

## Consumer DNA tests: Answering questions ‘we didn’t even know we had’

23andMe is among a crop of new services that have arrived to help us mine our genetic material for answers to questions we didn’t even know we had. These services’ ancestral algorithms are based on [estimates and probabilities](#), not certainties, but they nevertheless claim to distill the self into a series of appealingly specific data points onto which personal narratives can be written.

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And as DNA test results are shared publicly — spawning their own YouTube genre (“[Am I REALLY Hispanic? DNA Test Results!](#)”) and [Twitter memes](#) — they transform into a tool for talking not just about ourselves, but about race, often in ways that obscure its realities.

It’s probably not a coincidence that these mechanisms of biological self-discovery are on the rise now, amid seething tensions over racism, immigration and what constitutes a “real American.” White supremacists are drawn to DNA testing to [prove their racial purity](#).

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But progressive white people seem to be using these services in a different way: as methods for performing racial harmony and assuaging white guilt.

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[M]any white users perform delight at any hint of non-European origins in their results. In “[Irish People Take a DNA Test](#),” one woman rejoices when she learns that she is 4.2 percent Jewish. “I knew there was a bit of Jew in me!” she exclaims. “I’m glad that I have other bits in me.”

**Read full, original post:** [The Racial Spectacle of DNA Test Result Videos](#)