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Feminist Film Approaches to Female Artificial Intelligences in Science Fiction Films - A Case Study of *Ex-Machina*

Submitted by

Dennis, DAI Yong De

M-B6-4008-2

澳門大學
UNIVERSIDADE DE MACAU
UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

Thesis supervisor:

Professor TAN See Kam

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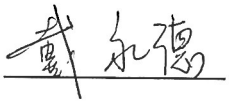
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Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgment is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Signed 

(Dennis, DAI Yong De)

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Abstract of Thesis

Entitled "Feminist Film Approaches to Female Artificial Intelligences in Science Fiction Films - A Case Study of *Ex-Machina*".

Submitted by DAI Yong De, M-B6-4008-2, for the degree of

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Of various themes that science fiction (SF) films tackle, this thesis is interested in investigating the power inequity between *homo sapiens* and their creations via the gendered gazes that specifically focus on men and female artificial intelligences (AIs). To interpret their relation, a close reading and analysis of the SF film *Ex-Machina* is conducted through the lens of feminist film theories.

The study begins with an elaboration of the narrative nexus encompassing human entities and their creations (AIs in particular) in SF films. In such films, men have tended to be the AI builder, while women are the built female. My review of feminist film theories espoused by Laura Mulvey, Mary Ann Doane and bell hooks, which provides critical insights on the gendered gaze with female figures usually as passive bearers of the "gaze" while their male counterparts as active "gazers" control power and pleasure. This imbalance highlights the patriarchal unconscious in films that accounts for audience's spectatorial identification. This thesis also explores the matter of race and sexuality as points of identification or disidentification. Indeed, with respect to the debates of gaze, my study discloses that the power asymmetry not only exists in men and female AIs, but also between men as well as between female AIs. In addition, male power can be subverted by female manipulation and empowerment that challenge Laura Mulvey's "male gaze". In sum, while men can enjoy the

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artificial substitution of real-life women for pleasure, female AIs' attempt to usurp their reign can become men's (human's) nightmare as well.

Key words: female artificial intelligences (AIs), science fiction (SF) films, feminist film theories, power relation, gazer and the gazed, gender and racial inequality, patriarchy

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