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Abstract:

UNTANGLING THE DEBATE ON SOCIETY AND HUMAN ENHANCEMENT

At a point when the public sector accepts wearable devices as routine and industry leverages significant growth in the regenerative medicine market, society is in the midst of an entanglement.

Confusion concerns the use of technology as an everyday device for improving communications and as a long-term device for improving biology. The optional use of wearable devices such as a smart phone is considered acceptable yet the necessary use of implanted devices such as nanorobots is considered irregular. While considerable attention is devoted to the debate on ethical issues of enhancement, human nature and bodily ownership, as well as emerging technologies, there may be a bigger issue to consider. For example, the everyday smart phone is just one device that has formed a person's exo-peripheral central nervous system. This means that the parameters of bodily ownership, and human nature, have already expanded beyond biology. In light of this, the security and protection of information that forms each person's thoughts and society as a whole will require further technologies for management, and some of these implantable. Accepting these further technologies necessitates a continued interdependency on technological tools for enhancement.

Along this line of thinking, the notion of morphological freedom as a human right bares some impact on both the individual and society. Further, discussion on the parameters of the body, and thus identity, between the physical and the digital environments suggests the need to include exo-peripheral states of existence. Lastly, the mind shift toward understanding the development of society is based largely on the advancement of each person's mind.

Whether optional, therapeutic, selective, or necessary, human enhancement is a continuous, iterative process. It requires a framework to understand the process; one that defines and clarifies people's needs, identifies technological solutions, and implements social distinctions because people are different. Human society is not one size fits all. Thus, when therapy becomes selective and when optional becomes necessity, the governing of human enhancement becomes a 'slid rule' that shows relationships between differences and helps to keep us engaged in the variety of purposes that untangling reveals.