

Movie discussion resource

Bladerunner 2049

Engage with culture without disengaging your faith.



Genre: SciFi

Rating: MA15+ (adult themes, extreme violence, sexual content, swearing)

Length: 163 mins

Starring: Ryan Gosling, Harrison Ford, Ana de Armas, Robin Wright, Jared Leto, Barkhad Abdi, Lennie James, Mackenzie Davis, Sylvia Hoeks

Director: Denis Villeneuve

Executive Producer: Ridley Scott, et al

Screenplay: Hampton Francher, Michael Green

Brief synopsis

It is 2049. Bio-engineered human replicants have been developed to be slaves and servants for humans. This new model of replicant was created to obey. Many of the older models had escaped from human control. They were to be hunted down and 'retired'. Those that hunted them were called 'Blade Runners'. K (Ryan Gosling), was a replicant and a Blade Runner in the LAPD. He retires a replicant hiding on one of the

large synthetic farms that have averted large scale famine. Before leaving he notices a date carved into the base of a dead tree and scans to find a box buried beneath. His Commander, Lt Joshi (Robin Wright), orders him to return. The box is found to contain bones of a deceased replicant who had evidently died in childbirth. This information was incredible as replicants were not supposed to be able to get pregnant. Lt Joshi believes if this information gets out it could lead to war between humans and replicants. K is ordered to destroy all evidence and then search for the missing child and eliminate him or her. Following up leads K comes to believe he must find Deckard (Harrison Ford), a blade runner who has been missing for 30 years. However, Wallace Corporation CEO, Niander Wallace (Jared Leto) discovers the possibility of reproduction in replicants and believes that ability will enhance his production of replicants to expand his 'off world' operations. He orders Luv (Sylvia Hoeks) his replicant enforcer and PA to follow K and find the child.

Questions for discussion

Some general questions might provide enough framework to get started:

- What stood out as the main points/highlights in the movie?
- What themes are explored?
- What assumptions were embedded in the story?
- What challenged you? What questions did it raise for you?
- Are there aspects of the story that resonated with your own experience or with the experience of others in a similar situation?
- Are there biblical or theological themes or characters that come to mind?

What has happened to the planet?

Perhaps the first views of the countryside through a thick smog and later views of Los Angeles form the impression that all is not well with the world. Planetary degradation in all forms appears little changed from the first film which depicted Earth thirty years earlier. In the hype about global warming have we forgotten about pollution?

What message do you think the film is trying to convey? How worried should we be? Do we just give in? What has happened to society? Is this the direction we are travelling? Discuss.

The power of corporations

The original manufacturer of replicants, the Tyrell Corporation, set their lifespan to only 4 years and replicants were shipped off world to provide cheap labour. However replicants made their way back to earth so the Blade Runners were tasked to hunt them down and 'retire' them. Eventually the demand for cheap labour led Tyrell to produce models that had no limits on their lifespan but due to rebellions of replicants the Tyrell Corporation was forced to cease production and went bankrupt. The rise of Wallace Corporation based on synthetic farming enabled a buyout to secure the technology and replicant production was renewed with safeguards built in to prevent revolt and these new replicants were integrated into society.

It is said that Corporations are taking over from governments. If Corporations were compared to countries on the basis of raised revenue, they figure 69 of the combined top 100 in 2016. Walmart ranked 10th in the world just above Spain, Australia and the Netherlands. Apple was about the same as India and Belgium.

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere/world-s-top-100-economies-31-countries-69-corporations>

Do we have a problem? Where lies accountability? Who makes the decisions?

Society & Economy

Replicants become the new slaves to progress the economy. What sort of society is the movie depicting? Holographic girlfriends? Pleasure models?

Are there any benefits seen or depicted?

Slavery

K investigates an orphanage. It shows the children being used as cheap labour. Seeking cheap labour is part of our current problems whether businesses go offshore or close down altogether. Whole industries disappear and jobs are lost. Below award wages are paid to sweatshop labour overseas and even in Australia. It is also true that slavery is still very much alive across the world. Thirty Million is a conservative figure.

<https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/modern-slavery/>

Why do you think slavery still exists? What can be done to combat it?

Robots are seen to be taking over jobs at an alarming rate. *Are they the same as replicants or is this a different issue? Discuss.*

Sexism

This movie has been criticised by its depiction of women and more.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYRsDi4fGOA>

Discuss.

Parental Love

Deckard has hidden himself away from Rachel and his child as he believed that his presence would put them in danger. *How do you view Deckard's 'sacrifice'? Discuss.*

Racism

K is referred to by his human colleagues in the LAPD as a 'skin job'. The film explores his experiences as an 'other'. *Discuss.*

Memories are real?

K has memories. On Morton's farm K finds a date that connects to a memory he has of the date carved on a wooden horse he had as a child. When he finds the actual horse it suggests his memory is real. His holographic girlfriend, Joi (Ana de Armas), insists that he must be a real person. K seeks out Dr. Ana Stelline (Carla Juri), a memory designer, who tells him that it is illegal to program replicants with real memories.

Some people claim to have memories of other lives and places? Can our memories play tricks on us? Are memories something that makes us human?

Do we have a soul?

Lt Joshi talks about a soul, something that distinguishes humans from replicants. Wallace refers to the new model of replicants he has created as 'angels'.

What makes humans different? Do we have a soul? What do you understand by this? What defines an individual person?

AI

Artificial Intelligence is implanted in the replicants. As they come to awareness do they become more than just machines? When they seek to become human in all respects what is the difference? K as a replicant has desires and emotions. How do you see K's actions towards the end of the movie? He refuses to follow through with his orders. If he no longer obeys is he a broken replicant?

Are the replicants in this movie becoming more human than the humans? Discuss.