

Dysgenics – Richard Lynn

This is a book for the people with the Darwin fish sticker on their cars. The liberals who believe in evolution, except when it comes to people.

Richard Lynn is profoundly out of intellectual fashion. He has been buried so deep that progressives are not even aware that they should be fervently ignoring this book. He has been consigned to oblivion. A measure of that oblivion is that Amazon prices the paperback at \$132 and does not offer a Kindle version. Lynn's Ulster Institute's online store sells it for a fifth the price and offers a downloadable e-book for a third of even that!

Why is this book so dangerous.? Actually, it's not dangerous at all, because the very people who should read it never will. And they will not even be made aware of its existence.

The first chapter talks about the eugenics movement. As soon as Darwin came out with *The Origin of the Species*, and especially his second book, *The Descent of Man*, there was general consensus among the leading scientists of the day that human beings were products of evolution. We were just another species of animal, and subject to the same evolutionary processes that had created all the others.

Evolution is termed the survival of the fittest. Darwin's doctrine, polished by other imminent Britons such as Francis Galton and Herbert Spencer, is that the individuals who are best suited to their niche are the ones who are most successful in attracting mates and leaving offspring.

This is easy to see among wild species. A bull elephant seal manages a harem. He commands the right to mate with a large number of females. His genome is successful, while those of lesser males die out. The same is true for just about every species. If they are tribal, a pecking order among the males determines who has access to the females. Solitary animals, such as tigers, tend to have territories. An animal not strong enough to command a territory has very meager mating possibilities.

The same dynamics are visible among primates and among primitive humans. In almost all Stone Age human societies that anthropologists have been able to study, the leading men in the society have access to more women than the weaker men. They may command the right to three or four women. Top men in pastoral and agricultural societies might enjoy a harem of hundreds or even thousands. They certainly enhanced the breeding opportunities for dominant men.

The leading men in a society work their way up through the ranks using physical strength, personality, and intelligence. They are the people who are most capable of getting things done, and most capable of enlisting the allegiance of the other men. There is thus a pecking order established. The top man takes what he wants, his supporters, at least get a single wife and are physically fairly safe. On down the line, the

lesser males are usually left without women, and their genome is therefore left behind in evolutionary history.

Among domesticated animals, a similar process is at work. Human breeders are able to look for traits that are beneficial. They mate male and female with beneficial traits to improve the species. Thus we came up with hundreds of breeds of dogs specialized for different tasks, horses that are increasingly strong and fast, cows that produce more milk and meat, bigger potatoes and apples.

Selective breeding is nothing new under the sun, and it has been very successful in changing the genomes of domestic animals very rapidly over the course of in many cases a single human life. Witness the success of Luther Burbank in California, or the Russian Belyaev who bred the wildness out of silver foxes so to make them suitable for turning into fur coats.

Lynn starts out with a chapter on the history of eugenics. It is the belief and practice of improving the genetic quality of the human population. Eugenics came into being in the second half of the 19th century. It was evident to all of the leading scientists of that age, including Darwin himself, that human populations were subject to the same laws of evolution as every other animal. Moreover, these men observed that the law of survival of the fittest had gone by the wayside. Starting about the beginning of the 19th century, the industrialized societies of Europe had become sufficiently wealthy, and generous, that all classes of society were able to raise their children to adulthood more or less successfully. That being the case, and seeing that the less intelligent classes were having more children, they concluded that the general intelligence of the population was diminishing. There was widespread concern about this.

The question was raised, why do not the members of the upper class have more children? They seemed preoccupied with other pursuits. Some asked the question, though to most the answer seemed self-evident, as to whether or not the upper classes were indeed genetically superior in traits such as character and intelligence.

About this time the new science of statistics came into being. Two of its leading practitioners were Karl Pearson and Ronald Fisher. Pearson started his investigations with the question of human intelligence, Fisher started with the yields of crops used by the Guinness brewery to make beer. However, it was a fairly small world, and they wound up collaborating and supporting one another as they created this new science of statistics. It provided a powerful tool to investigate the hypotheses that had been proposed by the eugenics advocates.

Statistics allowed these researchers to state beyond the possibility of a doubt that what they hypothesized was true. People were becoming weaker generation by generation. They were becoming physically weaker, as medicine allowed people with genetic diseases and without resistance to bacterial and viral diseases to survive. People with weaker eyesight had no handicap. Hemophiliacs, and people with other debilitating diseases that would've killed them in childhood lived and were able to reproduce.

More alarming to these eugenicists was the observation that the lower orders of society, whose intelligence they were now able to measure and identify as being substantially lower than the average, were having more children. The reasons for this were obvious. The things that used to kill them no longer killed them, and in fact society through its altruistic welfare programs kept them alive. They recognized fewer moral constraints on their sexual activity. Therefore the poor had more children who survive to adulthood, and those children had more children.

Intelligence is a relatively straightforward construct to measure, at least when compared with character. But the statisticians did indeed come up with measures of the latter. Based on questionnaires, correlated by measurable statistics such as the incidence of criminality, educational attainment, alcoholism and the number of illegitimate children. What they found was that the least conscientious members of society, overlapping the least intelligent, but not the same, were also having more children.

This led to a highly related question. How heritable is intelligence? How heritable is character, which is now called conscientiousness in psychological jargon?

The answer that they came up with, one which has been found repeatedly over eight decades and more of research, is that intelligence is highly heritable. The figure is about 80%. Conscientiousness is a harder construct to define and measure, but the heritability appears to be on the order of 50%.

This means that if the people who are less intelligent and less conscientious are having more children, it must be assumed that their children are likewise less intelligent and less conscientious. The psychometrician's set out to determine whether this was so, and the bulk of this book consists of study after study investigating these theories.

The Darwin fish progressives who will condemn this book will certainly look for methodological errors and condemn this study or that because it is imperfect. Imperfection is absolutely the core concept of the book. No study is perfect, and in fact, every study has identifiable flaws. This is nothing new or surprising. In any sample of human beings taken for the purpose of measuring almost anything, questions can be raised as to whether or not it is representative of the population.

Critics of any social science research that they don't like always able to find fault with individual studies. One of the take-home points from this analysis is that every study is flawed in some way or another. Human beings are difficult animals to corral and measure. The sample size is not big enough, or it is not representative. In Lynn's analysis, single people and married couples without children were left out of some studies because the studies were conducted on children. Some studies excluded black people; some studies were taken in schools, so they ignored dropouts. There are always a large number of factors to consider.

Therefore, what any responsible social scientist does is to look at many studies and form a composite picture. A responsible social scientist will cite studies that support his thesis and also those that don't. That is certainly the case with Lynn's work. He points to studies that would support the idea of a dysgenic evolution of intelligence, and those that go the other way.

One key part of a study involves the analysis of sibling counts. The more siblings in a family the lower the average intelligence. Also, the lower the average measure of character traits such as alcoholism, drug abuse, smoking and other measurable factors and the lower the scores on personality inventory questionnaires.

In doing these studies, Lynn examines the intelligence of the parental generation and that of the children. The general assumption is that the average intelligence for the parents is the same as for the children. He also cites different studies on the heritability of intelligence, placing that number between 50 and 80%. He cites all the studies, and his personal opinion places it closer to 80%.

In another area of citing differences of opinion, he says that there is a regression to the mean. There are two ways of understanding it. The first is that it is an artifact of testing. An abnormally high score may simply represent a lucky day for the test-taker. The other regression to the mean is one that had been recognized previously by biologists, that is that individuals that are far above or below the mean tend to have offspring that are closer to that mean. Gregor Mendel noticed that peas from exceptionally long pea pods give rise to plants bearing longer than average pods, but not as long as the parent.

Lynn himself was the first to notice that scores on intelligence tests rise from generation to generation. Moreover, the increases were not small. In some cases, such as postwar Japan, it was more than 10 points. The average has been generally said to be about three points per generation in the first half of the 20th century.

The rise in measured intelligence flies in the face of the dysgenics theory. Lynn, in this book, offers a number of explanations, but he rather modestly does not settle on any of them as being definitive. One obvious explanation is that nutrition in general continued to improve through the first half of the 20th century. It is well-known that a poor diet leads to a deficiency in intelligence. There was a lot of room to overcome that, especially in countries such as Japan and Korea where the measured increase was the greatest. The second factor is the increasing level and changing nature of education. Students become familiar with test taking. Certainly with SAT tests taking them repeatedly improves one's scores. The same is true on IQ tests. The designers of these tests do their utmost to make them free of cultural bias, but there is no way to get around the factor of familiarity with test taking in general.

A third factor has been raised which is that the nature of problems that people confront in modern life are different than those that occupied our grandparents' generation. People tend to think more in terms of the kinds of questions that appear on tests. At any rate, it was discovered that the IQ test items which were used in the 1920s and 1930s

were simply too easy for testtakers in the 1950s and 60s. The items had to be rewritten to be somewhat more difficult; the tests were recentered. Whatever its cause, it appears that all of the improvement possible due to the Flynn effect seems to have been realized in England and the United States in the last few decades. The Flynn effect seems to have exhausted itself.

The increase of intelligence via the Flynn effect does not negate any of Lynn's observations regarding family size, character or race or anything else. The dysgenic factors covered in this book operate with or without the Flynn effect. The Flynn effect was merely an across-the-board countervailing force in operation over a few generations.

Lynn treats the Flynn effect by introducing another concept. There is a genomic intelligence, the potential intelligence provided by the DNA, and phenotypic intelligence, the intelligence actually expressed in an individual. Lynn says that it is phenotypic intelligence which has risen. The factors which used to depress the full expression of genotypic intelligence have been removed, and for most people measured intelligence is now closer to the genetic potential.

One factor which would support Lynn's thesis is that among the very bright, people with IQs over 130 or so, who presumably did not suffer from anything holding them back in the past, the numbers seem if anything to have diminished. There are not as many superbright people as a proportion as they were 50 or 100 years ago.

The top levels of achievement on the NLSY (National Longitudinal Survey of Youth) have fallen. The cohort of people who are at the top of the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Tests, for college admission) has shrunk over the years even as the tests have gotten somewhat simpler. It appears that intelligence among high school kids peaked about half a century ago.

In this book, Lynn takes the differences in average intelligence among the races as a given. This is consistent with previous of his books, among them *IQ and the Wealth of Nations* and *Intelligence and Race*. It is supported by virtually all psychometricians: Google Wikipedia's "Mainstream Science on Intelligence" for a summary.

I will raise another question in closing. Lynn and Earl Hunt are the last major figures in a generation of significant psychometricians. Arthur Jensen, the leading figure, died a couple of years ago. Perhaps a lack of talent, and the oppressive force of political correctness has led to a diminished number in the rising generations who can replace them. This means that there will be no advocates for what this reviewer would call unbiased science. The science of intelligence will be funded by governments, and government approved analyses are likely to be all that is available for publication. This is a tragedy for science, and it may well be a tragedy for the genetic outcomes of Western civilization. If we cannot see, and cannot express the problems of society, we surely will not be able to solve them.