



Edison's Eve: A Magical History of the Quest for Mechanical Life

Gaby Wood

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During the eighteenth century, the inventor Jacques de Vaucanson created a mechanical duck that seemingly could digest and excrete its food. A few decades later, Europeans fell in love with “the Turk,” a celebrated chess-playing machine built in 1769. Thomas Edison was obsessed for years with making a talking mechanical doll, one of his few failures as an inventor. In our own time, scientists at MIT are trying to build a robot with emotions of its own.

What lies behind our age-old pursuit to create mechanical life? What does this pursuit tell us about human nature? In **Edison's Eve** Gaby Wood traces the history of robotics, from its most brilliant inventions to its most ingenious hoaxes. Joining lively anecdote with literary, cultural, and philosophical insights, Wood offers a captivating and learned work of science and history.

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