

Book Review: Nicholas Wade, *A Troublesome Inheritance: Genes, Race and Human History*. New York: Penguin Press, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1594204463 (Hard Cover). 288 Pages. \$27.95.

Reviewed by Tim McGettigan¹

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We are in full agreement that there is no support from the field of population genetics for Wade's conjectures.²

In *A Troublesome Inheritance*, Nicholas Wade articulates his vision of race and humanity in the 21st century. Wade believes that race determines life chances at the genetic level, and, therefore, Europeans are wealthy and powerful because they have superior genes. Sub-Saharan Africans, on the other hand, are poor and powerless because they have inferior genes.

Does this sound familiar? It should because, far from articulating a new vision of race, Wade has simply applied fresh makeup to an ugly brand of scientific racism: eugenics. For those unfamiliar with the term, eugenics is a 19th century school of thought originated by Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin.

The lure of Galton's eugenics was his belief that society would be better off if the intellectually eminent could be encouraged to have more children. What scholar could disagree with that? (Wade, 2014, p.27)

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² This is a quote from an open letter signed by more than 140 scientists who reject Nicholas Wade's interpretations of population genetics and evolutionary biology. The *New York Times* printed the open letter in the August 8, 2014 issue of *The New York Times Book Review*. The Stanford Center for Computational, Evolutionary and Human Genomics, <http://cehg.stanford.edu/letter-from-population-geneticists/>, also posted the letter on its website.