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Shifting health notions in future human reproduction – Enlightenment through rerogenetics.

abstract:

This paper focuses on currently changing repro-medical scenarios of future human conception producing new meanings of health, gender and reproduction which might become mobilised for political purposes. Not long ago reproductive medicine-stories mainly revolved around the ill individual, thus around prevention of genetic illness in the newborn and around help for those couples suffering from infertility. In those times it seemed clear whose reproduction was to be prevented and who was to be enabled to reproduce. These two strands about healing of 'defects' followed different and strictly separate concepts of different professions. But from the early 1990ies on slowly something new appears: Fertilisation and contraception converge in one. In such accounts infertility and laboratory reproduction appear to become a standard for everybody, preferable to "stochastic" DIY-conception outside of laboratories. The so produced future of human reproduction now amalgamates 'conception beyond sex and gender' and 'health promising genes'. I will thus in this paper present results of an analysis of scenarios that contain bio-/repro-medical positions in favour of a generalised use of NRGT and cloning as everyday reproductive techniques which change the concept of sterility and (reproductive) health, appearing in German magazines between 1995 and 2003. Different material-semiotic actors take part in the production of this convergent field, such as the technique of intra-cytoplasmatic sperm injection, pressure group's positions and liberal gene-fiction that meets german purism (as well in ethic- as in feminist discourse). I claim that the analysis shows a shifting ground of connected meanings of health and sex/gender/sexuality. The complex 'body sex - health' gives way to 'love' and 'illness' gives way to 'chances'. The scenarios form a scheme of a destabilising second enlightenment - with its as spatial and disordering effects on seemingly fixed categories as the historical enlightenment had. While sex is deconstructed gender is reinvented and refixed.