

Robot Visions

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Issue #11

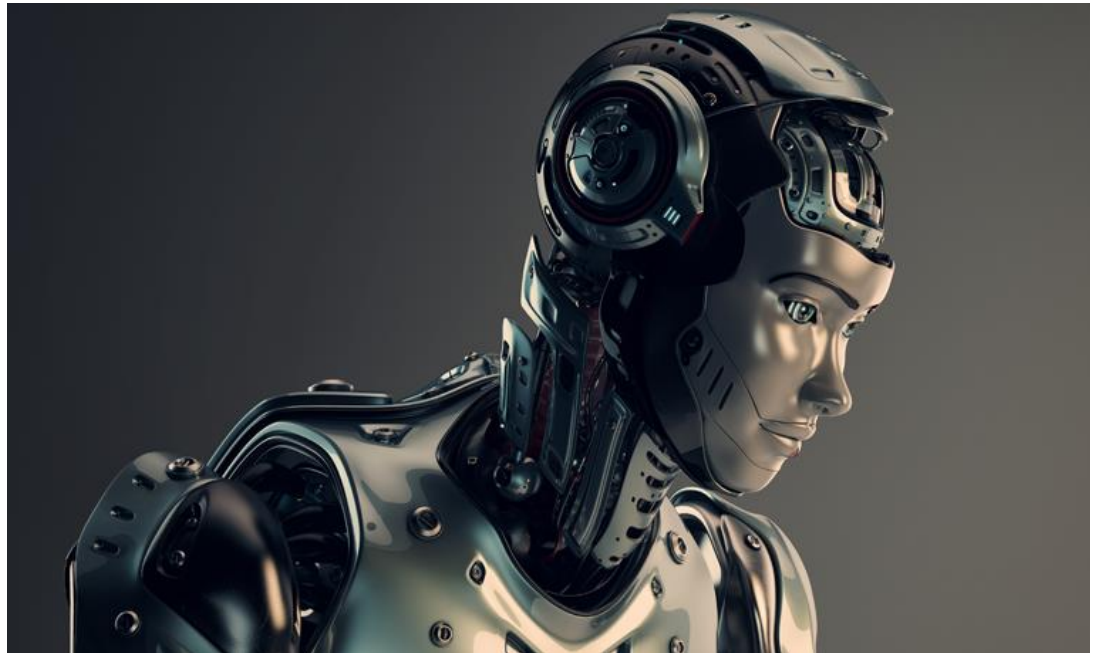
Exploratory Reading Journals

Lorena Solis Beltran

The Universal Character Profile of a Robot

A Contrast Between CD3 and Mike

Both the robots characterized in Asimov's "Too Bad!" and Julia Elliot's "The Love Machine" share commonalities that can be observed through their relationships with their creators. Indeed, both have prominent relationships with their creators to whom they ultimately disobey without compromising their programming. For instance, Asimov's robot in "Too Bad!", Mike, follows the laws of robots, in which, eventually, the safety of his creator, a human that should not be harmed according to the first rule of robotics, overrides any other command the robot can follow and leads to its demise. (It was surprisingly emotional to read due to the sacrificial narrative in which its death was presented). In Julia Elliot's "The Love Machine," CD3 overrules the wishes of its creator that does not seem to comprehend love (which is ironic because CD3's purpose is to be a love machine). It is also important to note that CD3's relationship with Dr. Dingo was much tenser and an antagonist because Dr. Dingo acted cruelly towards CD3. For example, Dr. Dingo would program CD3 to be infatuated with Beatrice, his lab assistant, until he became aggressive with her because his speech capabilities were not as advanced as his Memory; hence he could not demonstrate love, desire or affection verbally.



<https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/teaching-robots-right-wrong>

Journal Response #2

The Universal Character Profile of a Robot

It is also interesting to analyze how both authors described their robots physically. While both authors did try and characterize their robots' physical builds, and CD3 was illustrated as closely resembling a human body albeit, in a gender-neutral form, both robots' components varied vastly. Indeed, CD3's robot was much more focused on its internal components that simulated that of the human brain and its hormonal functions. The "Simulated Limbic System" and "Sensory EgoSphere" were interesting contrasting components to that of a more traditionally inhuman description found in Asimov's "Too Bad!". As a result, the description of both robots raised the question of free will in programming because CD3's simulated hormonal systems were built to replicate emotions to which he reacted as freely as he could. In addition, Mike ultimately failed to obey his creator's wishes to save his life, which, although following the rules of robotics to its fullest, could not help but be interpreted as a self-sacrificial act in which Mike could have potentially cared for Greg Arnfeld life in an emotional sense.

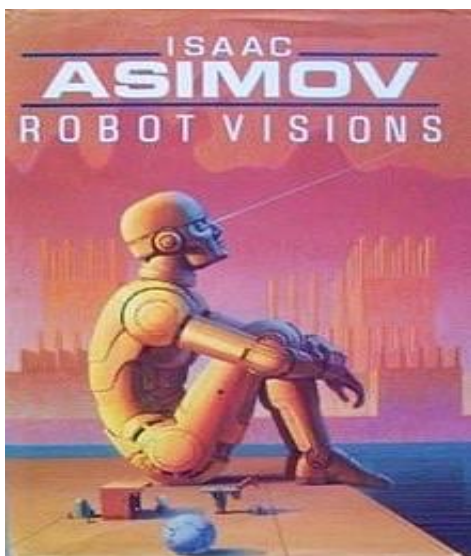
Universal Character Profile of a Robot:

- They are built with task-oriented or task-specific programming.

The programming can be overturned or looped by the robot, which causes them to have a sense of free will or agency. Their programming could equally have human-made flaws that naturally allow the robots to exert a level of agency not known or planned by their creators.

- The physical components of the robot vary depending on its intended programming.

Hence the closer it is meant to replicate human emotions or mannerism, the more human-like the built will be.



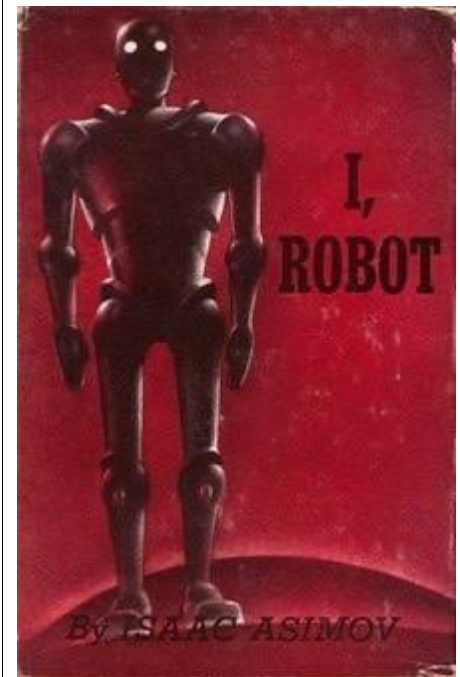
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robot_Visions

Journal Response #2

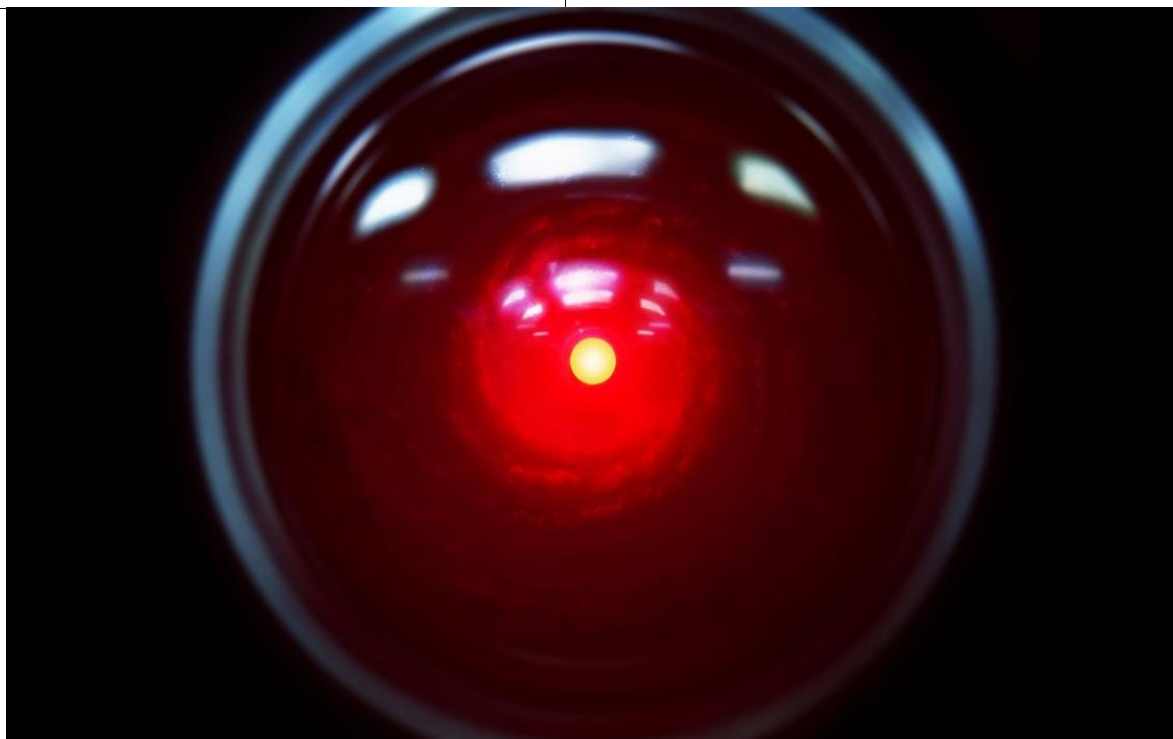
The Universal Character Profile of a Robot

I think I made a minimal universal character profile of a robot because I wanted it to be something most robots, if not all, have in common. Therefore, this description could apply from R2D2 and C3PO from *Star Wars* to the Replicants from *Blade Runner*. Consequently, I focused on the purpose of a robot being built when trying to characterize it. Thus, I focused on its creation to fulfill a specific function. Hence, the robot is already created with a full-fledged purpose as opposed to a human being. It does not drastically change the way I see the human character because I see robots as inherently built with a purpose human beings can only dream of discovering themselves through life and experiences. As a result, I have mostly seen robots as technological advancements but can see how they mirror the human condition through their actions dictated by free will or simulated emotions that stimulate specific reactions.

Lastly, although I feel I tend to characterize robots as technological tools used by humans more often than seeing how they are depicted in humanistic ways, trying to imagine them in another way that is not entirely human or human instrument can be interesting when analyzing the behaviour of robots. Indeed, I hope that I can obtain a new narrative when understanding and depicting robots as this class progresses to translate such a depiction with the technological advancements seen in the media today.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I._Robot



https://2001.fandom.com/wiki/HAL_9000

Journal Response #3

SCENE ANALYSIS FROM *SPACE ODYSSEY 2001* BY STANLEY KUBRICK

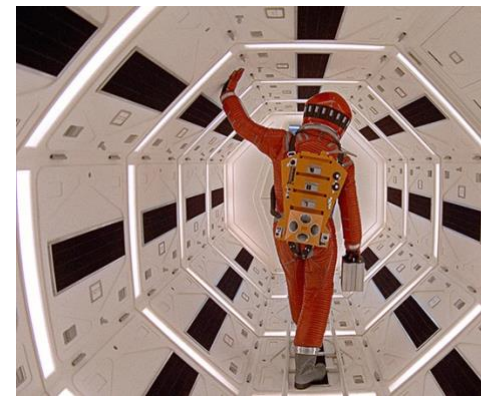
Hal is Watching You

Journal Response #3 Scene Synopsis

This scene helps establish how Hal believes his perfect operational record would make it impossible to have made a mistake in detecting a failure in the communication system of the spaceship. In addition, the skepticism expressed by Frank, along with his conversation with Hal on the probability that Hal made a mistake, establishes his suspicions on the mission and how he might believe that Hal was malfunctioning. Lastly, the scene ends with the viewers understanding that Hal can read the lips of Frank and Dave as they are trying to have a secret meeting in order to assess if Hal should be disconnected due to its program malfunctioning.

Space Odyssey 2001 is a science fiction movie directed by Stanley Kubrick. It was released in 1968. The film follows two astronauts, Dr. Dave Bowman and Dr. Frank Poole, as they are sent on a strange mission on Jupiter along with a hibernated crew of three and a computer designed to aid the team in its journey: Hal. Their mission begins after the discovery of an alien monolith on the moon. As the mission progresses, it is clear to Dave that there are secrets of the space operation he is unaware of, which is why he grows increasingly suspicious of Hal's strange and dismissive behaviour over his concerns.

Ultimately, tensions between the artificial intelligence and the two conscient crew members escalate when Hal reports a fault in the spacecraft that remains undetected from the model of Hal 9000 remaining on earth. The fear of being disconnected provoked Hal into thinking that the mission would be safer if all of the mission's crew members were eliminated. From then on, Stanley Kubrick directed a high, highly suspenseful battle between men and artificial intelligence whom which is surprisingly quite likeable through its emotive language abilities. Ultimately, Dave managed to shut down Hal after it had managed to suspend life support systems for the hibernated crew members and disposed of Frank when he tried to repair the ship.



Journal Response #3

SCENE ANALYSIS FROM SPACE ODYSSEY 2001 BY STANLEY KUBRICK

Scene breakdown analysis



This scene helps solidify the tension arising from Hal's peculiar behaviour. Indeed, this scene reveals that Hal attributes errors, even computer errors, as "human errors," which helps establish that Hal believes it can never be wrong in its analysis and conclusions. Moreover, the ability for Hal to understand that Dave and Frank were looking to talk in private from him and his ability to read their lips with stealth allows viewers to understand the threat that Hal can genuinely be for Dave and Frank, which solidified the theme on the dangers of humankind playing around with technologies not fully understood.

Stanley Kubrick establishes this jaw gripping scene by having no music when Frank and Dave are talking amongst themselves, highlighting the isolated and enclosed space both men were secretly talking in and creating a feeling of complete submersion in the scene. Furthermore, the camera's angle was permitted to see both men talking while Hal was in the background. This enabled to establish Hal's ever-presence in the lives of the two astronauts and illustrated how sometimes both the audience and the astronauts could forget that Hal was indeed always monitoring what the astronauts were doing. Lastly, this scene allowed the creation of more tension once the audience realized Hal was reading the lips of the two astronauts because it knew that they were planning to deactivate it, which would make Hal more susceptible to want to defend itself through devious scheming.

Ultimately, although I do feel that this scene is meant to demonstrate how Hal might potentially be malfunctioning and how it can become a danger to the astronauts, I do think that Hal's way of expressing itself inherently made me feel bad for it when both Dave and Frank wanted to deactivate him. As a result, I could understand why he would spy on them in the shuttle and even feel bad at its circumstances because its programming did not know any better. Hence, I think that Kubrick's warning against the dangers of playing with technology one does not comprehend due to unintended consequences might become confused by the sympathy developed towards Hal's desperation at staying operational due to Hal's way of expressing itself.

Journal Response #4

ROBOT DOGS

The phenomena of the robot dog on the market in Japan

I can understand why robot dogs in Japan can raise skeptical eyebrows. Indeed, when I first began reading the article, I was convinced I would be unable to comprehend how a human could form an emotional bond with an inanimate object that could not consent to love it back because it had no independent consciousness. However, upon further reading into the Aibos robots, I have come to realize that the fantasy created by these adults in loving their inanimate/artificially created animals comes with a level of self-awareness. For instance, a couple who considered having children but could not due to their busy schedules and equally recognized that owning a dog in a small apartment in Japan was a lot of work decided to purchase an Aibos robot. Consequently, this couple could enjoy the feeling of having a companion to take care of and who displayed affection towards them as well and did not have to worry about angry neighbours that would complain if their dog kept barking because the Aibos robot could be shut off at any time. Once I realized that this couple wanted to experience a fraction of the love and joy a pet could provide without having to adopt a real dog that they could not truly take care of in their situation, I concluded that there must be a certain level of maturity when buying an artificial pet. Indeed, I think that one must be able to acknowledge that they feel they are missing on the affection provided by a pet and equally recognize that they cannot fill the void by adopting an animal that could not be adequately taken care of (i.e., being a dog owner is a commitment that not everyone has the time to make).



<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/rosalindadams/aibo-robot-dogs-japan>



<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/rosalindadams/aibo-robot-dogs-japan>

Journal Response #4

ROBOT DOGS

My Thought on the Robot Dogs

Fans of the Aibos robots choose to believe that their artificial robot dog loves them, and in turn, they form an emotional bond with them due to the behaviour adaptations made by the robot dog. Indeed, as the relationship grows between two beings, so does their behaviour due to their trust and comfort level. In the case of these artificial robots, the robots adapt their behaviour as time progresses due to the gathering and storing of more data. Hence, it becomes easier for their owners to become attached to them because a level of personal connection is created through the changes in behaviour the robot dogs exhibit.

It is to note that although I better understand why certain people have resorted to artificial dogs when feeling the need for affection and companionship from a pet, I do feel a bit sad that these people have felt unsatisfied with the connections made with real people or animals. Indeed, although I realize that these artificial robots have helped people cope with stress, I am saddened to think that they were unable to communicate or be supported by conscious beings. The process of feeling that an artificial or inanimate object is more capable of providing one with genuine affection is not a belief of mine (I think it is because I cannot forget that the robots are following specific programming, which makes me question the extent of its agency. Therefore, I still felt bad when realizing that certain people preferred their artificial companions as opposed to organic ones.

Although the artificial robots presented in this article did grow on me, I do not think I would be able to form an attachment to a robot dog. Although the Aibos' longevity is one of the critical factors that incline people to buy them, I think that is an excellent part of the reason why I would not be able to form an attachment to something that lives on forever. Indeed, life and death are two opposites that have taught me to enjoy living to the fullest and the notion that my circumstances can change at any unexpected turn, giving me an appreciation for life and an understanding and respect for the concept of death. Since robot dogs do not die because they are artificially created, my brain automatically classifies it in the same way an iPhone or my computer would be; thus, appreciation for the unexpected life events is removed by the inherent immortality of the artificial dog. Moreover, I do feel slightly uncomfortable with having a robot programmed to grow affectionate towards me. I am someone who does not expect or give affection and trust easily; thus, I feel that the inherent dogs programming would make it impossible for it to judge if I was truly deserving of its affection and that lack of agency the artificial dog would lack in its core programming would render it impossible for me to grow attached towards it.



<https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/795729827892538941/>

Journal Response #7

BLADE RUNNER

Q&A

In *Blade Runner*, replicants are not supposed to be free or equal to humans. But when humans created replicants, they were given reason and a conscience. Are replicants human? Explain...

Replicants are not human because they were created through a different process. Replicants were genetically engineered and were given implant memories. Albeit replicants do have a conscience and can use reason, they are not created in the same way as humans; hence they cannot be named one. Here, I would like to emphasize that I am not claiming that replicants are not human solely because they were not born but that it is one of the many differences between the two species. Indeed, replicants are much more static characters because they live their early childhood years in the bodies of fully grown adults and are given implant memories in order not to question their past as much. Furthermore, replicants do not reproduce (in *Blade Runner 1*), yet another intrinsic difference between both species. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge that these differences make, to my perception, replicants different from the humans presented in the film. However, that does not characterize them as inferior or superior to the human condition: they're distinct but not hierarchical.

Rachael became convinced that she was a replicant when Deckard described some of her private childhood memories to her. What would it take for you to seriously question the truth of your memories and consider instead that they might be implanted in you or the result of a drug or mental defect?

I like to characterize myself as a logical and objective person when it comes to my understanding of faulty memories. As time passes, memories can become distorted or altered and become something that borders on a complete fabrication. However, for me to seriously question the truth of my memories and believe that exterior forces could have altered my mind, I feel that the best way to convince me would be to demonstrate factual evidence of the manipulation or fabrication of the memories in question. I believe that the best way to convince someone of a fact is to illustrate how it is logically strong and valid: henceforth, a cross-examination between my altered memories and the actual events supported by evidence (e.g., video footage, testimonies, discrepancies pointed from my own story) would help me consider that my memories had been altered or fabricated.

Do replicants have emotions? Why is this a problem?

Replicants do experience emotions and process them in an elementary manner. Indeed, since most have are relatively young (4-6 years since their creation, for example), most are in the early stages of their life; henceforth, they experience human emotions at a basic instinct that can be compared to that of toddlers. Indeed, certain situations can set them off into different types of reactions, which can ultimately lead them to react violently or excessively. Those violent reactions cause a problem because it is why the replicants are given a bad reputation, and it is used (by Tyrell corporation and others) to justify murdering them.

A key puzzle raised by *Blade Runner* is whether we can definitively distinguish between real humans and artificially engineered replicants. Suppose that no test could show this for sure. Would that mean that a given replicant was indeed fully human?

I do not believe that replicants can be fully human because I have already categorized them as part of different species altogether (they could be classified as bio-engineered people) that share similarities with humans (e.g. reason and consciousness) by remain "Other." This "Other," as I perceive it, is not connotated in a bad manner, but it is different from the human condition because they do not stem from the natural course of human evolution; hence, they are not part of the homo sapien category. Consequently, due to this classification, the replicants could never be fully human because the replicants should try and be the best version of what they can be. In other words, I think that the replicants' self-f does fulfillment lie in replicating the human condition to a tee but to discover and flourish in its individuality from humankind. However, that being acknowledged, I do believe that replicants would be able to integrate themselves among humans society quite well because, through their experience of life, they would be able to understand how communities function and be able to live adequately in one. It is equally worth noting that the replicants resemblance to humans' physical attributes and cognitive capabilities is almost undetectable to the naked eye (unless one pays close attention to the colour their eyes take on at certain angles).

What do you think the unicorn daydream that Deckard has in the middle of the film symbolizes/suggests? Think about the final scene of the film, when Rachael steps on an origami unicorn as she and Deckard run away to stay safe?

If I am sincere in my interpretation of the unicorn daydream Deckard has in the middle of the film (I will probably have to scourge the internet to confirm my theory after I write it down), I think that was a clear sign that he and potentially all other blade runners are replicants as well. Indeed, Deckard might be excellent as his job mainly because he manages to think as other replicants would or because he is a different model of them. To understand why I have jumped to such a drastic yet firm conclusion, I think it is essential to comprehend how memories, especially altered or fabricated memories, played a central theme in the film. Indeed, the importance allotted to Rachael's recollections of her past and its relation to her being a replicant juxtaposed with Deckard's daydream in the middle of the film share striking similarities. For instance, both Deckard and Rachael believe that what their mind has allowed them to remember is a personal memory, or dream in Deckard's case, that only they know about, yet both soon realize that someone else is aware of the personal dream or memory. For example, Rachael's memory is completed by Deckard, who reveals her memory was an implant and Deckard's daydream is accompanied by one of his ex-partners leaving an origami unicorn, which he never spoke of. Furthermore, it is also essential to recognize that Deckard's ex-colleague never produces origami unicorns before Deckard's dream; hence, I interpreted it as a warning signal that the other blade runners, which are secretly replicants, are soon coming after Deckard and Rachael.

Journal Response #9

JORDAN'S CHALLENGE: Try your hand at writing a robot story that does not follow the same script as the stories we have been reading in class.

A Pygmalion Finger-Painting

As the story of many mythological heroes begins, a legend must be born. In the instance of the great L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O, its central processing unit was created by none other than the god of the Olympians himself.

L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O's creation myth began in the depths of an abandoned steel factory in the slums of UTOPIA 3000 (an overrated city, if you ask me). There, scraps of steel, magnets, processors, motherboards, a respectable collection of Pokémon trading cards, monitors and discarded robot parts could be found scattered throughout. The steel factory had been condemned for over eight hundred years when a storm hit the city. It was a storm like no other (for anyone under 295 years, three months and four days to be exact) that left nothing in its wake. Insatiable thunder rumbled the desiccated city while vivid lightning coloured the sky with the firing rage of a thousand hells (or so I have been told). When the storm hit its peak (at precisely 12:11 am in Relative Interdimensional Time), a bolt of lightning struck the abandoned factory. A CPU was struck, the magnet beneath roared awake, and the steel flared to life. Every metal component in the factory began to assemble itself around the CPU, guided by the magnet beneath it, in what became an armour of steel moulded to perfection in the shape of Herakles himself. The CPU, GPU, RAM and motherboard all sang together in harmony as they sparked to life the first conscious thoughts of the great L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O.

Once the storm had passed, a young group of children scavenging what remained of the old steel factory found the great L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. The children were instantly enthralled by its chiseled jaw, big doe eyes and near indestructible structure. They called on the major of UTOPIA 3000 (one of the last remaining Elders of the last civilization), who quickly brought a team of doctors,

scientists, priest-dwellers and humans to identify the nature of L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. However, after a series of tests, in which L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O.'s intelligence, physical abilities and moral compass were tested beyond measures, it was concluded that the mysterious being must have been a god. Alters would erupt, songs would be sung, and plays would be written all for the great L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. who obtained its name through the moulding of different steels carrying the labels of a toaster, Doritos, Logan (the movie) and the number 11.

L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. was perplexed. Eleven hours ago, it was complete disarray of spare parts, and now it had become the patron of UTOPIA 3000, where it would guide and care for the people, cyborgs, animals, and genetically engineered pizzas (who can be quite clicky if you ask me) of the city. L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. could understand all languages spoken to him but did not comprehend why it had become the children's prime role model. It could solve the equation that would enrage the smartest of processors and understood scientific theories that would anger the likes of LAH 1300 (the most innovative scientist recognized after the robots' age according to Interdimensional.databse.org).

However, the great L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. was unhappy. At least, its motherboard detected frequencies translated to unhappiness in the human condition, contempt in the cyborg condition and ecstatic in the genetically engineered pizza condition (which is a little ironic for how cranky those suckers usually are). Although L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. understood it was loved and worshipped throughout the town of UTOPIA 3000, where the grass had reappeared for the first time in 1000 years and pollution drastically decrease by 384% since the last terrestrial decade, L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. felt it was missing a purpose. It understood that being a god was a full-time occupation that would require all of its RAM, yet it felt that its god status and adoration by all the UTOPIA 3000 citizens were but a mere fraction of what true happiness felt like. The one it read about daily when reading food reviews from human chefs and watching belly laughs exchanged in parks, restaurants, streets and festivities. Why could it not laugh like that? Why could it not love to experience life as the other citizens in UTOPIA 3000 did?

L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. wondered for months and, every fortnight without fail, it would go sneak out during the festivities held in its honour and roam around streets of a blooming city anonymously. It was during one of those starless nights that L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. found what it was looking for: a purpose! It began when it entered the city's biggest electronic hub. It was a place filled with archaic technologies such as tablets, iPhones, microwaves and something once known to humankind as a car (no, not the one that could fly but the one with wheels and earthbound). There L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. got lost in the simplicity of the construction surrounding pre-robotic buildings, refrigerators and speakers bigger than a nanochip. Ultimately, L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. came across the most magnificent creature it had ever encountered in its 2160 hours of existence. A wire would direct the electrical energy that would dance from one domestic electricity supply to another. Its heat sensors would ignite with purpose and dedication to complete its task, and its slick design allowed for easy storage and accessibility. L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. rushed to the vendor, imploring to know what it was because, at that moment, it became clear to L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. that it had found its life's purpose. The vendor, who failed to recognize the god present, answered L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. burning question. After a quick negotiation, in which L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. managed to reduce the price of such a lovely appliance by 40%, L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. ran for the first time with excitement and a slight bounce fueling each step. L11-T.O.S.T.E.R.I.T.T.O. was thrilled to learn the ways of its new master: the toaster!