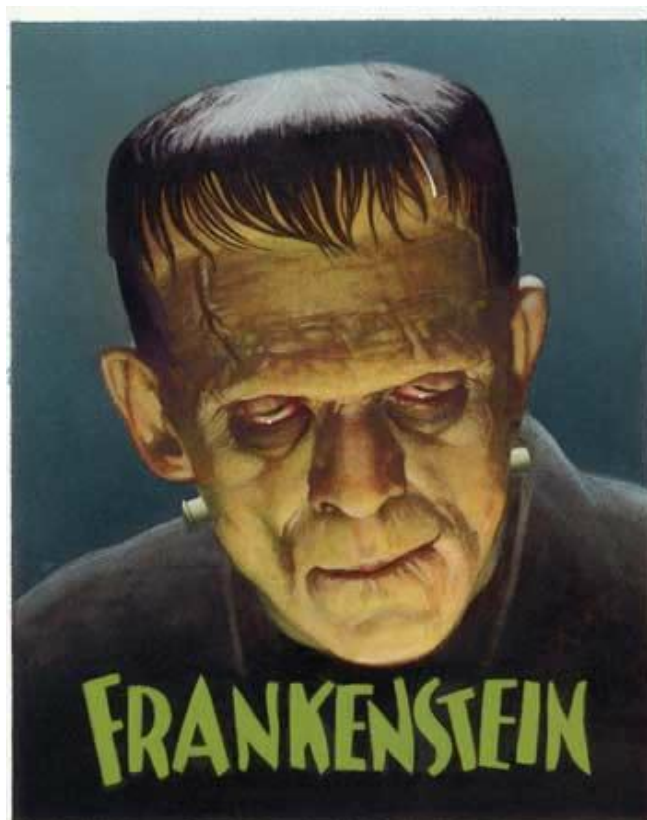
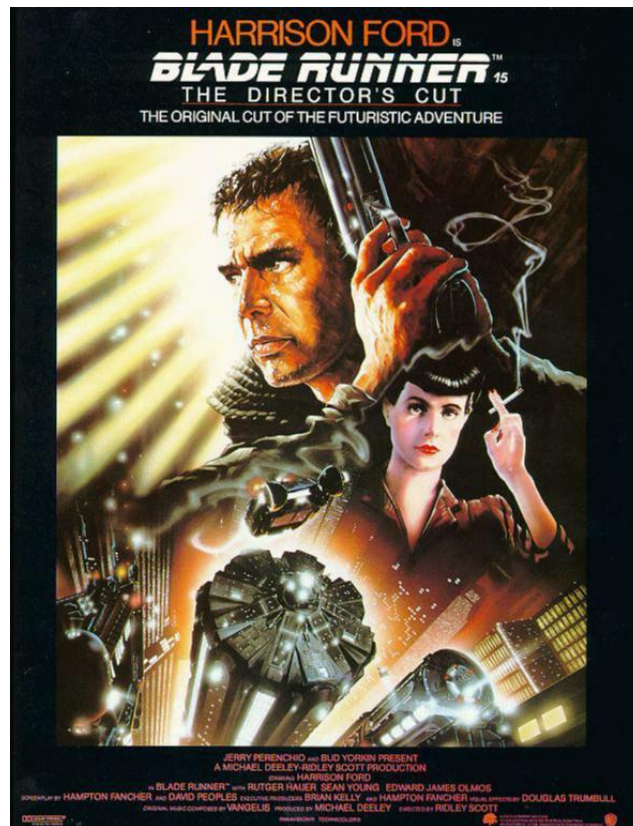


## ENGLISH: *FRANKENSTEIN/ BLADE RUNNER*

### Visual Representation

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# FRANKENSTEIN



**Image 1**  
*Gothicism*



## Analysis:

The above image depicts an eerie graveyard at night. The image is a low-angle shot giving us a closer view and making the graveyard elements appear even more sinister, with the brightly contrasted moon in clear focus in the background. The image is also dark in colour and similar to the description Frankenstein gave of the graveyard: “unhallowed damps of the grave”; the graveyard looks damp and foggy, mirroring Frankenstein. The image represents Frankenstein as it symbolises

the Gothic features embedded in Frankenstein. Gruesome deaths committed by the monster and the excavation and use of cadavers by Victor Frankenstein are only two events in the novel that express ideas of Gothicism.

#### **Quotes:**

“Her bloodless arms and relaxed form flung by the murderer on its bridal bier.” – Frankenstein

“Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay?” – Frankenstein

“I collected bones from charnel-houses and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame.” – Frankenstein

“I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain.” – Frankenstein

“The wretch saw me destroy the creature on whose future existence he depended for happiness, and with a howl of devilish despair and revenge, withdrew.” – Frankenstein

#### **Social, cultural and historical contexts:**

This image, as a representation of Gothicism and its features, highlights Gothicism as a historical context and its influence on Frankenstein. Gothicism in literature was significant at the time of Frankenstein (1818), and was highly influential in Frankenstein. Gothic literature uses settings that are sinister and derelict, and focus on the macabre. Frankenstein is embedded with elements of Gothic literature. Gruesome murders committed by the monster, descriptive sinister and eerie settings, and Frankenstein digging up dead bodies in the middle of the night to create a wretched monster highlight the significance of Gothicism on this particular novel.

The image represents Gothic features in literature and therefore helps the responder better understand the text's historical context and its significance. Gothic influences made the novel into what it is today, a somewhat frightening tale of a creation turned loose due to its maker's rejection. The novel focuses on the gruesome aspects of the monster's creation rather than the scientific explanation behind it. “I collected bones from charnel-houses and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame.” Shelley uses Gothic jargon to create a sinister and dark setting to evoke fear in the reader. “I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain.” Shelley uses vivid Gothic terms to evoke imagery, creating a gruesome environment that comes to life in the reader's mind.

Not only is the creation of the monster gruesome and representative of Gothicism, but the various and numerous murders committed by the monster also contribute to the Gothic nature of Frankenstein. The monster kills many a victim close to Frankenstein: Clerval, William, and Elizabeth, just to name a few. The deaths of William and Elizabeth were perhaps the most gruesome and Gothic in nature. William was brutally strangled by the monster's hands, a poor child viciously murdered: “I grasped [William's] throat to silence him, and in a moment he lay dead at my feet” a clear representation of Gothicism. Elizabeth also suffered a similar fate, left mangled and bloody on her bridal bed. “Her bloodless arms and relaxed form flung by the murderer on its bridal bier.” The detailed description of the murder and the strikingly vivid imagery evokes horror and fear in the reader, another clear representation of Gothicism. It is highly evident that the novel features events gruesome and macabre in nature, an evident link to the movement of Gothicism in literature in the 18th and 19th century.

Through *Frankenstein*, it is evident that Gothicism was a significant historical context in English literature. Highly influential in *Frankenstein*, gruesome and horrific events directly correlated with the movement of Gothicism, emphasising its significance and the profound effect it had on literature at the time. *Frankenstein* features innumerable events of a terrifying nature with multiple deaths as well as derelict settings, which demonstrate the significance of Gothicism and its effect on *Frankenstein*.

## Image 2

*Romanticism - Nature*



Analysis: Romanticism, a late 18th and early 19th century movement brought about – among other things – a focus or return to nature. The above image is an establishing shot depicting nature as a dichotomy of both beautiful and menacing through the use of colour – white clear skies for good, gloomy grey clouds for bad. In *Frankenstein*, a heavy importance is placed on the environment. The narrator ceaselessly describes the different settings, highlighting nature's beauty: “the calm and heavenly scene restored me”; or its terror: “beheld the bare trees and the black earth”. Victor and the monster see nature as healing at its best, and damaging at its worst. A large focus is placed on nature, evidently a result of the Romantic movement in the historical context.

## Quotes:

“I find it arise, like a mountain river, from ignoble and almost forgotten sources; but swelling as it proceeded, it became the torrent which, in its course, has swept away all my hopes and joys.” – *Frankenstein*

“I contemplated the lake: the waters were placid; all around was calm, and the snowy mountains, “the palaces of nature,” were not changed. By degrees the calm and heavenly scene restored me, and I continued my journey towards Geneva.” – *Frankenstein*

“As the sun became warmer and the light of day longer, the snow vanished, and I beheld the bare trees and the black earth.” – The monster

“A tumultuous sea rolled between me and my enemy, and I was left drifting on a scattered piece of ice, that was continually lessening, and thus preparing for me a hideous death.” – *Frankenstein*



## Social, cultural and historical contexts:

Among other things, Romanticism brought a focus to nature. The above image represents nature and its importance in Frankenstein. The historical context of Romanticism was largely influential on Shelley's Frankenstein, with a heavy emphasis on nature's wonder. Nature's beauty is often mentioned and described as having a healing effect on Frankenstein and the monster, especially when their spirits are low. At times of suffering and low morale, nature's beauty and the sun's warmth act as an elixir that restores the characters to their original form. Therefore, it is evident that Romanticism and nature are quite significant in Frankenstein.

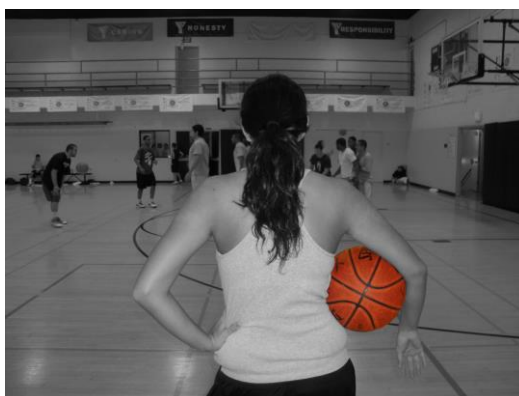
Shelley often uses nature as a metaphor to describe ongoing events in the novel. "I find it arise, like a mountain river, from ignoble and almost forgotten sources; but swelling as it proceeded, it became the torrent which, in its course, has swept away all my hopes and joys." Shelley describes the torrential mountain river as the extinguishing of Frankenstein's hopes, combining the emphasis on nature with the main plotline of Frankenstein's adventure. Evidently, Romanticism plays a big role in Frankenstein, as the focus on nature is abundant in the novel, especially important when used in comparisons to the characters' conquests.

The return to a focus on nature also impacted the main plot of Frankenstein. At the best times, nature healed and restored the main characters. "By degrees the calm and heavenly scene restored me, and I continued my journey towards Geneva." Nature is often the driving force for characters to propel in the story, especially with Frankenstein who struggles at times of hardship; nature gives Frankenstein the motivation to continue in his quests. At the worst times, tempestuous and blizzard-like weather destroys the main characters physically, and arguably is what eventually takes Frankenstein's life in the end, with the heavy snow and rain leading him to illness and death. "A tumultuous sea rolled between me and my enemy, and I was left drifting on a scattered piece of ice, that was continually lessening, and thus preparing for me a hideous death." Torrential weather towards the end of the novel diminishes Frankenstein's health and acts as a barrier stopping him from completing his conquest. Whatever the form, nature is encompassing of the main plot and has an enormous effect on characters and their spirits.

It is highly evident that Romanticism and nature had a great effect on Frankenstein, and its significance in the novel is undeniable. This image represents that nature can be both good and bad at times, that it can heal or diminish one's health. This is especially represented in Frankenstein, where nature plays an impactful role in the spirits of the main characters. This image helps the responder better understand nature's role in Frankenstein, and how important Romanticism was as a historical context during the time of Frankenstein. Romanticism and nature played an emphatic role, and its significance as a historical context at the time of Frankenstein is irrefutable as it penetrates the story of Frankenstein.

### Image 3

*Marginalisation of women*



## Analysis:

The above image is a back mid-shot of a woman seemingly isolated from a basketball game. The image is, for the most part, in black-and-white, conveying a sense of sadness and alienation, with the camera angle from behind the woman emphasising this sadness and almost covert emotional state. It represents the social and cultural context at the time *Frankenstein* was written, in reference to the role of women. Women were perceived by society to be 'inferior' to men and submissive (more of a type B personality), and to a certain extent 'left out' of *Frankenstein*, much like the woman in the image feels left out in a 'man's world' or 'man's sport'. This was depicted in *Frankenstein* as the role of women, or lack thereof, was evidently miniscule in comparison to the role men played in the text, and thus representative of the cultural and social context at the time.

## Quotes:

"Unjustly condemned, I am resigned to the fate awaiting me." – Justine

"God knows how entirely I am innocent. But I do not pretend that my protestations should acquit me." – Justine

"I looked upon Elizabeth as mine – mine to protect, love and cherish. All praises bestowed on her I received as made to a possession of my own." – Frankenstein

"I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited, and may tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man." – Captain Walton

"What can stop the determined heart and resolved will of man?" – Captain Walton

## Social, cultural and historical contexts:

At the time of *Frankenstein* (1818), social and cultural views placed women as inferior to that of men. Women were not viewed as intelligent as men, and therefore were expected to perform less tasks requiring intellectual capacity and were relegated to performing menial domestic chores. Subsequently, as a result of the social and cultural context, *Frankenstein* was written with little presence and impact of women throughout the story. Much like in the above image, women as a whole were largely exempt from the story of *Frankenstein*, therefore the image helps the responder understand the text to a greater extent as they understand that this story was written at a time when society and culture did not view women as equals to men, and therefore, their presence was minimal. The women were, in a sense, 'left out' due to the text's social and cultural context.

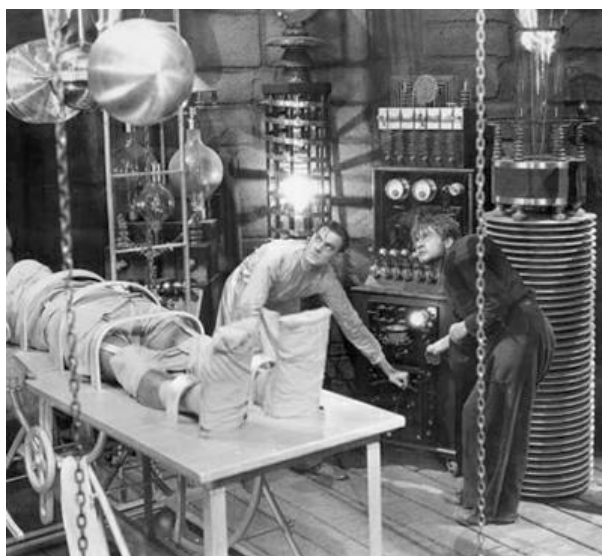
Immediately in the epistolary introduction, a sense that women were not as revered as men at this time is evident. Captain Walton begins the novel by writing letters to his sister, Margaret, who is the first female character introduced, and all that is known of her is that she is merely the captain's sister. The readers never 'meet' Margaret nor do they know if she receives or responds to the letters, nor if she even exists! Walton also writes, "what can stop the determined heart and resolved will of man?" an implication that at the time, women were not as determined or resolved as men. The portrayal of Walton and Margaret is already an indication that women were less valued at the time of *Frankenstein*, as a result of the social and cultural context.

Another female character, Justine, is 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." On top of this, Justine is seldom vocal and is often bounced back and forth between her family and the Frankensteins, until her eventual framing and subsequent death. Justine is the epitome of passivity and simply accepts any wrongful consequence, rather than standing up for herself in the face of injustice and showing some sense of courage. Justine falls into the stereotype – at the time

of writing – that women were inferior and weak, a clear result of the social and cultural context at the time, showing how significant these contexts were in shaping the text of Frankenstein.

There are many more examples where women are portrayed as less valued in Frankenstein: the fact that 'life' was created without the need of a woman, and Victor's need to 'protect' Elizabeth: "I looked upon Elizabeth as mine – mine to protect, love and cherish. All praises bestowed on her I received as made to a possession of my own." It is clear through the portrayal of females in Frankenstein that cultural and social contexts were very significant and highly influential in the text. The role of women in the novel was marginalised and represented the views at the time. Hence, the above image helps the responder better understand the text's context as it demonstrates that women played a more 'outside' role and were less prominent in Frankenstein, due to the views at the time.

#### **Image 4** *Galvanism*



#### **Analysis:**

The above image depicts the process of 'galvanism', where a human or animal is brought back to life through electrical means. The image depicts the electrical equipment necessary for galvanism, and is portrayed in black-and-white to convey to the responder that this process is not a recent discovery. Now known as electrophysiology, the idea of bringing dead matter back to life was prominent during the time of Frankenstein, and hence the novel was based around this process. Experiments at the time attempting to bring animals and people back to life gave Mary Shelley the idea of turning this phenomenon into a novel, as a way to also forewarn scientists as to the danger of their experiments. This process is included in the novel but never explicitly detailed; however, the image is still important in order for the reader to understand the process of how life was restored in the scattered limbs of the monster, even if the novel was quite vague.

#### **Quotes:**

"Pursuing these reflections, I thought, that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption." – Frankenstein

"Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay?" – Frankenstein

“With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet.” – Frankenstein

“When, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.” – Frankenstein

### **Social, cultural and historical contexts:**

The historical context of galvanism at the time was perhaps the most influential context in regards to Frankenstein. The idea of creating a monster through electrical means was derived by Mary Shelley during the time of these galvanic experiments; hence, the story would most likely not have been created if it weren't for this all-important historical context.

The significance of this context can be observed by studying the experiments at the time, particularly by Luigi Galvani, and his nephew, Giovanni Aldini. Galvani first discovered the effects of electricity on dead matter in the late 18th century when his scalpel touched the body of a dead frog and its legs twitched, dubbing the phenomenon ‘animal electricity’. His nephew, Giovanni Aldini, also conducted similar experiments in 1803, except this time on dead humans. Aldini's experiments were extremely gruesome and involved the probing of the rectum to elicit violent convulsions. This is significant for a responder to understand, as a context of the time is necessary to fully grasp why and how the idea of Frankenstein was developed. The image helps the responder understand the significance of galvanism as a historical context by giving the reader a general grasp as to what the experiments consisted of; electrical current passed on to a dead body, life restored, etc.

The process of galvanism is represented in the novel, although not to the extent where the process of creation is explicitly detailed. The mentioning of electricity sparking through the monster, and hence, eliciting life is present: “I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet”. The reason why the process was not detailed is that Frankenstein, in the context of the story, did not want mankind to know how he created the monster, as he did not want the same mistake to be made. “You expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be; listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved upon that subject.” As the nature of the novel is a cautionary tale warning of scientific and technological advancements, the idea that this ‘secret’ must not escape and be repeated by mankind is apropos to the story and very fitting with the cautionary tone; hence, the omission of a clear representation of the process of galvanism can be excused as it is damaging to the credibility of the story itself.

Overall, the process of galvanism, and hence the experiments at the time, were highly influential in Frankenstein. As a historical context, galvanism and scientific advances were the motive behind the story and hence its significance is insurmountable when referring to the text. Without this historical context, Frankenstein would not have existed. The image above helps the reader comprehend why and how the monster was created and thus its significance as a historical context.

### **Image 5**

*Romanticism – Emotions above intellect*





## Analysis:

As well as bringing back a return to nature, the historical movement of Romanticism also brought a return or focus to emotions, and defined it as more important than intellectual capacity. The above image is a close-up shot of two golden masks used in drama performances, highlighting both the happy and sad faces. The use of golden masks emphasises the importance of emotions, as the colour gold indicates the highest standard and aristocratic qualities. The image helps the responder understand Frankenstein to a greater extent as it shows two very contrasting emotions that are heavily present in the novel, an indication that emotions are significant in the novel due to the historical context. Nearly every character in Frankenstein exhibits a variety of emotions, from anger to fear and happiness to sadness. The protagonist in particular, Victor Frankenstein, experiences a multitude of emotions throughout the novel, ranging from ambition and happiness in the beginning of the novel: “no human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself” to fear, depression and anger in the end: “despair had almost indeed secured her prey, and I should soon have sunk beneath this misery”.

## Quotes:

“You may deem me romantic, my dear sister, but I bitterly feel the want of a friend.” – Captain Walton

“The heart of men, when unprejudiced by any obvious self-interest, are full of brotherly love and charity.” – De Lacey

“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?” – Frankenstein

“You can blast my other passions, but revenge remains – revenge, henceforth dearer than light or food! I may die, but first you, my tyrant and tormentor, shall curse the sun that gazes on your misery.” – The monster

“Seek happiness in tranquillity and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries.” – Frankenstein

## Social, cultural and historical contexts:

The historical movement of Romanticism in the late 18th and early 19th century brought about a focus on emotions. More importantly, it placed emotions above intellect and reasoning i.e. not everything can be solved by logical means. This return to an importance of emotions highly influenced Frankenstein, with all of the characters showing varying degrees of emotions. The general idea of intellect in Romanticism was portrayed in Frankenstein, with the idea that emotions should be placed above intellect as intellect can lead to destruction and chaos. Frankenstein was used by Shelley to portray that focusing too heavily on intellect could be damaging to oneself and society. This is depicted through Frankenstein focusing on scientific and intellectual discoveries that lead to his death and the deaths of his loved ones.

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 however, with his 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. Frankenstein feels that he has made a huge mistake in creating this ‘wretch’, and immediately questions his actions: “unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, and continued a long time traversing my bedchamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep”. 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.

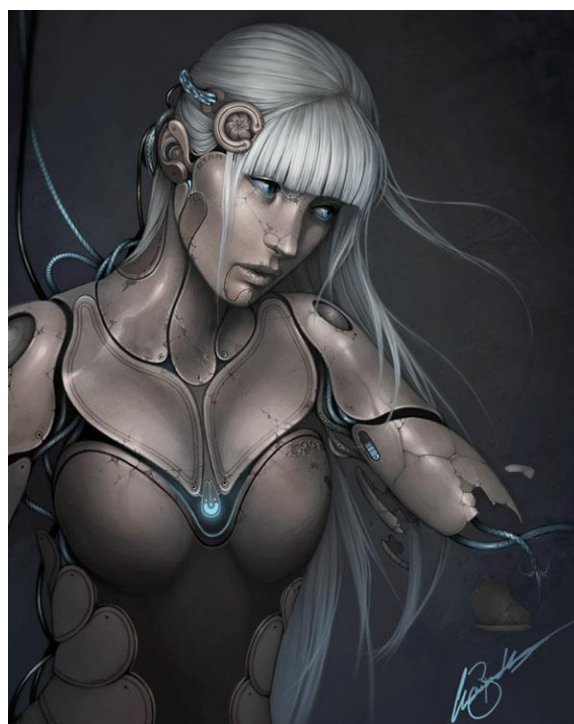
As the novel progresses, and Frankenstein begins to rationalise with the monster, the monster convinces Frankenstein to yet again put his intellectual capabilities to work by creating a female version of the monster. The monster, who had developed emotions through observation of the De Lacey family, feels a longing for a female partner, one as hideous and repulsive as he, so that they can live together in peace, isolated from mankind. "I demand a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself". Shelley effectively emphasises the importance of emotions through the monster: "the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes" highlighting the power of emotions. Frankenstein accepts the monster's offer, and begins to create the female version. Logic and reasoning soon kicks in again, with Frankenstein logically deducing that this creation will only cause more havoc, should issues arise. Frankenstein "[tears] to pieces the thing on which [he] was engaged" ultimately leading to his demise.

The significance of Romanticism as a historical context is undeniable in Frankenstein. Emotions are truly placed above intellect as Shelley presents the dangers of reasoning in the cautionary tale that is Frankenstein. This image represents emotions and its significance in the context of Frankenstein, and hence helps the responder understand the text to a greater degree.

## **BLADE RUNNER**



**Image 1**  
*Genetic engineering*



### **Analysis:**

The above image depicts a female cyborg. The camera angle of a mid-shot puts emphasis on the cyborg's robotic features such as the electrical wires, as well as highlighting her human-like features, such as her flowing platinum hair and blue eyes. The colours used in the image are also very indicative of robotics, with blue and white being the predominant colours on the cyborg. The image represents the historical context of cloning and genetic engineering at the time of Blade Runner, which was the driving influence for the movie and hence was very significant. The movie's plot is based around the genetically engineered line of 'replicants' called the 'NEXUS 6', with five of them escaping an off-world colony and returning to earth in search for their creator. Experiments with cloning were significant at the time of the text, and therefore the image can be connected to the replicants that run rampant in Blade Runner.

### **Quotes:**

"Not really. I make friends. They're toys. My friends are toys. I make them. It's a hobby. I'm a genetic designer." – Sebastian

"She's a replicant, isn't she?" – Deckard

"Would you... like to be upgraded?" – Tyrell

"They were designed to copy humans in every way, except their emotions." – Bryant

"Of course it's not real. Do you think I'd be working in a place like this if I could afford a real snake?" – Zhora

### **Social, cultural and historical contexts:**

In the social and historical contexts of Blade Runner, the cloning experiments at the time were the driving force for the plot. Dr. John B. Gurdon and Dr. Willadsen were among the first to successfully

achieve genetic engineering, with the cloning of a frog and lamb respectively, circa 1980. Scientific and technological improvements led to the discovery of genetic engineering and the idea of 'replicants' in Blade Runner. Although the movie was based off of these cloning experiments, the replicants weren't necessarily cloned, but genetically engineered, hence the individuality in their appearances. The movie, set in 2019, indicates that science and technology has developed over time where genetic engineering of humans is possible, hence highlighting the significance (and consequences) of cloning at the time.

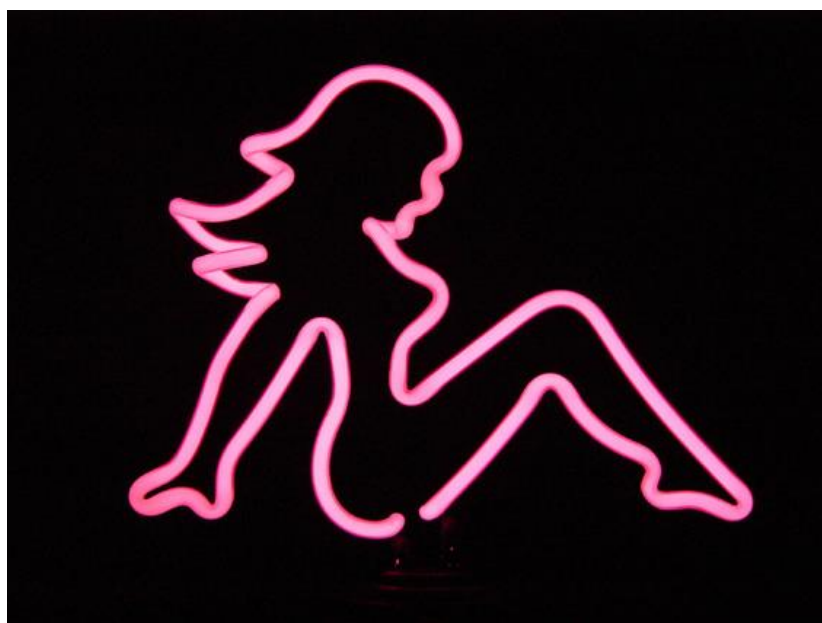
Blade Runner (much like Frankenstein) is a cautionary tale warning of advances in science and technology in the field of genetic engineering. Ridley Scott portrays the dangers of cloning and genetic engineering by creating a dystopian society where technology and science is rampant, and the replicants are threatening to cause even more chaos. The movie also tackles the issue of genetic engineering becoming 'too advanced', with the replicants' behaviour and appearance mirroring (and bettering) that of the humans. The human characters struggle to distinguish the replicants from the humans, relying on the Voight-Kampff machine/test (which must be completed voluntarily by the supposed replicant) to distinguish between them. The replicants are portrayed as perfect specimens whereas the human characters have many flaws. Physically, intellectually and emotionally the replicants appear to be more advanced than humans. They are in perfect physical shape, had the intellectual capacity to escape an off world colony and navigate a spaceship back to earth, and also show emotional unity and compassion towards each other as well as the humans (Roy deciding not to kill Deckard). The replicants have become far more advanced and therefore pose an even bigger problem than first imagined. Fortunately, Dr. Tyrell had implemented a failsafe program that gave the replicants only four years to live, portraying to the viewer that science and technology can bring with it dire consequences that need to be contained. Scott effectively portrays the historical context at the time of the cloning experiments and the consequences of these advances in science and technology, with the above image portraying to the reader the significance of science and technology in Blade Runner.

Perhaps the least menacing of the replicants, Rachael, poses the biggest problem in regards to genetic engineering advancements within the context of the film. With the implantation of memories into her wiring, Rachael believes that she is human. In one scene, Deckard is questioning Rachael to determine whether she is a replicant. Rachael, displaying all of the classic femme fatale attributes – smoking, tight clothes, and seductive body language – is shown in a mid-shot, and appears to be as human, if not more human, than Deckard. In a test that usually takes twenty or thirty questions, Tyrell mentions, "it took more than a hundred for Rachael, didn't it?" The distinguishing of human and replicant becomes even harder, posing an even bigger problem to modern society. Scott effectively portrays the historical context of cloning in the film and outlines the dire consequences of such advances. The above image displays to the reader that genetic engineering is a highly significant historical context in Blade Runner.



## Image 2

*Sexualisation and 'dehumanisation' of women*



### Analysis:

The above image is a full-shot of a cartoon or 'fake' pink neon woman posing seductively. The body language of the woman and the pink colour used is representative of the sexualisation and objectification of women in modern society, a social and cultural context represented in Blade Runner. All the women portrayed in Blade Runner exhibit sexualized behaviour, with Rachael portrayed as an alluring femme fatale, Pris a basic pleasure model, and Zhora an erotic dancer. Another major concern is that all the women are portrayed as replicants with no women portrayed as human beings, indicating that women are replaceable and can simply be cloned for their needs in society, portrayed in the above image through the 'fake' woman. The image symbolises the role women play in Blade Runner and hence is very significant in understanding the social and cultural context at the time of Blade Runner.

### Quotes:

"The fourth skin-job is Pris. A basic pleasure model." – Bryant

"Rachael is an experiment. Nothing more." – Tyrell

"You're reading a magazine. You come across a full-page nude photo of a girl." – Deckard

"You show [the nude photo of a girl] to your husband. He likes it so much he hangs it in your bedroom." – Deckard

\*Scene portraying Zhora's bare breasts as she prepares for a shower.

### Social, cultural and historical contexts:

The portrayal of women in Blade Runner can be considered as misogynistic, with all three women

portrayed as replicants who use their body to their advantage; however, this is certainly indicative of the social and cultural context at the time of Blade Runner. Zhora, Pris and Rachael are all characters that in some way use their body to their advantage, as a stripper, model and seductive 'femme fatale', respectively. The argument whether the movie is misogynistic itself, or rather is representative of a time where misogynistic views were held by society, cannot be distinctly evaluated and is in essence quite irrelevant: the movie portrays misogyny and therefore can be viewed as a text with misogynistic values.

There are two main features of the film that represent misogyny. The first being the over-sexualisation of the female characters (not to mention, that these three characters are the only female characters shown in the entire film, compared to a bevy of male characters, both human and replicant). Zhora, Pris and Rachael are all presented in a sexual manner, with Zhora and Pris being the most overt in their sexuality. On the contrary, Zhora and Pris are portrayed as strong, intellectual and cunning, a representation of feminism at the time as well. In one mid-shot scene, Deckard offers to put Zhora's robe on. Zhora appears to oblige yet tricks Deckard and strikes him with her palm, displaying the strong woman archetype. Rachael however, despite her femme fatale portrayal, is the least 'powerful' and cunning of the three and hence subverts this femme fatale archetype. The feministic portrayal of Pris and Zhora is essentially diminished however 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. The sexualised role of women is representative of the social and cultural context at the time and is represented in the image, hence giving the responder a better understanding of the misogynistic and sexualised role of women in Blade Runner.

The second feature of Blade Runner that can be regarded as misogynistic is that there are only three women portrayed in the film, and not one of them is human; all are genetically engineered replicants. This subtext must not be ignored, as it represents that 'human' or 'real' women are not needed in the future, and that all society needs them for – their bodies/sexualised nature – can be genetically engineered. Furthermore, it can be accurately assumed that this sexualised nature was implanted into the women, as all three of the replicant women exhibit an enhanced sexuality throughout the film. This further represents the stereotype (at the time) that women are needed in society for their bodies and little more, a certain misogynistic representation of the relative social and cultural context.

The above image embodies the views at the time of Blade Runner that women were needed solely for their sexual capacity, hence the image gives the reader a better degree of understanding of the context of Blade Runner. The image can be directly related to at least two of the three female characters (Zhora and Pris), and in some ways represents Rachael's seductive nature also. It is clear that the above image represents the misogynistic views of women at the time of Blade Runner, and hence gives the responder a deeper understanding.

**Image 3**  
*Neo-noir*



### **Analysis:**

The above image is a mid-shot of a mysterious masked man in a dark outfit, with a background of light shining behind the man – the contrast of light and dark evident. The image represents Blade Runner with its mysterious characters and emphasis on light-and-dark contrast in settings, but more importantly, it represents the historical movement of neo-noir in films at the time of Blade Runner, and the significant influence of this context. The neo-noir genre, a film movement characterised as a modern offspring of film noir, features characteristics in films such as identity crises, memory issues, subjectivity, technological problems and their social ramifications, antihero protagonists, as well as visual elements including low-key lighting, striking use of light and shadow, and unusual camera placement. Most, if not all of these features are present in Blade Runner and are a direct result of the historical film movement of neo-noir, accentuating its significance.

### **Quotes:**

“You know, that Voight-Kampff test of yours... did you ever take that test yourself?” – Rachael

“Implants. Those aren’t your memories! They’re somebody else’s. They Tyrell’s niece’s.” – Deckard

“Replicants are like any other machine. They’re either a benefit or a hazard.” – Deckard

\*Opening scenes where the neon lights and bright signs scattered through the futuristic L.A. setting are contrasted with the darkened city streets, alleys and buildings

### **Social, cultural and historical contexts:**

The film genre of neo-noir was highly evident in Blade Runner and hence was a significant historical context in shaping the text. The neo-noir genre embodies features of film noir movies such as low-key lighting and murder, however it puts a modern twist on the genre with many modernistic characteristics including the antihero protagonist, identity and memory crises, and the consequences of technology.

Deckard, the protagonist of Blade Runner, can be seen as an antihero due to his emotionless ‘retiring’ and treatment of the replicant characters. Deckard remorselessly kills Zhora and Pris for

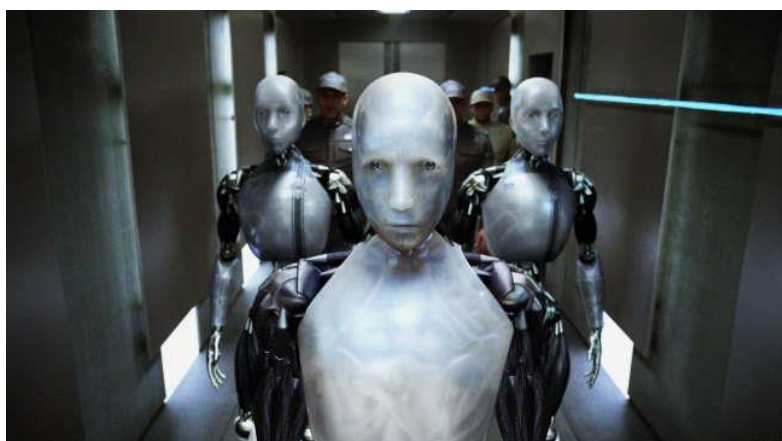
seemingly no other reason other than it is his job. Deckard shoots Pris repeatedly, with Pris screaming in agonising pain, and Deckard gives her a quick glance as he walks past her. The replicants' compassion towards each other and even towards the human characters – Deckard in particular, whom Roy saves from plummeting to his death – indicates the reversal of the roles of protagonist and antagonist, a key feature of the neo-noir movement. Its representation in *Blade Runner* makes evident that it was a significant historical context at the time, which the above image displays.

Another key feature of the neo-noir movement is the identity and memory crises evident in *Blade Runner*. This in particular is 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 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 and emotions, not truly understanding who she is. Deckard himself also has his identity questioned, firstly by Rachael who asks: "did you ever take that (Voight-Kampff) test yourself?" Deckard refuses 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. Deckard later finds a unicorn origami piece on the floor, and remembers Gaff's words; "it's too bad she won't live, but then again who does?" indicating that Gaff made the unicorn, and that Deckard is also a replicant, although this is debatable. Identity and memory crises are a key feature of neo-noir films, and the above image, displaying a mysterious masked man, is representative of an identity crisis with the mask covering his face; thus it can be said that the historical context of neo-noir was highly significant in *Blade Runner*.

Another key feature of neo-noir is the consequences of technology, explained in detail in image 1. The low-key lighting seen throughout the film, and the stark contrasts of lighting is also representative of neo-noir. This is especially evident in the contrast of the bright neon lights and 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). Therefore, as the above image encompasses the genre of neo-noir, and the genre had a significant impact on the text of *Blade Runner*, the above image helps the responder understand the historical context of neo-noir and its significance on the film.

#### **Image 4**

*Lack of Civility/Question of Humanity*



#### **Analysis:**

The above image is a mid-shot highlighting the lack of emotions of the three robots, accentuated by the white-grey colour demonstrating a lack of feeling. Normally, this image of three emotionless



robots would represent the robots or replicants in a film; however, the context of the image would be more applicable to the human characters, who are more emotionless and robotic in their actions than the replicants themselves. Coinciding with the neo-noir reversal of protagonist and antagonist, it is the human characters in Blade Runner that show a lack of compassion towards one another and to the replicants. In this sense, Scott is questioning humanity and how the pressures of modern society are diminishing our civility and lack of emotion and compassion to one another. The above image is representative of the lack of civility and compassion of the human characters in Blade Runner, rather than the replicants.

### **Quotes:**

“Come on, don't be an asshole, Deckard.” – Bryant

“Stop right where you are! You know the score, pal. You're not cop, you're little people.” – Bryant

“‘More human than human’ is our motto.” – Tyrell

“Rachael is an experiment. Nothing more.” – Tyrell

“Those aren't your memories!” – Deckard

### **Social, cultural and historical contexts:**

The irony in Blade Runner is evident through the portrayal of the human and replicant characters. The replicants, the ones that are genetically engineered and hence have no real emotions, are the characters that display compassion, sympathy and civility towards one another. The human characters often show little-to-no emotion, and if they do, it's often anger or frustration, very 'robotic' reactions to a situation.

Bryant, the captain of the 'Rep-Detect' department of the Los Angeles police department, approaches the 'Blade Runner' Deckard to come out of retirement and help him retire the escaped replicants. Bryant has a very hostile and abrasive manner of speaking, almost immediately calling Deckard an 'asshole' and forcing him to accept the job, “you're gonna spot them” when Deckard isn't even sure if he will accept the job. When Deckard attempts to leave, Bryant yells, “stop right where you are!” and blackmails him, “you know the score, pal”. This is emphasised through a close-up shot of Bryant with a shadow covering his scowled face. Bryant shows no civility and is very hostile in his approach, representing a diminished sense of empathy in mankind that Scott is attempting to convey. Modern pressures, especially dealing with technological consequences, have led to this abrasiveness and lack of civility, something that Scott questions through the human characters.

As Tyrell's motto states, the replicants are “more human than human”. The human characters often snap at each other, with Bryant a prime example. On the other hand, the replicant characters speak to each in a courteous and compassionate manner, exhibiting empathy, morality and genuine companionship with each other, which none of the human characters do. In one scene, Roy's friendly manner is evident, “very good, Pris” and in another, he shows genuine concern for her life: “if we don't find out soon, Pris hasn't got long to live!” As Roy is displaying his concern for Pris, the camera shows him at a high-angle shot with a light shining on his face, displaying his endearing and compassionate nature. The replicants show deep concern for one another and are willing to do anything to protect each other, and in essence represent the true emotions that a human should. This genuine companionship shows that the replicants are anything but robotic in their emotions; the humans are the characters that display robotic emotion due to the pressures of modern society that have escalated in the future.

The above image of the emotionless robots is used to display the social and cultural context of Blade Runner. Technological and industrial advances have led to the diminishment of human

emotions due to the pressures and stresses that these advances bring with them. The replicants build a strong bond with one another and hence develop their own emotions. The replicants also refer to each other by their first names, whereas the human characters refer to each by their surnames. The viewers hence become more attached to the replicants due to their companionship and display of emotions, while the humans' lack of emotions and almost robotic nature detaches them from the viewer. The above image hence represents the human characters and the lack of civility they display to one another, and its significance as a social and cultural context.

### Image 5

#### *Commercialisation*



#### **Analysis:**

The above image is a full-shot representing a world where commercial brands have taken over the world and their presence becomes overwhelming and irrepressible. This idea of a commercialised world is evident in *Blade Runner*, with many scenes penetrated by commercial brands that are placed prominently for the viewers' eyes. Coca-Cola, pictured above, is only one of a whopping 30-plus brands featured in the film, outlining the significance of commercialisation as a social context in *Blade Runner*.

#### **Quotes:**

- \*Camera pans past an electric Coca-Cola billboard flashing 'Enjoy Coca-Cola'
- \*Deckard is shown in a mid-angle shot buying a bottle of Tsingtao beer after dispatching the replicant Zhora
- \*Pan Am, Atari and other brands pictured in neon signs as the spaceship pans past them

\*Harley Davidson neon sign pictured on the back of a truck in a street scene

\*Marlboro neon sign pictured as Zhora runs out of the strip club

### **Social, cultural and historical contexts:**

The sheer amount of commercial brands featured in Blade Runner convey the significance of commercialisation at the time. The above image represents this, as the commercial brands appear to dominate the settings in this consumerist and capitalist democracy. The consumer mass culture at the time of Blade Runner had a significant influence in the visual settings of Blade Runner with brand logos appearing in the majority of scenes.

The brands featured in Blade Runner include, but are not limited to: ANACO, Atari, Atriton, Bell, Boyards, Braun, Budweiser, Bulova, Casio, Citizen, Coca-Cola, Cuisinart, Dentyne, Harley Davidson, Hilton, Johnny Walker, Jovan, JVC, Koss, I.a. Eyeworks, Lark, Marlboro, Microma, Million Dollar Discount, Mon Hart, Nescafé, Pan Am, Polaroid, RCA, Remy, Schiltz, Shakey's, Toshiba, Star Jewelers, Steyr, TDK, The Million Dollar Movie, TWA, Wakamoto, VidPhone, Yukon Hotel Group.

Even though the above list is incomplete, it is evident that the significance of commercialisation is extensively portrayed in the film. This directly relates to the significance of commercialisation in both the modern society at the time of Blade Runner, and the futuristic society depicted in Blade Runner. At the time of Blade Runner, commercialisation was present, but to a much lesser degree. Scott portrays this futuristic society and demonstrates how commercialisation and crass consumerism will, in his opinion, eventually be overwhelming in our modern society. The consumer mass culture will result in every setting featuring numerous advertisements – even in unusual settings, such as space. Scott uses the setting of Blade Runner to depict that society will become even more commercially-oriented in the future, with innumerable neon signs scattered across the dystopian Los Angeles setting.

Not only does the extensive list of commercial brands featured in Blade Runner highlight the significance of commercialisation, it is their constant appearance in the various settings that is indicative of a mass consumer culture. Deckard is being transported in a spaceship as the camera pans across an electronic billboard advertising Coca-Cola. A full-shot of Zhora as she escapes the strip club gives room for the bright Marlboro neon sign, as well as Nescafé, Harley Davidson and many more being starkly contrasted with the dark streets of L.A., with their luminescence permeating the shadowy setting. The coloured neon billboards and corporate ads dominate the skyline and are the dominant source of light in an otherwise obscure environment, signifying commercialisation and its significance as a social context.

Commercialisation was a highly influential social context at the time of Blade Runner, evident through its influence of the text. The sheer amount of product placement in Blade Runner, combined with the brands' prominently placed in countless settings, indicate the significance of commercialisation. The above image depicts a world consumed by commercialisation, directly representing the dystopian society portrayed in Blade Runner, where commercial brands dominate the environment. The significance of commercialisation as a social context can be derived through its prominent influence in the text of Blade Runner.