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The thesis that the genetic quality of populations of economically developed nations is deteriorating for health, intelligence and moral character was advanced by Sir Francis Galton in 1869 in his *Hereditary Genius*. Galton coined the term eugenic in 1883 to designate measures designed to address this problem and improve of the genetic quality of the population. The term dysgenics was coined by the English physician Caleb Saleeby in 1915 to describe the negative impact of World War One in which, he argued, the genetic quality of the populations engaged in the war was being impaired by the deaths of large numbers of those with more desirable genotypes including the more intelligent, patriotic and healthy, while those with less desirable genotypes remained at home to propagate the next generation.

In this book Lynn reviews the evidence on these issues and concludes that Galton was correct. He argues that advances in medical treatments have reduced the mortality of many of those with genetic disorders, who would formally have died in childhood. These advances have enabled many of those with genetic disorders to survive into adulthood, have children and transmit their genes to another generation. The effect of this has been to preserve the genes for genetic disorders in the population.

Lynn follows Galton in arguing that the deterioration of the genetic quality of the population for intelligence and moral character is attributable to those with high intelligence and strong moral character having relatively few children. He argues that the principal reason for the lower fertility of those with higher intelligence and stronger moral character was the invention of the modern condom in the 1870s. This suggests that condoms were used more efficiently by the more intelligent and those with strong moral character to limit their numbers of children. As Lynn puts it “once efficient modern contraception became available, dysgenic fertility was inevitable”.

With regard to intelligence, Lynn assembles evidence showing that there is an inverse association between IQs and number of children in several economically developed nations. This would be expected to entail a decline in the intelligence of the population. However, for much of the twentieth century, there have been increases of intelligence, that Lynn argues are largely attributable to improvements in nutrition and by increased education. He argues that these have masked the decline of genotypic intelligence that can be inferred from the negative association between IQs and fertility. He argues that the increases of phenotypic intelligence will eventually cease as the effects of environmental improvements will have become exhausted. Phenotypic intelligence will then decline, and he presents evidence that this has already been reported in Britain and Denmark.

Lynn argues that the decline of genotypic intelligence is taking place not only within countries but also in the world as a whole. He argues that the decline of the world’s IQ arises from the high fertility of low IQ populations worldwide, compared with the low fertility in

high IQ populations. Lynn calculates that the effect of this is that the world's genotypic IQ is deteriorating by 1.3 IQ points a generation.

Lynn also discussed the effects of immigration on the intelligence of the populations of the United States and Western Europe. He argues that most of these immigrants have lower IQs than the host populations, and hence that as their percentages in the host populations increase, the IQ of the populations will decline. He estimates that in the United States Europeans will become 45 per cent of the population in the year 2050 and calculates that this will entail a decline in the American IQ of 4.4 IQ. He argues that immigration will also bring about a decline of intelligence throughout Western Europe during the course of the twenty-first century.

The evidence Lynn presents for a genotypic deterioration of moral character are not so strong as that for intelligence. Lynn cites indirect indices such as the high fertility of criminals for the dysgenic fertility for moral character, and he also documents the large increases in crime that have taken place in many economically developed nations during the twentieth century as evidence that the moral character of the populations had deteriorated. However, the case Lynn has assembled for dysgenic fertility for health, intelligence and moral character is compelling.