

Will human genome editing beckon a new eugenics movement?

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.**

The technology is called CRISPR/Cas9. It is a modest acronym for an enormously powerful new molecular tool that, depending how it is used, could change the future of the human race. Using this we can now edit — that is, alter — the genes in any organism, including human beings, with unprecedented speed, efficiency and precision. Deployed in people, it affords the living the promise of amelioration or cure of diseases in which genes are causal or complicit.

The new technology also enables us to engineer new kinds of people — implanting in persons yet unborn genes that will improve them beyond their unedited genetic destinies and be passed to future generations.

We are living in the age of biocapitalism, and it is entirely possible that commercial and consumer interests could find a way around the current commitments and controls of governments.

That is an ironic outcome. As anyone who lived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century knows, “eugenics” is a dirty word largely because of its association with abusive governments, particularly the Nazis but also as a result of race-improvement policies here in the United States. Politically, it’s an untouchable third rail. But scientifically it’s now far more plausible than it ever was. With the advent of a new way to modify humans — by transforming their genes, rather than through breeding and extermination — it’s not overly alarmist to say eugenics, or whatever we call it this time, may come back, only in a new, private form shaped by the dynamics of democratic consumer culture.

**Read full, original post:** [If You Could Design Your Baby's Genes, Would You?](#)