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Nam Reflection Paper on Metaphysics: The Measure of a Man The article is about the right of Lt. Commander Data to refuse to undergo disassembling as proposed by Commander Bruce Maddox. Data refuses because of the possibility that Maddox would not be able to ‘reassemble’ him. Data is a special kind of android because of his ‘positronic brain’ that makes him humanlike in behavior, thinking, and emotions. Therefore, the metaphysical problem is whether Data should be granted the right to choose or not, which is a right awarded to human beings.

Data is an android built by humans to serve a specific function. I believe that Data is a ‘human’ being, technically speaking. Some leading philosophers have specified the primary features of a human being—rational, self-aware, and able to feel and express emotions—and Data possesses all of these. ‘He’ can even form relationships and is aware of the rights that he has. It is also correct to say that reproducing many of these machines will form a ‘race’, because this population will possess the basic aspects of a human race.

Data has the right to refuse to undergo dismantling and reproduction. He is a free being, which implies that he has the right to decide for himself and his fate. He has what is called ‘free will’ or the competence to decide for his own welfare and happiness. Granting Data his right to choose will absolutely create precedence for other androids that will seek or fight for the same rights in the future.

This movie is definitely metaphysical, for it discusses the notion of ‘being’. The concept of ‘being’ has long been a major problem of philosophy. It inflamed a number of remarkable philosophical debates. I think we should learn from the movie the ability to understand things that are not ‘human’,
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in the traditional sense of the concept. There are times that we should abandon our traditional knowledge or predetermined consciousness in order to go beyond the 'reality' that is in fact has been programmed for us. The JAG officer, I believe, therefore, is correct to grant Data the legal right to choose.