
Responsibility As A Powerful Burden To Bare In Frankenstein And Blade Runner

Responsibility is a powerful burden to bare, one of which often no one likes to admit to. Usually, by the time one's self comes around to accept and take ownership over their creation and its mistakes, it is too late, and tragedy has struck. Over the past few years, artificial intelligence in autonomous cars have and will continue rising. Along with this, so will the body count. Who will be held legally responsible for these fatalities? Although this shouldn't be a foreign concept as Shelley showed us this over 200 years ago.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* are fictional texts which warn us through the relationship between the creation and creator of potentially severe consequences if creators do not uphold responsibility for their creations. In both texts, the creators have groundbreaking theories aimed to launch humanity into the future. However, neither creator thinks through all consequences or possible adverse outcomes produced by these creations. When brought to fruition, death and guilt become their only friend.

With both texts written 165 years apart, they are still trying to teach us the burden of responsibility creators must uphold for their creations.

Scott's *Blade Runner*, first published in 1982, explores a futuristic world set in the year 2019 where humans live among humanoids known as replicants which are near indistinguishable from humans. Created by Dr Eldon Tyrell and his corporation, the replicants were intended to perform tasks that of which were too dangerous for humans. However, over time, replicants became illegal following an uprising and violence from the replicants. To stop the replicants from developing strong emotions or connections, Tyrell had limited the replicants to a mere '4-year' life span; creating the impression that Tyrell has started to distance himself from his creations and in away abandon them.

Moreover, in the first scene of the film as the camera pans of the hellish cityscape of Los Angeles, the camera angles up towards a colossal pyramid-like structure. The pyramid is the base of operations for the Tyrell corporations and that Dr Tyrell lives in a penthouse at the top of this grand structure. The cameras angle facing up towards the building from below signifies Tyrell's supremacy over his creations and the rest of the world. Later in the text, the monumental structure is seen to be less of a pyramid and more like a Babylonian ziggurat in design. In a paper from Khan Academy, it was described that during ancient times the ziggurat was classed as stairway to the 'realm of the gods'. In the text, this 'ziggurat' symbolises how Tyrell sees himself as a god. To all replicants, Tyrell is seen as a godly figure as he is their creator. Furthermore, in Babylonian times, it is said that the gods treated the humans as slaves. By Tyrell living in his penthouse atop of the massive structure, he is seen distancing himself from the replicants and treating them the same way, as a means to be wealthy and powerful.

It can, therefore, be discerned as a message from Scott to all creators. Warning them not to become careless and focus on the business model or possible profit from their creation, but to never lose sight on what they wanted their creation to achieve and do for society in the future.

Following through the replicants journey to meet their maker, 'eyes' are frequently used as a symbol throughout the text. It is often said that eyes are the window to the soul, with eye movements consciously or unconsciously revealing a human's intent and emotions. A test is performed to distinguish between replicant or human; this includes analysing eye movements of the subject with great detail and precision. On his quest to live longer Roy Batty, a replicant, crosses paths with the creator of his eyes, Chew. During this interaction, Roy says to Chew 'If only you could see things I have seen with your own eyes', showing us that he sees his own eyes as his creators and that there is always a reflection of the creator in their creation.

This raises the question? If a creation is brought to life by multiple creators, who is at fault and who is to blame for its actions. Would the company be at fault, or are we to solely place the blame on the individual who first brought the creation to fruition? We, as a society, will need to consider going forward. Will we blame the automobile company when an autonomous car is involved in a collision, or will we blame the founder of that company and creation?

When Roy finds and confronts Tyrell, even he said that he had 'done questionable things'. 'Also extraordinary things' responded Tyrell. This brings the reader to attention of Tyrells blindness for his creations. While replicants had killed many people, he could only see the good that replicants had done for humanity. Roys newly found anger and emotion, then forced him to take life from the one who gave it to him and squashes his eyes, subtly reintroducing the eye symbol. This also reveals how, as a result of Tyrell not taking responsibility for the death and destruction his creation had caused, his efforts to eliminate emotion clearly fail, resulting in his eventual demise.

In the text Frankenstein written by Mary Shelley over 200 years ago, Scientist Victor Frankenstein spends years on his endeavour to 'bestow animation upon lifeless matter'. While developing his creation, he thinks of only the scientific challenges he is facing and not the potential repercussions of his advanced creation. Frankenstein then achieves his goal and sees the creature open his 'dull yellow eyes'. This links back to blade runner with the idea that 'eyes are the window to the soul'. Shelley's language choice when using the phrase 'dull' yellow eyes, gives the reader insight into her portrayal of the creature having a clouded soul and being separated from humanity. It can be immediately drawn that Frankenstein only now realises the 'catastrophe' he has created. It is in this moment that Shelley places the burden of responsibility for the creature on Frankenstein, showing us how quickly a creator's mindset can change towards their creation when they realise the significance of responsibility, they must uphold for it.

The creature is seen to long for a female companion and asks victor to fulfil his wish. However, Shelley shows us how Victor has accepted the responsibility and has learnt from his first creation to consider what repercussion might be set in motion if he continues. Knowing this, In the final stages of his production of a second monster, victor rejects his first creation by destroying the half-finished female creature and thus proving Frankenstein's learnt from his mistakes.

As the novel continues, Victor begins to suffer as payment for his responsibility to his creation. The creature is seen to kill Frankenstein's younger brother William, his best friend Henry Clerval and Frankenstein's cousin Elizabeth on their wedding night. It is again evident that Frankenstein holds himself accountable and responsible for these deaths claiming that he is 'the true murderer' of all these deaths. By Shelley now depicting Frankenstein the creator as holding

himself accountable for these deaths, it demonstrates to us that he has had a revelation about his responsibilities for his creations choices and that all creators must own up and accept the responsibility, before innocent people around them suffer due to a ripple effect of the creator's actions.

Despite all this, in recent times, it is evident that creators have not yet learnt to accept this responsibility. Not much more than a year ago it was reported that Uber was suspending self-driving car tests after a fatal accident. As a 49-year-old was crossing the street in Tempe, Arizona she was hit by one of Uber's self-driving cars and killed. This was thought to be the first time an autonomous vehicle was involved in a severe and fatal collision, one of which no judge, officer or even Uber knew how to deal with the situation. An article from BBC highlighting this incident depicted it as a 'wake up call' for other companies and creators who are 'investing heavily in research and development' such as Ford, General Motors, Tesla and Waymo. After a shocking turn of events, in March earlier this year, an article from azcentral had concluded that there were to be 'no criminal charges for uber' over this death. The same report highlighted that the family of the woman who was hit were trying to file a 10 million dollar lawsuit against the city for her death, for reasons inconsequential compared to the evidence against Uber. This issue highlights how the actions of the creator, Uber, resulted in others paying the price, just as Victor did in Shelley's Frankenstein.

These two texts highlight the importance of the relationship between creator and creation. Whether it is the creator not distancing themselves from the actions and decisions of the creation or considering not just the benefits but the hidden consequences it could have on themselves and others. Shelley and Scott both continue to teach the importance of the responsibility a creator must uphold for their creations.