

# **CfP: “What’s next?!” Hype and Hope from Human Reproductive Cloning to Genome Editing**

**Department of Philosophy and Educational Sciences, Turin (Italy), July 6 & 7<sup>th</sup> 2017**

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*Organizers: Dr. Solveig Lena Hansen, Department of Medical Ethics and the History of Medicine, Göttingen (Germany) & Dr. Maurizio Balistreri, Department of Philosophy and Educational Sciences, Turin (Italy)*

*Keynotes: Prof. Dr. Demetrio Neri, University of Messina (Italy) & Prof. Dr. Aline Ferreira, University of Aveiro (Portugal)*

## **Deadline: March 31st, 2017**

Recently, the HFEA approved the first research application of new genome editing techniques. The UK Parliament also opted for the clinical application of IVF techniques that include mitochondrial donation, techniques that are equivalent to nuclear cell transplantation. Both events initiated debates that involved not only scholars of bioethics but also the conducting scientists themselves. Pertaining to these technologies, media argued for a regulation of this revolution which otherwise could be overshadowed by fear.

However, the self-regulatory concern of science that emerged at the Washington summit in 2015 on genome editing was already present at events such as the Ciba-Symposium on Eugenics in 1962 or the Asilomar conference on recombinant DNA in 1975. Also the proposed need for regulation holds for events like the birth of Louise Brown in 1978 and the birth of Dolly the Sheep in 1996 that were followed by crucial regulations nationally and globally.

As for the technology of genome editing and modifications of germ lines, the right for reproductive choice is balanced against the risks for future generations and non-therapeutic use. Also this balancing resembles the patterns of arguments that were aroused after earlier inventions in reproductive techniques. Just as the many reproductive techniques have been hyped, many hopes were built up and destroyed. Expectations for stem cell research, for instance, were interrupted when the announcement of the first cloned human embryos for therapeutic purposes turned out to be a fraud in 2005.

In an independent manner from the ethical debates, science fiction never stopped bringing individual and collective issues of these technologies to the public. In this tradition of the deep social dimension of modern technology, films and novels counter hard facts of science with a touching story of vulnerable and affected subjects. From this point of view, the fact that society simultaneously produces scientific progress and its fictional narration is no coincidence but the result of an innate requirement to negotiate hopes, potential consequences, side effects and risks of biotechnologies.

**Bringing together these perspectives, we invite scholars interested in interdisciplinary research to discuss, from a theoretical or empirical perspective:**

- Which hypes and hopes were/are attached to new reproductive technologies? How do we evaluate their risks and benefits from an ethical perspective? What can be learned from disruptions of 'hype and hope' for future ethical debates?
- How do we morally evaluate the attention and research allocation in the field of reproductive technologies? Which issues of social justice arise?
- Which social conflicts and cultural paradigms are continuously negotiated in the representational arts? How are clones, IVF children and genetically enhanced individuals depicted? How can their stories help shaping moral arguments and ethical evaluation? What is the role of fiction in moral epistemology?

**We are looking for presentations of approx. 30 mins.**

**What to send:**

Scholars who are interested in participating please send an abstract of max. 300 words including a short note on their CV and their experience with interdisciplinary work. A limited number of travel grants is available for eligible participants who are selected. For scholars who do not have any access to funding at their home institutions, please give a short explanation. Please send the abstract and the additional information not later than March 31st to [solveig-lena.hansen@medizin.uni-goettingen.de](mailto:solveig-lena.hansen@medizin.uni-goettingen.de)