


Beyond Dystopian Hollywood: The Socioeconomic Narratives of Blade Runner

Cristian MANOLACHI

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

 0009-0002-6308-1357

c.manolachi@gmail.com

Abstract

Films seem to be an essential form of entertainment in modern society, but as the literature review shows, the film industry is involved in subtle distortions of cultural, religious, and political ideas. Regardless of whether films are publicly or privately funded, there are many creative ways to influence or alter perceptions, to educate audiences, to stir irrational fears, and swiftly promote certain ideologies. Therefore, this study examines the socioeconomic narratives present in the Blade Runner film series and their connections to economic theories. The research aims to analyze the portrayal of capitalism, socialism, Malthusianism, Social Darwinism, and ecologism within a dystopian context, focusing on themes such as wealth distribution, labor exploitation, technological disruption, and environmental collapse. Using a qualitative methodology, the study employs socioeconomic content analysis, more specific thematic coding, discourse analysis, semiotic interpretation, historical contextualization, and audience reception assessment. The findings indicate that Blade Runner embodies Malthusian concerns about overpopulation, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. The films portray capitalism as a system that reinforces social stratification, in which technological advances serve the interests of elites while deepening the oppression of the working class. Immigration is framed as a destabilizing force, rooted in historical anxieties about cultural identity and economic competition, rather than being recognized for its real contributions to cultural exchange and economic growth. Furthermore, the films invoke the myth of the noble savage, suggesting that salvation lies in an outsider who remains untainted by capitalist corruption. Through a socioeconomic analysis of the Blade Runner series, this study highlights Hollywood's influence in shaping dystopian fears and critiques of contemporary economic systems.

Keywords: Malthusianism; human migration; artificial intelligence; technological progress; Hollywood motion pictures

JEL Classification: F22; J15; O13; Z11; B53

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24818/ejis.2025.02>

1. Introduction

This study aims to explore the socioeconomic dimensions reflected in the Blade Runner film series and to analyze how its themes correspond to various economic theories. The analysis will take a multidisciplinary approach, with a primary focus on the socioeconomic aspects of the film.

The film industry has a significant impact on human societies today, changing attitudes, shaping characters, and influencing public policy. People spend their spare time watching their favorite films, laughing, rejoicing, and suffering alongside their favorite characters, while producers, writers, directors, or actors quietly build or destroy beliefs.

Despite the restrictions on movement during the coronavirus pandemic, the artistic representation of dream or reality through film remained a strong magnet for people, while not only has the cinema audience been partially taken over, but it has been multiplied by online streaming platforms that are much more accessible to the public: by 2022, streaming media platforms' worldwide revenues will have climbed 25 times since 2010, nearly doubling since 2019, with another two-thirds increase projected by 2029 (Digital TV Research, 2023).

The influence of Hollywood films is also reflected in their consistent grosses and budgets; of the top 200 highest-grossing pictures in 2022, 89 were produced in Hollywood – only English-language films are included – while only 13 of these 89 films had a production budget of less than \$10 million (Statista, 2023). In the over 100-year history of cinema, films produced in Hollywood have been the best ambassadors of the United States of America, in the sense that whole generations of people have wanted to adopt American cultural values: for example, researchers show that Chinese who watch American films are more likely to be individualistic (Yan et al., 2024).

Every tale developed in Hollywood or elsewhere contains an ideological message that is either subliminally displayed – such as showing a way of life – or directly revealed through coherent political themes. If we look back at the development of politically charged American films, we can grasp that many of the stories shown in the postwar period were linked to major social concerns, such as films about World War II – see *The Thin Red Line* (Malick, 1998) –, the Vietnam War – see *Full Metal Jacket* (Kubrick, 1987); or *Platoon* (Stone, 1986) –, the intensification of the Cold War – see *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Kubrick, 1964) –, and the 2001 World Trade Center attacks – see *Zero Dark Thirty* (Bigelow, 2012).

However, the best films are those that deftly conceal a potent ideological statement behind an elaborate, state-of-the-art backdrop. This is our case study's narrative. The original *Blade Runner* film (Scott, 1982), released in the early '80s, depicts a dystopian, apocalyptic, hopelessly polluted environment where sunlight is always scattered, in a city crammed with skyscrapers that create a palpable sense of claustrophobia. We get a world teeming with out-of-control technology and a (too) large population, a local society overrun by negative immigration, with impoverished and illiterate migrants. With the release of the second film in the series, *Blade Runner 2049* (Villeneuve, 2017) – which came out relatively recently – contemporary concerns such as technophobia and ecologism are revisited and cleverly used to bring the film's narrative thread up to date. The two films are inspired by Philip Kindred Dick's (2007) novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. The author is best known for *The Man in the High Castle* (Dick, 2001), with the book forming the basis of the screenplay for the popular Amazon original series of the same name (Spotnitz, 2015).

As we seek to bridge the artistic cinematic messages with theoretical economic and social frameworks, the research objectives are delineated as follows. The first objective is to analyze the socioeconomic themes present in *Blade Runner*, specifically those related to capitalism, socialism, Malthusianism, Darwinism, and ecologism. The second objective is to identify and evaluate economic theories that correlate with the films' portrayal of wealth distribution, labor exploitation, technological disruption, instrumentalization of state violence, and market monopolization. The third objective explores the significant fears expressed by the films' characters that replicate global concerns of the past fifty years, including fears of natural disasters, biological degradation, and advances in human genetic engineering. The fourth objective is to examine the diabolical portrayal of the capitalist man as opposed to the "new man" or the "noble savage", alongside depictions of ruthlessness and greed. Finally, the fifth

objective is to perform a comparative analysis of Ridley Scott's (1982) *Blade Runner* and Denis Villeneuve's (2017) *Blade Runner 2049*, in terms of how each film serves as an allegory of the socioeconomic concerns prevalent in their respective eras.

These goals led us to the following research questions. The first question is: *What perspectives from economics, sociology, and biology – specifically those articulated by thinkers such as Malthus, Marx, Darwin, or Konrad Lorenz – can provide meaningful interpretations of the socioeconomic narratives embedded in the Blade Runner films?* Another question is: *What fundamental insights into human nature, ethics, and social values are revealed through the archetypes of the series' characters?* The third inquiry asks: *In what ways does the visual symbolism of films effectively communicate to audiences the social and economic anxieties of their respective time periods?* Ultimately, we aim to examine: *How do Blade Runner and Blade Runner 2049 differ in their approaches to world-building, character development, and thematic emphasis, and how do these differences reflect the societal concerns of the times in which they were produced?*

A qualitative content analysis of the *Blade Runner* film series is used to achieve the research objectives, structured around five tools. The first research technique is *thematic coding*, which is centered on the decoding of socioeconomic themes. *Discourse analysis*, the second, examines character interactions to reveal underlying economic power structures. The third and fourth research tools are *semiotic interpretation* and *historical contextualization*, which are employed to analyze visual representations and link them to the economic and social debates relevant at the time of their production. The fifth technique is the *audience reception assessment*, exploring both public and critical perceptions. By integrating these techniques, the research systematically links cinematic discourse with academic theories.

The subsequent sections of this paper are organized as follows: Section 2 provides a review of the relevant literature, emphasizing economic and social theories that intersect with cinematic narratives, while also incorporating recent scholarly contributions in the field. Section 3 describes the qualitative content analysis methodology, providing a detailed account of the techniques of inquiry and referencing strategies used in analogous studies. Section 4 articulates the main findings, exploring the ways in which socioeconomic theories shape the themes identified within the *Blade Runner* film series. Finally, Section 5 concludes the study by summarizing the key findings, offering additional interpretations of the films' messages, discussing the limitations of the research, and suggesting directions for future research.

2. Theoretical Background

To fully grasp the socioeconomic messages embedded in *Blade Runner*, it is essential to explore both the theoretical underpinnings of cinematic representations and recent scholarly discussions on how films convey cultural, economic, and ideological narratives. Therefore, this section is structured into two subsections: the first outlines key economic and social theories directly relevant to the analysis of *Blade Runner*, while the second addresses the broader context of film as a vehicle for political and social communication.

2.1 Key economic and social theories

This section examines the socioeconomic concepts depicted in *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982; Villeneuve, 2017) through the lens of both mainstream and heterodox economic and social theories. Although some authors amplify humanity's deepest fears through their ideas, others counter these concerns with compelling arguments. Here, we focus on the key economic and social principles that reinforce our exploration of *Blade Runner* and set the stage for our subsequent analysis.

The conceptual framework for this investigation is built upon the theories of the economists Thomas Malthus, Karl Marx, Joseph Schumpeter, and Julian Simon; the biologists Charles Darwin and Konrad Lorenz; the philosopher Plato; the writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; the political theorist George Orwell; the migration scholar Everett S. Lee; and the historian Paul Hazard.

At the end of the eighteenth century, economist Thomas Malthus predicted that unchecked population growth, driven by man's unbridled desire to procreate, would make famines more frequent as diminishing land yields made the process of obtaining food resources more expensive. Guilty of this situation are (Malthus, 1992, pp. 22-23) "the lower classes of society" who, in disagreement with their humble material condition, insist on having children (apud. Bonar, 1885, pp. 305-306). Despite being formulated more than two centuries ago, Malthusian theory continues to be regarded as relevant by many contemporary scholars – such as the economist Paul Samuelson (1961, p. 27), author of the best-known university textbook on economics.

While classical liberals – notably Thomas Malthus (1992) and David Ricardo (1959) – fail to anticipate the extraordinary potential of technological progress, socialists claim that innovation itself will bring about the demise of capitalism: Karl Marx (1966, pp. 436-445) prophesies this in his *Capital* (see the section *The Battle Between Man and Machine*). Despite the failed totalitarian political experiments of the twentieth century, socialism is still popular today in its more watered-down forms: interventionism (see Keynes, 2009) and protectionism (see List, 1973), which are the economic doctrines most favored by finance ministers worldwide, particularly those in so-called welfare states.

The Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter (2011, pp. 37-44) developed the theory of creative destruction, arguing that technological advancements will dissolve existing enterprises, leaving behind new, more lucrative, and wealth-generating businesses. Long before Schumpeter, Charles Darwin (2017, pp. 356-385) formulated the biological principle of creative destruction in *The Origin of Species*, claiming that the extinction of dinosaurs ultimately led to the triumph of mammals.

Foreseeing human society's apocalypse is not just the property of philosophers, economists, or physicists, but also of biologists. Konrad Lorenz (2001, pp. 19-20, p. 37) fall prey to the passions of political eugenics and social Darwinism. He claims that humans are genetically degraded because they have no other competing species to confront, while "uncontrolled human breeding" has led to an unhealthy overpopulation of the earth, necessitating a return to nature.

In *Timaeus*, Plato (1993) introduces the Demiurge – a divine craftsman who imposes rational order on chaotic matter to shape the universe. This benevolent creator symbolizes harmony emerging from disorder and offers a philosophical contrast to the archetype of the fallen creator.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (2017) *Faust* explores the moral complexities that arise from a pact with the devil, represented by the character Mephistopheles. Goethe's narrative probes deeply into the ethical limits of human ambition, highlighting the destructive potential of unchecked pride and desire.

Everett S. Lee (1966) introduced a push-pull framework for understanding migration, suggesting that people move because of factors that repel them from their place of origin, including climatic disasters and political instability, or attract them elsewhere because of economic opportunities; Lee also identifies negatively selected migrants, individuals who lack the resources or skills to improve their precarious conditions at home.

George Orwell (2002; 2018) critiques totalitarian regimes and points to the power of propaganda. His depiction of "Big Brother" exemplifies oppressive surveillance and social control and warns against unchecked authority and manipulation.

Paul Hazard's (2007) exploration of Enlightenment thought investigates the concept of the "noble savage" – an idealized figure representing purity and virtue, untouched by the corrupting influences of civilization. This archetype underscores humanity's persistent yearning for authenticity and moral integrity amid societal corruption.

Rather gloomy than optimistic, the forecasts of the intellectual world are convincingly challenged by the American economist Julian Simon (1996, p. 494, p. 59); he sees population growth as a good opportunity for more brains to become available for thinking, and resource scarcity can only serve as an incentive for them to innovate.

Applying classical and contemporary theories to *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982; Villeneuve, 2017) reveals a complex interplay of influences that shape its dystopian vision. Malthusian (Malthus, 1992) concerns about unchecked population growth and resource scarcity are reflected in the films desolate urban landscapes, while Marxist (Marx, 1966; Marx & Engels, 1962) critiques of capitalist exploitation anticipate the rise of a more equitable "new man". Schumpeter's (2011) principle of creative destruction is inverted, as technological progress exacerbates rather than alleviates inequality. Lorenz's (2001) fears of genetic degradation and overpopulation are manifested in the moral decay and overcrowded environments depicted on screen. The ambitious innovators in the films echo both Plato's (1993) Demiurge, who seeks beauty and the establishment of a rational order, and Goethe's (2017) *Faust*, whose quest for knowledge transcends moral boundaries. Orwell's (2002; 2018) exploration of surveillance and social control is evident in the oppressive corporate hegemony, while the depiction of an unblemished outsider aligns with Hazard's (2007) concept of the "noble savage", offering a sense of moral redemption amidst corruption. Everett Lee's (1966) migration theory explains how vulnerable populations become entrapped in the dystopian metropolis of *Blade Runner* and contrasts sharply with Julian Simon's (1996; 1998) optimistic views on human innovation and immigration. Together, these theories offer insight into the multifaceted socioeconomic factors at play in the *Blade Runner* narrative.

2.2 Recent academic literature

We set out to review existing research on the multifaceted political, religious, and economic dimensions of American filmmaking to contextualize our analysis of Hollywood's socioeconomic standing. The scholarly papers around the world are mostly exploratory in

nature, intended to acquaint readers with a relatively new academic endeavor. Although limited, academic literature spans a variety of fields – financial, linguistic, ideological, artistic, and social – and illustrates how nations strategically use film to reinforce cultural, and political agendas: such as the case of cinematography in communist Romania (see Pop, 2022).

Countries with influential film industries effectively use cinema as a form of soft power, including China through government-sponsored narratives (Green, 2015), Turkey through symbolic representations of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Tutku & Serife, 2017), and Iran via religiously inspired depictions of women (Aqababae & Razaghi, 2022). Even seemingly neutral themes, such as environmentalism in Japanese animation – as exemplified by Makoto Shinkai's (2019) *Weathering with You* – carry underlying ideological messages (Amzah et al., 2023).

American cinema, whether privately funded or government-sponsored, frequently promotes national and political narratives (Pilcher, 2022). It addresses diverse issues, including cultural stereotypes of religious groups or ethnic minorities (Noureen & Paracha, 2019) and Cold War tensions (Yüksel, 2018), while other productions explicitly champion Western values (Bo, 2018), thus reinforcing America's global soft power (Chen et al., 2022).

Other studies highlight the impact of cinema on urban architecture perceptions (Helenius-Mäki, 2002) or the display of marginalized communities (Hart, 2019). Even genres traditionally considered apolitical, such as romance, can subtly convey ideological content (Ecks, 2024), while promotional materials such as film posters further illustrate Hollywood's embedded political messages (Tziamtzi et al., 2015).

3 Methodology

A qualitative content analysis was used to conduct a multidisciplinary exploration of the socioeconomic themes found in the *Blade Runner* film series. The research includes a comprehensive examination of narrative elements, character interactions, world-building, cinematography, production design, and visual effects, drawing parallels between fiction and reality, historical context, and established economic theories. While the socioeconomic lens remains central, the study integrates insights into political economy, history, anthropology, philosophy, and science fiction studies. This approach allows us to bridge cinematic narratives with economic theories, focusing on *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982) and *Blade Runner 2049* (Villeneuve, 2017), yet also considering broader trends within American cinema.

More specifically, this research employs several specific analytical techniques. The first research technique used is thematic coding, which involves identifying recurring socioeconomic themes – such as economic inequality, corporate dominance, the impact of automation on labor markets, and ethical considerations associated with technological progress. The second technique is discourse analysis, which looks at dialogue and character interactions: this method uncovers embedded economic power dynamics and revolutionary political goals in the script, as exemplified by the speeches of innovation guru Niander Wallace and replicant freedom leader Freysa Sadeghpour. The third research tool is semiotic interpretation, focusing on *mise en scène* elements to understand how the film constructs social hierarchies and depicts wealth and poverty in its dystopian context. The fourth technique is historical contextualization, examining the economic and social climate during the production of the films: this provides insight into how real-world issues, such as technological advances, influenced the films'

themes. Finally, the audience reception assessment explores how various audiences – including the general public and film industry professionals – perceive and interpret the cinematic messages.

Our approach is designed to meet the research objectives outlined in the introduction. First, we use thematic coding to uncover patterns related to economic theories, drawing attention to topics that reveal deep-seated anxieties about social inequality, technological upheaval, and environmental degradation. Second, through discourse analysis, we examine representations of wealth distribution, labor exploitation, and market monopolization, testing the notion that these factors serve as critiques of capitalism. Third, we employ semiotic interpretation, and fourth, historical contextualization, to determine how the fears expressed by the characters resonate with real-world challenges faced over the past fifty years. Fifth, we assess audience reception of the films to understand public and critical responses to our hypothesis. In addition, these analytical techniques are used to comparatively examine the nuances in the socioeconomic messages of each *Blade Runner* film.

Although the academic literature on the socioeconomic impact of cinema is not extensive, it is diverse enough to warrant examination from multiple perspectives, including financial, linguistic, ideological, artistic, cultural, and social. While researchers cover a variety of topics, the prevalent approaches often lean toward statistical analysis (e.g., Bo, 2018; Yan et al., 2024), as evidenced in works by economists, sociologists, political scientists, and linguists, resulting in a somewhat monochromatic landscape of research methods. However, there are also some qualitative interpretations made by international media and film specialists (e.g., Helenius-Mäki, 2002), as well as deeply ideologically biased philosophical analyses (e.g., Cardenas, 2012), that enrich the scholarly discourse.

4 Case Study: Blade Runner series

4.1 Blade Runner (1982)

Context

The original *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982) is considered a cult film, a classic, and is specific to American and Western culture. At the time, it was favorably appreciated by film critics connected to major American newspapers; the Internet portal Metacritic (n.d.) cited experts' assessments on average, and the movie scored 84 out of a possible hundred points. This widespread critical acclaim reflects not only the quality of the film's production, but also its relevance to broader discussions about societal sustainability.

World-Building

Renowned director Ridley Scott, who is praised for his ability to build convincing fantasy worlds, is directing the movie. The filmmaker takes us to a decaying slum in Los Angeles in 2019; it is a crowded, run-down city with improvised stalls all over the place and merchants from around the world; there, people in poverty and in skimpy clothing move through the dimly lit streets, carrying with them a sort of Asian subculture.

Since Asian immigrants make up most of the city's population, we can observe that ethnicity and danger are linked – the Asian continent was home to over 60% of the world's population at the time of the film's shooting (Macrotrends, n.d.), presumably threatening humanity with

overpopulation. Moreover, the stereotype says that ethnic groups from communist regimes are portrayed in European and American films as a risk to civilization. The Chinese are typically antagonistic characters in apocalyptic thrillers, including Russian productions – see the TV series *Epidemyia* (Kostomarov & Tyurin, 2019); the Soviets are usually negative protagonists in political dramas – see the internationally produced film *The Death of Stalin* (Iannucci, 2017).

The *Blade Runner* script (Scott, 1982) makes it clear that the harsh reality of Earth's daily existence would have inspired the most resilient Earthlings to colonize space. There, in colonies, they choose to use replicants – humanoids made in a lab that are identical to people but do not have the same emotional reactions as humans. Genetically programmed to survive only four years, they are treated as slaves and forced to do the drudgery of the cosmic colonies.

This depiction of a crowded, culturally diverse metropolis resonates with Malthus's (1992) warnings about uncontrolled population growth amid finite resources, as well as Konrad Lorenz's (2001) views of social degradation caused by overcrowding. In addition, it is partially consistent with Everett S. Lee's (1966) push-pull migration model by illustrating how the desperate and displaced may gravitate to megacities despite dire conditions. The creation of replicants echoes Plato's (1993) contrast between a benevolent demiurge who shapes order and a flawed (high-tech) "creator" figure who uses technology for exploitation – paradoxically foreshadowing Marx's (1966) notion that capitalism inherently exploits labor (here, replicant labor).

Characters

Harrison Ford's character, Detective Decker, develops feelings for Rachel, played by Sean Young, a replicant who is humanized via her emotional response to a human hero's love. The leader of the out-of-control replicants, played by Rutger Hauer, demonstrates once more the humanity of these robots when he finally decides not to kill Detective Decker, knowing full well that he would perish because of the cynicism of the likes of Decker, namely the earthlings who genetically programmed him to live only four years.

This closing picture serves as further evidence that humans, with their unfettered and corruptible nature, and mind- and spirit-robbing technology, are still to blame for the world's misery and the planet's endangered status. The moral superiority of the replicants is a reference to Paul Hazard's (2007) concept of the "noble savage" who is untainted by the greed and corruption of society.

Plot

The plot of the film illustrates that the Los Angeles Police Department must cope with certain Replicants who have sneaked into the city against orders not to, as global society is not under the full control of Earthlings as assumed. This script plays on irrational fears of technological progress – technophobia – and the danger of machines driven by artificial intelligence becoming autonomous or even independent of human will. At the same time, the role of technology can be seen in a positive light, as replicants – the fruit of scientific progress – prove to be more compassionate than humans: technology creates the new humanity, replacing the old, fallen, irretrievably lost.

The scenario suggests the paradox of today's world dilemma, which simultaneously embraces the benefits of technology and fears its potentially harmful effects. The subject is so controversial that even the leaders of present-day IT companies cannot agree; with the release of Chat GPT4, a powerful AI-based language engine, in 2023, an open letter was published warning mankind of the potential dangers of artificial intelligence. Signed by prominent tech

figures such as Elon Musk (Twitter - X, Space X, Tesla), Steve Wozniaki (Apple), and over 30,000 other entrepreneurs, academics, inventors, and regular internet users, the letter highlights the primary concerns of technological advancement (Future of Life Institute, 2023): “Contemporary AI systems are now becoming human-competitive at general tasks, and we must ask ourselves: Should we let machines flood our information channels with propaganda and untruth? Should we automate away all the jobs, including the fulfilling ones? Should we develop nonhuman minds that might eventually outnumber, outsmart, obsolete, and replace us? Should we risk loss of control of our civilization? Such decisions must not be delegated to unelected tech leaders. Powerful AI systems should be developed only once we are confident that their effects will be positive, and their risks will be manageable. [...] Therefore, we call on all AI labs to immediately pause for at least 6 months the training of AI systems more powerful than GPT-4.”

Concerns about Artificial Intelligence spiraling out of control contradict Schumpeter’s (2011) optimism about technological progress as a catalyst for beneficial creative destruction; in this situation, innovation does not improve living standards, but rather threatens human well-being.

4.2 Blade Runner 2049 (2017)

Context

2017 saw the release of *Blade Runner 2049* (Villeneuve, 2017), the sequel to the original film. Directed by Denis Villeneuve – a Canadian filmmaker best known for *Incendies* (Villeneuve, 2010), *Arrival* (Villeneuve, 2016), and *Dune* (Villeneuve, 2021) – the film received a highly positive reception from critics, with an 88% favorable rating on Rotten Tomatoes (n.d.) platform. The second episode of *Blade Runner* emphasizes anti-capitalist and environmentalist themes, questions the role of artificial intelligence, and raises serious doubts about the existence of humans.

The film’s widespread critical acclaim underlines the increasing mainstream appeal of anti-capitalist and environmentalist themes in contemporary culture. These social anxieties echo Marx’s (1966) critique of innovation’s potential to negatively transform social structures.

World-building

The 2017 version of the *Blade Runner* universe highlights the value of natural resources and how even a basic natural wooden toy can become an expensive luxury item due to its scarcity. Rarely can the sun’s rays be seen through the thick smog caused by pollution, while the streets of 2049 Los Angeles are populated by impoverished, reckless, uncivilized, and exhibitionistic immigrants from all over the world.

A world touched by the Malthusian tragedy – one marked by the depletion of natural resources and the self-destructive degradation of humanity – is recreated in the new film, carrying on the tradition. The presence of immigrants highlights the harsh realities of mass migration, driven by environmental and socioeconomic push factors (Lee, 1966). The bleak urban environment reveals Konrad Lorenz’s (2001) predictions of social degeneration stemming from overcrowding and unchecked human reproduction, ultimately eroding societal stability and degrading living conditions.

Plot

The Los Angeles society is led by an innovation guru, the genius Niander Wallace – well played by Jared Leto – a cynical, self-centered, control freak, profit-driven character who holds the patent to produce replicants: lab-created humanoids used as slaves in space colonies. The spectator must conclude that whoever has the monopoly on technology controls the means of production both on Earth and in the space colonies. The resulting power is abused, disregarding social and environmental concerns in favor of self-serving and careless behavior.

This dystopian setting exemplifies the monopolistic tendencies inherent in capitalist structures driven by the relentless pursuit of profit – a theme that resonates with socialist beliefs (Marx, 1966). Through this lens, Hollywood is a not-so-subtle critique of Western society, as Mr. Wallace is in many ways the quintessential wealthy tech entrepreneur, like the personas of globally recognized stars such as Elon Musk, Richard Branson, and Steve Jobs.

Dark Characters

Wallace, with the arrogance of the few and rich, sets out to literally conquer outer space in the name of humanity by populating colonies with replicants (Villeneuve, 2017, 00:38:00): *“We make angels in the service of civilization. [...] That is how I took us to nine new worlds.”* However, the replicants must be endowed with the miracle of human life, i.e., learn the ability to reproduce independently, in a bid to feed the company owner’s ambition to populate the universe (Villeneuve, 2017, 00:39:00): *“I cannot breed them. [...] We need more replicants than can ever be assembled. Millions, so we can be trillions more. We could storm Eden and retake her.”* This statement is very much in line with the biblical message that God gave to mankind (Biblia, 2012, ch. 1:27, ch. 1:28): *“So, God created man in his own likeness, in the very image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, saying: «Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth, and over every crawling thing that crawls on the ground».”*

The defiant entrepreneur not only embodies the biblical God, but also borrows the characteristics of the Creator of the Universe from Greek philosophy, as he seeks to achieve perfect order in the entire universe, in stark contrast to the mundane chaos that reigns on earth (Plato, 1993, p. 144): *“The Demiurge took all that was visible, restless and in discordant and chaotic motion, and led it out of disorder into order, considering order to be altogether better than disorder. The best of men is not and never has been allowed to do anything but what is the most beautiful.”*

Wallace can clone humans through technology, but the screenwriters make him blind to highlight how hopeless human morality is (will be) in 2049. We understand that the business magnate has made a bargain with the devil and sold his soul, much like Goethe’s (2017) creation Mephistopheles from his masterpiece Faust. Therefore, rather than searching for a goodhearted demiurge, we should be looking for one who worships Lucifer, a fallen angel and anti-hero.

Wallace’s god-like aspirations vibrate with Plato’s (1993) Demiurge, albeit twisted by his thirst for profit, and recall the Faustian bargain (Goethe, 2017) in his ruthless pursuit of power. His monopoly over replicant production undermines Schumpeter’s (2011) vision of innovation as a force for economic renewal. Meanwhile, the environmental collapse aligns with Konrad Lorenz’s (2001) concerns about humanity’s self-inflicted decay.

Good Characters

Though replicants are not supposed to be able to feel human emotions, Detective K, a more sophisticated replicant portrayed by Ryan Gosling, falls in love with beautiful Joi – played by Ana de Armas; in fact, this woman is a convincing artificial hologram created by a well-known computer program. Joi assists Detective K in his transformation from a cold servant of the system – loyal to the police forces controlled by the human-owned Replicant Company – to an empathic man dedicated to the cause of the rebel slave army.

The rebel army aims to overthrow the corrupt human system, and they use the child born of a replicant – even though it should have been sterile from the start – to do so. This attribute of procreation should be seen as the ultimate argument to prove the replicants' humanness (Villeneuve, 2017, 02:00:00): [Freysa] *"I knew that baby meant we are more than just slaves. If a baby can come from one of us, we are our own masters."* [Luv] *"More human than humans."*

It is made clear that the rebel replicants army wants to preserve the miracle of life for their own kind, for noble purposes, to serve the cause of a better world, whereas the humans, through Niander Wallace, want the same thing, to provide the replicants with a fertile womb, but for an entirely different reason: to increase the slave population exploited by the few humans at the top of the social pyramid.

In the end, Detective K will give his life to save the replicant child's human father: a rebellious, anti-establishment former detective, the Decker character from the first episode of the series, played by Harrison Ford. This is another paradox: the heartlessness of Earthlings is contrasted with the compassion of the robot replicants, specifically to show the irreversible changes that the competitive capitalist system and individual greed will wreak on the human spirit.

Detective K's moral awakening suggests that morally untainted outsiders, as embodied by the replicants, might offer a path to ethical renewal – a perspective reminiscent of Paul Hazard's (2007) concept of the "noble savage". At the same time, the existence of the replicant child symbolizes not only the rebirth of humanity, but also the Marxist-inspired (Marx & Engels, 1962) emergence of a new proletarian class capable of resisting and dismantling oppressive power structures. By portraying replicants as ethically superior to humans, the message of *Blade Runner 2049* directly challenges Julian Simon's (1996) faith in humanity's capacity for innovation and moral resilience.

5 Discussion

The second episode of *Blade Runner* (Villeneuve, 2017) makes the argument that bees, a symbol of nature and life, are confined to a desolate, forgotten region of the globe. In an interview with *The New York Times* (Murphy, 2017), director Denis Villeneuve reaffirms what we understand to be the meaning of this sequence in the movie – that is, that the world is headed toward an ecological catastrophe: [Villeneuve] *"There are a lot of problems with bees in the world right now. They are disappearing, so the fact that here you can see those creatures still alive and still present, was for me like a little spark of hope in this dystopian universe."*

The film series claims that the world of capitalism, with its unjust and exploitative man, will give way to the just and equitable society of the replicant or proletarian, the new man, who is fairer, more compassionate, more selfless – as Marx and Engels (1962, p. 25) pointed out, the

proletariat ultimately “*establishes its supremacy through the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie.*” Here is what the leader of the rebelling replicants, Freysa – played by Hiam Abbass – has to say on this matter (Villeneuve, 2017, min. 02:00:00): “*A revolution is coming. And we’re building an army. I want to free our people.*”

On the other hand, the head of the brutal, self-centered, and fiercely competitive group of humans seeks to uphold the alleged need for the capitalist system to survive on the misery and work of slaves (Villeneuve, 2017, 00:39:00): “*Every leap of civilization was built off the back of a disposable workforce. We lost our stomach for slaves unless engineered.*” These theories attributed to capitalism are contrary to the conclusions of classical liberal thinkers; Adam Smith (2011, p. 219) stated as early as the 18th century that the use of slaves is unethical and ineffective economically.

The film subtly simplifies Marxist economic ideas by creating the impression that Los Angeles society is in the final stages of capitalism, with mister Wallace appearing to be the only major capitalist still standing – the other few and rich may have fled to the colonies. Socialist theory states that capital eventually becomes concentrated in the hands of a small number of businessmen following several systemic economic crises of capitalism (Marx & Engels, 1962, p. 20): “*The bourgeoisie [...] agglomerated the population, centralized the means of production and concentrated property in a few hands. The inevitable consequence of these changes has been political centralization.*”

Schumpeter’s (2011, pp. 37-44) theory of creative destruction does not seem to apply in post-apocalyptic Los Angeles, this fallen axis mundi of the colonized universe. The Austrian economist argues that technological innovations will adjust the composition of capitalism’s constituent parts through “*industrial mutation*”, the system’s natural process of replacing older, less successful enterprises with newer, more profitable ones – think supermarkets replacing neighborhood grocery stores. Contrary to this widely accepted theory, the film’s plot demonstrates the opposite: while scientific improvements have made it possible to create state-of-the-art holograms and to genetically duplicate natural objects or living beings, replicants and humans alike are poor and unable to benefit from these discoveries. Given this pessimistic sociological view of society, it seems likely that the filmmakers were influenced by dialectical materialism (see Marx & Engels, 1962, pp. 17-25; see also Schumpeter, 2010, pp. 69-161; Heilbroner, 1994, pp. 146-182; Marx, 1966, pp. 380-512, Comte, 2019, p. 7), which states that any significant development in capitalist society brought about by revolutionary innovation ends up making the workers even poorer (Marx & Engels, 1962, p. 23).

Following the film’s narrative logic, the ever-present inhabitants condemned to misery can only be lumpen-proletarians, i.e. declassed individuals, beggars in rags, “*this passive rottenness of the lowest classes of the old society*” – as Marx and Engels defined them (1962, p. 24) –, made so by fierce competition and the concentration of capital in the pockets of large industrial corporations’ owners.

Nobel Prize-winning scientist Konrad Lorenz believes that the emergence of the violent and deceitful population – that the authors of *Blade Runners* (Scott, 1982; Villeneuve, 2017) envision living in future Los Angeles – is explained by the genetic decline of the human species. The biologist asserts that people who wind up in densely populated urban areas will become violent and cruel due to a combination of factors, including unchecked reproduction, environmental issues, and capitalist industrialization (Lorenz, 2001, p. 22). The film depicts another Lorenz’s (2001, p. 11) militant themes, namely that the very luxuries that technological

progress brings to the civilized world would only serve to domesticate and thus alienate humans, leading to the further degradation of the species.

Meanwhile, we have discovered another hypothesis that could explain the supposedly diverse and vulnerable population of future Los Angeles: the migration caused by the climate crisis. As resourceful individuals presumably had the option of leaving for outer space colonies, “the weak or the incapable” – as demographer Everett Lee (1966, p. 56) categorizes negatively selected migrants – had no choice and, to survive, ended up unemployed or in low-paying jobs in the big city.

Blade Runner versus Blade Runner 2049

Ridley Scott’s (1982) *Blade Runner* and Denis Villeneuve’s (2017) *Blade Runner 2049* offer interconnected but distinct representations of a dystopian future, each reflecting the evolving socioeconomic anxieties of their respective eras.

Scott’s (1982) original film immerses audiences in a vast, neon-lit Los Angeles marked by pronounced social divisions. Embedded in this urban landscape is the presence of Asian immigrants (see Scott, 1982, 00:07:30), who serve as symbols of the deeper ecological and political crises that catalyze human displacement. The cityscape itself functions as a silent critic, its deteriorating structures reflecting the unchecked power of large-scale corporations and the resulting marginalization of vulnerable communities.

In contrast, Villeneuve’s (2017) sequel emphasizes complex character narratives and anchors its socioeconomic critique in more personal and emotionally impactful story arcs. While maintaining a dystopian atmosphere, *Blade Runner 2049* (Villeneuve, 2017) heightens contemporary ecological anxieties, particularly through symbolic imagery such as abandoned bee colonies (see Murphy, 2017), which serve as a poignant representation of a global potential collapse. Socialist themes (see Marx & Engels, 1962, p. 25) are presented more explicitly through the revolutionary aspirations of the replicant army (Villeneuve, 2017, min. 02:00:00), serving as a clear condemnation of corporate greed and the relentless pursuit of power by elites. Unlike the 1982 version, *Blade Runner 2049* (Villeneuve, 2017) minimizes overt depictions of immigration, likely reflecting evolving societal perspectives and contemporary cinematic conventions that caution against simplistic portrayals of ethnic communities.

In addition, *Blade Runner 2049* explores the theme of technophobia in greater depth – see Joi’s manipulation of Detective K (Villeneuve, 2017, 01:32:00) – addressing contemporary concerns about artificial intelligence, pervasive surveillance, and the ethical challenges posed by unchecked technological progress. Here, the tension arises less from cultural conflict than from the increasingly ambiguous boundaries between human and replicant, coupled with the looming presence of a pervasive, corporate-led surveillance apparatus.

For the sake of clarity and to better capture the nuanced socioeconomic themes artistically portrayed, we have expanded the comparative analysis of the two *Blade Runner* films into the following table.

Table 1. Blade Runner versus Blade Runner 2049

Socioeconomic Theme	Blade Runner (1982)	Blade Runner 2049 (2017)	Key Theoretical Links
Immigration & Overpopulation	Depicts a densely populated Los Angeles teeming with impoverished Asian immigrants, suggesting unchecked population growth and global displacement.	Downplays direct depictions of immigration, drawing attention to widespread environmental degradation and resource depletion.	Engages Thomas Malthus (1992) on the dangers of unchecked population growth, Everett S. Lee (1966) on the push-pull dynamics of migration, and Konrad Lorenz (2001) on the societal decay caused by overpopulation.
Environmental Degradation	It suggests ecological decay through persistent rain and polluted urban landscapes, though these elements serve primarily as atmospheric backdrops.	It positions environmental collapse as a central theme, featuring elements such as abandoned bees and thick smog. Natural resources are transformed into luxury items, reflecting severe scarcity and significant inequalities.	Addresses Malthus (1992) on resource limits, examines Lorenz's (2001) analysis of human-induced environmental stress, and offers a counterargument to Julian Simon's (1996) optimistic assessment that resource scarcity stimulates innovation.
Technophobia & Artificial Intelligence	Raises concerns about replicants as artificially intelligent entities that could potentially turn against their human creators.	Intensifies apprehensions about artificial intelligence, holograms, and pervasive surveillance, paralleling contemporary debates about the ethics of data privacy.	Challenges Schumpeter's (2011) assertion that technological progress benefits society; resonates with George Orwell's (2002; 2018) warnings about totalitarian surveillance; and parallels Goethe's Faust (2017) in its exploration of the moral consequences of unbridled ambition.
Socialist Revolutionary Undertones	While the replicants strive for autonomy, the film focuses primarily on one detective's moral awakening rather than depicting an organized rebellion.	Depicts a more explicit replicant rebellion, evoking a socialist-inspired uprising against the power structures of the elite.	Borrowing from Marx and Engels (1962) regarding proletarian revolution. Consistent with Hazard's (2007) concept of morally untainted, world-saving outsiders.

Source: Author

Together, these films demonstrate how socioeconomic narratives evolve over time. Overall, despite their different emphases, both films highlight the tension between technological progress and societal decay, ultimately converging on the idea that unchecked capitalism, environmental destruction, and moral indifference pave the way for a dystopian future.

6. Conclusions

This paper contributes to the existing literature by integrating cinematic content analysis with socioeconomic theories, providing a structured comparative framework that elucidates how films can reflect contemporary economic and social issues. By systematically applying insights from economists, sociologists, biologists, and philosophers, the study underscores the interdisciplinary value of film analysis in exploring real-world collective anxieties.

A significant limitation is the interpretive nature of the analysis, which is based on textual and thematic examination rather than empirical data or audience reception studies. Additionally, the study's exclusive focus on the *Blade Runner* series may neglect other influential artistic works that present different representations of similar socioeconomic themes. Future research could broaden the scope by including comparative analyses of other dystopian films and incorporating quantitative methods or audience surveys to validate and expand the findings.

The paper distills five major takeaways. The first point is that the films link capitalist systems to labor exploitation and ecological collapse, revealing elites who profit from environmental ruin while society bears the consequences. The second takeaway highlights how advanced artificial intelligence and surveillance technologies further entrench corporate power, echoing modern anxieties about personal autonomy and the ethical dilemmas of unchecked technological progress. The third observation is that, contrary to economic theories, innovation and migration fail to solve overpopulation and resource depletion; instead, the films' narratives portray the solutions as problems, with all four issues collectively reinforcing the so-called systemic greed of capitalist oppressors. The fourth centers on replicants as uncorrupted "noble savages", offering ethical redemption in contrast to humanity's moral decay. The final insight points out that the sequel shifts from migration concerns to a replicant revolution, intensifying the critique of capitalism's role in perpetuating inequality and ecological disaster.

The environmentalist and anti-capitalist social theories are adopted by the *Blade Runner* series (Scott, 1982; Villeneuve, 2017) and integrated into the dystopian vision of an Earth irreversibly damaged by the decadent world of inhuman private enterprise system. Indeed, humanity is portrayed as pure evil, having devastated Earth – see the post-apocalyptic production design and visual effects of the film – and replicating on a universe-wide scale a society that is equally merciless to humans or humanoid robots and reckless to the environment. Even though society can produce ever more advanced machines or androids, this does not seem to improve the lives of ordinary people. It's not to blame just the cynical innovation guru and the nomenclature that backs him to rule the world; it's the people, all of them, who have created the circumstances necessary for the presence of such characters at the top of the social pyramid. The suspects are the same as in most analysis of today's allegedly disintegrating order: technological progress and the free market economy.

As previously pointed out, the theories of biologist Lorenz, sociologist Marx, and economist Malthus are hidden beneath the collective fears of the modern world: the depletion of the Earth's natural resources, the unsustainable overpopulation of the planet, the degradation of Western civilization by constant waves of negative migration, the irreparable pollution of the environment. Activists, journalists, and even scientists frequently and ominously raise these environmentalists and social issues in the public arena, topics that can likewise be found in the *Blade Runner* series.

People are therefore led to believe that a potential ecological apocalypse – a scaled-down equivalent of a reversed Big Bang – is imminent. Since capitalism is not immune to harsh criticism for creating disparities and affecting the climate through industrial production and mass consumption, within the popular imagination, this natural disaster is followed by the construction of a police state in which the powerful and privileged few are compared to Big Brother and the pigs from Orwell's works (2002, 2018); or the films influenced by his writings: *Animal Farm* (Batchelor & Halas, 1954), *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Radford, 1984). The narrative unfolds as the newly established elites of power and capital retreat into a confined metropolitan area – an urban oasis of centralized planning –, exercising vigilant control over their surroundings while ruthlessly exploiting the defenseless, impoverished, and tribal peoples of the nearby regions; Ultimately, the answer to saving humanity and our planet from this catastrophic situation lies with an outsider who embodies the virtues of the noble savage (for more on the myth of the noble savage, see Hazard, 2007, pp. 20-22).

This reoccurring scene may be seen in many American commercial films, television series, or miniseries that either recreate a hypothetical dystopian future for human society or transfer the same plot to a science fiction setting, such as *Dune* (Villeneuve, 2021; Villeneuve, 2024).

But Hollywood's vision of the future, especially as it relates to *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982; Villeneuve, 2017), differs from that of economist Julian Simon (1996, p. 59), who questions real-life scenarios of doomsday climate change, societal collapse, and human decline: "This is important: scarcity and technological advance are not two unrelated competitors in a Malthusian race; rather, each influences the other." In reference to the filmmakers' assumption that waves of immigrants pose a threat to local societies or nation-states, the same Julian Simon (1998, p. 152) notes that while some political or social concerns may be discussed, there is no economic risk associated with immigration – only an absurdly imagined threat.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the project "The Development of Advanced and Applicative Research Competencies in the Logic of STEAM + Health" /POCU/993/6/13/153310, project co-financed by the European Social Fund through The Romanian Operational Programme Human Capital 2014-2020.

The author expresses appreciation to Professors Cristian Păun and Gabriel Mursa for the helpful advice they provided throughout the process of writing this study, as well as to the peer reviewers for their feedback, which strengthened the paper's structural rigor and analytical clarity.

References:

- Amzah, N., Ismail, H., Shi, N. L. (2023). Climate Change in the Movie *Weathering with You*-Critical Discourse Analysis of Environmental Issues. *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature - The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 29(3), September. <http://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2023-2903-20>
- Aqababae, E., & Razaghi, M. (2022). Islamic Fundamentalism and Gender: The Portrayal of Women in Iranian Movies. *Critical Research on Religion*, 10(3), 249-266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20503032221124551>
- Batchelor, J. & Halas, J. (directed by). (1954). *Animal Farm* [Film]. United Kingdom; United States of America: Halas & Batchelor; Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).
- Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură* (edited by B. V. Anania). (2012). Retrieved online August 9, 2022, from <https://www.dervent.ro/biblia/Biblia-ANANIA.pdf>.
- Bigelow, K. (directed by). (2012). *Zero Dark Thirty* [Film]. United States of America: Columbia Pictures; Annapurna Pictures; First Light Production.
- Bo, X. (2018). Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the Movie *Argo*. *English Language Teaching, Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 11(4), 132-137. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v11n4p132>
- Bonar, J. (1885). *Malthus and his work*. London: Macmillan and Co.

- Cárdenas, J. D. (2012). Annotations on cinema and ideology. *Palabra Clave*, 15(3), 415-431. <https://palabraclave.unisabana.edu.co/index.php/palabraclave/article/view/2593>
- Chen, C., Xu, B., Yang, J. H., Liu, M. (2022). Sentiment Analysis of Animated Film Reviews Using Intelligent Machine Learning. *Computational Intelligence and Neuroscience*, 2022(8517205), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/8517205>.
- Comte, A. (2019). *A general view of positivism. Or, summary exposition of the system of thought and life*. Glasgow: Good Press.
- Darwin, C. (2017). *Originea speciilor*. București: Herald - Editura Academiei Române.
- Dick, P. K. (2001). *The man in the high castle*. London: Penguin Books.
- Dick, P. K. (2007). *Do androids dream of electric sheep* (retold by A. Hopkins and J. Potter). Oxford University Press.
- Digital TV Research. (October 19, 2023). Over-the-top (OTT) TV and video revenue worldwide from 2010 to 2029 [Graph]. In *Statista*. Retrieved online July 18, 2024, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/260179/over-the-top-revenue-worldwide/>.
- Ecks, S. (2024). Life is a gift: Value cosmologies in Hollywood cinema. *Economic Anthropology*, Wiley Blackwell, 11(1), 18-26. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sea2.12278>.
- Future of Life Institute. (2023, March). *Pause Giant AI Experiments: An Open Letter*. Retrieved online May 2, 2024, from <https://futureoflife.org/open-letter/pause-giant-ai-experiments/>.
- Goethe, J. W. (2017). *Faust: tragedie* (translated by L. Blaga). București: Humanitas.
- Green, F. H. (2015). The Sky is the Limit: Feng Xiaoning's Leitmotif Cinema, Chinese Soft Power, and Ideological Fantasy. *East Asian Journal of Popular Culture*, 1(3), 341-358. https://doi.org/10.1386/eapc.1.3.341_1.
- Hart, K. P., (2019). Socially Constructing an AIDS Dystopia: Representing Urban Spaces and Places in American Movies about HIV/AIDS. *Proceedings of 51st International Academic Conferences*, Viena, International Institute of Social and Economic Sciences. <https://doi.org/10.20472/IAC.2019.051.013>.
- Hazard, P. (2007). *Criza conștiinței europene: 1680-1715*. București: Humanitas.
- Heilbronner, R. (1994). *Filozofii lucrurilor pământești. Viețile, epocile și ideile marilor economiști*. București: Humanitas.
- Helenius- Mäki, L. (2002). Theme city or gated community - images of future cities. *European Regional Science Association ERSA conference papers*. <https://ideas.repec.org/p/wiw/wiwr/ersa02p427.html>.
- Iannucci, A. (directed by). (2017). *The Death of Stalin*. France; United Kingdom; Belgium; Canada; United States of America: Quad; Main Journey; Gaumont; France 3 Cinéma; La Compagnie Cinématographique; Panache Productions; Canal+; Ciné+; France Télévisions; Free Range Films; Title Media.
- Keynes, J. M. (2009). *Teoria generală a ocupării forței de muncă, a dobânzii și a banilor*. București: Publica.
- Kostomarov, P., Tyurin, D. (directed by). (2019). *Epidemiya* [TV Series]. Russia: 1-2-3 Production; Ivan Production; Kit Film Studio; Premier Studios.
- Kubrick, S. (directed by). (1964). *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* [Film]. United Kingdom; United States of America: Stanley Kubrick Productions.
- Kubrick, S. (directed by). (1987). *Full Metal Jacket* [Film]. United Kingdom; United States of America: Warner Bros; Natant; Stanley Kubrick Productions.
- Lee, E. S. (1966). A Theory of Migration. *Demography*, 3(1), 47-57. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2060063>.
- List, F. (1973). *Sistemul național de economie politică*. București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România.
- Lorenz, K. (2001). *Cele opt păcate capitale ale omenirii civilizate*. București: Humanitas.
- Macrotrends (n.d.). *Asia Population 1950-2024* (Historical and UN projections). Retrieved online May 3, 2024, from <https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/NAC/asia/population>.
- Malick, T. (directed by). (1998). *The Thin Red Line* [Film]. United States of America: Fox 2000 Pictures; Geisler-Roberdeau; Phoenix Pictures.
- Malthus, T. R. (1992). *Eseu asupra principiului populației*. București: Editura Științifică.

- Marx, K. (1966). *Capitalul: critica economiei politice* (Vol. 1). in Marx, K., Engels, F., *Opere Alese* (Vol. 23). București: Editura Politică.
- Marx, K., Engels, F. (1962). *Manifestul Partidului Comunist*. București: Editura Politică.
- Metacritic (n.d.), *Blade Runner critic reviews*. Retrieved online May 6, 2024, from <https://www.metacritic.com/movie/blade-runner/critic-reviews>.
- Murphy, M. (2017, October 2). Denis Villeneuve Narrates a Scene From “Blade Runner 2049”. *The New York Times*. Retrieved online May 2, 2024, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/02/movies/denis-villeneuve-interview-blade-runner-2049.html>.
- Noureen, A., Paracha, S. A. (2019). Muslims and Islam: Freeze Framed Discourses in Hollywood during 1978-2013. *Global Regional Review, Humanity Only*, 4(4), 37-43. [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2019\(IV-IV\).05](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2019(IV-IV).05).
- Orwell, G. (2002). *O mie nouă sute optzeci și patru*. Iași: Polirom.
- Orwell, G. (2018). *Ferma Animalelor. O poveste*. Iași: Polirom.
- Pilcher, L. (2022). Racial Ideology in Government Films: The Past and Present of the US Information Service’s Men of the Forest (1952). *Genealogy*, 6(41). <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy6020041>.
- Platon. (1993). *Opere: vol. VII. Timaios*. București: Editura Științifică.
- Pop, D. (2022). The Socialist Boy Detectives and the Cold Wars of Childhood. *Caietele Echinox*, 43, 38-61. <https://doi.org/10.24193/cechinox.2022.43.02>.
- Radford, M. (directed by). (1984). *Nineteen Eighty-Four* [film]. United Kingdom: Virgin; Umbrella-Rosenblum Films Production; Virgin Benelux; Virgin Schallplatten.
- Ricardo, D. (1959). *Despre principiile economiei politice și impuneri*. in Ricardo, D. *Opere Alese* (vol. I). București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române.
- Rotten Tomatoes. (n.d.). *Blade Runner*. Retrieved online May 2, 2024, from https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/blade_runner.
- Samuelson, P. A. (1961). *Economics: an introductory analysis* (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Schumpeter, J. A. (2010). *Zece mari economiști: de la Marx la Keynes*. București: Publica.
- Schumpeter, J. A. (2011). *Poate supraviețui capitalismul?: Distrugerea creatoare și viitorul economiei globale*. București: Publica.
- Scott, R. (directed by). (1982). *Blade Runner* [Film]. United States of America; United Kingdom: The Ladd Company; Shaw Brothers; Warner Bros; Blade Runner Partnership; Michael Deeley Production; Ridley Scott Productions; Scott Free Productions.
- Shinkai, M. (directed by). (2019). *Weathering with You* [Film]. Japan; China: Weathering with You Film Partners; Beijing Enlight Pictures; China Film Group Corporation (CFGC); CoMix Wave Films; Kadokawa; Lawson Entertainment; Story (II); Toho.
- Simon, J. L. (1996). *The ultimate resource II*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Simon, J. L. (1998). Are there grounds for limiting immigration? *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, 13(2), 137-152.
- Smith, A. (2011). *Avuția Națiunilor*. București: Publica.
- Spotnitz, F. (created by). (2015). *The Man in the High Castle* [TV Series]. United States of America; United Kingdom; Canada: Amazon Studios; Big Light Productions; Electric Shepherd Productions; Headline Pictures; Picrow; Reunion Pacific Entertainment; Reunion Pictures; Scott Free Productions.
- Statista. (June 8, 2023). Breakdown of Hollywood movies released in theaters worldwide in 2022, by budget (in million U.S. dollars) [Graph]. In *Statista*. Retrieved online July 31, 2024, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1389936/breakdown-production-budget-hollywood-movies-worldwide/>.
- Stone, O. (directed by). (1986). *Platoon* [Film]. United States of America; United Kingdom: Hemdale; Cinema '84; Cinema 86.
- Tutku, A., Serife, I. (2017). The Reciprocal Relationship between Turkish Cinema and Politics: The Portrayal of “Atatürk” as a Political Leader in Filmic Narrative. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, Sciendo*, 6(1), 77-86. <https://doi.org/10.5901/ajis.2017.v6n1p77>.
- Tziamtzi, C., Kyridis, A., Vamvakidou, I., Christodoulou, A., Zagkos, C. (2015). Social Signified in the Movie Posters of Hollywood Movies Made for Children. *Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities*, Research Academy of Social Sciences, 3(5), 295-310. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/rss/jnljsh/v3i5p6.html>.

Villeneuve, D. (directed by). (2010). *Incendies* [film]. Canada; France: micro_scope; TS Productions; Phi Group; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).

Villeneuve, D. (directed by). (2016). *Arrival* [Film]. United States of America; Canada: Lava Bear Films; FilmNation Entertainment; 21 Laps Entertainment; Xenolinguistics.

Villeneuve, D. (directed by). (2017). *Blade Runner 2049* [Film]. United States of America; Canada; Spain: Alcon Entertainment, Columbia Pictures; Sony; Torridon Films; 16:14 Entertainment; Scott Free Productions; Babieka.

Villeneuve, D. (directed by). (2021). *Dune: Part One* [film]. United States of America: Warner Bros.; Legendary Entertainment; Villeneuve Films.

Villeneuve, D. (directed by). (2024). *Dune: Part Two* [film]. United States of America: Warner Bros.; Legendary Entertainment; Villeneuve Films; Eagle Pictures; New Zealand Film Commission; Ubisoft Abu Dhabi; FGM; The Royal Film Commission; Origo Film Studio.

Yan, J., Li, N., Yu, F. (2024). An empirical study of trade effect on culture. *Journal of Applied Economics*, 27(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/15140326.2024.2334551>.

Yüksel, H. (2018). Cold war ideology: The Rocky 4 movie. *Journal of Labor and Society*, 21(3), 385-414. <https://doi.org/10.1111/wusa.12351>.