Homo artefactus and Promethean shame: Reflections on Josef Čapek, Futurism, transhumanism, posthumanism, and the Obvious

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Recent decades have been a time of growing interest in philosophy, art, and literature dealing with technology.* A contemplative awareness about technology is, of course, not an entirely new theme (i.e., Plato, Phaedrus, 1990, 274d–275b), but technology was, until recently, mostly associated with human modifications of the environment. Current technology, however, can be used for modification of the human. This paper tries to relate these notions of technology in philosophy with the ideas of creative technology presented in early 20th-century avant-garde literature and art, particularly concerning the problem of the technologization of humans and posthumanism.[1]

The present philosophical attention to internal employment of technology has been mostly guided, but not necessary definitionally exhausted, by reflections on the current state of affairs of informatics, biology, and biomedicine; it is widely thematized by concepts of human enhancement (Parens 1995, 141), anthropotechnic (Teyssot 1994, 16), and biopolitics in general (Foucault 1978, 139–140). Philosophical attitudes on this topic usually range from categorically dismissive stances (Sandel 2007, 99) and charitably disproving opinions (Buchanan 2011, 14) through to benevolently favorable views (Harris 2007, 19) and even glorifying celebrations of diverse technological modifications that could bring about new forms of a radically transformed life that may or may not resemble humans and their aspirations (More 2013, 4). Indeed, talk about so-called posthumans[2] has become quite common in some philosophical circles.

This paper will attempt to reenact the debate by connecting some of the notions that emerged when posthumans became a topic of discussion in art and literature. For instance, the technological transformation of humans played a rather prominent role in speculations of the 20th-century avant-garde movement of Futurism (Marinetti [1910] 2006), which in turn was tightly scrutinized by many of the cultural critics of the artificialization of modern life. Some critics pointed out that this Promethean promise of a new kind of *Homo artefactus* (Čapek [1924] 2018, 25) could be, for all its worth, also perceived as an artistic expression of "Promethean shame" (Anders [1956] 2016, 31) that is based on a latent embarrassment of humans by the impressive results of modern technology (Hauskeller 2014, 43). This paper

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will try to argue that some of the past and present motivations for creating posthumans are infected by this paradoxical underpinning of the relationship of humans to technology, and it will also try to show that the precursors for this conclusion did not escape the attention of Josef Čapek, who actually proposed the term (Čapek 1933, 12), which is still one of the central tropes for all of posthumanist philosophy, art, and science. This paper therefore tries to bring together robots, posthumans, Josef Čapek, Futurism, transhumanism, posthumanism, and shame. Before continuing with the past, present, and future of posthumans, it is appropriate at this juncture to begin with a story which perhaps best represents the current understanding of humans and technology.

THE OBVIOUS STATE OF TECHNOLOGY AND JOSEF ČAPEK

On 25 October 2018, there was a strange art auction happening in New York. The auction on its own had the usual course of events, but one of the pieces managed to catch some desired attention due to its apparent ambiguity of a general style (Carron 2018) and the absence of a balanced technique (Hassine and Neeman 2019, 20), which raised doubts about its legitimacy at this event. Nonetheless, the piece in question was seen by some as one-of-a-kind, novel, weird, and contemporary enough in its representation for it to be heralded, or auctioned off to be more precise, as an innovative breakthrough in art (Schneider and Rea 2018). The auctioned item was eponymously presented as a portrait of *Edmond de Belamy, from La Famille de Belamy* and had been developed, constructed, and published by Obvious, a Parisian art collective (Christie's 2018).[3] The Obvious collective,[4] however, cunningly claimed that *Edmond de Belamy* had not been their creation, but had in fact been a design made by an unknown entity – artificial intelligence – that had managed to create art[5] (Obvious 2018 [Vincent 2018]).

This posthumanist statement then unsurprisingly provoked some continual furor. The verbal fisticuffs erupted mainly around the intellectual disagreement over the work's originality (Hertzmann 2018), identity (Rosenmeyer 2020, 36), politics (Schröter 2019, 297–311), sociology (Arriagada 2020, 403–404), interpretation (Stephensen 2019, 21–30), the auction itself (Sidorova 2019), the code (Epstein et al. 2020, 1), art (Miller 2019, 119–122), and reality as such (Conte 2019, 20–21). Some of the artists and art critics accused the Parisian collective and the British auction house of a horrible aesthetic (Goodman 2020, 43), communicational misconduct (Elgammal 2018), and even implication for art fraud in general (Hassine and Neeman 2019, 22). Thus, they were banning the non-human *Edmond de Belamy* and his new no-art movement from the realm of true art.[6] Others, however, pointed out the refreshingly subversive and therefore very humorous character of this obvious happening by the Obvious collective and Christie's role in it (Rolez 2019). To this day, the official web page of the auction house still nonchalantly mentions "the oeuvre of some as yet undreamed-of robot Picasso" (Christie's 2018).

Admittedly, the conclusion of that last statement seems false. Obviously, there is not any robot Picasso yet, but there were countless dreams and even night-

mares about "robot Picassos" in the cultural history of the 20th century. Interestingly enough, Josef Čapek, a man who by his nonchalant ingenuity actually coined the term "robot" for his brother Karel's 1921 play *R.U.R.* (Čapek 1933, 12), and ultimately for all of us, was in fact an established Cubist painter (Slavík 1987, 6). Josef Čapek was also a rather prominent figure in heated intellectual debates about the right interpretation of dreams about tools for a new Futuristic kind of being[7] and the new avant-garde movement of Futurism. Josef Čapek's fair liaison with Futurism started with mildly welcoming reviews of the new Italian art movement (1912; 1914). It then culminated in an unsuccessful attempt at painting (Srp 2006, 161) along with the successful creation of fiction (Čapek [1913] 2014) that bore some resemblance to the motifs of the technologically induced deconstruction of human exceptionalism. It eventually ended abruptly with a mocking feuilleton about the comical but grave consequences of the technical seizure of humanness (Čapek [1924] 2018). Ultimately, Josef Čapek had seen it all, one of the essential observations being that he could, if he wished and had the time, note that the many confrontations of the previous on-future-oriented art movement had not been merely verbal (Nezval 1959, 73) or intended as such (Marinetti [1913] 2006, 177).

Regardless, quarrels about the right *nuovo* in modernism had some bearings on the proper understanding of Josef Čapek, who has sometimes been, especially in older anglophone studies, referred to simply as the older brother of the more famous Karel (Seymour-Smith 1985, 376). That being said, the crucial brotherly cooperation of Josef and Karel Čapek is well understood (Katz 2016, 189–191), has been many times referred to (Kussi 1990, 12), and has been celebrated (Ort 2013, 14). Nonetheless, for some authors, Josef is still primarily seen as an avant-garde writer and painter (Sriratana 2018, 10), whereas Karel is described as "the more somber and philosophic from the duo" (Cravens 2006, 502). This kind of conforming juxtaposition of Josef and Karel Čapek is probably understandable from the point of view of the popularity of some of their common works, but it is not entirely supported by further rigorous readings of Josef's complete work and life trajectory (Opelík [1980] 2017; Slavík 1987; Opelík and Slavík 1996). After all, Josef Čapek created a plethora of diverse works including paintings, illustrations, scenic designs, novels, essays, poems, theatrical plays, screenplays, tales, columns, and fierce reviews, all of which provide a sketch of his unique philosophical outlook. Therefore, there is a reasonable disagreement about the correct interpretation of the systematicity of his philosophy (Patočka [1964] 2004, 181). However, it seems uncontroversial to say that Josef Čapek was interested in the study, adaptation, and critique of classical and novel philosophical ideas. The usually supposed inspirations are, for example, the philosophy of vitalism (Sleigh 2009, 241) and French philosophy in general (Opelík [1980] 2017, 292). This paper, however, does not intend to provide a systematic review of Josef Čapek's philosophy and creative work as such. Instead, it takes on a modern, specific yet broader philosophical question that Josef Čapek inspired: Why would anyone want to create a robot Picasso?[8] In other words, and using a contemporary philosophical term, why create a "posthuman"?

TRANSHUMANISM AND THE ROBOT PICASSO

The Obvious collective may well rightfully claim that their artistic intentions where gravely distorted by the workings of the fast media machinery (Caselles-Dupré 2018 [Bailey 2018]). Then again their official manifesto still nonchalantly, albeit modestly self-referentially, states that "humans are limited by creativity and biased visions of the world" and that technology could help us to "overcome these challenges", but that all of this has a catch: namely, the destruction of our "mental barriers" (Obvious 2020, 10).[9] Once the whole process has been concluded, we will have the chance to marvel at a spectacular "machine that is capable of being creative, in the same way a human is" (6); thus, employing a simple metaphor from the manifest of the Obvious collective, this machine "will be capable of creating new examples of Picasso" (7).

However, there also seems to be a noticeable motivational problem for this endeavor. There already was someone who could paint like "a Picasso" – Picasso himself. And as it happens, there already are and will be, albeit only for a definite time, "machines" of a sort (i.e., humans) that can create various new examples, even of Picasso. So why should we try to destroy the limitations and barriers of humans, when humans – despite all their limitations and barriers – are the original creators of Picasso? According to the Obvious collective, the reasons are in providing "knowledge and future perspective to the world" (3) and "reducing the gap between research and applications" (3) that may unveil "true creative potential" (3) and "fresh perspective on different eras, cultures, and human inspirations" (Vernier, Caselles-Dupré, and Fautrel 2020a, 2), or even a new kind of devotion "where science meets with spirituality after these two notions spent so many years being kept apart" (Vernier, Caselles-Dupré, and Fautrel 2020b, 1). However, there also seems to be some (maybe unfaithful) confusion, because technology is seen at one time by the Obvious collective as the "best tool to push our limits" (2020a, 2), while their other statements maintain that "technology itself doesn't have any impact on our society, nor on our lives" (2).

Leaving this aside, it is also clear that the Obvious collective try to cast a curious, playful, and particular outlook on the challenges of the extensive use of transformational technologies. For example, they do not shy away from the critique of the cult-like or reckless approach to current cutting-edge technology in some media, business, politics, and science circles, nor do they seem to ignore the many possible ethical and societal problems that (could) come with algorithmic governance, artificial intelligence, and the big data revolution (2020b, 1). They also do not try to paint their status as "unprecedented", and therefore it seems that there is some human modesty, humbleness, and also caution in their work, albeit only when their manifesto and reports were not written by AI.[10] It therefore seems apparent that they follow the path of theory that philosophers usually distinguish as "moderate transhumanism" (McNamee and Edwards 2006, 514), which is nowadays a prevalent and somewhat dated philosophy of some of the technoscientific and biopolitical communities (Frodeman 2019, 96). The common idea behind this type of philosophy is simple and maybe even old-fashioned: to understand a human, you must produce or emulate as many creations of a human's abilities – and *the* human itself – as possible.

FUTURISM AND THE MECHANICAL PICASSO

Nevertheless, there seems to be a bolder, and therefore also more challenging, solution to the problem of the capture of the supposedly elusive essence of humans. The radical Futuristic solution commonly believes that if you do not understand the old human, then it would be probably best to create a completely new one. The more the human is new, the more he will be reasonable, intelligible, and variable. According to Futurism, which was one of the traditional takes on this Futuristic solution, humans, whatever they actually may be, should not hide behind some substitutional tales about the social wellbeing of their wildest creative ambitions and dreams (Marinetti [1910] 2006, 86). Futurists assumed that it would be much franker to argue that humans should persistently try to accelerate the process of a new kind of transformative creation, because actual beauty, and the beauty of the process, is always in speed (Marinetti [1909] 2006, 13). Thus, the idea of the Futuristic refashioning of the universe (Balla and Depero [1915] 2009) presented in orthodox Futurism aimed at nothing less than the creative reconstruction of all parameters of humans, nature, existence, and the universe as such. This grandiose plan had some obvious limits, to put it mildly, especially if you recall that neither Marinetti, Balla, Depero, nor the other Futurists at the time could not have known that there were, for example, other galaxies.[11] Nonetheless, the philosophical grounding of Futurism was based on some definitive (even if loosely defined) prerogatives.

Futurists typically believed that the center of any exuberant creation was essentially bound by the understanding of the designer himself or herself. This creator could have many forms – e.g., an engineer, a scientist, an entrepreneur, a poet, a painter, or a worker – but all of these and other forms were epistemologically established by Futurists as the many particulars of the only true ontological idea, the idea of the artist (Marinetti [1909] 2006, 15). Thus, the Futurists believed foremost in the important reality of the creator – the artist – and hence themselves. However, Futurists have also taken note that the central role of the artist as the creator must have some apparent limits – specifically, the limits of the creator himself. Therefore, if the whole point of the Futuristic process of creation should consist of a new yet unfathomed reality, or the reestablishment of the universe as such, then the logical prerequisites of this gigantic task also require an analytical reconstruction, systematic deconstruction, and determined destruction of the limits of the creator. This has led to some disastrous political decisions on the part of the Futurists (Gentile 2003, 41–45) but nonetheless has also established a central trope of Futurism, specifically the figure of an all-encompassing transformation through technology (Marinetti [1910] 2006).

The mechanical speculations of the Futurists were, as in other matters of Futurism, primarily guided by the narrative of conflict. Futurists believed that the creative aspect of the creator can be endangered twofold. First of all, chaotic nature has to be tamed by the rationale of the tools of the artist. Nature is the primal limit of the creator and the creation, while technologies are the secondary – yet still essential – "natures" of the artist imposed upon primordial nature (Balla and Depero [1915] 2009, 211–212). From this Futurist point of view, all of humankind's attempts at derivative yet existentially adamant technological natures should be celebrated

only when they keep the nonderivative, yet existentially compromising, "natural" nature at an impasse. Thus, Michelangelo's *Pieta* – or the speeding automobile, to use the chronic example of Futurism (212) – are both beautiful since they deify the limits of the marble in the example of the sculpture, the place in the example of the passenger, and nature in the example as such. This, however, also means that if all of these second natures are not beautiful per se, then they can quickly become ugly, especially when they somehow halt the creation of other complex natures that could bring about new and more effective forms of natural restriction or artistic expression. And as nature, by its chaotic temper, always fights back, then all of the old forms of natural domestication are only temporary and thus chronically dubious and unsuccessful in the eyes of Futurists (Marinetti [1909] 2006, 15).

The Futurists' squabbles with their forefathers were, however, only a prelude to a second breakdown of the endangerment of the creative aspects of the creator. All of the creative tools, regardless of how advanced they might be, are characterized by an extensional power that not only refashions nature and enhances humans, but which also delimitates the whole creative space of nature and humans (Marinetti [1910] 2006, 85). Even if the extensions are used by humans with loving intentions, then the technologies in the end always are what they are – an exclave of the power of the creator. This externalization of the power of the creator was also seen by Futurists as the prima facie confirmation of the ongoing ontological weakness and existential absurdity of humans (86). Thus, Caravaggio's tenebrism – or the electrified city, to use another chronic example of Futurism (Marinetti [1909] 2006, 15) – are exceptionally radiant yet nonetheless constant reminders that humans cannot see in the dark. The touch and comfort of the human body and soul are not enough. By contrast, Futurists proclaimed that humans should not be seen only in the role of benevolent opposition to technology, but most importantly as the possible infinitum of technology, the machine, and the absolute (16). Marinetti's famous erotic encounter with an airplane ([1912] 2006, 107) was not proposed by the Futurists merely as a thought-provoking metaphor for the propelled destruction of the syntax (108); it was also intended as a normative attempt at the salvation of creativity before humans' existential fragility and anthropocentric entrapments. Every divide between human and technology must come to a halt; hence man must become a machine. Or, to put it more expressively, according to Futurists, humans should desire to create "[a] non-human species, in which moral anguish, goodness, affection, and love, the singular corrosive poisons of vital energy, the only off-switches of our powerful, physiological electricity, will be abolished" (Marinetti [1910] 2006, 86).

HOMO ARTEFACTUS AND PROMETHEAN SHAME

Perhaps humans should not desire to create such a species, even though it is quite clear that such allusions and projects may have more interpretative layers. From a local and absorbed point of view, there is some rather ostensible curiosity involved in the "provocative emphasis" (Čapek 1912, 175) of Futurism on the need for a new era, a new man, and a new nature (Čapek [1924] 2018, 9).[12] This curiosity, which is usually celebrated as an essential prerequisite for imaginative artistic creations,

reached new heights in declarations of Futurism, as it was primarily seen as the core principle of the whole movement; thus, Josef Čapek's take on the emergence of Futurism was at first marked by a gentle defense of a new kind of misunderstood artistic expression (1912, 174–175) that, in his opinion, had the "exceptional power of modern comedy" (1914, 141). This mildly welcoming opinion was not shared by everyone and therefore subsequently led to Josef Čapek's removal from the position of editor-in-chief of the journal *Umělecký měsíčník* (Art Monthly) and the well-known conflict with Skupina výtvarných umělců (The Group of Visual Artists; Lamač 1988, 184). The main disputes between Josef Čapek and some of his artistic peers lay in their differing opinions on the rigidity of Cubism, the innovativeness of Cubo-Futurism (Vichnar 2019, 88), and the definition of art in general (Opelík [1980] 2017, 98). For Josef Čapek, Cubism was not the end of art, but rather more of a means for art, even though he continued to be devoted to the Cubist fashion (Srp 2006, 165). Josef Čapek's disagreement about the permitted expressions of art, however, was also guided by a wider standpoint, specifically a philosophical one (Čapek 1912 [Opelík 2017, 99]).

From the global and more reflective point of view, it is also evident that Futurism's artistic expressions were not merely descriptive; they were also categorically prescriptive, as was declared many times by the Futurists themselves (Marinetti [1910] 2006, 86). From the start, Josef Čapek had also taken note that the idea of a speedy mechanical reinvigoration of Picasso can be, for sure, quite amusing, but that the actual prerequisites and consequences of the realization of this concept may vary because the required "compositional destruction" (1912, 176) may not have definitive "limits and endings" (176). The conundrum lies in the straightforward logical absurdity that depends on the inconsistency between the advertised premises (see Čapek [1924] 2018, 9–14) and the illustrious conclusion of such a radical Futuristic undergoing (51–60).

The first problem of this kind of approach to humans, posthumans, and reality as such depends on the doubtful validity of the conjunction of the premises. The whole approach seems to be based on the contradictory assumptions that (1) humans somehow are able to create marvelous works, and by this they are praiseworthy, and that (2) these same humans and works are in some way still perceived, to put it bluntly, as despicable. For sure, the inconsistency of the conflation of these premises could be solved by the abandonment of one of them, but then the motivational impetus for the whole future of this kind of *Homo artefactus* would diminish (25). If one accepts only one of the sides of the conjecture, then people really are that creative, intelligent, and thus not suitable for abolishment, or, if it is simply true that humans are so unoriginal and dull, then their attempts will inevitably fail. Hence, the first problem of Futurism and some of the radical Futuristic attempts at creating something beyond humans consists of the melancholic yet bipolar understanding of the human as a foolish genius. This is a modern paradoxical state that was later coined by Günter Anders as the attitude of Promethean shame ([1956] 2016, 31).

The chronic oscillations between these two poles, however, can very quickly lead to stark existential fatigue. The answer to this state then is the second point, where

plenty of on-future-transformation speculations and philosophies usually differ. Futurists believed that the right response to the human tragicomedy lies in the establishment of a new kind of comedy, or rather a perilous type of novel tragedy (Marinetti [1912] 2006, 107). This reasoning was dependent upon assumptions that in the end all human problems require some unprecedented non-human solutions. The most radical of the Futurists thereafter concluded that the maximal non-human solution for the human is consistently *the* non-human, which some of them, by merits of extrapolation, saw or provocatively marketed as an a-human (Marinetti [1910] 2006, 86).

However, there are other options for the human transformation if one wishes. First of all, you could paint the transformation rosier or make it more earthbound. This type of creative expression maintains that the required non-human solutions are performed solely for the sake of humans. These interventions (in the broad sense) are presented as the means by which humans are enhanced, upgraded, and uplifted. Thus, these solutions, which are usually coupled with some kind of exciting and ground-breaking possibility of technology, are seen as the prima facie enablers for novel human self-understanding, self-knowledge, and self-creation (Obvious 2020, 3). However, it would be much more honest to claim that these adventures are undertaken more for the sake of the exact understanding of technology than for the comprehension of humans, who sometimes only play the role of an experimental space for this option. Be that as it may, the conclusion still remains that with this solution humans are also seen as something to be radically transcended,[13] even though this change is presented gradually with slogans about the most humane intentions for an upgrade of humanity. Hence, intentions that are depended on the axiom of the understanding of humans as something insufficient for this or another impending world.

POSTHUMANISM AS THE CONCLUSION

There is another solution. Maybe the problem is not the human, but our understanding of the human as such. Because even if something about the human has to change, then it could be the change of the human as well as the change of the understanding of the human species and its misguided place in the deceptively hierarchical structure of the "Great Chain of Being"[14] (Ferrando 2019a, 94). The current philosophy of posthumanism believes that the downsides of the human, and skepticism about the past, present, and future situation of the human species, are most likely prime examples of the crucial downsides of the philosophy of humanism and anthropocentrism. According to posthumanism, the Western metaphysical tradition of humanism requires humans to see themselves as unique, special, and radically different from all other forms of life and matter (Schussler 2020, 26). The supposed extraordinariness of humans can hardly, however, be preserved in the face of mundane global reality. Therefore, humans confronted with this veracity generally opt for the strategy of sharpening some of the remaining differences through the destruction of others (the catastrophic exploitation of nature) or the destruction of themselves (the technologically induced post-biology of robotic Picassos).

As a result, some of the motivational assumptions about the creation of the posthuman are built upon a disastrous stigmatization of the human by humans that envy the hypothetical superiority of the technological other. What is then the solution of posthumanism?[15] Everything is equal but not the same, such as the human's shame before the posthuman.

NOTES

[1] For a broader review of the relationship between the discourse of philosophy, art, and literary science, see Papoušek 2018.

[2] I will use the term *posthuman* in an unrestricted manner. For a current analysis of the technological and ethical modalities of the posthuman, see Sýkora 2019. For an informative review of the narratives about the sublime hybridization of the human and posthuman, see Kotásek 2015.

[3] The portrait *Edmond de Bellamy* was created with the help of the algorithms of the generative adversarial network (GAN) technique, which is a subtype of machine-learning technology. The framework of this technology was originally proposed by Ian J. Goodfellow and his colleagues (2014). The GAN innovation for the purpose of generating artworks was introduced by Alec Radford, Luke Metz, and Soumith Chintala (Epstein et al. 2020, 1), and the configuration of the GAN code for the creation of art-style images was originally performed by Robbie Barrat (Vincent 2018).

[4] The Obvious collective is a collaborative project by Gauthier Vernier, Hugo Caselles-Dupré, and Pierre Fautrel.

[5] For a similar approach in literature, see the electronic text composition project Erica T. Carter (Carpenter 2004) or the current anthology of Liza Gennart (2020) developed by Zuzana Husárová and Ľubomír Panák.

[6] A substantial review of the general problem of the relationship between AI and art is beyond the limited scope of this paper. For a recent topical survey, see Démuth 2020.

[7] Alessandro Catalano (2013) points out that Karel Čapek's knowledge of Futurism may have played a role in the development of the concept of robots famously introduced in the play *R.U.R.* (1920). Catalano specifically mentions Marinetti's play *Poupées électriques* (Electric Dolls), which was published in 1909 and contained a preface on Futurism (Bohn 2018, 449). It was not possible for the present author to locate any definitive proof of Josef Čapek's knowledge of that particular play, but if Catalano's allusions are correct then it seems probable that Josef may have also had an early awareness of Marinetti's idea of electric automata and their narrative place in Futurism.

[8] For the nomenclature of Josef Čapek on this matter, see his notions of robots and *Homo cubisticus* ([1924] 2018, 31–36).

[9] The manifesto is published on the official website of the Obvious art collective (http://obvious-art.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/MANIFESTO-V2.pdf). This document is the second version of the manifesto and was published in April 2020. The digital library of the Internet Archive (https://archive.org/) shows that the first (now obsolete) version was published in July 2019, probably in connection with the introduction of the new Obvious project *Electric Dreams of Ukiyo*. The archive also indicates that the first version of the manifesto is still accessible at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1esAOv8MsVzYH9njGmHnqUdgPh4aFDVvK/view. There are some differences between these two versions, but this paper will stick to the present version of the Obvious manuscript (2020).

[10] It is not the intention herein to imply that the experimental application of collaboration between literature, language processing applications, and AI precludes creativity or originality. For a review of the idea of digital postmodernism, see Pisarski 2017.

[11] Definitive proof of the existence of separate galaxies beyond the Milky Way was provided by observations performed by Edwin Hubble from 1923 to 1928 (1929, 103).

[12] Josef Čapek's study of Futurism was formed through his general knowledge of the works of Marinetti (Gwóźdź-Szewczenko 2011, 158). For example, the introduction of Josef Čapek's feuilleton *Umělý člověk* (Artificial human/*Homo artefactus*) directly quotes ([1924] 2018, 10) a passage from Marinetti's "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" (cf. [1912] 2006, 111).

[13] For an illuminative examination of the relationship between technology, religion, and mythology, see Frunză 2019.

[14] Francesca Ferrando believes that the hierarchical concept of the *Great Chain of Being* is rooted in Plato, Aristotle, and the Old Testament, and was, with contextual modifications, passed on to modern philosophies that are based on the concept of the biological constitution of humans (Ferrando 2019b, 647).

[15] It is interesting to note that the bibliography of Ferrando's pivotal work lists (2019a, 235) Karel Čapek's *R.U.R* (1920) as a source. However, there does not appear to be any specific reference to Karel Čapek in the body of the text of *Philosophical Posthumanism* (2019a).

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Homo artefactus and Promethean shame: Reflections on Josef Čapek, Futurism, transhumanism, posthumanism, and the Obvious

Josef Čapek. Futurism. Transhumanism. Posthumanism. Artificial intelligence art. Robot. Posthuman.

This paper is focused on an analysis of Josef Čapek's notion of technology and his scrutiny of the conflicting nature of the avant-garde movement of Futurism in relation to the contemporary assumptions of the processual philosophies of transhumanism and posthumanism. The analysis is reconstructed in the narrative setting of the technological and methodological hybridization of the categories of the human and posthuman (*Homo artefactus*) and is inspired by Josef Čapek's approach to a specific philosophical question: Why would anyone want to create a posthuman, a "robot Picasso"? It is argued that Josef Čapek projected that some of the motivational assumptions about the creation of posthumans would be built upon the inconsistent stigmatization of the human by humans that envy the hypothetical superiority of posthumans (i.e., Promethean shame).

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