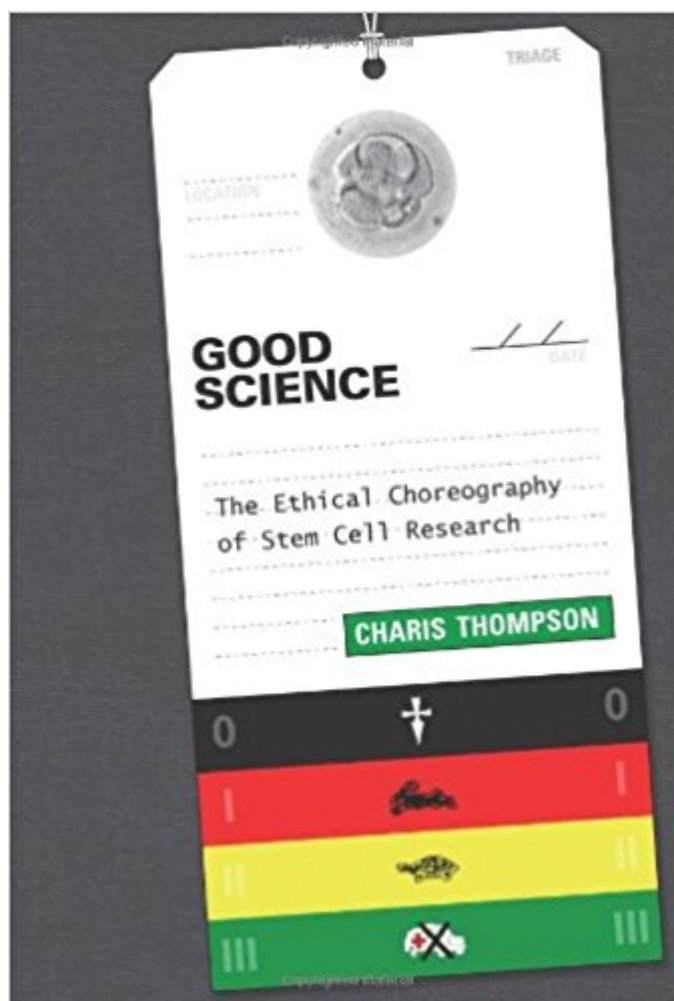


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Good Science: The Ethical Choreography Of Stem Cell Research (Inside Technology)



Synopsis

After a decade and a half, human pluripotent stem cell research has been normalized. There may be no consensus on the status of the embryo -- only a tacit agreement to disagree -- but the debate now takes place in a context in which human stem cell research and related technologies already exist. In this book, Charis Thompson investigates the evolution of the controversy over human pluripotent stem cell research in the United States and proposes a new ethical approach for "good science." Thompson traces political, ethical, and scientific developments that came together in what she characterizes as a "procurial" framing of innovation, based on concern with procurement of pluripotent cells and cell lines, a pro-cures mandate, and a proliferation of bio-curatorial practices. Thompson describes what she calls the "ethical choreography" that allowed research to go on as the controversy continued. The intense ethical attention led to some important discoveries as scientists attempted to "invent around" ethical roadblocks. Some ethical concerns were highly legible; but others were hard to raise in the dominant procurial framing that allowed government funding for the practice of stem cell research to proceed despite controversy. Thompson broadens the debate to include such related topics as animal and human research subjecthood and altruism. Looking at fifteen years of stem cell debate and discoveries, Thompson argues that good science and good ethics are mutually reinforcing, rather than antithetical, in contemporary biomedicine.

Book Information

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How can disruptive political attention and a fierce public controversy as it arose around stem cell research not impose undue regulatory burdens on researchers, lead to a slowdown of research, and undermine the freedom of scientific inquiry? How can it instead turn into being good for science and democracy? In this amazingly clear-sighted, yet normatively firmly grounded book, Charis Thompson makes a convincing case that 'good science' in pluripotent stem cell research results from the continuing, reiterative, and open engagement between science and ethics. She succeeds brilliantly in sketching the outline and dynamics of what may become a new and innovative biopolitical paradigm. (Helga Nowotny, President, European Research Council, and author (with Giuseppe Testa) of *Naked Genes: Reinventing the Human in the Molecular Age*) This ground-breaking examination of the American stem cell debates presents a powerful call for high levels of ethicality in the life sciences. Complex and thought-provoking, *Good Science* is a tour de force by one of the leading feminist technoscience scholars of our times. (Marcia C. Inhorn, Yale University) Bravo! A very important book. Charis Thompson shows how putting challenging bioethical issues on the table and cooperating without consensus to move ahead are producing good stem cell science in California and beyond. Describing the negotiations as choreography, Thompson reveals how important relations among stem cell researchers, their many publics, sponsors, users and research materials must grow and change to address the next generation of scientific potentialities and the complexities of traveling transnationally. Must reading for all of us. (Adele E. Clarke, University of California, San Francisco) *Good Science* offers us a tour of ethical debates in contemporary bioscience from a wholly new and unprecedented perspective, linking the practical challenges of bench science to the complex politics of stem cell regulation and the future promises of translational biology. We could have no better or more knowledgeable guide to these dilemmas than Charis Thompson. (Sarah Franklin, University of Cambridge)

Charis Thompson is Chancellor's Professor and Chair of Gender and Women's Studies, and The Center for Science, Technology, and Medicine in Society, at the University of California, Berkeley, and Professor of Sociology, London School of Economics and Political Science. She is the author of *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies* (MIT Press)

Thompson's thinking is very sharp. She believes that as growing fields like biomedicine, genomics, bio-informatics intersect with controversial topics like eugenics, genetic privacy, and regeneration, that ethics must be an integral part at every phase of the conversation. She makes a strong case that the social, ethical, and legal issues are not downstream implications anymore but part and

parcel of the scientific research itself. In this environment she encourages and advocates for openness in dissent bringing together the best result from many different kinds of contributors from different disciplines and life experiences. Her thinking and writing goes far beyond the usual debates that are so characteristic of books covering the emerging post-human condition in science and medicine. She moves the conversation to an entirely new level.

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