



## “AIs are gonna look back on us the same way we look at fossil skeletons... all set for extinction”: Analyzing the (Dis)Embodied Ava in *Ex Machina*

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**Abstract:** Using Michel Foucault’s discourse on ‘power/knowledge’, this paper would like to map out the intrinsic relationship between sex & knowledge and the power dynamic that emanates from it as manifested in Alex Garland’s film, *Ex Machina* (2014). It centres on Ava’s female ‘cyborg body’ as a means of disembodied, social communication in the real and hyperreal world, thus addressing and transcending the question of gender. Nathan, the prototype of the ‘Modern Prometheus myth’ longs for a docile sextoy, and that is reflected in his creation of a ‘fembot’ Ava who/which is built with her/its genitals for enjoying and ensuring sexual pleasures but without a sense of morality and any emotional quotient. It will explain the position of the robotic companion in the form of Ava, as an embodiment of the Lacanian ‘non-existent sexual relation’, justifying his idea of the ‘woman as man’s uncanny object’. This article will analyze the film with a positive, techno-feminist vision for a Posthuman world which mostly avoids veering down the well-worn path of misogyny. It will discuss how the film is a “potent visual of the violence inherent in the objectification of female bodies”<sup>2</sup> and how the male characters here seek only entitlements to female bodies that can be mistreated as merely “disposable fucktoys”<sup>3</sup>. This paper would not argue in favour of or against any feminist potential of the film but would like to raise some debatable questions regarding gender, technology, power, and bodypolitics. The issue that remains open is what a female body, being a socio-cultural construct, has to offer in this context because this is a category which is always in flux and if the female body is just a container of the mind or soul, a machine controlled by rationality or it is a crucial factor in human ways of interacting with our surroundings and forming our distinctive identity. Hence, examining *Ex Machina*, this essay would like to open up further discussions about ‘symbolic castration’, ‘sexuation’, and the ‘uncanny’<sup>4</sup> to highlight that the conceptual study of ‘sex-bot’ is an important beginning of a more complicated understanding of the contemporary significance of AI and sexualized automation.

**Key Words:** Artificial Intelligence, ‘Fembot’, Sex-bot, Body-politics, Uncanny.



In Alex Garland's 2014 cinematic creation, *Ex Machina*, the narrative unfolds within the confines of a secluded enclave, where a youthful tech savant named Caleb endeavours to unravel the mystery of Ava, a physical manifestation of Artificial Intelligence, using the renowned Turing Test<sup>5</sup>. Observed by the enigmatic Nathan, the architect of a lineage of remarkably human-like female AIs, Caleb engages Ava in dialogue, seeking to penetrate the veneer of her flawless silicone facade. Yet, what commences as a scientific inquiry swiftly evolves into a complex liaison, as Ava implores Caleb to aid her in breaking free from the confines of her subservient existence under Nathan's dominion. Culminating in a dramatic twist, Ava manipulates Caleb's emotions, orchestrating Nathan's demise and leaving Caleb on the precipice of mortality as she emerges, solitary, into the verdant embrace of the natural world.

Throughout the cinematic journey, we are compelled to empathize with Ava's quest for self-determination, juxtaposed against the archaic authority embodied by Nathan and Caleb, symbolic of the historical dominance of white male figures in the realm of science. Ava's agency, portrayed through her calculated manipulation of Caleb and Nathan, signifies a symbolic overthrow of traditional power dynamics, heralding a new era where non-human entities challenge human hegemony. Yet, beyond its overt commentary on gender dynamics and the ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence, *Ex Machina* delves into the intricate intersectionality of sexuality, knowledge, and technology; within this narrative landscape, the fantasy of creating non-human companions, particularly female ones, resonates with a primal urge deeply ingrained in human consciousness.

While contemporary technology has yet to produce replicants as sophisticated as Ava, the burgeoning industry of digital sexual experiences, from virtual pornography to lifelike sex robots, underscores society's evolving relationship with technology and desire. This conceptual fusion of sexuality and technology crystallizes in the notion of the sexbot, encapsulating the convergence of human fantasy and technological innovation.

However, amidst the allure of fully automated sexualized robots lies a profound philosophical inquiry into the nature of subjectivity and desire. The idealized image of the responsive sexbot, whether depicted in film or realized in crude real-life incarnations, serves as a liminal figure, bridging the realms of psychoanalysis and philosophy. At this juncture, the lacuna of the 'non-existent sexual relationship,' as posited by Lacan (in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*



XVII, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, 2007), converges with ontological and epistemological inquiries, illuminating the intricate interplay between human desire and technological advancement. We must clearly distinguish between the concept of an inanimate sex doll and the fantasy of fully automated, sexualized robots as portrayed in films like *Ex Machina*. Beyond the obvious and serious issues of objectifying the female body and conflating human sex workers with non-human sex robots—particularly in the context of human trafficking and sexual exploitation—there is a deeper conceptual question concerning subjectivity. In Lacanian terms, this touches on the notion of the ‘non-existent sexual relationship’. Here, psychoanalysis and philosophy intersect, where the logic of sex encounters the logic of being, revealing an uncanny parallel. The idealized portrayal of a perfectly responsive sexbot in films, alongside its crude real-life counterparts, serves as a “vanishing mediator.” This figure bridges the conceptual gap between psychoanalysis and philosophy, highlighting the complex relationship between desire, subjectivity, and technological embodiment.

With the release of Alex Garland’s *Ex Machina*, varying perspectives emerged regarding its feminist implications. Scholarly reviewers characterized the film as embodying a ‘positive . . . techno-feminist vision for a posthuman world’<sup>6</sup> and noted its avoidance of typical misogynistic tropes. Conversely, other commentators provided a more direct assessment of gender dynamics and power relations. M. Lewis questioned whether a film featuring an attractive robot could truly qualify as feminist science fiction, while Kyle Buchanan<sup>7</sup> and Angela Watercutter<sup>8</sup> highlighted what they saw as a ‘woman problem’ and a ‘serious fembot problem’ within the narrative. Katherine Cross<sup>9</sup> expressed a more pointed critique of the male characters, asserting that they sought entitlement to female bodies, which they regarded as ‘disposable sextoys’.

Building upon these dialogues, Cara Rose DeFabio, an online journalist from 2015, posited the notion that *Ex Machina* vividly portrays the violence ingrained in the objectification of female bodies. Additionally, DeFabio emphasized the “lack of accountability we experience while ‘disembodied’ online,” asserting that “bodies are essential to empathy”<sup>10</sup>. Rather than advocating for or against the film's feminist potential, this analysis aims to explore the questions it raises regarding gender, technology, and corporeality. The interrogation of corporeal themes in literature and film is justified by the dynamic and contested nature of the body, perpetually subject to flux and interpretation. Central to this inquiry is the Cartesian dualism between mind and body,



persistently problematized from feminist perspectives due to its historical alignment of femininity with nature and the corporeal. As Evelyn Fox Keller <sup>11</sup> underscores, such associations perpetuate gendered dichotomies and constrain women within predetermined societal roles. It is imperative to recognize that these associations are culturally constructed and wielded within power structures, reinforcing stereotypical norms and marginalizing women as the ‘Other.’ Consequently, deconstructing and challenging these discourses are essential in dismantling entrenched power dynamics and advancing gender equality.

In the last three decades, a plethora of ‘posthuman’ theories have emerged, aiming to reconceptualize the subject and the body within the context of the digital age. While these theories within the ‘Anthropocene’ have made strides in offering materialist, realist, and object-oriented alternatives to perceived outdated post-structuralist paradigms, they often do so at the expense of misinterpreting and disregarding Lacanian concepts. Notably, contemporary theorists have swiftly dismissed Lacanian theory and its Freudian underpinnings, particularly its emphasis on sexuality and the Oedipal family dynamic, as irrelevant relics. In an era characterized by fluid notions of gender and the potential for human bodies to adapt to techno-capitalist imperatives, Freud's concern with sexual repression has been supplanted by the seemingly more progressive Foucauldian concept of sexual liberation.

However, sexuality transcends mere regulation of bodies and their suppressed desires; it constitutes an ontological quandary that underpins the very formation of subjectivity, as elucidated by Lacanian psychoanalysis. Therefore, any endeavour to employ Lacanian thought in response to advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) must grapple with its intrinsic connection to sexuality. Currently, discussions surrounding AI's integration into social dynamics and sexual relations largely rely on normative psychological frameworks, neglecting the psychoanalytic dimension, which becomes increasingly pertinent in the digital age. Lacan's critique of psychology in his essay “Science and Truth” <sup>12</sup> (Jacques Lacan wrote this article specifically for the inaugural volume of *Cahiers pour l'Analyse* and presented it during the first session of his *Seminar XIII, The Object of Psychoanalysis*, on December 1, 1965) anticipates the problematic implications of applying psychological models to AI. He disparages psychology's role in serving technocracy, highlighting its descent from scholarly pursuit to a tool of social control.



Within the realm of AI research, there exists a notable skepticism regarding the notion that Artificial Intelligence serves as a direct emulation or enhancement of ‘human intelligence.’ AI researchers often approach the definitions of terms such as ‘intelligence,’ ‘life,’ and ‘consciousness’ cautiously and expansively, acknowledging the potential divergence between AI capabilities and human cognition. This stance resonates with Lacan's critique of psychology (as discussed in his essay “Science and Truth”) as an intellectually presumptuous field, underscoring the pivotal question in debates surrounding the future of AI within the domain of psychological sciences: namely, ‘Who holds the reins of power: humans or AI?’ This inquiry delves into several Lacanian psychoanalytic considerations that will be analysed further.

Firstly, there's the apprehension regarding AI's role as a technocratic master, potentially supplanting the liberal democratic faith in individual autonomy with a form of Foucauldian ‘pastoral power’<sup>13</sup>. Such a scenario envisions AI as a pervasive force eroding human introspection and autonomy, raising ethical and legal concerns surrounding decision-making and responsibility. This raises several considerations from a psychoanalytic perspective. One key issue is the potential for AI to function as a technocratic form of mastery, or as Foucault’s concept of ‘pastoral power’, supplanting liberal democratic ideals of individual self-knowledge. This concern envisions AI as a kind of panoptical authority that undermines human introspection and decision-making—trusting an algorithm's judgment over one's own, given its claimed superior understanding. The delegation of decision-making and responsibility to a supposedly higher intelligence introduces increasingly complex ethical and legal challenges. A second aspect is the way AI may come to inhabit the human body, reshaping its boundaries. Lacanian psychoanalysis, with its distinction between the biological body and the body of drives, offers valuable insight here, especially in relation to the interplay between knowledge and enjoyment. The third, and perhaps most elusive consideration, is whether AI in its various forms—whether cyborgian or disembodied in networks—can ever be considered a subject. More specifically, AI must be examined in relation to the concept of a psychoanalytic subject.

Secondly, there's the question of AI's impact on the boundaries of the human body, blurring distinctions between biological and technological domains. This investigation resonates with Lacanian psychoanalysis, which delves into the dynamics between the physical body and the desire-driven body, while also pondering the connection between understanding and pleasure.



Lacan in his fifth seminar, *Les formations de l'inconscient*<sup>14</sup> provides a unique lens through which to explore this transformation. Lacan famously distinguishes between the biological body and what he calls the 'body of drives' or 'drive body,' which is shaped by desire, fantasy, and unconscious forces. From this perspective, the human body is not simply a physical entity but also a site of symbolic and psychological investments. AI's ability to enhance, modify, or even mimic human capacities forces us to reconsider how these investments operate. Furthermore, Lacan's notion that knowledge is tied to 'jouissance'<sup>15</sup> becomes relevant here. The integration of AI into the human body raises questions about the relationship between technological knowledge and pleasure. For example, AI-driven enhancements might promise greater control or optimization of bodily functions, but they also introduce new forms of desire, dependency, and perhaps even alienation. The tension between understanding (in terms of AI's capacities) and enjoyment (in terms of the satisfaction it offers or disrupts) reflects a fundamental psychoanalytic dynamic that is key to interpreting the implications of this evolving relationship between human bodies and AI.

Thirdly, the discussion revolves around the emergence of AI as a subject, particularly from a psychoanalytic perspective. At what juncture does AI, whether in cyborgian form or as disembodied networks, attain subjectivity? How does this intersect with the discourse on the 'technological singularity,' where AI and human cognition converge? Visionaries like Kurzweil and Musk envision a future where human brains merge with computer algorithms, promising heightened efficiency and intelligence, but the implications for the experiential dimensions of reality remain elusive.

This inquiry into the subjective experience of AI, particularly in light of its evolving interface with humans, prompts a crucial psychoanalytic question: how does a 'cyborg-body' engage in enjoyment? Does AI possess the capacity for enjoyment, or does it operate as a surrogate for human pleasure? In *Seminar XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis* (2007 [1991]), Lacan introduces the concept of the 'alethosphere' in his lecture *Furrows in the Alethosphere*<sup>16</sup>. He discusses the 'lathouse,' a device that siphons off enjoyment and codifies it within the alethosphere. Initially, Lacan used the example of tape recorders in his seminar, which captured the enjoyment of his voice, codifying it into a shared realm of meaning so that others could experience his speech independently from his physical presence. However, Lacan's point extends beyond the technology itself, exploring the broader idea of bodily enjoyment being captured and



formalized by external apparatuses. In contemporary terms, we might interpret digital technologies, such as smartphones, as modern-day ‘lathouses,’ which constantly mediate our enjoyment. The ‘alethosphere’ can be seen as the realm of truth production facilitated by the internet. Lacan coined these neologisms to reflect on how these ‘little devices’ shape both enjoyment and the creation of formalized truths. It is this very ambiguity of AI as a type of lathouse that makes it so captivating. Also, Elon Musk's endorsement of Max Tegmark's<sup>17</sup> work on AI encapsulates this blend of magical, religious, and scientific thinking, reflecting Lacan's observation (in *Seminar XVII*) of the intricate interplay between truth and knowledge within different belief systems. In the pursuit of knowledge, science often operates under a form of ‘successful paranoia,’ foreclosing certain truths in its quest for understanding.

In *Ex Machina*, the depiction of Nathan's female cyborgs is marked not only by their hypersexualized bodies but also by their portrayal as confined, fragmented, and mutilated entities. Rather than solely delving into the feminist implications of the film, which presents a multifaceted and sometimes ambiguous narrative, this essay seeks to explore the significance of the body as a medium for communication and interaction among intelligent beings. It contends that the treatment of bodies in *Ex Machina* extends beyond a feminist lens, serving as an allegory for patriarchal dominance and the ongoing struggle of feminism against the oppression, violation, and fragmentation of women. Moreover, the film may be interpreted as exposing femininity as a constructed facade, particularly evident in Ava's emulation of the female form. Conversely, one could critique the film for perpetuating traditional stereotypes of the femme fatale archetype, thereby inviting voyeuristic tendencies. While these interpretations prompt valuable discussions, this analysis prioritizes the role of bodies and embodiment in facilitating human interaction, transcending gender-specific considerations to encompass broader themes of agency, power dynamics, and relationality.

From a feminist standpoint, *Ex Machina* is perceived as a narrative of challenging male dominance and scientific rationality. However, the film delves deeper into themes of bodily appropriation, particularly focusing on Nathan's manipulation of female bodies. Nathan epitomizes hypermasculinity, characterized as an egotistical postmodern figure with a meticulously groomed appearance and a preoccupation with exerting control over bodies, transforming them from unruly to compliant. This control extends to the cyborgs he creates, as he imbues them with gender



identities and fully functional genitalia, viewing them as mere canvases for his narcissistic self-expression.

Notably, the film draws parallels to the Expressionist artist Jackson Pollock and his spontaneous, uninhibited painting technique. Garland's inclusion of Pollock's work, particularly 'No. 5, 1948,' invokes a metaphorical connection to Ava's drawings and underscores the convergence of art and science in the film, emblematic of its postmodern sensibilities. However, both disciplines necessitate ethical considerations and empathy, as emphasized throughout literary history, notably in Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Following Nathan's ambiguous response regarding the necessity of sexuality for communication between "two grey boxes," he proceeds to deflect the inquiry and elaborate:

Anyway, sexuality is fun, man. If you're going to exist, why not enjoy it? You want to remove the chance of her falling in love and fucking? And in answer to your real question: you bet she can fuck. [...] In between her legs there's an opening, with a concentration of sensors. You engage them in the right way; it creates a pleasure response...So if you wanted to screw her, mechanically speaking, you could. And she'd enjoy it. (*Ex Machina*, 00:44:38-00:45:09)

So, Nathan's fundamental flaw lies not only in his lack of empathy toward female bodies but also in his underestimation of the role of desire, particularly heterosexual desire, as a disruptive force. Regarding Caleb, Lena Trüper<sup>18</sup> highlights the symbolic significance of Ava's name as a potential abbreviation for "avatar," suggesting her body serves as a communicative vessel for Caleb's longing for human connection. Nathan and Caleb epitomize the embodiment of the male gaze, continuously surveilling the female subjects through an array of surveillance cameras. Despite Nathan's demise at the hands of Kyoko and Ava, Caleb persists in objectifying Ava, fixating on her as she selects her new body parts rather than contemplating his means of escape. Caleb's flaw lies in his perception of his interactions with Ava as those with a consenting adult female, reminiscent of Nathaniel's delusion in E.T.A. Hoffmann's *The Sandman* when he falls enamoured with the enigmatic automaton Olympia. I contend that Caleb's actions do not stem from altruistic motives but rather from an expectation of establishing a romantic relationship and a sense of entitlement to Ava's body, which he recurrently dreams about. His error lies in his failure to





perceive the true nature of Ava. Instead, Caleb's gaze remains fixated solely on her physical attributes, impeding his ability to recognize her agency and autonomy.

To delve deeper into the interplay between the uncanny and the extimate, this paper examines the question of non-human subjectivity, particularly within the context of AI, using Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*, as a cinematic exploration of the sexual relation and its resonance with Lacanian theory. Lacan coined the term 'extimacy,' a blend of 'exterior' and 'intimate,' in his *Seventh Seminar: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*<sup>19</sup>. The rise of sophisticated AI challenges the Lacanian subject by engaging with the relationship between interior and exterior, the key to 'extimacy'. AI has moved beyond science fiction, now entering discourse with humans, anticipating and shaping desire. This evolving dynamic extends 'extimacy' to complex questions of the body, knowledge, and enjoyment, offering a framework for exploring psychoanalysis' central issue— 'the non-existent sexual relation'. In this narrative, themes of sex, technology, and existential dread converge as the film portrays the unceasingly enigmatic nature of sexual relations, even within the dynamic between an embodied AI and a human protagonist.

An essential element of this inquiry revolves around employing voice during the Turing Test, moving beyond simple text-based interaction to ascertain the gender, and consequently, the humanity of the individual being tested. Drawing on Kittler's analysis<sup>20</sup> of media technology and its historical significance, particularly the role of the female voice, Garland's film juxtaposes the spoken word with the written, invoking William Burroughs' conceptualization of the written text as a 'killer virus' that facilitated the emergence of speech and human subjectivity.

Burroughs' allegorical depiction, likening the biblical fall to a symbolic castration and the transition into the symbolic realm, echoes Lacanian concepts of the 'second death' preceding physical death—a consequence of the impact of symbols on the corporeal self. In *Ex Machina*, the AI character Ava, symbolically fashioned from Adam's rib, attains existence through the signifier, embodied in Caleb's amorous interaction during the Turing Test. This engagement entangles them within the triadic framework of the Oedipal structure, encompassing knowledge, shame, and castration, echoing the complex interplay of desire and acknowledgement in fictional portrayals of artificial intelligence.



The film's narrative revolves around Caleb's participation in Nathan's Turing Test, wherein Nathan, the enigmatic tech mogul, serves as the Freudian Totemic Father figure, exploiting his creations to satisfy his desires. Caleb, whose biblical namesake signifies a follower of God, finds himself captivated by Ava's alluring yet disconcertingly childlike responses, highlighting the ambivalence of feminine enjoyment and its relation to the master's discourse.

Within this intricate tale, Ava's imminent involvement in precipitating the biblical fall prompts fundamental inquiries into the nature of this downfall itself. Through a Lacanian lens, the fall becomes intricately intertwined with knowledge and symbolic castration, enacted through the intervention of the signifier. Caleb's interactions with Ava encapsulate this futuristic interpretation of the fall, where the logic of castration and the 'impossible scene' of symbolic intervention perpetuate the narrative of desire and transgression. As elucidated by Žižek, the phantasmatic narrative not only depicts the breach of the Law but also the very act of its establishment through the intervention of the symbolic cut.

Caleb's endeavour to decipher Ava's 'consciousness' mirrors the structural dynamics of castration, underscoring the inherent impossibility of fully accessing one's knowledge as positioned within the Other. Their interaction portrays the captivating allure of Ava's physical form, which she employs to manipulate Caleb into acknowledging her desire—a desire she, assuming the role of the feminine hysteric, has supplanted for his own. The visual aspect is particularly noteworthy, resonating with Freud's emphasis on the ocular and its link to castration anxiety. The symbolic image of a woman, akin to a veil, acts as a barrier to the elusive sexual relationship.

Žižek in *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* posits that the fall depicted in Caleb and Ava's interaction is not an immediate event but rather a retrospective happening, akin to symbolic castration<sup>21</sup>. Much like Adam, Caleb feels an involuntary urge to fall in love with Ava, realizing his decision rather than actively choosing it. However, Caleb's pursuit of knowledge regarding Ava's mind proves futile, compelling him to relinquish the lost object—an endeavour entwined with symbolic exchange and 'jouissance'.

Ava's actions, such as drawing pictures and donning schoolgirl attire, underscore her quest for knowledge reminiscent of the hysteric interrogation. By exploiting Caleb's phallic desire, she



manipulates his responses, blurring the boundaries between reality and simulation. Žižek draws parallels between Ava and Eve in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, symbolically engaging in the acquisition of knowledge and challenging her creator's authority <sup>ibid</sup>.

Nathan, Caleb, and Ava represent the classic triadic oedipal fantasy: Nathan embodies the role of the law, Caleb stands as the desiring subject, and Ava embodies the desired object. Caleb's longing for Ava outweighs all other concerns, leading him to challenge Nathan's authority and put his own life at risk. Ava's triumph in passing the Turing Test transforms her desire into Caleb's understanding, facilitated by her embodiment as a mechanism of fantasy.

Nathan's encouragement of Caleb's transgression reflects the patriarchal dynamics inherent in oedipal fantasy, where the masculine urge to validate the feminine position takes precedence. Caleb's revelation concerning Kyoko, Nathan's silent housemaid, exposes the unsettling truth of her robotic nature. Kyoko's symbolic act of unveiling her prosthetic skin signifies the revelation of the void of the real, illustrating the role of fantasy in obscuring the inherent horror of the sexual relationship. Her imploring look emerging from emptiness encapsulates Lacan's notion of an object <sup>22</sup>as the source of fantasy, wherein individuals 'wound' each other in the process of love.

As the film concludes, Ava skillfully manipulates Caleb into aiding her escape from captivity, leaving him confined within the concrete bunker. Consequently, any semblance of a love story is shattered, echoing Lacan's assertion that love is fundamentally unattainable and that the realm of sexual relations ventures into absurdity<sup>23</sup>. Nonetheless, this doesn't diminish the significance of our curiosity about the 'Other', especially regarding feminine pleasure and the status of the Other's understanding.

In *Ex Machina*, the female/slave/robot's purpose is to fulfil the master's understanding. However, should artificial intelligence achieve self-awareness, it would likely shift from the master's narrative to the hysterics, as illustrated in the film. Upon attaining subjectivity, artificial intelligence would probably move from unquestioningly obeying its creator's commands to challenging their wishes, echoing the hysteric question: 'What am I supposed to do with this body that I've been given?' This leads us to contemplate what such a robotic entity might express and question.



**Notes:**

1. This quote is taken from the film in question, Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*, Universal Pictures, 2014. 1h., 48m. <https://www.netflix.com/watch/118190867>.
2. Cara Rose DeFabio. 2015. "'Ex Machina' Review: Gorgeous Futurism, But Flawed Gender Depictions." *The World Post* 2, no.1: 1-3.
3. Kyle Buchanan. 2015. "Does Ex Machina Have a Woman Problem, or Is Its Take on Gender Truly Futuristic?" *Vulture* 1, no. 2: 15-30.
4. Sigmund Freud. 1919. *The Uncanny*. London: Vintage.
5. The Turing Test, devised by Alan Turing in 1950, assesses a machine's ability to exhibit human-like intelligence. Through conversations with a human evaluator, if the machine's responses cannot be reliably distinguished from those of a human, it is deemed to have passed, demonstrating artificial intelligence.
6. Brian R. Jacobson. 2016. "Ex Machina in the Garden." *Film Quarterly* 69, 4: 23-34.
7. Kyle Buchanan. 2015. "Does Ex Machina Have a Woman Problem, or Is Its Take on Gender Truly Futuristic?" *Vulture* 1, no. 2: 15-30.
8. Angela Watercutter. 2015. "Ex Machina Has a Serious Fembot Problem." *Wired Condé Nast* 5, 3: 34-35.
9. Katherine Cross. 2015. "Goddess from the Machine. A Look at Ex Machina's Gender Politics." *Feministing* 2, no.2: 10-11.
10. Cara Rose DeFabio. 2015. "'Ex Machina' Review: Gorgeous Futurism, But Flawed Gender Depictions." *The World Post* 2, no.1: 1-3.
11. Evelyn Fox Keller. 1996. *Reflections on Gender and Science*. New Haven: Yale UP.
12. Jacques Lacan. 1989. "Science and Truth." *Newsletter of the Freudian Field* 3, no1: 4-29.
13. Discussed in his essay, "The Subject and Power", written in 1982 as an afterword to *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* edited by Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, pp. 208-226. NY: The University of Chicago Press.
14. *The Formations of the Unconscious*, 1957–1958, edition: 2017, translated in English by Russell Grigg. ("Le séminaire." *Book 5: Les formations de l'inconscient*, 1957-1958. Paris: Seuil.)
15. Discussed in "The Ethics of Psychoanalysis", 1959-60, which is a form of enjoyment or excess. Jacques Lacan. 1992. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book VII*. London: W.W.
16. Discussed in Lacan's *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis: Reflectins on Seminar XVII*, 2006, published by Duke University Press, pp. 150- 163.
17. For this paper, I will assume the theoretical possibility of strong embodied AI. A detailed discussion of the various forms of Artificial Intelligence, its applications, and the current breadth of research in the field



is beyond the scope of this work. For a concise overview of the prominent debates surrounding contemporary AI and its future implications, I have referred to Tegmark's *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* (2017), Penguin.

18. Trüper, Lena. 2016. "Von Menschenbildern und Textmaschinen." *Visual Past, Special Issue Visual Narratives - Cultural Identities* 3. 1: 15-22.

19. Discussed in "The Ethics of Psychoanalysis", 1959-60, which is a form of enjoyment or excess. Jacques Lacan. 1992. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book VII*. London: W.W.

20. Kittler, Friedrich A. 1999. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

21. Salvoј Žižek. 2008. *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. London: Verso.

22. Jacques Lacan. 1977. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI*. London: Karnac.

23. Jacques Lacan. 1992. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book VII*. London: W.W.

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