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EDITORIAL

Present policies and possible futures

‘There is a tide in the affairs of men.
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;’
(Shakespeare *Julius Caesar* Act 4 Scene 3 218–219)

Those who edit academic journals rarely seek fortune in financial terms or if they do, are unlikely to find it. However, Shakespeare’s Brutus was quite right that with ‘fortune’ in terms of gaining influence or success, timing is so often crucial. I often regret that editing a journal which is only published quarterly often means that by the time articles appear, the topics they consider have often peaked in the news and sometimes passed altogether.

This issue however is book-ended with two articles which explore things as yet not possible so who knows in years to come what future readers may make of their ideas and speculations. Gibson, at a time when the hardships faced by geographically displaced refugees are all too apparent, explores in his intriguing paper, whether refugee status would be appropriate in centuries to come, for those who may become displaced in time though being cryogenically preserved. Yue, in his review article, explores through the lens of suffering, whether robot companions could ever be programmed to be sentient in a way that could lead to meaningful loving relationships with our own species.

Elective egg freezing (oocyte cryopreservation) for fertility preservation – commonly referred to as social egg freezing, will be permitted in Singapore from 2023. Heng Boon Chin and Saiffuddeen, in their paper, consider the ethics of this change in the law from both secular and Islamic perspectives, before it comes into effect. Although abortion has long been a subject of ethical debate, the leak of a Supreme Court draft opinion to possibly strike down *Roe v Wade* in the US has propelled it back into the news again, giving added relevance to the next two papers in this issue. First, Singh by demonstrating ‘a dis-analogy between giving a fetus Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and abortion’ argues that Hendricks’ (2019a, 2019b) impairment argument for the impermissibility of abortion fails. Blackshaw *et al* in the second paper on abortion, respond to Shaw’s recent paper arguing that inconsistency arguments against abortion fail *en masse* (2021). Richards in his paper, contends that whatever challenges, present or future, religious preclusion or marginalisation in bioethics is not only harmful but inadmissible.

Even the book reviews in this issue have a futuristic component, courtesy of Bryan Hall’s *An Ethical Guidebook to the Zombie Apocalypse: How to keep your brain without losing your heart*. Cons’ cracking review of this volume

garnered hundreds of views within a few weeks of being published online. A welcome first for the journal, which leads me to conclude ‘*On such a full sea are we now afloat,*’ though I hope its current serves us towards a better future than it did for Brutus.

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