

Frankenstein and blade runner example #2



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Despite being created in different political, social and cultural paradigms, a comparative study of Mary Shelley's classic novel Frankenstein and Ridley Scott's sci-fi cult film, 'Blade Runner the Directors Cut' reveals similar concerns and issues which are still relevant to a modern audience. Both Blade Runner and Frankenstein were written centuries apart, both being passed on Milton's four century old epic poem, Milton's Paradise Lost. This continuum of consideration highlights the continued significance of literature that examines ideas such as disruption and identity.

By considering the commonalities and differences between the two texts, responders are able to gain an insight into the consequences of man overreaching, thus disrupting the chain of being and how technological progress and scientific development leads to a loss of identity and a collapse in the moral nature of humanity. The idea of 'disruption' is explored within Blade Runner and Frankenstein through the interference of the natural environment due to scientific progress.

Such a conflict between nature and science within Frankenstein, stems from the contextual backdrop of the 1800 Romanticism movement, a backlash against the age of Enlightenment and its rationality through scientific experimentation. In an attempt to warn her audience of the horrifying consequences of disrupting nature, Shelley utilises a Gothic-Romanticist style, and motifs such as the sublime and soothing nature versus monstrosity as shown in the lines, "the valley that is more wonderful than the sublime", juxtaposed with the appearance of the monster as "yellow skinned, black eyed", whilst Victor warns Walton to "void ambition... in science and discovery", his character development, alluded to as the '

ancient mariner', whose ubris of overreaching the boundaries leading to his downfall is contrasted against his perfect childhood, again reiterating Shelley: warnings about the consequences of disrupting nature.

Likewise Scott in Blade Runner explores the disruption of nature, however presents the complete other side to that presented In Frankenstein, an environment where nature has become a commodity. Instead of the setting contrasting against the monster of the plot however, the disturbing scenery provides the perfect introduction for Roy, an android who's bleached blonde hair and film-noir ostuming is merely a modern version of the yellow skin of Shelley's monster. Roys deranged personality is comparable to the Frankenstein monsters fits of rage and both commit murders, the ultimate symbolic act of evil, to highlight their role as monsters set lose upon the world when man tried to surpass nature.

Furthermore, the panoramic shot of a 2019 Los Angeles environment reveals blazing fire and smokestacks representing hell, accompanied by the haunting diegetic pounding of the Vangelis soundtrack. Scott is evidently taking advantage of his audience's contextual concerns of an asian-ised, dystopic environment void of environmental sustainability.

This concept stemmed from the 1980's neo-hlpple movement and is further highlighted through the only natural element within the film is the sun in Tyrells apartment and the bonsai trees, suggesting that Tyrell has stolen' God's role, he has replaced the sublime with machines, thus having disrupted the natural to an extent which it cannot be fixed. Hence. both Frankenstein and ' Blade Runner' explore technological progress.

While trying to warn responders about the consequences of scientific advancement disrupting the natural order, both composers also simultaneously promote another Romanticism value, the questioning of human identity. Being titled 'The Modern Prometheus', Victor's 'gift' of creation echoed the two great utopian promises of the 18th century: the Industrial and French Revolution which although contained the potential of great promise, also contained unknown horrors, and this question of identity and humanity is mainly conveyed through the character of the monster.

While described as hideous and repulsive, Shelley had nonetheless characterised the monster with eloquent and beautiful speech, a contradiction that forces responders to consider it not as a superficial creature of evil but also as an equal, self-aware being. The reflective tone found in statements such as "But where were my friends and relations?" and "What was I?" creates the persona of a lost child, giving the monster an individuality that the audience can emphasise with and consequently blurring the line between monster and human.

This confusion confronts responders forcing them to reconsider what they consider to be the human identity and whether one so monstrous in appearance but human in thought can count as one of them. Similarly in 'Blade Runner', the genre of Film Noir adds an expectation of deep rooted societal fears which adds to the fear of machines taking over human identity. Scott also relies heavily on his 'monster' to question the idea of human identity in Blade Runner, employing the same persona of a lost child with the android Roy.

The composer uses Jargon specific to the movie such as “ replicant” and “ retirement” to dehumanise the androids only to immediately contradict this by showing that replicants are not only “ more human than human” physically and mentally, but they might also posses higher morality and develop their own emotions. Roy’s use of emotive language is reminiscent of the reflective tone sed by the Frankenstein monster especially in the final scene ending with the powerful simile of how his own memories, which make up his identity, will be lost “ like tears in rain”.

These distinctly human characteristics of memory and emotions make up a very human identity that confuses even the modern audience forcing them to consider Roy as a human rather than just another product. This highlights the deep rooted societal fear of science leading to a loss of human identity as machine replaces man, much like Frankenstein’s fear of the inevitable decay and collapse of human society. In conclusion, both Blade Runner and Frankenstein are texts that uphold the Romanticism values of disruption of nature and the questioning of the human identity.

Though written and set in vastly different contexts a comparative study of the two texts highlights both composers use of setting and solid characterisation to convey their messages succinctly. However, it is ultimately up to the decision of the responder to consider the impact of scientific progress on the nature of humanity and the ‘ disruption’ of the natural to gain a holistic understanding into the issues presented by both composers.