



# The New Bioethics

A Multidisciplinary Journal of Biotechnology and the Body

ISSN: 2050-2877 (Print) 2050-2885 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ynbi20>

## Transitional States

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To cite this article: Trevor Stammers (2019) Transitional States, The New Bioethics, 25:1, 1-2,  
DOI: [10.1080/20502877.2019.1574134](https://doi.org/10.1080/20502877.2019.1574134)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/20502877.2019.1574134>



Published online: 19 Feb 2019.



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## Transitional States

It is highly appropriate as *The New Bioethics* reaches its 25th volume, that it also enters a transition into a quarterly publication. This will enable us to publish more articles faster in a fast-moving discipline.

Much of this issue is taken up with explorations of the transition zone of transhumanism and the Essay explores what elements might signify metamorphosis from a human to a post-human state. Pruski first seeks to establish what if anything, is distinctive about humans by a consideration of the features of the human body and its mode of existence in society. These ideas of human nature are then compared with animals and entities from literature, film and computer games such as Metatron, Space Marines and the Borg.

Iftode uses the lens of authenticity in his philosophical analysis of enhancement technologies. He distinguishes between two different understandings of human authenticity – an essentialist one obtained through self-discovery and an existentialist one which rejects any notion of a ‘true self’ in favour of the concept of ‘self-creation,’ but then proceeds to challenge the sharp boundary often made between the two. By formulating a revised notion of authenticity, he seeks to preserve the elements of both ‘getting in touch with your nature’ and ‘self-creation’ and presents a fascinating exploration of accounts of authenticity in enhancement ethics encountering Monty Python’s ‘Life of Brian’ along the way.

The transition between life and death is the subject of Cahill’s paper which explores the multiplicity of factors involved in a coming to a Do Not Attempt Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation Decision. She illustrates compellingly that ‘whilst “end-of-life care forms” offer a way to consider DNACPR decisions within a positive context, they cannot help but subjectify patients by their very existence. Processes have been identified as having a tendency to be prioritised above nuanced, personalised care’.

Turning to the transition zone of birth, Igreja and Ricou’s assessment of the state of surrogacy is particularly timely in the U.K. in the light of the current commissions for revision of the surrogacy law underway by the Law Commission of England and Wales and The Scottish Law Commission, both funded by the Department of Health. Their paper gives a comprehensive review of current surrogacy-related issues including a ‘right to regret’ and the studies they consider are broadly supportive of the process. However, the authors acknowledge that the

majority of studies have serious methodological limitations, such as small sample size and lack of controls. Low response rate, particularly in studies on psychological follow-up, introduces a risk of selection bias, since people with negative experiences are less likely to participate in such studies

and recommend that ‘Large-scale longitudinal studies in different cultural contexts are needed in order to strengthen existing scientific knowledge and highlight biases inherent in retrospective studies.’

The final transition zone explored in this issue by Zimmerman is that from childhood to adulthood. He explores this through a consideration of assessment of autonomy in relation to the landmark U.K. legal case of *Gillick v West Norfolk* (1986) and controversially concludes that *Gillick* adds an unwarranted burden upon children and adolescent patients through which damage is done to integral human relationships.

The next issue of the journal due out in June will be a guest-edited, themed issue exploring various aspects of conscience in relation to medical practice and healthcare.

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