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GALTON TO HIMMLER: AN ARCHEOLOGY
OF EUGENICS DISCOURSE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Jeffery Logan Clark
December 2013

GALTON TO HIMMLER: AN ARCHEOLOGY
OF EUGENICS DISCOURSE

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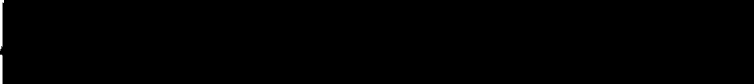
by
Jeffery Logan Clark


December 2013


Approved by:


Mary Boland, Chair, English

11-14-2013
Date


Jacqueline Rhodes


Mary Boland, Graduate Coordinator



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ABSTRACT

The project of this thesis is to trace interdiscursive and intertextual relations between ancient and modern social discourses that allow and constitute Francis Galton's eugenics discourse, and how Francis Galton's eugenics discourse effects change in other social discourses of the twentieth century.

To this end, three precursor texts are examined, two modern and one ancient. The first is, Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), second, John Humphrey Noyes' "Scientific Propagation" (1870), and third, *The Republic of Plato*.

Chapter One sets the kairotic moment of this project, that is, Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes' opinion to the court in *Buck v. Bell*, 2 May 1927. Chapter One also traces the theoretical basis and the purpose and work of this thesis.

Chapter Two introduces Galton, his eugenics theory, and its reception in the U.S.

Chapter Three closely examines Darwin's *Origin of Species* as inspiration for Galton's work on heredity and J. H. Noyes' "Scientific Propagation" as impetus to push Galton from theory into praxis.

Chapter Four closely examines *The Republic of Plato* as rhetorical blueprint for Galton's scheme of eugenics implementation.

Chapter Five presents Galton's scheme with a close reading of two Galton publications, one for the general public, "Hereditary Improvement" (1873), the other as a lecture presented to the Sociological Society of London, "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims" (1904).

Chapter Five also includes the conclusion to this project.

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CHAPTER ONE

JUSTICE HOLMES AND THE KAIROTIC MOMENT

It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind. . . . Three generations of imbeciles are enough.

(Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Junior, Opinion:
Buck v Bell, 2 May 1927)

"Illegitimate," "feeble minded," "mental defective," and "probable potential parent of socially inadequate offspring": In his opinion to *Buck v Bell*, Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes used these terms to characterize Carrie Buck, an eighteen-year-old woman who underwent compulsory sterilization as an inmate of the Virginia State Colony for Epileptics and the Feeble-minded. With his now infamous conclusion that "three generations of imbeciles are enough, Justice Holmes affirmed the constitutionality of such forced procedures, finding that the state had a compelling interest to protect society from the genetic contamination by "defective persons."

Carrie Buck's mother was also an inmate of the facility, and as Carrie Buck conceived an illegitimate child - ostensibly due to promiscuity, which the experts considered a trait of the feebleminded - Miss Buck was sterilized.¹

Given the "facts" as presented to the Supreme Court in the Carrie Buck case, how was it possible for a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States to come to such a conclusion? To even use such language? Part of the answer to these questions lies in the language that constitutes a particular discourse and in the idea that no discourse exists in isolation. Discourses are always already in response to other discourses - created, shaped, and informed by them. In this case, while Holmes' judicial discourse addressed a legal question and involved legal analysis, that discourse was also, and more importantly, informed by the medical, sociological, psychiatric, genetic, and eugenic discourses of its time.

¹ However, Carrie Buck's plight may have merely been a case of her foster family protecting their own probity by institutionalizing her. It was later proved that Carrie Buck's pregnancy was the result of rape by a relative of her foster parents. The child later tested above average in intelligence and not in the least feeble of mind (Bulmer 89-90).

While terms such as "feeble-minded," "mental defective," and "socially inadequate" are now offensive to hear, to say, even to think, eighty-five years ago these terms represented objects of psychiatric discourse, clinical, and not considered offensive. To provide one important illustration, the "Report of Committee on Classification of Feeble-Minded" published in the *Journal of Psycho-Asthenics* (1910), produced terms such as "idiot," "imbecile," and "moron" in effort to more accurately identify and taxonomize the broader term Holmes uses, the "feebleminded" ("Report" 61-67). The committee's task was to standardize the terminology of psychiatry to better separate the normal from the abnormal, to better control its discourse in service to institutional power.

Francis Galton (1822-1911) is the originator of discourse on the heritability of intelligence that informs and allows the terminology used by Holmes in his opinion to the court in the Carrie Buck case. Galton had a significant impact on later experimental psychologists as a pioneer of mental imagery, developer of statistic tools such as the correlation coefficient (the bell curve), and coiner of the term "psychometry" (the measurement of mental processes) (Gillham 226). For instance, James McKean

Cattell, an American who traveled to Cambridge in 1883, based much of his psychometric work on that of Galton. That same year, Alfred Binet and based much of his work on that of Galton and Cattell at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris. Binet furthered the work of both to develop the IQ test in 1905. A test that is still a "tool that has led to countless arguments ever since on the heritability of intelligence" (Gillham 129-30). Thus, Galton's theoretical inquiries and early experimentation led to the legal language used by Holmes.

Purpose and Work of this Thesis

In an interview originally published as "Pouvoir et Corps" in *Quel Corps?* (1975), Michel Foucault is asked by the "editorial collective" to speak on the historical process of "the constitution of an ever more disciplinary society" (61). Foucault replies that in *Discipline and Punish* he has

attempted to analyse how, at the initial stages of industrial societies [the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries], a particular punitive apparatus was set up together with a system of separating the normal and the abnormal.

To follow this up, it will be necessary to construct a history of what happens in the nineteenth century and how the present highly-complex relation of forces The interesting thing to ascertain, not what overall project presides over all these developments, but, how, in terms of strategy, the different pieces were set in place. (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 61-2)

Foucault's second sentence speaks to the purpose of this thesis, as social discourses – institutional and public – effected and affected Galton's eugenics narrative and all subsequent social narratives.

The project of this thesis is to discover interdiscursive and intertextual relations between ancient and modern social discourses that allow and constitute eugenics discourse, and how Galton's eugenics discourse effects change in other social discourses. That is, "how in terms of strategy, the different pieces" of Galton's narrative "were set in place" (62). This thesis begins a portion of the follow-up work Foucault suggests.

In particular, this thesis will explore the origins of the eugenic ideas and ideologies that led to Galton's

coining the term "eugenics" in order to expose the discursive precursors from which Galton built his narrative. It will attempt to answer three central questions: (1) What precursor discourses were most influential to Galton and allowed him to create, frame, and attempt to control his eugenics narrative? (2) How did this narrative find a foothold in the nineteenth-century imagination, thus enabling eugenics to become the dominant social discourse of the early twentieth century? And (3) how did eugenics theories of praxis lead from positive eugenics (voluntary "better breeding" programs) to negative eugenics (forced sterilization laws in the U.S.) and eventually to Himmler's Final Solution in Nazi Germany?

In addressing the first question, this thesis contends that while eugenics discourse and its programs were enabled by a variety of social discourses popular in the nineteenth century, the roots of this discursive scheme reach much deeper in western tradition than previously recognized. More specifically, eugenics discourse finds its genesis in the dialogue of Socrates, Book V of *The Republic of Plato*,²

² *The Republic of Plato* (Davies and Vaughan translation), first published in English in 1866, followed by Jowett's translation in 1870. Both translations were immensely popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and influential to Galton's project.

in which Socrates, Glaucon, Adeimantus, Thrasymachus, and Polemarchus discuss the breeding of humans in the manner of animal husbandry. While others have noted parallels between Plato's dialogue and Galton's narrative, for example, John Humphrey Noyes (1870), J. Parton Milum (1913), and William H. Tucker (1994), no one has traced the ideas presented in Plato's dialogue as a blueprint for Galton's eugenics discourse. The goal of this thesis then, unlike critics before, is to examine these parallels not as curiosities worthy of passing remark, but as indicators of precursor discourses that helped constitute the values and the construction of eugenics in its heyday.

The second question connects to the first in that the logic and plan for the breeding of guardians of Plato's utopian republic becomes the logic and scheme of Galton's eugenics. *The Republic* not only serves as a blueprint for eugenics praxis, it becomes the blueprint or scheme for Galton's eugenics presentation. By so using it, Galton relies on ancient rhetorical methods to achieve modern public acceptance of his eugenics theory and praxis. He does this by publishing his "scheme" in journals both academic and public in effort to authorize his work in the former and garner public acceptance in the latter. In

particular, this thesis will examine closely "Hereditary Improvement" (1873), in which Galton first presents his scheme for public consumption.

The third question involves looking closely at several texts that precede Galton for ideological assumptions that became naturalized, embedded and hidden, in eugenics discourse and how they could be picked up and interpreted, intertextually and interdiscursively, by precursor texts. Thus, as social discourses change via the addition of new interpreters and their assumptions, positive eugenic ideals became the focus of cultural attention and were subject to ideology and to manipulations of asymmetrical power relations. These manipulations of eugenics discourse led to social transformation brought about by changes in discourse practices as part of the "engineering of social and cultural change" (Fairclough, *Discourse* 8). Discourses such as those surrounding eugenics are transformed and not always for the better.

The discourse work of Foucault and Fairclough is crucial to the understanding of eugenics discourse and the social discourses that made Galton's eugenics narrative pervasive, to become the dominant social discourse of the early twentieth century. By close examination, analysis

and interpretation of three precursor texts – two modern: Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) and John Humphrey Noyes' "Scientific Propagation" (1870); and one ancient: *The Republic of Plato* – through the lenses of both Foucault and Fairclough, it will become evident how these texts formed and informed Galton's narrative. Such an analysis will reveal how his eugenics narrative led to the fundamental ideological assumptions and objects of discourse used by Holmes in his opinion to the court in *Buck v. Bell* (1927) and to the extremes of Himmler in Nazi Germany a little more than a decade later.

Nominalization

The particular terms used by Holmes in his opinion to the *Buck v Bell* case are merely signs signifying complex associations of measured scores on psychiatric tests, graded on a scale of one to nine. The formation of these objects of discourse are, as Foucault suggests in *Archeology of Knowledge*, constructions of psychiatric discourse and are "a way of limiting its domain, of defining what it is talking about, of giving it the status of an object – and therefore of making it manifest, nameable, and describable" (41). These terms, then, do not signify things in themselves, but are abstractions

constructed by identifying "'processes and activities [that are transformed] into states and objects' through nominalization" (Fairclough, *Discourse* 182). Moreover, Fairclough maintains that nominalization entifies a condition "into an inherent state or property, which can then itself become the focus of cultural attention and manipulations" (183). The terms used by Justice Holmes were legitimized, authorized as objects of social discourse, and therefore subject to affective ideological assumptions that surround them in medical/judicial discourse.

Naturalization

Ideological assumptions that become naturalized as commonsense are based on "members' resources" that rely on discursive commonplaces and "meaning systems" surrounding the objects of discourse for interpretation. Thus, background assumptions lead to particular interpretations of texts by supplying the "missing links" in discourse through a process of "gap-filling" (Fairclough, *Language* 67) in the manner of Aristotle's rhetorical syllogism, the enthymeme, does. In other words, the author places traces in texts, consciously or unconsciously, that function as clues for interpretation, and the reader fills in the

missing element of the enthymeme. Assumptions of the author, the reader, and the discourse communities of both frame these traces, and are in turn framed by the discourse.

Once naturalized, ideological assumptions that surround nominalized conditions embed in the language of discourse. They are engendered and enabled, reinforced and replicated, and operate as a hidden function in the background of language. As Fairclough explains: "Ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible," that is, when the missing links are hidden as background assumptions that function "as common sense in the service of sustaining unequal relations of power" (70-71).

Assuming the ideological, commonsense, assumptions embedded in Holmes' judicial discourse remained hidden to the court in the Carrie Buck case, the now offensive terms Holmes uses in his "Opinion" were appropriate for discussion in the intersections of social, medical, and judicial discourses of his time.

In addition to creating objects of discourse, nominalization of conditions and sets of symptoms or scores on psychiatric tests alienates the subject who exhibits the symptoms and/or engaging the tests. Nominalizations, and

attending commonsense assumptions surrounding them, allow the physician or the magistrate to dismiss, consciously or unconsciously, the agency of the subject in question and treat or adjudicate the nominalized abstraction rather than the person who exhibits or expresses symptoms or conditions. Thus, the authorized terminology Holmes uses in his opinion in *Buck v Bell* became the focus of institutional attention in medical, social, and judicial discourses of the early twentieth century, in the manner Fairclough describes. The expert-authorized terms were imbued with power, and the power of these objects of discourse allowed for the conscious and/or unconscious abuses of institutional power in the name of public good.

Once identified and categorized by expert medical authority, the focus of judicial attention returns from the nominalization, the label as object of discourse, to the labeled, that is, the socially unworthy "defective persons" — those considered to be a drain on the economic resources of society. These individuals have been effectively branded, subject to legal authority, institutionalized, hidden from view, abandoned, erased by non-inclusion, and sterilized to complete the erasure in order to protect the public from genetic contamination.

Enunciative Modalities

The formation of specific terminologies as objects of discourse is only one aspect of narratives that take on power. It is not the objects themselves, their "point of emergence," their "mode of characterization" or "the domain that they form," that matters most, "but the relation between the surfaces on which they appear" (Foucault, *Archeology*. 47). Beneath the surface of discourse runs the formation of what Foucault calls "enunciative modalities." Fairclough describes enunciative modalities as "types of discursive activity, such as describing, forming hypotheses, formulating regulations, and so forth, each of which has its own associated subject positions" (*Discourse* 43). In other words, the social subject who engages in discursive action speaks not as "an entity that exists outside of and independently of discourse," but is a functionary of the enunciative mode of the discourse in which he or she is engaged (43). Thus, the subjectivity of an individual such as Justice Holmes has become an institutional functionary and is released from culpability

should institutional demands call for ethically questionable decisions or actions.³

For Foucault then, the discursive action constitutes the actor. Largely, this is true. However, Fairclough has reservations important to this thesis. Foucault, according to Fairclough, "insists" on the subject "as an effect of discursive formations . . ., which excludes active social agency in any meaningful sense" (*Discourse* 45), whereas Fairclough advocates a dialectical position between discourse and subjectivity "which sees social subjects as shaped by discursive practices, yet also capable of reshaping and restructuring those practices" (45). The distinction Fairclough makes is an important one – it better allows for change in social discourses, as it speaks to "the increasing salience of discourse in social transformations . . . a concern to control discourse: to bring about changes in discourse practices as part of the engineering of social and cultural change" (*Discourse* 8). Francis Galton is an example of such a social subject, one who set out to change social discourse in effort to engineer the face of society, literally, through his

³ One is reminded here of the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals, many of which claimed, "I was merely following orders."

"scheme"⁴ of eugenics presentation. And it is Galton's eugenic narrative that became the dominant social narrative of the early twentieth century, thus allowing for Holmes' language.

Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity

It is vitally important to examine closely narratives that take on power and grow to become dominant social discourses, and as Holmes was situated in discourses of "social progress" that viewed eugenics as a natural means to that progress, Galton's eugenics is a prime example of such a narrative. One way to examine how Galton's came to be the dominant social narrative of his time is to look at precursor social discourses for intertextual representation or re-presentation of textual elements. Another is to look for interdiscursive connections between precursor texts and Galton's narrative in the manner Fairclough describes in "Intertextuality in Critical Discourse Analysis" (1992), that is: (1) To look closely at how texts represent other texts by examining the objects of discourse represented across texts, by discovering the naturalized ideological assumptions that carry through from text to text, and by

⁴ Galton uses "scheme" to refer to his plan of eugenics presentation in "Hereditary Improvement" (1873).

exposing the enunciative modalities that seem to transfer intertextually; (2) to look for signs of interdiscourse between texts, that is, to see if texts actually speak to each other or if they are merely working on similar projects in similar discursive modes with recurrent terminologies and themes.

Chapter Two of this thesis will identify Galton and his impact on nineteenth and early twentieth century sociological discourse. It will also identify his eugenics narrative "scheme" and the American social discourse it inspired.

CHAPTER TWO

GALTON AND THE EUGENICS NARRATIVE

Sir Francis Galton F. R. S.

Sir Francis Galton F.R.S. (1822-1911), half-cousin to Charles Darwin, was a truly remarkable figure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He has been called a "Victorian polymath" by the editors of Galton.org, a website whose stated project endeavors to "correct the record": "Despite his colossal achievements, contemporary reputation and far-reaching influence, Sir Francis Galton is no longer widely known or appreciated except among specialists." Galton.org does this by presenting in PDF format all available published and private writings of Galton, including portions of his autobiography *Memories of My Life* (1909), as well as related published works such as the three volume biography written by Karl Pearson, *The Life, Letters and Labours of Francis Galton* (A, 1914; B, 1924; C, 1930). According to the website, Galton was an avid geographer, meteorologist, and tropical explorer. He was the founder of differential psychology and the inventor of fingerprint identification, as well as a pioneer of statistical correlation and regression. Later in his

career, he became a convinced hereditarian, eugenicist, proto-geneticist, and best-selling travel author (galton.org).

William H. Tucker takes a hard look at Galton in, *The Science and Politics of Racial Research* (1994). Tucker refers to Galton as "a kind of scientific dilettante" in the first half of his life, one who "had such an obsessive desire to collect data – to classify, organize, measure, and tabulate – that he once acknowledged it as 'almost a danger' to himself" (Pearson in Tucker 37).

As Tucker takes a hard view of Galton, Nicolas Wright Gillham, in his biography, *A Life of Sir Francis Galton: From African Exploration to the Birth of Eugenics* (2001), takes a notably softer view. As Gillham points out, upper middleclass Victorians with questioning minds, and the leisure time and financial wherewithal, conducted much of Victorian science. Moreover, Galton's personality led him to investigate a wide range of scientific discourses. When he found a gap in the discourse that interested him, or unanswered questions of a particular scientific discourse, he launched his own investigation and invariably added to that discourse. The dominant idea that drove Galton in his later years was heredity, and its kairotic moment for him

was the publication of his cousin Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859.

Galton's Eugenics

I have no patience with the hypothesis occasionally expressed, and often implied, especially in tales written to teach children to be good, that babies are born pretty much alike, and that the sole agencies in creating differences between boy and boy, and man and man, are steady application and moral effort. It is in the most unqualified manner that I object to pretensions of natural equality. The experiences of the nursery, the school, the University, and of professional careers, are a chain of proofs to the contrary.

(Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius*)

Galton believed strongly that heritable traits play a stronger role in human difference and natural ability than do particular environments. "Nature verses nurture," a binary he coined,¹ describes this phenomenon. Another way

¹ Galton's coining of "nature verses nurture" may find its inspiration in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as "Prospero complains about his adopted son Caliban: 'A devil, born a devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick'" (Bulmer 61).

of saying it is essence verses existence; another is objective hereditary endowment verses subjective social construction.

As in animal husbandry, controlling objective physicality is easier and more practicable than controlling subjective social construction. It is simple logic for Galton. If heredity plays the stronger role in human development than environment, and if natural human ability is developing slowly via natural selection, then artificial selection using scientific principles of propagation via social, medical, and judicial experts could speed the development of human potential. All that is needed is a plan of action. Galton's obsession became finding that plan. However, any plan would require social acceptance. Galton realized this fact and that such a plan would take generations to take hold and its discursive language and underlying assumptions become socially naturalized. He devoted the second half of his life to this pursuit.

In the conclusion of his autobiography, Galton simplifies the aims of eugenics first delivered to the meeting of the Sociological Society in 1904:

Its first object is to check the birth-rate of the Unfit, instead of allowing them to come into

being, though doomed in large numbers to perish prematurely. The second object is the improvement of the race by furthering the productivity of the Fit by early marriages and healthful rearing of their children. Natural Selection rests upon excessive production and wholesale destruction; Eugenics on bringing no more individuals into the world than can be properly cared for, and those only of the best stock. (*Memories* 323)

Depending on how one defines the "Unfit" and determines how many individuals the world can properly care for, this statement sounds rather reasonable. However, who defines and what determines? And by what mechanism?

Pearson, in his biography of Galton, defines eugenics by citing Galton himself (from *Memories of My Life*) as "the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations either physically or mentally" (223). However, Pearson points out another instance in which Galton changes the wording of this particular speech act. In an interview with the *Jewish Chronicle*, Galton defined eugenics as "the study of the conditions under human control which improve or impair

the inborn characteristics of the race" (223). Pearson sees import in the change of "qualities" to "characteristics," but a more glaring change is "the study of agencies under social control" to "conditions under human control" (223-24). Still later, in the Codicil of his will (1909), Galton returned to his original definition but inserted an introductory clause: "to pursue the study and further the knowledge of *National Eugenics*, that is of agencies under social control . . ." (emphasis added 224). These changes belie the idea of positive eugenics in which individuals choose to mate based on eugenic principles. Rather, they disclose the idea of negative eugenics. What are the "agencies under social control" but agencies of the medical profession, of the judicial system, of the state?

U.S. as Fertile Ground for Galton's Eugenics Narrative

During the mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the British and American publics saw a chain of problems associated with ever-expanding populations caused by migration from rural areas to urban centers and European immigration during the Industrial Revolution – and the resulting overpopulation of cities, of poverty, disease,

and urban blight. It seemed to many – those who looked at society as a whole – that the U.S. was undergoing social decline. Victorian authors, the most notable of which, Charles Dickens, through his reading tours of the U.S. in 1842 and again in 1867, showed the American public the social evils of industrialization as he saw them in England. The literary realism of Rebecca Harding Davis (1831- 1910), and William Dean Howells (1837-1920) depict the dark side of industrial development and migration of people from agrarian to city life. American naturalism in literary works such as those by Stephen Crane (1871-1900) and Edith Wharton (1862-1937) and others do as well.

It was through not only stories and novels that the U.S. was becoming educated on social issues, but nonfiction essays and science articles carried social discourse to the American public as well. Popular magazines and journals that published noted scientists and intellectuals in England were available to the American reading public – journals with titles such as, *Eclectic Magazine*, *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, *Fortnightly*, *Macmillan's*, *Dial*, and *Current Literature*.

U.S. scientific journals and popular magazines that featured contemporary discourse on science and current

events also supplied intellectual fodder for the American reading public. Scientific journals such as the *American Journal of Sociology*, first published in 1895, often reprinted articles published in academic and scientific journals in England. The same is true of the general interest weekly magazine, *Littell's Living Age*, also known as *The Living Age* (1844 to 1941). One short-lived journal, *Modern Thinker* (1870-1873), was said to have "startled New York City and the world" as its anonymous editor sought to bring to publication a variety of "suppressed theorists" and "freethinkers," those who sought legitimacy for views that ran contrary to the dominant social and intellectual discourses of their day (T.R Noyes 25). The well-known and widely-read *Popular Science Monthly* (now known as *Popular Science*), founded in 1872 and billed as the "What's New, What's Next magazine," is still in publication, available both in print and online.

What these U.S. scientific and popular-nonfiction publications have in common is the forwarding of current intellectual discourses, national and international, by reprinting or intertextually re-presenting in summary or verbatim, many articles, essays, and scientific papers, often within a week of publication in England.

The social concerns raised by these literary works and journal publications were nothing new to the American public who were experiencing social entropy, especially in large metropolitan cities. The public had private knowledge, first hand; they were living in or around it, could see the effects of it. The public also gained private knowledge from the literary voices of authors such as Dickens, Davis, Howells, Crane, Wharton, and others. They could see their social reality reflected in literature. However, it was through the voices of men and women of the hard and soft sciences who were published in popular journals that private knowledge became public.

Scientists and academics such as Francis Galton, Karl Pearson, J. H. Noyes, Benjamin Kidd, Franz Boas, Alice Vickery, Lady Welby, and many others built from the foundational voices of Plato and Darwin, each contributing to the social discourses of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. These works, popular and scientific, built one onto another, each in an attempt to gain legitimacy as part of the emerging dominant sociological discourse of twentieth century. The voices of these contributors to sociological discourse were erecting and scaffolding ideologies, all the while standardizing the

language of social discourse, a process that continues well into the twenty-first century.

Once publically articulated, conformation of perceived social decline demanded a solution. Galton's eugenics narrative scheme seemed a link to bring the ends of the problematic chain of social ills together as the scientific, methodological savior of the human race. Eugenics was universally accepted and perhaps the first social movement to connect the disciplines of hard and soft science: biology and medicine with psychology, sociology, anthropology, and even theology. In a sense, eugenics theory both explained the problem and proffered rational solution to a universally perceived dilemma - social entropy.

CHAPTER THREE
TWO MODERN PRECURSOR DISCOURSES
TO GALTON'S EUGENICS

First: *The Origin of Species*
Charles Darwin

The accumulated tension burst upon the mind of the whole intelligent world with a suddenness and an overwhelming force for which the strongest material metaphors are poor and inadequate. . . . In a way to which history furnishes no parallel the opinions of mankind may be said to have changed in a day.

(Sir William Huggins "Presidential Address" to the Royal Society in London (1905)¹

The text that Huggins heralds as "burst[ing] upon the mind of the whole intelligent world" and spawning a Kuhnian intellectual paradigm revolution of "overwhelming force" is none other than Darwin's *Origin of Species*, first published in 1859. This work was in effect the scientific validation of the biological/mechanical functioning of nature in evolution and the struggle of the individual for survival that had been brewing in science discourse well before

¹ Huggins cited by Benjamin Kidd in *The Science of Power* 1919.

Darwin. From ancient times the former understanding of biology saw and could categorize species by their differences – the work of Aristotle, for example. It must have seemed natural and consistent with the current religious beliefs of any given naturalist at a given point in time that things as they are now have always been, static, complete and perfect in themselves – their functioning as animals divinely created and therefore right as in correct or determined. Stasis was the biological paradigm.

Many who read Darwin's *Origin* shifted the conception of a creator god to set of systemic, biological processes but did not alter the perception of the outcome as right. The common reading of Darwin was that evolutionary struggle created the current form of a species via the mechanics of biology and therefore the current form is right, correct, and determined by natural law. However, Darwin's text does not reveal him a strict materialist, nor does his text approach the denial of a Prime Mover or First Cause. Rather, Darwin's text attempts to explain the process of change taking place over millennia, *post prima causa*, thus leaving the concept of *primum movens* out of the biological equation. The title of his lengthy essay, an "Abstract" as

he calls it in the introduction, is *On the Origin of Species*, not the Origin of Life on Earth. In other words, Darwin describes how species evolve over time, not how life first started. He attempts to avoid the *prima causa/primum movens* controversy.

The Importance of Darwin's Rhetorical Presentation

The biological paradigm-shift that "burst upon the mind of the whole intelligent world," announced by Huggins was not the only inspiration for Galton; Darwin's rhetorical presentation was important as well. Careful attention to Darwin's rhetoric sheds light on just how important *Origin* was for Galton's scheme of eugenics presentation, beginning with the full title of Darwin's work.

The common title, *On the Origin of Species*, is familiar to all, but less familiar to most is the full title Darwin gave his lengthy essay: *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. The second half of this title is exigent to understanding the genesis of eugenics discourse. In addition to the revolutionary paradigm shift Darwin's hypothesis requires, it is perhaps

this full title and its possible double meaning that added shockwaves through the philosophical, political, social fabric of the Western world and perhaps also gave Galton his kairotic moment, helping to spawn his eugenics discourse and his scheme of its presentation.

Regarding the second half of the full title of *Origin*, several questions come to mind: By what criteria are races "favoured"? And by whom or what? And what exactly does Darwin mean by "Races"? Does "Race" as signifier stand in for "species" or variations among species? In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was no common referent associated with the word "race." The word "race" could refer to mineral, vegetable, or animal. It could refer to specific human populations that share common physical traits; to nationality, to ethnicity, or to human beings as separate from the animal kingdom. However, as Darwin uses the term, "race" meant identifiable variations within species whether human, animal, or plant (*Origin* 8).

In addition, the words "Preservation of the Favoured," as used here, seem to imply an agent that does the preserving and favoring; it is as if Darwin personifies nature, imbues an anthropomorphized process of natural selection with conscious agency to select the favored for

preservation. It seems, then, that Darwin builds upon rather than counters the teleological language of argument from design.

By judicious diction in the full title of *Origin*, Darwin preserves the language of the nineteenth century's version of intelligent design while assigning that design not to the creator god of contemporary Judeo-Christian belief, or Logos of the ancient Greeks, but to the evolutionary process of natural selection without suggesting pure materialism. In this manner, Darwin attempts to assuage the shock of revolutionary paradigmatic change. He leaves himself an out, by keeping the mystery of First Cause and Prime Mover alive with the final two sentences of *Origin*:

Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of *life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed² into a*

² In this statement, Darwin alludes to a verse from the Old Testament: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (KJV Gen. 2.7).

few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved [emphasis added]. (259)

Is Darwin allowing for a *Primum Movers* as agent who "originally breathed" life "into a few forms or into one," from which "endless forms" of superlative beauty and wonder evolve? Or, is the breath of life the result of systemic processes, as *prima causa* agency. Darwin does not state emphatically one way or the other, but leaves the interpretation – materialistic or spiritualistic – to his reader.

Beyond the title, one of the first rhetorical moves Darwin makes in *Origin* is important to its public and scientific acceptance. As Douglas R. Gaughey points out, "he [Darwin] commences his book not with the description of species origin in nature, but with the familiar topic of selective breeding in domestic animals" (73). Domestic breeding was common practice in the mid-nineteenth century, and Darwin himself is known for his research in the breeding of pigeons. It is a short line of reasoning to

understand why he chose the topic of domestic breeding as an analogical appeal to accepted human experience to introduce his hypothesis on natural selection.

How Darwin's hypothesis differs from the long human history of animal husbandry is the length of time needed to account for the change and even the origins of species in nature. The selection of traits to breed for, or breed out, in domestic stock is directly accessible to the senses in relatively short periods - several generations of animal breeding, for example.

The process of natural selection as Darwin lays out, on the other hand, takes place over millions of years and its process is not perceivable by the senses. This revolutionary paradigmatic shift in understanding of the length of time to effect change in species required abstract reasoning not directly verified by the senses.

The use of analogy "enables his reader, speculatively, to grasp the concept of trait selection and enhancement in animals as a 'natural process' even though it is not perceivable by the senses" (Gaughey 73). This particular analogy was not original to Darwin, however, as will be

seen in the section of this thesis on Plato's rhetorical presentation in *The Republic*.

Darwin's Influence on Galton

The publication in 1859 of the Origin of Species by Charles Darwin made a marked epoch in my own mental development, as it did in that of human thought generally. Its effect was to demolish a multitude of dogmatic barriers by a single stroke, and to arouse a spirit of rebellion against all ancient authorities whose positive and unauthenticated statements were contradicted by modern science.

(Francis Galton, *Memories of My Life*)

It was *Origin of Species* that finally gave Galton a purpose and direction to his career. He reasoned, if there is a direction and a purpose to the slow process of evolution, then the application of scientific principles to that process could speed humanity towards the obvious evolutionary goal: the perfection of humanity. Galton saw in Darwin's work an outlet for his own obsession with quantification and measurement. Moreover, Darwin's allusion to *primum movens* via Chapter 2, verse 7 of Genesis was not lost on Galton. He saw it socially expedient to

include a religious social element to his theory of praxis in effort to garner public acceptance of his eugenics theory and "scheme" of its implementation.

Second: "Scientific Propagation"

J. H. Noyes

The socialisms and spiritualisms which have engaged public attention in the last thirty years seem to have weakened the very constitution of society. Free love, easy divorce, foeticide, general licentiousness, and scandalous law-trials in high life, are the symptoms of the times. Many believe that marriage is dying.

(J. H. Noyes, 1870)

The above quotation from the conclusion of Noyes' "Scientific Propagation" sounds as if written by a conservative in the twenty-first rather than the nineteenth century. This short passage implies a narrative of religious and political conservatism, yet it comes from a radical Christian scholar denied ordination by the Calvinist orthodoxy at Yale Divinity School for his nonstandard beliefs.

It is important to know the peculiar mindset of Noyes, the ideology that he brings to the discussion of human reproduction and eugenics, and the assumptions that may be clear to Galton but hidden from his readers. The more controversial ideological assumptions Noyes attempted to keep in the shadows were exposed in his writing due to the history of his religious narrative.

Background on Noyes and his Beliefs

Noyes, by 1870, had a personal and public stake in the social and human reproduction discourses of his day. He saw the millennium swiftly approaching, and with it the possibility of a new utopian Kingdom of God on earth. The approach of the new utopia required for many – progressive socialists, perfectionists, biblical communists, and others – the breeding of a better, more fit race to live in the Kingdom. Another personal stake in reproduction discourse: Noyes was arrested for adultery and jumped bail in 1848 for his “complex marriage” practices at Putney. In 1848, Noyes fled in Putney, Vermont for Oneida, New York to avoid state-sponsored religious prosecution and established the Oneida Community there. Eventually he had to cross the border into Canada to avoid prosecution.

Noyes was a voice to be heard on human reproduction and an important influence on Galton's theory of eugenics. The fundamental assumptions, religious and personal, that Noyes brought to the discourses on sociology and human reproduction are important to note when discussing his call to action and challenge to Galton in "Scientific Propagation." Some of those assumptions:

1. A belief in his own infallibility and religious perfection through conversion and obedience to God's laws.
2. A belief in the coming of a new religious utopia on earth at the millennium.
3. A belief in the primacy of social science to achieve the better breeding of humans for the coming utopia.
4. A belief in free love with male continence unless procreation is sanctioned by the community.
5. A feeling of state-sponsored religious persecution.
6. A belief in the ancient biblical story of Jacob's animal husbandry and the practicability of Socrates' scheme of raising guardians of the state in Book V of *The Republic of Plato*.

"Scientific Propagation":
A Close Reading

In "Scientific Propagation," Noyes traces the discourse of selective breeding of livestock from the biblical story of Jacob and Laban,³ the Socrates' analogy of livestock breeding in Book V of *The Republic*, to the current literary discourse of sociology from the 1840s through 1870.

Noyes begins by stating that by the time of his writing (1870) the sociological narrative "among the highest thinkers" had reached the consensus that "sociology is the science around which all other sciences are finally to be organized" but that the center of social science has as yet not been reached. He asserts that the center or "nucleolus" of sociology is "fast forming in the general mind," that is, "the scientific propagation of human beings" was becoming public knowledge, well established through written discourse in popular magazines and journals of the time (1). He demonstrates the dominant sociological narrative on human reproduction of the mid-nineteenth century by tracing public discourse — citing by author and

³ The biblical story has Jacob (whose name means *usurper* or *deceiver*), improving his own flocks, while in his uncle Laban's employ. By selective breeding of sheep, Jacob eventually becomes richer than Laban at Laban's expense (Gen. 30.25-43).

page number when available – in popular magazines and journals such as *American Exchange and Review*, *Tribune*, *American Institute Transactions for 1858*, *Laws of Life*, *Galaxy*, and *Nature*, the latter, a journal in which Galton frequently published.

One after another, by careful selection, Noyes lets the voices of public social-science discourse exemplify his position on the problems of human reproduction. He even cites himself in a publication he refers to simply as "Religious Paper," in which he asks his literary audience to read "Darwin attentively," and further, if the application of scientific principles of reproduction and techniques of artificial selection works with animals and plants, why should those scientific techniques not be employed with the breeding of humans. Noyes calls for scientific social action in human reproduction:

The place where science should rule most of all is ruled by the least science; the subject around which the highest enthusiasm should cluster, is viewed with the most indifference. Human Breeding should be the foremost question of the age, transcending in its sublime interest all present political and scientific questions, and

should be practically studied by all. May the time hasten when this shall be! (4)

Noyes not only calls for action in breeding better humans, he also voices the urgency he and others feel at narratives of negative social exigencies caused by discourses surrounding the effects of Industrial Revolution and those surrounding a combination of fear and exultation many feel at the prospect of the impending millennium.

With the need for application of scientific principles to human propagation established, Noyes calls for a plan of action:

So far we have come since Plato; and yet all this is only an application of the little Sokratic argument⁴ that we quoted, written two thousand years ago.

Let us not make too much of these confessions. This swelling flood of conviction has burst⁵ no barriers yet. It is well known that the present constitution of society absolutely precludes, in man's case, anything like what has

⁴ Earlier in Noyes' essay he quotes the same section of *The Republic of Plato* as does J. Parton Milum in 1913 and William H. Tucker in 1991.

⁵ Note the diction here. Noyes' "swelling flood of conviction has burst no barriers yet" (1870) sounds very much like Higgins' "accumulated tension burst upon the mind" (1905). Interesting the echoes in related discourses many years apart.

been done for plants and animals; and these confessors have no idea of changing the constitution of society. They cry aloud for *what* ought to be done but when they come to the *how*, their voices grow feeble. (italics in original, 4-5)

Noyes asserts that there has been enough discourse on theory, what is needed now is praxis, and nothing less than a radical change in society will allow the application of scientific principles to human reproduction.

Noyes establishes the connection between Darwin and Galton and claims the latter as forwarding the ideas of the former:

Galton, a late [i.e., contemporary not deceased] English writer, has actually gone forward a step beyond Darwin in the Platonian argument. He demonstrates by elaborate statistics that genius and all other good qualities are hereditary in human families.⁶ Nobody doubted this before; but it is a satisfaction to have such a point seized and fortified by science. He passes over from

⁶ Noyes refers to Galton's book *Hereditary Genius* (1869) first published the year before Noyes' article and ten years after Darwin's *Origin*.

analogy to the beginning of direct proof that human nature is as plastic and obedient to the laws of reproduction as that of animals and plants, and therefore as properly the subject of scientific treatment. (5)

By "fortifying" the analogical argument of Plato's Socrates with science, Galton legitimizes the discourse of artificial selection. The discourse on applying the "laws of reproduction" was becoming naturalized in the public mind.

Galton's forward step beyond Darwin is not enough for Noyes. As Galton states in *Hereditary Genius*, the breeding of humans would follow the same lines as the creation of a "permanent breed of dogs or horses" by selective breeding by "judicious marriages during several consecutive generations" (Galton in Noyes 5). According to Noyes, Galton then "sub-sides into the meekest conservatism" when he states:

It would be writing to no useful purpose were I to discuss the effect that might be produced on population by such social arrangements as existed

in Sparta.⁷ They are so alien and repulsive to modern feelings that it is useless to say anything about them; so I shall confine my remarks to agencies that are actually at work, and upon which there can be no hesitation in speaking. (Galton in Noyes 5)

This reticence to speak of a practicable scheme for accomplishing the work that current social discourse demands is gone by the publication of "Hereditary Improvement" less than three years later.

Noyes pushes beyond Galton and seems to call for legal action. His diction becomes legalistic as he, in the authorial *we*, states: "Thus we find the public generally, and even the most advanced writer, simply under conviction in the presence of the law of scientific propagation" (6). After connecting the word "law" to "scientific propagation," Noyes, in the next sentence, appeals to divine law:

The law of God urges us on; but the law of society holds us back. This is a bad position. Either our convictions ought to become stronger

⁷ See the section on Sparta in Cultural Context of Plato's Project later in this thesis.

and deeper till they break a way into obedience,
or we ought to be relieved of them altogether.

Here Noyes makes the claim the Christian God as *Primum Movens* behind Darwin's process of natural selection. For Noyes, as a believer in Perfectionism, the perfection of the human race is God's will, and, as God demands obedience, humanity must do *His* will.⁸ However, Noyes does not actually call for a change in the social law, but his diction plants the idea of legalistic social change, as did Plato's Socrates in Book V of *The Republic*. Galton addresses the need for social mandate on procreation as well, but stops just short of legal prescription for artificial selection and proscription of ill-conceived conjugal pairings.

Noyes addresses the "Platonian argument for scientific propagation," and suggests that two "practical measures" to achieve the *how* of perfection in livestock: one positive, the other negative. The first is to breed from the best stock, and continue breeding in, a process Noyes names

⁸ Galton picks up this refrain in "Hereditary Improvement" (1873). Although Galton keeps the religious tone and diction, and actually calls for a "new scientific religion," he does not see the Christian God as *Primum Movens*, but a personifies nature as artisan of humanity.

"Stirpiculture" (10).⁹ The second is negative, that is "the suppression of the poorest" by "castration and confinement" (10). The negative "practical measures" when applied to humans are problematic. Socrates suggested the very same measures based upon cultural assumptions of ancient Athens and Sparta. He suggests that, as does Noyes, "all imperfect children that are born to the others [those whose conjugal union is civilly or religiously unsanctioned], will be concealed, as is fitting, in some mysterious and unknown hiding-place" (*The Republic* 168). The legal arguments for castration of "the poorest" or the unfit, the "illegitimate," the "feebleminded," the "mental defective," and the "socially inadequate" will be left to the next generation after Noyes and Galton, that of Holmes and Himmler.

The Future According to Noyes

Legalistic diction pointing to Holmes and Himmler notwithstanding, Noyes "looks beyond present institutions to the possibilities of the future" and sets "boundaries of what is needed and must come" (22). The first of which is freedom. Noyes argues that the liberty of livestock to

⁹ The same is true of sanctioned conjugal pairings at Noyes' Bible Communist attempt at social utopia in Putney, Vermont.

breed is controlled positively by artificial selection and negatively by castration and confinement, but the liberty of humans to breed cannot be controlled by such means:

If there is to be suppression, it must not be by castration and confinement, as in the case of animals, or even by law and public opinion, as men are now controlled, but by free choice of those who love science well enough to "make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake."¹⁰ If mating is to be brought about without regard to the sentimental specialties that now control it, this must be done only for those whose liberty consists in obeying rational laws, because they love truth more than sentimentalism.

(23)

Noyes advocates sexual freedom sans individual emotional attachment in conjugal pairings. Remember, he was arrested for adultery because he practiced "complex marriage" with

¹⁰ Noyes refers to a passage in the *New Testament* in which Jesus speaks of marriage and interprets Mosaic Law: "But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (italics in orig., KJV Mat. 19.11-12).

members of his flock at the Putney commune, so "free choice" has added meaning for Noyes.

The "sentimental specialties" that now control mating would include those of conventional marriage and the complex marriages as practiced by the Bible Communists of Putney. Noyes differs from Plato's Socrates in this respect and the ideas of legal sanction and cultural opinion put forth in Book V of *The Republic of Plato*, as will become clear later in this thesis.

The second of Noyes' concerns is the home:

There is another thing that the institutions of the future must not do; they must not injure the HOME. Here we touch another point of difference between the cases of animals and human beings. Man has a social nature that demands very different treatment from that of animals. The best part of human happiness consists in sexual and parental love, and the best part of human education consists in the training of these passions in the school of home. That school must not be superseded or weakened by the new arrangements, but must be honored more than ever.

For Noyes, the home is the sacred place of refuge, of nurture, of love and procreation, and of learning. The concepts of home embraced in Noyes' mind are so strong in their combined meanings that he feels the need to represent orthographically the concepts embodied by that word in upper case.

For Noyes, the home does not consist of mother, father, and children on a small plot of land. For Noyes, home is the campus and the community, as all male members are fathers and all female members are mothers in complex marriage, and all offspring are the children of all, much like the communal environment of the guardian class Socrates envisions in Book V of *The Republic*. Thus, "parental love" has a much broader meaning for Noyes.

For Noyes and his followers, home is also a special place reserved for "sexual love."¹¹ Due to conversion and obedience to Christian tenets, all thoughts and acts of "the perfected" are sanctified. The Bible Communists of Putney valorized free love as long as males remained continent, and pleasure in sex could then be felt as sacred pleasure. It was in this unique community that these

¹¹ Contrast with the Shakers, a communal group Noyes lauds as exemplar in many respects, who remain celibate.

"sentimental specialties" of free love could be practiced. Moreover, due to state-sponsored religious persecution for their free-love practices, it is not surprising that Noyes would consider his community, his extended family, as a special, nonpublic, place to educate the children of his flock. The tenets of complex marriage and male continence would not last very long if their children were educated in the public schools of New England. Thus, it is not hard to see why Noyes would want to homeschool the children of his community such that his school "not be superseded or weakened" by "new" public "arrangements, but must be honored more than ever" in order to protect his community (23).

After making clear what should not be done, that is, infringement on liberty or home, Noyes gives a "hint," in the form of a syllogism, at what might be possible to bring about scientific procreation in the human race without trampling on the rights of the individual person or the individual group:

If home could be enlarged to the scale, for instance, of the Shaker families, and if men and women could be taught to enjoy love that stops short of propagation [male continence], and if

all could learn to love other children than their own, there would be nothing to hinder scientific propagation in the midst of homes far better than any that now exist. (23)

Noyes calls for public acceptance and application of his tenets of complex marriage, free love with male continence, and selective breeding on a wide scale. These three tenets echo those proposed by Socrates as regards the sex and procreation of the guardian class.

Noyes envisions the practicability of such an undertaking provided it was "undertaken by intelligent and conscientious men, endowed with abundant wealth, and under the sanction of government" (23). As the founder of both the Bible Communists in Putney, Vermont and the Oneida Community in New York, Noyes is well aware of the economics of building and running communes. He is also personally aware of the need for government sanction for such a project.

Concluding Remarks

Noyes ends his article with an appeal for further discourse on the subject of scientific propagation:

And it is for such inventions as this, or others more pertinent and hopeful, that

discussion ought to be set free, and kings and congresses, social science societies, ethnological societies, philanthropists of all kinds, and rich men who wish to dispose well of their money, should be offering the very highest premiums.

At all events the practical difficulties of our problem must not turn us away from the study and discussion of it. The great law which Plato and Darwin and Galton are preaching, is pressing hard upon us, and will never cease to press till we do our duty under it. (23)

The importance of the connections Noyes draws between Plato, Darwin, and Galton in the above quotation cannot be overemphasized. Plato sets the blueprint for scientific human propagation. Darwin shows the science behind natural selection that by analogy can be applied to human reproduction, and Galton applies Darwin's science to human reproduction, thus allowing for the possibility of scientific application of artificial selection in human populations.

It is through these discourses, ancient and modern, and the public discourses in popular journals and academic

papers of the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries, that the assumptions surrounding the "scientific treatment" of human reproduction became naturalized in public consciousness. Noyes, by extensive sampling from a wide variety of published sources, illustrates in "Scientific Propagation" the ongoing conversations surrounding the application of scientific principles to human reproduction.

Galton takes up where Noyes leaves off. In 1873, Galton publishes "Hereditary Improvement" in *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* in England. Galton's article reads as if he has read Noyes first published in *Modern Thinker* in 1870.

"Scientific Propagation" was published less than three years prior to Galton's first publication of his eugenics scheme, a scheme he first called "viriculture." After Noyes publishes "Scientific Propagation" (1870), Galton abandons "viriculture" for "stirpiculture," the term coined by Noyes. In *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (1883), Galton settles on his own term, "eugenics."

CHAPTER FOUR

ANCIENT PRECURSOR TO EUGENICS DISCOURSE:

THE REPUBLIC OF PLATO

If the second half of the title of Darwin's *Origin – Preservation of the Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* – granted Galton his eureka moment and helped to spawn his eugenics narrative, it was Noyes' "Scientific Propagation" that directed Galton to *The Republic of Plato*, and Plato's work that inspired the rhetorical presentation of Galton's "scheme." Consider the timeline:

1. 1859. Darwin (1809-1882) publishes *Origin of Species*, in which he uses the practice of domestic breeding of livestock as analogous to the process of natural selection.
2. 1866. The translators John Llewellyn Davies and David James Vaughn publish *The Republic of Plato*, in Book V Section 459 of which Socrates and Glaucon discuss the breeding of domestic stock as analogous to the breeding of guardians of the republic.
3. 1869. Galton publishes *Hereditary Genius* in which he forwards the theory of Darwin but balks at the idea of practicability of the application of

- artificial selection in breeding better human populations.
4. 1870. Noyes publishes "Scientific Propagation" in *Modern Thinker*,¹ in which he cites Darwin's *Origin*, Book V of *The Republic of Plato*, and Galton's *Hereditary Genius*, while stating that Galton fails to establish a plan for advancing the work of Darwin along the lines of Plato.
 5. 1873. Galton publishes "Hereditary Improvement," the first account of his "scheme" for public acceptance and implementation of eugenics, as an article in *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*. In this article, Galton uses the same appeal to analogy as Darwin, Noyes, and Plato while advancing his scheme based on Darwin's theory and Plato's praxis.

Is the sequence of these publications along with utilization of the same rhetorical strategies and ideational content merely the result of black swan events² rationalized as consequential discourses that build one

¹ *Modern Thinker* was a short-lived New York magazine (1870-1873) providing current intellectual fare to the general public.

² For more on black swan events see Nassim Nicholas Taleb's "How We Tend to Overestimate Powerlaw Tail Exponents," 2012 and *Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder*, 2012.

on/to another? Are they merely sequential publications with no causal connection? Or are they discourses that build upon each other to become a dominant social narrative. Consequential or merely sequential, these texts can be read as precursor discourses that build to enable public acceptance of Galton's eugenics theory and praxis.

Cultural Context of Plato's Project

In *The Republic*, Plato responds to and writes within a context of an ancient society that valued physical beauty and symmetry and devalued deformity. In Classical Greece, beauty was nearly synonymous with virtue and the good. As R. Sullivan points out in "Deformity – A Modern Western Prejudice with Ancient Origins," the importance of physical beauty can be seen in Classical Greek literature, such as Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Plato's *Laws*. In both these ancient texts, "a sound and hale body is strongly emphasized" (262). According to Sullivan, Aristotle pushed the cultural emphasis on health and beauty to legal sanction against deformity "by proposing a law to prevent parents from raising deformed children," and parents of Sparta were forced by law to "abandon to their death"

deformed infants (262). Legal president was set in ancient Greece.

Discourse on deformity and disability exists not only in ancient Greek philosophical texts, but also in the literature of myth as well. The myth of Hephaestus, the outcast god of technê, is an example. In an article published in *Disabilities Studies Quarterly* (2006), William Ebenstein pursues what he calls a "new archetypal psychology of disability" as he analyses the depiction of deformity in the Myth of Hephaestus in attempt to explain modern constructions of disability stereotypes. He does this by viewing the Hephaestus myth through a dual lens: Freud's psychoanalysis and the archetypes and collective unconscious of Jung.

Hephaestus, infant son of Hera, is thrown out of Olympus because of the physical deformity. According to several accounts, Hera, "envious of the solo creation of Athene by Zeus," gave birth to Hephaestus "without any act of love" and as he is "conceived in anger and resentment, is weakly among the gods and born with a shriveled foot. In shame and disgust she casts the infant out of Olympus" (Ebenstein, n. pag.).

A cursory Freudian analysis of the actions of Hera in this myth reveals much about the patriarchal nature of ancient Greek culture and that culture's reaction to deformity and disability. Hera, the goddess of women, who, due to penis envy, resentfully tries to mimic the "solo creation" of her husband, Zeus, and because there is no "act of love," or love in the act, she gives birth to a monster, a medical term for physical deformity commonly used in the early twentieth century. Furthermore, Hera's "shame and disgust" leads to feelings of guilt and remorse. If she were a human mother in ancient Greece, the guilt and remorse might stem from the feeling that her child's deformity was the result of culturally constructed ideas of divine retaliation for some known, unknown, or unrecognized sin.

The goddess Hera functions in Greek mythology as the representative of all women. She, as Woman, personifies the universal female psyche. Through myth, ancient Greek patriarchy blames Woman for congenital deformity and disability and causes her to feel guilt.³

³ Similarly, Carrie Buck and her mother were blamed for perceived imbecility, institutionalized, and subject to involuntary, albeit legal, sterilization.

As problematic as this ancient patriarchal depiction of the female psyche is to postmodern readers, the practice of social casting-out of the deformed and/or disabled in modern culture finds its genesis in the Hephaestus myth. According to Ebenstein, "[Hephaestus'] lameness is viewed as an aesthetic monstrosity, an affront to an ideology of beauty that values symmetry of the physical body" (n. pag.). Modern negative stereotyping and rejection of deformity and disability appear to have roots that run deep in the Western tradition.

Plato's Rhetorical Blueprint

Tell me, Glaucon, . . . for I know you keep both sporting dogs and a great number of game birds, . . . do you breed from all alike, or are you anxious to breed as much as possible from the best? — From the best. — And if you were to pursue a different course, do you think it would be different with horses or any other animals? — Certainly not; it would be absurd to suppose it. — Good heavens! My dear friend, I exclaimed, what very first-rate men our rulers ought to be, if the analogy hold with regard the human race.

(The Republic of Plato, Book V, Section 459 as
quoted in "The Fallacy of Eugenics" 1913)

The dialogue above between Socrates and Glaucon is perhaps the first written example of a precursor eugenics discourse in the Western tradition. Although "eugenics" did not enter into the English language until Galton coined the term in 1883, it can be argued that all subsequent eugenic discourse hinges on this passage from Book V of Plato's dialogue *The Republic*.

Plato's project in Book V deals with the development of a plan for raising a guardian caste for his utopian republic. It opens with Adeimantus asking Socrates if women and children would be considered communal property, and if so, by what plan. He insists that Socrates "specify the conditions under which children are to be begotten" and calls for a "complete description of the community of women" (*The Republic* 153). Socrates protests that the subject is too large and will rouse "a swarm of questions" and "occasion us endless trouble" (153). Nevertheless, the group is adamant.

Glaucon then reframes Adeimantus' topic, turning it from "women and children" of the republic as a whole, to a "community of wives and children, which is to subsist among

our guardians" (155). This reframing is important to note, as the shift in focus from general to the particular seems to be missed by Galton and others who use this text. Many authors who re-present Book V focus on women and children of the general populace, not on the specific, specialized class of guardians of the republic – a class that in modern society would likely be called the specially trained communities of Law Enforcement and/or National Guard.

Again, Socrates expresses his reluctance to pursue the subject of the place of women and children and the plan and conditions under which children are to be born. He is not only concerned with the complexity of the task, but with the reaction of the group or "auditors" as Glaucon calls them:

[S]: It is no easy matter, my gifted friend, to discuss this question; for it is beset by incredulity, even more than our previous doctrines. In the first place, *the practicability of our plans will not be believed;* and in the next place, supposing them to be most completely carried out, *their desirableness will be questioned.* And that is why I feel a reluctance to grapple with the subject, lest I

should be thought, my dear friend, to be
indulging in a merely visionary speculation
[emphasis added]. (155)

What is of concern in the foregoing passage is Socrates' inquietude at the possible reaction of the group toward his doctrinal ideas. The two concerns voiced in this passage – plan practicability and desirability – are raised by nearly every voice in opposition to Galton's eugenics "scheme" post public disclosure at the Sociological Society meeting in the School of Economics (London University), held on 16 May 1904. Galton himself raises these two concerns in several of his works in an effort to answer critics. He first does so even as he broaches his scheme in "Hereditary Improvement" (1873).

Many of those who opposed Galton's scheme seize on a third point in this passage. They saw Galton as "indulging in a merely visionary speculation" of a future utopian society of supermen brought about through implementation of eugenics theory and praxis of artificial selection. Heydrich and Himmler indulged in more than visionary speculation. Not only were their efforts at Lebensborn (the Nazi program to breed pure Aryan stock by artificial

selection) impracticable, those efforts were highly undesirable.

Glaucon urges Socrates to continue and "feel no reluctance" for his "auditors are neither stupid, nor incredulous, nor unfriendly" (155), but Socrates still expresses reservation. He confides to Glaucon and the group that he

is still in the position of a doubting inquirer [and] lest [he] should miss [his] footing on the truth, and falling, drag [his] friends down with [him], and that upon that ground on which a false step is especially to be dreaded (155).

Note the humor and ironic tone of Socrates. Even in the patriarchal culture of ancient Greece, talking about a plan for or the role of women in society is a touchy subject that requires careful language to avoid a dreaded false step. Beyond a possible subtext of ancient Greek gender relations, Socrates may be voicing Plato's irony involving socio-cultural discourses of his time and outside the text, as translated by Davies and Vaughan, of *The Republic* itself.

Meta-Reading Plato

Plato can not see the links, can leave them in the shadow or break them up. And yet these links go on working of themselves. In spite of him? thanks to him? in his text? outside his text? but then where? between his text and the language? for what reader? at what moment?

(Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy" *Dissemination* 96)

Plato's reading audience is a step removed from the auditors in the dialogue, which allows for levels of reading based on possible socio-cultural discourses ongoing in ancient Athens yet unrevealed in the text itself. Plato's use of irony allows for these alternative readings. Thus, a possible meta-reading of the above passage has Socrates speaking to his auditors as Plato speaks to his readers. The group has been asking Socrates to expound on the topic, but it seems Socrates would rather come to new knowledge, or "truth," based on communal discourse rather than exposition. By ironically claiming he is a "doubting inquirer" in pursuit of solid "footing upon the truth," Socrates, as their teacher, is reminding his auditors that they are coming to truth through dialectic in conversation not lecture.

Or, perhaps Plato, through Socrates, engages in irony because the dialectical process itself can develop discourses that follow lines of reasoning that can not only lead to new knowledge, but also erroneous and dangerous false knowledge. Perhaps Socrates warns his auditors, and Plato his readers, of the potential dangers of discourses that lead to narratives that become dominant, even problematic, as does Galton's. As Socrates reminds Glaucon of the physician's use of pharmakon (*The Republic* 167), discourse as a line of inquiry partially based on unperceived or hidden cultural assumptions and social paradigms can develop into narratives that function as nostrums, that is, as social remedies or poisons.⁴ The pharmakon of Galton's eugenics narrative did become dominant and did lead to draconian measures becoming law in the U.S. and Nazi Germany in the first half of the twentieth century.

Breeding Program for the Guardians

After establishing that female candidates for acceptance as guardians of the republic should of better stock, physically and mentally, than two-thirds of the men

⁴ See the discussion of text as pharmakon in Plato's *Phaedrus* and Derrida's commentary on that work in "Plato's Pharmacy," *Dissemination* (1981) 63-172.

of the general populace, and that these females should be trained exactly as male guardians, Socrates announces that all women and children are to be held in common, much as Noyes' commune in Putney, Vermont two thousand years later. Parents are not to know their children or the children their parents (164). Glaucon questions both the practicability and advisability of this plan, but Socrates begs indulgence to proceed and worry about practicality later. Glaucon agrees and Socrates initiates discussion of selection of mates among the guardians. Socrates posits that the "rulers" and "their auxiliaries" will select pairs among the guardian class for mating.

Due to close proximity of the sexes in all aspects of the guardian communal environment - mess tables, living quarters, gymnasium, et cetera - and due to the nature of human emotion, connubial decisions cannot be left to the guardians themselves. Only the lawgivers or magistrates (Socrates seems to use the terms "rulers," "their auxiliaries," "lawgivers," and "magistrates," interchangeably.) are in a position to make rational choices when it comes to the procreation of such an important class as the guardians.

Sanctification as Cultural Adhesive

According to Socrates, not only must the magistrates decide conjugal pairings, but also those pairings must be seen in light of emotion not reason:

[G:] The necessity truly will not be that of mathematical demonstration, but that of love, which perhaps is more constraining than the other in its power of persuade and draw after it the mass of men.

[S:] Quite so. But in the next place, Glaucon, irregular alliances, or indeed irregularity of any kind, would be a *profanation* among the members of a happy city, and will not be permitted by the magistrates.

[G:] And rightly so.

[S:] Manifestly then our next care will be to make the marriage-union as *sacred* a thing as we possibly can: and this *sanctity* will attach to the marriages which are most for the public good. .

(emphasis added, 166)

Thus, Glaucon suggests a turn from a logical description of conjugal "alliances" amongst the guardian class to a

pathetic appeal in order for that class to accept the breeding scheme.

Emotion is the key to controlling the minds of the guardian class, not reason alone. It is necessary for the magistrates to gain acceptance of their scheme and to avoid its rejection by members of the guardian class. However, if the magistrates take the individual, personal emotional component out of the conjugal equation, something must take its place. Plato's Socrates, in taking up Glaucon's turn, suggests the "necessity" of replacing individual emotion -- be it love or lust -- with socio-cultural emotion of religious ceremony and propitiation -- group love under a sanctified scheme. Galton takes this position, as did Noyes in his religious commune.

Note Socrates' choice of religious, sacred diction. Throughout this dialogue, Socrates uses terms with sacred significance. Here he refers to "irregular alliances" as "a profanation." The word "profanation" has two meanings; in this text both use the word as an adjective having a verb at root, a profaning of sacred cultural tradition. One definition is merely a secularizing of the sacred. The second is perhaps more serious as it connotes irreverence or disrespect to orthodox religious practice. That being

said, the word "profane" comes to the English language from Latin not from Greek; therefore, translation plays a role in the interplay of readers who re-present this text in its reading – Plato as writer, Socrates as speaker, translator as reader/interpreter/re-presenter, the English-speaking reader of the mid-nineteenth century, and the English-speaking reader of the early twenty-first. What matters, though, is not so much the root of the word's etymology or its denotation as signifier, but the word's connotation as signified. Socrates' use of religious or sacred diction in this dialogue is germane to his, Plato's, project, as it is to Galton's, and even Himmler's, that is, to cloak the creation of a new socio-cultural ethic with social obligation through religious mythos.

Appeal to Analogy: Section 459

J. Parton Milum's article denouncing eugenics, "The Fallacy of Eugenics" and Noyes' "Scientific Propagation" before him, provides an historic link joining Darwin's *Origin*, Galton's eugenics theory and praxis, and Book V of *The Republic of Plato*. Fortunately, Milum cites the translation he used in footnotes to his article. Davies and Vaughan, as the definitive translation used by Milum,

would likely be the same as that accessed by Galton.⁵

However, simply comparing Milum's re-presentation of Plato with the definitive version of the text as translated is not enough to establish a causal connection between it and Galton's theory and praxis. It is necessary to locate Milum's passage in the context of this particular dialogue within Book V of *The Republic* itself. A close look at what comes before and after Section 459 of Book V is in order.

It is the first half of Section 459 of Book V that Milum selected to re-present in his essay "The Fallacy of Eugenics" (1912). What came before this section has been dealt with so far in this thesis, but the ideational content delivered through another analogical appeal of the second half of Section 459 is of equal importance to this project.

In the first half of 459, Socrates uses the familiar appeal to analogy by comparing the breeding of humans to that of domestic animals. The goal in selective breeding of domestic stock is to produce offspring with the most desirable traits for the use intended for that stock. It

⁵ Benjamin Jowett's translation of the Dialogues of Plato was published two years prior to Galton's publication of "Hereditary Improvement" (1873) in which he lays out his scheme of eugenics presentation; however, the Davies and Vaughan translation (1866) was well established prior to the publication of Jowett's (1871).

would seem Socrates made a good choice of dogs and horses to represent the guardians and their intended use; moreover, the judicious selection of traits most suitable for these animals and their purposes would seem to be attainable for the guardians as well.

The second half of Section 459 deals with the construction of a social mythology to sanctify and thus allow acceptance for the selection of suitable marriage partners by government bureaucrats. Glaucon asks Socrates what he means by "what first-rate men our rulers must be" (167). Socrates then appeals to another analogy – physician and medicine – one that seems rather strange to Glaucon as they are discussing marriage and procreation. In answer to Glaucon's question Socrates states:

[S:] Because they will be obliged to use *medicine* to a great extent. Now you know when invalids do not require medicine, but are willing to submit to a regimen, we think an ordinary doctor good enough for them; but when it is necessary to administer medicines, we know that a more able physician must be called in.

[G:] True; but how does this apply?

[S:] Thus. It is probable that our rulers will be compelled to have recourse to a good deal of falsehood and deceit for the benefit of their subjects. And, if you recollect, we said that all such practices were useful in the character of medicine. (emphasis added, 167)

In this reply to Glaucon's question, Socrates says the rulers or magistrates,⁶ similar to physicians, "will be obliged to use medicine to a great extent." Socrates refers to a previous discussion in which they agreed that the use of deception by physicians in the prescription of medicine [*pharmakon*] to their patients was sometimes necessary. He suggests that the "rulers will be compelled to have recourse to a good deal of falsehood and deceit for the benefit of their subjects," a proposition that had been settled earlier in the dialogue with regard the use of falsehood and deceit as medicine in the physician's role in patient care.

The analogy of physician and prescription of medicine is an interesting choice here. Medicine, or *pharmakon*, can signify both medicine that heals and poison that can sicken

⁶ Consider the role of Joseph Goebbels, the minister of propaganda, in Nazi Germany as such a magistrate.

or kill. It also signifies a drug that intoxicates, deludes, or misleads.⁷ Thus, the magistrates here are to apply a rhetorical drug of deception in effort to control the minds of the guardians through the presumptive emotional charge behind religion and ceremony.⁸

The logic of social mind control, whether in Noyes' commune, Galton's "scheme," proceeds from previously established ideas of what is right and good for the society of guardians of the republic. Socrates reasons on about which of the guardians will be allowed to breed, what is done with the offspring of the best and of the worst, and the secrecy necessary for freedom from "internal strife" among the guardians.

[S:] Well then, it appears that this right principle applies particularly to the questions of marriage and propagation.

[G:] How so?

[S:] It follows from what has been already granted, that the best of both sexes ought to be brought together as often as possible, and the

⁷ See Derrida's "The Pharmakon," Chapter 4 in "Plato's Pharmacy" (1981) 95-117.

⁸ "It is the absolute right of the State to supervise the formation of public opinion" (quotation attributed to Joseph Goebbels).

worse as seldom as possible, and *the issue of the former unions ought to be reared, and that of the latter abandoned*, if the *flock* is to attain to first-rate excellence; and *these proceedings ought to be kept a secret from all but the magistrates themselves*, if the *herd of guardians* is also to be as free as possible from internal strife. (emphasis added, 167)

What is of concern in the above quotation is threefold, the third in two parts. By order of concern, least to first: One, an analogical shift from a higher to a lower order of signification than that signified; second, the first proposition of Socrates' second speech act in the quote above; third, the abandonment of undesirable offspring of ill-matched conjugal pairings and the secrecy necessary to avoid "internal strife."

The first is of itself a lower order of concern yet of linguistic import in that it illustrates the irony of Plato in the voice of Socrates. Plato creates a linguistic and metaphoric degradation from human to animal by analogy and a further degradation by diction. In ancient Greek culture, humans were the preeminent animals, the pinnacle of creation. The cognitive effect of the analogy and its

degradation in this passage on the ancient and modern reader is irony. This ironic effect is similar to *literary synesthesia* that Rueven Tsur explores in his essay, "Issues in Literary Synesthesia" (2007), wherein the mind of the reader is unconsciously affected by upward or downward transfer of sensory descriptors that apply to the same subject. These references, as descriptors, are scalars that refer to sense perceptions. The sense of touch would be at the bottom of the scale and sight at the top, with taste, smell, and sound between. An upward transfer from one sense to another in literature would produce, according to Tsur, an unconscious emotional response. For example, a line from Keats' "Isabella" as cited in Tsur, "taste the music of that vision pale," has the senses moving upwards from taste to hearing and then to sight and does produce a pleasant emotional effect. Conversely, downward transfer of sensory descriptors, according to Tsur, produces a "witty" effect: "The same bright face I tasted in my sleep" (Keats, "Endymion," 4. 418-19 in Tsur). Thus, the downward transfer of the later example from Keats' poetry has the cognitive effect of "wittiness" in a collocation of the verb "taste" with a descriptor of visual sensation "bright."

Even though Plato's use of domestic animals as metaphoric humans in Socrates' analogy does not rely on the senses for unconscious meaning as Tsur's literary synesthesia does, it does engender a sense of irony in the reader, however unconscious the feeling. Consider Socrates' diction. He refers to the guardians in a condescending manner, as a "flock" and a "herd." Gone are the stronger terms "dogs" and "horses" from the earlier analogy. Plato further degrades the guardians from human to domestic animal to lesser domestic animals: utilitarian dogs and horses to flocks of sheep that can be herded by the good shepherds - the rulers, the magistrates - who can and must pull the rhetorical wool over the eyes of the guardians to keep them in the fold.

As Foucault describes the function of the modern equivalent of Plato's magistrates or "officers appointed for the purpose" at the carceral at Mettray circa 1840: "Their task was to produce bodies that were both docile [as sheep] and capable [as trained dogs and horses, as guardians of the republic]" (*Discipline & Punish* 284). Thus, the magistrates as shepherds of the flock, watch, take note, manage and control the herd of guardians in the carceral, that is, the commune of the guardians.

The second concern – “that the best of both sexes ought to be brought together as often as possible, and the worse as seldom as possible” – follows logically from the analogy. However, the ancients could only rely on what was directly accessible and demonstrable to the senses. They could recognize the effects of what would later be called the Mendelian model of transmission of desirable and undesirable traits by simply observing the breeding of their packs, herds, and flocks, so it seems a matter of simple logic that the population of the guardian class could be manipulated as well. This same simple logic carried through two thousand years until the scientific paradigm revolution Darwin exemplified. Yet, it took more than *The Origin* to unravel the theoretical complexities of inheritance. Even though Darwin made available to the modern mind more abstract ways of looking at biologic processes, Galton and others clung to simplistic notions of one-to-one relationships of trait inheritance based on an ancient model.

The third concern of the above quoted material involves what should be done with the offspring of ill-conceived conjugal pairings amongst the guardian caste. The utopian republic of Plato must find a way to deal with

the undesirable. The solution is abandonment, which is an obvious choice for Socrates due to the cultural milieu of Plato's writing. The textual precedents are the Hephaestus Myth, Aristotle's proposed law of prevention in Athens, and the legal obligation "to abandon deformed infants" in Sparta.

Again, it is up to the magistrates to decide which infants are worthy of inclusion and which are to be abandoned, much as Justice Holmes' role in the Carrie Buck case in 1927. In the scheme here proposed, the parents are not to know which child is whose.⁹ Moreover, abandonment of the offspring from non-sanctioned pairings can become problematic for the magistrates in that they would need to establish which infants are undesirable. Thus, to avoid a lengthy process of legal wrangling with emotional arguments on both sides, and since government officials and bureaucrats ostensibly know what is best "for the benefit of their subjects, . . . these proceedings ought to be kept secret . . . [so that] "the herd of guardians [is kept] as free as possible from internal strife" (167). Secrecy is

⁹ Noyes as the magistrate of his Christian commune echoes Plato in this regard.

essential in order to keep the "herd of guardians as free as possible from internal strife."

Socrates' Construction of Procreation Mythos

In an effort to assuage doubt over magisterial control of connubial pairings, Socrates suggests an elaborate scheme of the sanctification of procreation among the guardian caste. He devises a mythos complete with festivals and celebration:

[S:] Then we shall have to ordain certain festivals, at which we shall bring together the brides and the bridegrooms, and we must have sacrifices performed, and hymns composed by our poets in strains appropriate to the occasion; but the number of marriages we shall place under the control of the magistrates, in order to that they may, as far as they can, keep the population at the same point, taking into consideration the effects of war and disease, and all such agents, that our city may, to the best of our power, be prevented from becoming either too great or too small.

[G:] You are right. (168)

[S:] We must therefore contrive an ingenious system of lots. I fancy, in order that those inferior persons, of whom I spoke, may impute the manner in which couples are united, to chance, and not to the magistrates.

[G:] Certainly. (168)

In the above exchange, Socrates again engages in sanctification of magisterial control with sacrifices and hymns and careful attention to the keeping the numbers of the guardian caste to optimal levels. This concept of controlling the numbers is re-presented by Himmler in his *Lebensborn* (life fount or wellspring of life) program (1935-1945) in an effort to increase the number of pure Aryan stock in Hitler's Germany (*Lebensborn* n. pag.). And again, the guardians themselves are not to know the nature of their pairings or who decides.

Socrates' last two lines in the above dialogue are problematic. If all the guardian class is of the best men and women of the republic, why does Socrates say "those inferior persons . . . may impute the manner in which couples are united, to chance, and not to the magistrates"? Who among the guardians is inferior? It seems Socrates slips back to the notion that all members of the republic

are to be selected in this manner and not just the guardians. Glaucon, later in the dialogue, does bring Socrates back to concentration on the breeding of the guardians.

The next concept dealt with in this exchange picked up both by Galton, and later, Himmler, is that of the liberality granted the men of the guardian class to engage in sexual relations:

[S:] And those of our young men who distinguish themselves in the field or elsewhere, will receive, along with other privileges and rewards, more liberal permission to associate with the women, in order that, under colour of this pretext, the greatest number of children may be the issue of such parents.

[G:] You are right. (168)

In the above exchange, it is clear that not only would the men who "distinguish themselves" be allowed "liberal permission to associate with women" but also these men will have "other privileges and rewards."

The next section engages a problem identified earlier, that of what to do with the offspring of ill-conceived conjugal pairings:

[S:] And, as fast as the children are born, they will be received by the officers appointed for the purpose, whether men or women or both: for I presume that the state-offices will be held in common both by men and women.

[G:] They will.

[S:] Well, these officers, I suppose, will take the children of good parents, and place them in the general nursery under the charge of certain nurses, living apart in a particular quarter of the city: while the issue of the inferior parents, and all imperfect children that are born to the others, will be concealed, as is fitting, in some mysterious and unknown hiding-place.

[G:] Yes, if the breed of the guardians is to be kept pure. (168)

It is interesting that Plato's Socrates sounds fair to both genders in regards state offices. And even though it seems appropriate that the children of "good parents" will be well taken care of, it seems Socrates continues to speak in terms of breeding the general population and not just the

guardians. Glaucon refocuses the conversation on the guardian class in the last line above.

How similar Glaucon's language in this last line is to Galton's theory and praxis and Holmes' opinion to the court in *Buck v. Bell*. A question arises and must be explored: What is to become of the hidden undesirables, the offspring of "inferior parents," or as Justice Holmes called Carrie Buck's daughter, "socially inadequate offspring"? Plato's Socrates does not mention their ultimate fate, nor are they inquired after by the owl-eyed Glaucon or commented on by the adamant Adeimantus. They are erased, put away, hidden from view "in some mysterious and unknown" place, sterilized by non inclusion in the ancient precursor to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century insane asylum, or in one of the euphemistically named equivalents: the Virginia State Colony for Epileptics and the Feebleminded.

Once identified and categorized "by the officers appointed for the purpose" these socially unworthy, "defective persons" – those adjudicated to be either a possible source of genetic contamination or a drain on the economic resources of society – are then institutionalized, hidden from view, abandoned, erased by non-inclusion, and sterilized. In the case of Himmler's *Die Endlösung*, in

order to complete the erasure of genetic contamination, these defectives were sent to the "lethal chambers" as Benjamin Kidd presaged in his presentation to the Sociological Society meeting held in London in 1904 (Kidd, "Discussion" 19).

The next section of text exigent to discussion of Galton and Himmler's respective projects deals with childcare. Again, Socrates seems to talk in terms of the general populous rather than the specific class of guardians:

[S:] And will not these same officers have to superintend the rearing of the children, bringing the mothers to the nursery when their breasts are full, but taking every precaution that no mother shall know her own child, and providing the women that have milk, if the mothers have not enough; and must they not take care to limit the time during which the mothers are to suckle the children, committing the task of sitting up at night, and the other troubles incident to infancy, to nurses and attendants?

[G:] You make child-bearing a very easy business for the wives of the guardians.

[S:] Yes, and so it ought to be, . . . (168-

69)

Even though Glaucon perhaps misspeaks when he uses the term "child-bearing" rather than "child-rearing" (or perhaps Davies and Vaughan mistranslated), the idea presented by Socrates is strikingly similar to that of Himmler's *Lebensborn*. According to the Jewish Virtual Library,

Himmler founded the *Lebensborn* project on December 12, 1935, the same year the Nuremberg Laws outlawed intermarriage with Jews and others who were deemed inferior. For decades, Germany's birthrate was decreasing. Himmler's goal was to reverse the decline and increase the Germanic/Nordic population of Germany to 120 million. Himmler encouraged SS and Wermacht officers to have children with Aryan women. He believed *Lebensborn* children would grow up to lead a Nazi-Aryan nation. (*Lebensborn* n. pag.)

This society offered "racially pure" young girls the opportunity to give birth to an Aryan child in secret.

Note again Plato's *pharmakon* of secrecy utilized in a society within a society, with the SS as a modern equivalent of Plato's guardians. The children of these girls were taken by the SS to educate and be put up for adoption to parents who passed the "racial purity" test: three generations¹⁰ of Aryan blood. Originally, the children were placed in SS-run nurseries, but soon "the SS transformed these nurseries into 'meeting places' for 'racially pure' German women who wanted to meet and have children with SS officers" (*Lebensborn* n. pag.). In other words, Himmler's grand design of *Lebensborn* degenerated into an SS-run brothel for the elite, a stable well stocked with blue-eyed blondes.

The penultimate section of the dialogue relevant to Galton's project has Socrates turning the discussion to who will and will not be allowed conjugal rights in the new republic by age and how transgressors will be perceived. Socrates lays out the age range of women and men who should breed for the good of the republic, those "in their prime": "a period of twenty years for a woman, and thirty for a man" (169). Next, Socrates addresses conjugal indiscretion

¹⁰ Interesting - "three generations" echoes Holmes' "three generations of imbeciles are enough" comment in his opinion to court in the Carrie Buck case.

if a man who is either above or under this age shall meddle with the business of begetting children for the commonwealth, we shall declare his act to be *an offence against religion and justice*; inasmuch as he is raising up a child for the state, who, should detection be avoided, instead of having been begotten under the *sanction of those sacrifices and prayers*, which are to be offered up at every marriage ceremonial, by *priests and priestesses*, and the whole city, to the effect that the children to be borne may ever be more virtuous and more useful than their virtuous and useful parents, will have been conceived under cover of darkness by the aid of dire incontinence.

[G:] You are right.

[S:] The same law will hold should a man, who is still of an age to be a father, meddle with a woman, who is also of the proper age, without the introduction of the magistrate: for we shall accuse him of raising up to the state an *illegitimate, unsponsored, and unhallowed child*.

[G:] You are perfectly right. (emphasis added, 169)

Glaucon begins to sound more a sycophant than a true interlocutor at this point. It seems Plato rushes Socrates a bit here.

A legal issue ensues from the above exchange. Note the emphasis Socrates places on sanctification of conjugal pairings via religion and law. Socrates lays a heavy emotional charge on breaking the civil laws and ceremonies of marriage. Not only is it unlawful for an overage or underage man to beget children, but also couples that would otherwise legitimately do so are breaking the law if a government bureaucrat, a magistrate, does not first introduce them. For their parents breaking this law, their child would be branded not merely as illegitimate but as unholy.

One last section of dialogue between Glaucon and Socrates necessary to this project regards what sounds more like abortion or infanticide rather than abandonment or concealment of the products of ill-conceived conjugal pairings "in some mysterious and unknown hiding-place" (168). Even the issue of "intercourse between brothers and

sisters, if the lot [lottery] falls that way, or the Delphian priestess also gives it her sanction" (170),

but only after giving them strict orders to do their best, if possible, to prevent any child, haply so conceived, from seeing the light, but if that cannot sometimes be helped, to dispose of the infant on the understanding that the fruit of such a union is not to be reared. (emphasis added, 169-70)

Yet again, Socrates brings up disposal of the unwanted, the illegitimate, and the unhallowed and again he is vague as to how this disposal is to be carried out. Glaucon does not inquire, and Adeimantus, who early in Book V is ever ready to object, remains silent.

CHAPTER FIVE

GALTON'S SCHEME OF EUGENICS PRESENTATION

AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The spread of civilization may be likened to a fire: First, a feeble spark, next a flickering flame, then a mighty blaze, ever increasing in speed and power. We are now in this last phase of development.

Human activity has become so widespread and intense that years count as centuries of progress.

There is no more groping in the dark or accidentally stumbling upon discoveries. The results follow one another like the links of a chain. Such is the force of the accumulated knowledge and the insight into natural laws and phenomena that future events are clearly projected before our vision. To foretell what is coming would be no more than to draw logical conclusions, were it not for the difficulty in accurately fixing the time of accomplishment.

(Nikola Tesla, 16 Jan. 1910)

Such was the sentiment of the early nineteenth century. Francis Galton had felt the above sentiment at least forty years before Tesla wrote the article, "What Science May Achieve This Year," for the *Rocky Mountain News* in 1910. Galton believed in his eugenics scheme absolutely. He believed that the links of the discursive chain he was forging, if clearly projected, would lead the public to draw the logical conclusions he, Noyes, and Socrates had predicted: public acceptance of his eugenics scheme as a new scientific religion.

In "Hereditary Improvement" in *Frazier's Magazine for Town and Country*, Galton lays his scheme before the 1873 general public. Thirty-one years later Galton lays the same plan before the social-scientific community at Sociological Society meeting in 1904 with his essay, "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims." Why he chose to present his scheme first to the general public rather than to the scientific community remains inexplicit by Galton himself. Why would he not attempt to gain approbation for his plan from the scientific community first?

Galton explains his strategy of eugenics presentation in "Hereditary Improvement." In one example from this

essay Galton proposes "a scheme for [race] improvement whose seeds would be planted almost without knowing it, and would slowly but steadily grow, until it had transformed the nation" (116). Another example comes further along in the essay as Galton allows, "the popular mind will gradually become impressed with a conviction of their [the "ordinary doctrines of heredity"] truth, owing to the future writings and observations of many enquirers" (123). By choosing *Frazier's* Galton suggests a desire to present his scheme publically to a broad range of readers in an effort to garner a position for his eugenics scheme in nineteenth-century popular discourse prior to submitting the scheme to the experts of sociology. He understood the power of the popular imagination in sociological discourse. Prior to the publication of this article, Galton did share his work on heredity in books and scholarly articles, but he did not present its "scheme" of implementation in them.

"Hereditary Improvement":
A Close Reading

In the first paragraph of this fifteen-page essay published in *Fraser's Magazine*, January, 1873, Galton addresses his potential critics exactly as does Socrates in Book V of *The Republic of Plato*. In the first sentence,

Galton makes the same analogic appeal as Noyes, Darwin before him, and Plato before Darwin, without citing either the modern or the ancient precursor discourses. He recognizes the first of the three concerns of Socrates - "In the first place, the practicability of our plans will not be believed" (*The Republic* 155). Galton states:

It is freely allowed by most authorities on heredity, that men are just as subject to its laws, both in body and mind, as are any other animals, but it is almost universally doubted, if not denied, that an establishment of this fact could ever be of large practical benefit to humanity. (116)

At this point in the essay, Galton does not entertain the second concern Socrates raises - "supposing them [Socrates' plans for breeding guardians of the state] to be most completely carried out, their desirableness will be questioned" (*The Republic* 155). Galton harbors no doubt his plans will be accepted, once they are understood. However, in the second sentence of paragraph one, he does take up the third concern of Socrates, that of "indulging in a merely visionary speculation":

It is objected that, philosophise as you will, . . . any prospect of improving the race of man is absurd and chimerical, and that though enquiries into the laws of human heredity may be pursued for the satisfaction of a curious disposition, they can be of no real importance. (116)

The first two sentences of his essay, Galton follows the arguments of Plato's Socrates as established in the very beginning of Book V of *The Republic of Plato*.

There is a fundamental difference, however, between Galton's presentation of his plan and that of Socrates. Whereas Socrates balks at the line of questioning Adeimantus and Glaucon pursue, as he "is still in the position of a doubting inquirer" (*Republic* 155), Galton is not in such a position and defends his own scheme while laying the groundwork to effect positive public opinion to its implementation.

In the face of criticism similar to that which concerns Socrates in Plato's *Republic*, Galton harbors no doubt as to the practicability or the desirability of his

plan if only the professional men of science and the lay¹ public would understand his theory and praxis:

I maintain . . . that it is feasible to improve the race of man by a system which shall be perfectly in accordance with the moral sense of the present time. . . . [I] propose a scheme for [race] improvement whose seeds would be planted almost without knowing it, and would slowly but steadily grow, until it had transformed the nation. If the ordinary doctrines of heredity in a broad sense be true, the scheme in question must, as it appears to me, begin to show vigorous life so soon as the mass of educated men shall have learnt to appreciate their truth. (116)

The above quotation contains Galton's main premises, that it is feasible to improve the human race, and that the gradual implementation of his scheme will not arouse moral public alarm. In other words, Galton proposes a scheme of narrative discourse aimed first educating the public at

¹ Implied here is a double meaning of the term "lay": 1. not ordained or belonging to the clergy and 2. not having professional qualifications or expert knowledge (Oxford American). The first meaning becomes clear early in Galton's essay as he calls the scheme a "religious duty" (118-19).

large, and from the discursive momentum created by them to the scientific community. As Galton's essay unfolds, so does his "scheme"² which includes discussing explicitly how he will go about creating, maintaining, and controlling his eugenics narrative.

Galton Emphasizes Race over Individual
in the Struggle for Existence

In the preservation of favoured individuals and races, during the constantly-recurrent Struggle for Existence, we see the most powerful and ever-acting means of selection.

. . . A grain in the balance will determine which individual shall live and which shall die, - which variety or species shall increase in number, and which shall decrease, or finally become extinct.

As the individuals of the same species come in all respects into the closest competition with each other, the struggle will generally be most severe between them; it will be almost equally severe

² Implied is a double meaning of the term "scheme" here as "a large-scale systematic plan" that is both 1. "a secret or underhanded plan" or "plot" and 2. "a particular ordered arrangement" (Oxford American). Galton is using the second meaning: "scheme" as "plan"; however, as a Platonesque pharmakon of secrecy plays a large role in Galton's scheme, the first meaning is also an appropriate reading.

*between the varieties [or races] of the same
species.*

(Charles Darwin, *Origin* 247)

In the epigraph above, Darwin emphasizes both the individual and race in the "constantly-recurrent Struggle for Existence," although he mentions the individual first, which implies that natural selection works through the individual to effect change in the race. Galton, on the other hand, discounts the individual in the scheme of artificial selection he proposes:

If we . . . look around at the course of nature, one authoritative fact becomes distinctly prominent It is, that the life of the individual is treated as of absolutely no importance, while the race is treated as everything, Nature being wholly careless of the former except as a contributor to the maintenance and evolution of the latter. (119)

These sentences are problematic. First, one may see many "authoritative" facts that "become distinctly prominent" when one looks at nature. Second, the passive verb phrase "is treated" in reference to the individual or race implies an agency that "treats." Furthermore, Galton capitalizes

"nature," thus consciously personifying an abstract concept, imbuing it with agency as well as the capacity for an emotional response to individuals and races. In doing so Galton raises nature to level of Supreme Being that favors, treats, and cares about the race and not the individual. Thus, Galton builds his argument that the good of the individual should be sacrificed by "sweeping away a legion of ineffectives" for the good of "our race."³

Galton follows this statement with a teleological argument via analogical appeal, as does Socrates in Book X of *The Republic*:

It is as though individual lives were of no more consideration than are the senseless chips which fall from the chisel of the artist who is elaborating some ideal form out of a rude block. We are naturally apt to think of ourselves and of those around us that, being not senseless chips, but living and suffering beings, we should be of primary importance whereas it seems perfectly clear that our individual lives are little more

³ "Race," as Galton uses the term, can mean the human race, a particular race, the Nordic race, the English as a race, or some as-yet eugenically unachieved, utopian race depending on context. As used by him, the meaning of the term "our race" slips context and seems obfuscatory each time he uses it.

than agents towards attaining some great and common end of evolution. ("Hereditary" 119-120)

This analogy, while virtually identical to Plato's in *The Republic*, wherein an artifact is evidence of an artisan (*Republic* 335-40), is not meant to prove the existence of a creator god, but to replace that god with nature personified.

For Galton, nature works as the artisan of humankind in an obvious evolutionary plan to perfection. However, his concept of "individual lives" as "senseless chips"⁴ is diametrically opposed to that of Darwin's "grain in the balance" as a determinant of not only which individual will survive "the constantly-recurrent Struggle for Existence," but also which "variety or species" will increase and survive or decrease and go extinct (*Origin* 247). Galton's personification goes well beyond Darwin's in *Origin*. Even though Darwin does not address *Prima Causa*, he does use language that suggests *Primum Movens* throughout *Origin*.⁵ Furthermore, he alludes to such a power by its actions

⁴ While chipping away "senseless" individuals, the artisan best be wary of slipping a blow and chiseling off the nose of his creation.

⁵ For example, "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one" (emphasis added, *Origin* 259). Darwin alludes to some agency that has the power to "originally" breathe life into a single or multiple forms.

without making a claim for or giving a name to such power as Galton does by personifying Nature.

Three Basic Assumptions of Galton's Scheme as Remedy for Social Ills

Galton again addresses the possibility of public opposition to his scheme due to lack of public knowledge of "the ill condition of our race" (123). He suggests the need to "find a remedy"⁶ even though it "requires some audacity to publicly propose schemes" to do so. The remedy is his scheme of viriculture⁷ based on three assumptions he himself lists:

It is entirely based on the assumption that the ordinary doctrines of heredity are, in a broad sense, perfectly true; also that the popular mind will gradually become impressed with a conviction of their truth, owing to the future writings and observations of many enquirers; and lastly, that we shall come to think it no hardheartedness to

⁶ Note the physician/medicine analogy of Plato's Socrates in Book V of the *Republic* and the necessary rhetorical pharmakon the magistrates must employ to control the minds of the guardian caste (*Republic* 167).

⁷ Galton first used the term "viriculture" as a name for his scheme; later he would substitute the term "stirpiculture," coined by John Humphrey Noyes in *Scientific Propagation* (1870), and claim its coining in the discussion section of his presentation to the Sociological Society meeting of 1904. Later still (1883), Galton coined the term "eugenics." Perhaps he felt the need to create his own term in order to better control the discourse surrounding his scheme of eugenics presentation.

favour the perpetuation of the stronger, wiser, and more moral races, but shall conceive ourselves to be carrying out the obvious intentions of Nature, by making our social arrangements conducive to the improvement of their race. (123)

Again, Galton's diction is troubling. He says that his entire scheme is based on three assumptions that may or may not be true. The truth of first assumption seems obvious – that the "ordinary doctrines of heredity" are true – but what are the ordinary doctrines? Whose interpretation of those doctrines does Galton suggest? There were many interpretations of the doctrines of heredity at the time of Galton's writing.

The second assumption – "that the popular mind will gradually become impressed with a conviction of their truth" – is necessary to Galton's scheme in a similar manner as that which Socrates discusses with Glaucon in Book V of *The Republic*. The major difference between Socrates' plan and that of Galton is revealed in the operative word in this second assumption, "gradually." Socrates devises a new republic with its own social paradigm, building it from scratch, as it were. Galton, on

the other hand, devises a change to a pre-existing social paradigm, and as public acceptance of paradigmatic change by medical or governmental fiat is rare (if it ever happens), he does need "future writings and observations of many enquirers" in order to "gradually" gain the acceptance of the public.

The third assumption is extremely problematic when viewed from the post-war future. What Galton says, and sets up for acceptance of his scheme, relies on a dubious syllogism. That is, since natural selection favors the "stronger, wiser, and more moral," and since this "scheme" is to bring about a quickening of the process of natural selection through artificial selection, then to follow this scheme is to aid or "carry out" the intentions of the personified Nature. The problem with this syllogism lies in the mechanism of artificial selection. Exactly who is to select? A beneficent physician, an impartial judge, or a social body constructed from selected experts on social welfare? Or a bureaucrat of the National Socialist Party, such as Himmler? And what will be the unintended consequences of artificial selection?

Moreover, by the use of the second-person-plural pronoun "we" in this third assumption, Galton seems to set

himself⁸ and others up as physicians to remedy social ills, as magistrates to artificially select proper conjugal pairings, and as arbiters outside the order of races, ones who set the scheme in motion and control the outcomes of sanctioned conjugal pairings. The third-person-plural-possessive pronoun "their" in the above block quotation would refer to the improvement of the "stronger, wiser, and more moral races," whether they are of the "English race," the human race, or some future utopian race (which is hard to derive due to Galton's rather loose usage of the term). And what, pray, is "more moral" about one race over another? Does Galton refer to a "more moral" race as one that hides, sterilizes, or eliminates those he calls the "ineffectives," or to use Holmes' terminology, its "socially inadequate," "defective persons"?

Looking again at the third assumption in light of Galton's individual as mere "senseless chips which fall from the chisel of the artist who is elaborating some ideal form out of a rude block," one can see a further shift from Socrates' analogy in Book X of *The Republic*. In Book X,

⁸ Galton is not likely using the royal 'we' to refer to himself alone; although given his writerly persona, such a reading is not far fetched.

Socrates talks about God⁹ creating the Form of a bed; the artisan, an artifactual bed based on the Form; and the painter, a simulacrum based on the artisan's creation.

Socrates asks which is the real bed: the Form, the artifact, or the simulacrum in paint, and Glaucon responds that the real bed is the Form created by God (*Republic* 338). Therefore, in Plato's dialogue, God is the real creator, the artisan merely producing a copy, and painter a reproduction of a copy. However, Galton is does not speak of a god creating Forms, but Nature as the artisan, man the artifact. Thus, by conceiving themselves "to be carrying out the obvious intentions of Nature, by making our social arrangements conducive to the improvement of their race" the magistrates, the officials, the medical professionals, the bureaucrats of eugenics practice or those of the Third Reich – those who carry out the "obvious intentions of Nature" – would usurp the function of Nature and replace natural with artificial selection.

Planting the Seeds

Galton saw that the climate of public acceptance for his scheme was rather cool at the time of his writing

⁹ "God" is the word utilized by Davies and Vaughan, yet may not accurately represent the meaning of Plato's Socrates.

(1873) and granted the time necessary to warm the public to his scheme of viriculture, which he later called "eugenics":

There is a vast difference between an intellectual belief in any subject and a living belief which becomes ingrained, sometimes quite suddenly, into the character. I do not venture to ask that the *doctrines of heredity* shall be popularly accepted in the latter sense, in order that the seeds of my scheme should be planted, but I am satisfied if they shall come to be believed in with the same degree of persuasion and as little fervour as are those, at the present time, of sanitary science. That is enough to enable the scheme to take root and to grow, but I cannot expect it to flourish until the popular belief shall have waxed several degrees warmer. (emphasis added, 125)

In the above, Galton equates "doctrines of heredity" with his scheme of hereditary improvement. By equating his theories of viriculture with hereditary doctrines in general, Galton broadens the base of public and professional acceptance — broadcasting his seeds, as it

were. In addition, he links his discourse with that of "sanitary science," a discursive action that will gain nods from that discourse community. Moreover, Galton addresses the effort necessary for his seeds to grow, that is, "with the same degree of persuasion and as little fervour" to persuade the public. He contends that the effort will not be great and will not arouse the "fervour"¹⁰ of the public. Galton wants to keep the presentation of his scheme low-key so as to not arouse opposition.

Galton continues the seed-planting metaphor explicitly states the object of his scheme is

to build up, by the mere process of extensive enquiry and publication of results [via discourses scientific and public], a sentiment of caste among those who are naturally gifted, and to procure for them, before the system has fairly taken root, such moderate social favor and preference. (125)

Early on in the working of Galton's scheme, it should be obvious to the better born that they are special and should

¹⁰ "Fervour" (British spelling) can mean "intense and passionate feeling," but can also have the archaic meaning "intense heat," from the Latin *fervere*, 'to boil' (Oxford American). The latter definition seems most appropriate as Galton uses the term here.

be "justly informed of the precise measure of their importance to the nation" (125). Galton concludes/assumes that "the natural result" of informing the "gifted" of their importance would "bind them together by a variety of material and social interests, and to teach them faith in their future" (125).

Galton continues, in supposition, to say that the "sentiment of caste [would/should] secure that they shall intermarry among themselves about as strictly as is the custom of the nobility in Germany" (125). This later statement is extremely problematic, as Galton (1873) seems to presage Nazi Germany and Himmler's *Lebensborn* Project (1935-1945) - minus the dark horrors - sixty-two years later.

So not only does Galton suggest pushing natural selection by artificial means, he wishes to set up a literal caste system in which the higher class of each caste has privilege, the lower classes denied assistance, and the lower caste access.

In addition, this ideology of promoting the better born finds its roots in Book V of Plato's *Republic*:

And those of our young men who distinguish themselves . . . will receive, along with other

privileges and rewards, more liberal permission to associate with the women, in order that, under colour of this pretext, the greatest number of children may be the issue of such parents.

(*Republic* 168)

In the above, Plato's Socrates talks with Glaucon about the guardian class or caste, but it reads as if he is talking about the general population, as does Galton's text. However, Galton, like Socrates, is talking about the special caste of the "naturally gifted," which are the virtual guardians that Socrates posits – the best and brightest of the general population as breeding stock for the guardian caste.

So, Galton's scheme favors class within caste, and "[a]gain, the society would be ever watchful and able to befriend them" (126). Galton proposes here a progressive society based on promoting the gifted at the expense of the masses, but who is this "society" that does the watching? And who watches the watchers? These are questions Adeimantus might have asked of Socrates, if Plato had allowed him voice at the appropriate juncture of discourse in *The Republic*.

Stages of Scheme Implementation

Galton calls for a hereditary registry in the early stages of his scheme in practice, "a future 'golden book,'" which would collate information on individuals via the panoptic vision¹¹ of "[s]choolmasters, ministers, medical men, employers of labour, and the resident gentry," but those "facts should be collected quietly" to avoid arousing "prejudice and unreasonable opposition" and to maintain docile bodies¹² (125). "Society," that would perhaps include Plato's magistrates, physicians, and "officers appointed for that purpose," and Galton's above list "would continually watch the career of the persons whose names appear on the register" (125). Boys¹³ would be "examined and classed . . . weighed and measured and appraised in respect to their natural gifts, physical and mental." Those named would "be treated with more respect and consideration than others" even of the same social rank (126).

He anticipates resistance to his scheme in the early stages of implementation, "[b]ut gradually [that qualifying

¹¹ See Foucault, *Discipline & Punish* (1975).

¹² *ibid*

¹³ Galton mentions only boys in 1873. Later, at the Sociological Society meeting of 1904, Victorian feminist, cofounder of the Malthusian League, and early proponent of birth control, Alice Drysdale Vickery, will take him to task for the omission of women in eugenics discourse (13).

word again], not withstanding many mistakes at first, much ridicule and misunderstanding, and not a little blind hostility, people will confess that the scheme will bear its proper fruit" (126). Thus the metaphoric, schematic fruit, through careful tending and pruning, will eventually appear on the tree of hereditary knowledge.

The intermediate stage between "mere investigation" and "practical action" is one of patronage of the better born, and this practice, Galton anticipates, will be well received, rather than

patronising paupers, and doing what are commonly spoken of as "charitable" actions, which however devoted they may be to a holy cause, have a notorious tendency to demoralise the recipient, and to increase the extent of the very evils which they are intended to cure. (126)

Note Galton's emphasis on the word "charitable" in the quotation above. Here Galton shows the Malthusian roots of his scheme in practice. Galton's language evidenced here, and the discourse of Thomas Malthus in his book, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), continue through the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, and are still voiced in the twenty-first.

Galton anticipates the question of the better born developing a "tolerably priggish and supercilious" demeanor towards the lesser-born caste, especially due to the growing "democratic feeling" in society (127). Such a feeling is evinced by Victorian Era charity organizations and social welfare societies of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century, for example, the Sociological Society.¹⁴ His answer is that these "exceptional" individuals of the early stages of his schematic practice would

be good all around, in physique and *morale* [italics in original], rather than exceptionally brilliant, for many of the geniuses would not 'pass' for physical qualities, and they would be kept in good order by the consciousness that any absurd airs on their part might be dangerous to them. (127)

In the above, Galton again speculates as to the reactions of the populace in that his geniuses would not look so much

¹⁴ At this meeting of the Sociological Society held at the School of Economics, London University, on May 16, 1904 Galton publicly represents the scheme presented in "Hereditary Improvement" to experts of social science discourse, this time entitled "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims."

different from the common herd, and hence, could "pass"¹⁵ in the general populace without too much attention as long as they behaved in a non-condescending manner toward the lesser born.

He goes on to say that the better born would then be seen as no more than the "possessors of ancestral property" in terms of ancestral heritage of positive physical and mental traits. It is interesting that Galton equates genetic traits (as they will later be called) with property. Thus, he assigns an economic value to genetic inheritance.

Galton then takes up the feelings of democracy, which he clearly does not value:

As regards the democratic feeling, its assertion of equality is deserving of the highest admiration so far as it demands equal consideration for the feelings of all, just the same way as their rights are equally maintained by the law. But it goes farther than this, for it asserts that men are of equal value as social

¹⁵ One cannot help but think of the inversion here of the concept of "to pass" in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century black America. Galton inverts the notion of the term, as he does the notion of to whom "such moderate social favor and preference" (125) be given.

units, equally capable of voting, and the rest.
This feeling is undeniably wrong and cannot last.
(127)

In this passage, Galton uses a semi-Rogerian argument by conceding that democratic "feelings of equality" are admirable, as are equal rights under the law.

Nevertheless, in Galton's view, democracy and equal rights are mere feelings, based on emotion, not reason. Notions of democracy and equal rights are reserved for the racially superior caste, as

persons on the register [Galton's "golden book"] were obviously better and finer pieces of manhood in every respect than other men, democracy notwithstanding, their superiority would be recognised at just what it amounted to, without envy, but very possibly with some feeling of hostility on the part of beaten competitors.

(127)

The "hostility" felt by "beaten competitors" echoes the second half of the title of Darwin's *Origin*: "*the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life.*" Galton anticipates here, as did Plato's Socrates, pushback

from groups excluded by competition with the higher caste individuals.

In the final stages of his scheme, Galton envisions a distant time to have arrived "when societies shall have been sown broadcast over the land and have become firmly rooted, and when, principles of selection shall have been well discussed and pretty generally established" (127). He argues that once the public discourse has become socially naturalized as common sense,¹⁶ and the better born become approximately one percent of the British population, that "a strong feeling of caste" would have developed (127).

The naturalization of caste association based on "the vanity of men, especially youth" would be "well-nigh irresistible" (127), much as the naturalization of race superiority the Nazi propaganda machine produced in pre-war Germany. With language that well fits the Hitler Youth programs some sixty years later, Galton would give the youth of the higher caste of his utopia "a diploma, which would virtually be a patent of natural nobility" to document their place in society (127-28).

Again, sounding as though writing for the Nazi propaganda machine, Galton refers to maintaining the breed

¹⁶ See Fairclough, *Language and Power* (1989).

as well as controlling the narrative of his scheme by keeping its narrative constantly present in public discourse:

They [the magistrates, officers, and bureaucrats, the Platonesque implementers of Galton's scheme as well as Goebbels' propagandists] tell them [the gifted youth] that in addition to the old-established considerations of rank and wealth there is another and higher one, namely, of purity of blood, and that it would be base to ally themselves with inferior breeds. . . . [F]or there can be little doubt that *one consequence of the continual writing and talking about noble races of men, during many years, would be to increase the appreciation of them* [emphasis added]. 128)

It is by this continuous public eugenics discourse that Galton takes his scheme from early stages of information gathering by "[s]choolmasters, ministers, medical men, employers of labour, and the resident gentry," however "quietly collected" (125), through the intermediate stage between "mere collection" and "practical action" (126), to the final stages of implementation.

Effects of Democratic Hostility
on the Gifted Race

Galton anticipates "democratic hostility to the favored race" leading to a more solid cohesion of the gifted caste, the "favoured race," via persecution. "If trade unionism chose to look on them [the gifted] as cuckoos in the national nest, they [the gifted] would be driven from the workshops, and be powerfully directed to co-operative pursuits " (128). These favored-race outcasts would build their own "co-operatives in the country," and in "these colonies, caste regulations would . . . gradually acquire the force almost of religious obligations, to maintain and increase the character of their race" (128). Galton's language here turns to religion again, and his imagined utopia has expanded. His caste has now become a race in itself, a race that needs to protect itself from genetic contamination.

If such communities were established, it would be in them, rather than anywhere else, where those forms of new and higher civilisation, which must hereafter overspread the earth, would be first evolved. (129)

Here, Galton first mentions evolution.

At this point in his essay, Galton waxes serious about the implications of the rising power of his "favoured race" should they become into institutionally and civically powerful enough.

It is very possible hereafter, at the time I have been anticipating, that the Legislature under the growing influence of the gifted caste . . . would enforce some limitation to inheritance, in cases where the heirs were deficient in natural gifts. The fittest would then have a far better chance of survival . . . and civilisation . . . would, under more enlightened leadership, employ its force to maintain and improve them [the inferior]. (129)

Galton alludes to the takeover by the "gifted caste" of the welfare of those "deficient in natural gifts," limiting by force the most basic right of all people, to breed.

Even though Galton speaks of "limitation to inheritance" of mental and physical traits, his language is that of economic inheritance. The concept of enforced limitation is not a far step removed from depriving the lesser caste of economic property. In fact, all eugenic discourse contains within it economic concern – so with

Darwin and Malthus before him, and so with Galton and Himmler.¹⁷

The lesser caste would naturally wither away, according to Galton, just as all "inferior races always disappear before superior ones" (129). Eventually the gifted caste would rule in benevolence over the lower caste "so long as they [the lower caste] maintained celibacy" (129). Galton envisions that if they did not remain celibate, they would be considered "enemies of the State, and to have forfeited all claims to kindness" (129). Galton's discourse has moved from volunteer celibacy (positive eugenics) to language of militant opposition (negative eugenics) that allows for the judicial language of forced sterilization laws in the United States and *Die Endlösung* in Nazi Germany.

"Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims":
A Close Reading

Francis Galton read "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims" at the Sociological Society meeting held at the School of Economics, London University on May 16, 1904. It represents Galton's attempt to garner support from varied

¹⁷ Note that the Sociological Society meeting of 1904 was held at the School of Economics of London University.

experts in sociology and related fields. Heretofore, Galton had published many articles in popular journals such as *Fraser's*, *Macmillan's*, and *Fortnightly Review* in order to build public knowledge of his scheme for hereditary improvement. He also published many articles on heredity in academic journals such as the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* and *Proceedings of the Royal Institution*, and his Huxley Lecture, "The Possible Improvement of the Human Breed under the Existing Conditions of Law and Sentiment," first printed in *Nature* (1901) and reprinted in the *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution*.¹⁸

All these publications established eugenics as a major part of the sociologic discourse of the early twentieth century. The Sociological Society meeting offered a perfect opportunity to present his scheme to the leading voices of social discourse.

The publication of "Eugenics:" is the transcript of a debate before the Sociological Society in 1904. Apparently the text of the essay had first been disseminated to the

¹⁸ In the appendix to "Eugenics: Definition, Scope, and Aims" Galton lists his own works that bear on the subject of eugenics: *Hereditary Genius* (1869), *Human Faculty* (1883), *Natural Inheritance* (1889), and the Huxley Lecture: "The Possible Improvement of the Human Breed under the Existing Conditions of Law and Sentiment" (1901).

lecture's attendees in time for them to respond in writing prior to the lecture itself; their opinions are included in the Appendix to the essay. Or, perhaps the attendees voiced their opinions spontaneously at the lecture and their responses accurately transcribed for later publication. Regardless, the lecture audience was well prepared to speak in response to Galton's eugenics as his previous work on the subject had been well established beforehand. In this Burkean parlor, Galton began by giving a talk on the definition, scope, and aims of eugenics, while attendees, both in agreement and opposition spoke after him. Voices such as Karl Pearson's, H. G. Wells', George Bernard Shaw's, and various medical doctors, sociologists, and writers appear in the Appendix to the transcribed lecture.

Galton begins by defining the word eugenics as "the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them [inborn qualities] to the utmost advantage" (1). As coined, "eugenics" is a word compounded from two Greek terms: its prefix *eu*, meaning good or well, and its suffix *gen*, meaning genesis or creation (D. J. Galton, "Greek Theories" 263). Thus, the word *eugenics* suggests

the *well-created* or *well-born*. He and takes up a common theme in Plato's works, that of what is good or bad in qualities among species. He claims that what is considered "goodness or badness of character is not absolute, but relative to the current form of civilization" and speaks allegorically of animals in the zoo. Since this particular quote is lengthy, it is perhaps best to take it concept by concept:

Let the scene be the zoological gardens in the quiet hours of the night, and suppose that, as in old fables, the animals are able to converse, and that some very wise creature who had easy access to all the cages, say a philosophic sparrow or rat, was engaged in collection the opinions of all sorts of animals with a view of elaborating a system of absolute morality. (1)

Galton's use of an information-collecting sparrow or rat in this allegory suggests a cadre of panoptic social bureaucrats.

It is needless to enlarge on the contrariety of ideals between the beasts that prey and those that prey upon, between those of the animals that have to work hard for their food and the

sedentary parasites that cling to their bodies
and suck their blood, and so forth. (1-2)

In this passage, Galton establishes his view of the order of nature and man. There are the "prey" and the "preyed upon," those that "work hard," and "sedentary parasites" that suck the economic blood of society. Harsh, to say the least.

Galton continues:

A large number of suffrages in favor of maternal affection would be obtained, but most species of fish would repudiate it, while among the voices of birds would be heard the musical protest of the cuckoo. (2)

By "maternal suffrages" Galton refers to animals that rear their young postnatal. Fish do not, while birds do. It is interesting to note Galton's use of the cuckoo in this passage. He used this particular bird in "Hereditary Improvement" (1873): "trade unionism chose to look on them [the gifted] as cuckoos in the national nest" (128). The cuckoo is a bird that will lay its eggs in the nests of songbirds, thus avoiding the "maternal suffrage" of childrearing. In other words, fish and cuckoos might protest individual maternal suffrage much as members of

communities such as Noyes' Bible Communists or his Oneida Community might say maternal suffrage is the responsibility of the community - all men fathers, all women mothers to the progeny of committee-sanctioned conjugal pairings.

Galton continues:

Though no agreement could be reached as to absolute morality, the essentials of eugenics may be easily defined. All creatures would agree that it was better to be healthy than sick, vigorous than weak, well-fitted for their part in life; in short, that it was better to be good rather than bad specimens of their kind, whatever kind might be. So with men. (2)

All animals and humans would agree with Galton as to health and fitness; however, what is of concern in the above passage is "well-fitted for their part in life." Who determines an individual's "part in life"? What exactly is a "part in life"? Does Galton refer to occupations? Are humans born blacksmiths or insurance adjusters? Judges or law enforcement officers? Firefighters or demolition experts? Are some born psychologists or to the clergy? It seems another of Galton's assumptions is that humans are born to stations in life, occupational hereditary perhaps.

Galton is so sure of the logic of his scheme that he uses an ad hominem attack on potential dissenters. In describing a method of tracking the better born Galton states: "A considerable list of qualities can easily be compiled that nearly everyone except 'cranks' would take into account when picking out the best specimens of his class" (2). Many of his audience were in opposition to his scheme and no doubt took umbrage to being called cranks for so doing. Such a list "would include health, energy, ability, manliness, and courteous disposition" (2). But what does "energy" mean as a heritable trait? And what "manliness"? Again, Galton assumes masculinity, as if females – such as Lady Welby, a pioneer of semiotics; and Alice Drysdale Vickery, noted feminist and pioneer of birth control – were not present at the lecture. It is as if, women *naturally* did not figure at all in his eugenic scheme.

After his allegory to explain the aims of eugenics, Galton launches into utopian supposition based on assumptions about what is good and natural to civilized society as he describes a eugenic outcome for a society. The first assumption seems to be a conflation (or is it confusion) of the terms "race" and "nation." He uses terms

such as "our nation" and "the race" as if the two were synonymous, and plays loosely with the term "race" in all his writings: "a race," "the race," "our race," "one race," "human race," even "English race." The second assumption among many is that the dissenters at the Sociology Society meeting are "demagogues who 'played to the gallery'" (3). He refers to those who objected to eugenics theory and praxis spoke publically in popular print media, such as journals, magazines, and newspapers. Still one more assumption in the same paragraph: by practicing eugenics, England "should be better fitted to fulfill *our* vast imperial opportunities" (emphasis added 3), as if imperialism is *naturally* for "the good" of both the colonizer and colonized, and by "our" does he mean that all at the Sociological Society meeting share his imperialistic assumptions, or that all of England would/should share those views? Would the Fabian Socialist attendee and ardent eugenics supporter, George Bernard Shaw, share this view?

Galton suggests that "a *learned* and *active* society, such as the sociological [emphasis added]" (3) may adopt procedures he sets forth. Here he is complimenting the Sociological Society by using the term "learned," nodding

to their academic ethos and "active" to give them a sense of social relevance in their progressive ideals, while at the same time implicitly invoking them to act on those ideas and take up the work of eugenics.

He lays out five procedures necessary to social action:

1. "Dissemination of a knowledge of the laws of heredity."
2. Historical inquiries into the rates of "civic usefulness" classes, modern and ancient, have contributed to society.
3. Systematic collection of records to show the circumstances contributing to "thriving families."
4. "Influences affecting marriage."
5. "Persistence in setting forth the national importance of eugenics."

In procedure 3, Galton calls these records "a 'golden book' of thriving families" (4), the same golden book he mentions in his essay, "Hereditary Improvement" (1873), a book that gives documentary power to "the race" of the better born in his eugenic utopia. He also calls for a "committee charged with the task" that would use these records. He does not suggest at this point that the

committee – a correlate of the “officers appointed for that purpose” of Plato’s Republic – would/should have cultural, judicial, or religious power over individuals studied, but does open the possibility of use/abuse of social power in marital decisions – a legislative key to the private door of the bedroom, a virtual *dictum cubiculum*.

In procedure 4, “Influences affecting marriage,” as Socrates does in *The Republic*, Galton takes on the question of the possibility of arranging marriage given that the “passion of love seems so overpowering that it may be thought a folly to try to direct its course” (5). But Galton states that the facts support the notion that “[s]ocietal influences of all kinds have immense power” to affect marriage relations (5), for example, prohibiting the conjugal pairings of siblings or cousins.

In procedure 5, “Persistence in setting forth the national importance of eugenics,” Galton suggests “three stages to be passed through:” (1) that the national importance of eugenics must be “accepted as a fact,” (2) that eugenics “deserves serious consideration,” and (3) that eugenics “must be introduced into the national conscience, like a new religion” (5).

Here again we have Galton's obsession with religion, and again the religious element of Socrates' plan in Book V of *The Republic* touched upon. As Galton states: "I see no impossibility in eugenics becoming a religious dogma among mankind, but its details must be worked out sedulously in the study" (6).

He warns: "Overzeal leading to hasty action would do harm . . . and cause the science to be discredited" (6).

"Overzeal": One cannot help but think of America's forced sterilization laws and Hitler's implementation of Heydrich and Himmler's the Final Solution as overzeal. Galton calls for the discourse of eugenics to take hold over time, become naturalized as per Fairclough, and "gradually give practical effect to them [eugenic ideals] in ways that we may not wholly foresee" (6). The law of unintended consequences is here in effect. Benjamin Kidd, as one of the voices of opposition to the eugenics "scheme" in the Appendix to Galton's lecture, presages *Die Endlösung*: "Judging from what one sometimes reads, many of our ardent reformers would often be willing to put us into lethal chambers, if our minds and bodies did not conform to certain standards" (13). Could Himmler or Heydrich have read this response by Kidd? Did Kidd create a kairotic

moment for Himmler? Or rather, does the nature of discourse itself, especially social narratives that take on power such as Galton's eugenics narrative, somehow lead naturally to unintended, and sometimes, horrific consequences?

After the other speakers deliver their comments pro and con to his eugenics principles, Galton appears again in rebuttal. His diction reveals disappointment and condescension directed to the majority of the speakers who are in opposition to his program. He sees them as either misreading or misunderstanding what should be self-evident in his previous writings and his current presentation:

When this debate began, I was extremely unhappy at the quality of it. . . . More than one of the later speakers were really not acquainted with the facts, and they ought not to have spoken at all. (24)

It seems Galton was ill prepared to handle criticism of his work. He was eighty-two years old at the time of this meeting/debate. It must have been a crushing blow that all members of the Sociological Society did not receive his eugenics scheme as well as he had expected, especially

after thirty-one years of work preparing the public for its acceptance.

Galton's final comment is hard to decipher, grammatically:

I have little more to say, except that I do feel that if the society is to do any good work in this direction, it must attack it in a much better way than the majority of speakers seem to have done tonight. (25)

"[T]his direction" must refer to social general improvement. Or perhaps he means hereditary improvement of "the race." But what does the second pronoun, "it," in "it [the Sociological Society] must attack it in a much better way [emphasis added]" refer to? Does "it" here refer to the direction of the work of the Society? Or does it refer to Galton's eugenics scheme of hereditary improvement?

Concluding Thoughts

Galton's language in "Hereditary Improvement" escalates from benign discussion of breeding a better race in the same manner as domestic livestock to enforced "limitation of inheritance" of the lesser born. He uses the same three analogies as Plato ascribes to the character

Socrates – the breeding of humans after the fashion of animal husbandry, the magistrates or officials in charge of his scheme as physicians whose duty it is to apply rhetorical *pharmakon* of deception necessary to control the minds of the “favoured race” as well as those of the less socially desirable. He personifies Nature as the artisan who creates the “gifted caste.” He considers his scheme of hereditary improvement, through artificial selection, as doing the work of a personified nature as the artisan of eugenically conceived utopian race.

He also seems to value Socrates’ scheme in Book V of *The Republic of Plato* to the extent that he appears to use it as a blueprint for both the ideational content and the implementation of his eugenics scheme. He calls for gathering information, classifying, and promoting the strongest physically and brightest mentally just as Socrates suggests be done for the guardian class of his new republic.

Moreover, while he religion as merely a social device to control populations, Galton calls for a new scientific religion of eugenics. He promotes this new religion to the social science experts attending the Sociological Society

meeting of 1904 and calls for sanctification of conjugal pairings exactly in the manner of Socrates in *The Republic*.

Most troubling of Galton's utopic imagining is the way his discourse builds in militancy as his essays progress. This militant progression – one based on unsubstantiated assumptions of race that have become, for him, naturalized common sense – moves slowly, as a positive eugenic seed develops into a tree of negative eugenic intolerance.

Effects of Precursor Discourses:

Although Galton does not explicitly cite his predecessors other than Darwin, such intertextuality is implicit in his work. The precursor discourses of Noyes, Darwin, and Plato, and the generative subject positions of each, allowed for and made possible the interdiscursivity of social concepts leading to Galton's eugenics scheme. Moreover, without these precursor discourses, Galton's "genius" may have continued to flounder beyond his "fallow years," as Pearson dubs them in his Galton biography *Life, Labours, and Letters* (1914).

Although prior to "Hereditary Improvement," Galton published much on heredity, both for public and academic consumption, his work lacked a practical plan of social implementation: it was a theory without praxis. Galton did

not cite Noyes' "Scientific Propagation" (1870); nevertheless, his use of "stirpiculture," a word he later changed to "eugenics," is evidence that he had read Noyes' article. He also took up Noyes' challenge three years later with his scheme for implementation in "Hereditary Improvement" (1873). Not only is it evident that Galton took up Noyes' challenge, but he also based his plan on *The Republic of Plato* as suggested by Noyes.

Galton's work, and the precursor discourses of Plato, Darwin, and Noyes, enabled and led directly to eugenics discourse in the U.S., the forced sterilization laws, and the language of Justice Holmes opinion in the Carrie Buck case of 1927. His work on heredity and his scheme of eugenics implementation with its focus on measurement, quantification, and classification and with underlying assumptions of race superiority also paved the way for the development and acceptability of the *Lebensborn* and *Die Endlösung* projects of Himmler and Heydrich.

Discourses of perfection in human mentality and physicality in the Western literary tradition, from the ancient Greek concepts of symmetry in art and the displacement of those considered physically and mentally inferior, through the modern social discourses including

Galton's eugenics narrative, have continued to the postmodern age. From classical Greece to the present day, the best and brightest are valorized, often at the expense of the lesser lights, the common human herd.

Galton planned the implementation of his "scheme" of "Hereditary Improvement." He chose an ancient plan of action and from that developed a scheme of its presentation. He consciously attempted to control the eugenics narrative and its public and academic reception. To a large extent, he succeeded. Positive eugenic practices reached their apex with Himmler's scheme of the *Lebensborn* project, and negative eugenics with *Die Endlösung*, the Final Solution.

Assumptions naturalized in language as common sense are located in all social discourses. As these assumptions implant in discourse, they become fixed in social narratives and construct cultural assumptions. These assumptions build and are passed on, re-presented intertextually and represented interdiscursively. By examining closely social discourses and narratives of the past, especially those that take on power, socio-cultural assumptions that feed ideologies and how they develop can be recognized and possibly reversed. First, they need to

be exposed and recognized for what they are – dangerous social assumptions.

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