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310.552.2500  
310.552.1191 Fax

17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1900 Avenue of the Stars  
Los Angeles, CA 90067-4408

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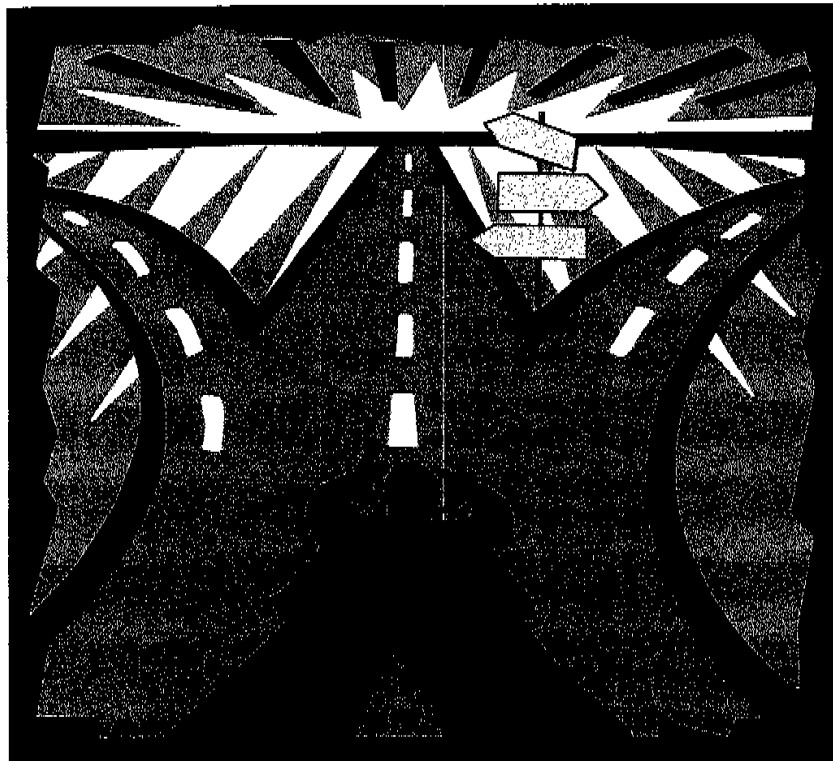
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Volume 2 Number 4

**The American Journal of Bioethics**



## **Becoming Bioethicists? The Future of the Field**

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**Review of Changeux and  
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**In Focus:  
Has Patient Autonomy Gone Too Far?  
Geneticists' Views in 36 Nations**  
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## Contributors

ronto Joint Centre for Bioethics, where her principal responsibilities are as an ethics consultant and as an educator of health care professionals and bioethics graduate students. She is President of the Canadian Bioethics Society until October 2002. Dr. Harrison is a member of several research teams investigating end of life decision making for children.

Melody Isinger, M.A., is currently working toward a Ph.D. in healthcare ethics at Duquesne University. The title of her dissertation is *The Right to Use a Corpse: Concerns with Presumed and Surrogate Consent*. Her master's in philosophy and bachelor of arts are from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada.

Derek S. Jeffreys, Ph.D., teaches religion and philosophy at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. Specializing in the philosophy of religion and ethics, he is currently completing a book on Pope John Paul II's political thought.

Nancy E. Kass, Sc.D., holds the Phoebe R. Berman Chair of Bioethics and Health Policy at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. She is coeditor, with Ruth Faden, of *HIV, AIDS and Childbearing: Public Policy, Private Lives* (Oxford University Press, 1996).

Michael J. Klag, M.D., M.P.H., is Vice Dean for Clinical Investigation and Director of the Division of General Internal Medicine at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. He did his undergraduate work at Juniata College and received his M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He completed his residency training at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine where became a fellow in the Division of General Internal Medicine.

Sharon S. Krag, Ph.D., is Professor in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Research at Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. She received her Ph.D. in biochemistry from Johns Hopkins University and completed postdoctoral work at the Center for Cancer Research at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She has taught a required course in responsible conduct of research at the Bloomberg School of Public Health since 1996.

Mark G. Kuczewski, Ph.D., is the Director of the Neiswanger Institute for Bioethics and Health Policy at the Stritch School of Medicine, Loyola University Chicago. He is the author of two books and coeditor of the recent volume *Bioethics: Ancient Themes in Contemporary Issues* (MIT Press, 2000). Dr. Kuczewski is also the cofounder of the Disability and Rehabilitation Ethics Affinity Group of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities.

David Magnus, Ph.D., is Graduate Studies Director and professor of Bioethics at the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the Associate Editor of *The American Journal of Bioethics*, Editorial Advisor for the *Encyclopedia of Life Sciences*, and directs the project on the Ethics of Genetically Modified Foods at Penn's Center for Bioethics. His latest work includes *Who Owns Life?* (Prometheus, 2002), which he coedited.

Karen J. Maschke, Ph.D., is an independent scholar who holds a Ph.D. in political science and a master's degree in bioethics. She is writing a book on human-subjects research and is coauthor of a forthcoming article in *Pediatrics* regarding payment to child research subjects. She was the 1999-2000 Bioethics Fellow at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

Cynthia S. McCarthy, M.A., is currently preparing for her comprehensive exams for a Ph.D. in healthcare ethics at Duquesne University. She works as a healthcare ethics consultant in the Pittsburgh area and is an adjunct faculty member at the Consortium Ethics Program at the University of Pittsburgh.

Patrick J. McCrudden serves as Vice President for Mission and Ethics at St. Joseph's Mercy Health Center in Hot Springs, Arkansas, where he chairs the hospital's Institutional Ethics Committee and Institutional Review Board. He is currently a student in the online M.A. program in bioethics at the Neiswanger Institute for Bioethics and Health Policy, Loyola University of Chicago.

Amy McGuire, J.D., is a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas Medical Branch (Galveston). She is coauthor of *Addendum to the Texas Medical Jurisprudence Examination: A Self-Study Guide* (Institute for the Medical Humanities, 2002).

Jonathan D. Moreno, Ph.D., is Kornfeld Professor and Director of the Center for Biomedical Ethics at the University of Virginia. He is also a former member of the National Human Research Protections Advisory Committee. His most recent book is *Undue Risk: Secret State Experiments on Humans* (Routledge 2001).

Madeline M. Morra, M.S.W., J.D., is a health lawyer and a Doctoral Fellow with the Faculty of Law at McGill University. She has expertise in physician licensing regulation, medical fraud, antitrust investigation and international clinical research regulation. Her doctoral dissertation concerns the formulation of a legal theory that asserts a higher standard of care and fiduciary duty owed by physician-investigators to their research patients in clinical research.

Jay Nathanson, M.D., M.P.H., is a Fellow in Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry at Boston Medical Center. He received his master's of public health from the Boston University School of Public Health, with a concentration in Health Law and Medical Ethics.

Irmgard Nippert, Ph.D., is Professor and Director of the Research Unit for Women's Health Research at the University of Münster Medical School, Germany. A medical sociologist by training, she has participated in several international research projects on ethical and social implications of human genome research. She is a member of the ethics committees of the Federal Board of Physicians, Germany, and of the German Society of Human Genetics.

Kayhan P. Parsi, J.D., Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Bioethics and Health Policy at the Neiswanger Institute for Bioethics and Health Policy, Stritch School of Medicine, Loyola University Chicago, where he is also the Graduate Program Director for an online master's program in bioethics (<http://bioethics.lumc.edu>). He is also an Adjunct Professor at the Loyola University School of Law.

Thaddeus Mason Pope, J.D., is an attorney with the Los Angeles office of Arnold and Porter. In 1997 he earned both a J.D. and an M.A. in philosophy from Georgetown University. In June 2002 he successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation in philosophy at Georgetown University. He has recently authored articles in the *University of Pittsburgh Law Review* and *Health Matrix*.

Rosamond Rhodes Ph.D., is Director of Bioethics Education at Mount Sinai School of Medicine and a Member of the Doctoral Faculty of the Ph.D. Program in Philosophy at The Graduate School, City University of New York. She is Editor of the *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and Medicine* and coeditor of *Physician Assisted Suicide: Expanding the Debate* (Routledge, 1998).

Kenneth A. Richman, Ph.D., is a member of the Philosophy Faculty at Bryn Mawr College. He has published on early modern philosophy, philosophy of education, and philosophy of medicine. He is a contributing coeditor of *The New Hume Debate* (Routledge, 2000) and is currently completing a book manuscript on concepts of health and bioethics.

L. S. Rorhenberg, J.D., is Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine in the Division of Medical Genetics of the Department of Medicine at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). He is Chair

ing. I serve on the institutional review board as one of several physicians, but also as the only ethicist. The entire community is benefiting from my education.

While the program at Midwestern was originally conceived as a program for experienced professionals, it was recently opened to osteopathic, physician's assistant, and physical therapy students interested in dual degrees. The interest has been impressive and suggests that healthcare

professionals at all stages of their careers welcome the opportunity to learn about bioethics. Also, ethics classes are being integrated into the basic curriculum of all of the professional programs at Midwestern. The next generation of professionals will feel better prepared to deal with the ethical issues ahead of them, and there will be academically trained bioethicists to help guide us all through the challenges of the twenty-first century. ■

## My Bioethics Education at Georgetown

Thaddeus Mason Pope, Georgetown University

### Introduction

In 1992 I enrolled in Georgetown University's J.D.-Ph.D. joint-degree program. In 1997 I earned both a juris doctor and a master's in philosophy (bioethics concentration). In the summer of 2002 I successfully defended my Ph.D. in philosophy (bioethics concentration).<sup>1</sup> After clerking for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, I joined the Los Angeles office of the law firm Arnold and Porter.<sup>2</sup> Today, I litigate mass tort and securities actions, present papers at academic bioethics conferences, and participate on the Bioethics Committee of the Los Angeles County Bar Association.

### Georgetown's Graduate Bioethics Programs Exceeded My Expectations

Georgetown's bioethics programs not only met but exceeded my expectations. This is a result of at least three factors. First, Georgetown expanded and strengthened its programs during the time in which I was enrolled. Second, Georgetown's law and philosophy programs worked synergistically. Third, Georgetown's Washington, D.C., location offered many opportunities for off-campus research and learning.

When I began my studies at Georgetown, there were several established bioethics programs. The Department of Philosophy offered both an M.A. and a Ph.D. in philosophy with a concentration in bioethics. Many of the relevant courses were taught by scholars at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics and at the Center for Clinical Bioethics. These two centers also offered a wide variety of additional

opportunities to graduate students, including lecture series, clinical practica, and ethics rounds.

During my time at Georgetown the number and variety of bioethics programs grew with alacrity. The law school, for example, expanded the number of full-time and adjunct faculty teaching and writing in bioethics and began offering an L.L.M. in health law.<sup>3</sup> The law school also established the Greenwall Fellowship program and other joint-degree programs, such as a J.D.-M.P.H., with Johns Hopkins University. The increased number of bioethics activities in all of Georgetown's schools ensured part-time jobs and other preprofessional opportunities for the graduate students. Many, for example, helped edit publications such as the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, worked as research assistants for bioethics scholars, or taught introductory classes in the philosophy department or in the medical school.

While I cannot, in this space, describe all of Georgetown's bioethics programs, I can at least describe the one in which I participated. In 1992 I had just completed the undergraduate honors program in philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh. I was torn between pursuing graduate studies in philosophy and going to law school. I ultimately decided to do both. I chose Georgetown because I expected that bioethics, which was a great strength of Georgetown's philosophy department, would fit with my legal studies better than more traditional areas of philosophical inquiry.

I was right. While no bioethicist has, or may ever have, formal education in all the disciplines upon which bioethics draws, it is increasingly common to have formal education in at least two of them. Multidisciplinary train-

1. The title of my dissertation is *A Definition and Defense of Hard Paternalism*. In it I clarify the ethical issues surrounding the restriction of substantially voluntary self-regarding conduct, and defend conditions under which such restriction is justifiable.

2. The firm's website is <http://www.aporter.com>.

3. Georgetown permitted cross-enrollment, such that even graduate students who were not pursuing a law degree could enroll in the Law Center's bioethics courses. This is where I met my wife.

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ing both permits the bioethicist to view other perspectives more clearly and conditions him or her to be more circumspect in his or her analysis. My legal training enables me to understand how policies relating to bioethics are and might be implemented. My philosophy training gives me the analytic skills and theoretical grounding to draw upon a sophisticated scholarship to clarify and help solve conceptual and normative problems in bioethics (Pope 1999; 2000).

Finally, in describing and assessing my bioethics education at Georgetown, I must discuss the off-campus research and learning opportunities surrounding Georgetown University in and around the nation's capital.

Washington, D.C., is an ideal place to conduct bioethics research. Georgetown has excellent medical, law, and humanities libraries, and it has the National Reference Center for Bioethics Literature. Moreover, Georgetown students have ready access to the National Library of Medicine, the Library of Congress, and numerous other universities' libraries.

Washington, D.C., is also an ideal place to engage in bioethical dialogue. First, federal government agencies such as presidential bioethics commissions, regularly hold open meetings around Washington. Second, public seminars and practica are regularly held at the National Institutes of Health and at the city's more than ten professional health schools. Third, policy makers from Congress, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and other government and nongovernmental organizations are close at hand and are regular guests in Georgetown's classrooms.

*The Diversity of Disciplines in Which Graduate Bioethics Programs Are Based Is a Mixed Blessing*

Bioethics is an interdisciplinary field both substantively and methodologically. It is surely richer for drawing upon so many perspectives. Nevertheless, this inclusion necessitates some precautions. While many of the methods and

much of the vocabulary are familiar across the field of bioethics, there is often as much of a language barrier between two bioethicists working in two different departments of the same university as there is between bioethicists in different countries.

In order to help minimize disruptions caused by domestic language barriers, I offer two suggestions. First, conference planners must carefully consider the appropriate audience for their conferences. While some are clearly directed to healthcare professionals or to philosophers, other conferences have no clear target audience. The result is disappointed attendees and less than optimal dissemination of knowledge. Second, those who index bioethics publications should indicate the disciplinary approach of articles. Increasingly, bioethics articles are published in journals (such as this one) devoted exclusively to bioethics rather than in journals of philosophy or in law reviews. The time and expense of obtaining full-text reprints or downloads highlights the importance of supplementing the records for bioethics articles in bibliographic databases. ■

*Conclusion*

I went to Georgetown to become a bioethicist. Once there, I discovered that the role of the bioethicist is no more unitary than that of the lawyer or the doctor. I soon decided what *sort* of bioethicist I wanted to become, and Georgetown prepared me well for that role.

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