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Argumentative Essay

6th Period

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What makes a great movie? Is it brilliant acting? A surreal plot? Outstanding reviews? A movie's greatness is measured differently for every viewer; but in the case of *Ex Machina*, anyone can find something to love. *Ex Machina* was the best movie of 2015, and nothing proves this more than the movie's insanely original content and the international critical acclaim it continues to receive today. If you doubt the movie's awesomeness now, you won't by the end.

The first defining part of any movie is the plot. Writer Alex Garland, who brought you films such as *Sunshine* and *28 Days Later*, effortlessly lays the story before you so close it's almost too real. *Ex Machina* was Garland's debut as a director, and it blew the top off the box office in its category, grossing over 25 million and selling out in its first weekend. Its immediate success is no surprise for the content blows you away. The movie follows programmer Caleb Smith, played by Domhnall Gleeson, your newest crush on the silver screen. Caleb is selected to spend a week in his reclusive billionaire CEO's remote, high-tech estate, and to participate in a ground-breaking experiment in synthetic intelligence by evaluating the human qualities of a breath-taking humanoid named Ava. (IMDb Ex Machina) The suspense hits you immediately when Caleb is dropped off by helicopter in the middle of the wilderness, and as he watches his only way back to civilization fly away, the audience feels trapped. His employer tells him upon arrival that Ava is dangerous and advises him to not let her get into his head, but Ava's

intelligence is beyond his comprehension. For Caleb, what started out as a robot quickly becomes an innocent girl imprisoned by her maker. The actors are a huge part of the movie's alluring aura. Gleeson and Isaac—who plays Caleb's employer—were both in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. Gleeson can also be seen as Bill Weasly from the Harry Potter franchise and the lead role in *About Time*. Ava was Alicia Vikander's break-out role, but she was meant for the part. The actors' portrayals of secluded techies and a seductive robot are flawless.

The critics agree. The Atlantic says, "*Ex Machina* is easily one of the best films of the year." Rolling Stone raved, saying you'd never see anything like this. Another critic dubbed it a classic while another called it 2015's most seductive high-IQ drama. It was rated one of the best Sci-Fi movies in the entire 21st century in the ranks of *Gravity* and *Inception*, with movies like *Guardians of the Galaxy* and *Hunger Games* receiving only honorable mentions. (IndieWire 2015) The critic's praised it for every ounce of brilliance.

As mentioned earlier, this film knocked the socks off the box office, but I know what you are thinking—why should I care? I'll tell you why: This film came into theaters during a time in which producers would usually sit back and watch a movie fail. *Avengers: Age of Ultron* was taking the world by storm. It took up nearly three slots per theater. Any other movie was thrown to the side, disregarded, and left to die in Ultron's shadow. Then *Ex Machina* hit the screen, and, according to weekly grossing charts, Ultron's profit dramatically dropped. (Ex Machina Weekly Gross, 2015) People were going to see *Ex Machina* while Ultron played in the rooms right next door. All this commotion for a movie not previously connected to anything ever. It was not based off comics or books, it did not have a cult following, it was not a sequel. It didn't have big name actors, or a famed director. This movie was a dark horse, a mysterious stranger in the movie industry, and in its second week, it had two slots in theaters. That is a movie industry miracle.

Ex Machina also racked up on awards. Reviews matter, but not as much if it can't stand up in awards season. *Ex Machina* won the Academy award for Best Visual Effects over *Star Wars*, and the Choice Award for Best Sci-Fi/Horror movie over *Mad Max*, *Jurassic World*, and *The Martian*. Overseas, it won the British Independent Film Award for Best British Independent Film, Best Screenplay, and the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Craft. It also received the Directors Guild of America Award for Outstanding Directing. Moreover, they were nominated in nearly every category imaginable. It was nominated in six categories for the BAFTE, an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay, Critic's Choice Award for Best Screenplay, Golden Globe award for Best Supporting Actress, a PGA Award for Best Theatrical Motion Picture, an MTV Movie award for Best Female Performance, European Film Award for Best Actress and Best Writer, and Empire Award for Best Actress, and several more.

Ex Machina was inarguably the best movie of 2015. From its capturing content to its dominance in awards season, it excelled. I loved this movie. Critics loved this movie. The World loved this movie; and you should, too.

Citations

"Ex Machina Weekly Gross." Box Office Mojo. IMDb, n.d. Web. 13 Sept. 2016.

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