



2009 CONFERENCE

**IDENTIFYING THE PERSON: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

*St Antony's College, University of Oxford*

**26-27 September 2009**

## **Abstract**

**Sex Crime in the Genetic Age:**

**The Role of Sex Offenders in Generating a New Identification Regime**

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This paper extends previous historical analyses of the development of new biometric identification technologies into the present day. It posits the notion that each new identification technology has drawn on cultural representations of "poster criminals," who symbolically embodied a notion of criminality associated with that particular technology. Today, of course, we are entering an age in which genetic markers seem poised to become the dominant method of biometric identification, certainly in criminal justice and perhaps in other areas as well. In the case of DNA profiling, I argue that sex offenders, due to their metonymous relationship with genetic material and bodily fluid, served as the "poster criminals" who symbolized the utility and cultural power of genetic identification. In this paper, I explore the role that sex offenders played in justifying the development of forensic, archival, and diagnostic identification projects centered around genetic markers.

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