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Practical Methodology for Bio-ethical Imperative of Fritz Jahr

In order to test the solidity and stability of the robotic dog “Spot”, which was made by Google’s subsidiary company “Boston Dynamics” (Google’s Boston Dynamics shows off new robot dog, <https://goo.gl/fA8p3U>, 2015), by kicking it, some people propounded a question whether this was a violation of the robot’s rights. Perhaps Fritz Jahr’s Bioethical Imperative could extend the possibility of spreading ethical recognition not only into plants, animals and human beings, but also robots with artificial intelligence. Jahr’s Bioethical Imperative contributed to the horizontal expansion of ethical senses from plants to human beings.

The advances in technology are expanding areas that can interfere with the human body and the intervention is increasing. With xenotransplantation, sex assignment surgery and various prostheses, the boundaries between animals–human beings, women–men, and machines–human beings became blurred. These blurred boundaries have caused philosophical debates about what is the biological nature of human beings and also have thrown out questions that need to be addressed in real earnest. The illustrative emerging problems encountered in relation to physical prostheses are as follows: If someone stole an artificial leg, would he be charged with injury or theft? Or if someone’s prosthetic leg breaks down at work, should the work accident (industrial injuries) insurance cover the new prosthesis? There is a report of a Paralympic athlete who was denied boarding his flight because of his prosthetic leg. He was only admitted after checking in his limb as luggage. Thus, in order to solve this kind of problems, it should be discussed whether body implants can be formally recognized as body parts or objects with separability. Also this discussion has a direct association with the rights of individuals wearing body prostheses.

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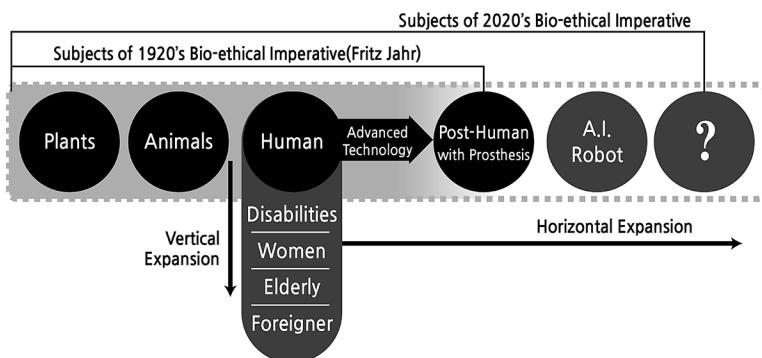
A typical human figure consisting of blood and flesh can have a new form due to the advanced technologies. As matter of fact, we often see something between human and non-human beings in myths, novels, movies and games. Sometimes they are admired under the name of superman, at other times they are portrayed as strange monsters. In fiction, we just have a sense of likes and dislikes of human beings in artificial bodies, but now it is the time to seriously ponder and care for how to live with them. The most typical example would be a person wearing an advanced powered prosthesis. Professor Hugh Herr at MIT, who enjoyed mountain climbing, lost both legs in an accident, and is now using self-made high-tech prosthetic legs. After using the prosthetic legs, he mentions that he doesn't want to go back and live as non-disabled. His comment gives us a chance to reflect on our perception of the disabled.

Jahr's ethical responsibility should be extended to this individual. The advanced technologies have led us to new existences and we have accordingly expanded our ethical consideration. Now the problem is how we can dissolve the boundaries between us and 'them'. That is, in other words, a methodological problem that would expand our empathy to them. As methodological alternatives, "1) generalizing the concept of alienation to mitigate alienation" and "2) changing the perspective from user-centered to problem-based", are suggested.

(1) *Generalizing the concept of alienation to mitigate alienation:* Today, wearing glasses is nothing to be ashamed of. Like bad eyesight, if a disability becomes a general lack, a society where individuals can no longer be ashamed of their alienation (or disability) would be possible in the long-term perspective. One must recognize that he (she) could be alienated in some parts, and alienation is a common concept. In order to do so, one must discover and segment the concept of isolation. Alienation does not exist, but it could be actively recognized and discovered by social members. This was also reflected in the process of using 'apricot color' as the term for a color of skin in South Korea recently. First, it was the recognition and discovery of racism, that modified 'skin color' into 'light scarlet color' and after the first change, 'apricot color' is the result of elementary school students' realization that 'light scarlet color' is difficult for themselves. The discovery of alienated layers (i. e. digital divided layer, mobility handicapped layer, energy alienated layer etc.) extends the scope of alienation and the social stigma can be removed.

(2) *Changing the perspective from user-centered to problem-based:* Approaching to alienated classes from a problem-based instead of a user-centered position can be a good starting point for a changing perspective. The user-centered view is a way to distinguish between the elderly, disabled and foreign workers, and how to deal with their typical problems and demands. For example, this assumes that elderly

people suffer from poverty, illness and solitude, and to try to solve these problems. However, the user-centered methodology cannot properly interpret modern society which is mixed and mingled with combined classes and characteristics: There are elderly citizens who suffer from the lack of digital literacy and unemployment, but others can trade stocks on the Internet and are economically stable. Due to the diversity of parameters and problems, the traditional classification of minorities has its limitations. To overcome these shortcomings, classifying according to the types of problems people are actually experiencing can be a solution. It seems more effective to classify people who suffer from same problems than to address every characteristic group such as elderly citizens, disabilities and foreign labors. The problem-based solution concentrates on the problem itself, for example, the digital divide, cultural alienation or illiteracy.



The subjects of Jahr's bioethical imperative should be widened horizontally to include post-human beings. Raising an ethical question about kicking a robot dog may be considered to be a mere episode yet. However, if you think about which one make you inconvenience between YouTube video with putting flowers in a vase and kicking a robot dog, you can easily understand that it might not be a long time to discuss the robots as a subject of bio-ethical imperative.

The subjects of Jahr's bioethical imperative should also be expanded vertically by including groups of specific isolated and discriminated human beings. To do this, it is necessary to raise the question about the cognitive structure of the distinctions. Although the distinction originated with studies and welfare for minorities like women, disabled and foreigners, it seems to be done to distinguish them with laws, systems and facilities. This is similar to the process and the result of how madmen are distinguished from ordinary people in Michel Foucault's 'Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason'. It is necessary to disconnect the loop of alienation, discrimination, isolation and segregation which is caused by simple differences.