

Literature review on two assignments (part one and part two)

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



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Literature Review

Part 1

In the film, the replicant models are only given four-year life spans because they are genetically engineered to be better than humans - stronger, more efficient, better reaction times. By the time they reach four years old, though, they have begun developing their own memories and emotional reactions. Because they are already adult sized and supposedly better than humans in important ways, there is a fear that the emotional immaturity they express may cause greater harm or that they will come to replace humans. This can be seen by comparing the two-year-old model Leon with the four-year-old model Roy. With only two years of experience and emotional development, Leon is more of an observer and does as he's told, but Roy struggles with his emotions and in trying to understand what they mean. For a good amount of the film, it is assumed the engineers of the replicants created a kind of built in kill switch. However, when Roy confronts Tyrell on the subject, Tyrell tells him this isn't the case. Instead, the replicants die after only four years because the extra abilities they have

cause them to burn through their biological resources faster. Attempts to circumvent this limitation have apparently been tried and failed. However, Rachel is also a replicant but is not limited to the four year life span. There are a few reasons this might be so. First, she was designed to be a replacement for Tyrell's niece and therefore was never meant to go out into space as a slave. It could be assumed that she was not designed to have the special abilities that the other replicants have and thus would not 'burn out the system.' Finally, she may be the first of a new line of replicants in which this issue has finally been resolved.

Part 2

Within the article " Blade Runner: Science Fiction and Transcendence," Desser argues that the story is more focused on intrinsic elements of the human experience, what it means to be human, than the extrinsic elements common to the genre, the hardware and technology that make things different. Within this argument, Desser indicates that it is the redemptive nature of human relationships that defines humanity as expressed in this film.

One of the points Desser makes to support his argument is the mythical allusions captured within the film such as the allusions made to Milton's Paradise Lost. In making this point, Desser suggests that the film is about human redemption as he makes connections between Milton's epic poem and the world of Blade Runner. " The heatless, soulless, neon lights, the misting, acid rain and the teeming mass of humanity that populate this Los Angeles of the future is the very vision of hell as Milton saw it" (173). Looking

at the film from this perspective makes the change in Roy's character more understandable. He came to earth with murder in mind and treated Chew and J. F. with violence, but he kills Tyrell with sympathy and he dies asking for forgiveness for the questionable things he's done. By looking at the film as a story of human redemption, this development makes much more sense.

Another point Desser makes in his article is the way the director used film noir techniques to create a mood of the fallen. " The neon lights, the rain, the shadows all create an atmosphere of ambiguity and uncertainty; the impossibly immense skyscrapers oppress the humanity below. In such a world, alienation is the normal condition; to be part of the 'lonely crowd' is the way things are" (174). Film noir includes archetypical characters such as the hardboiled, isolated detective like Rick Deckard and the femme fatale like Rachel. In explaining these two character types, Desser reveals how the film shows human redemption as each of these characters find connections with the other.

Perhaps the most helpful point Desser makes in terms of clarifying the meaning of the film is his discussion of who the real hero of the film is. One of the things I found difficult to deal with at the end of the film was my feelings about the main characters. I was equally torn between wanting something good for Roy and wanting something good for Deckard. Desser specifically points out that the film " answers the question of the hero ambiguously" (176) and ties this back to the film's connection with Paradise Lost. Within this discussion, Desser shows how Roy is like Satan, a fallen angel from the sky who is better than human, but Roy does something Satan

is not able to do when he confronts his maker, Tyrell, and kills him. The strength of this character is so strong that he even defeats Decker, but then the redemption theme comes back in when Roy saves Decker from falling just before Roy dies his 'natural' death.

Works Cited

Blade Runner. Dir. Ridley Scott. Perf. Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, Sean Young, & Edward James Olmos. Hollywood: Warner Brothers, 1982.

Desser, David. " Blade Runner: Science Fiction and Transcendence." Literature/Film Quarterly. 13, 3 (1985): 172-79.