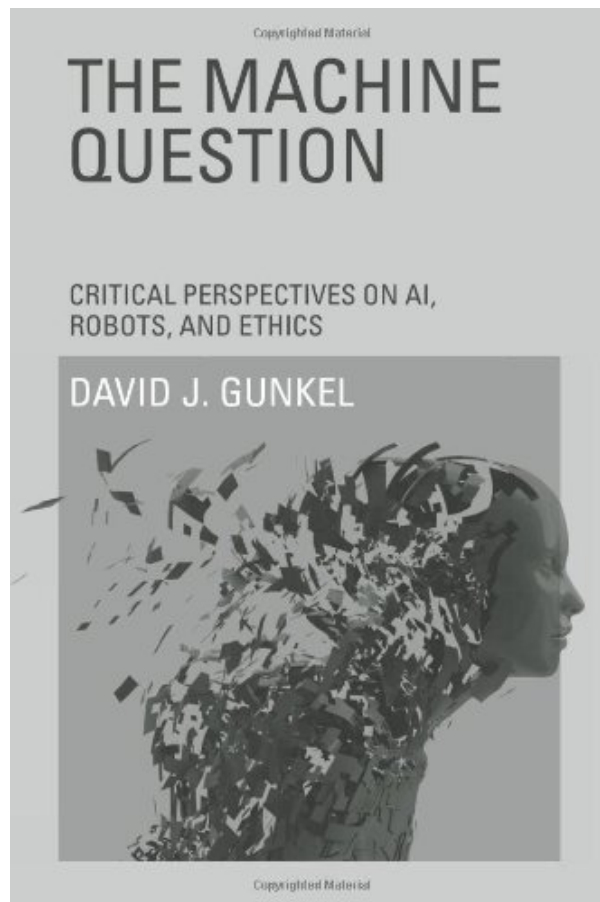


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PERSPECTIVES ON AI, ROBOTS, AND
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Review

A formidable new book.... Provides a galaxy of challenging thought.... Gunkel does a fine job of lucid and concise exposition.

(Peter Hankins *Machines Like Us*)

Gunkel's deconstruction is a tour de force that largely succeeds in getting us to 'think otherwise'. His argument that machines have always been the excluded other is convincing.... Gunkel engages the thinking of both 'analytic' and 'continental' philosophers, which I believe is a virtue.... The book is an original contribution to the field and likely to have wide reverberations... careful and remarkably comprehensive.

(Ethics and Information Technology)

There is something right about Gunkel's recognition that one can hardly consider the questions of machine morality without being led to more fundamental methodological and meta-ethical issues.... He nevertheless succeeded in connecting the ethics of robots and AI to a much broader ethical discussion than has been represented in the literature on machine ethics to date.

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This controversial and thought-provoking book is a must-read for anyone interested in the philosophy of technology and in discussions on artificial intelligence and ethics of information and communication technology. The unprecedented value of the book is that Gunkel not only analyzes important aspects of the immediate problem but also that he places his discussion in the context of philosophical discussions on such related issues as rights discourse. Maybe some day the moral status of machines will be obvious for all of us,

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(Wendell Wallach, Yale Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics)

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One of the enduring concerns of moral philosophy is deciding who or what is deserving of ethical consideration. Much recent attention has been devoted to the "animal question" -- consideration of the moral status of nonhuman animals. In this book, David Gunkel takes up the "machine question": whether and to what extent intelligent and autonomous machines of our own making can be considered to have legitimate moral responsibilities and any legitimate claim to moral consideration. The machine question poses a fundamental challenge to moral thinking, questioning the traditional philosophical conceptualization of technology as a tool or instrument to be used by human agents. Gunkel begins by addressing the question of machine moral agency: whether a machine might be considered a legitimate moral agent that could be held responsible for decisions and actions. He then approaches the machine question from the other side, considering whether a machine might be a moral patient due legitimate moral consideration. Finally, Gunkel considers some recent innovations in moral philosophy and critical theory that complicate the machine question, deconstructing the binary agent--patient opposition itself. Technological advances may prompt us to wonder if the science fiction of computers and robots whose actions affect their human companions (think of HAL in 2001: A Space Odyssey) could become science fact. Gunkel's argument promises to influence future considerations of ethics, ourselves, and the other entities who inhabit this world.

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7 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Better questions for modern times

By Zach

This book was exactly what I expected having read David's other books, "Thinking Otherwise" and "Hacking Cyberspace". Gunkel narrows his focus here from "Thinking Otherwise" and focuses on what is not only arguably a very pertinent question of today, but quickly becoming one of the most pressing questions in the very near future: how does one approach the machine as other?

This is not a question with an answer, of course, but one that should bring us to think more carefully about the possibility not only of machine intelligence, but the ethical quandaries that emerge alongside artificial intelligence. Following the work of Baudrillard, Gunkel presents a great alternative to reading technology as merely a tool, and begins to delve into the ethics of this, possibly the most radical alterity. This book is an important read for anyone concerned about machine ethics, and a great addition to the growing body of work in this field.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

a book that makes you think otherwise

By Mark Coeckelbergh

Are machines worthy of moral consideration? David Gunkel's "The Machine Question" is an exceptional book that differs from much of the literature in robot ethics since it does not argue for a particular position in the debate but attends to the question itself. What is the question when we are talking about moral considerability and moral status? How is this problem framed and what does this framing reveal and exclude?

Gunkel insightfully shows how the very way the "machine question" is usually asked already legitimates the domination, exploitation, and exclusion of others. By means of instructive and scholarly discussions of Descartes and Levinas, Gunkel deconstructs some of the most important oppositions in the debate. This is a tour de force that encourages us to "think otherwise".

With its original contribution to the field, this book deserves many readers. Gunkel's gesture sheds new light on a problem that will remain of central importance not only within machine ethics but also within moral philosophy in general. The author's efforts to go beyond more of the same are exemplary. The main virtue of this book is not that it is about the ethics of machines, but that it shows that modern ethics has always been a machine ethics. A significant contribution to moral philosophy.

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Well written.

By Charles H. Davis

As said, it's well written and is yet another of the many books written on this and closely related topics.

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