

# **‘Se la bioetica è la risposta, qual era la domanda?’ Riflessioni sulla storia della bioetica britannica dagli anni ’70 ad oggi**

Commento a: Duncan Wilson, *The Making of British Bioethics*, Manchester: Manchester U. P., 2014.

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*‘If Bioethics is the Answer, What was the Question?’ Some Reflections on the History of UK Bioethics from the 1970s Up to Now*

*Abstract:* This article reconstructs the emergence of bioethics in the UK from the 1970s up to now. It does so by taking its cue from historian of medicine Duncan Wilson’s latest book, *The Making of British Bioethics*. Wilson analyses how in the UK the emergence of bioethics has constituted a “decisive shift in the location of biopower”, from medicine itself to bioethics. The book also charts the institutionalisation of bioethics in British universities from 1970s up to now, and shows how from the ‘10s we are witnessing a new phase of ‘the making of British bioethics’. This new phase is characterised by a move towards a more ‘critical’ approach to the analysis of bioethics issues thanks to the active involvement of sociologists and anthropologists. While Wilson suggests that bioethics may be entering a possible ‘bioethical backlash’ against a professional type of or expertise or perhaps even a “slight mid-life crisis”, in this article I argue instead that bioethics is reaching maturity. With the priority of bioethical issues shifting more and more towards questions of global justice, social inequalities, and the environment, I describe how it is morphing into something closer to V. R. Potter’s original meaning of bioethics as the “science of survival”.

*Keywords:* History of bioethics, British bioethics, Coproduction, Biopower, Expertise.

*notizie di POLITEIA*, XXXIV, 129, 2018. ISSN 1128-2401 pp. 189-196