

## Editorial

I am composing this editorial in a hotel room with a (splendid) view, on the top floor of a building that is part of the Calgary skyline. As a member of the Interim Review Committee for Genome Canada, I was invited to fly over to Alberta to spend a couple of days in a series of meetings with research teams. A leap back in time from spring to winter, although now all of a sudden the sky is brightening over the prairie landscape in the north. While being thus involved in midterm reviews for a number of Canadian research projects, I noticed a new item that had been dropped in my inbox, only to discover that the Midterm Review Report for our own Centre (CSG) has just been sent to us. This is all part of the peer-review concept, of course: assess and be assessed, review and be reviewed. And there is no such thing as coincidence in this. We, as an international research community stretching from Austria and Germany through the Netherlands and the United Kingdom up to Finland and across to Canada, all find ourselves in more or less the same position: we all have come to the halfway point of our second term.

It is from this perspective that I read through the final versions of articles and contributions that make up the latest edition of our *Genomics, Society and Policy* journal. As diverse as they may seem, in terms of the broad array of topics they address, they have at least one thing in common: they provide a perfect sample or overview of how our field is evolving at this stage. Genomics is becoming more and more concrete. It has begun to enter our lives. And beyond genomics, post-genomics developments are emerging. How are these new technologies affecting us and how are we affecting them?

These issues are addressed from various perspectives. In the first article, Mairi Levitt and Fiona O'Neill describe how they discussed genomics and post-genomics issues with a sample of school children. As biocitizens of the biosocieties of our biofuture, they are invited to reflect on emerging options to improve themselves and on the fading boundaries between therapy and enhancement, thus taking their first lessons in interactive and anticipatory bioethics. Denisa Kera addresses a similar theme. New biotechnologies of the self (such as direct-to-consumer genomics) are seen as instances of "collective experimentation", "bionetworking" and "crowdsourcing". As such, they are creating new communities and identities. Bionetworking, as a convergence of biotech and webtechnologies, is presented as a test-bed for developing new options for biocitizenship. Christopher Hood, however, addressing the same topic (direct-to-consumer testing) takes a much more sceptical stance, questioning the relevance and impact of these sources of individualised bioinformation. In their response, Tutton and Hedgecoe even go a step further, pointing out not only the global nature of this development, but also the risks involved, building on a decade of research on this topic. Schulte in den Bäumen, Paci and Ibarreta address one of the essential components of the emerging biosocieties: the biobank, focusing on "biobank networking" as a development that is regarded as crucial when it comes to enhancing public benefit.

Similar issues are studied in the books being reviewed. Bernice Elger and her colleagues analyse biobanking as a worldwide phenomenon, presenting the results of in-depth interviews with 87 respondents world-wide. *Genetic Suspects*, and *Genetic Policing* analyse the emergence and impact of forensic DNA profiling and databasing as well as its potentials for the future, clearly indicating that genomics has come of age and is no longer confined to the laboratory. Finally, Sheila McLean addresses the vicissitudes and challenges these developments entail for one of the most important bioethical concepts in this domain, autonomy.

The suggestion, inherent in this listing, that genomics is identical with *human* genomics, is counteracted by the article by O'Doherty, Burgess and Secko on the societal aspects of salmon genomics, with a focus on the two most disputed issues in the field: salmon aquaculture and the production of transgenic salmon. Genomics represents a particular way of knowing life, the authors argue, and salmon genomics is certainly part of the geneticisation of society. Their paper describes the results of a public engagement on the topic of salmon genomics, deliberating new options and developments, taking public involvement "upstream", as it were, before the second generation salmon reach the supermarket.

Thus, this issue gives a fair impression of how our research is evolving midway through our second term.

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