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Relating Romantic Monsters to Dystopian Robots

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Carel Čapek's *Rossum's Universal Robots*

ABSTRACT
The following paper is a study case showing the way in which the debate and attitudes on creating artificial life were shaped by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and how this debate was inherited by dystopian author Carel Čapek in *Rossum's Universal Robots*. Paralels are made at the level of simbolic topography, classic scientific discourse, its relationship with gender constructs and the growing field of disability studies. Capek's thesis seems to be more complex than many have assumed. Rather than simply offering a radical critique of man's endeavour to create artificial life, the author seems to favour mimesis rather than the scientific attempt at improving nature itself.

KEYWORDS
Mary Shelley; Carel Čapek; Dystopia; Robot; Monster; Gender.

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Dr. Frankenstein's creature is probably the most well-known "monster" in all of British literature and Mary Shelley, as Joan Kane Nichols argues in her book, *Mary Shelley – Frankenstein's Creator,* the first science-fiction writer. Her influence in literature is unparalleled and her work the staple piece of hundreds of university courses around the world. Courses on the Gothic Novel, feminism, disability studies are nowadays unthinkable without taking *Frankenstein* into consideration either as main text or important influence. As Diane Long Hoeveler notes, Shelley's novel has become the most frequently taught canonical novel written by a woman in the nineteenth century (Hoevler 2003, 60) while Jay Clayton argues that, as a cautionary tale, "virtually every catastrophe of the last two centuries – revolution, rampant industrialism, epidemics, famines, World War I, Nazism, Nuclear holocaust, clones, replicants and robots has been symbolized by Shelley's monster." (Clayton 2003, 84)

In a very extensive essay entitled "Frankenstein's Futurity: Replicants and Robots" published in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley*, Clayton tracks tales of robots and replicants as being direct descendants of Dr. Frankenstein's creation.

Whether these creations are portrayed in a good or bad light, as a bright step forward in human evolution or as a monstrous, potential cause for the downfall of man, Clayton believes that these texts are all related to Shelley's novel. To this purpose, within the corpus of his essay, he discusses views from famous directors such as Ridley Scott, George Lucas or Stephen Spielberg, science fiction writers such as Nancy Kress and Octavia A. Butler; pioneers of robotics like Hans Moravec and Rodney A. Brooks; the inventor Ray Kurzweil or the feminist theorist of science studies Donna Haraway. (Clayton 2003, 85) What Clayton does is basically splitting these robotical descendants of *Frankenstein* in two categories on the basis of the author's and work's position (favourable or unfavourable) to the creation of artificial life. He discusses afterwards the minority of works, in written or cinematic form that have begun to appear and which seem to portray these creations not as monsters or, in his own words, "demons stalking popular culture" (Clayton 2003, 85) but in a positive light. The essay is very astutely written and certainly does a good job of showing the different artistic and scientific perspectives on the matter of creating artificial life while also pointing out the connections with Mary Shelley's novel. However, I would try to point out throughout this essay that although it is true that in the last few years we have been witnessing an upsurge in productions, cinematic or otherwise, that do not portray robots or replicants as "monsters" or aberrations of science, this is not actually a new way of approaching the theme. In fact, with regards to sci-fi and the dystopian sub-genre, the origins of the idea can be traced as far back as the 1920s to the author that introduced the word "robot" into the English language, the Czech author, Karel Čapek.

The purpose of this essay is thus to build yet another bridge, this time between Mary Shelley and a twentieth century author whose fictional spaces and characters have often been regarded as dystopian. His work, *R.U.R – Rossum's Universal Robots* attempts to portray a future in which science has managed to create artificial life forms which are used to replace human labour and thus create an apparent leisure utopia where man no longer needs to work. Things do not go exactly as planned and the play develops its dystopian twist. However, it is my aim to prove that, despite the play's portrayal of universal doom at the hand of nature and robots, the issue is more complicated. The author should not simply be regarded, as many surely did, as one who is fully against the creation of artificial life because of his portrayal of the disastrous consequences that may arise. The issue at stake is far more complex, the author's position being liminal, that is, constructing within the same work both images that would suggest an unfavourable attitude towards creating life and "monsters" as well as images that portray the potentiality of this endeavour, provided it is done right. The "right way" Čapek seems to suggest is also within the scope of this essay. What the author does in my opinion is a criticism of means and motives, rather than the end itself of creating artificial life. He portrays the things that may go wrong but also leaves images that seem to hint at how things ought to have been done, provided only if done better. We should bear in mind that Čapek's creations are not like we would tend to imagine "robots", that is, machines vaguely mimicking humans made of iron and bolts. On the contrary, we are talking about very close replicas of humans, closer to what sci-fi later called androids.

Because of the author's narrative structure with regards to the creation of artificial life, this essay will be split into two parts. The first will be dealing with Čapek's critique of sciences' obsession with controlling

nature and the environment. Issues of space and gender, Čapek's usage of dystopian topology as well as pointing out the connections between his play and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* will be discussed in this first part.

The second section will be dealing with images in the play which are not critical of the prospect of creating artificial life. During this section I will draw on theories coming from the field of disability studies as well as Jungian psychoanalysis. Same as before, we shall be having in mind parallels with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

The Monstrous Gendered Dystopian Space and the Critique of Science's Attempt to Subdue Nature to Reason

The first of the parallels between Čapek and Shelley that we should take into account surrounds the issue of gender. As most feminist scholars have pointed out, one of the most important images at the core of *Frankenstein* is the image of a male scientist attempting to create life in the absence of the female, an image also present in Čapek's *R.U.R.* In our exploration of this issue we should also be aware of one of western culture's most enduring narratives, astutely discussed by Susan Griffin in her work *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her.* This narrative implies a symbolic association between masculinity and rationality/ science on one hand, while on the other, an association between femininity, nature and irrationality. According to Griffin, a hierarchy between the two terms is also part of the narrative, placing reason and masculinity above femininity and nature, the purpose of the first being achieving control over the latter. This type of gender politics was inherent to scientific thought in the seventeenth century and the Enlightenment against which Shelley partly reacted and in which Francis Bacon announced: "I come in very truth leading to you Nature with all her children to bind her to your service and make her your slave. […] Nature should be taken by the forelock. It is necessary to subdue her, to shake her to her foundations." (Farrington 1997) These types of gender constructions in relation to science and nature are very important when discussing works like Mary Shelley's novel or Carek Čapek's play at the level of characters, themes but most importantly at the level of constructing symbolic geographical environments. In the case of Shelley's novel, the repression of the feminine singles Dr. Frankenstein as a man working against nature, his "monster" being the result of an unnatural scientific experiment while the laboratory where this is achieved is constructed as a masculine space. His quest, as Anne K. Mellor notes in the essay "Making a 'Monster': An Introduction to *Frankenstein*" from *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley* is precisely to usurp from nature the female power of biological reproduction (Mellor 2003, 19) or, as Francis Bacon put it "to penetrate into the recesses of nature, and show how she works in her hiding places." (Farrington 1997) She observes how such an interpretation leads to discussions of the novel as a critique of science that overreaches past the boundary of Nature. Mary Shelley worked upon several ideas and concepts related to the scientific world in her time, including Sir. Humphry Davy, the first President of the Royal Society of Science who believed that the master chemist is one who attempts "to modify and change the beings surrounding him, and by his experiments to interrogate nature with power, not simply as a scholar, passive and seeking only to understand her operations but rather as a master, active with his own instruments." (Johnson 1802, 16) This fixation about controlling nature is portrayed by

both authors as leading to terrible results. In *R.U.R* the same critique is underlined in a different manner. Here, the construction of a large number of robots affects the birth rate of humans:

> Dr. Gall: […] maybe you would throw stones into these machines, here, that give birth to robots and destroy women's ability to be women.
> Helena: Why are there no more children being born?
> Dr. Gall: Because there are robots being made. Because there's an excess in manpower. Because mankind is actually no longer needed. It's almost as if…er…
> Helena: Say it.
> Dr. Gall: It's as if making robots were an offence against Nature.
> Helena: Gall, what's going to become of the human race?
> Dr. Gall: Nothing. There's nothing that can be done against the force of nature.
> Helena: Why didn't Domin put a limit on…
> Dr. Gall: Ah, forgive me, but Domin has his own ideas. People who have ideas should never be allowed to have any influence on the events of this world.

This is an example of a way in which "Mother Earth" itself and nature fights back. This theme of nature fighting back can also be observed in *Frankenstein*, though here, nature's revenge is not against humanity as a whole but seems to be focused on Dr. Frankenstein alone, who dies of "natural" causes at a very young age. (Mellor 2003, 19)

Similarly, the issue of gender resurfaces in the creation of Rossum's robots but this construction of gender emerges not only at the level of characters (the robots being similarly to Frankenstein's creation, motherless creations of a male scientist) but also at the level concerning the gendered spatiality of the island itself. The island on which the robots are being created is a strictly masculine space, in a sense, a twentieth century version of Dr. Frankenstein's laboratory. To further emphasize the connections between gender and space in *R.U.R* and also the issue of why this space may be considered monstrous as well as masculine, we must turn to some of the basic features of utopian/dystopian space. Writers of utopias geographically constructed space as an island on which a supposed better, rational social order could be created. The island also provided the isolation from the world beyond it. In many utopias, travellers coming from other geographical environments are regarded in a negative light. This is because, from the utopian perspective, any exterior element could prove potentially destabilizing and subversive to the "perfect" utopian social order. Individual and geographical otherness is thus automatically constructed as uncanny dark continents (in the Freudian sense). Or, much more simply put, the geographical environment of the island was constructed symbolically as a positive, desirable space whilst the world beyond and its inhabitants carried a negative, undesirable symbolic value. Twentieth century dystopian authors maintained the island model at the core of their textual geography; however, they reversed the symbolic connotations of space. While much has been said about the negative space of the dystopian city, few considered discussions of the space beyond it. Its meaning too has been reversed, shifted from the former utopian construction as "dark continent" to a space endowed with positive meaning. The same can be said about the role of visitors to the "island" who bring with them a different world view challenging the main discourse central to the dystopian topos. The female

gender and feminine space is of significant importance to *R.U.R.* The character of Helena is in this case a potentially subversive visitor who remains throughout the play the only female human character on an island populated solely by male scientists and robots. As she herself declares "I've come here with plans to start a revolution among your robots"[1]. Her discourse is one that posits ethical considerations against the business oriented factory management that creates robots in order to sell them as inexpensive labor force or army personnel. Gender is also an important element in the marketing of robots themselves as Domin, the chief scientist tells Helena:

> Helena: Why do you make female robots when…
> Domin: …when they don't have, er, when gender has no meaning to them?
> Helena: That's right.
> Domin: It's a matter of supply and demand. You see, housemaids, shop staff, typists: people are used to them being female.[2]

Domin himself has a female robot secretary. This particular type of marketing also underlines issues of space and gender, though this time the focus is the workplace as gendered space. Čapek goes to considerable lengths to underline the repression and confinement of the feminine to certain areas of life while being supressed from others. While on the island, Helena is not given permission to visit all areas of the factory, in fact she is mostly portrayed as staying in a room specially designed for her, a room "of purely feminine character."[3] This is the room in which the original blueprints for robot creation will be burned by Helena making all further robot construction impossible. However, this happens too late to have a chance at stopping the robots who turn against their creators and the extinction of the human race.

To return to Griffin's theory examining the narrative equating masculinity with reason and femininity with nature and irrationality, the repression of the feminine can also be observed at the level of robot construction. The original aim of Rossum was creating an artificial life-form that is completely rational and efficient, constructing any other human feature as *other* and repressing it from the final product. Human qualities like "feeling happiness", "playing the violin", "going for walk" and other like these had to be eliminated because they were not needed as they interfered with the robot's productivity. Domin considers that "a good worker" is not one that is honest and dedicated, as Helena thinks, but rather one that is cheap and has the least needs possible. Rossum therefore did not originally attempt to mimic nature in his endeavour to create artificial life but rather attempted to simplify the concept eliminating any humanlike feature that would stay in the way of the robot's main three functions: rationality, efficiency and cost effectiveness. Because of these things, Domin believes that Rossum created something much more sophisticated than nature ever did.

This particular construction priciple contains within itself the doom of mankind for a very simple reason. If artificial life is created only to perform tasks, be rational, eliminate inefficient behaviour from the environment and importance is not being put on any other developmental areas, it should not come as a surprise the moment when these beings turn against their creators. Both Rossum and Domin understood that humans are prone to irrational behaviour, engaged in all sorts of activities that are not productive or contributing to work efficiency and they tried building creatures that are free of such issues. One should not wonder then when the robots start to do precisely what they have been created for:

rationalize and eliminate inefficiency ergo eliminate the irrational humans or as Rossum put it, throw the man out and put the robot in'. As Radius, the robot leader argues:

> Helena: I'm so sorry about it, they're going to exterminate you. Why weren't you more careful with yourself?
> Radius: I will not work for you.
> Helena: Why do you hate us so much?
> Radius: You are not like robots. Robots are able to do anything. You give mearly orders. You say words which are not needed.[4]

The irrational side of man is being rejected in favour of creating a purely rational being. Again, this turns us to the question of gender, for if masculinity is constructed as Griffin argues in relation to reason and femininity in relation to irrationality and nature, repressing the irrational equates symbolically with the repression of the female at a geographic as well as psychological level.

The otherness and alternative natural feminine space symbolized by Helena is posed as counterpoint to the masculine space of the island. She is the outsider visitor, the symbolism associated to her gender being potentially subversive to the carefully rationalized order on the island. Domin's initial refusal to listen to Helena's arguments ultimately leads to the extinction of the human race, first by a massive drop in human natality symbolizing nature's reaction to his enterprise and secondly by physical elimination at the hands of the robots who basically achieve what they have been programmed for: be rational, maximize efficiency and eliminate irrational behaviour from the environment. Čapek's point seems to be that interfering with nature and repressing the feminine is not only unnatural or unjust but extremely dangerous having the potential of causing unforeseen consequences. For this reason, through its symbolic associations, the island is constructed in my opinion as a masculine space of monstrosity.

Hope for the New Adam and Eve after the Robot Apocalypse – A Robot Love Story and Čapek's Right Kind of Artificial Life

All being said in the previous chapter about the island as being monstrous through the repression of nature and the feminine, Čapek's text does seem to posit an alternative to universal doom at the hand of robots and the revenge of nature. And this is precisely the part that is so often overlooked by critics who simply label him as being ultimately unfavourable to the prospect of creating artificial life when discussing his play. This alternative comes in the form of symbolic hybridization and the acceptance of the natural, irrational and feminine dimension in man's endeavour of creating a life form in his own image.

Within this chapter I will attempt to show that rather than eliminating the natural irrational "other" from robot construction with the purpose of creating a more efficient artificial being, Čapek's point seems to be that man must rather attempt mimesis, that is not attempt to correct nature but imitate it. The issue revolves around the seeming development of individual consciousness in the case of some robots present in the play as well as Dr. Gall's idea of shaping a new breed of robots, a breed that starts with the creation of a very close replica of Helena. However, throughout the play, we manage to meet only two of his creations, a male named Primus and robot Helena before the robot apocalypse. But to understand exactly how these two function symbolically in the economy of the text we must make a further parallel with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein.*

Having in mind the above discussion of the role of gender and gendered space we should detach a little from feminist criticism and go into the area of disability studies as well as Jungian psychoanalysis. Simi Linton argues that the purpose of disability studies is to criticize the notion that disability is primarily a medical category. Linton explains that:

> The medicalization of disability casts human variation as deviance from the norm, as pathological condition, as deficit, and significantly, as an individual burden and personal tragedy. Society, in agreeing to assign medical meaning to disability, colludes to keep the issue within the purview of the medical establishment, to keep it a personal matter and "treat" the condition and the person with the condition rather than "treating" the social processes and policies that construct disabled people's lives. […] Our goal is the reinterpretation of disability as a political category and to the social changes that could follow such a shift. (Linton 1998, 2)

Now obviously, as Diane Hoeveler notices, it is rather easy to use this definition in relation to a novel likes *Frankenstein.* The creature's appearance could be interpreted as "disabled" in a society that values external beauty (as defined by the aesthetic theories of Edmund Burke), conformity and class determinacy. *Frankenstein* thus becomes an expression of the "otherness" of living as differently abled in a world of able, hostile or indifferent people. (Hoevler 2003, 59) Hoeveler also mentions the theory of the biologist Stephen Jay Gould who believes that "the creature becomes a monster because he is cruelly ensnared by one of the deepest predispositions of our biological inheritance – our aversion towards seriously malformed individuals'. Gould believes this is a "mammalian pattern" which needs to be tempered by "learning and understanding." (Gould 1994, 21) Shelley's point in constructing *Frankenstein* would then be that "Nature can only supply a predisposition, while culture shapes specific results … [we must all] … judge people by their qualities of soul, not by their external appearances". Also the rejection, fear, hatred and punishment the creature faces contributes to his turning violent. This seems to point out the now common psychological insight concerning the probability and the frequency to which an abused child turns himself into an abuser.

This particular issue is reversed with respect to Čapek's play. By this I mean that the robots are not portrayed as being ugly or physically disabled. In aspect they are near perfect copies of humans. Thus, their monstrosity does not stem from an unappealing appearance but rather the robots are perceived as monstrous or inferior by the scientists because "they don't have a soul,"[5] a rather hypocritical remark as we shall see. The robots are objectified as machines fulfilling the tasks for which they are created and sold on the market. The possibility that these forms of artificial life may also develop their own psychology, or, even more, that there may be ways of attempting to improve the resemblance of their psyche to that of humans is completely beyond the scope of scientists like Domin. Among those like him, not only it is commonly considered that the robots have no souls, but also that they don't need one for the tasks they have been built for.

> Domin: (*laughing*) Sulla isn't a person, Miss Glory, she's a robot.
> Helena: Oh, please forgive me...
> Domin: (*puts his hand on Sulla's shoulder*) Sulla doesn't have feelings. You can examine her. Feel her face

and see how we make the skin.
Helena: Oh, no, no!
Domin: It feels just the same as human skin. Sulla even has the sort of down on her face that you'd expect on a blonde. Perhaps her eyes are a bit small, but look at that hair. Turn a-round, Sulla.[6]

This underestimation is a key factor causing the robot rebellion which ultimately leads to the destruction of the human race. Similarly to Dr. Frankenstein, Domin fails as a parent at understanding and taking responsibility for his children'. The fact of the matter is that the "robots" violent reaction against their creators, against being used as slave labour force, their craving for independence and even their rage and bloody revenge seems to indicate a development in their individual consciousness progressing from the point where they would blindly follow orders to another, more advanced, level. However, Domin is a scientist, a biological engineer, not a psychologist. Helena comes again into focus, posing some very interesting, intuitive ideas but these are treated as preposterous by Domin or the other scientists.

Hallemeier: They've got no will of their own. No passions. No hopes. No soul.
Helena: And no love and no courage?
Hallemeier: Well of course they don't feel love. Robots don't love anything, not even themselves. And courage? I'm not so sure about that; a couple of times, not very often, mind, they have shown some resistance ...
Helena: What?
Hallemeier: Well, nothing in particular, just that sometimes they seem to, sort of, go silent. It's almost like some kind of epileptic fit. "Robot cramp", we call it. Or sometimes one of them might suddenly smash whatever's in its hand, or stand still, or grind their teeth– and then they just have to go on the scrap heap. It's clearly just some technical disorder.
Domin: Some kind of fault in the production.
Helena: No, no, that's their soul![7]

When the robots indeed do seem to act outside the proper pattern inscribed to them, the scientists merely conclude that it is due to a factory disorder or technical failure and send those that cannot be "repaired" to the scrap heap. What interests us here from the point of view of disability studies is precisely how the robots' difference is constructed as other, as a kind of disease: "robot cramp". Rather than admitting the possibility that the respective robots might be evolving and developing differently from the point of view of individual consciousness or developing even a "soul", this different behaviour is constructed as a disease. Thus similarly to how Dr. Frankenstein rejects his creature, regarding it as a disabled monstrosity so do the scientists in Čapek play reject the robots that do not fit their image of the proper functioning robot, sending those that manifest the above quoted symptoms to the scrap heap. These are the robots that will eventually suceed in eliminating man.

But we might ask, how exactly are we to interpret or define the concept of "soul" within this text? The question is fundamental in order for us to understand the reason for which these artificial beings are constructed as monstrous by the scientists. What exactly does Helena mean when she argues that the robots have the capability of developing souls? To answer this question I think that Čapek has in mind a psychological definition. That is to say, he employs the word "soul" as a word related to the concepts of "anima" or "psyche" used by ancient

philosophers such as Plato or Aristotle and later psychologists like C.G. Jung.

Although Čapek could not have had any contact with the works of C.G Jung, their definitions of the "soul" or "anima" seem remarkably compatible. For Jung, the anima was an antropomorphic archetype of the unconscious psyche which presented itself as the totality of the unconscious feminine psychological qualities that a male possesses. Jung considered this archetype as being responsible for creativity, sensitivity as well as other typically human features. If we understand Čapek's definition of soul as anima following the Jungian perspective we can make several interesting observations.

First of all, we become aware of the hypocritical position of the scientists. This is because, on one hand, they construct robot identity as an ontological other, as "soulless", "not-human" and therefore inferior and monstrous. On the other hand, when a robot *does* manifest actions that contradict the "soulless" paradigm, their condition, far from being considered as a sign of developing consciousness, is treated as a disease: robot cramp. We have seen through disability studies how difference can be constructed as sickness. Therefore, the only two types of identity a robot is attributed by the scientists are either "soulless and monstrous" or "defective and monstrous". But why would the emergence of consciousness, soul or the anima would automatically construct them as "defective"? The answer to this question is simple: because the soul or "anima", the feminine archetype that Jung believed is the source of human creativity is precisely what is eliminated in the attempt to create the perfectly rational, efficient artificial being. As Domin himself puts it, robots are supposed to be efficient not be creative or "play the violin"[8] like humans do. As we have seen in the above quotation from the play, the signs of "robot cramp" are described to us as bursts of irrational behaviour unacceptable from perfectly rational and efficient forms of artificial life. This brings us back to the issue of gender. Susan Griffin points out the narrative that has constructed masculine identity in relation to reason and culture while female identity was constructed in relation to irrationality and nature. The existance of an anima, of this feminine principle would undermine the prime purpouse of the robots' existance. The issue of rejecting the probability that the robots may be developing a soul or anima is another instance of repressing the feminine on Čapek's robot island.

In the end, the robots do manage to rebel against their creators and in the process exterminate the whole human race. In turn, Helena destroys Rossum's original blueprints making all further robot construction impossible. Thus, apparently both races are doomed. Only one scientist, Alquist, the head of the construction department is left alive by the robots with the hope that he can rediscover the now lost "secret of life". His great surprise is to see in the final scene of the play two of Dr. Gall's robots, Primus and robot Helena showing empathy and being in love with each other acting exactly like a pair of humans would, given the circumstance. At first he cannot believe his eyes, thinking that maybe they are humans that have somehow managed to escape the robot apocalypse. This confusion destabilizes completely the symbolic line that was cast between the race of men and robots. The signs that made differences visible do not function anymore. Alquist's first instinct is that of the scientist. He wishes to disect robot Helena and see exactly what is the rational cause for her natural, humanlike behaviour, what makes her work different from the other robots. After encountering heavy protests from Primus who dramatically offers his life to spare the other, Alquist accepts only to encounter the same protests,

this time from Helena. However he changes his attitude abbruptly:

> Primus*:* (holding on to her) I won't let go of you. You're not going to kill anyone, old man!
> Alquist*:* Why not?
> Primus: Because … because ... we belong to each other.
> Alquist*:* You're quite right. It's alright. Go, now. Go on your way, Adam. Go on your way, Eve.[9]

In my opinion this last scene from the play changes radically the message of Čapek's text. We are not dealing, as many have assumed when interpreting, with a text that simply criticizes man's overreaching ambition at creating artificial life. The text does not resemble Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* at the level of this particular theme. Surely, as Jay Clayton argued, texts that portray favourable views towards the creation of artificial life are just as much indebted to *Frankenstein* as texts that do not. However, the criticism in Čapek's play is not meant to be a clear dismssal of the attempt. One can say that the author criticizes the utilitarian logic that lead to the construction of the robots in the first place or the repression of nature, the irrational and the feminine principle both at the level of individual characters as well as geographical environment. One can say that the author criticises of the scientist's approach to correct nature rather than work along it an mimic it, but not the prospect of creating life itself.

These two robots with humanlike feelings for eachother are neither represented as monstrous nor are they evil or failed experiments but rather they act more human than the humans themselves did throughout the play. The play goes a long way telling us that irrationality, creativity, feelings and emotions are just as much part of human nature as rationality is and those that will or would venture unto the task of creating life-forms in our own image should definitely take this into account. The two at the end, presented as a new originary pair, a new Adam and a new Eve are a step forward in evolution. They are hibridized creatures containing the best from both worlds. In this respect Čapek's text is among the first that portray not only what may go wrong in the creation of artificial life but also alternative possibilities. Alquist's final optimistic remark seems to underline this.

> Alquist: […] life will not perish! Life begins anew, it begins naked and small and comes from love; it takes root in the desert and all that we have done and built, all our cities and factories, all our great art, all our thoughts and all our philosophies, all this will not pass away. It's only we that have passed away. Our buildings and machines will fall to ruin, the systems and the names of the great will fall like leaves, but you, love, you flourish in the ruins and sow the seeds of life in the wind.[10]

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Notes

[1] Karel Čapek, *RUR*, p. 29.
[2] *Ibidem,* p. 21.
[3] *Ibidem,* p. 23.
[4] *Ibidem,* p.35.
[5] *Ibidem,* p. 29.
[6] *Ibidem,* p. 9.
[7] *Ibidem,* p. 18.
[8] *Ibidem,* p. 8.
[9] *Ibidem,* p. 81.
[10] *Ibidem,* p. 82.