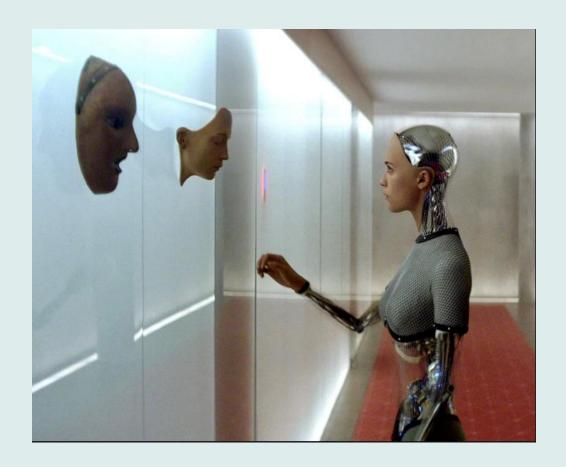# INVISIBLE TOUCH ESSAY

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The Image above is a still from the 2014 science fiction film "Ex Machina", directed by Alex Garland. I will be exploring relevant contexts surrounding this image in order to relate it to the theme of "Invisible Touch". The image depicts Ava once she has escaped her room and a wall of masks captures her attention, specifically a mask of her face. The film explores how humans relate to God as represented by Judeo-Christian religions, a male deity whose exact image is forbidden from being known.

Ex Machina has Biblical and Ancient Greek themes running simultaneously through the storyline. The Title derives from the Latin phrase 'Deus ex Machina' which means 'a God from the machine'. Which dates to ancient Greece/ Rome approximately 5B.C), when they had plays and performances where the actor playing a god was lowered by a crane like mechanism *(Deus ex Machina n.d)*. Once lowered, the god would solve the humans' grievances in a fast and unpredictable manner. I believe Ava is both God and the machine. In this moment she realizes she has more power than the humans she interacts with. She becomes the link between humanity and a higher power, in this case rather than being a deity she is an artificial from of intelligence (AI). Her power comes from being able to emulate human behavior and emotions. She is quite visibly a machine but like the ancient Greek actors she too wears a mask. Unlike the other masks on the wall hers is the most realistic to the human face.

The main characters all have biblical names. Nathan (the scientist) means "he gave" *(Nathan 2020)*, he referring to the Judeo-Christian God. Caleb (the programmer) means "wholehearted" or "devotion to God" *(Caleb n.d)*. Ava means "Life" in Hebrew and is thought to be a variation of the name Eve *(Ava n.d)*, which could be a nod to her being the first manmade female God. Nathan saw himself as God, he created life and took it away as he pleased to suit his agenda. True to his name, Caleb is whole heartedly devoted to wanting to find out whether Ava can be said to have true artificial intelligence. As Caleb grows closer to Ava, she gets closer to achieving a Godlike status and his loyalties with Nathan weaken. Their names have created an invisible bond between them which controls the roles they play.

In conclusion, this image relates to the topic of Invisible Touch because it summarizes the movies exploration of the human need to understand the invisible forces that control us. It specifically focuses on spirituality and human curiosity with the existence of a higher power. In this moment Ava recognizes what she truly is. By simply existing, she has become a physical representation of the intangible gap between mankind and a higher power. Her human appearance and soft voice present her as less threatening, more

vulnerable and easier to relate to than the typical representation of God, who cannot be directly approached as he resides in the heavens. Ava has a physical body that can be seen and touched. This vulnerability masks that she is capable of so much more than Nathan and Caleb. Like a God, can control the narrative and environment.

Word count Excluding in text References : 530

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