ENGLISH: *FRANKENSTEIN/BLADE RUNNER*

Blade Runner and Frankenstein were greatly influenced by the social, cultural and historical contexts of their times. Although scientific and technological advances were the catalysts for each text, other features such as the portrayal of women and progressions in film and literature represented the contexts at the time to a greater degree. The role women played in both texts was directly influenced by the contexts of their time, with women playing a marginalised role in Frankenstein due to their perceived 'inferiority' by society at the time, and women playing a more sexualised role in Blade Runner. Furthermore, movements in the fields of film and literature greatly influenced the texts, such as Romanticism in Frankenstein and neo-noir in Blade Runner, indicating that these texts were influenced by social, cultural and historical contexts of their time.

The role of women in both texts represents the influence of the social and cultural contexts at the time, with their marginalised roles in Frankenstein and sexualised roles in Blade Runner. At the time of Frankenstein (1818), social and cultural views placed women as inferior to that of men. Subsequently, as a result of the social and cultural context, Frankenstein was written with little presence and impact of women throughout the story. The most prime example of this would be Justine, perhaps the most submissive and weakly portrayed of the female characters in the novel. Justine was wrongly framed for the murder of William and merely accepted her sentence as if she were in fact guilty. Justine shows no outrage at the misjudgement and willingly accepts an unjust execution: "unjustly condemned, I am resigned to the fate awaiting me." Additionally, certain statements made by various characters can also be considered sexist. For example, Captain Walton's statement, "what can stop the determined heart and resolved will of man", clearly relays that men are more resolved than women, which is quite perplexing seeing as how the author is a woman herself. Furthermore, the fact that life was created without the need of a woman, as well as the story chiefly revolving around male characters (Victor, the monster, Clerval and Walton), the impact of the contexts at the time is evident, due to the role that women play in the text.

The role women played in Blade Runner was more prominent than the role in Frankenstein, but whether this was an improvement is debatable. The women were portrayed as mere sexual beings, using their bodies to their advantage. Zhora, an erotic dancer; Pris, a 'basic pleasure model'; and Rachael, a seductive femme fatale, evident in her scenes with Deckard through the use of low-key lighting and close-ups of her in tight black clothing as she puffs smoke into the air. In spite of the women's sexual manner, Zhora and Pris are portrayed as strong, intellectual and cunning, a representation of feminism at the time also. In one mid-shot scene, Deckard offers to put Zhora's robe on. Zhora appears to oblige yet tricks Deckard, displaying the strong woman archetype, emphasised by the close-up shot as she turns and strike Deckard to the floor. The feministic portrayal of Pris and Zhora as two strong women is essentially diminished in the end of the film, as Deckard kills the two more representative of the 'powerful woman' archetype, while the more subservient and weaker Rachael survives behind Deckard's shadow, subtly indicating that women cannot survive unless they are protected by men. The fact that there are only three women in the film, and that they are all portrayed as replicants, represents that 'human' or 'real' women are not needed in society, and that they can be genetically engineered for their needs. Both texts represent women as less valued than men, showing a direct influence of the cultural and social views at the time.

The literary and film movements at the time of Frankenstein and Blade Runner are another example of how contexts at the time influenced each text. Romanticism, a late 18th and early 19th century movement that brought about a return to emotions over logic and intellect, was highly evident in Frankenstein, especially through the portrayal of the protagonist Victor. Shelley effectively portrays the message of Romanticism, particularly at the beginning of Chapter 5 when Frankenstein's toils and exhausted intellectual capacity finally pay off with the creation of the monster.

Frankenstein's emotional side soon kicks in after the creation, with feelings of fear and disgust taking over his rational side: "how can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form?" Emotion supersedes logic and Frankenstein is forced to abandon the monster due to his feelings of grave repulsion and disgust, repeatedly labelling him a 'wretch' as a result of his outburst of emotions. Frankenstein faces dire consequences as a result of his intellectual escapades, and his emotions begin to run wild, further accentuating the context of Romanticism with emotions superior to intellect.

Blade Runner was also influenced by movements in the film industry at the time. Neo-noir features characteristics in films such as identity crises and memory issues, as well as visual elements including low-key lighting and striking use of light and shadow, all of which are present in Blade Runner. A key feature of the neo-noir movement was the identity and memory crises evident in Blade Runner, in particular reflected in Rachael and Deckard. Rachael's humanity is immediately questioned at the beginning of the film, where she takes a Voight-Kampff test to determine whether she is a replicant. Due to another's memory being implanted into her wiring (memory issues: another key feature of neo-noir) Rachael believes she is a human. When Rachael attempts to prove her humanity through doctored photographs, Deckard roughly replies, "those aren't your memories!" Rachael's identity crisis is highlighted in a close-up shot of her facial expressions, not truly understanding who she is. Deckard's anger is also portrayed through use of shadow lighting covering his face, indicating darkness and rage. Deckard himself also has his identity questioned, firstly by Rachael who asks: "did you ever take that (Voight-Kampff) test yourself?" with Deckard refusing to answer. The unicorn dream sequence also questions Deckard's humanity, as the viewer is unsure if this is another implanted memory or simply a dream. The use of low-key and stark contrasts of lighting, especially evident with the contrast of the bright neon lights with the darkness of the L.A. streets, and the particularly low-key lighting in Deckard's apartment (also representative of his covert nature and identity crisis), is also representative of neo-noir. Movements in the fields of literature and film were evidently influential in both these texts, with Romanticism bringing a return to nature evident in Frankenstein, and neo-noir bringing unconventional features evident in Blade Runner.

Overall, it is evident that both Blade Runner and Frankenstein are highly influenced by social, cultural and historical contexts of their time. Advances in science and technology at the times influenced both texts, with experiments of galvanism influencing Frankenstein, and experiments of genetic engineering influencing Blade Runner. The role of women in both texts was also indicative of the contexts of their time, with marginalised roles in Frankenstein and sexualised roles in Blade Runner representative of social and cultural views at the time. Also, historical movements in both literature and films led to the texts being shaped by features of these movements, with features of Romanticism evident in Frankenstein and features of neo-noir evident in Blade Runner. It is clear that both Blade Runner and Frankenstein were influenced by social, cultural and historical contexts of their time.