

# we, new utopians..

genome editing and echoes of future life



workshop/laboratory

Goethe University

Research group *Biotechnologies, Nature and Society*

ARTENGINE project (MCSA H2020)

LaSST\_ the Lab for Studies in Science and Technology

17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> September, campus Westend, room SH 5.106

contact: slesingerova@soz.uni-frankfurt.de

"Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*

bioethics      future life      knowledge      recombination      DNA  
methodology      STS      research      genome      editing      laboratory  
DNA repair      enhancing life      ethnography      law  
bioArt      gene      targeting      genome      engineering  
biopolitics      synthetic life      biotechnological      utopias

We are living in multiple bio-political potentialities, futures resonating ideas of life-as-it-could-be. Life and bodies seem to have become the materialization of various biotechnological utopias. For fifty years, assorted technologies for human genome editing and DNA repair/recombination have been used. Particular techniques such as CRISPR-Cas9, TALENs, and zinc finger nucleases have been employed significantly in human genome editing and DNA repair in recent years. The current applications of genome editing and DNA repair technology have provoked significant attention and raised a number of ethical and legal questions. We analyze various economies of hope, hype, expectations, politics, and poetics of promises and better or worse predictions or moral panic from the point of view of sociology, anthropology, and science and technology (STS) studies. Miscellaneous futurities, as material-semiotic reconfigurations, are present in the topics of the current genome editing technologies. We will discuss concrete research cases, fieldwork, projects, and analyses. Based on encounters with anthropology, sociology, STS, bioethics, and biotech sciences, we meet to bring together various views on questions like:

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- What kinds of biotechnological utopias, spaces of hope and hype, visions, and social innovations do we face today in the context of human genome editing technologies?
  - What kind of objects, un/real, bio-objects, bio-digital, bioinformatics life these emerging technologies represent and constitute? How can we analyze, explore this situation? What methodological dilemma are we facing in this context?
  - What modes of de/politicization are involved in the context of editing genome technologies? Which medicalized social problems are mirrored and created by contemporary editing genome technologies? How personalized medicine does stratify groups of potential patients?
  - And what political and ethical implications and ramifications do these "problem settings" have?

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Tuesday

13:00 - 14:30

welcome speech by

Thomas Lemke (Goethe University)

*intro talk: laboratory, research, knowledge*

Neil Stephens (Brunel University London)

*Life, laboratory and qualitative research*

14:30 - 15:00

coffee break

15:00 - 16:30

Rachel Hale (Cardiff University)

*Hope and fear for the future of human genome editing*

Fiona Coyle (The University of Edinburgh)

*Genome editing and concept of agora*

17:30 +

dinner



Wednesday

9:00 - 10:00

*intro talk: genome, genealogy, promises*  
Michael Morrison (University of Oxford)

*CRISPR in Context: A critical historical perspective  
on the promise and utility of gene editing*

10:00 - 10:30

coffee break

10:30 - 12:30

Josef Barla (Goethe University)  
*Engineering Extinction: Genome Editing, Public Health,  
and Exterminism*

Katharina Hoppe (Goethe University)  
Cyborg-politics as postmodern Utopia? - Perspectives on  
transformative eco-techno-politics

Eva Slesingerova (Goethe University)  
*We, new utopians*  
*Recombinant DNA technology and other times and spaces*

12:30 - 14:00

lunch

14:00 - 15:30

Timo Faltus  
(Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg)  
*Legal questions of genome editing in human medicine -  
the legal project part of the interdisciplinary ELSI  
project GenomELECTION*

Wei ZHU (Fudan University, Luxemburg university)  
*Where to go for China after the Gene-Edited Baby  
Scandal?*

Jean Enno Charton and Steven Hildemann  
(MerckKGaA and Freiburg University)  
*Ethically Guided Application of Genome Editing  
Principles in an Industry Setting*

15:30 - 16:30

discussion, future collaboration

