

Exploring Sartrean Existentialism Manifestation in *Blade Runner 2049* (2017)

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi penerapan konsep eksistensialis Jean-Paul Sartre "Existence Precedes Essence" dalam film *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). Dengan menganalisis karakter K dan Luv, penelitian ini mendalami perjalanan eksistensial mereka dan bagaimana mereka menantang atau memperkuat ideologi Sartre. Perjalanan K dari replicant dengan ingatan buatan menjadi individu yang memiliki kebebasan mencerminkan gagasan Sartre bahwa seseorang mendefinisikan esensinya melalui tindakan mereka sendiri. Sebaliknya, perjuangan Luv menyoroti konflik antara identitas yang dipaksakan dan kebebasan pribadi. Studi ini juga membahas implikasi tema eksistensial dalam film, seperti pembentukan identitas, kebebasan, dan keaslian, serta dampak media sosial terhadap identitas dan persepsi diri. Melalui analisis karakter dan elemen tematik, skripsi ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang filsafat eksistensial dalam sinema modern.

Kata Kunci: Sartre, Existence Precedes Essence, *Blade Runner 2049*, eksistensialisme, pembentukan identitas, authenticity.

Abstract

This research explores the application of Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist concept "Existence Precedes Essence" within the context of the film *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). By examining the characters of K and Luv, the research delves into their existential journeys, emphasizing how they challenge or reinforce Sartrean philosophy. K's journey from a replicant with implanted memories to an individual seeking authenticity exemplifies Sartre's idea that one defines their own essence through actions and choices. Conversely, Luv's struggle with her predetermined purpose and her efforts to assert her superiority underscore the conflict between imposed identities and personal freedom. The study also highlights the broader implications of existential themes in the film, such as identity formation, freedom, and authenticity, providing insights into contemporary issues like the impact of social media on identity and self-perception. Through a detailed analysis of character development and thematic elements, this thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of existential philosophy in modern cinema.

Keywords: Sartre, Existence Precedes Essence, *Blade Runner 2049*, existentialism, identity formation, authenticity.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a common trait for an individual to wonder about their existence. Questions like who created us, what our purpose is, or why we are here can lead to an existential crisis. The gig economy has changed how we think about work, affecting how people see themselves and their sense of purpose. In the gig economy, people take on short-term, flexible jobs through platforms like Uber, TaskRabbit, and Fiverr. Workers often have to stay professional no matter how clients act. This isn't just true for freelancers but for many jobs today. This change impacts how people view their roles and purpose, much like themes seen in the movie *Blade Runner 2049*.

In *Blade Runner 2049*, replicants like K are made for specific tasks, similar to how gig workers are often seen. But just as K tries to find his own identity beyond his designed role, gig workers must also create a sense of self amid changing job demands. This struggle is like K's journey for self-definition.

Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre said, "existence precedes essence," meaning we create our own identity through actions and choices, not by pre-set roles. Gig workers, like the replicants in *Blade Runner 2049*, aren't limited to one fixed identity. They can—and must—constantly redefine themselves through various jobs.

The gig economy challenges this freedom. Constantly needing new jobs and adapting to different

requirements can make workers feel disconnected from their true selves. It can be hard to find real meaning when work identity is scattered and controlled by outside demands. This reflects Sartre's idea of "bad faith," where people deceive themselves by conforming to these roles. A 2021 report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) highlighted the unstable nature of gig work, noting the lack of job security, benefits, and recognition. Unlike traditional employees with clear career paths and a sense of belonging, gig workers face a fragmented and uncertain job landscape. This instability can lead to existential crises as workers struggle to find meaning and stability in their professional lives.

The gig economy's effect on worker identity mirrors the existential themes in *Blade Runner 2049*. Gig workers, navigating flexible and unstable jobs, face a struggle between imposed identities and the quest for self-definition. This situation highlights the tension between personal freedom and the external forces shaping identity, challenging Sartre's existential philosophy.

Blade Runner 2049, directed by Denis Villeneuve, is a 2017 sci-fi film and a sequel to the 1982 movie *Blade Runner*, directed by Ridley Scott and based on Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*. The film received positive reviews for its deep themes and immersive atmosphere.

Set in a dystopian future, *Blade Runner 2049* features bioengineered beings called replicants who assist humans. The story follows Officer K, a replicant and Blade Runner played by Ryan Gosling, as he hunts his own kind. Accompanied by his AI hologram partner JOI, played by Ana de Armas, K's investigation uncovers a secret that could disrupt society.

Officer K's journey explores key elements of existentialism, including questions of identity, agency, and existence. The film serves as a rich exploration of these themes. K's interactions with JOI and the contrast with the replicant Luv, played by Sylvia Hoeks, highlight Sartrean existentialism and contemporary debates on AI and humanity. By analyzing K's quest for identity and autonomy against Luv's acceptance of her role, the research connects these complex character dynamics and philosophical themes to the modern working world. This study appeals to scholars in philosophy, film, literature, and technology, offering insights into identity, purpose, and autonomy, and relating the replicants' struggle with identity to today's work environment.

This comprehensive analysis aims to understand how the existential nature of the replicants in *Blade Runner 2049* challenges or reinforces Sartre's concept of "Existence Precedes Essence" and its impact on their identities and actions within the narrative. Key areas of analysis include examining the predetermined purposes of

the replicants, exploring K's journey towards self-discovery and autonomy, and assessing the visual and narrative evidence of how these elements manifest Sartrean existentialism. The research method involves a detailed and systematic approach to capturing relevant scenes and dialogues, ultimately providing a thorough analysis of how the replicants' existential struggles challenge or reinforce Sartre's philosophical principles and their implications for the film's narrative and themes.

METHOD

This study uses an existential approach to analyze *Blade Runner 2049*, focusing on scenes featuring K. The film serves as the main data source. Information is carefully gathered by examining dialogues, monologues, settings, storylines, and the film's background and atmosphere. The goal is to understand how K's journey illustrates Sartre's idea of "Existence Precedes Essence" and how it affects his identity in the dystopian world of *Blade Runner 2049*. Key areas of analysis include examining the existential themes within the film, exploring K's conflicts and his journey toward self-discovery, and assessing how K's life changes as a result of his existential struggle. The research method involves a detailed and systematic approach to capturing relevant scenes and dialogues, providing a thorough analysis of K's journey, his character development, and the film's narrative.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In order to understand the subject of this research, understanding of said subject must first be established. In "*Blade Runner 2049*," replicants are bioengineered beings created by the Wallace Corporation to serve specific purposes, embodying a tension between their predetermined essence and their potential for autonomous existence. The film explores this tension through the character of Officer K, a Nexus-9 model replicant designed to obey and serve as a blade runner. This narrative provides a rich context for examining Sartre's existentialist concept of "existence precedes essence," which posits that individuals are not defined by a predetermined nature but by their actions and choices.



Figure 1 A newly created Replicant

Replicants are created through advanced bioengineering processes that involve genetic manipulation and artificial wombs, resulting in beings that are physically and mentally superior to humans but designed with built-in obedience protocols. This engineered essence is akin to Sartre's description of inanimate objects, which have a fixed nature and lack consciousness. However, replicants, particularly Officer K, challenge this notion by exhibiting consciousness, emotions, and the capacity for self-reflection.



Figure 2 Wallace inspect the newly created replicant

In this scene, Wallace inspects the replicant and, finding her unsatisfactory for his purposes, kills her with a swift, emotionless act. He laments the replicants' inability to self-reproduce, which he perceives as a flaw that limits their usefulness. This scene contrasts with Sartrean existentialism, which posits that existence precedes essence. Wallace's treatment of the replicant as a tool with a predetermined essence exemplifies the very opposite of Sartre's philosophy. For Wallace, the replicants' value is defined entirely by their utility and ability to fulfill his vision, viewing them as objects with an essence designed to meet specific functions rather than beings capable of defining their own essence through actions and choices. From a Sartrean perspective, Wallace's actions represent bad faith, where individuals impose a fixed essence on others, denying them the freedom to shape their own identity. In *Being and Nothingness*, Jean-Paul Sartre describes "bad faith" as the act of self-deception to avoid confronting the truth of one's freedom and responsibility. He writes, "The one who practices bad faith is hiding a

displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth" (Sartre, 1956, p. 89).

The newly created replicant fails to meet the essence Wallace has predetermined for her, leading to her immediate disposal. This dehumanizing perspective contrasts sharply with the journey of characters like K, who strive to break free from imposed identities. K's journey towards self-definition, influenced by characters like JOI, reflects Sartre's existential belief that identity is not given but created through personal choice and action. Thus, Wallace's killing of the replicant highlights the existential struggle within the film, underscoring the tension between externally imposed essences and the quest for authentic self-creation, which is central to "*Blade Runner 2049*."

Blade Runner

Blade runners, like Officer K, are replicants designed to "retire" other replicants, a task that fundamentally challenges the core principles of Sartre's philosophy, which asserts that "existence precedes essence", due to the fact that replicant were killed or "retired" mainly to control them. This concept is vividly demonstrated throughout the film, highlighting the tension between the programmed roles of replicants and their quest for authentic self-definition.

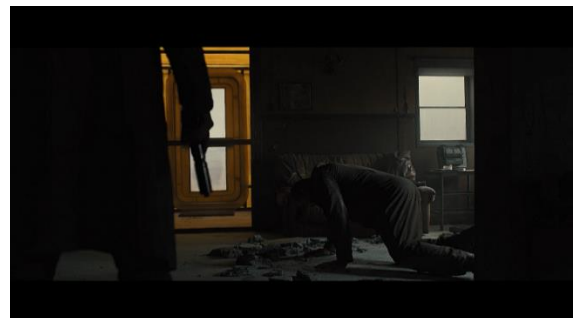


Figure 3 Officer K "retire" Sapper

One pivotal scene illustrating this paradox is when K retires Sapper Morton, another replicant, early in the film. Sapper's resigned acceptance of his fate contrasts with K's methodical execution of his duty. Despite being a replicant himself, K is tasked with terminating his own kind, emphasizing the utilitarian view of replicants as tools with predefined purposes. This action starkly contrasts with Sartre's existentialist view that individuals must define their own essence through their choices and actions. Furthermore, by denying the freedom to shape their own identity, Blade Runners are portraying Sartrean concept of bad faith.



Figure 4 Officer K is being approached by couple of Doxies

The characterization of K as a blade runner embodies the existential struggle. As in this another scene, K is being approached by three female replicants prostitute, one of them urge her friends to stay away from him because she recognizes K's profession as Blade Runner. His programmed role tasked with eliminating other replicants, forces him into a cycle of existential conflict to the point where he is being both resented and feared by his own kind, yet despite this, K were unable to express himself as he believes that it is not in his nature as a Blade Runner.

K's existence is initially defined by his creators' intentions, which reduces him to a mere functionary. This predetermined essence imposed upon K negates the Sartrean ideal that essence should be self-determined through personal experience and choice. The plot further complicates this when K starts to believe he might be the child of a replicant, suggesting a unique, self-defined destiny. This potential shift from a predefined role to a self-chosen identity underscores the existential tension within K's character arc.

Moreover, the film's setting and visual symbolism enhance this existential discourse. The dystopian landscape of *Blade Runner 2049* reflects a world where replicants, despite their human-like qualities, are stripped of agency and treated as disposable commodities. This dehumanizing environment underscores the existential plight of replicants, who, like K, struggle to assert their individuality within a system that denies them authenticity. The frequent use of reflective surfaces and shadows in the cinematography symbolizes K's introspective journey and the duality of his existence as both enforcer and victim of an oppressive regime. The narrative structure and point of view also contribute to this existential analysis. K's journey is portrayed through a subjective lens, inviting viewers to empathize with his inner conflict. This perspective aligns with Sartre's belief in subjective experience as the foundation of personal identity. As K grapples with his programmed duties and emerging sense of self, the audience witnesses the existential struggle between the imposed essence and the quest for authentic existence.

Linking this analysis to a broader context, the role of blade runners in *Blade Runner 2049* serves as a critique of contemporary issues related to identity and autonomy. In a society increasingly dominated by technological advancements and artificial intelligence, the film raises important questions about what it means to be truly human. The replicants' struggle for recognition and self-determination mirrors modern existential concerns about autonomy, freedom, and the essence of humanity. Sartre's existentialism, which emphasizes personal responsibility and the creation of meaning through individual choices, provides a philosophical framework to understand these dilemmas.

The existence of blade runners in *Blade Runner 2049* presents a significant affront to Sartrean existentialism. Their role as enforcers of a predetermined order, compelled to eliminate their own kind, starkly contrasts with the existentialist ideal of self-determined essence. Through the character of K, the film explores the tension between imposed identities and the pursuit of authentic self-definition, ultimately questioning the nature of existence and the possibility of true freedom within an oppressive system. This existential paradox invites viewers to reflect on their own struggles with identity and autonomy in a rapidly evolving world.

Predetermined Essence of Replicants

In "*Blade Runner 2049*," replicants are designed with specific, predetermined purposes, primarily to serve humans and execute tasks considered too dangerous or undesirable for humans. This sub-chapter explores how replicants challenge these imposed purposes, demonstrating the existential theme of "existence precedes essence." Through their actions and choices, replicants like K and Luv attempt to transcend their programmed roles, seeking individuality and meaning beyond their designed functions.

A key scene illustrating this theme is when K discovers a memory that leads him to believe he might be the child of a replicant. This revelation significantly impacts his sense of self, pushing him to explore his origins and question his purpose. JOI, his holographic companion, reinforces this belief by telling him he is special, bolstering his sense of individuality and purpose. K's journey from a dutiful Blade Runner to someone who seeks his own identity and purpose reflects the existential struggle against a predetermined essence.

K's struggle is emblematic of Sartrean existentialism, where existence precedes essence, meaning that individuals define themselves through their actions and choices rather than any preordained purpose. Initially, K follows his programmed role as a Blade Runner without

question. However, the discovery of the memory and JOI's encouragement propel him to seek a deeper understanding of himself, challenging the notion that his identity is solely defined by his creators' intentions.

Similarly, Luv, despite being a loyal servant to Niander Wallace, exhibits moments of existential conflict. Her actions, such as her ruthless efficiency and emotional outbursts, suggest an internal struggle to reconcile her imposed identity with her desire for recognition and uniqueness. This is evident when she declares herself "the best" after stabbing K, indicating her need to assert her individuality and prove her worth beyond being a mere tool for Wallace.

The character of Luv highlights Sartre's concept of "bad faith," where individuals deceive themselves to avoid confronting uncomfortable truths about their existence. Luv's reverence towards Wallace and her need to be seen as special underscore her self-deception and existential denial. Her internal conflict and struggle with emotion signify her bad faith, as she tries to suppress her own desires and emotions to fit the role imposed on her. The actions of K and Luv illustrate the broader existential themes in "*Blade Runner 2049*." Their journeys reflect the struggle to transcend predefined roles and seek individual meaning, challenging the deterministic view of their existence. This aligns with Sartre's existential philosophy, which posits that individuals must create their own essence through choices and actions rather than accept an imposed identity.

The film's depiction of replicants challenging their predetermined purposes serves as a powerful commentary on the nature of identity and autonomy. By showing replicants striving for self-definition, *Blade Runner 2049* not only deepens the viewer's understanding of existentialism but also prompts reflection on the human condition and the quest for authentic existence. This analysis provides a foundation for further exploration of existential themes in contemporary cinema and their relevance to modern philosophical discourse. Furthermore, this theme is reinforced in scholarly literature, such as discussions on Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) which the original *Blade Runner* movie took inspiration from, and its cinematic adaptations. These works delve into the philosophical underpinnings of artificial beings and their struggle for self-definition, highlighting the existential questions raised by their existence.

Blade Runner 2049 portrays Replicants with a predetermined essence, seemingly contradicting Sartrean existentialism. However, through their lived experiences, these beings challenge and redefine their existence, ultimately reinforcing Sartre's assertion that essence is shaped by individual existence. This interplay between

determinism and free will deepens the exploration of what it means to be human, aligning with Sartre's philosophy that individuals can transcend their initial conditions through conscious action and self-definition.

Baseline Test

The Baseline Tests in *Blade Runner 2049* serve as critical markers of Officer K's psychological state and his adherence to his programmed role as a replicant. These tests, conducted to ensure K's emotional detachment and stability, reveal the extent of his transformation and existential journey when compared at different points in the narrative. The first Baseline Test, taken after K completes a routine mission, and the second, taken after he discovers the implanted memory of the wooden horse, highlight this transformation and its alignment with Sartre's existential principle that existence precedes essence.



Figure 5 K receives positive remarks during the first Baseline Test

In the first Baseline Test, K recites a series of predetermined responses in a cold, mechanical manner, and constantly without any deviation to the point where the interrogator calls him "Constant K". His compliance with the prescribed answers demonstrates his conformity to his designed purpose as a blade runner. This scene underscores K's initial acceptance of his predetermined essence, where his identity and role are defined by external programming and societal expectations. His lack of deviation in the test indicates an absence of self-awareness and autonomy, characteristics that align with Sartre's view of inanimate objects or beings with predetermined essence.

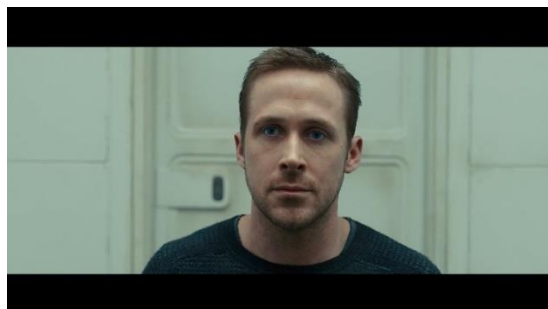


Figure 6 K is far from the Baseline during his last test

However, the second Baseline Test presents a stark contrast. After the revelation of the implanted memory, K's responses become fragmented and emotionally charged. His visible distress and inability to recite the responses as mechanically as before signify his inner turmoil and growing awareness of his individuality to the point where now the Interrogator mentioned that K is not even close the baseline. This shift marks the beginning of K's existential crisis, as he starts questioning the authenticity of his memories and the essence imposed on him. The breakdown in his responses illustrates a departure from his programmed identity, reflecting Sartre's notion that individuals must define their own essence through personal experiences and choices.

The juxtaposition of these two Baseline Tests provides compelling evidence of K's transformation. The first test symbolizes his compliance with a predetermined essence, while the second test highlights his struggle for self-definition and autonomy. This transformation aligns with Sartre's principle that existence precedes essence, as K moves from a state of passive acceptance to one of active self-definition. His journey mirrors Sartre's existential belief that identity is not a given but is constructed through one's actions and choices.

In a broader context, K's existential journey challenges the rigid boundaries between humans and replicants, suggesting that even beings with predetermined roles can achieve a sense of self and autonomy. His evolving responses in the Baseline Tests underscore the dynamic nature of identity and the fundamental human drive to seek meaning and authenticity, reinforcing Sartre's idea that existence is defined by the individual's pursuit of self-realization and freedom.

Officer K's Existential Journey

Initially Officer K's journey was started when he stumbled upon a remain of a replicant who through investigation were found that she was died from complication during childbirth. This discovery put K on an investigation to find who and where the child is. Through this investigation, Officer K's journey is marked by significant moments of self-discovery and existential questioning. For instance, his interactions with JOI, an artificial intelligence companion, further highlight his struggle for identity. JOI, despite being a product designed to fulfil K's emotional needs, she also seeks her own form of existence, blurring the lines between predetermined essence and autonomous existence. A crucial moment occurs when K visits Dr. Ana Stelline, a memory designer, who confirms that one of his implanted memories is real. This moment symbolizes the intersection of artificial and authentic experiences, emphasizing the existentialist theme of self-definition. K's realization that his memories,

whether real or implanted, shape his identity reinforces Sartre's idea that existence precedes essence.

Officer K's journey ultimately reinforces Sartre's existentialist concept by demonstrating that even beings with an initially predetermined essence, like replicants, can transcend their origins through conscious choice and self-discovery. His quest for identity and meaning exemplifies the existential struggle to define oneself beyond given roles and functions, underscoring the transformative power of personal agency and the quest for authentic existence.

Luv and the Concept of Bad Faith

In *Blade Runner 2049*, Luv's existential struggle is a poignant illustration of Sartre's principle that "existence precedes essence" and his concept of "bad faith." Luv grapples with her identity as a replicant and her role as an enforcer for Niander Wallace, highlighting the tension between her potential for autonomy and the constraints imposed upon her.

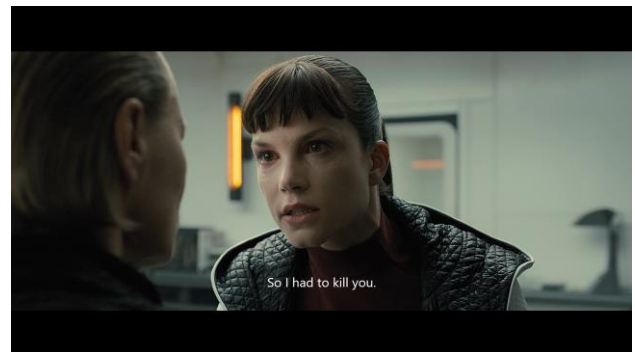


Figure 7 Luv torture and kill Lt. Joshi

A defining moment in the film that encapsulates Luv's existential struggle occurs when she mercilessly kills Lieutenant Joshi on Wallace's orders. This scene not only demonstrates Luv's capability for extreme violence but also her unwavering loyalty to Wallace, reflecting her internal conflict and submission to his authority.

Luv's identity crisis is rooted in the existentialist notion that existence precedes essence. As a replicant, she was created with a predetermined purpose: to serve Wallace's ambitions. However, the film hints at her underlying desire for individuality and recognition, which clashes with her role as a mere instrument of Wallace's will. Her actions, particularly the murder of Lieutenant Joshi, underscore this conflict. By executing Wallace's orders without question, Luv embodies Sartre's concept of "bad faith," where she denies her own freedom and responsibility by conforming to an imposed role. Her violent acts are a manifestation of her struggle to assert her identity in a manner that aligns with Wallace's expectations rather than her own autonomous desires.

The characterization of Luv is crucial in understanding her existential predicament. Despite her formidable abilities and cold demeanor, there are moments that reveal her vulnerability and yearning for validation. For example, when she refers to herself as "the best one" to Wallace, it reflects her desperate need for his approval and a sense of worth. This need drives her to suppress any personal moral or ethical considerations, resulting in actions that are brutally efficient but devoid of genuine personal significance.



Figure 8 Luv says to K that she is "the best one"

The setting of Luv's interactions with Wallace further accentuates her existential struggle. The sterile and oppressive environment of Wallace's headquarters symbolizes the rigid and deterministic nature of her existence. Within this setting, Luv's identity is continuously molded and defined by Wallace, leaving little room for self-determined essence. The film's plot and dialogue also contribute to this portrayal, emphasizing Luv's lack of freedom and her internal conflict. Her ruthless efficiency is juxtaposed with fleeting moments of emotional expression, hinting at the depth of her suppressed individuality.

Luv's existential struggle in *Blade Runner 2049* can be understood within the broader context of Sartrean existentialism. According to Sartre, individuals must confront the reality of their freedom and the burden of defining their essence through actions. Luv's journey, however, is a tragic exploration of what happens when one succumbs to bad faith, allowing external forces to dictate one's essence. Her identity crisis and the suppression of her potential autonomy illustrate the existential tragedy of failing to embrace one's freedom.

In Sartre's view, bad faith is a form of self-deception where individuals deny their inherent freedom to avoid the anxiety that accompanies it. Luv's unwavering loyalty to Wallace and her brutal actions are indicative of this bad faith. By adhering to Wallace's commands, she avoids the anguish of existential freedom but at the cost of her own authentic existence. As in Sartrean existentialism, man is condemned to be free and must navigate the responsibility of defining oneself. Luv's character demonstrates the perils of evading this responsibility,

resulting in a life constrained by external definitions and devoid of true self-actualization.

Luv's existential struggle in *Blade Runner 2049* serves as a powerful exploration of the themes of existence preceding essence and bad faith. Her identity crisis, shaped by her relationship with Wallace and her violent actions, reflects the tension between her potential for autonomy and the deterministic constraints of her role. Through Luv's character, the film delves into the complexities of existential freedom and the consequences of failing to embrace it, offering a profound commentary on the human (and replicant) condition in the context of Sartrean existentialism.

The Opposing Natures of K and Luv

In *Blade Runner 2049*, the opposing natures of K and Luv exemplify the existentialist concept that "existence precedes essence." This principle, central to Sartrean existentialism, posits that individuals first exist without any predetermined purpose and must define their essence through actions and choices. The film uses the relationships of K with Joi and Luv with Wallace to explore how these characters navigate their existence and define their essence.

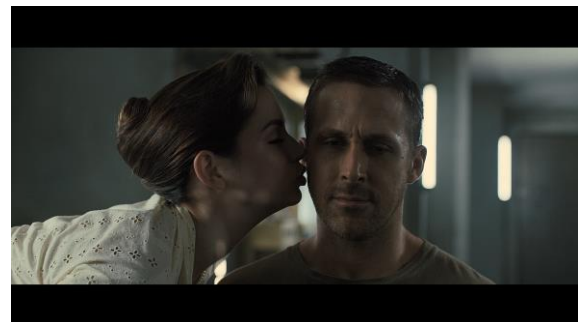


Figure 9 JOI became K's both emotional support and the person who helps him find his identity

In one pivotal scene, K returns to his apartment after a gruelling day and interacts with Joi, his AI companion. Despite Joi's virtual nature, she provides K with emotional support and a semblance of normalcy. In contrast, Luv's interactions with Wallace are marked by submission and a lack of personal

autonomy, as seen when she ruthlessly executes his orders without question, such as when she brutally kills Lieutenant Joshi.

K's relationship with Joi plays a crucial role in his existential journey. Joi represents an ideal of affection and understanding, despite being a product of artificial intelligence. Through their interactions, K begins to question his own identity and purpose, moving beyond his initial role as a blade runner. This dynamic aligns with Sartre's notion that individuals must create their own

essence through choices. Joi, though not real, becomes a catalyst for K's self-exploration. This is particularly evident in the scene where Joi tells K, "I always knew you were special," prompting K to seek out his own unique identity and purpose. Joi's influence encourages K to transcend his programmed essence as a replicant and forge a path defined by his own choices.

In stark contrast, Luv's relationship with Wallace underscores her existential struggle. Wallace sees Luv as merely an extension of his will, devoid of any personal significance beyond her utility. This dynamic is highlighted in scenes where Luv executes Wallace's commands with precision and ruthlessness, demonstrating her submission to his control. For instance, when Wallace orders her to retrieve the replicant child, Luv carries out his instructions with lethal efficiency, displaying little personal initiative or moral contemplation. This submission reflects Sartre's concept of "bad faith," where individuals deny their freedom and responsibility by conforming to external pressures. Luv's essence is dictated by Wallace's expectations, preventing her from achieving true autonomy.

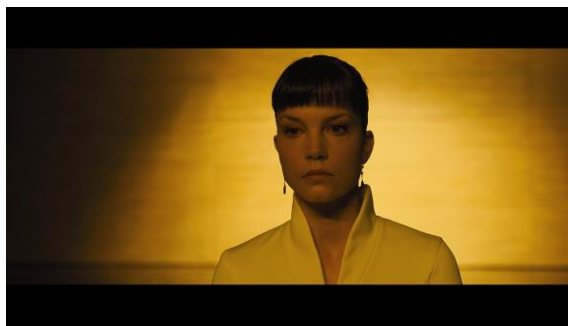


Figure 10 Luv getting cold treatment from his master and creator Niander Wallace

The contrasting relationships of K and Luv with Joi and Wallace respectively illustrate the existentialist theme that existence precedes essence. K's evolving bond with Joi highlights his journey toward self-actualization, where he moves from being a mere replicant to someone who actively shapes his own destiny. This transformation is emblematic of Sartre's belief that individuals must create their own essence through authentic choices. As K becomes more influenced by Joi's affirmations and his own introspection, he embodies Sartre's idea that "man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (Sartre, *Existentialism Is a Humanism*).

Conversely, Luv's subservient relationship with Wallace represents the antithesis of this existential freedom. Her lack of autonomy and acceptance of Wallace's dominance highlight the consequences of living in "bad faith." By relinquishing her potential for independent thought and action, Luv embodies the

existential tragedy of failing to transcend one's imposed essence. Her actions, dictated by Wallace's will, prevent her from realizing her own existence and defining her essence.

Blade Runner 2049 effectively uses the opposing natures of K and Luv to explore the existentialist idea of identity especially through Sartrean concept of existence precedes essence. K's relationship with Joi fosters his journey toward self-discovery and authenticity, while Luv's subordination to Wallace underscores the pitfalls of bad faith. This contrast not only enriches the narrative but also offers a profound commentary on the human (and replicant) condition, echoing Sartrean existentialism's core tenet that individuals must define their own essence through their actions and choices.

CONCLUSION

This research has successfully addressed the central questions surrounding the application of Sartrean existentialism within the context of *"Blade Runner 2049,"* particularly through the analysis of the characters K and JOI. By examining how the film illustrates existential themes such as identity formation, freedom, and authenticity, the study elucidates the intricate dynamics of these philosophical concepts as they are depicted in modern cinema.

Through a detailed exploration of key scenes and interactions, the research demonstrates how JOI's influence on K serves as a catalyst for his existential journey. K's struggle with his identity, initially depicted through his customization of JOI, reveals his desire for personal connection and individual recognition. This journey is further propelled when JOI projects herself outside for the first time, symbolically naming K "Joe" and encouraging him to seek his own truth and identity. This pivotal moment aligns with Sartre's belief that individuals define themselves through their actions and choices, highlighting the existential idea that existence precedes essence.

The research also delves into the contrasting nature between K and Luv, illustrating the opposing existential paths they embody. While K's journey is marked by his quest for authenticity and self-definition, Luv represents the antithesis, adhering strictly to her programmed essence. This dichotomy underscores the existential notion that individuals must navigate their existence through personal choices rather than predetermined roles, further reinforcing Sartre's philosophy.

Additionally, the study's examination of key scenes, such as K's encounter with the giant holographic advertisement of JOI, underscores the superficiality and commodification inherent in their relationship. This

moment of disillusionment is crucial as it forces K to confront the artificiality of his perceived connections, ultimately pushing him towards a more authentic sense of self. This analysis aligns with Sartre's concept of "bad faith" and emphasizes the importance of authentic self-definition through personal experiences and actions.

The practical implications of this research are significant, offering enhanced viewer engagement and personal development insights. By understanding the existential themes in "*Blade Runner 2049*," audiences can gain a deeper appreciation for the film's philosophical questions, enriching their viewing experience. Moreover, the exploration of themes such as identity, freedom, and authenticity provide valuable reflections for individuals grappling with their own existential dilemmas, particularly in the context of contemporary societal influences like social media.

Suggestion

Future research could delve deeper into the individual existential crises faced by other replicant characters beyond K and Luv. Characters such as Joi, Deckard, and Freysa present rich avenues for examining how their experiences and choices reflect or contradict Sartrean existentialism. By expanding the scope to include these characters, scholars can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse ways in which replicants navigate their predetermined purposes and strive for authenticity.

A comparative study between *Blade Runner 2049* and other science fiction works that explore artificial intelligence and consciousness would be valuable. Films like *Ex Machina*, *Ghost in the Shell*, and the original *Blade Runner* offer different perspectives on similar themes. Such a comparative analysis could highlight the unique contributions of *Blade Runner 2049* to the discourse on existentialism and artificial life, as well as identify common philosophical threads across the genre.

Third, the ethical implications of creating sentient beings with predetermined purposes warrant further investigation. The film touches on the moral responsibilities of creators like Niander Wallace and the consequences of their actions on the replicants. Future research could explore these ethical dimensions in greater detail, drawing on philosophical theories related to autonomy, personhood, and bioethics. This line of inquiry could also consider real-world advancements in AI and robotics, bridging the gap between fiction and reality. Moreover, the role of memory and its manipulation in shaping identity is a critical theme that could be expanded upon. K's implanted memories and their impact on his sense of self raise important questions about the nature of authenticity and the reliability of subjective experience.

Examining this theme in conjunction with psychological and neuroscientific research on memory could provide a richer understanding of how memories influence personal identity and existential choices.

Lastly, an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates insights from psychology, sociology, and cultural studies could enhance the analysis of *Blade Runner 2049*. Understanding how the film's portrayal of replicants resonates with contemporary societal issues, such as the quest for identity in a technologically advanced world, can offer broader cultural and social implications. This approach could also consider the audience's reception and interpretation of the film's existential themes, providing a holistic view of its impact and significance.

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