Preface

We are happy to announce the publication of the 8th issue of *metaphorik.de*. The present volume is the third special issue within the last three and a half years and it demonstrates the growing interest in thematically centered studies on the use of metaphor and metonymy. Taking into account the rapidly evolving discourse on biotechnology, this issue is devoted to one of the most controversial and contested technological advances within the recent years: Research on and the use of *embryonic stem cells* in the framework of medical sciences. Since the year 2000, stem cell research has become the object of intense debate throughout Europe and the main question remains whether or not early blastocysts – so-called pluripotent embryonic stem cells which hold the capacity to produce every type of cell and tissue in the body – represent a human being. Ethical and moral views differ hugely and clearly refer to a continuing contestation of a generic human concept and the intrinsic value of human dignity. The main argument still focuses on what stage of cell development life begins and whether human dignity could be attributed the small heaps of cells. In short, do embryonic stem cells represent a human being or are they simply a cluster of cells, devoid of human qualities, which could be harvested and used for research? The main aim of this issue is to explore the categorizing force of metaphor within this expanding domain of discourse.

This special edition starts with an article of Martin Döring and Jörg Zinken. They analyse the metaphorical schematisation of the stem cell discourse in the evolving Polish and French stem cell coverage between 1998 and 2000. The article shows that there are no main national differences in the metaphorical forging of ‘stem cell realities’; moreover, conflicts could be connected to differing systems of metaphor underlying ethical and moral evaluation. It proposes the investigation of metaphorical schematization of ‘ethical cultures’ instead of so-called national cultures. Ying-Hsueh Hu provides insight into the Taiwanese framing of the *great chain of being* by linking it to religious backgrounds such as Confucianism. Compared to the 'western' traditions, the metaphor of *great chain of being* in the Taiwanese discourse on embryonic stem cells takes on a quite different shape in this context and enhances the scope of the following articles by a non-European perspective. Andreas Musolff proposes an analysis of the metaphorical concept of *the great chain of being*. He investigates the diachronic dimensions of the metaphorical concept by reconstructing its historical context and its recent use in biotechnology. By doing so, Musolff uncovers the power of metaphor underlying the current

discourse on the scientific use of embryonic stem cells. Finally, the paper provided by Brigitte Nerlich offers a cultural comparison of the Rubicon-metaphor in the German and British press coverage. This metaphor was widely used in the German coverage and it was de- and reconstructed by politicians and scientists. Nerlich gives an overview of the evolving discourse of the Rubicon-metaphor in Germany – first used by the former Federal President Johannes Rau – and provides information as to why it was rarely used in the British press coverage. She shows how differing stocks of culturally embedded knowledge resonate with the Rubicon-metaphor and lead to a differing national reverberation and bio-policy.

All contributions are accessible in the html- and in the pdf-format. The download of files containing graphical elements may cause some delay of time. Also, the quality of the visualization depends on the type of browser you use. We apologize for any troubles and would like to indicate that different fonts are available on the internet.

We hope that the articles in this special issue underline the relevance of investigating metaphor and metaphorical schematisation in the discourse on biotechnology and bio-policy. They may – on a grander level – contribute to a reflexive discussion about our future human generic concept.

Bonn, July 2005

Hildegard Clarenz-Löhnert
Martin Döring
Klaus Gabriel
Katrin Mutz
Dietmar Osthus
Claudia Polzin-Haumann
Nikola Roßbach