

In 2003 the Human Genome Project announced that it had achieved a stunning scientific breakthrough: the full map of the human genome and with it our first complete picture of the basic building blocks of human life. Since then, boasts about the benefits—and warnings of the dangers—of genomics have remained front-page news.

For the nonscientist, the claims and counterclaims are dizzying—what does it really mean to understand the genome? Barry Barnes and John Dupré offer an answer to that question and many more in *Genomes and What to Make of Them*, a clear and lively account of the genomic revolution and its promise. The book opens with a brief history of the science of genetics and genomics, from Mendel to Watson and Crick and all the way up to Craig Venter; from there the authors delve into the use of genomics in determining evolutionary paths. Barnes and Dupré then consider both the power and risks of genetics, from the economic potential of plant genomes to overblown claims that certain human genes can be directly tied to such traits as intelligence or homosexuality. Ultimately, the authors argue, we are now living with a new knowledge as powerful in its way as nuclear physics, and the stark choices that face us—between biological warfare and gene therapy, a new eugenics or a new agricultural revolution—will demand the full engagement of both scientists and citizens.

"The authors of this insightful book are prominent figures in the sociology of knowledge and philosophy of science. . . . They have come to grips with the detail of scientific tradition and methodology in this field. . . . *Genomes and What to Make of Them* provides as straightforward an unpacking of the scientific, philosophical, and ethico-sociological questions that lie at the core of the new genomics as could reasonably be expected." —*International Journal of Epidemiology*

"An engaging, dense and informative account of the many conceptual, theoretical and ethical issues surrounding the powerful science of genomics. . . . Philosophers and historians of science, sociologists of knowledge, and bioethicists will all benefit from reading it. I will add to the list biologists too. . . . This is an impressive book. The writing style is engaging, while the approach is quite refreshing, as the authors are not afraid to take many biological, political, and ethical stands." —*Metapsychology*

Barry Barnes is a former codirector of the ESRC Centre for Genomics in Society at the University of Exeter, where he was formerly professor of sociology. He is the author of several books on the sociology of the sciences and was awarded the J. D. Bernal Prize for his career contribution to the field. **John Dupré** is the director of the ESRC Centre for Genomics in Society, professor of philosophy of science at the University of Exeter, and the author of several books, including *Darwin's Legacy: What Evolution Means Today*.

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