

What was once biology's commons of research materials becomes increasingly commodified. Haraway takes the Human Genome Diversity Project as a case study in agency in the age of the gene. It was supposed to gather samples from populations at risk of losing their more or less distinctive characteristics. Indigenous communities were not involved in formulating the project, which at best sought their permission, not collaboration. Many indigenous peoples are strongly against the results of such work leading to patents.

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N The "mutation" of the private property form into strictly controlled "intellectual property" makes whole new classes of things available for commodification. "Like the stigmata of gender and race, which signify asymmetrical, regularly reproduced processes that give some human beings rights in other human beings that they do not have in themselves, the copyright, patent and trademark are specific, asymmetrical, congealed processes—which must be constantly revived in law and commerce as well as in science."⁶⁶ Intellectual property grounds a new kind of class power.

Δ A patent defines what is nature and what is not. An artifact of "nature" cannot be patented. For that to happen, nature has to be mixed with labor. Patent is a site of struggle over what counts as subject and what as object. Haraway's famous example is DuPont's OncoMouse, the first patented mammal, specifically engineered for the study of breast cancer. All sorts of organisms are now integrated into a strange techno-nature meant to support human life, or at least those parts of it that can be commodified. Not only mice but dogs and all sorts of other beings are our "companions" within techno-science. In place of the liberal-humanist family, quite another kind: "the technoscientific family is a cyborg nuclear unit," now that "life is a system to be managed."⁶⁷

N What kind of critical agency is possible in the world of OncoMouse? Do lab rats belong to the working class? Should battery hens be unionized? Should one have the right to share in the surplus produced by one's cells, even when those cells are not in one's body? Consider the case of Henrietta Lacks, an African-American tobacco worker who died of cervical cancer. Cells taken