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91473



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 3 English 2023

### 91473 Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence

Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence.	Respond critically and convincingly to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence.	Respond critically and perceptively to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**Write ONE essay in this booklet.**

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in any cross-hatched area (କ୍ଷତ କ୍ଷତ କ୍ଷତ). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

Merit

TOTAL 05

## INSTRUCTIONS

Write an essay on at least ONE **visual or oral text** that you have studied, in response to ONE of the statements below.

Give the details of the text(s) in the box on page 3.

## VISUAL OR ORAL TEXTS

Discuss the extent to which you agree with your chosen statement. Respond critically to the statement by making a close analysis of the text(s).

### STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

1. Great texts skilfully combine sound and vision to deliver important truths.
2. Villains are convincing because they reveal both dark and light sides.
3. The treatment of time in unusual ways offers us unexpected insights into our world.
4. A skilful director/creator uses challenging ideas to change the audience's mind.
5. Complex relationships between characters convey the director/creator's purpose.
6. Important ideas are revealed through the details of settings.
7. Successful texts have one key moment that unsettles the audience.
8. The way characters are challenged by their settings encourages us to examine our own world.

**Visual or oral text type(s):**

Tick (✓) your selection

Film

Radio programme

Graphic novel

Television programme

Oral performance

Drama production

Multimedia/digital/online text

**Title(s):** \_\_\_\_\_**Director(s)/creator(s):** \_\_\_\_\_**PLANNING**

You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 5–6 pages in length. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay.

In your essay, discuss the extent to which you agree with your chosen statement. Respond critically to the statement by making a close analysis of the text(s).

Begin your visual or oral text(s) essay here:

Ex-Machina, a movie produced by Alex Garland in 2014 encompasses the moral dilemma of AI technology by using a small cast of characters each with their own shortcomings and flaws to portray fleshed out accurate characters that are convincing and believable to the audience. Each of which has villainous traits or motives that drive them to act accordingly, however Garland has these characters interact with positive traits and friendly interactions as well, as key concept for a good villain- one that can exist within real life.

The most obvious villain in the film Ex-Machina would be alcoholic genius Nathan, a character who lives so isolated from the rest of society that he drinks and has a feminine robot to keep him company. He is introduced boxing, showing his anger and strength- however also is welcoming and inviting to his 'contest winner' Caleb. However these layers of a friendly drinking buddy peels back as the movie progresses to leave a egotistical man not afraid of doing whatever it takes for the sake of technological advancement in his benefit. For example, earlier in the movie when Caleb and the audience is still quite charmed by this chatty laid-back genius, Caleb quotes "if you've created sentient AI, that's not the history of man- that's the history of Gods." which Nathan then warps to fit his growing ego to Caleb's praise, later responding; "I was thinking about last night when you called me a God." in which Caleb is confused- "that's not what I said... " trailing off as Nathan ignores him as he continues on his power trip. However this is before Nathan starts revealing some of his true colours and ideas- so Caleb and the audience can brush past it without further inquiry. As we start seeing Nathan almost spiral into a pit of his own ego and intelligence, showing him as more than just Caleb's friend; we reveals that in order to craft Ava's face and voice he used camera and technology on cell phones worldwide, extremely illegal and brings Nathans character and morals into question. Nathan shows more of his manipulative and violent side which was previously hidden behind a charade of jokes and sugar coated promises- making him a terrifying villain, a well written one at that; as he was created to be someone who could exist, he isn't pure evil, he has hobbies and enjoys activities and joking around, he light playful side which makes him terrifyingly convincing.

However our protagonist Caleb, is a more interesting case, as you have to look deeper into his thought patterns and what he projects into whether he could be considered a villain- however he does have his light and dark sides making him a morally questionable character to begin with. Caleb is portrayed as a lone wolf, meek and timid without any immediate family or significant other in his life- making him an easy target for someone like Nathan. While over the seven days Caleb starts developing feelings for Ava, the way he discusses her to Nathan still almost seems like he isn't quite convinced by her as sentient; however he phrases her almost as something he'd like to own- to conquer. He plays right in to the idea that Ava is but a damsel in distress needing his aid, which he will provide- in return for a relationship, which doesn't make Caleb quite the heroine he is on the surface with his anxious

traits and friendly banter and eagerness to learn, he also has the dark side of saving Ava purely out of romantic interest, which raises a question to the audience; what if Ava didn't confess her feelings? He didn't seem too keen to let her escape until then. Caleb also turns his back on Nathan, when Nathan explains that Ava's feelings for him may be a charade to escape; "Ava was a rat in a maze, and I gave her you to use as an escape." Caleb was fazed by the idea of Nathan being killed- he was willing to do whatever it takes to escape and save Ava.

Ava herself is an interesting view, as she herself is not human, even if she has the consciousness of one. She is flirty with Caleb and tries to mold him through just seven short conversations into feelings of love and understanding and a desire to be together; "Do you want to be with me?" However, on Caleb's last day, when Nathan reveals Ava may be tricking him, he quotes "she would have to lie, manipulate, plan, use emotion, use her body, and if that isn't true AI, then what the f'ck is?" This is an important scene in the movies, as it breaks down the point to Ava is just created in Nathan's image- she isn't a human of free will and thought, Nathan programmed her personality and made her believable in his eyes, which is symbolic for her inheriting all of Nathan's negative traits; his narcissism, manipulative nature, and his moral throwaway of using people to get what you want. We see this when Ava leaves Caleb locked in the complex- taking his helicopter ride back into the world, leaving Caleb to die and he yells and begs "Ava don't leave me here!" and she ignores him- no sign of guilt of killing Nathan or sentencing Caleb to his death- leaving him trapped in the facility as she once was. Ava is the perfect representative of a convincing villain, she is conniving and manipulative behind her sweet face and personality, that even the audience is shocked by her betrayal- making it all the more surprising at the reveal, bringing into question her moral compass, what she knows is 'right' or 'wrong' revealing a hidden side of her completely unexpected.

Alex Garland uses the ideas of light and dark sides to create perfect flawed characters, ones that can all be viewed as villains in their own light and analysis, a convincing character because it represents humanity; every person having a light or a dark side- which makes us human. *Ex-Machina*, however having a small cast, has a well balanced dynamic of interaction and character to create villains in his film, making these villains memorable and well written, leaving an impact on the audience.

## Merit

**Subject:** English

**Standard:** 91473

**Total score:** 05

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
2	M5	<p>Statement: 2</p> <p>Visual / oral text: <i>Ex-Machina</i> (Alex Garland)</p> <p>The response clearly addresses the chosen statement, but in a somewhat unbalanced manner.</p> <p>There is an interesting interpretation of the 'light side' as being a facade used by a character to deceive other characters about their dark intentions.</p> <p>The reason a higher grade score has not been awarded is that the 'convincing' aspect of the statement is only addressed at the end of the response.</p>