



# What Are Little Girls Made Of?

## Little Girls Misdirecting

Dennis Weiss, York College

Sugar and spice and everything nice. That's what little girls are made of. But what exactly does this have to do with Roger Korby? Our title is the first indication that we need to approach this episode of Star Trek carefully. It's the first hint of misdirection. The title suggests that this episode is going to be about little girls, or at least grown women who nurture a lost love from years ago, when they were just girls. We expect an episode about Christine Chapel. The episode's title and her presence on the bridge for the teaser suggest that she is the focus. And yet, the episode is actually more interested in the men (frogs and snails and puppy-dog tails)—and isn't this how it often is in the world of Star Trek. It's Korby and Kirk and of course the monstrousness of Ruk that takes center stage in this episode, not Christine. This is just the first instance of a series of ambiguities and misdirections that structure this episode. Is this episode about little girls or little boys? Is it Korby or not? Is logic incompatible with emotion? Are androids merely the sum of their programming? On each of these questions, *What Are Little Girls Made Of?* speaks equivocally. But among these equivocations, there is presumably one certainty: the monstrousness of science and technology and how our love of technology can lead us astray. This message seemingly comes across unequivocally in the inhumanity of Korby and his plans for cosmic domination. Here too, though, there may be more than meets the eye, more misdirection and equivocation than is at first apparent.

First, a brief resume. Kirk and Nurse Chapel beam down to Exo 3 in search of Roger Korby, the brilliant Pasteur of archeological medicine who was lost more than five years ago. Chapel studied with Korby, became his fiancé, and when he was lost signed up with Starfleet with the ulterior motive of finding him. When our star-crossed lovers are reunited, we learn that Korby has discovered an ancient technology buried deep in the caverns of Exo 3 that allows him to create androids and download his own consciousness into a synthetic body. He holds Kirk captive, creating a duplicate of him, so that he can smuggle the technology off-world and infiltrate society, eventually reengineering a more perfect human being and human society. His plans go awry, though, as his creations begin to malfunction and he is himself eventually destroyed, his mechanical nature having been exposed to his lost love Christine.

On the surface (that is before we delve into the caverns of Exo 3), *Little Girls* would seem to be the tale of the undoing of Roger Korby and his faith in science, technology, and logic. But as I suggested, things are a little more complex than appear on the surface (aren't they always). Let's start with the matter of Christine, where we already get a glimpse of the significant misdirection this episode is engaged in. We're lead to believe that this episode will be about little girl and yet Star Trek once again proves its willingness to toss aside the women-folk, for Christine is played for the dupe. We learn that she has pined for her lost love for the past five years, having thrown away her own promising career in bio-research to sign aboard a starship and search for Korby. Previously, though, in *The Naked Time*, we learn that she has the hots for

Spock: "I am in love with you Mr. Spock. You. The human Mr. Spock. The Vulcan Mr. Spock. I see things. How honest you are. I know how you feel. You hide it but you do have feelings. Oh, how we must hurt you, torture you." How fickle little girls are. As a student she was attracted to her professor. As a starship nurse, she is attracted to an officer. What won't women do for love? The Naked Time toyed with the issue of why we human beings are out in space to begin with, and with Christine we get an answer—searching for our lost loves. Not only that, but she is routinely and regularly wrong. And why? Because she trusts her feminine intuitions. Christine "knows" that Korby when she hears and sees him:

SPOCK: You're certain you recognise his voice?

CHAPEL: Have you ever been engaged, Mister Spock? Yes, it's Roger.

Repeatedly, Christine claims to know things on the basis of her feelings, only to be proven wrong and failing to recognize that both Korby and Kirk are replaced by evil doppelgangers. So much for love and female intuition. Star Trek is once more toying with women, as Roger no doubt toyed with Andrea, his mechanical geisha. But of course we are being toyed with as well as we try to figure what, if not little girls and their misplaced crushes, this show is supposed to be about. We're misled about the focus of this episode, the certainty of women's intuitions, and the undying love which is not so undying. And these are not the only instances of misleading.

Consider how the show equivocates on the status of emotion. On the one hand it is supposed to be what is distinctly human and the thing that cannot be copied in the androids. Kirk suggests that it is the one thing that makes him superior to an android. And yet we see in Christine (as well as Andrea) how emotion leads us astray. The rational and the emotional are always changing places in this episode. Korby is supposed to be the voice of logic and reason but he clearly is unhinged. His over-reliance on logic is clearly problematic. We're told that the androids are mere things, not human, because of their lack of emotion:

KORBY: Andrea's incapable of that. She simply obeys orders. She has no meaning for me. There's no emotional bond. Andrea, kiss Captain Kirk. Now strike him. You see? There's no emotion in it, no emotional involvement. She simply responds to orders. She's a totally logical computer. A thing is not a woman.

Again, though, our androids seemingly keep exceeding their programming. Andrea, for instance, kills the android Kirk in a fit of pique and then confesses her love for Korby.

Similar misdirection can be seen in the central question of whether Korby is really Korby. On the one hand, Christine is sure it's Korby and Korby himself vouches for his authenticity:

KORBY: It's still me, Christine. Roger. I'm in here. You can't imagine how it was. I was frozen, dying. My legs were gone. I was, I had only my brain between life and death. This can be repaired easier than another man can set a broken finger. I'm still the same as I was before, Christine, perhaps even better.

But by this point Christine doubts her previous conviction. Nonetheless, Korby seemingly proves himself by taking his own life, in a final act that suggests his persistence. We witness another reversal, though, in Kirk's final statement on the matter: "Dr. Korby was never here." These same issues of course plague the more recent discussion of cyberspace and the Singularitarians' hopes for downloading consciousness and attaining an everlasting afterlife,

another clear instance of Star Trek raising issues that will dominate technoscientific culture forty years later.

So the duplicate both is and is not a duplicate. Emotion both is and is not central to our humanity. Programming and logic both are and are not central to mechanism. On these issues the episode speaks with no certainty. There does, though, seem to be a clear message when it comes to our single-minded pursuit of technology. Such a pursuit, the episode suggests, is monstrous.

As we learn about the history of the prior inhabitants of Exo 3 we discover that their dimming sun led them deep into the planet's caverns where they developed their unique technology. As Brown, Korby's assistant, explains:

BROWN: Doctor Korby has discovered that as their sun dimmed, the inhabitants of this planet moved underground from an open environment to this dark world. When you were a student of his, Christine, you must have often heard Doctor Korby remark how freedom of movement and choice produced the human spirit. The culture of Exo 3 proved his theory. When they moved from light to darkness, they replaced freedom with a mechanistic culture.

It's that technology that gave birth to Lurch, I mean Ruk, the personification of the monstrosity of technology. We later learn what happened to the old ones, and it's worth quoting at length as it pulls together several of our themes.

KIRK: What happened to the old ones, Ruk?

RUK: So long ago.

KIRK: Is it possible they built their machines too well, gave them pride and a desire to survive? Machines that wanted logic and order and found that frustrated by the illogical emotional creatures that built them?

RUK: Yes, the old ones. The ones who made us. They grew fearful of us. They began to turn us off.

KIRK: And isn't it Korby who's creating the same danger to you all over again? Unlike you, we humans are full of unpredictable emotions that logic cannot solve.

RUK: Yes. Yes, it had been so long ago, I had forgotten. The old ones here. The ones who made us, yes. Yes, it is still in my memory banks. It became necessary to destroy them. You are inconsistent. You cannot be programmed. You are inferior.

KIRK: And Korby?

RUK: You came from the outside. You bring disorder here.

KIRK: The danger to you is Korby.

RUK: I was programmed by Korby. I cannot harm him.

KIRK: The old ones programmed you, too, but it became possible to destroy them.

RUK: That was the equation! (seizes Kirk) Existence! Survival must cancel out programming.

KIRK: That's it, Ruk! Logic! You can't protect someone who's trying to destroy you!

KORBY: Ruk, I would like



RUK: You brought him among us. You brought the inferior ones. We had cleansed ourselves of them. Now you bring the evil back!

KORBY: Ruk, stop! Your programming. (fires phaser, Ruk vanishes) I had no choice.

Recall that Korby is the Pasteur of archaeological medicine and had previously revolutionized immunization techniques and now he wants to “infiltrate” society with his android duplicates. Here Ruk too speaks the language of infection and immunization: “We had cleansed ourselves of them.” But of course it’s Ruk, and by extension Korby’s technology, that represents the infection that we must be immunized against. The technology must be contained and that is precisely what happens as the androids are eliminated one by one, ending with Korby and Andrea’s mutual obliteration. While Star Trek is so equivocal on other matters that arise in this episode, on this one it is clear. Korby was never here.



But on this one matter on which the episode speaks with certainty, we have to question its final judgment, for ultimately Ruk/Lurch is of course human (played by Ted Cassidy). Human beings occasionally give birth to monsters, but monsters that are still very much human. And what does that say about the monstrous technology that we give birth too, even when it emerges from that dark, cavernous world? Might we not have to own up to those dark, cavernous aspects of our humanity that give rise to these monstrous visions but are nonetheless human? The Old Ones grew fearful of their technology and ultimately

tried to eliminate it. But those things that well up from the dark, cavernous world may be frightful, but they are still human. Rather than trying to eliminate them we need to understand their place in our humanity—this is what Korby ultimately fails to understand. It is his plan to eliminate the failings and imperfections in our humanity. This doesn’t represent the perfecting of humanity, but the turning away from humanity—a failure to recognize that it’s all part and parcel of the whole package. So ultimately Ruk too is a bit of misdirection. He is supposed to represent the inhuman, the monstrousness of a technology born of the dark, cavernous world. But Ruk too is ultimately human and we have to own up to this dimension of our humanity. We are led to believe that the danger must be eliminated: Brown, Andrea, the fake Kirk, Ruk, and finally Korby all have to be eliminated. But this was Ruk’s solution to the dilemma too: eliminate the contagion, the danger, the irrational. But technology and the various dark and cavernous impulses that sometimes give rise to dark and irrational forces in techno-science cannot be so easily eliminated. This is the show’s ultimate misdirection.