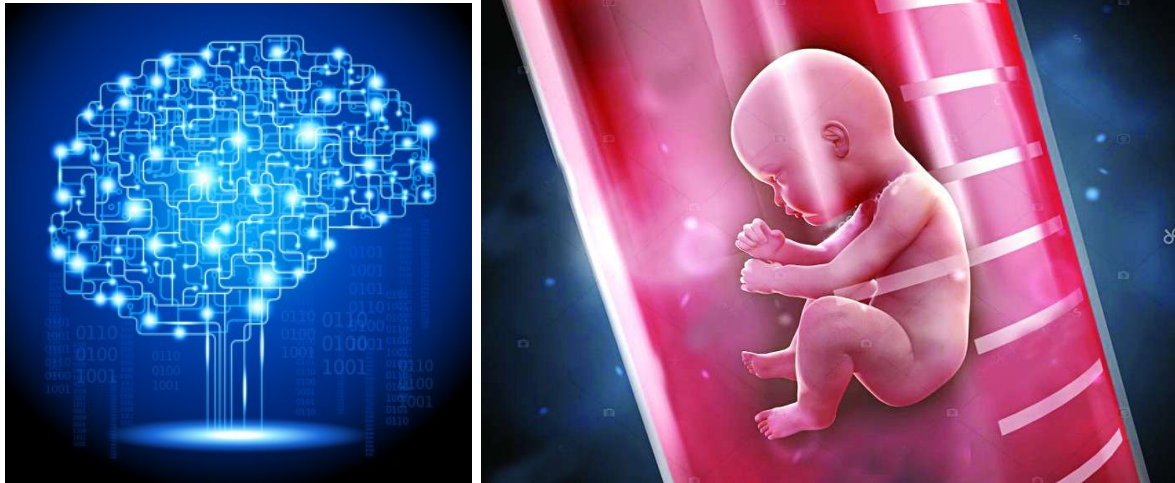


## **'Novel Beings' Workshop**

**When we create new forms of life, what is it to be human?**

10:00-16:00 Thursday 19th September, Newcastle University,  
G21/22 in the Devonshire Building

Supported by Newcastle University Humanities Research Institute



Advances in biotechnologies including synthetic genomics, and in artificial intelligence research, promise the emergence of new lifeforms. These 'novel beings' may even be conscious, and would pose entirely new challenges for society.

Our project sits at the intersection of a number of fields that are often held as disparate, but which are all fundamental to understanding what it is to be human, and how we might apply this understanding to these 'novel beings'. With Wellcome Trust support, we have previously established a network incorporating expertise from bioethics, philosophy of mind, company law, medical law, regulatory theory, neuroscience and the biomedical sciences more broadly, computer science, science and technology studies, and clinical practice; and our aim now is to include a greater wealth of perspectives from the humanities. We envision this including disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, literary studies, and broader creative arts culture. All these disciplines actively engage with considerations around what it is to be human, and we are confident that the work already being conducted in these areas will lead to new horizons in our research.

We intend the majority of the day to be for active participation in breakout groups aligned to specific topics and disciplinary interest areas. This will be punctuated by cross-cutting talks and wider group sessions to ensure the content of the day remains on-topic and focussed.

This workshop would be conducted with a view to determining themes that could form a basis for a new interdisciplinary field of academic research centred around the

various societal impacts that new intelligent lifeforms, as well as other morally significant technologies, will have. The foundation of this field will be to bring together life and computer sciences with the humanities in a new way which focuses on redefining, and providing a holistic alternative to, the piecemeal approach that is currently used in the study of emerging technologies.

We aim to accommodate all those who wish to come but places are limited, please book your place here

If you have any questions, please contact Dr Sarah Morley or Dr David Lawrence.

Dr Sarah Morley and Dr David Lawrence

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