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# **The Future is Female: Gynoidian Skins and Prosthetic Experience**

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## Abstract

The female cyborg, or 'gynoid', has historically recurred in cinema as a trope by which the female form magnetises anxieties about new experiences proffered by digital technologies. This thesis draws on phenomenological theory, including Laura Marks' notion of the 'haptic' and Jennifer Barker's method of 'textural analysis', to conceptualise the affective experiences that gynoids within a strand of contemporary Hollywood films promote. The gynoidian protagonists of Spike Jonze's *Her* (2013), Alex Garland's *Ex Machina* (2015), and Luc Besson's *Lucy* (2014) attempt to engage the viewer in various 'prosthetic' (Alison Landsberg) encounters: tactility, sensations, gaming and sexual experiences. I argue that these films use sophisticated stylistic means, including what I term 'haptic absence', to employ the gynoid's body or voice as a conduit in promoting a more positive or celebratory exploration of the affects produced by new technologies. The films demonstrate that within this particular cultural milieu, phenomenological experiences of cinema have the potential to open up a less fraught relationship between women and technology.

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# Contents

Abstract .....	2
Acknowledgements .....	3
Introduction .....	5
Case Studies	
The Phenomenological Approach	
Literature Review	
Chapter One: Gynoids .....	26
I.I    Cyborg/Android	
I.II   Autonomy/Dependence	
I.III  Human/Robotic	
I.IV   Built/Natural Environments	
I.V    Skin/Machine	
Chapter Two: Skins .....	57
II.I   Feeling Skins: Haptics	
II.II  Gynoidian Skins	
II.III Screen Skins	
Chapter Three: Prostheses .....	90
III.I  “Let’s Dance”: <i>Ex Machina</i> , Dresses and Female Forms	
III.II “I Wish I Could Touch You”: Disembodiment and Voice	
III.III “The Past is Just a Story We Tell Ourselves”: Prosthetic Memory	
III.IV “Follow me, F***head”: Haptic Gaming	
Conclusion .....	138
Works Cited .....	145