**Morality Of Navy Turning Back Refugee Boats Headed For Australia**

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[AussieSteve](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/1807379) a day ago

G'day Prof Sandel

Over recent times a large number unseaworthy boats, each containing 50-120 refugees, have been sailing from Indonesia towards Australia. Some of the boats have sunk with the loss of some or all of the people on board. Where boats have got into difficulties in International waters, or have made it into Australian waters, they have been intercepted by the Australian navy and towed into an Australian port. 90% of the people on board such boats are successful with their claim for refugee status in Australia under UNHCR conventions.

There is a proposal to "stop the boats where safe to do so" by having the Australian navy intercept these boats in international waters, tow them back to Indonesian waters and reduce their fuel, food and water supplies so they only have sufficient to get back to an Indonesian port. This would appear to infringe the rights of legitimate refugees. What questions of morality do you see in this proposal?

Regards, AussieSteve

1. [0](javascript:void(0)) [greggwri](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/1890653)

about 21 hours ago

The problem is many or most are not at all legit IMO.

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**Would Machines have rights (Strong AI)? Balancing Machine and Human Rights?**

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[stoyan4](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/1824656) a day ago

We got into this discussion with one of the teaching staff, about Kant's notion of capacity to reason deserving dignity, and that many machines are starting to and will reach human and superhuman levels of understanding of the world.

Reasoning machines - would they and should they deserve rights? I say it is tempting to consider that a) their reason may be the extrapolated development of exactly the kind of values we put in reason as humans, as Kant expressed himself. and b) may be necessary as humans and machines would be the two groups of creatures most capable of reason on earth. Likely members of either group would be fairly self-sufficient and able to command resources.

Asking about philosophers who have thought about this, I was referred to John Searle. His recent opinions on consciousness as an entirely biological phenomenon seem to suggest we should think of machine intelligence similarly to ours. On the other hand (at least the way I read) his older work seems to deny machines being capable of understanding (Chinese room experiment). Any other philosophers who have thought of that?

Anticipating a world where both humans and many machines will have some self-sufficiency, intentionality, and commanding resources, we owe it to ourselves to think of questions of justice that arise. Knowing a just way of dealing with each other will probably contribute much to the peaceful coexistence of the two groups. Especially when likely we'll be left behind in terms of most powers and abilities.

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**'LIVE QUESTION' TO PROFESSOR SANDEL (DR. JACK KEVORKIAN) AND THE MORAL COURAGE.**

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[workeye](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/912632) a day ago

Dear professor Sandel

My name is workeye jamille

I am from Ethiopia live in Atlanta Georgia.USA

My question is as follow

Dr. Jack Kevorkian was very controversial professional with high moral philosophical convection and courage .And he also blunt and stubborn like any historical true philosopher. When he was in jail he didn't change his mind about his action. After he got out of jail he assisted his last patient Tom Youk. All of his assisted suicide was with consent of the patient and their family. In addition to that he recorded the entire suicide process. One Sunday evening 60 minutes mike Wallace asks him that “Tom Youk was a man. And it was a compassionate murder, but you murder him“ Dr.kovorkian responded “But it was a man whose life didn't measure up anymore. You know, David Hume said it, 'No man ever threw away a life while it was worth keeping.'” Dear professor sandel where do you categorize Dr. Jack Kevorkian among many philosophers? How history would judge him? I would like to know what your opinion about Kevorkian is.

Thank you,

1. [0](javascript:void(0)) [Bob\_Barrett](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/1538332)

about 19 hours ago

The debate on assisted suicide treats "life" as a unquestionable good. This is a false assumption. While life is a miraculous thing... it does not mean all living creatures exist in the same state. Life is not a binary condition; nor is dying. Dying is a process, often a nasty, painful, unfair one.

There are many things that should be experienced prior to forming an opinion. If you have never witness someone die, then you are ill informed on the process of dying.

Kevorkian has ethics on his side. He was treating his patients with dignity, and providing them with care and fairness. It is unfair to prohibit a dying person the right to decide how to die. It is harmful to make people suffer.

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