



Sir Francis Galton (*1822;†1911): Hereditary Genius

Description

Sir Francis Galton, was an English Victorian era statistician, polymath, sociologist, psychologist, anthropologist, eugenicist, tropical explorer, geographer, inventor, meteorologist, proto-geneticist, and psychometrician. He was knighted in 1909.

Galton produced over 340 papers and books. He also created the statistical concept of correlation and widely promoted regression toward the mean. He was the first to apply statistical methods to the study of human differences and inheritance of intelligence, and introduced the use of questionnaires and surveys for collecting data on human communities, which he needed for genealogical and biographical works and for his anthropometric studies.

He was a pioneer in eugenics, coining the term itself and the phrase “nature versus nurture”. His book *Hereditary Genius* (1869) was the first social scientific attempt to study genius and greatness.

As an investigator of the human mind, he founded psychometrics (the science of measuring mental faculties) and differential psychology and the lexical hypothesis of personality. He devised a method for classifying fingerprints that proved useful in forensic science. He also conducted research on the power of prayer, concluding it had none by its null effects on the longevity of those prayed for. His quest for the scientific principles of diverse phenomena extended even to the optimal method for making tea.

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Hereditary Genius

A biographical summary of the pre-eminent men of Britain grouped by profession. The extensive survey draws from information including college graduation, reputation during career, fellowships, and even known relatives. Includes discussions on findings and observations as well as referenced appendices. - Summary by Leon Harvey

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