

The Way of the Human Genome

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Introduction – The Way of Genome Editing

- The orientation of bioethics and research ethics are too **narrow** to set regulation
- **Defining regulation** entails more than setting high standards
- Standards **enable new research** and are important in **international competition**
- At stake are not just health, but **also investment and GDP**, especially in the field of genome editing
- Traditions of valuing health, nature, and embodied knowledge in various parts of the world

Human Germline Intervention (HGI) – issues

- Use of **large numbers of embryos and gametes**; its experimental nature will seriously **complicate pregnancy** and reproductive decision-making
- Forcing prospective parents to reflect in terms of what are 'healthy' or '**better**' babies
- Children as **designer products** by **designers**©
- Risk of ***Genome Pollution***
- Why and how we exploit ourselves...

Embodied Knowledge

1) Skills we learn gradually through tradition and practice, e.g., riding a bicycle

2) Problem solving underpinning quick-fix solution

a. pull: solving problems for the good

b. push: honour, patents, setting the standards, comparative advantage, economic growth

The Brain's Left Hemisphere (LH) Oh, and the Right One (RH)

- **Two hemispheres:** relate not to function but to **different modes of attention** (I McGillchrist – *The Master and His Emissary*, 2009)
- LH: treats things as tools, grasps; emphasises the visual, the conceptual – has a voice
- RH: looks at context and connections
- LH inhibits RH

“For the RH, we live the body; for the LH, we live in it, rather as we drive a car”

Scientific separation

- **Scientific separation** from the environment of its object of Interest (T Ingold 2000)
- Embryo genome editing **guided by pre-existing genome** map – hit or miss?
- Gene editing defines ability and health in terms of **genetic endowment, separated from** the human's development and **life world**
- Scientific skills are developed in an environment of global competition, industry and trade, but **fails to include this as a risk**

Nature, Mystery, Morality

Relations between **nature and morality** (Eastern & Western traditions, green-spiritualist-environmental movements) (D Soelle; J Kidd; D Cooper; W. de Barry; DT Suzuki):

- Harmony with the environment/nature
- Life as gift, destiny or path, encouraging contentment
- Risk of overestimation/ over-theorisation of disembodied knowledge
- Cultivation of intuitive and spiritual faculties on the basis of experience
- Nature as imbued with vitality, mystery, Dao

Shared by most of us:

- Feeling at home in nature; appreciating the natural environment
- Human diversity is important
- All humans depend on other humans
- Worry about experimental medical technology and its iatrogenic consequences

Conclusion

- Support science, but not its narrow material interests and market orientation
- Not its technological fix before human care
- GLI can only be justified by sidelining the Right Hemisphere
- The regulatory facilitation of GLI, even ***or perhaps especially if conditional***, will be used to justify the wholesale exploitation of this field