­­­EDITORIAL

**To Infinity and Beyond?**

This final issue of 2019 marks the end of the first quarter century of the journal and the first year of quarterly issues, which has seen three essays, four editorials, ten book reviews and nineteen papers published. Our twitter following @newbioethics has also grown steadily to 479 followers and institutional subscriptions continue to rise year on year in an increasingly competitive market for academic journals.

In this issue we make our first venture into deep-space with Szocik and Braddock arguing in their Essay that the development and deployment of a human enhancement policy, initially confined to astronauts is essential for the furtherance of deep-space exploration. They claim that ‘….the space philosophy for human enhancement is not only inspired by the idea of enforcing human performance, like on Earth, but mostly by the need for survival in the new environment. In such cases it may become the norm, and perhaps no longer regarded as enhancement.’

Meanwhile back on earth existing technology is still posing pressing questions. The first healthy baby resulting from what Ishii terms ‘mitochondrial replacement technology’ was born on 6th April 2016 in Mexico where, as Prof John Zhang the consultant making the announcement famously declared, “there are no rules” (Hamzelou 2016). If this should happen in a country where there are rules, what follow up should such a child have? Who should be responsible for making that decision? Who should implement such ongoing monitoring and should it be voluntary or mandatory? These are all important questions Ishii raises in his article. A question not raised however is why has there been only one further baby born worldwide with the technique since 2016 and that was not a child at risk of mitochondrial disease in the first place. If the technique is of such importance and potential why has its clinical application in mitochondrial disease taken so long to result in further healthy live births? Even if another one is announced before this editorial is published, a total of 3 in as many years is hardly the revolutionary therapy promised by those scientists lobbying for the law to be changed to allow the techniques to be used.

Blackshaw, in his paper returns to a well-established bioethical dilemma which he starkly dubs as the ethics of killing. He sympathetically critiques McMahan’s Two-Tier Account of our differing moral intuitions about the relative badness of killing embryos, foetuses and infants and proposes instead a Dual-Aspect account employing “the morality of interests and the morality of respect *simultaneously*, not in tiers. Rather than grounding the morality of respect on reaching a threshold of psychological capacities, the Dual-Aspect Account uses the substance view to ground respect.” It will certainly not end the debate but does make an original further contribution to it.

The next paper by Riva et al deals with a relatively new but increasingly prevalent ethical dilemma. When donated human biological material leads to development that produce large profits, ‘even the traditional instrument of informed consent may not adequately protect the dignity of the subjects of the "transaction".’ They argue that any future use of such donated materials must be justified and consistent with the values motivating the act of donation. A worthy goal but one that may prove difficult to determine.

The final paper is a spirited response from Wischik to Gamble and Pruski’s paper in our last themed issue on conscience in healthcare, in which he takes issue with various elements of their central claim that ‘medical acts’ form a clearly distinct category of activity from actions which though performed by a doctor, do not treat symptoms of any pathology but ‘facilitate social desires’. I suspect this debate will continue into future issues.

Over the next year we have a themed issue planned on bioethics and environmental sustainability edited by Prof Cristina Richie and another on surrogacy as substantial changes are expected in the law on this in UK in the near future. We have also expanded the editorial board with another two member since the last issue and welcome Prof Thana de Campos from Chile and Dr June Jones from Edgehill University in the UK as our latest new members.

Ideas for further themed issues and responses to papers are always welcomed as The New Bioethics enters its second quarter century of publication.

Trevor Stammers

Director, Centre for Bioethics and Emerging Technologies.

St Mary’s University, Twickenham

Hamzelou J 2016 World’s first baby born with new “3 parent technique” *New Scientist* <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2107219-exclusive-worlds-first-baby-born-with-new-3-parent-technique/>