

If people are just  
complex machines,  
what does that  
suggest about the  
moral statu...

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19 June If people are just complex machines, what does that suggest about the moral status of machines? Could I be committing murder every time I turn off my computer?

God has made man superior to all other creatures in the world. The fundamental factor that distinguishes between other living things and humans and makes the latter superior as compared to the former is intelligence. Man is the most intelligent of all living things. Owing to the level of complexity of human intelligence, some people tend to call humans as “complex machines”. It is not just the intelligence that convinces them to call humans machines, but also several other factors play a role in it. Such factors include but are not limited to the systems contained in the human body, and the fact that humans need food for these systems to function appropriately. Every machine has a system that makes it work, which is composed of several electrical and mechanical subsystems. Likewise, human body functions as a result of mutual work of circulatory system, digestive system, and respiratory system etc. On the other hand, like every machine either needs charging or fueling to work, human body needs food for the systems to work. This paper analyzes the moral status of the act of turning a computer off and discusses whether it can be called as a murder or not in light of the perception that humans are just complex machines.

While humans may qualify to be called machines keeping these factors in mind, there is a very important factor that humans contain that machines do not; Emotions. Humans have feelings. They can not only think, but also evaluate the pros and cons of different options and select the most suitable option in a given context. Machines do not have this capability. Some

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machines like computers do have the capability to evaluate the different variables of certain mathematical procedures, but that knowledge is fed into the computer by humans themselves. A computer does not have the capability to feel for something nor does any other machine. On this basis, it is irrational to define humans as complex machines. Hence, on the basis of the argument that humans are much more than complex machines, it is not justified to comment upon the moral status of machines as the laws of machines are different from those of the humans. While a human can be sentenced to death for having committed the murder of another human, a machine cannot be dealt with in the same way since the machine cannot commit murders in the first place. Likewise, turning a computer off is not similar to committing a murder.

Concluding, on the basis of the points discussed in this paper, it is wrong to think of the act of turning a computer off as murdering it because only living things can be murdered, non-living things cannot. It is inappropriate to call people machines on the basis of the complexity and immensity of their intellectual power because such a characterization overlooks the fact that humans have emotions as well which machines do not irrespective of their level of complexity.