ABSTRACT

AJ SCHLECHT. From Los Angeles to the Green Place: Gendering Environment in Science Fiction. (Under the direction of Professor Devin Orgeron.)

Science Fiction has always been the genre that has been most involved in envisioning futures that humanity has in front of them. However, film, and science fiction especially, has historically been a medium that has been dominated by masculine ideas. For a genre focused on transgressing boundaries and barriers, this severely limits the narrative possibilities available in the genre. This gendered view has pervaded nearly all elements of the science fiction genre, but it is clearly evident in the settings and environments. However, the genre is beginning to evolve and convey narratives that are liberated from this traditionally-masculine dominated genre. This paper focuses on the setting portrayed in the two films *Blade Runner: The Final Cut* (*2007*) and *Silent Running* (*1972*), and then compares and contrasts these settings with the contemporary films *Arrival* (*2016*), *Annihilation* (*2018*), and *Mad Max: Fury Road* (*2015*).

By using a formalist approach to these films, the settings and environments present in the narratives were analyzed to illustrate how the genre has evolved overtime to reach the current state of the genre. Science fiction is at a crossroads now where films can diverge and broaden their narratives and stories in a way that was previously unthinkable. Films such as *Ex Machina* (*2014*) even illustrate a female AI in complete control in a traditionally feminine setting of a domestic household. This is in stark contrast from older films focused on masculine AI's in complete control such *2001: A Space Odyssey* (*1968*) or, a film more in-line with the domestic setting, *Demon Seed* (*1977*). Through this drastic expansion of narrative and storytelling elements and styles, new life can be sent into the genre that is dedicated to imagining the future of humanity.