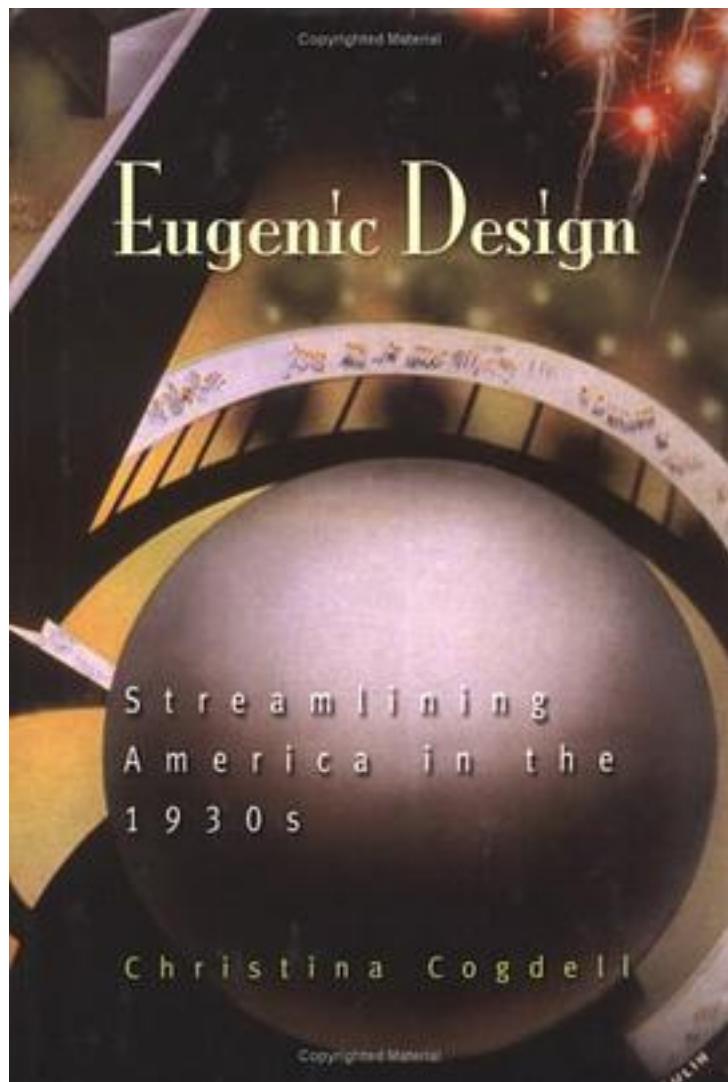


Eugenic Design



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In 1939, Vogue magazine invited commercial designer Raymond Loewy and eight of his contemporaries—including Walter Dorwin Teague, Egmont Arens, and Henry Dreyfuss—to design a dress for the "Woman of the Future" as part of its special issue promoting the New York World's Fair and its theme, "The World of Tomorrow." While focusing primarily on her clothing and accessories, many commented as well on the future woman's physique, predicting that her body and mind would be perfected through the implementation of eugenics. Industrial designers' fascination with eugenics—especially that of Norman Bel Geddes—began during the previous decade, and its principles permeated their theories of the modern design style known as "streamlining." In *Eugenic Design*, Christina Cogdell charts new territory in the history of industrial design, popular science, and American culture in the 1930s by uncovering the links between streamline design and eugenics, the pseudoscientific belief that the best human traits could—and should—be cultivated through selective breeding. Streamline designers approached products the same way eugenicists approached bodies. Both considered themselves to be reformers advancing evolutionary progress through increased efficiency, hygiene and the creation of a utopian "ideal type." Cogdell reconsiders the popular streamline style in U.S. industrial design and proposes that in theory, rhetoric, and context the style served as a material embodiment of eugenic ideology. With careful analysis and abundant illustrations, *Eugenic Design* is an ambitious reinterpretation of one of America's most significant and popular design forms, ultimately grappling with the question of how ideology influences design.

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