

<http://somatosphere.net/2009/04/ian-hacking-on-commercial-genome.html>

## Ian Hacking on commercial genome-reading

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By Eugene Raikhel

Chris Kelty at [Savage Minds](#) directs our attention to an excellent [discussion](#) on commercial genome-reading hosted by the National Humanities Center's On the Human project. An excellent [post by Ian Hacking](#) on genome reading services offered by companies like [23andMe](#), receives commentary from [Paul Rabinow](#), [Gisli Palsson](#), [Norton Wise](#) and others. There is also a [follow-up post](#) by Hacking. Hacking's post continues some of the arguments he developed in his 2006 Daedalus article, "[Genetics, biosocial groups & the future of identity](#)" (available for [free download](#)), chiefly the question of "Are the direct-to-consumer online genome services forging a new technology of the self?"

The [On the Human](#) project itself and its website are also quite interesting. The project is devoted to interdisciplinary explorations "dedicated to improving our understanding of persons and the quasi-persons who surround us." By quasi-persons they mean animals and machines; so this project is very much situated in contemporary discussions about human/non-human distinctions in the context of novel biotechnologies. In addition to the [blog/forum](#), the website includes an [open-access undergraduate course](#), some [teaching resources](#), and [videos](#) of lectures from a series of conferences which addressed these issues.

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