

# A Biogenetic Paradigm of Western Civilization

By NATHANIEL WEYL

During the past two thousand years, Western man moved from the oecumenical world order of Rome to the fragmented manorial system of the Dark Ages, then experienced a recrudescence of specialized, articulated, technologically advanced, urban and imperial societies which far surpassed Rome in each and all of these respects.

Can we extract from this historic process certain coherent biogenetic relationships of a dynamic nature between intelligence, fertility and civilization?

Subject to the qualification that certain forces are peculiar to each civilization and stand outside the general paradigm (for example, lead poisoning of the Roman élite and sacerdotal celibacy in Catholic Europe), I believe that we can.

In the past, eugenicists have, I believe, approached the entire problem of the relationship between reproduction and intelligence in terms of an oversimplified model. The most important variable which they have either underestimated or ignored is assortative mating for intelligence—the tendency of bright people to choose bright spouses, and stupid people to choose stupid ones.

The importance of this force in advanced societies can scarcely be overestimated. Jensen calculates that assortative mating has more than doubled the number of people in the U.S. with I.Q.s over 130, caused a sixfold increase in the number above 145, and multiplied by twenty the number above 160.<sup>1</sup>

If we can assume that Nobel Laureates in science roughly correspond to the population group with I.Q.s of 160 and over, elimination of all assortative mating for brain would virtually wipe out all the first-class scientific minds of the Western civilization area. For those with merely enough intelligence to understand and apply the scientific work of others and to function well as professionals, businessmen, generals and Presidents, the mortality rate would be only a bit over 50 per cent.\*

<sup>1</sup> Arthur R. Jensen, *Genetics and Education*, New York, 1973, p. 108.

\* The American electorate is regularly informed of such weighty matters as the dietary habits, athletic talents and musical taste of its Presidents, but is told less about their intelligence. Of the recent crop, John F. Kennedy had a reported I.Q. in the low 140s and Vice-President Spiro Agnew one in the mid-130s. Catharine M. Cox's classic study of early genius (*Genetic Studies of Genius*, Vol. II, *The Early Mental Traits of Three Hundred Geniuses*, Stanford 1926) revealed — to nobody's astonishment—that the earlier Presidents were, on the whole, considerably brighter.

If random mate selection could be imposed on the United States and Western Europe, a society would evolve in a few generations with minimal creativity and innovation, one perhaps best adapted to competent peasant-type farming.

The correlation between the I.Q.s of husbands and wives in the United States is about 0.60. Of the scores of characteristics investigated in Tharp's classic 1963 study of assortative mating, the only ones that correlated higher than I.Q. were age and amount of schooling.<sup>2</sup> (Of course, discrete factors such as nationality, race and religious affiliation could not be subjected to this sort of correlation analysis.)

Assortative mating for intelligence cannot improve the mental resources of a population. It merely increases I.Q. range, variability and standard deviation without altering the arithmetic mean. If people choose spouses with similar I.Q.s, you will get more highly intelligent children and also more grossly stupid ones. This trend can be hypothesized as socially desirable if the productive contribution of a few geniuses compensates for the social burden of supporting a comparable number of subnormal and moronic individuals. The history of civilization suggests that this hypothesis has been abundantly proved.

Trends in differential class reproduction and progeny survival are not generally parallel to those in assortative mating for intelligence. The degree of assortative mating varies with I.Q., a plausible assumption being that it is greatest at the high-I.Q. levels. It also varies in relation to such factors as time, the type of society involved, the degree of complexity of social and technological organization, and the size of the *deme*, that is to say, the breeding community from which people choose spouses. The sociology of assortative mating has not even begun to be worked out. Yet this is one of the most fruitful remaining fields for original and significant research in the social sciences.

With these qualifications, we hypothesize that assortative mating for intelligence tends to increase in scope and efficiency\* as society moves from primitive *demes*, such as the homogeneous village or peasant community, toward very complex ones, such as the megalopoli of high civilizations. During this long period of civilizational ascent, a continuing increase in assortative mating for brain can be posited. This is not the case, however, in regard

<sup>2</sup> R. G. Sharp, "Psychological Patterning in Marriage," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 60, 1963, pp. 97-117.

\* By scope, I mean extent, the proportion of people selecting spouses for intelligence similarity; by intensity, I mean the reciprocal of the average I.Q. difference between such assortative couples divided by the mean I.Q. difference for all members of the *deme*.

to the fertility of the intelligent compared to that of the population at large. Here, the tendency is for the reproductive advantage of the élite elements to slacken as one moves from landed to urban societies. In the imperial, megalopolitan societies, the demographic growth of the upper and educated classes, not only abates, but may decline absolutely. In short, the society is breeding itself out of brains. This process, however, is slow and for a long time remains imperceptible because of forces operating in the contrary direction.

First, since the society is completely articulated and technologically sophisticated, the demand for intelligent people at the top expands. Talent-searching, specialized education and a free circulation of élites (bringing able people of humble origin into the leadership cadres and extruding incompetents of aristocratic origin from it) become important.

Second, the megalopolis tends to break down conventional breeding barriers and there is an enormous increase in mate selection for intelligence and for cognate psychic qualities. This has a multiplier effect on the supply of highly intelligent and highly creative people.

Urbanization and empire, however, tend to bring about an unchecked expansion of bureaucracy and state power which throttle free enterprise. Egalitarianism supplants individualism as the dominant ideological attitude. These forces cause social, political, cultural and economic decline. The talent search abates. The bureaucracy becomes status-bound rather than merit-oriented. The impulse toward assortative mating for mental ability is weakened.

## THE CASE OF IMPERIAL ROME

All this is visible in the case of Imperial Rome.

A significant decline in the population of the Empire may have occurred under Trajan (imp. 98-117) and certainly became a visible force for civilizational disintegration during the third century.

But the patrician families and the intellectuals had begun to breed themselves out of existence earlier and did so faster. Of 400 families of Senators in 65 A.D., half were extinct 31 years later.<sup>3</sup> From this and other evidence, a modern demographer has

<sup>3</sup> Tenney Frank, "Race Mixture in the Roman Empire," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1916, pp. 698-708.

concluded that the birth rate of the upper classes was only about half their death rate.<sup>4</sup>

The effects of this reproductive calamity were for a while masked by the fact that Rome drew scientists, artists, professionals, teachers and administrators from Greece, Asia Minor and Alexandria, both as slaves and as free immigrants. These newcomers were rapidly absorbed into the governing and intellectual classes.

Why did the Roman upper classes and intellectuals fail to maintain their numbers? There are many possible reasons. The most important cause was probably lead poisoning, which causes sterility. This affected primarily the upper classes and the intelligentsia because of the ways they prepared their food and drink.<sup>5</sup>

Lead poisoning aside, there is a general rule that rural and warrior societies tend to regard large retinues of children as desirable, whereas sophisticated urban societies tend to take the opposite view. The intelligentsia and upper classes of Rome could practice moderately effective contraception and abortion because they had the services of Greek doctors who had studied at established medical centers, whereas the masses either had no physicians or relied on itinerant quacks whose birth-control remedies were magical and useless.<sup>6</sup>

Metropolitan societies tend to be money-oriented. Hence, the Galton effect. Able and ambitious men try to marry money. But money is concentrated in infertile strains, where the parental fortune did not have to be minutely subdivided. Thus, these lines tend to die out.<sup>7</sup> The specific ways in which this process works itself out and its quantitative significance depend on such institutions as primogeniture (present in England, but absent in Rome), social security systems, and the presence or absence of high income and inheritance taxes.

Finally, the breeding community expands greatly with urbanization. It becomes much more of an ethnic and class melting pot than it was in simpler societies. Does this lead to increased sterility? In an important recent paper, Bresler suggests that it does. Studying the 1960-61 pregnancies of healthy Caucasian women with at least one prior live birth in Providence Lying-in

<sup>4</sup> T. H. Hollingsworth, *Historical Demography*, Ithaca, 1969, pp. 253-254.

<sup>5</sup> S. Colum Gilfillan, "Roman Culture and Dysgenic Lead Poisoning," *THE MANKIND QUARTERLY*, Vol. 5, No. 3, January-March 1965, pp. 131-148.

<sup>6</sup> John Scarborough, *Roman Medicine*, Ithaca, 1969, pp. 101-102.

<sup>7</sup> Hugh M. Last, "Letter to N. H. Baynes," *Journal of Roman Studies*, 1947, pp. 152-156. Also Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, London, 1869, pp. 178-179.

Hospital, he found that fetal loss increased cumulatively 2.5 per cent to 3.0 per cent "with each additional country of birth of the great-grandparental generation" and with the physical distance between the birthplaces of the parents.<sup>8</sup>

## THE MIDDLE AGES

From a simplistic eugenic standpoint, the Dark and Middle Ages would seem *prima facie* to have been a Darwinian paradise. The strongest and shrewdest clawed their way to power, could choose as wives the healthiest, brightest, prettiest, most fertile and most able women, and could repeat this choice generation after generation, thus continually improving their breed. Almost incessant famine and the ravages of endemic and epidemic disease harassed the masses, but took a lower toll from the upper classes. Wars had a more complex impact. As a rule, the serfs were relieved of all military obligations and the fighting was done by the knights and the yeomanry. Therefore, military casualties bore down most heavily on the more valuable groups in society. The brunt of deaths from war-borne epidemics and famines, however, fell upon the poor.

Let us conservatively conjecture that the fertility-survival advantage of the aristocracy over the masses was a mere 10 per cent and that this applied on average from 800 to 1800 A.D., or for forty generations. Under these assumptions, the average knightly or baronial family would have ended the period with about 67 times as many living descendants as the average peasant family.\*

This would suggest that the Middle Ages was a period during which European man made slow but impressive biogenetic progress toward his present far from contemptible levels of ability and intelligence.† And to a certain extent this is true. But as

\* Jack B. Bresler, "Outcrossings in Caucasians and Fetal Loss," in Jack B. Bresler (Editor), *Genetics and Society*, Reading, Massachusetts, 1973, pp. 200-213.

\* This suggests that those who claim aristocratic or royal descent may not be asserting a pedigree as exclusive as it sounds. It also serves to explain such apparent anomalies as the fact that there were no less than 30,130 Americans named Chamberlain among 152,757,455 persons on 1964 U.S. social security rolls. Could that many really descend from holders of this high and prestigious medieval office? Yet, they could, because chamberlains no doubt outbred peasants.

† Since Scotland has never been a conquered country its stocks have interbred naturally with the result that the proportion of nobles to peasants is considerably higher there than elsewhere. This is markedly true in comparison with England. A great number matriculate their arms in Scotland, whereas in England the emphasis is on grants of arms to newly-hatched nobles.

usual, there were powerful forces working in the opposite direction.

The first limitation is that, prior to the Renaissance, biological selection must have been more for shrewdness and what used to be called native wit than for creative intelligence of the highest order. This followed from the comparatively primitive conditions of society in which there was little demand for the highest type of creativity and in which the prizes of life went to the sharp-witted, the charismatic, the strong and the practical.

An even more severe restriction was the institution of clerical celibacy. Those who wished to become scholars were attracted preferentially to the monastic life. This gave them security, peace, order and libraries. The condition enjoined on them was that they remain chaste.

This rule was not generally honored. During most of the Middle Ages, the clergy were of two kinds. The higher clergy came mainly from the aristocrats and, as a rule, openly had concubines, many of them also from the aristocracy. The lower clergy derived from the peasants and were mostly celibate. Hence, the dysgenic effect of sacerdotal celibacy was mitigated; and its negative biogenetic impact was primarily on intellectually able elements arising from the lower classes.

When it reacted to the Reformation, however, the Church attempted to impose the rule of celibacy generally on the entire clergy: with enormously baneful effect.

Over the long period, clerical celibacy prevented a considerable part of the creative élite of Europe from reproducing or, where it did reproduce, from making adequate provisions for the survival of its children.<sup>9</sup>

The third limitation is that the breeding community was for most Europeans the village, a small, homogeneous social unit, in which opportunities for assortative mating for intelligence were minimal. In the towns, guild membership, class and occupation further restricted the size and heterogeneity of the community from which brides could be chosen. The nobility was subject to limitations of lineage, dowry and dynastic ambition, but these were less onerous and less strictly enforced. We find from the pedigrees of noble families in England and Scotland that they married widely. Thus, mate selection among the aristocracy remained eugenic. Among all classes, the infrequency and hazardous nature of travel limited the extent of assortative mating for mental ability.

<sup>9</sup> Francis Galton, *op. cit.*, pp. 411-412.

## TOWARD MODERN SOCIETY

In Europe, between the breakdown of the Roman Empire in the West and the Industrial Revolution, reproduction was uniformly high and the main check on population growth was high mortality. This vastly favored the rich and the educated.

As the Middle Ages waned, the disintegration of traditional breeding barriers meant enlarged opportunities for mate selection and greater ability to choose intelligent wives. Sacerdotal celibacy had served as a painless gas chamber for much of the intellect of Europe. The Reformation destroyed its power for evil in the northern and western European countries which became Protestant, but amplified its effect in those lands which remained Catholic. With the later rise of science and scepticism, the Catholic Church no longer attracted the European intelligentsia and the infertility of its priesthood ceased to be of much importance to society.

The brief triumph of liberal doctrines in politics, government and economics made individual ability more important than lineage and inherited status as a measure of worth. This created an ideal ambience for assortative mating of the best.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, concerned students of population noted that the fertility of the educated, the intelligent and the successful was lagging behind that of the masses. This was occurring at a time when advances in medicine and public health were narrowing the gap between the death rates of the two social groups.

For a long time, it was assumed that the infertility of the highly educated was largely an economic matter, that they chose small families because their low salaries and their need for education required that course. In recent decades, there has been a spectacular rise in the salary levels of the intellectuals and of the highly educated. This has not caused any corresponding increase in the size of their families. Last year, I made a study of the 14,000 or so members of American Mensa, the high-I.Q. society. I found that the lifetime fertility of the average Mensa couple (that is to say, Mensa member and spouse) was 1.6 children. This was 27 per cent below the national average. It was not enough to provide zero population growth. Even assuming null-mortality, the Mensa population would shrink by 60 per cent in two generations.<sup>10</sup>

If we look at some of the other factors which affected the Roman élite, we see interesting parallels and differences between third century Rome and twentieth century America.

<sup>10</sup> Nathaniel Weyl, "An Analysis of the 1972 Mensa Membership," *Mensa Research Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 2, July 1974, pp. 42-47.

In both systems, there is a wide gap between the frequency and sophistication of the contraceptive and abortive techniques of the classes and the masses. However, in contemporary America, that gap is closing.<sup>11</sup>

Punitive income and inheritance taxes and cradle-to-grave social security have probably made the Galtonian effect largely irrelevant to the contemporary Western civilization area.

Involuntary sterility, caused by intermarriage between different ethnic and national strains, may operate to significantly diminish fertility.<sup>12</sup> If so, this will have much more impact on the creative minority than on the masses. The skewed class composition of would-be adoptive parents suggests that forces for involuntary sterility operate disproportionately against the highly educated.

As in Rome, the effect of the infertility of the capable has been masked temporarily by other developments. Improvements in education and promotion, provision of magnificent research facilities, the breakdown of class and race barriers to education and leadership, and the brain-drain imposed on less fortunate countries—all these have caused a continuing recruitment of men and women of outstanding ability.

Simultaneously, assortative mating for intelligence has largely replaced fertility as the main means of providing the United States with a sufficiently large corps of brilliant people to maintain the ferment of creation, invention and discovery.

The prospect, however, is that the efficacy of assortative mating for intelligence will decline because of mounting ideological and institutional pressures imposed by the dominant egalitarian ideology and the Establishment. There is already evidence of this. Seventy years ago, William James could boast that “we alumni and alumnae of the colleges are the only permanent presence that corresponds to the aristocracy of other countries.”<sup>13</sup>

The American college population today cannot by the wildest stretch of imagination be equated with an aristocracy of any sort. Its selectivity has been largely destroyed by the open university, by the assault on intelligence testing, by the demand for “relevant” education and by the imposition by government of

<sup>11</sup> Charles F. Westoff, “The Modernization of U.S. Contraceptive Practice,” *Family Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 4, No. 3, July 1972, p. 12. Nathaniel Weyl, “Population Control and the Anti-Eugenic Ideology,” *THE MANKIND QUARTERLY*, Vol. 14, No. 2, October-December 1973, pp. 73-74.

<sup>12</sup> Jack B. Bresler, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-213.

<sup>13</sup> William James, “Address to the Association of American Alumnae,” Meeting at Radcliffe, 7th November, 1907.



racial and sexual quotas on both student bodies and faculties.

Thus, dysgenic reproduction and the impeding of assortative mating operate in unison to bring progressive intellectual impoverishment to the United States and Western Europe. In the communist world, similar processes are occurring, but on a monstrously magnified scale. In the West, there is a shortfall in the fertility of the creative élites. In the Soviet and Chinese communist worlds, these élites were hunted down and exterminated in the genocidal and aristocidal purges characteristic of the revolutionary phases of communist power. In the West, assortative mating is being eroded by such measures as debauching higher education through the forced injection of incompetents on racial grounds. In the communist world, the régimes intervene to fling the bright and the stupid into juxtaposition. In the Chinese case, the state directly encourages marriages between intellectuals and peasants.

Thus, the egalitarian ideology involves the use of state action to take measures which should arrest and reverse man's evolutionary progress in genetic terms and which may serve to bring into existence future generations so mediocre and spiritless that they will serve as pliant instruments of the gargantuan state.

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# Some Further Reflections Upon Race and Racism

By H. W. J. EDWARDS

Some good may, I believe, be achieved by a layman's further reflections upon race and racism in so scientific and erudite a periodical as THE MANKIND QUARTERLY.<sup>1</sup>

It was with moderate satisfaction that the editor of *Yr Haul*, the organ of the Church of England in Wales, decided to review my first article and I gathered that the editor of *Christian Order*, a Catholic monthly, was thinking of performing a similar task. Moreover, the University of Cincinnati asked me for a reprint for its psychological department. So far I have heard no adverse criticism save for pursed lips and a curious statement by one of my friends that even if what I wrote was right, I ought not to write it. The Rev. Tregelles Williams, who is in charge of religious broadcasting in Wales, wrote: "I read your article with interest. You certainly succeed in making your point and many will have much to say in reply. Race is much the same as sex; it always gives most trouble when too much attention is paid to it." I thank the cleric for his diplomatic answer; but I believe that he dare not write or speak on this matter too freely. While I remained in hospital, a friend lent me a batch of periodicals all of which are called *The Friend*, the weekly organ of the Quakers (the Society of Friends). I should have thought its pages would reflect the traditional friendliness and charitable character of that small but influential denomination. I found, however, in a copious correspondence under the heading "Friends and Politics" many letters bearing upon the so-called race problem. Bearing well in mind that the motto of *The Friend* used to be *In Essentials Unity, in Non-Essentials Liberty: in All Things Charity* (a quotation from St Augustine), I was not

<sup>1</sup> I write what I call a sequel at the suggestion of the Editor of THE MANKIND QUARTERLY but readers may pardon any declension in my work since I am forced to write within a Welsh hospital, the authorities of which, having seen my first article, think it well that I should continue—perhaps as a form of occupational therapy—which may be good for those who of late found themselves "blackened" by the Establishment which tends towards the Left.

In my first article I stated that the word barbarian has as its root the Latin *barba*, a beard. Although I was so taught in school by a classics master (who should have known better), the etymology is from the Greek *barbaros* used to describe those who could not speak Greek. It was later used by the Romans to mean, as I wrote, those who lived outside the imperium. The mistake in no way impairs my argument.