

CS/PHIL 201 Discussion Prompt Response

Name:	Elita Danilyuk
Other Group Members:	Dan Butcher, Amanda Elbaz, Kevin Finger, Chris LaBerge

Response to Prompt for Module # 6 on topic Human Enhancement

Begin by stating whether you would A) let the elderly patient receive the neural implant, and then B) whether young healthy individuals should receive the neural implant. Motivate your answer for (a) and (b) by using two ethical theories. It should be clear why there is/is not a difference between giving the elderly patient and the young individual the neural implant.

- a) I have other ethical beliefs that make me want to disagree with letting the elderly patients receive the neural implant but setting those aside with how this scenario is laid out, I would say it would be morally ethical to allow the implant to be received by elderly patients with dementia and Alzheimer's. Allowing the elderly patients to receive this implant would improve their life styles, as well as those around them.
- b) I do not think it is morally permissible to allow young healthy individuals to receive the neural implant. Allowing already healthy individuals to receive the neural implant would give them an unequal advantage above others. The implant in these younger individuals would only increase their own life, but not those around them. Also, if all young individuals were given this implant, it would only increase the entire populations memory and then no person would have an advantage over the other. On the other hand, this implant could be used to increase the memory of individuals who could afford it, thus making it even harder on individuals and marginalizing those who could not afford it.

Utilitarianists would in favor of the implant for elderly patients because it would increase the overall happiness of those affected by it. It would help the elderly patients as well as those around them, because the patient would be safer and they would theoretically need less home care. In the case of the young patient, utilitarianists could argue against the implant because it is only increasing a single individual and not the others affected. Thus, in this case it would not increase the majority.

Virtuous theorists would also argue in favor of the implant for elderly patients because it is the virtuous thing to do. A virtuous person would offer the implant to elder patients who are struggling with their memory to help because it would help that individual's overall survival. They would then likely argue against the implant in young individuals because a virtuous, healthy, young individual would not feel compelled to get a neural implant to enhance their memory and brain power.

Robert Sparrow argued that if rapid technological advancements in human enhancement lead to human obsolescence early in life, then individuals will experience negative psychological effects, namely, they will not be able to achieve typical human projects (participation and productivity in society), since their enhanced peers will vastly outperform them. How does this concern relate to your answer in part 1? What ethical tools do you have to agree or disagree with Sparrow?

This scenario further shows that it would not be ethical to allow young healthy individuals to receive the implant. As stated, both utilitarianists and virtuous persons would argue against young healthy patients to obtain the neural implant. The implant for these individuals goes against both moral theories moral conduct. Utilitarianists would not be increasing the evolved individual's overall happiness. Virtuous theorists would agree that a virtuous person in the scenario would agree with the implant due to its inequality. Thus both moral theories would be going against their rules.