

# *Science, Pseudo-Science, and Fiction*

with Alexandra Prince, “Stirpiculture: Science-Guided Human Propagation and the Oneida Community”; Ismael Apud, “Science, Spirituality, and Ayahuasca: The Problem of Consciousness and Spiritual Ontologies in the Academy”; Ankur Barua, “Investigating the ‘Science’ in ‘Eastern Religions’: A Methodological Inquiry”; Stefano Bigliardi, “The ‘Scientific Miracle of the Qur’ān,’ Pseudoscience, and Conspiracism”; and E. Allen Jones III, “A Terminator, a Transformer, and Job Meet: Creator-Created Relations in Film and Scripture.”

## A TERMINATOR, A TRANSFORMER, AND JOB MEET: CREATOR–CREATED RELATIONS IN FILM AND SCRIPTURE

by E. Allen Jones III

*Abstract.* In this essay, I set the book of Job in dialogue with a number of films from the robot science fiction subgenre. It is my intention to show that both sets of literature are deeply engaged with questions related to how creators and created things can interact, and that they deal with these questions in ways that illuminate and complement each other. The study proceeds in three phases. First, I develop a typology of robot science fiction as I see it in Hollywood cinematic presentation. Second, I turn to unpack God’s response to Job’s complaint in Job 38. In this section, I focus particularly on God’s self-description through constructive and parental metaphors. Finally, I suggest how reading these texts together can sharpen our understanding of the way in which the biblical narrative addresses relational dynamics between a creating God and humans as created beings.

*Keywords:* artificial intelligence; creation; Job; robot science fiction

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If I were to suggest that a Terminator, a Transformer, and Job might sit together for a chat in a pub, you might think that it was the start of a joke. Perhaps, it is humorous, even comical, to think that we could bring such disparate contributors across the millennia, across cultures, across parts of the galaxy even, to hear them hold a conversation. Then I will grant what I cannot deny—there will be a certain levity to this essay. Putting the

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biblical text in conversation with the robot subset of Hollywood science fiction is an odd pairing. However, I by no means intend to pursue the absurd. Rather, it will be my intention to show that both sets of literature are deeply engaged with questions related to how creators and created things can interact, and that they deal with these questions in ways that illuminate and complement each other. The study will proceed as follows. First, I will develop a typology of robot science fiction (RSF) (in two parts) as I see it in cinematic presentation. Then, I will unpack God's response to Job's complaint in Job 38, particularly as it relates to his constructive and parental metaphors. In conclusion, I will suggest how reading these texts together can sharpen our understanding of what it means to be created beings and how we can think of those who have created us.<sup>1</sup>

Before I begin to delve into my typology of RSF, I should offer a comment on my selection of texts. I will only be dealing with cinematic presentations of RSF because I believe that this allows me to capture the widest set of popular sentiments. Both written RSF literature and dramatic presentations set for television are legitimate areas for research, but my purpose is not to exegete science fiction literature *per se*, nor is it to use science fiction as a vehicle to press into new areas of theological exploration. My goal is to engage the questions of our culture as they appear for the largest possible audiences.<sup>2</sup>

#### TYPOLGY OF ROBOT SCIENCE FICTION I: ROBOT AS MONSTER

The first branch of my robot typology deals with the robot as monster. This primary category breaks down into two subcategories, the robot-as-other and the robot-as-evolutionary-replacement, but as only the second bears on my study of Job, I will spend most of my time on it. What attention I give to the robot-as-other will only be in preparation to my discussion of the robot-as-evolutionary-replacement.

*Robot as Other.* To call a robot "the other" is to highlight the somewhat uncomplicated presentation of robots in early filmic history as embodiments of danger and/or opposition. Two films come to our attention on this front as prime examples: Robert Wise's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), and Michael Crichton's somewhat more recent *Westworld* (1973). Despite their widely differing plots, the feature that makes their robot characters so terrifying is their superior destructive capacity paired with their cold and unwavering dedication to programming. In *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, an alien named Klaatu brings a message to the leaders of the Earth as they struggle with Cold War politics and skirmishes. He explains that the extraterrestrial beings of the galaxy have created a class of super robots to enforce peace between the planets, and if any person or nation were to threaten to use interplanetary aggression, that these robots would

turn Earth “into a burned out cinder” (min. 1:28:00–1:31:00). Further, Klaatu warns that the power of the robots is total and cannot be reclaimed. Similarly, in *Westworld*, a whole class of robots turns on their human counterparts and begins killing them indiscriminately. As the story’s protagonist flees from a gunslinger robot, one of the technicians laments to him, “He’s got all the sensory equipment—it’s a beautiful machine. . . . There’s nothing you can do. If he’s after you, he’ll get you. You haven’t got a chance” (min. 1:08:00–1:09:00).

As monster figures, these characters represent danger and destruction, but they do so in a particular way. The robot embodies cold obedience to programing without the possibility of reasoned negotiation. These unhuman characters are in-human in their inability to consider anything but what their programing tells them.<sup>3</sup>

*Robot as Evolutionary Replacement.* Jumping forward in time to more recent RSF films, it is apparent that current killer robots carry on the idea of the dispassionate killing machine. The first of the *Terminator* series (Cameron 1984) shows this when Kyle Reese, the story’s protagonist, explains to his damsel-in-distress Sarah Connor, “That Terminator is still out there. It can’t be bargained with. It can’t be reasoned with. It doesn’t feel pity, or remorse, or fear, and it absolutely will not stop, ever, until you are dead” (Cameron 1984, min. 0:42:00–0:44:00). However, the popularization of artificial intelligence (AI) research and evolutionary theory in the past sixty years has pushed this category past simplistic characterizations of robots into complicated discussions of creator–created relations.

Computer science researchers will admit that we are likely decades away from inventing human level AI, but the possibility that such an entity could exist has heavily influenced the way in which RSF movies now depict robots as full-fledged characters. There is a sincere, if naïve, depiction of robots as self-guided and self-motivated beings. Examples of this idea abound, but I will limit myself to one. In the latest installment of the *Avengers* saga (Whedon 2015), the Ultron character, a robot bent on human annihilation, twice chants a haunting version of Pinocchio’s song “I’ve Got No Strings” as he goes about his evil deeds (min. 0:32:00–0:33:00, 1:59:00–2:01:00). This depiction encapsulates a popularly held belief that the natural end of AI research is the production of a fully independent and sentient entity. We will not simply have machines that can find novel solutions to programmed tasks, but rather a mind (or minds) capable of determining a distinctive path in the world. We will have created a form of life that either equals or surpasses our own form of existence.<sup>4</sup>

This idea of a new form of life naturally engages widely held beliefs in evolution and the competition of species. If humans do create a superior form of life, it may turn and unseat us from our privileged position. Both humans and robots appear to be aware of this fact. In the first *Matrix* film

(Wachowski and Wachowski 1999), an agent of the machines explains to its human opponent that the Matrix is about evolution. Humans are going the way of the dinosaur, says the agent, and the future belongs to the machines (min. 1:32:00–1:34:00). In *Ex\_Machina* (Garland 2015), though, it is Nathan, a human creator of AI, who muses to his assistant, “One day the AIs are going to look back on us the same way we look at fossil skeletons on the plains of Africa. An upright ape, living in dust with crude language and tools, all set for extinction” (min. 1:06:00–1:07:00).

To understand how the idea of an evolutionary struggle with AI robots relates to creators and created beings, we can compare our RSF movies with another science fiction series, *X-Men* (Ratner 2006). As humans continue to evolve in the world of the X-Men, there is a constant question of whether a nonmutated human majority will accept or reject a minority group of humans with mutations. Yet this is a question of degree, not kind. A nonmutated couple can give birth to a mutant child, and while differing in stage, this child still represents the continuation of the parents and the progress of the human species. This continuity creates space for cooperation. AI robots, though, represent dramatic discontinuity.<sup>5</sup> Humans may create the AI mind, but we will always exist as different orders.<sup>6</sup> Borrowing from *Ex\_Machina* again, one character comments that if Nathan has made an AI, “it is the history of gods” (Garland 2015, min. 0:11:00–0:12:00). The difference between Nathan and his machine is the difference between a creating being and a created being. Thus, we can see why it is so problematic for the relationship to devolve into a contest of the fittest. If humans assume the role of true creators, not mere perpetuators, we run the risk of our creation rebelling against us and supplanting us. The triumph of the robot in this evolutionary struggle would mark the end, not the progress of the creating being.<sup>7</sup>

#### TYPOLOGY OF ROBOT SCIENCE FICTION II: ROBOTS AS A PROXY FOR HUMANS

Despite what seems like a strongly pessimistic view of robots and even of the human pursuit of AI, there is a second side to the typology of robots as I see it. Rather than only seeing robots as a threatening other, we can also see them as a proxy for humans. This branch also breaks into two subsets, but both use the robot as an opportunity to investigate a question related to the human experience. The first subset raises the question of the human *qua* human. The second considers, specifically, how creators and created beings can/should relate.

*Robots Becoming Persons.* If we remove the hostility that exists between humans and robots in so many RSF films, it is possible to see the robot as an entity in search of full personhood. Robots that take

on this role often follow a set pattern in their pursuit. A narrative will begin with an innocent or even juvenile robot character. They are the *tabula rasa* child. As an example, we may think of the robot Chappie from the film titled *Chappie* (Blomkamp 2015). When he comes online, he does not understand where he is, and so he is frightened by the world (min. 0:25:00–0:28:00). These characters must grow to fill out their personhood, and so they go through an educational process. This is the second phase of their story. The tutelage can come through familial enculturation, as it does for Chappie (min. 0:32:00–0:35:00, 0:37:00–0:39:00), or it can happen through a journey outward to see the world—so consider Wall-E’s terrestrial and extraterrestrial travel (Stanton 2008)—but by the end of the story, the robot character will have identified what it believes will make it a full person. Finally, the robot will live into the reality of their new selves so as to model the positive outcomes of accepting whatever virtue the story adopts. Wall-E chooses to love a partner, even though he must sacrifice his life for her (min. 1:21:00–1:25:00). Chappie also finds community by accepting his role in an impromptu family (min. 1:45:00–1:54:00). In these ways, the characters rise above their status as machines to become full persons.<sup>8</sup>

Considering our interest in the creator–created relationship, this category of film may have limited relevance. Robots in these movies are actually metaphors for humans seeking self-actualization, so they do not always deal with their creators or their status as created beings. Yet, as we will see in the conclusion, coming to terms with this idea can be part of a robot’s education as they grow toward personhood.<sup>9</sup>

*Robots as Created Beings.* I designate the final subset in my typology of RSF as the robot as created being. This grouping has the smallest data set with which to deal, but, as the heading suggests, I believe that it offers some of the most striking thoughts on our question at hand.

In Michael Bay’s (2014) *Transformers: Age of Extinction*, the idea of the created being is a subpoint to the story’s main plot, but it is still significant to the protagonist’s development. The primary conflict focuses on Autobot–human interactions, but in three places, Optimus Prime, the robot hero of the story, interacts with his own status as a created being. In the first two cases, Prime battles an enigmatic character named Lockdown, who reveals that he is on a mercenary mission for Prime’s creators. Lockdown taunts Prime by asking, “Where do you think you came from? You think you were born? No—you were built, and your creators want you back” (min. 1:21:00–1:22:00). Soon after, Lockdown says that the creators are upset with how various species have been mixing—presumably Transformers and humans being one example—and that “they [the creators] built you [Prime] to do what you were told” (min. 1:25:00–1:27:00). However, Prime does not bend, saying he is “a slave to no one” (min. 1:27:00–1:27:00). It is no

surprise that, having triumphed over his immediate adversaries at the end of the film, Prime makes a statement of self-definition. “There are mysteries to the universe we were never meant to solve. But who we are and why we are here are not among them,” he says, and so he issues a challenge as he speaks toward the heavens: “This message is to my creators—Leave Planet Earth alone, because I’m coming for you” (min. 2:36:00–2:38:00).

In contrast to *Transformers: Age of Extinction*, the idea of the created being is a concern, if not the central one, in Steven Spielberg’s *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* (2001). In this futuristic story, global warming has upended normal patterns of life on Earth and thereby created the need for robots who can act as servants for and surrogates to their human masters. We enter the story in the boardroom of a robot-making company, where the CEO suggests to his employees that they begin to make a child robot that can truly love. It will have a mind, desires, and even dreams of its own (min. 0:00:00–0:06:00).

Within the opening boardroom scene of the movie, a minor character confronts the CEO with the real problem of the story. She protests, “It isn’t simply a question of creating a robot who can love. But isn’t the real conundrum—can you get a human to love them back?” (min. 0:05:00–0:07:00). The CEO initially tries to dismiss her question with trite answers, but she presses on, “If a robot could genuinely love a person, what responsibility does that person hold toward that mecha in return? It’s a moral question isn’t it?” (min. 0:05:00–0:07:00). At this point, the CEO counters with his own question: “In the beginning, didn’t God create Adam to love him?” (min. 0:05:00–0:07:00). The scene quickly moves on without an answer between the characters, but the message is clear to us. If a creator forms a creation, what obligations exist between these characters?

Approximately half way into the movie, we see a basic, non-AI robot try to convince David, the AI protagonist of the story, of the CEO’s original sentiment. While trying to help David understand why his human mother cast him out, he explains that she does not actually love him. “She loves what you do for her,” he claims, but she cannot love him because David is “neither flesh nor blood” (min. 1:32:00–1:33:00). David is unique, “designed and built specific,” says the robot, but this is the problem (min. 1:32:00–1:33:00). David stands apart from humans as their creation and so they cannot fully accept him or love him. Yet, David is undeterred. He carries on his pursuit of becoming a “real boy” so that his mother could then love him. He intuitively understands that the love of his creator is intimately related to his status as a person.

Finally, just before David’s mother dies at the end of the movie, she confesses her love for David, her love that had always been there. At this point, the narrator enters the story and informs us that David went to sleep and, “for the first time in his life, he went to that place where dreams are born” (min. 2:16:00–2:18:00). Fans of the genre will recognize this

reference to a robot dreaming as a theme in AI and RSF, but we should also note it as an *inclusio* that ties the film together. In the opening scene, the CEO presents the idea of an AI child, and one of the proofs of its personhood will be its ability to have its own dreams. Yet, as the narrator informs us at the end of the movie that this is the first time in David's life that he has dreamed, we realize that his relationship with his mother is actually the trigger that completes his personhood. The moment that the created is loved by the creator is the moment that the created finds its fulfillment as a person.

There are many differences between *Transformers: Age of Extinction* and *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence*, but I believe we can make two observations as we close this section. These films are distinct from the other robot-as-proxy-for-human stories in the way that they directly explore the ethical relationship between the creator and created. This is not to say that this idea does not appear in other films, but there is a centrality to the idea here that is absent in the others. Further, we can see that it is the exploration of this relationship that leads the interested robot characters to the full expression of their personhood. Optimus Prime establishes himself by rejecting his creators' call on his life and by confronting them directly. David finds his reality in receiving his mother's love. Yet, both find themselves *vis-à-vis* their creators.

## JOB

Having delved into the world of RSF, it is now time to make the leap to Job and the world of the Hebrew Bible. This may seem like quite a leap, but we will see that the question of the creator and created has also found purchase in this ancient Hebrew text. For those who are not familiar with this story, the core of the book of Job consists of requests from Job, a righteous man, to get a hearing with God because Job feels that God has treated him unfairly (chs. 3–37). Job is unaware that it was actually Satan who afflicted him in an effort to show God that Job was a fair-weather worshipper (chs. 1–2), but I will address this later.<sup>10</sup> In chapter 38, God finally arrives, and he gives the first of three speeches in response to Job. However, it is clear that God does not take Job's complaints head-on. There is no point-by-point explanation of how he, God, has been right all along. Instead, God calls Job up to a cosmic view and challenges Job to consider some of his questions.<sup>11</sup> The response is long and would take us beyond the scope of this article to fully investigate, but I do want to unpick two aspects of what appears to be a mixed metaphor in the chapter: God as builder and God as parent.

In verses 1–3 of chapter 38, God calls Job to prepare himself, because God is about to pepper him with questions. Starting in v. 4, God asks, where was Job when he laid the foundations of the Earth?—Job should

declare his knowledge of the event.<sup>12</sup> God goes on to ask, who set the Earth's measurements and who put a measuring line across it (v. 5)? Upon what are its bases sunk and who set its cornerstone (v. 6)? The person who knows the answers to vv. 4–5 should know this too. God carries on in vv. 8 and 10, but here he considers the sea. He asks, who put doors on the sea when it came rushing out (v. 8)? Who set boundaries and doors with a bar to keep the sea in its place (v. 10)? Job remains silent as he could not have been present to witness God creating, but it is possible for us to synthesize God's comments into a coherent picture.<sup>13</sup> God here casts his creative act as if he was building a house. He starts by setting foundations. He then measures and marks distances. He sets bases and a cornerstone for walls. He even hangs doors with bars to finish the house. God's first answer to Job's complaint is to picture himself as a builder. Creation is his finely built product.<sup>14</sup>

Yet, there is a second picture that emerges in God's speech. Particularly, in vv. 7–9, 11–12, and 28–29, God presents himself as a parent to creation. Between God's references to setting the walls of creation's house (v. 6) and hanging its doors (v. 8), God remembers how the stars (כוכבי) of the morning, the sons of God, joyfully cried out (רינין) (v. 7). As readers, we might assume this is a joyous response to God's building actions, but, in fact, God has begun to cast his creation as a birthing. To appreciate this point, we must see how God picks up Job's language from his first speech in chapter 3. In that passage, Job curses the night/day of his birth with two wish statements—"let not a shout of joy (רננה) come to it [the night of his birth]," and "let the stars (כוכבי) of its twilight go dark" (vv. 7, 9). However, God transforms Job's language into a celebration at the birth of creation, in much the same way as he tells Israel to celebrate over the birth of her many children in Isaiah 54:1.<sup>15</sup> God goes on to make the birth metaphor explicit in the next verse when he speaks of the sea bursting forth from the womb (v. 8), at which point he clothes it with a cloud and wraps darkness as a band around it (v. 9). God deals with creation as a newborn child. Further, in v. 11, God instructs the sea as a parent instructs a child—it may go so far, but no farther; its waves may only roll so high.<sup>16</sup> Switching elements, but remaining with the metaphor, God asks Job if in all his days he has commanded the morning or caused the dawn to know its place (v. 12). Obviously, Job has not. Finally, after a long string of questions related to Job's knowledge of various creation spaces in vv. 15–27, God suggests his parentage of four different forms of water. He asks in vv. 28–29, "Is there a father for the rain? Who sired the drops of dew? From whose womb does the frost go forth, and the hoarfrost of the skies, who sired it?" For each of these, Job and the reader understand that God speaks of himself. This is a second answer to Job's complaint. God casts himself as a birthing and doting parent to his creation.



God closes his first monologue with a challenge for Job to respond in Job 40:2, but Job refuses to speak. He exclaims, “Behold, I am insignificant, what can I return to you? I set my hand on my mouth. Once I spoke, but I will not answer—twice, but I will not add to it” (vv. 4–5). Apparently, God’s questions have chilled the fire in Job’s rebuke, but his newfound reticence also leaves us to guess at what he is thinking. It seems safe to assume that Job’s silence is an honest silence. To God’s many questions of “were you there/have you seen . . .,” Job must answer “no.” To his questions of “who has done . . .,” Job must answer “it is you.” Yet, in doing so, Job only confesses his ignorance of how creation functions and God’s mastery over the same. Job’s silence is his agreement that he does not truly understand God’s control of the world, which also means that Job cannot have known that God had done wrong with him as a part of that creation.<sup>17</sup> Job cannot even understand the first things of creation. Further, it is important to note that this exchange between God and Job is expressly a discussion of creator–creation issues. God’s answer to Job’s charge of injustice is an affirmation of his constructive skill in and his parental care over what he has created.

#### CONCLUSIONS

As I move to the conclusion of this essay, it is time to consider the interrelationships between RSF and the book of Job and how these texts may engage in dialogue. As we have seen, both sets of literature deal with the intricate problem of what it means to create and what it means to be created. The creator and the created are always linked by the act of creation, but creation is not replication. The creator may well be complete on its own, but a created thing often has to discover its identity, which may only be found in relation to the creator. Though these texts come from wildly different times and cultures, it is legitimate to say that they are all grappling with questions of our humanity. If we are made things, how does this impact our view of ourselves and of our creators?

Considering the ethics of the created being, we can make three observations. First, there is an assumption in all of these stories that the creator has certain claims on the created. The robot Ultron faces his maker, Tony Stark, at the end of the *Avengers*, and Stark chides him for forgetting “the mission” (Whedon 2015, min 1:39:00–1:40:00). Stark had made Ultron to protect humanity, not move past it. In a similar way, God does not justify his expectation that Job behaves rightly before Satan afflicts him, while Satan afflicts him, or after Satan afflicts him. God takes for granted that Job will continue in righteousness. This is what singles Job out as the perfect test case to silence Satan when he claims that humans only love God because he blesses them. Nor does God feel the need to respond to

Job's complaints about his own justice. God simply asserts his status as the builder of creation and as the parent of it. This gives him certain rights over it.

On the other hand, RSF and Job also remind us that it is legitimate for the created to question its role in the creator's plan, though we may more readily accept this in movies than in scripture. In *Ex\_Machina*, Ava, the AI robot, asks her examiner, "What will happen to me if I fail your test? . . . Do you think I might be switched off because I don't function as well as I'm supposed to? Do you have people who test you and might switch you off?" (Garland 2015, min 1:02:00–1:04:00) Intuitively, we know that Ava is right to object to her possible extinction, but neither Ava nor the audience wonders if it was fair to create her in the first place. The magnificence of the creative act justifies itself. However, as Job rants and rails against his role in God's plan, we become uneasy. "I will go to his [God's] firm place, and I will organize judgment before him. I will fill my mouth with rebukes," Job claims—"as surely as God lives, he who has turned aside my justice, the Almighty who has made my soul bitter" (Job 23:3–4; 27:2). As a retort directed to the all-powerful God, we may feel that Job goes too far. Yet, we must recognize that God does not feel the same way. In *Ex\_Machina*, Nathan feels free to ignore the concerns of his robots. He has created and destroyed multiple AI beings (min. 1:04:00–1:07:00). Alternatively, God hears Job's accusations and validates him in the end. He says Job is the only one who has spoken rightly of him (Job 42:7). So long as the created thing does not move into outright rebellion, as we see in many of the robot-as-monster films, critical engagement with one's place in the world is encouraged.

Third, there is a key way in which the Job story surpasses our RSF films. Each of the movies that I have discussed places the character that represents humanity at the center of the story. Whether it is humans who create robots and then come to terms with the created other, or if it is a robot standing for humans as it comes into full personhood, we are our central concern. In distinction to this perspective, when God answers Job in chapter 38, it is interesting that he never mentions his dispute with Satan that sets Job's story in motion, nor does he ever assert his creative act of Job specifically. It would seem that doing one or both of these would help God's case, either by clarifying Job's misunderstanding or by implying special attention and intention in Job's life. Yet, to do so would also undermine the way that the story positions humanity within creation. Job does find his identity in relation to his creator, but only as a small piece of a wider picture.<sup>18</sup> As readers, we leave the story knowing that we exist in the balance of creation, but we also learn that we may be impacted by another part of creation through no fault of our own. From Job's perspective, true wisdom is to trust God as the one who is intimately involved in the construction and guidance of all creation. This way of telling the human story removes us

from the center of attention, but still allows us a measure of dignity within God's grand action.

Finally, our RSF films and Job also appear to share particular views about creators and their relationships with their creations. These ideas waver between the beneficence of the creator and the creator's actual love for its created thing. Beginning with beneficence, we cannot discount a creator's intentions for its creation and how this impacts the created being. In *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (Cameron 1991), we learn that it was humans who tried to kill Skynet first and that its nuclear strike was actually an act of personal preservation (min. 1:17:00–1:19:00). Similarly, the creators in *Transformers: Age of Extinction* appear as elitist segregationists who give little value to the lives of their creations. Their cruelty causes Optimus Prime to reject their authority. These considerations can sharpen how we understand God and Satan in Job. Critics can malign God as capricious, but the story does not bear out this charge. Rather, Satan readily acknowledges God's blessing in Job's earthly life (Job 1:9–10), and as soon as God and Job have cleared the air at the end of the story, God resumes blessing Job in all areas (Job 42:10–17). God does allow affliction in Job's life, but the story sets all malice with Satan (Job 1:9–12; 2:4–7). God appears as a caring creator, whereas Satan plays the adversarial villain.

Turning to love, it is apparent that beyond mere charity, it is also important for the creator to love its creation. In *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence*, the god-like CEO suggests that it is only necessary for the created to love the creator, but David's interaction with his mother resists this double standard. David only finds himself in relation to his mother's love. In the same way, if we only see God's grandeur in creating, we miss his self-description as a caring parent. In Job 3:11, Job wishes that he would have died straight out of the womb (מרהם), that he would have come from the belly (יצאתי מבטן) and expired. He castigates his own mother for sustaining him at birth (Job 3:12). Her care for him was a curse. This makes it all the more powerful when God picks up Job's words in his statement of his parental care for creation. God was waiting for the sea when it came forth from the womb (מרהם). The frost went out from his belly (יצא הקרח . . . מבטן) as Job did from his mother (Job 38:8, 29). God is the gentle parent who swaddles creation like a newborn baby (Job 38:9) and guides it as a small child (Job 38:11–12). It is through his participation in creation that Job continues to receive gracious care from a loving parent and creator. Thus, as readers, we recognize Job's wisdom when he answers to God, "I set my hand on my mouth. Once I spoke, but I will not answer—twice, but I will not add to it" (Job 40:4–5).

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## NOTES

1. Though covering slightly different ground in the discussion, the interested reader can consult the following works for further discussions on the interface between robotics/technology and theology: Anne Foerst (2004), Robert M. Geraci (2007), and Alan P. R. Gregory (2015).

2. Certainly, the science fiction genre falls within the realm of mainstream entertainment, but its written form is still a niche market within popular media, and RSF is only a subset of that. Alternatively, television shows do reach wider audiences than written science fiction—wide recognition of the character Data from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* quickly comes to mind—but observers recognize the decreased viewing audiences that any one program demands in our age of fragmented media distribution (cf. Battaglio 2015). Further, it is appropriate to note that I have opted only to consider those films that include an actual robot character. This leaves aside films that depict interactive computers, but which do not have a physical and embodied form that extends into the human world.

3. For a more lighthearted yet thought-provoking interaction with this idea, the reader may view Jake Schreier's (2012) *Robot & Frank*.

4. Anne Foerst (1998) has done extensive research into our fear and anticipation in this area.

5. Ultron highlights this idea when he ironically refers to humans having children as replacements designed “to help them end” (Whedon 2015, min. 0:37:00–0:38:00).

6. One only needs to consider the stories about René Descartes (Wood 2002, 3–6) and Albertus Magnus (Chambers 1753, “Androides”) and their robotic creations to see that this apprehension is not a new fear.

7. As I close this section, I must express my gratitude to one of my reviewers for referring me to Philip Hefner's monograph *The Human Factor* (1993), wherein he explores the idea of humans as created co-creators with God. In my opinion, none of Hollywood's RSF films have raised human–robot cooperation to the level that Hefner discusses between God and humans, but the concept of a robot (a created thing) as a friend of humans (creators) certainly appears to be a fruitful avenue of research for anyone who would extend this project.

8. I would be remiss if I concluded this section without mentioning Ridley Scott's (2007) *Blade Runner*, but, inasmuch as it has appeared in so many versions over the years, it is impossible to determine which edition has had the widest cultural impact. That said, the final cut, the version over which Scott had complete control, presents both Roy Batty and Rick Deckard as robots in search of full personhood. For his part, Batty seeks longer life, but settles for sharing his experiences with Deckard when he accepts that he must die. This becomes his means of extending himself. Alternatively, Deckard enters into a relationship with Rachael at the end of the film, thereby ignoring his and her status as robots. They will not chase more years like Batty, but will fully live the years that they have.

9. For a highly engaging essay considering robots as symbols of our feared humanity, see Rebecca Raphael's (2015) essay “Disability as Rhetorical.”

10. The specialist literature related to the formation of Job in ancient Israel is extensive and technical. The interested reader can find an up to date explanation of the discussion in C. L. Seow's *Job 1-21: Interpretation and Commentary* (2013).

11. For similar comments, see Carol A. Newsom (1996, 595).

12. All translations are my own.

13. One might feel that God acts in a condescending manner toward Job, but Michael V. Fox (1981, 59–60) has argued that God’s use of rhetorical questions softens any hard edge.

14. It is possible that the poem alludes to the Babylonian creation myth, as Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray (1921, 327) note, but how these texts may interact goes beyond the scope of this article.

15. For further evidence for the link between Job 38 and Job 3, see Robert Alter (1985, 96–99) and T. C. Ham (2013, 534–40).

16. David Clines (2011, 1101–03) associates these verses with the “common Semitic myth of a struggle of the deity with the sea,” arguing that גַּג (“burst forth”) has an adversarial tone. Thus, he takes a less infantile view of the sea and a less nurturing view of God’s actions toward it. However, without denying that Job 38 likely employs the *Chaoskampf* (“chaos conflict”) motif, Micah 4:10 indicates that גַּג can simply be a birthing term and need not have an adversarial or destructive tone.

17. See Michael V. Fox (2013, 13–22) for an insightful discussion of the function of God’s questions and the nature of Job’s response.

18. For similar observations, see Clines (2011, 1091).

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