

ADVANCED ENGLISH TEXT IN TIME: BLADE RUNNER AND FRANKENSTEIN CONTENTS PAGE

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Bladerunner & Frankenstein ANALYSIS

Context

Bladerunner	Frankenstein
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaganism & Thatcherism marking a period of consumerist ideals & Corporate Greed ‘greed is good’ (‘You’re quite a prize...’ ‘the light that burns twice as bright burns half as long’ ‘Commerce is our goal’) • Expansion of multinational corporations during the 1980s (mass billboards, advertisements and juxtaposition of Tyrell’s financial transactions and his opulent lifestyle, indicating subconscious pursuit of wealth). • Discrimination of AIDS Victims (1982), South African Apartheid & Homosexual Rights movement = moral bankruptcy and debauched human race (final scene) • Second Wave of Feminism (Zhora death scene and the shattering of the glass indicated the glass ceiling. The non diegetic heartbeat questions Deckard’s apathy and provokes questioning of treatment of women). • Augmentation of Global Warming concerns as science exceeded human expectations (opening scene) • Cloning Movement & Biotechnological developments usurping natural boundaries such as IVF (Tyrell death scene) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romanticism – antithesis of Age of Enlightenment. ‘the waters were placid: all around me was calm... the calm and heavenly scene restored me’ ‘the very winds whispered in soothing accents, and maternal nature bade me weep no more’ ‘I shall kill no albatross, therefore do not be alarmed...’ • Galvanism. • Chauvinistic mastery. • Scientific egoism/unbridled scientific progress. ‘learn from me... how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge...’ ‘you are my creator, but I am your master’ • Gothicism. ‘dull yellow eye of the creature opened’ ‘the yellow covered the work of muscle and arteries beneath’ • Academic preoccupations & misogyny. • Hubris. • Fascination with attainment of knowledge ultimately usurping natural boundaries. Walton alternates between revealing a quest for knowledge in search of personal glory ‘may tread a land never before imprinted...’ and the fictitious benefit for all of mankind. • Industrial revolution.

Setting

Bladerunner	Frankenstein
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA 2019, Derelict earth. • No natural elements but rather a vast and mechanised cityscape which lacks morality. • Insertion of Tyrell Corporation as a Mayan Ziggurat indicating the worship of religion. • Environmental dilapidation and over industrialisation. • Constant acid rain. • Patriarchal society, women are perceived as unequal and substandard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sublime nature • The environment is omnipotent and able to influence ones emotions. This is evident as in Frankenstein the land has been conquered by science, however, in Frankenstein Shelley accentuates that the environmental will always prevail evident in Walton having to conclude his expedition 'surrounded by mountain of ice...in imminent danger of being crushed...' • Rather than science being a worldly obsession for all, it dominates Victor's life. For Victor, Science is the new religion. • Patriarchal society – women are perceived as substandard. • World dominated by Revenge.

Characterisation

Bladerunner	Frankenstein
<p>Dr. Eldon Tyrell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of Tyrell is a critique of economic rationalism which was prominent in the 1980s through Reaganist policies 'Commerce is our goal here at Tyrell' • He is depicted as a man who has become powerful at the expense of the Replicants and those that are disempowered. 	<p>Victor Frankenstein</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akin to Tyrell, he is driven by Scientific glory, despite the menace on mankind that he releases. • He is obsessed with the acquirement of knowledge, however, at the end of the text he finally realises the dangers of usurping natural boundaries through his cautionary preamble 'learn from me... how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge...'

- Functions as an embodiment of ‘greed is good’ corporate credo of the 1980s.
- Juxtaposition of his opulent lifestyle and the medium shot of him conducting financial transactions indicates the subconscious pursuit of wealth and thus, alludes to the expansion of multinational corporations.
- Tyrell’s downfall and the chaos wreaked on LA 2019, reinforces the fears of biotechnology in the 1980s, particularly IVF and cloning.
- The harsh and frozen Arctic Circle, mirrors the cold and ruthless personalities that the avengers develop. Furthermore, they serve as metaphors for the isolation of Victor from society, and ultimately an environment that humans cannot control – another common contextual belief.

Rachel

- Science Fiction version of femme fatale.
- Tyrell’s scientific egoism clouds his judgment and results in his false wisdom. Evident in that he labels Rachel as **‘an experiment, nothing more...’** however, in reality she develops emotions of Deckard.

Roy

- Through Roy, what it means to be human is largely questioned as seen through his poignant death scene.
- Literary Allusion used ‘William Blake “America a Prophecy” **‘Fiery the Angels fell...’** reinforced through his descension back to earth, depicting him as Lucifer.
- Modelled to represent the Aryan race and thus, through his ill treatment Scott disparages the contextual issues of SA Apartheid, as the perfect person is secluded.

Monster

- Shelley subverts the prominent Gothic convention of the supernatural, through the insertion of the monster functioning as a *doppelganger* to Victor.
- Contextually, the monster represents Rousseau notion of ‘noble savage’. Similar to the replicants, he seeks acceptance and benevolence by the humans and due to the ill treatment he receives **‘I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend’**
- He is a binary opposite/foil to Frankenstein, arousing empathy towards him. He reflects what the human race should be like in reality.

- The monster is an embodiment of the marginalised social classes in the French Revolution.
- He also parallels Roy **‘I ought to be they Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel’** analogous with the visual metaphor of Roy following the death of Tyrell.

Walton

- Utilised by Shelley as a foil to Frankenstein, throughout the epistolary framework.

- Through Roy, Scott berates human morality **'only if you have seen what I have seen with your eyes'** implying that humans are failing to learn from the destruction which they cause.
- By beating Tyrell in chess, it is a metaphor for fight for control and power and his ultimate intellect over Tyrell.
- He is the chief romanticist throughout the text the rhetorical question **'What may not be expected in a country of eternal light?'** utilises light as a symbol of knowledge and discovery. This accentuates that Walton's quest is in search of ultimate knowledge, personifying the 19th century scientific rationalist's optimism that knowledge was pure good. Thus, through this pseudo scientific journal, Walton is depicted as a prototypical Romantic explorer.

Overall the Replicants question what it means to be human, juxtaposing the dehumanised humans. They develop emotions which the apathetic humans cannot.

Deckard

- An archetypal apathetic, ruthless and savvy Blade Runner – the common convention of a hardboiled 1940s film noir detective.
- His conspicuous bloody mindedness towards the 'force of law and order' is another common convention, articulated through Bryant's blithe reference to him as **'a god damn one man slaughter house...'**.
- The apathy of Deckard is magnified following the retirement of Zhora, through the non diegetic heartbeat, which instils human qualities into the scene, vindicating the Tyrell Corporation motto that Replicants truly are **'more human than human'**, questioning Deckard's morality.
- He utilises the literary allusion **'I shall kill no albatross, therefore do not be alarmed...'** which depicts him as the chief romanticist throughout the text. This is in contrast to Victor, who is indifferent and lacks reverence to the natural order.
- Whilst contrasting Victor, he parallels the monster as he **'desire the company of a man who could sympathise...'**, thus, reflecting the notion that human relationships are greater than scientific glory.
- Ultimately, he presages the ramifications of usurping the natural order, reveals the morale of the didactic tale of Victor and berates unbridled scientific progress in the closing letters of the text.

Justine/Elizabeth

- These two women epitomise the concern within patriarchal society at the time and the chauvinistic mastery which was common.
- Elizabeth and Justine foil Frankenstein as where he is impulsive, self centred and irresponsible, they are virtuous,

highly principled and honourable.

- Ultimately, they highlight the issues of justice and innocence.
- Essentially, Shelley creates a world dominated by doomsday imagery, whereby all women die, indicated how chauvinistic society exists.
- The science utilised by Victor results in asexual production, removing the need for females in the process of procreation. This also occurs in Bladerunner through Tyrell's scientific advancement.

Similarities

- Both Shelley & Scott explore what seemed possible at the time and this still seems to resonate with 21st century audiences.
- Both texts belong to the science fiction genre.
- Both creators become isolated and are secluded from society. Shelley depicts Victor as the 'Modern Prometheus' trying to emulate God however is punished forever. It may be seen that William, Clerval, Justine and Elizabeth constitute the liver of Prometheus, enduring eternal punishment. Victor begins to separate himself from all others in life. On the other hand, Tyrell lives in his 'Mayan Ziggurat' and opulent lifestyle 'fit for a king' whilst the rest of society suffers in the derelict earth, with little communication to the others.
- Society is discomfited by the creation of Tyrell and Victor, through the murders and unrest.
- Both texts provide cautionary tales regarding unbridled scientific progression, provoking the audience to question such innovation.
- Both texts are misogynistic and reflect the patriarchal makeup of society, evident as in Frankenstein all women die in the text and science creates asexual reproduction with no need of them. Similarly, Zhora is a stripper and Pris is a pleasure model – who both die.
- Essentially same messages and didactic tale is being told; unbridled scientific progression, misogyny, environmental dilapidation and moral deficiency.

Differences

- Shelley is more focused on the individual i.e. Victor Frankenstein whereas the dangers of scientific innovation are revealed through Scott berating society as a whole during a period of globalisation.

- Society is depicted as an omnipotent, insurmountable, sublime force whereas the environment in *Bladerunner* ceases to exist, becoming a mechanised world, dilapidated and over industrialised.
- Different contextual concerns but essentially same message.

What Romantic values are present in Frankenstein? How do they relate to the module?

Shelley employs pathetic fallacy, emblematic of the Romantic belief that through the sublime natural order human sentiment is liberated. This is articulated in the lines *'the waters were placid, all around me was calm... the calm and heavenly scene restored me'*. Accordingly, Shelley's characterisation of Victor and the monster reiterates Wordsworth's supposition that *'man and nature are adapted to each other'* – a common notion during the 1800s.

Additionally, Romanticism refashioned the ancient concept of 'Mother Nature', vindicating its omnipotence and the nurturing dimension of the natural world. This is elucidated through Victor and the monster seeking consolation in Mont Blanc, articulated in the line *'the very winds whispered in soothing accents, and maternal nature bade me weep no more'*.

Vindicating the dominance of nature in Romantic ideology, the denouement illustrates how man cannot conquer nature, contrary to *Blade Runner*. This is accentuated in the closing letters, as Walton is *'surrounded by mountains of ice, still in imminent danger of being crushed.'* Furthermore, the harsh and frozen landscapes mirror the cold and ruthless personalities that the avengers develop, serving as metaphors for their isolation from society.

What Consumerist values are present in Blade Runner? How do they relate to the module?

With his depiction of an ominous megalopolis, Ridley Scott explores various contextual issues of prominent concern during the 1980s. Over corporatisation, propagation of capitalism and increased accent being placed on material accumulation and sensual comforts are elucidated through Tyrell.

Tyrell epitomises the 1980s corporate credo *'greed is good'*. Ironically, we witness his opulent lifestyle through his dwelling in a *'palace fit for a king'*, yet its juxtaposition with his financial transactions in his bedroom, accentuating the subconscious pursuit of wealth, alluding to the expansion of multinational corporations in the 1980s.

The commodification of the Replicants is explicated through Tyrell referring blithely to Roy as *'Quite a prize'*, reiterating the immersion of Reaganist policies in society during the late 20th century, marking an era of corporate greed. Further strengthening the depiction of a highly consumerist environment is the artificial illumination of the city by neon lights.

Moreover, Tyrell's proclamation that *'commerce is our goal'* and *'Rachael is an experiment nothing more'* seemingly contradict their development of human emotions. Thus, Tyrell's lack of aptitude to remove himself from his consumerist pursuits is signified through his thick glasses, a metaphorical barrier to reality, emblematic of the erosion of morality in the perpetual quest for wealth – reiterating fears around the world at the time.

BLADERUNNER AND FRANKENSTEIN INTERVIEW

How is Frankenstein an example of Science Fiction and Gothic horror?

Written at the turn of the Industrial Revolution, Shelley delves into an unknown world, dominated by doomsday imagery and scientific discovery.

Through the didactic tale of Victor, various Science Fiction conventions are explored, the first of which is *'man playing god'*. Shelley forebodes the repercussions of manipulating nature in pursuit of scientific glory, covertly referring to Galvanism, whereby Victor bestows *'the spark of life'*.

Additionally, Science fiction presents the dangers of the thirst for knowledge and perpetual advancements, through an unknown menacing world. This is précised through Victor's cautionary preamble *'learn from me...how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge...'*

Shelley subverts the prominent Gothic convention of the supernatural, through the assertion of the monster, functioning as the doppelganger to Victor. The amalgam of dead body parts through the use of dark, vivid imagery in the line *'the yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscle and arteries beneath.'*, repulses and horrifies the audience, common amongst Gothic texts.

Further satisfying the Gothic genre, the text explores the binary opposition of love/hate and creator/creation. This complements the Gothic setting at the beginning and end of the concentric narrative in the Arctic Circle, an environment of desolation, isolation, coldness and ruthlessness, serving as metaphors to the personalities the avengers develop.

How is Blade Runner an example of Science Fiction and Crime Fiction?

The setting of Blade Runner in 'Los Angeles 2019' encompasses the archetypal scientific exploration of the future. Scott incorporates futuristic gadgets such as flying vehicles, artificial animals, video phones and image enhancement machines that are alien to both 1980 and modern audiences. The exploration of a new world, elucidated through the advertisement *'a new life awaits you in the off world colonies...'* is also common to Science Fiction.

The creation of Replicants, absence of a natural environment, with elements of film noir such as artificial lighting concealing stars of illumination, asserts the dominance of science over the mechanised cityscape – another Science Fiction convention.

Blade Runner is also an example of the Crime Fiction genre. Through the characterisation of Deckard, an archetypal apathetic, ruthless and savvy Blade Runner - the common convention of a hardboiled detective is present. His conspicuous bloody mindedness towards the 'forces of law and order' is another common convention, articulated through Bryant's blithe reference to him as *'a god damn one man slaughter house'*.

The apathy of Deckard is magnified following the *'retirement'* of Zhora, through the non diagetetic heartbeat, which instils human qualities into the scene vindicating the Tyrell motto that replicants truly are *'more human than human'*, questioning Deckard's morality.

How does letter one of Frankenstein establish the concepts of the module?

Letter one, the beginning of the epistolary framework acts as an overture, establishing the contextual issues of attaining knowledge, unbridled scientific progression and Romanticism.

Expressing his elation, he alternates between revealing a quest for knowledge in search of personal glory '*may tread a land never before imprinted...*' and the fictitious benefit for all of mankind. Hence, through his willingness to attain knowledge by usurping human boundaries, he mirrors the archetypical male in the 19th century.

The opening letter further encapsulates the key notions of Romanticism. Invigorated by the natural landscape of the North Pole '*I was inspirited by this wind of promise...*' Walton elucidates the common belief that nature inspires mankind, epitomising the underlying notion in Wordsworth's poetry that '*man and nature are essentially adapted to each other*'.

Additionally, the rhetorical question '*What may not be expected in a country of eternal light?*' utilises light as a symbol of knowledge and discovery. This accentuates that Walton's quest is in search of ultimate knowledge, personifying the 19th century scientific rationalist's sanguinity that knowledge was pure good. Thus, through this pseudo scientific journal, Walton is depicted as a prototypical Romantic explorer.