



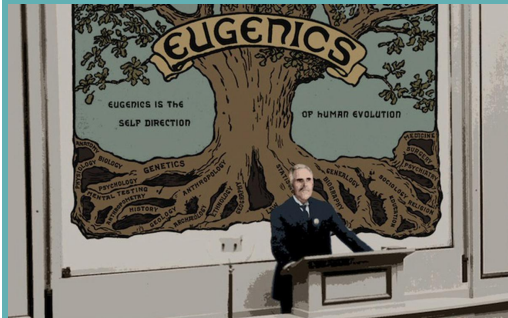
CENTER FOR  
GENETICS  
AND SOCIETY

# BioPolitical

# News&Views

February 12, 2021

## SPOTLIGHT



### A Dangerous Idea: Eugenics in America

Thursday, February 25, 6:30pm PT, presented by the Asian Art Museum.

View excerpts from the 2018 documentary [A Dangerous Idea](#) and discuss the meanings, uses, and misuses of genetic science. With UC Berkeley bioethicist and CGS Senior Fellow Osagie K. Obasogie, CGS Executive Director Marcy Darnovsky, and filmmaker Stephanie Welch, moderated by Milton Reynolds.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### Superior: The Return of Race Science

Thursday, February 18, 4-5:30pm PT, presented by the Boston Museum of Science.

A conversation with Angela Saini, author of *Superior*, and Osagie Obasogie, CGS Senior Fellow and the Haas Distinguished Chair and Professor of Bioethics at the University of California, Berkeley. They'll be discussing the murky history of race science and the ways in which it's being resurrected in the 21st century, how the far-right are attempting to repackage racism, the history of systemic racism engrained in STEM, and how the current COVID-19 pandemic is bringing the concept of racial hierarchy to the forefront of our society once again.

[Register now for this free virtual event.](#)

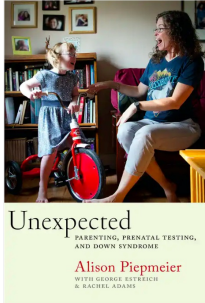
**The History and Future of Scientific Racism and**



## Eugenics: Panel Discussion

Tuesday, February 16, 1-3pm PT, sponsored by the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics and the University of Oregon Department of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies. This panel will consider the enduring legacy of eugenics alongside the possibilities that genetic technologies now offer for understanding population histories, diverse and diasporic ancestries, and race- and gender-based health disparities. Panelists: CGS Advisory Board member Alexandra Minna Stern and Jada Benn Torres. Moderator: Judith Eisen. Commentary by Françoise Baylis.

[Register now for this free virtual event.](#)

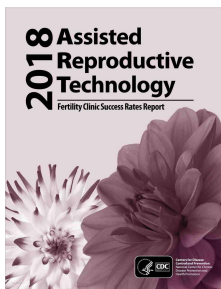


## Book Launch Roundtable on Alison Piepmeier's *Unexpected: Parenting, Prenatal Testing, and Down Syndrome*

Monday, February 15, 3pm PT, online. George Estreich, Rachel Adams, Alondra Nelson, Sayantani DasGupta, and Arden Hegele discuss what prenatal tests and down syndrome reveal about our reproductive choices.

[Register now for this free virtual event.](#)

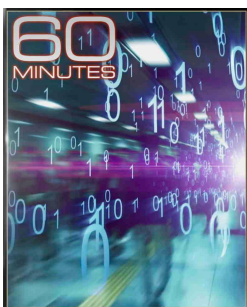
## COMMENTARY



## New Data Confirm the Need to Regulate the US Assisted Reproduction Industry

[Pete Shanks](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 02.10.2021

Analysis of the latest Centers for Disease Control report on US fertility clinics confirms the limitations of current law. CDC has no oversight authority, while clinics expand the sale of expensive, unregulated techniques. Is this situation leading the way to a modern, high-tech form of eugenics?



## Commercial DNA, and the China Card

[Pete Shanks](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 02.03.2021

On January 31, *60 Minutes* featured interviews with, among others, UC Davis professor of law and CGS Fellow Lisa Ikemoto and 23andMe CEO Anne Wojcicki. The segment focused on companies and countries — especially China — “vying for your DNA.” The depiction of the Chinese threat overshadowed similar issues raised by developments in the US.

## WHAT WE'RE READING

GENOME EDITING | RACE & EUGENICS | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION |  
GENOMICS | BUSINESS | BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

GENOME EDITING

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## Runaway Biology: A Call for Conscientious Genome Editing with CRISPR

[Søren Hough](#), *Science for the People* | 01.28.2021

As scientists and governments methodically deliberate on the best way to regulate CRISPR's use in society, those seeking fame and fortune plow ahead heedless of the consequences.

## The Dawn of CRISPR Mutants

[Eben Kirksey](#), *Sapiens* | 01.27.2021

An anthropologist dives into the world of human genetic engineering to explore claims that gene-editing tools such as CRISPR might redesign our species for the better. This is an edited excerpt from Kirksey's recent book, *The Mutant Project*.

## RACE AND EUGENICS

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### Where's the Vaccine for Ableism?

[Elliot Kukla](#), *New York Times* | 02.04.2021

Terrible human and systemic failings have led to some lives being treated as expendable, driving the pandemic to unmanageable proportions and putting all Americans in more danger. Ableist perspectives on disability in the pandemic have been elevated by the media, while disabled voices have largely been sidelined. Until we recognize that we need one another, none of us will be safe.

### Clinicians fear NFL's concussion settlement program protocols discriminate against Black players

[Pete Madden, Cho Park, and Ryan Smith](#), *ABCNews* | 02.03.2021

"Race-norming" assumes that the average Black player starts at a lower level of cognitive functioning than the average white player. Data suggest that race-based adjustments have a significant impact on payouts.

### The Logic of Eugenics Still Haunts Virginia

[Ellen Wayland-Smith](#), *Boston Review* | 01.27.2021

Elizabeth Catte's new book, *Pure America: Eugenics and the Making of Modern Virginia*, examines how early 20th century Virginia progressives believed the forced sterilization of poor whites would pave the way to a bright future—and how their legacy endures in national parks and prisons.

### Media Elevate Eugenicists, Sideline Disabled Voices in Discussions of Covid Rationing

[Justine Barron](#), *FAIR* | 01.20.2021

Corporate media coverage of COVID has elevated some experts without disclosing their troubling views on disability, aging, and the value of human life.

## ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

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### Egg freezing is on the up – but new research raises questions about how clinics advertise

[Zeynep Gurtin](#), *The Conversation* | 02.01.2021

Recent research suggests that, in general, UK fertility clinics provide a poor standard of information about egg freezing, are not transparent about costs, and do not always provide accurate data on success rates. Only one of the fifteen websites analyzed was rated "good" in terms of its quality of information.

### Surprising Surge of Egg Freezing During the Pandemic Raises Ethical Questions

[Danielle Pacia and Jacob Howard](#), *Bioethics Forum* | 01.21.2021

Contrary to the expectations of many fertility clinics, demand for egg freezing has increased sharply during the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting long-standing ethical concerns about egg freezing clinics.

## GENOMICS

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### **Complicated legacies: The human genome at 20**

[Kathryn Maxson Jones et al.](#), *Science* | 02.05.2021

As part of a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the publication of the human genome, *Science* published 9 short pieces, by a total of 17 experts, including CGS Advisory Board member Dorothy Roberts, that “explore how we got here and where we should (or ought not) be going.”

### **DNA and Our Twenty-First-Century Ancestors**

[Duana Fullwiley](#), *Boston Review* | 02.04.2021

Home DNA ancestry kits include no ancestors, instead comparing customers to other present-day people based on assumptions about race and ethnicity. So what are they actually selling?

### **The Victims Left Behind by Genetic Genealogy**

[Jacob Stern and Sarah Zhang](#), *The Atlantic* | 01.27.2021

The average American murder victim is a Black man in his 20s, likely living in or around a major city. An analysis of publicly available genetic-genealogy cases found that, in cases involving murder, a disproportionate number of both the victims and the suspects are white. The victims are also overwhelmingly female.

### **New 23andMe Tool Assesses Risk of Covid-19 Becoming Severe**

[Kristen V Brown](#), *Bloomberg* | 01.27.2021

Commercial DNA-testing company 23andMe has launched a new tool that aims to predict an infected person’s risk of developing a severe case of Covid-19. The tool does not incorporate genetic factors, although the company says it may in the future, once genetic associations with Covid severity have been established.

### **‘Deleted’ DNA Data Just Reappeared on a Popular Database**

[Emily Mullin](#), *Future Human* | 01.22.2021

Over the past few years, the online DNA database GEDmatch has become a powerful tool for solving cold cases. The database contains around 1.5 million DNA profiles uploaded by 1.1 million people. Recent hacks, technical glitches, and changes to its privacy policy threaten to undermine trust in the site.

## BUSINESS

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### **23andMe to go public via Richard Branson’s SPAC**

[Casey Toss and Matthew Herper](#), *STAT* | 02.04.2021

Virgin Group’s Richard Branson and 23andMe’s Anne Wojcicki will each invest \$25 million in the fund formed to bring the company public, bringing its value to \$3.5 billion. “In my opinion, there’s no better way to invest your money than in health care,” Branson told STAT. “And the returns can be exceptional.”

### **China gene firm providing worldwide COVID tests worked with Chinese military**

[Kristy Needham](#), *Reuters* | 01.30.2021

BGI Group, the world’s largest genomics company, has worked with China’s military on research that ranges from mass testing for respiratory pathogens to brain science, a Reuters review of research, patent filings, and other documents has found.

### **Is Your DNA Data Safe in Blackstone’s Hands?**

**Matthew Ponsford**, *NEO.LIFE* | 01.28.2021

Direct-to-consumer DNA sequencing companies are busy monetizing their large-scale genetic databases, with hopes to shape the burgeoning DNA economy and reap its rewards. Your DNA might already be under the corporate control of some of the richest firms on Wall Street.

## BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

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### **Why Biden needs to make genetic data privacy a top priority**

**Robert I. Field, Anthony W. Orlando, and Arnold J. Rosoff**, *Philadelphia Inquirer* | 01.28.2021

If people avoid medical genetic testing out of fear or suspicion, they may deny scientists the data they need to make lifesaving discoveries. The law should make it more difficult for companies to share your genetic data, and it should ensure those data are encrypted and protected in transit.

### **This Scientist Helped Free the Innocent Using DNA. Now Biden Wants Him in the Cabinet.**

**Eli Hagar**, *The Marshall Project* | 01.26.2021

Some experts hope Eric Lander, the president's choice for new science adviser, will crack down on bad forensics in courtrooms.

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