

## Topics for Critical Thinking and Writing

1. What does this photograph seem to say about human genetic modification? Why do you think the photographer included a bar code in the image? In a couple of paragraphs, evaluate this photo's effectiveness.
2. Do you agree with the point of view expressed in the photograph? In 250 words, write up a description of a photograph that might work as a rebuttal to this one.

## RICHARD HAYES

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*Born in 1945, Richard Hayes is executive director of the Center for Genetics and Society, an organization that describes itself as “working to encourage responsible uses and effective society governance of the new human genetic and reproductive technologies.... The Center supports benign and beneficent medical applications of the new human genetic and reproductive technologies, and opposes those applications that objectify and commodify human life and threaten to divide human society.”*

*This reprinted essay originally appeared in the Washington Post on April 15, 2008.*

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## *Genetically Modified Humans? No Thanks*

In an essay in Sunday's Outlook section, Dartmouth ethics professor Ronald Green asks us to consider a neoeugenic future of “designer babies,” with parents assembling their children quite literally from genes selected from a catalogue. Distancing himself from the compulsory, state-sponsored eugenics that darkened the first half of the last century, Green instead celebrates the advent of a libertarian, consumer-driven eugenics motivated by the free play of human desire, technology, and markets. He argues that this vision of the human future is desirable and very likely inevitable.

To put it mildly: I disagree. Granted, new human genetic technologies have real potential to help prevent or cure many terrible diseases, and I support research directed towards that end. But these same technologies also have the potential for real harm. If misapplied, they would exacerbate existing inequalities and re-inforce existing modes of discrimination. If more widely abused, they could undermine the foundations of civil and human