhetoric to illuminate the use of narrative and storytelling to move discussion about birth control from the private to the public sphere (Bone, 2010). Others have shown how Sanger's rhetoric constructed women as global citizens to shift the focus from the individual body to the political and civic body (Stearns, Sharp, & Beutel, 2015). Though these are but a few ways in which Sanger's rhetoric has offered texts illuminating important shifts in the women's movement regarding sexual health and birth control, other scholars such as Edwin Black cite Sanger as part of dangerous eugenicists arguments against those who were unfit to procreate (2003). However, even Edwin Black seems to question Sanger's motives by stating



that she was not racist or anti-Semitic, but that “Sanger was an ardent, self-confessed eugenicist, and she would turn her otherwise noble birth control organizations into a tool for eugenics, which advocated for mass sterilization of so-called defectives, mass incarceration of the unfit, and draconian immigration restrictions” (2003, p. 127). Black’s assertion draws out the potential problems of rhetorical ambiguity and audience, as one reading of Sanger’s discourse may be viewed as supporting women’s rights could also be read by another as racially motivated eugenics by calling working class women to refrain from procreating. The ambiguity in Sanger’s rhetoric that allowed her to challenge both legal and moral order in ways that appealed to broad audiences who would otherwise find no common ground to support Sanger’s cause, also created openings for problematic readings and opposing viewpoints to misconstrue her discourse. To better position our understanding of Sanger’s precarious position it’s important to recognize that she began her crusade for sexual health education and birth control for women before women were legally considered equal citizens in the United States. Years before women’s suffrage was won, Sanger had been advocating for women to have control over their bodies and advancement to motherhood.

Sanger’s firsthand accounts depict the necessity of improved social hygiene education as growing urban populations forced families to live in “poverty and filth” (2003, p. 21). The substantial growth in industry and population in urban environments during this period took a major toll on the infrastructure of American society. As new immigrants flocked throughout the 1800s to cities in hopes of earning a living, the amount of young, unattached adults living in boardinghouses lead to an eruption of issues pertaining to sexuality (Horowitz, 2000). As conversations regarding sexuality and sexual health progressed throughout the mid-to-late 1800s four sexual frameworks developed: the religiously enthused vice reformers, the social-purity

advocates, the free lovers, and the social hygienists (Horowitz, 2000; Jensen, 2010) These frameworks are useful in organizing the discursive oppositions leading into the sexual health messages that became prevalent at the turn of the century.

Notoriously devout Anthony Comstock, a Civil War veteran who “framed sex as an immoral temptation and worked to silence most public talk about sex” led the religiously-enthused vice reformers during this era (Jensen, 2010, p. 3). Comstock’s work centered around eliminating any and all literature that might encourage someone to engage in impure thoughts or actions, which led to laws passed against any printed materials that may be considered ‘obscene’ (Horowitz, 2000; Jensen, 2010). The Comstock laws were both inconsistent as well as overly suppressive because of the ambiguity of the term ‘obscene’ depending on the time and place. Recognizing the strategic rhetorical ambiguity of this time provides context for different ways in which social groups constituted identities based on the controversy surrounding sex and sexual health. The social purists of the time dedicated attention more toward the dangers of sex and promoted fear-based sexual education that was limited to teaching women information to assist them in “upholding motherhood as women’s most important and sacred contribution to society” (Jensen, 2010, p. 9). An important thing to note is that these programs were almost explicitly aimed at middle-to-upper class white women in a way that safeguarded their sexual innocence until they were properly married. Unlike the previous frameworks, social-hygiene advocates were able to create a seemingly unbiased argument that was legitimized with modernized scientific discovery (Jensen, 2010). As scientific technology advanced, so did the way society viewed and understood the body and diseases. These frameworks leading into the 1900s undergird the necessity for Sanger to carefully frame her arguments in a way that were sufficiently ambiguous to attract differing sexual health perspectives while still advocating for

birth control. Furthermore, recognizing the desire for birth control information by women of diverse demographics, Sanger uses birth control as a platform to challenge other forms of social oppression.

The demonstrated strategic ambiguity within Sanger's rhetoric provides an ideal text to recognize the utility of ideological criticism, specifically in teasing out how Sanger's discursive choices function to constitute an overarching identity while creating opposing second personae within a single text. In moments when a rhetor needs to address both moral and legal attitudes, ideological criticism offers the critic a means to fully comment on the potential implications of such rhetoric. The nuanced multiplicity within the persuasive message becomes all the more important to investigate when the rhetor is strategically employing ambiguous rhetoric to navigate tumultuous cultural attitudes regarding both the moral and legal implications of that rhetoric to the audience. Furthermore, she was often addressing multiple audiences at once: she needed both middle class support to challenge laws impeding the ability to promote sexual health education and birth control, and she also needed to convince women of the working class to partake in such reform as her primary audience of concern. To reach both literal audiences simultaneously Sanger employed the use of second persona, but her ambiguous audience creates rhetorical tensions that cultivate questions of agency and motherhood.

Analysis: "When Should a Woman Avoid Having Children?"

To draw out the components of personae within this article and prove the complex utility of different second personae, it is first noteworthy to express that Sanger explicitly addresses separate audiences first by listing general requirements a woman should consider before having a child, then finishes her article by addressing working women specifically. Though the purpose of the speech itself may seem universal throughout, the stark change is quite blatant when

incorporating personae as a perspective.

She begins her article by addressing the need of her writing:

If one judges by the letters and personal inquiries that come to an advocate of Birth

Control the one thing that women wish to know more than any other, is how to escape the burden of too frequent child bearing. Next to that they are interested in the question of when a woman should avoid having children (Sanger, 2003, p. 242).

She thus opens her address by framing her audience as women who have written letters to her in hopes of learning more about how and when to avoid having children. This move appeals to both audiences she creates an overarching, seemingly unified second persona. She responds to these inquiries, adopting a scientific tone that falls within the supposed demeanor of the social hygienist. Sanger states that “once it seemed that everyone who discussed it, whether it was from the standpoint of medicine, morals, social welfare or individual rights disagreed with everybody else who had attempted to give an answer” (2003, p. 242). Here, she acknowledges that there are multiple perspectives that are in frequent conflict, but ultimately appears to find solace to the argument through science:

Within the past few years, however, medical and social science have made such strides in this direction that it is now comparatively easy to separate the worthwhile conclusions from those which are of doubtful value or plainly worthless. Those who have made a careful, scientific study of Birth Control are pretty well united upon the points which I shall set forth in this article. I do not give them as my own opinions so much as the result of investigation by others, which have proved correct in my own studies (Sanger, 2003, p. 242).

Sanger situates her argument within the context of scientific evidence, and then establishes

credibility in the following information through not only herself as a public health nurse, but calls upon vague scientific backing to enforce that her response is not considered scientific fact rather than her own personal opinion. In this way, she rhetorically situates her audience to be trusting of the scientific community and places importance on such validity. This perceived importance of scientific credentials supports the notion that the audience is educated enough to recognize scientific credibility, as well as positions Sanger's overarching argument as a health concern. However, mid-article Sanger switches her focus from the health of the mother and child as the primary emphasis to a moral argument about feeding a capitalist society.

**Second persona.** If the second persona reflects who the rhetor is inviting the audience to become, Sanger is pointing to all women to begin to critically reflect on their fitness for motherhood by framing her audience as unique to themselves and capable of making rational decisions. Sanger states:

THERE ARE MANY circumstances to be considered before anyone attempts to advise a woman who asks when she should avoid having children. When all is said and done, the answer is never the same in any two cases. There are certain things which the mother or prospective mother should know. Then she must decide for herself (2003, p. 242, emphasis original).

This framing of the audience suggests a united audience that is capable of making such an important decision using the guidelines to follow. This construction of womanhood is important because previous representations of womanhood excluded women who were not mothers or didn't want to be mothers. Sanger creates a second persona of women, regardless of motherhood. This construction offers agency in choice that characterizes the audience, rather than maternal status. Sanger stresses the importance of recognizing that even with considering the

circumstances, no two women's situations are the same, thus the decision should rest on the woman herself. Here, the overarching unifying Second persona is a woman who takes this information and makes wise decisions on when to become a mother or have another child.

Sanger builds agency through choice, using an assumption of scientific rationality to guide women's choice. The subsequent list of considerations begins by offering logical recommendations pertaining to the health implications of childbirth:

(1) Generally speaking, no woman should bear a child before she is twenty-two years old.

It is even better that she should wait until she is at least twenty-five...

(2) Child bearing should be avoided within two or three years after the birth of the last child...

(3) By all means there should be no children when mother (or father) suffers from such diseases as tuberculosis, gonorrhoea, syphilis, cancer, epilepsy, insanity, drunkenness or mental disorders. In the case of the mother, heart disease, kidney trouble, and pelvic deformities are also a serious bar to pregnancy (Sanger, 2003, p. 242-243).

Here Sanger offers brief, scientifically backed, prescriptive explanations for the first two conditions, but the third requires significantly greater work as she begins to blur the lines between general scientific facts to morally evaluative assertions creating potential tensions within her audience on the basis of who should and should not have children. For instance, she mentions "insanity, drunkenness or mental disorders" which at the time were very vague considerations, as women fighting for suffrage were often labeled as mentally insane as means for dismissal. In a lecture delivered at the University of Manchester in March of 1918, Bernard Hart, M.D. stated that "mental and nervous disorder is a popular rather than a technical term, and, like all such terms, it's meaning is somewhat loose and indefinite" (p. 5). Recognizing that

those in the field at the time were openly criticizing the ambiguous terminology to describe mental inconsistencies, Sanger's use of the term is troublesome as at the time considering a popular opinion of women wanting to participate in politics and having voting rights a sign of madness or hysteria, in that she is speaking to an audience who likely largely identifies within this group of women. By stating that women with mental illness are not fit to be mothers when many of the women inclined to support Sanger's argument for accessible sexual health education and birth control were likely also in favor of suffrage, the Second persona becomes problematic. In fact, I argue that within the scientific framework that Sanger crafts a third persona, or outgroup by constituting a good mother in terms of scientific soundness. Though a woman can choose to wait until she is twenty-five to have a child, and with birth control measures could space her childbearing out, a woman cannot control medical issues like mental disorders or deformities. Just as many of the newspaper articles analyzed within this project previously showed, women were often determined unfit or bad mothers because of scientific assumptions. Thus, women who identify as having some form of illness or disease have restricted agency through the third persona, as they should not have children and thus really have no choice.

The third persona becomes more prevalent as she continues:

(4) No more children should be born when the parents, though healthy themselves, find that their children are physically or mentally defective.

(5) There should be no more children whenever the conditions of life and the uncertainty of livelihood make it improbable that the children can be given proper care, both as to their physical and mental needs (Sanger, 2003, p. 243).

Within these final two official considerations for avoiding having children, Sanger changes her focus from the health of the mother to the wellbeing of the child. While this shift could be

viewed as backing off the potential negated third persona created in which the women within the audience would feel negated on the grounds of perceived mental illness

The attention drawn to the conditions of life for children creates a divide on the basis of class, as Sanger's writings often portray working class and poor family living conditions as unsanitary due to overpopulation. This division creates a third persona in lower class women, according to Sanger, cannot provide proper care to both the physical and mental needs to children. Thus, though the overarching second persona created within the textual argument is a woman who has the right and knowledge to know best and make the decision when to have children, the women who cannot provide socially deemed proper care should not have children at all. Within this framework, a false sense of agency is constructed whereas the second persona constructs the agency of choice of motherhood, not all women have the choice to become mothers under Sanger's standards of class and means. Sanger supports her claim by citing the U.S. Children's Bureau that found that in 1918 one in seven children died before their first birthday due to economic conditions (2003, p. 243 & p. 245). The infant mortality rate at the time emphasized the pressing need to address the problem, as it was significantly higher in low income families than in families with access to adequate nutrition and facilities. So even though Sanger attempts to use scientific backing to argue the necessity of only having children when certain of mental and physical fitness, the data Sanger uses to support this rationale firmly positions working class women as unfit for motherhood, excluding them from the Second persona of choice.

Sanger reunifies her audience rhetorically by wrapping this section of her article up by saying "this, then, is the answer of science for all women generally" (2003, p. 244). This subtle choice in words does two things: it reinforces the overarching unified Second persona as women



with the right to make informed decisions based on scientific evidence, and also distances Sanger rhetorically from making moral judgements against the third persona. Placing her evidentiary justification in science reflects the sentiment that Sanger herself is not to blame for pronouncing women of lower class or physical ability as unfit to have the right to have children. The Second persona is reinforced within the overarching audience under the assumption that the audience make future decisions with the logical, scientifically credible, information she had given. However, this assumption also accepts that such an audience already has the knowledge necessary to prevent pregnancy to be capable of making the choice in the first place, reaffirming that the “true” or “ideal” second persona is of a social class with who already have access to such information based on status, and likely have the means to either prevent pregnancy, or fulfill the conditions listed by Sanger’s scientists. Within this frame, the “true” second persona could be seen to reaffirm that particular audience’s desire to have children and continue procreating. Thus the ideal woman as an identity constructed within Sanger’s rhetoric is an audience affluent enough to have access to information and products to prevent pregnancy, or to have enough resources to provide for more children. This version of the second persona is the preferred ideal within the text: women who have the intelligence and access to birth control so that they can choose to have a child when it is in the best interest of both parent and child.

Sanger does not conclude her article there, even though it seems as if the list is scientifically conclusive. She continues: “I want to impress upon the mind of the reader who belongs to the toiling masses that women who labor, who do useful things in the world, have a special and exceedingly deep interest in Birth Control (Sanger, 2003, p. 244). This statement draws the identities of womanhood together under the second persona as an invitation for all women to have agency over their physical potential for motherhood and choice, as even wealthy

women who do not labor likely view themselves as those who do useful things in the world. The ambiguity of what is deemed as “useful” helps to mend the split in audience, which creates a unified identity as women who should be interested in birth control. The strategic reunification occurs directly prior to a split in Sanger’s rhetorical attention, as she moves from addressing women in general to working class women specifically. The reunification of the overarching second persona could be seen as a means of maintaining the collective identity of woman in support of birth control to negotiate the diversity within her audience.

**Agency and false choice.** The second half of Sanger’s article solidifies the concept of the false choice presented to women of lesser means by seemingly addressing this subsection of the audience directly. Though the overall goal is still somewhat the same: allow women the agency to make the choice of motherhood; the attitude shifts in Sanger’s rhetoric from scientifically backed to socioeconomic morality. Continuing the notion that the second persona is a woman capable of making the choice to have children, within Sanger’s argument for working class women there is no longer a true choice nor considerations for individual cases. Sanger presents a definitive sense of right and wrong, giving the sense of a false where if working women want to make the “right” choice as explained by Sanger, she only truly has one choice to make.

The structure of Sanger’s address changes as well, no longer are her conditions numbered and supported at length, but rather written in a short and direct way. She reiterates the question in a much bolder way by writing: “WHEN SHOULD A woman avoid having children? (2003, p. 224, emphasis original). Sanger uses the capital letters emphasize that these considerations are more important, or strongly encouraged, beyond the previous list. The change in structure alters the tone of her writing, instilling a sense of severity and seriousness to the remaining points. Though the question posed by Sanger is still asked of women in general, the remainder of

Sanger's responses are only directed at working women which appears to exclude nonworking women, but functions to create a possibility for informative dissonance in which nonworking women are the true audience. This means that though it seems the literal audience proposed rhetorically is working women, the creation of the overarching second persona invites nonworking women to participate within the constitutive body of women.

Sanger's first response reads: "If she is a working woman she should have no more children while society remains indifferent to the needs of her offspring and forces them to toil in mills and factories" (2003, p. 244). Here the burden is not on the parents for bringing a child into the world, but on society for allowing the working class to suffer. It could be argued that if working women were pushed into a negated group as the third persona previously in the text on the grounds that they carry the blame of having babies without ability to provide fully for their children, that here nonworking women are called to action on the grounds of benefitting from and participating in the society outlined harming working women. It is within these conditions for abstaining for motherhood that the nonworking-class women within Sanger's audience are offered a sense of agency through their power to fix working conditions by focusing attention on their complacency that previously upheld the system.

The rhetorical focus on working women place nonworking women in the position where they cannot identify with the working class women under the second persona previously constructed and thus must identify as part of the problem if they are to accept Sanger's credibility and identification with the initial second persona. Sanger's second response continues: "The working woman should have no more children while the profit system exists, for it dictates where you shall live, and what you and your children shall eat and wear (2003, p. 244). Sanger supports this claim by connecting her audience of working class women by expressing that the

majority of workers have too little, not because they don't work hard, but because society dictates that they be considered inferior. This shift in rhetorical blame is key, in that the motivation for working women to avoid having children is not for their direct wellbeing, but in opposition to the society in which nonworking women benefit daily. The women who identified as part of the ideal second persona are now rhetorically positioned as the reason working women should not have children and are presented with false choice.

The shift in agency that blames society for the toils of working women threatens to dismantle the constitutive identity so carefully crafted and unified previously in the text. Sanger offers her last condition: "While there is a struggle between the forces of Poverty and Plenty, the working woman should have no more children. Every child is likely to have to go into the mill or the factory and compete with its father and mother for its daily bread" (2003, p. 244). Her support here draws connection to the commodification of human life in a chilling way. She states: "The mothers of workers have made human life cheap with battalions of unwanted babies. As long as life is held thus cheap, society will continue to waste life prodigally in under paid toll" (2003, p. 244). Sanger's argument rings with the simple understanding of supply and demand economics: working class people are treated unfairly and inhumanely because they are easily replaced by countless others in the same position. Her audience is offered a choice of identification between poverty and plenty. The ideal second persona is rhetorically positioned to recognize their position as both entitled to the second persona, but also as a barrier for the working class woman to become the second persona. The woman with agency and choice makes logical decisions based on scientific information and access to birth control. The working woman is instead offered a false choice in that she simultaneously should choose not to have children, but also does not have the right to have children because she cannot provide for her children, and

is considered a commodity easily replaced. No longer does the sentiment that “no two cases are the same” ring true.

Sanger does not say that working women should consider not having babies if..., instead she explicitly states that all working women should stop feeding the economic machine with their cheap workforce. Unlike the tone in the previous section, Sanger is direct and hard-hitting with both audiences simultaneously. She goes so far as to say: “do not be deceived. Your children are commodities—they are bought and sold in industry” (2003, p. 244). She uses very specific words to allude to prominent concerns of the time. Speaking directly to the working woman allows her to incite fear and anger at the thought of being bought and sold in industry, while simultaneously positioning the nonworking woman to feel potential shame and disgust for participating in a society that could buy and sell children. Though the Civil War had been over for some time, this time period was still recent enough to incite deep emotions pertaining to slavery. War had been fought to eradicate slavery, yet children are still being bought and sold? Previously Sanger used the word “battalions” to invoke war metaphor as well, prepping the audience to recognize the similarities. Furthermore, the previous chapter exposed ways in which healthy children were rhetorically linked to healthy soldiers in a way that suggested a mother’s identity rested on her duty to raise healthy soldiers for her nation to consume during wartime. Sanger’s choice to infuse wartime words into her rhetoric helps to solidify the social construction of mothers as makers of consumable children for the benefit of hierarchical power systems.

The importance here is that though the overall theme seems to be that Sanger’s rhetorical audience is receiving advice to answer the question as to if and when they should avoid having a baby, Sanger splits her audience in the literal and textual sense. Her ideal second persona consists of the women capable of making the decision to wait until the proper age, having

enough money to fully support a child, or even make sure that if her husband did contract syphilis while fighting in the war that they were both treated with penicillin. Sanger's secondary second persona, however, is an invitation in opposition to the second persona, as centered around the working class woman who may never be able to qualify within the first considerations, and is then told to avoid having children to stop feeding the economic machine. The audience is then given agency through the invitation to challenge the very hierarchy that make the ideal second persona possible. Without cheap labor, many of those women in the middle or upper classes would not be so firmly implanted in their own wealth and comfort that affords them the ability to advocate for and support the public health initiatives for which Sanger is arguing. The dialectic opposition between personae creates rhetorical tension that undermines Sanger's overall argument that women should choose when and if to have a baby.

**Third persona.** Though Sanger only somewhat touches on her belief that those with medical or mental disorders should not procreate, I argue that Sanger's rhetoric within this text suggests her use of the third persona as a means of easing the tensions between the second personae. For instance, the working woman under the second persona has agency over whether or not to comply with the commodification of their lives by learning more about birth control and actively working to either reduce or avoid having children. The working class women are given agency through the choice refrain from motherhood not because they are unfit, but because society is an unfit place for her children. Though the secondary, or working class, second persona is often in direct opposition to the ideal second persona within Sanger's rhetoric, Sanger carefully outlines options for her audience to engage with her persuasion by creating a rhetorical population that function as the third persona in that Sanger does not directly address such people, but directly points them out as unfit for society and that their procreation is unfair for the child as

a continued burden. The marginalization of the third persona thus binds the women within second personae because they have agency and are invited to participate in Sanger's rhetoric of choice and control over their potential for motherhood. In this instance, if having the luxury of becoming the preferred second persona outlined within Sanger's article is inaccessible, which I have argued that without adequate education and funds for medical interventions is the case, the audience has the opportunity for agency only through the false choice of motherhood or considering themselves unfit. I would find it surprising to find many people who willingly view themselves as unfit to contribute to society, so the only option is to adopt a persona as described by Sanger or reject her argument wholly. The invitation to the overarching second persona as a woman who has agency and choice over motherhood thus blurs the recognition that the success of one group would negate the other.

#### Disrupting the Savior

Within the context explored throughout the previous chapters, Sanger's rhetoric works to disrupt the societal assumptions of womanhood in a couple ways. The first is emphasized through the viewpoint of the overarching second persona, that defines women on the basis of their womanhood regardless of whether or not they are mothers. This is unique during this time period, as motherhood for women was assumed and therefore a main component of womanhood. Within Sanger's second persona, however, women are given agency through their ability to choose whether and when to become mothers based on Sanger's scientific and moral parameters. Furthermore, even when she does divide her audience through the use of a false choice, she still rhetorically positions her audience as women who are capable of taking control of their reproductive bodies. Even with a false choice, Sanger's audience is invited to exude agency over themselves, which is in great opposition to many of the messages found in public texts at the

time.

The use of persona helped this chapter fully develop the nuances within Sanger's text by recognizing her use of strategic ambiguity to address multiple issues with a diverse audience. Although this particular article appears to be primarily about reproductive health and motherhood, deeper analysis using persona shows elucidates themes of intersectional agency based on class and sex. Sanger's strategic ambiguity allowed her to use her audience's interest in when to have children as a means for addressing the struggles of working class women and motherhood. By creating an overarching second persona that invites agency on the basis of womanhood that allows the choice of motherhood, Sanger's secondary second persona offers a stark contrast with a false choice as the only means of agency. Working class woman are still offered agency, but it is constrained by class. Sanger's development of the second persona as agency through womanhood rather than motherhood disrupts the notion that mothers are the saviors of the world. This disruption occurs as Sanger's explanation of the challenges of the working class as a result of cheapened life through overpopulation and ease of replacing workers. Thus, the savior within Sanger's text is the woman who chooses to avoid becoming a mother so that she does not add to the consumption of human life.

## **CHAPTER 5: INTERSECTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF MOTHERHOOD IDENTITIES**

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”

-George Santayana (1905, p. 284)

The analyses within this overall project represent a funneled approach to understanding the possibilities for agency within motherhood identities constructed within the intersections of eugenics, birth control rhetoric, and wartime nationalism from 1915-1920. Through critical



discourse analysis of newspaper articles discussing motherhood and birth control or eugenics, dominant discourses emerged suggesting public fears that motherhood for white upper-middle class educated women was in crisis through publications that suggested national decay, race suicide, and motherhood in crisis. The second analysis of *The Ladies' Home Journal* elucidated ways in which motherhood was represented in a publication whose target audience was white, upper-middle class women, which found that motherhood representations enforced intensive mothering as a means of producing quality children for the nation. The final analysis of Margaret Sanger's article that would have been distributed to women and mothers of both upper-middle class women, and the poor and working class women of New York, emphasized the rhetorical tools that connected motherhood and choice within the context of eugenics, birth control, fears of race suicide, and wartime nationalism. This final chapter offers overall conclusions to discuss ways in which the constructions of motherhood identities found within newspapers, *TLHJ*, and Sanger's article all speak to the ways in which the possibilities for agency within motherhood identities were constructed in a way to reaffirm hierarchies of American identity based on sex, class, race, ethnicity, and both mental and physical ability through discourses of scientific advancement, wartime nationalism, and consumerism.

### Scientific Motherhood

The intersectional component to each analysis throughout the chapters emphasizes the ways in which women's agency through motherhood identities were consistently constructed in ways that explicitly and implicitly reaffirmed hierarchical boundaries based on race and class. Those hierarchies were reinforced by scientific motherhood. The concept of scientific motherhood draws on the assumption that there is a right way to mother and that proper mothering is grounded in science. During the time period of this study, scientific motherhood

was deeply intertwined with eugenics. Even when eugenics is not explicitly mentioned, the notions of developing superior children through a lens of scientific backing such as nutrition or psychological development echo the dominant eugenics discourses of the time. As each chapter exemplifies, scientific discourses can be found intertwined within the rhetoric of motherhood. This study has shown that scientific motherhood can function both implicitly and explicitly, and the same assumptions of scientific motherhood can be appropriated for different and contradictory ends.

Within newspaper articles nationwide, discourses reflecting both positive and negative eugenics explicitly urged women from very specific demographics to have children and in greater quantity, while suggesting that poor and working class women are incapable of raising children to be productive members of American society. The discourses shown in newspaper articles give explicit links to eugenic principles of genetic breeding and public conversations about the state of the American population and fears about changes in demographics. The newspaper articles constructing motherhood identities incorporating eugenics or discussions of birth control rarely take environmental factors into consideration, using terms like “stock” or “crop” to refer to children as commodities that can be enhanced through scientific advancements in genetic understanding, as well as increased scientific knowledge for disease prevention and raising healthy children that will be discussed later in this chapter. The use of genetic sterilization and scientific framing of procreation discursively reduce agency for women as mothers, as their role as American mothers within the framework of genetic advancement offers less individual choice for the woman within the constraint of breeding purely for the benefit of superior generations. Sterilization itself is a means of taking away a person’s agency over the choice to have children, particularly in instances where sterilization was forced or the procedure

completed without the patient's knowledge. The calls for sterilization explicitly target populations of people who were considered "unfit" in society, largely due to perceived mental insufficiencies that were ill-defined and largely found in poor and working class people.

The intertwining of scientific advancements, the rise of eugenic influences in public discourse, and the changes in the American population demographics with immigration and urbanization offer a context in which motherhood identities are constructed in public discourse to reaffirm whiteness and class by depicting anyone outside of the "ideal" as a threat to the nation. In the instance of positive eugenics, educated white women of upper to middle class are discursively constructed as superior mothers through arguments that they are selfishly refraining from motherhood in order to achieve careers traditionally held by men, or to engage in frivolous activities such as petitioning for women's suffrage. This framing denies them agency of choice over their potential for motherhood, instilling that their greatest value to society is through their reproductive ability. Wealthy white mothers are thus constructed as the ideal American mother, or rather, the construction of the ideal American woman is defined by motherhood. Women existing outside the realm of American motherhood are unpatriotic, selfish, or worse: committing race suicide of the American identity. American motherhood is not simply the act of raising children, but raising the *right* children to shape the future of the American identity through genetic superiority.

Fear appeals referring to poor and working class mothers of large families as "national decay" explicitly position such mothers as undesirable and unworthy of their identity as an American mother. Motherhood, as discursively constructed throughout this time period, was supremely classed. The class divide would have been of even greater influence in terms of education and intelligence, as well as physical ability. With limited child labor and school

attendance laws, poor and working class children rarely had more than an elementary education before working to support their family. The working conditions these children grew up in furthered the distance between their physical and mental abilities and those of wealthier children who continued schooling. Class here becomes an umbrella term for the vast intersections of socioeconomic status, education and intelligence, physical ability, race, and ethnicity. Even Sanger, whose approach to science was grounded in the ability to prevent pregnancy rather than class inferiority, still resulted in placing some within the category of women who should not be mothers.

The ramifications of classed constructions of American motherhood identities likely influenced future decisions incorporating eugenics within medical practices and political decisions. Women who failed to live up to the social construction of American motherhood would ultimately be targeted by entities in power, particularly poor un-wed mothers. One example of the result of eugenic motherhood standards that has been the topic of scholarly investigation is the U.S. Supreme Court case *Buck v. Bell*, where the court ruled in favor of the government's right to sterilize those deemed unfit without consent (Lombardo, 2008; Cohen, 2016). As Paul Lombardo found after years of research *Buck v. Bell*, though Carrie Buck's sterilization was justified on grounds of her feeble-mindedness and promiscuity, she was not only of average intelligence, but was the victim of rape at the age of 17 (2008). Carrie Buck's case has since become a narrative of how eugenics<sup>6</sup> was used to sterilize tens of thousands of people considered 'unfit' to contribute their future generations to the American identity largely on

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to mention that not all eugenicists supported negative eugenics, and even less supported sterilization. Sterilization was a highly controversial practice at the time, and often performed "under the table" under the guise of other surgical procedures without patients ever knowing (Cohen, 2016).

grounds of class, sex, and race (Cohen, 2016). Buck is just one of the many who were denied agency when it came to her body simply on the basis of her socioeconomic status.

#### Wartime Nationalism Promotes Intensive Mothering & Consumerism of Women's Bodies

The early 1900s were rife with American nationalism centered around fears of a changing national identity based on increased immigration and changes in the global sociopolitical landscape with the outbreak of WWI. This study has emphasized how the increased wartime nationalism promoted intensive mothering and consumerism of women's bodies through fear appeals. Intensive mothering, though typically considered a modern-day phenomenon, can be found in Progressive rhetoric of the time through clear examples of public discourse in each chapter. These examples show how women were told to enact nationalism through motherhood, in a way that provided a constricted agency for women as mothers, but not for women as citizens. The focused discourses on women as mothers promoted a sense of consumerism of women's bodies, where their value to American society was in their ability to produce the nation's children and cultivate the next generation of American citizens.

Though *The Ladies Home Journal* did not explicitly engage in discussions of eugenics, thematic constructions of American motherhood identity drew upon the notions of genetic superiority as well as the superiority of those readers with the means to utilize scientific advancements to raise stronger and healthier children. These constructions were exacerbated with uncertainty of the American identity as a global power in direct challenge to public sentiments of isolationism. As shown in the Red Cross advertisement, American motherhood is the savior of mankind, but must reach *across* oceans to provide aid to others. Motherhood itself was not the savior of mankind, as there were mothers in Europe who were unable to protect their

children from the war that needed American women to send aid in the form of donations. Newspaper articles prior to U. S. involvement referenced the genetic inadequacies of the French as a rationale for why the French were unable to protect themselves from invasion, thus the American mother's duty to her country is to ensure America's freedom through birthing and raising superior children. American motherhood is, in these representations, synonymous with American exceptionalism and nationalism.

As wartime nationalism intensified with the entrance of the United States into the Great War, nationalism and motherhood become inseparable. Motherhood then shifted from the republican mother's responsibility to raise good citizens to that of an intensive producer of consumables, resulting in the development of nationalistic motherhood. *TLHJ* consistently represented its audience as mothers responsible for raising children and maintaining the household. *TLHJ* itself was considered an expert resource in which the American mother could turn for guidance on how to feed her family, budget the family finances, furnish and decorate her home. Stories and narratives reflected the emotionally absorbing act of mothering, meant as entertainment, but served to intensify the construction of motherhood expectations.

Advertisements emphasized the labor-intensive requirements of motherhood, offering "new and improved" gadgets and gizmos to assist mothers who could afford it. Even as wartime rations drastically increased the cost of milk, mothers were told that their children's health depended on it, making milk worth the price. Intensive mothering may not be such a contemporary concept at all, but a discursive tactic utilized to constrain women's agency as mothers in society. However, I would argue that the nationalism in American during the Great War added another level to Hays's notion of the intensive mother, in that she was immensely patriotic. It was not enough just to be hyper-fixated on the duties of motherhood, but the

American mother during the Great War needed to fulfill her role as a mother for her country, which is not necessarily a dominant theme in today's discourses.

In both the newspaper discourses, as well as *TLHJ*, the constructed identity of the American mother centered around her role within the home as a role of support for her country. The repeated references to the "baby crop" as an agricultural metaphor suggest not only that good babies are a sign of a healthy nation, but also that the making and raising of babies is a science. American motherhood requires participation, through weighing and measuring children from Uncle Sam, to ensuring children are provided proper nutrition and adequate playtime outside so they may become soldiers fit to fight for their country. The American nationalistic mother's principle role then, is to birth more genetically desirable children, ensure her children grow up healthy and fit enough to be a soldier, then support her soldiers as they are consumed by war through conservation of goods and purchasing war bonds. Her agency as a mother is constrained not only by her duty to her children, but her duty to her country as well. The heavy emphasis within *TLHJ* on the American mother's duty to her nation to raise children to become soldiers challenges the notions of consumerism within magazine readership, as in this case the mother's body is a vessel with which she creates lives for the government to consume as wartime soldiers.

Sanger's argument for working class women to choose not to become mothers gains significance within the broader context of public discourses of the time. She explicitly warned women against the nation consuming poor children and mothers for economic and political advancement for those in power. She argued that as long as women continued to provide children to become cheap labor to be consumed, the status quo would remain unchanged. Her acknowledgement of women as citizens of America with the right to choose when and if

motherhood is appropriate for them provides a sense of agency for womanhood that is absent in broader public discourses. This sense of agency in motherhood rhetoric promotes an important connection for women, where birth control offers a means to choose to participate in motherhood. Though there is a sense of false choice for working class women, who are still told to choose not to have children to be consumed by the nation, birth control gives them the agency to enact social change through abstaining from motherhood and denying that their bodies to be continually consumed.

#### Implications: Birth Control & Choice

This dissertation establishes that as birth control emerged in the American public imaginary, along with women's changing social roles and eugenics, so too did the language of choice. However, for women choice was consistently presented in such a way as to construct a false choice. The social norms constituted in the rhetoric would draw on the language of choice while constrained within the definitions of the only acceptable choices. The discursive themes found within the analysis of newspapers in the first chapter emphasize ways in which certain women were rhetorically defined as ideal for motherhood and publically ridiculed as deviant for their choice to abstain from motherhood. Because birth control offered the means for women to abstain from motherhood, it makes sense why a society dependent on maintaining hierarchical dominance would attempt to stifle information and distribution of birth control for the public. The fact that *The Ladies' Home Journal* never mentions birth control or directly talks about motherhood as a choice within this time frame demonstrates how discursive silence reinforced the ideal that good women should choose to have children and devote all their time to being good mothers. The absence of discourse about birth control likely perpetuated a sense of taboo, and as



*TLHJ* seemed to cover every other topic women would potentially find useful, reified the sense that good women in America should embrace and celebrate their role as mothers in society.

If dominant discourses constructing motherhood identities ultimately shaped the identity of American motherhood as the white, middle class, educated, intensive and patriotic mother, then publications such as Sanger's "When Should a Woman Avoid Having Children" offer a much more complex resistance to society. When dominant discourses equate motherhood with patriotism and duty to her nation, abstaining from motherhood as a woman deemed fit to procreate could be viewed not only as unpatriotic, but in wartime crisis downright treasonous. Thus for women, abstaining from motherhood offered a means of resistance to hierarchical structures whether that be a government that refuses women suffrage or a society that benefits from the continued suffering of the working class. The reduction in family size within the middle and upper class showed that even though information about and distribution of birth control was illegal, women with education and financial means were able to have control of their bodies. The discourses targeting such women as being selfish or lazy shows how these women's exertion of control over their bodies created societal turmoil. A woman's right to make choices about her body thus become incongruent with the success and future of America.

However, the connection of the white, middle-class, educated mother to American nationalism does not explain the public backlash against educating and supplying poor and working class women with birth control. If the imbalance of offspring production between upper to middle class white mothers, and poor and working class mothers was resulting in perceived national decay and race suicide, it seems odd that there would not be more support for increased access to birth control education and products for women deemed unfit for American motherhood. The rise of negative eugenics and sterilization practices suggest that even though it

was controversial, there was support for controlling populations deemed unfit for reproduction. Thus, it was not the act of birth control itself that would have been problematic for poor and working class women, but the act of agency in making the choice to control her body within the larger paradigm of a capitalist consumer society dependent on hierarchical structure. Based on the discursive themes constructing American motherhood identities found within these analyses, I argue that class, choice, and consumerism are inextricably connected in terms of birth control and women's bodies. Birth control access and education for poor and working women would provide agency, whereas forced sterilization denied such agency as well as the identity of American motherhood. From this perspective, Sanger's article is less about the scientific process of giving birth and becoming a mother, but targets women's bodies as a source of agency as a direct challenge to the capitalist consumerism of women's bodies and their children.

#### Limitations and Future Directions

With any project there exist limitations on the research parameters based on theoretical and methodological choices, as well as limits on the amount of time and resources available to complete a project. This project examined newspaper articles in major cities across America to determine dominant discourses about motherhood, birth control, and eugenics using qualitative analysis to generate themes. Qualitative methodology offers a great means for exploration and richness, but does not offer the breadth for generalizability. Further work should be done using other forms of analysis to generate a larger perspective on Progressive Era discourses about motherhood, birth control, and eugenics to validate themes found within this study, as well as find other possibilities for agency within motherhood rhetoric that existed outside the publications used for this analysis. There are many potential benefits to expanding this research by looking at publications for more diverse populations. During this time period there were many

newspapers and magazines in print written by and for people of color, or immigrant populations. Including intersectionality as a lens while analyzing possibilities for agency within motherhood rhetoric in publications for diverse populations would further our understanding of how motherhood shifted during this time period. A future area of exploration could be into the prevalence of the eugenics movement within groups like the Talented Tenth, as mentioned in the introduction of this project to better understand the complexities of intersectional identities, motherhood, and eugenics.

## Conclusion

Intersectionality offers a way of recognizing the complex connections of early birth control rhetoric, giving insight to the foundations of discourses surrounding birth control and women's health today. Pairing an intersectional lens with critical discourse analysis and rhetorical analysis allows for a deeper understanding of how birth control, eugenics, and wartime nationalism shaped identities of American motherhood. As rhetorical critics we have methods and theories to shape our perspectives as we engage with the past, which offers deeper understanding not only of specific moments in history, but also how those moments have shaped cultural identities in the present. Rhetorical history offers a process for understanding social construction of society by looking at "the context through the messages that reflect and construct that context" (Turner, 1998, p. 2). Zarefsky furthers this notion stating that the rhetorical "historian views history as a series of rhetorical problems, situations that call for public persuasion to advance a cause or overcome an impasse. The focus of the study would be on how, and how well, people invented and deployed messages in response to the situation" (1998, p. 30). The critical nature of rhetorical history stems not from simply looking at what happened, but rather looking at both message and context to understand *how* and perhaps *why* things happened.

It is important to note that our lens of interpretation is determined by our perspective of the present, that is, our understanding of moments in history may differ greatly depending on the social reality of the critic. Social constructions of power and identity shape the narratives that become historically relevant, thus as those dynamics shift in time, so do the available narratives. The understanding of historical context is fluid, for the critic's lens may change between decades or days depending on the critic's reality. *How* we view the rhetorical situations of the past offers just as much insight to the present. As rhetorical critics we engage with history as a means of informing our present and future, for history is “not only what is remembered but how it is remembered” (Clark & McKerrow, 1998, p. 34).

Though this investigation focused on discourses from a century ago, the rhetoric of American exceptionalism and complex connections between choice and intersections of oppression are still highly prevalent today. Our standpoint within the future, post-WWII, offers us a horrific understanding of the ramifications of eugenics ideologies when coupled with nationalism, scientific racism, and antisemitism. America seems to have all but forgotten about the origins of eugenics, all too easily attributing eugenic extremism to Nazi ideology. The lack of public memory about eugenics, especially with regard to the diverse ideologies contained within the term eugenics, promotes a situation in which quotations or policies can be misconstrued without historical context. A prime example of the challenges such situations present can be found in arguments against Planned Parenthood on grounds that it was built by Margaret Sanger—a known eugenicist. Recent political attacks in an attempt to defund Planned Parenthood point to Sanger's eugenic principles, claiming that Planned Parenthood is a racist organization working to control the black population emphasize ways history can be manipulated when taken out of context (Kelly, 2015). Recognizing historical context through dominant

discourses helps to understand the influence eugenic principles played in constructing American identities of motherhood and by extension women's bodies. Understanding how American motherhood was constructed amid such a complex and tenuous time in American history offers insight into why discussions about women's bodies and control are still a challenge today.

While women's bodies and procreation are debated in American public culture, we are debating about much more than the individual woman. The identity of the nation is wrapped up in conceptions of motherhood. This project has highlighted ways in which women's agency has been largely predicated on motherhood, through their role as the producers of future American generations. Women have made great strides in achieving a sense of agency as citizens in America, but the social pressures of maintaining certain standards of motherhood still exist as evidenced by the continued scholarly attention to modern issues pertaining to motherhood (Adams, 2017; Asen, 2003; Cappuchio, 2006; Dickinson, Foss, & KrolØkke, 2017; Dobris, White-Mills, Davidson, & Wellbrook, 2016; Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Edwards & Brozana, 2008; Eguchi, Calafell, & Files-Thompson, 2014; Foss, 2010; Fuentes & Brembeck, 2017; Gibson & Heyse, 2010; Hanell, 2017; Hayden, 2011; Hurt, 2011; Jensen, 2016; Mack, 2017; McCarver, 2011; Murphy, 2017; Peeples & DeLuca, 2006; Thornton, 2011, 2014; Zoller, 2016). Even the language of choice, commonly appropriated today by supporters of abortion rights, is laden with unstable meaning. This dissertation began by discussing the inherent disconnect between the naming of the oppositional groups as Pro Choice and Pro Life. Each chapter has worked to illuminate ways in which the rhetoric of birth control as a means of establishing agency for women separate from the social constraints of motherhood has developed within the discursive framework of choice. Women's agency as citizens in America is dependent upon the right of choice, where all women regardless of race, class, orientation, or any other intersecting

identity have the freedom to participate in society while maintaining the choice of motherhood. As the United States enters into a new stage of birth control debates with the eminent confirmation of a new United States Supreme Court justice, this study suggests that we must engage an intersectional lens to better understand ways in which agency is continually constrained by sociopolitical systems of power that withhold the freedom of choice.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: The greatest mother in the world

*The Ladies' Home Journal for May, 1918 67*



*The GREATEST MOTHER in the WORLD*

✚ Stretching forth her hands to all in need; to Jew or Gentile, black or white; knowing no favorite, yet favoring all.

Ready and eager to comfort at a time when comfort is most needed. Helping the little home that's crushed beneath an iron hand by showing mercy in a healthy, human way; rebuilding it, in fact, with stone on stone; replenishing empty bins and empty cupboards; bringing warmth to hearts and hearths too long neglected.

Seeing all things with a mother's sixth sense that's blind to jealousy and meanness; seeing men in their true light, as naughty children—snatching, biting, bitter—but with a hidden side that's quickest touched by mercy.

✚ Reaching out her hands across the sea to No Man's Land; to cheer with warmer comforts thousands who must stand and wait in stench and crawling holes and water-soaked entrenchments where cold and wet bite deeper, so they write, than Boche steel or lead.

She's warming thousands, feeding thousands, healing thousands from her store; the Greatest Mother in the World—the RED CROSS.

*Every Dollar of a Red Cross War Fund goes to War Relief*

*This page contributed to the Winning of the War by the*  
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E. S. Gort, Committee on Public Information, Division of Advertising

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# APPENDIX B: Won't you weigh and measure your baby for Uncle Sam?

## Won't You Weigh and Measure Your Baby for Uncle Sam?

The Nation's Health To-Morrow Depends on the Child's Health To-Day

These Photographs and Directions Were Prepared in Accordance With the Program for "The Children's Year," as Suggested by the United States Children's Bureau, Julia C. Lathrop, Chief

THE United States Government asks, through the Children's Bureau and the Child-Welfare Department of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, that every baby in America be weighed and measured this month and the weights and measures recorded on the cards the Children's Bureau provides for the purpose. Many agencies for child and baby welfare in America are cooperating with Uncle Sam to achieve



the end desired, and you, as a mother, are urged to cooperate. The individual record cards may be secured from the nearest chairman of a Child-Welfare committee of the Council of National Defense, or from your county or state Child-Welfare chairman, or from the Children's Bureau. Here are shown methods of weighing and measuring children, and on the Bureau's record cards are given the weights and heights of normal healthy babies.



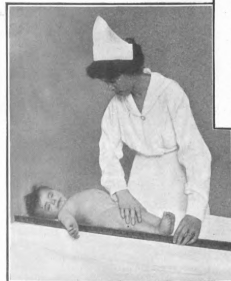
ABOVE is a baby being weighed under ideal conditions at a baby health station under the supervision of a doctor and a nurse. The weight is recorded, and subsequent weights compared with the normal weight for the age of the baby will constitute a guide to the mother for the baby's later care.



THERE are in the schools of the United States to-day approximately 20,000,000 pupils. It is estimated that:

- 300,000 to 400,000 of these have organic heart disease.
- 1,000,000 at least have now, or have had, tuberculous disease of the lungs.
- 1,000,000 have spinal curvature, or are flat-footed, or have some other deformity serious enough to interfere to some degree with health.
- 1,000,000 have defective hearing.
- 5,000,000 have defective vision.
- 5,000,000 are suffering from malnutrition, in many cases due in part at least to one or more of the other defects enumerated.
- 6,000,000 have enlarged tonsils, adenoids, or enlarged cervical glands which need attention.
- 10,000,000 (in some schools as high as 98 per cent) have defective teeth which are potentially if not actually detrimental to health.
- Several millions of the children possess, each, two or more of the handicapping defects.
- 15,000,000 of the school children in this country are in need of attention to-day for physical defects which are partially or completely remediable.

HERE the baby is being weighed at home and its weight recorded twice on one of the Children's Bureau cards. Half the card is kept by the mother and the other half sent to the Children's Bureau at Washington, postage free, for comparing with the weight records of thousands of other babies of the same age to the end that all American babies may be guided into healthy school boys and girls.



THE baby may be measured at home by placing a rule along the edge of a table braced against the wall. The baby should be laid with its head touching the wall and its body pressed gently flat lengthwise of the rule. A book, box or book end should be pressed squarely against the feet and the measurement marked on the rule with this:



THE taller of these children was born in August, 1913, and the shorter in June, 1913. The taller boy is of normal height, weight and development for his age, while the boy on the right, although older, is shorter and lighter than his companion.



AN UNDERWEIGHT, undernourished and improperly fed baby of 10 months, bottle and breast fed and weighing only 14 pounds 10 ounces.

AN OVERFAT baby—A 29 pounds and 8 ounces, one year old—emphasizing the point that weight alone does not mean proper feeding and resistance. This baby was breast fed for two months, breast and bottle fed for two months and bottle fed for the balance of the year.



A ONE-YEAR-OLD baby normal in height, weight (21 pounds and 8 ounces), development and nourishment, breast fed for the first year.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSIE TARBELL BELL



### The Gateway to an Education

NEARLY every young woman would like to enter this gateway, but many cannot afford it.

If you want a good education but lack the necessary funds, this is your advertisement. It tells how you can earn as much money for educational expenses as you need.

In brief: We will authorize you upon request to represent *The Ladies' Home Journal*, *The Saturday Evening Post* and *The Country Gentleman*. In return for these subscriptions that you send us we will pay you liberally in salary and commission; or we will purchase for you a scholarship in any college you may choose.

The orders may be secured in spare time—at first from local friends and acquaintances; later, if you wish, from a broader field.

Doesn't the plan sound good? It is even better than it sounds, as the details will prove to you. To get them, address

Educational Division  
The Curtis Publishing Company  
310 Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa.



## Ivers & Pond PIANOS

Are unexcelled for refinement of tone, beauty and originality of case design and wonderful durability. Used in over 450 prominent Educational Institutions and 60,000 discriminating homes. Our 1918 models are the most artistic musically and the handsomest in case design we have ever produced. The new catalogue picturing and describing in detail these latest creations, sent free upon request. Write for it.

### How to Buy

Our latest models are on exhibition at high-class piano houses throughout the United States. If none in your vicinity sells them, we can supply you direct from our factory easily, safely, and to your advantage, shipping the piano on approval and paying railway freights both ways if it should disappoint you.

Fill Out and Send This Coupon to

IVERS & POND PIANO CO.  
117 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

Please mail me your new catalogue and proposition to buyers.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX C: The "in-between" child in wartime

The Ladies' Home Journal for June, 1918 1

**A Special Word to Subscribers**

WHEN you receive notice that your subscription has expired renew it at once, using the blank enclosed in your final copy. Please sign your name clearly as it appears on your present address label. Sometimes a subscriber who has already renewed may receive this blank. We begin to pack in mail-bags two weeks or more before mailing, and the renewal may have reached us after the copy containing the blank has been packed. In requesting a change of address please give us four weeks' notice.

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## The "In-Between" Child in Wartime

By S. Josephine Baker, M.D., D.P.H.

Director, Bureau of Child Hygiene, Department of Health, New York City

THE average mother breathes a sigh of relief when babyhood is safely over, and usually settles down to a period of comparative complacency, feeling that her child is safe for a few years at least; that she need not begin to worry again until the school age comes; yet this in-between period stands next to babyhood in its high mortality rate. Out of all deaths in the United States at all ages, one out of every five is that of a baby under one year of age, while one death out of every three of all ages is that of a child under five years of age. While not relaxing in any way our efforts to save our babies, it seems to me that we awakened to the importance of the little brother or sister who is just finishing the strenuous period of baby life.

Our entry into this great world war has brought us to a realization of our deficiencies in this regard. The report of the Surgeon-General of the Navy for 1916 shows that seventy out of every hundred applicants for enlistment were rejected because of physical defects.

Of more than 200,000 applicants for enlistment in the regular army from 1914 to 1917, seventy-eight out of every hundred were rejected because of physical unfitness.

The standard of health demanded in these cases was very high indeed, and in our draft army men with minor physical defects are being accepted; yet even here, at the offices of the local examining boards, at least twenty-nine out of every hundred were rejected, and the figures at the cantonments have brought the total up to between forty and fifty per cent.

When we come to analyze the reasons for rejecting these young men we find that practically seventy per cent of the defects or diseases which have made them unfit were easily preventable, that the majority of them had existed from childhood and could and should have been prevented then.

War always bears heavily upon children. We may feel that we are keeping them at home and safely protected, but in reality they are not much safer than the men in the trenches. During the first year of the war, in England's armies, nine men were killed every hour on the battlefield; at home, fourteen babies died every hour, most of them from preventable causes. So far, we have not had great and severe losses on our own account on the battlefield, but, in the United States, twenty-eight babies die every hour.

The way in which war reacts upon the children through the changes it makes in our way of living. We, too, are facing the possibility of a reduction in our own birth rate.

This has already occurred in some large cities and undoubtedly will increase as the war goes on and our young men of marriageable age go overseas to fight for us.

IT IS a well-known fact that every factor which affects in any way the method of living always reacts upon children more than it does upon adults. Children are the most sensitive part of our population, as far as environment is concerned. They are at the receptive age both mentally and physically. Everything that concerns them or touches them in any way makes a definite impression upon them.

Although we have been in the war only a year, we began to feel the effects almost as soon as it started in Europe. High prices and shortage in foodstuffs, with wages that have not increased as rapidly as the cost of living, have all shown their serious effects first upon the children, and the age group that has suffered most from this war so far as the pre-school age.

Take just one article of diet, for instance: milk. If the baby is not nursed by the mother, but is fed on cows' milk, the family may be almost any sacrifice in order to obtain milk for the baby, because it is the only food it can use; but just as soon as the emergency need of milk is over, other articles are added to the diet to take its place. None of them has its nutritive value.

For the child, milk is the perfect food, although, after one year of age, other foods are needed in addition; but up to six years of age the normal diet of childhood should include at least one and a half pints of milk



DOCTOR BAKER'S article is a helpful contribution to the effort which is being made through "Children's Year" to call the attention of all American parents to the needs and rights of the child between infancy and school age, whose well-being has been so complacently taken for granted that physicians are now labeling the period between two and six "the neglected age."



JULIA C. LATHROP  
Chief of the United States Children's Bureau.

a day. This may be given partly plain and partly cooked in the form of custards, soups or ice cream or other milk foods.

Sometime last autumn we made an investigation in New York City to see where the increase in the price of milk and the severe milk shortage had shown the most definite results. We found that the babies under one year of age were getting their milk, but that out of over two thousand families with children under six years of age, over fourteen hundred were using less milk than they had the year before and many were substituting coffee, tea, beer or even wine. One hundred and twenty of these families were not getting any milk at all.

THIS time of life, or the "pre-school age" as we have come to call it, is the time when, above all others, the child needs nourishing food and care. It is the time when the health habits of life are formed. Mentally and physically, in after life, the child will be the result of the influences that have surrounded it during this early period. There is no time in the whole life history when so much good or so much harm can be done. This is true particularly with regard to keeping up the bodily growth.

Although the opening of school has been associated with the occurrence of the contagious diseases of childhood, still it is a fact that ninety-five in every hundred of all deaths from whooping cough occur in children under five years of age, eighty in every hundred of all deaths from measles, sixty-two in every hundred of all deaths from diphtheria, and fifty-four in every hundred of all deaths from scarlet fever occur in children under five years of age.

It has also been found in a study of this age period that the kind of physical defects that have caused our young men to be rejected for enlistment in the army and navy occur first during the pre-school age.

With the exception of defective vision, it is safe to say that all of the physical defects are at their highest proportion during the early years of life. Owing to treatment and proper care there is always a tendency for them to diminish as the child grows older, yet an alarming proportion of children go through life without having had these defects remedied and, most important of all, without having led the kind of life and having received the kind of care that would have prevented such defects.

The period of pre-school age is the time when, above all others, these defects can be prevented; if they have already occurred, they can then be easily cured. Habits of good posture will prevent spinal curvature. The habit of eating the right kinds of food and of living a wholesome, normal life will prevent undernourishment. Attention to adenoids and tonsils and proper care of the first teeth will result in the chances of infection being very much lessened, and the contagious diseases, with their sometimes serious results, may be prevented.

Probably there is no one disease or condition of ill health which is so serious or which so thoroughly undermines the health of children as undernourishment. The undernourished baby is always handicapped through childhood, and the undernourished child is the one who has little, if any, resistance to disease when it grows up.

Mothers have a wrong point of view regarding this condition. Undernourishment does not mean

that the child has not had enough food to eat, although a certain type of starvation does result from undernourishment, but the undernourished child—that is, the one with dark circles under the eyes, shoulders thrust forward, with hollow chest, muscles soft and flabby, with pale lips and skin, the child who is easily tired, very nervous, who sleeps badly and has no appetite—is the child who is not having the needs of its body supplied. These needs may be food or air or exercise or rest, or one of many other essentials, but the result is the same. The child is what we call undernourished and sickly, the kind that contracts every disease that occurs in the neighborhood. It is because mothers have associated undernourishment with neglect that every one of them ought to realize that such neglect may be quite unconscious.

A short time ago I went to one of the most exclusive private schools for small children in one of our large cities. The children attending this school were from six to ten years of age, and all of them came from ultra-wealthy families, yet of the total number one out of every five was seriously undernourished.

These children did not need food. The trouble in their case was too much care. They needed lack yards and mud pies and dirt on their faces and the chance for free and unrestricted play.

The way to cure the undernourished child is to find out what he lacks. Some of these children get entirely well by having a midday nap. Some of them stay up too late and should go to bed earlier. Some are needlessly excited by the noise and turmoil in which they live or by artificial excitement, such as staying up late at night, and the movies. Some are satisfying their appetites with the wrong kind of food. Some are kept too much indoors and lack exercise and fresh air. Nearly all of them need to have their diet adjusted.

Some cases that I have seen have been entirely cured by sleeping outdoors or having their bedroom windows wide open at night.

FOOD for the growing child is of the greatest importance. Children require in proportion to their weight three times as much food as the adult does. The diet should be well balanced and wholesome, with regular times for meals. Meat once a day, with an abundance of green vegetables, plenty of milk, bread and butter, eggs at least once a day, and sweets in the form of desserts, jam or honey, will provide the proper material for growth. The main thing to remember is, first, that the proper amount of milk each day should be provided, and, second, that even in this time of stress no conservation of food or substitution of foodstuffs which do not have an equal nutritive value should apply to the growing child.

The time for us to save our children is before, not after, they are ill.

Just as it is being recognized now that the care of the expectant mother is the best way to keep babies alive after they are born, so we know that the care of the child of pre-school age is the best way to assure sound health to the child during school life and when it becomes a "grown-up." We have been applying our health measures to the baby and to the school child. We need to continue all our good work in that direction, but in the meantime we have come to a realizing sense that we must give a square deal to the little children who fall in between these activities.

A mother cannot give her children pure milk unless the community furnishes pure milk. She cannot keep them in clean and decent surroundings unless the community exercises proper care over its streets and discards refuse and waste. She can make use of all the facilities the community offers her, but all parents in any community must pull together if they are going to give their children the best opportunities. We have never questioned the value of pooling our interests when it comes to providing an education for the child, but we have been very negligent about using the same means to assure good health to that same child. We need to take for our slogan that "No mother's baby is safe until every mother's baby is safe."

# The Woman's Committee

## Of the United States Council of National Defense

An Official Department Reflecting its Interests and Needs

The Aim of This Page  
is to Help Every Woman to Grasp  
Her Opportunity  
to Serve Her Country at War

EDITED AT WASHINGTON, D. C., BY  
**DR. ANNA HOWARD SHAW**  
CHAIRMAN OF THE WOMAN'S COMMITTEE, COUNCIL OF  
NATIONAL DEFENSE



Doctor Anna Howard Shaw

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### America's Greatest Asset To-Day

IT is folly to imagine that the greatest war in history can take possession of the lives and energies of the American people and leave their children wholly unscathed. The larger our share in the fighting the greater will become the need of measures to safeguard the children at home.

That is why the President of the United States has proclaimed the second year of our participation in the war "The Children's Year." It calls for concentration of part of our war-making effort upon taking better care of our babies and our youth than ever before.

Happy, the children of America have been spared the direct exposure to destruction by the deadly engines of war which have killed and maimed the children of our Allies. With us, war's menace to children springs from a multiplication, an intensification, of those dangers which, even in peacetimes, threaten our children from before the moment of their arrival in the world until they reach adult years. What these dangers are and how they may best be met is well known; it is not so generally appreciated that war makes necessary extra exertions to guard against them.

The President himself has made it clear that henceforth measures for child welfare are to be regarded as part of our war program, and he has proclaimed, for the whole national Government, its support of the work outlined by Miss Julia C. Lathrop, Chief of the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor. Execution of the Children's Bureau program has been entrusted to the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, the official organization through which American women are mobilized for the tasks of war, and of which Miss Lathrop herself is a member.

There are only four major requisites in the program for "The Children's Year," and one of these four is the provision of "recreation for children and youth, abundant, decent and protected from any form of exploitation." The others are public protection of maternity and infancy, mother's care for older children, and enforcement of child-labor and schooling laws.

The importance our own and Allied armies attach to recreation for soldiers should convince even the doubting of its importance for recreation for children to rank as a war measure. Play for soldiers is provided generously, not only here in America, but behind the lines in France, and it is being provided for the reason that it pays in results on the battlefield. It will even more richly repay us as a nation to provide now abundant and decent recreation for all our children.

### The Importance of Recreation

SOLDIERS' play serves two purposes. First, it builds up the men physically and improves their fitness for the fight. Second, it provides a wholesome, invigorating substitute for sheer idleness or commercialized exploitation of their leisure hours. It protects them from those things which weaken the body and dull the spirit.

Play for children accomplishes precisely the same purposes. It is even more necessary for them because they have not developed the perceptions of adult years as to what is and what is not good for them.

Juvenile delinquency has greatly increased in every country engaged in this war. This is proof, if proof be needed, of war's menace to children. There is, unfortunately, no reason to believe that America can escape this unless adequate measures are adopted in time to offset this inevitable tendency. Abundant provision of wholesome recreation for all children is the best bulwark against juvenile delinquency at all times.

War does not make boys and girls "bad." It only serves to remove some of the restraining influences surrounding them. One way it does this is by its demand—too often granted—for the labor of boys and girls who should be in school. Is there a woman anywhere who can truthfully say that there is not a single boy or girl at work today in her community who, were it not for the war, would otherwise be in school? There is abundant evidence that already, throughout the nation, boys and girls are too soon leaving school for the lure of war employment. Authentic reports show a serious decrease in high school attendance.

## Women: This is Your Job!

REJECTIONS of vast numbers of our young men as physically unfit for military service proves that the physical development of our people has not kept pace with their mental or industrial attainments. Of those who were found physically fit, the fighting in France is engaging great numbers.

These facts demand that now, more than ever, we take good care of the children with which the nation is blessed. Our present situation requires that we do our utmost to secure the better physical development of our young people.

The responsibility rests on parents, teachers and communities. They should make a united demand that every available lot not under cultivation this year be turned into a children's playground.

As a patriotic measure, then, for the sake of the future of our country, let women everywhere in this "Children's Year" insist that every community devote some of its money and all of its available ground to the development of strong and happy children in healthful, wholesome play.

*Anna Howard Shaw*

For the first time in their lives these boys and girls are freed of some of the restraints of home and school; they have money of their own earning in their pockets; they are thrown intimately with miscellaneous—or worse—groups of their elders, at best indifferent to their welfare. What more natural than that they should imitate the recreations, the money spending of those with whom they are associated at work? The task of preserving to them the wholesome recreations of normal youth is difficult. It will be accomplished only by the community recognizing their needs and making adequate provision to meet these needs. Every mother should ask herself who, in her community, is seeing to it that the boys and girls who have gone to work too early are not being deprived of their right to abundant, decent play.

The war has not only drawn boys and girls into employment; it has taken thousands of mothers as well. This does not refer exclusively to those at work for wages. The mother undertaking to spend her mornings at a Red Cross workshop or a canning kitchen is as truly absenting herself from home on a war job as the woman machine operator in a munitions plant. In both cases the children are left for all or part of the day in care of older children, household servants, a neighbor, or perhaps no one at all themselves; in none of these situations is there adequate provision for suitable recreation. A neighborhood playground, convenient of access and properly supervised, is the best answer to every situation of this kind.

### War Games Should be Supervised

IF YOU will notice the children about you, you will find them playing to-day war games of their own invention, with mimic attack, defense wounding and slaughter. This is quite natural, with war in the very atmosphere. But games such as these, left to follow their own course, are likely frequently to end in disaster, perhaps doing more violence to the child's mind than to his body. Directed into supervised games and athletic contests this same spirit, these same energies, will have a healthful, wholesome effect, instead of a destructive one. What normal boy of spirit—or girl either—could be expected to resist the fascination of a soldier's encampment. Yet for them to spend much of their leisure time about the camps is obviously not good for them. The community

with soldiers in its vicinity should not so absorb itself in the pleasant duties of providing recreation for soldiers as to forget its even greater duty to provide such recreation for children as will compete with the attractiveness of the camps. In rural districts the need for organized provision for youthful recreation is particularly acute. This year, with labor scarce and expensive, boys and girls will be called upon to help out more than ever before. Let that community beware which sanctions more farm work by its boys and girls, even at home, without at the same time making better provision than ever before for their recreation. Resentment at being made to work too hard in childhood, at being deprived too soon of youth's right to play has been responsible for many of our cases of runaway boys and girls.

### The Children's Bureau Program

THERE is not a community, hardly a mother, not confronted by these problems in one form or another. How they shall be met is for the community, rather than the individual, to determine. Whether in city, town or rural village, parents and existing authorities and agencies must take up the question together and deal with it as with any other wartime job. Already much has been done to help every American community better to provide adequate recreation for children and young people. The program of what needs to be done and how to do it has been mapped out by the Children's Bureau. Execution of this program has been entrusted to the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, with its state divisions in each of the forty-eight states. Every State Council is pledged to support the program for "The Children's Year," and national and state organizations dealing with various aspects of children's health, education and recreation have enlisted in cooperation. Within the states all these forces have been mobilized by the Woman's Committee, in towns and counties as well as for the states as a whole. By the time this is published there should not be a town or county without its organized effort to carry on the work of "The Children's Year," of which the better provision of recreation for children is an important part. It remains only for the people themselves, particularly parents, to supply the support, the funds and the workers necessary to do the job and do it well.

In any community the first step should be a survey of the existing situation. What are the children doing now in their leisure? Is it all that it should be? What neighborhoods are without adequate and accessible play spaces? Are such organizations as the Y. M. C. A., Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and the like, represented and active? Have arrangements been made to carry on school athletic contests through the vacation period? Is there a community plan for recreation or only what scattered groups or individuals are doing? Are such commercial enterprises as moving-picture shows, amusement parks, in any way supervised and regulated, or is the management left entirely free to exploit the children as they choose? Have the managers of such enterprises been put on committees dealing with the recreation question?

These questions themselves suggest what needs to be done. They point the way by which a community can truthfully say this summer: "Yes, we know just what our children are doing, and there is nothing that either we or they need be ashamed of."

### The Value of Playgrounds

PLAYGROUNDS properly supervised, are not the only means by which a community may solve its recreational problem, but they are probably the most important means. Where a playground system is lacking, often the wisest step is to get control of the play spaces surrounding the public-school buildings. Unless other provision is made it is no less than a crime for public-school grounds to remain locked and barred against the children of the neighborhood who need the use of them for play.

The opening of the grounds secured, the next thing is to get play supervisors for them. The importance of a supervisor, or director, can hardly be overestimated. Their presence makes certain the physical safety of all the children, and the prevention of mischievous tricks and practices of all kinds. On the supervised playgrounds, boys and girls and younger and older children engage only in the games and sports entirely suitable for their ages and physical development. The supervisor supplies the leadership essential in organized play; children without sufficient need for management to run about than truly play. The presence of a playground supervisor is coming to be regarded as much more than an expense.

To demand and secure the use of school grounds for play purposes this summer is one of the best war jobs the women of any community can do. Likewise, the young woman who will take training as a play director may consider herself rendering an important war service. Both of these statements apply with equal if not greater force in rural districts as in cities.

It is unfortunately the tendency of fathers and mothers of children in comfortable homes to regard the matter of playgrounds as one not concerning them, but only as a pleasant bit of altruism for the benefit of the very poor. On the contrary, it is a matter which vitally concerns all, rich, poor and middle class. And no family, whatever its social station, can afford to remain indifferent to it.

### The Street No Place for Children

AFTER all, there is not very much difference in the play instincts of boys and girls of a select residential district and those of the children in congested areas. Both need intelligent direction and control, and usually receive only restraint or neglect. A count of children on the streets of a typical Western city disclosed as many playing on the streets of comfortable homes as in the less prosperous neighborhoods. A street is a street, whether it is a "nice" street or a tenement street. Neither is a fit place for children, physically, morally or spiritually.

A mother of children well fed, housed and clothed may feel that her children have been too well brought up to be in danger from existing war conditions. True, her boys may not be in much danger of the juvenile court, but they may, on the other hand, very likely come into contact with the child who has been affected by a relaxation of restraint upon him. Protection of her own home, the ultimate success of her own life work, requires that every mother lend a hand and do her full part to help spread wholesome, organized, healthful play more widely over every community than ever before.

## Curriculum Vitae

Terra Rasmussen Lenox  
Department of Communication  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

### EDUCATION

#### **Ph.D., Communication, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (August 2018)**

Emphasis: Gender and Health Communication

Relevant Coursework: Philosophy of Communication, Rhetoric of Kenneth Burke, Digital Mirror, Advanced Feminist Theory, Seminar in HIV/AIDS Communication, Development of Family Over the Lifespan, Advanced Qualitative Methods in Nursing, Critical Analysis, Alternative Approaches to Studying Family Communication, Presidential Debates, Critical Race Theory, Rhetorics of Constituting Communities and Social Controversy.

#### **M.A., Communication, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (May 2014)**

Emphasis: Interpersonal Communication with Mediation Certificate

GPA: 3.94

Relevant Coursework: Mediated Communication; Communication and Social Influence; Mediation and Negotiation; International Mediation and Peace building; The Rhetoric of Women's Rights in the United States; Sexuality and Communication; and Collective Bargaining.

#### **M.A., Communication, Illinois State University (10 credits)**

Emphasis: Interpersonal Communication

Relevant Coursework: Qualitative Research in Communication; Training and Development; Proseminar in Communication Theory; Teaching in the College Classroom.

#### **B.S., Communication, University of Wisconsin-Superior (May 2011)**

Major: Speech Communication with minor in Geography

Cumulative GPA: 3.77

Completed Senior Project in Communication & Graduated Cum Laude (Summa Cum Laude within concentration)

Relevant Coursework: Group Communication; Interpersonal Communication; Persuasion; Gender in the Media; Communication in Conflict; Gender/Identity Communication; Computer Science; Oral Interpretation; Theorizing Communication; Criticism of Film & TV; Intercultural Communication.

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

#### **Teaching Assistant, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (August 2013-Present)**

##### *Interviewers and Interviewing 2017-Present*

Responsible for one stand-alone section, including syllabus development

Course Director: Kathryn Olson (2017-Present)

##### *Gender and Communication 2016-2017*

Responsible for one stand-alone section, including syllabus development

Course Director: Erin Parcell (2016-2017)

##### *Business and Professional Communication 2013-Present*

Responsible for one online section (summer 2017-present)  
Responsible for one face to face stand-alone section (2016-2017)  
Responsible for 3 discussion sections of Business and Professional Communication each semester (2013-2015)  
Course Director: Mike Allen (2016-Present), Andy Cuneo (2015-2016), Erik Timmerman (2013-2015)

**Teaching Assistant, Illinois State University (Fall 2011)**

Responsible for one stand-alone section of Introduction to Communication as Critical Inquiry. Course Directors: John Hooker & Cheri Simonds

**PUBLICATIONS:**

- Lenox, T. R. and Allen, M. (2018). *Business and Professional Communication, Third Edition*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc. In Press.
- Lenox, T. R., Davis, B., and Klecka, H. (2018). Working in groups. Lenox, T. R. and Allen, M. (Eds). *Business and Professional Communication, Third Edition*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc. In Press.
- Lenox, T. R. and Orcholski, M. (2018) Transgressively tWERQing: Using dance fitness as a tool for empowerment. *Women & Language, 40(2)*, 29-43.
- Rasmussen, T.D. (2017). Teamwork and Conflict. In Choi, C.S. and Allen, M. (Ed.), *Business and Professional Communication Second Edition*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Lenox, T.R. (2016). Performance Research. In Allen, M. (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of communication research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**UNDER REVIEW:**

- Lenox, T. R. (under review). The Functions of Baiting in the 2016 Presidential Debates.
- Lenox, T. R. (under review). Sanger and the Split Persona.

**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:**

- Lenox, T. R. (April 2018). Difference in the functions of baiting in the 2016 Presidential Debates. Presented at the Central States Communication Conference in Milwaukee, WI.
- Lenox, T. R. (April 2018). Margaret Sanger and the "Split" Persona. (Recipient of the David Zarefsky Top Student Paper Award). Presented at the Central States Communication Association Conference in Milwaukee, WI.
- Lenox, T. R. (Feb. 2018). Syllabus Day in Meme Form: Setting the Tone for the Next Few Months. Presented at the Western States Communication Association Conference in Santa Clara, CA.
- Lenox, T. R. (Nov. 2017). Our Legacy, Our Relevance: Margaret Sanger and the second persona. Presented at the National Communication Association Conference in Dallas, TX.
- Lenox, T. R. (May 2017). Balancing family: How families communicate balancing work, life, and having children in school. Presented at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in Champaign-Urbana, IL.
- Lenox, T. R. (March 2017). The temptress, the sweetheart, and the scapegoat. Presented at Central States Communication Association Conference in Minneapolis, MN.
- Lenox, T. R. (Nov. 2016). Get in-formation: Critical analysis of critical performance. Presented at the National Communication Association Conference in Philadelphia, PA.

- Lenox, T. R. (Oct. 2016). Transgressively tWERQing: Using dance fitness as a tool for empowerment. Presented at the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language & Gender Conference in Oak Park, IL.
- Lenox, T.R. (May 2016). Promoting prevention: Condoms, self-efficacy & aging. To be presented at the Rhetoric Society of America Conference in Atlanta, GA.
- Lenox, T.R. & Dellinger, J. (May 2016). Difficult Discussions: Addressing sexual health in aging America. To be presented at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in Urbana-Champaign, IL.
- Lenox, T.R. (Oct. 2015). Intersectionality: Ageism & sexism in the media. Presented at the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language & Gender Conference in Bowling Green, KY.
- Lenox, T. R. (Nov. 2015) Embracing opportunities for difficult discussions: Having the "talk" with Grandma. Poster presented at the National Communication Association Conference in Las Vegas, NV.
- Lenox, T. R. (Feb. 2015) "Catcalling & other dangers of existing in the heteronormative public sphere". Presented at Doing Autoethnography, an international conference for academic autoethnographers held in San Angelo, Texas spring 2015.
- Rasmussen, T. (July 2013) "Movement for Change: A Critical Analysis of Televised Dance as Performative Rhetoric for Social Change". Presented at the International Academic Forum European Conference on Media & Mass Communication summer 2014.
- Rasmussen, T. (Feb. 2012) "Sex in Cyberville: Exploring the initiation of intimacy in virtual role-play communities". Presented at *Doing Autoethnography*, a national conference for academic autoethnographers held in San Angelo, Texas spring 2013.
- Horn, N. and Rasmussen, T. (2011). "Othering Ourselves: International Students' Perception of American Romantic Relationships" Presented at Illinois State University Graduate Research Symposium Spring 2012.

### **HONORS & AWARDS**

David Zarefsky Top Student Paper Award, Central States Communication Association, 2018  
 Mel Milner award for Highest GPA in the Master's Program, 2014  
 Dean's List, University of Wisconsin-Superior, Spring 2008-Spring 2011

### **SERVICE (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee)**

Communication Graduate Student Council-President, May 2016-Present  
 Central States Communication Association Panel Chair & Respondent, 2018  
 National Communication Association Convention Panel Chair, 2017  
 Reviewer for the Central States Communication Association-Rhetorical Theory and Criticism Division, 2017  
 Reviewer for the Central States Communication Association-Graduate Student Caucus Division, 2017  
 Central States Communication Association Kenneth Burke Society Secretary, Spring 2017-Present  
 UWM Undergraduate Research Symposium Judge, 2016, 2017  
 Reviewer for the National Communication Association-Feminist and Women Studies Division, 2017  
 Communication Graduate Student Council-Treasurer/Fundraiser, January 2014-May 2016

Presented a UWM course management system (Desire to Learn) training module for Business & Professional Communication course teaching assistants: Summer 2014, 2015, 2016

Reviewer for the National Communication Association-Communication as Social Construction Division, 2015

International Academic Forum European Conference on Media and Mass Communication Panel Chair, 2014

Communication Graduate Student Council-Social Media Coordinator, January 2014-May 2014

Volunteer judge at Public Speaking Showcase, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee: Spring 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2017

Senior Reviewer for the International Academic Forum European Conference on Media and Mass Communication, 2014

### **SERVICE (Illinois State University)**

Volunteer at the National Communication Association Conference: New Orleans 2011

### **SERVICE (University of Wisconsin-Superior)**

Volunteer Public Relations Advisor for Political Campaigns 2010-2011

Student Government Association: Vice President, 2008-2009

Academic Association Committee-Chair, 2008-2009

Yellowjacket Union Advisory Board-Chair, 2008-2009

Yellowjacket Activity Committee-Member, 2008-2010

### **SERVICE (University of Wisconsin-Madison)**

Residence Hall Advisory Board Member (Fall 2006-Summer 2007)

Residence Life Student Representative: Cole Hall (Fall 2006-Spring 2007)

### **GRANTS**

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Student Organization Travel Grant, Spring 2016, Fall 2016

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Student Involvement Professional Development Grant, Spring 2016.

### **CERTIFICATIONS**

Online and Blended Teaching Certificate

Title IX Training Certificate

Data Security & Privacy Training Certificate

### **ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIPS**

National Communication Association

Central States Communication Association

Western States Communication Association

Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender

Rhetoric Society of America

International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry