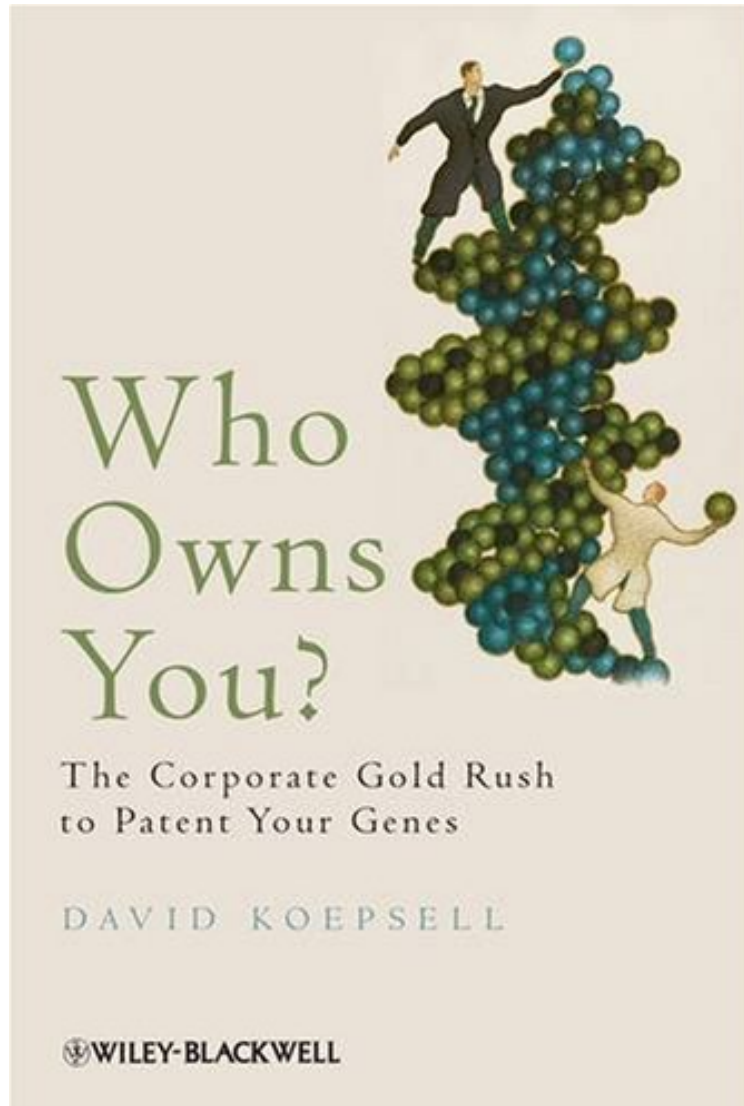


# Who Owns You?: The Corporate Gold Rush to Patent Your Genes

David Koepsell

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**David Koepsell : Who Owns You?: The Corporate Gold Rush to Patent Your Genes** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Who Owns You?: The Corporate Gold Rush to Patent Your Genes:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent By Matt Brown Well-written and argued examination of the legal and philosophical issues around gene patenting. I'm a biologist by training, so I largely skimmed the, albeit very good, intro sections on the basics of DNA. The rest of the book manages to tackle some pretty abstract issues of property rights, personhood, and economics, while still managing to be readable to the layman. It's definitely a

philosophical text, so don't go in expecting a light read, but it's well worth the effort if you have any interest in the topic. At this point the only real criticism I can give is that it's somewhat out of date, since the law and precedent regarding gene ownership has changed significantly since publication. However, to the author's credit those changes have mostly been in the direction he argues for, and the book is still well worth reading as an overview of a complex topic. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Patently Obvious - Koepsell hits the nail right on the head. By Luigi Palombi. For such a complex subject this book is easy to follow. The issues are clearly explained and the arguments succinctly made. Patents are about inventions. The bedrock principle of any patent system is that natural phenomena are not patentable. They belong to no one. They are part of the public domain. They are to be shared by humanity for humanity. We all know that. True it may be that patents are granted to inventors for making their ingenious inventions known and available to the world and that is a social good that deserves a social reward, but the equilibrium between that good and that reward has been disrupted. At least 20% of the human genome is now subject to US patents. How has this happened? What does this mean at a practical everyday level? And what has to be done to stop this injustice? These are the questions which this book poses and explores. There is more to this book than academic gymnastics. It's actually really important for all of us to understand how the patent bureaucracy has undermined the patent system and what this means to all of us. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Who Owns You? by David Koepsell: Fascinating, Erudite, Compelling: a Must-read on the Topic. By C. A. Lajos. "Who owns you?" According to Koepsell (Assistant Professor, Philosophy Section, Faculty of Technology, Policy, and Management, Technology University of Netherlands, Delft; Senior Fellow, 3TU Centre for Ethics and Technology, The Netherlands; Ph.D, Philosophy, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1997; J.D., SUNY at Buffalo School of Law, 1995; B.A, Political Science/English, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1990; author of several books including *The Ontology of Cyberspace* as well as scholarly articles; [...]), an author, attorney, philosopher, and educator, whose research has focused on the nexus of science, technology, ethics, and public policy, you may be surprised and alarmed to learn that biotechnology companies, universities, and other research institutions now own the exclusive rights to many parts of you. As the aforementioned entities rush to patent the human genes comprising the human genome--the genetic code that largely defines the distinct features of humans, of which one-fifth is fully patented-- gene patenting threatens to infringe upon the rights of individuals and hinder scientific and technological progress. It also violates international agreements and is contrary to historical and legal norms. In this noteworthy publication, the author provides the first, nearly comprehensive study of the practices and implications of gene patenting. Koepsell maintains that gene patenting is harmful and needs to be reexamined. Using scientific findings, philosophical conclusions, and ethical determinations based upon his examination of the ontology of genes, the author advocates immediate legal reform. Among other solutions, he argues in favor of partly revoking intellectual property laws in order to establish the naturally-occurring, human genome as a "commons by necessity" that will not be patentable by companies, universities, or other research institutions. Divided into nine chapters, covering the science of genes, their ontology, the legal dimensions of gene ownership, intellectual property laws, pragmatic considerations, and more, this accessible, expertly-argued, insightful, nicely-presented, sufficiently-documented, interdisciplinary study on the practices and implications of gene patenting will interest general readers as well as students, scholars, and professionals. It will serve as a significant resource for further understanding, knowledge, and research. This book belongs in many large, public, academic, and law library book collections. Highly recommended.

*Who Owns You?* is a comprehensive exploration of the numerous philosophical and legal problems of gene patenting. Provides the first comprehensive book-length treatment of this subject. Develops arguments regarding moral realism, and provides a method of judgment that attempts to be ideologically neutral. Calls for public attention and policy changes to end the practice of gene patenting.

"This book is a useful exposition of the difficulties that patents on human genes give rise to. Its focus on philosophical considerations adds depth to the debate, and it takes a novel perspective ... A book that proposes that the model should be abolished should promote useful debate in the field." (*Journal of Biosocial Science*, 2011) "This is an excellent introductory book to the main topics and concepts related to gene patents. Moreover, not only it is a (well written and) comprehensive piece of writing, but also, it has already had an impact within the academia (see, for instance, the many times that it has been reviewed) probably, because of the relevance of, and the accuracy by which the research topic is addressed, and, also probably, because of its strong (provocative and) normative tone and content." (*Asian Biotechnology Development*, 1 March 2011) "Who owns you is lucidly written and reads as a 101 gene patenting. It is a book suitable for all who wish to understand gene patenting, and obtain a fresh perspective on associated ethical and legal matters". (*Ethical Perspectives*, 1 March 2010) "Koepsell's timely book is highly recommended for all reading levels." (*CHOICE*, December 2009) "The writing of Koepsell is expertly critical and thoughtfully opinionated. The vast array of intellectually provocative questions raised directly, or indirectly, by the discerning commentary of Koepsell is a great strength of the book. The book's edifying substance is highly relevant to universities and corporations, importantly including insurance, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies. The rich wealth of

information mined by Koepsell's intellectual toil likewise should be of greatly appealing interest to many professionals, including: geneticists, biologists, biomedical scientists, intellectual property scholars, patent public interest and healthcare lawyers, judges, legislators, bioethicists, genetic counselors, and health policy makers." (Metapsychology, April 2010) "Koepsell makes an extensive argument that gene patents should be recognized as a social justice and human liberty issue ... .Who Owns You provides a real philosophical foundation to anyone interested in the debate." (yalepatents.org, January 2010) "Who Owns You? is the first long-form, comprehensive treatment of the implications of gene patenting. As such, it deserves much credit for bringing the debate into the public eye, though it's no template for policy change in itself. Perhaps most important is its application of philosophical analysis to biopolicy, an underutilized approach critical to scientific advancement. Koepsell's book serves as a worthy starting point for anyone interested in interconnecting genetics, property law, and philosophy." (Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine, December 2009) "We live in a century when quandaries that seemed more appropriate for science fiction will become real. I suspect, for example, that many people would be outraged to find out that large parts of their genome the genetic code that largely defines the distinct features of their own humanity are patented, and therefore "owned" by others. David Koepsell here raises a set of fascinating questions that all of us, and policy makers in particular, should ponder as science is slowly redefining what it means to human." Lawrence Krauss, Arizona State University "A lucid and compelling deconstruction of current practice in the patenting of human genes, exposing inherent contradictions in the process and offering practical ways to resolve them." John Sulston, The University of Manchester, Nobel Prize Laureate "Who Owns You? Is an authoritative, well-argued and clear discussion of a topical, serious problem. The author raises a number of tough philosophical, legal and political questions, starting with the possible infringement on the most basic of all rights, that of owning oneself. I know of no comparable work on the question of DNA property rights. Who Owns You? is bound to become obligatory reading on this thorniest of issues." Mario Bunge, McGill University "Via reflective consideration of secondary sources, attorney and philosopher Koepsell explores economic, ethical, legal, and scientific questions raised by the patenting of one-fifth of the human genome.... Koepsell's emphasis on the demonstration of both an innovation and a commercial use ultimately may prove central to future jurisprudence in cases involving these patents. Koepsell's timely book is highly recommended for all reading levels." C. H. Blake, James Madison University

From the Back Cover Surely you own your own genes, don't you? Think again. Now that the race to map the human genome is over, another competition has ensued. Biotech companies, universities, and research institutions, sensing a biological gold mine, have been engaged in a furious scramble to patent human genes. Presently, more than one-fifth of the human genome is fully patented. As far-fetched as it may sound, corporations and universities now own the exclusive rights to many precious parts of you. How can this be? Patenting human genes violates international agreements and flies in the face of historical and legal norms regarding the ownership of human parts. Not only that, the practice is a costly and unethical aberration in the law of intellectual property that threatens to impede the pace of scientific and technological progress. Who Owns You? is a wake-up call to the far-reaching implications of the insidious nature of gene patenting.