How do we classify ourselves as being human? What characteristics distinguish us from the millions of other species, and other more abiotic entities, as being "human?" In the article "Mind vs. Machines", Brian Christian defends our humanity in comparison to our computer counterparts. After experiencing the confederate position of the Turing Test he writes, "As computers have mastered rarefied domains once thought to be uniquely human, they simultaneously have failed to master the ground-floor basics of the human experience—spatial orientation, object recognition, natural language, adaptive goal-setting—and in so doing, have shown us how impressive, computationally and otherwise, such minute-to-minute fundamentals truly are". I strongly agree with this notion, while computers may be able to mimic the fundamentals of everyday conversation, they cannot replicate the natural behaviors of human nature.

 These natural behaviors are associated with experiences or memories throughout life; they cannot be attained by computers in the same capacity. In the article Christian eludes to a conversation between Doug, a Canadian linguistics researcher, and his judge. The pair, realizing that they were both from Canada, began referring to local teams, using abbreviations, and joking about different hockey team's past and present records. This added the humanity aspect to the conversation, both individuals' shared common memories and emotions associated with their experiences. A computer could not draw on feelings and memories like this, thus they could not replicate the "human" aspect of the conversation.

A prime example of this human connection occurs at every athletic event I have ever attended. For example, when warming up for track events it is not uncommon to begin talking with your

soon-to-be opponent. The conversation generally begins with a comment about the upcoming race; however, it transitions into previous race experiences, funny team stories, and expectations from demanding coaches. While a computer may be able to generate a generic response to keep the conversation going, it could never convey the emotion associated with the events to which it was referring. A computer doesn't know the pain of running four hundred meter repeats, can't realize the pain associated with defeat, and certainly does not know the joy in dousing a coach with Gatorade. These fundamental feelings which we take for granted cannot be replicated by a computer, proving how human we are.

As Christian referred to, one of the elements that help to distinguish us from these computers is natural language. In the article he describes part of his technique when conversing with the judge is to type as though he is actually talking. There is a natural rhythm associated with the way we speak; our responses to questions do not simply cover the material that was posed. Often we build upon our responses, offering different ideas and examples to support our position as they occur to us; this also includes inquiring the other person's opinion on the different notions that were presented. Christian applied this technique in his interview. He added multiple ideas on a subject, questioned the judge, and filled the time that would be considered an "awkward silence" in a face to face conversation. His technique proved to be effective, as he received the Most Human Human Award. Computers do not experience these every day, face to face conversations. They cannot understand the natural language that comes, well naturally, to humans.

Although the majority of the article supports the notion that humanity cannot replicated by computers there is evidence that suggests it is difficult to distinguish between humans and their computer counterparts. For example, the article references the computer program Eliza, which would extract key words from a conversation and pose a question to the recipient based upon the key words. Many people reported having a meaningful conversation with Eliza and believed that they were conversing with a human being.

Albeit this complicates my position there are still underlying principles which refute the legitimacy of this counterargument. Eliza simply posed questions based upon key words, there were no experiences to draw upon, or anyway to relate to what the human was saying. Therefore, it was able to mimic the everyday conversation but was missing the natural aspects of human behavior. The article also describes how the program would fall back on generic phrases, which further proves its inability to comprehend and relate on a human level.

As technology becomes more advanced the distinction between humans and computers may seem to become more obsolete. However, as Dave Christian reasoned computers have "failed to master the ground-floor basics of the human experience…" such basics cannot be programmed or learned without experiences and emotion. In conclusion, I believe it is very evident that there is a clear distinction between humans and all other entities which attempt to replicate them.