

Study on the Conflicts in Frankenstein from the Perspective of Science and Humanity

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Abstract

This thesis aims to analyze the conflicts in Frankenstein. It elaborates the power of creation and destruction of science in terms of the conception of science and the ethics of science. Besides, it discusses the causes that result in Victor Frankenstein and the monster's tragedy, drawing on the discussions about whether the human nature is good or evil and whether the practice of creating "man" is good or evil. Thus, it reveals the contradiction between bioscience and humanity, and the importance of making a balance between them.

Keywords

Frankenstein; Conflicts; science; Humanity.

1. Introduction

1.1. Brief Introduction of Frankenstein

Frankenstein was written by Mary Shelly, a British female writer who led the Romantic Era of English Literature. As a masterpiece, it is always regarded as the pioneer of science fiction and has a significant impact on the literary world.

In the novel, the hero, Dr. Victor Frankenstein wants to gain respect as a life-maker but only to create an ugly monster. Instead of succumbing to Victor's wishes, the created monster kills his family in succession. Finally, Victor Frankenstein, who should have bathed in happiness, is devastated both physically and mentally. He and the created monster end in death in the battle. It is a tragedy through and through.

Victor's blind pursuit of science is the fundamental reason for their tragic destiny. Victor Frankenstein reflects scientists' curiosity of unknown things and their desire to change the world, but the limitation of humanity. He is a completely self-centered person. Despite rebellion against the Lord God, he creates a monster. However, he and his creation cannot escape loneliness and end up with a tragedy. From his weakness of humanity, we can see that the loss of ego will lead to isolation from nature and society.

1.2. Significance of the Research

The horror elements in Frankenstein are not only based on exploration of mysteries of life, but on the assumptions of human's own destiny. To pursue something mysterious is the essential feature of human nature, which will produce two kinds of results: good and evil. When human's desire for knowledge promotes the advancement of bioscience, it also leads people to the danger of survival. Due to the complexity of humanity, it has to be admitted that some scientists, unable to overcome weaknesses of human nature, are likely to claim from nature in the name of "science" and even exploit other creatures with intelligent abuse.

The unfortunate story of Frankenstein is more a prophecy than a fable. If we reread Frankenstein, we may find that Mary Shelly has already shown her attitude towards man-made man 200 years ago. This masterpiece has a very strong practical significance. Scientists should do something but not everything. They should never pursue science blindly, but apply it

rationally under the guidance of humanism, so that people can get more space for the development of humanity and realize harmonious co-existence between human and nature. Those who develop science and technology without discipline will inevitably become another Frankenstein. As the world's first gene-edited babies have been already born, the conflicts between bioscience and ethnics cannot be neglected any more.

1.3. Literature Review

In 1818, as soon as Frankenstein was published, it was favored by many theorists and writers. Up till now, there have been many British and American scholars studying it. In the 1980s, Mary Shelley and her works come into Chinese scholars' attention. With her novels being translated into Chinese, review articles related gradually appeared.

A large number of scholars abroad have conducted in-depth research on Frankenstein from the perspective of scientific and anthropological development, showing the impact and role of science on human beings. For example, Lederer focuses on the scientist's astonishing fantasy in Frankenstein, emphasizing that the technology will have a profound influence on body transplantation and blood delivery in modern medicine.[11] Hammond criticizes the scientific concept expressed in Frankenstein, for science has brought negative effects on human beings and society.[4] Accordingly, this novel also sheds light on issues about cloning and the transgenic technology.

Some scholars have conducted research from the perspective of psychoanalysis. Luo Yi analyzes the psychology of characters in the novel, reveals the effect of libido and subconsciousness on a person's fate, and further discusses social humanity.[6] Dong Wenyu explains the personality structure of important images in Frankenstein with Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which shows the connection between personality structure and tragic fate.[2] Sun Xiaopei analyzes the characters' mental state of being abandoned in the novel by entering their inner world, so that we can see different images of them.[9]

Other scholars have conducted research from the perspective of ecocriticism. Sheng Dan[8] and Sun Yefeng[10] both discuss the characters' tragedy in Frankenstein from the perspective of ecocriticism, thus revealing their reflection on the relationship between human and ecological nature. Wei Wei maintains that Mary Shelley expresses ecological natural thoughts in the novel by describing the creator's abuse of science and technology.[15] Xu Pengyun presents a fact that global environment crisis is increasingly serious, and interprets the ecological ethics expressed in the novel and its profound significance.[16]

Many scholars also have conducted research from the perspective of reflecting on science. Zhang Feng and Zheng Jipeng claim that the novel reflects on the progress of science and technology, and provides theoretical material for research on ethics of science, which allows us to understand the scientific concept of that era more clearly.[20] Zhang Jinfeng thinks that the abuse of science and technology will bring about potential threat, which acts as a wake-up call for the development of modern science.[17]

In addition to analyses from the above perspective, scholars have also interpreted this book in many angles, such as narrative structure, tragedy, archetype, romanticism, feminism, surrealism, Gothic characteristics, identity, character multiplicity, theme, etc. Profound analyses of the writer have been made from various research fields.

There is still a gap to fill the former scholars' study. Many articles merely analyze Frankenstein from one perspective. Large quantities of thesis analyze the fiction focusing on the theme "science and nature". A lot of scholars tend to quote Freud's psychoanalytic theory to analyze humanity. Based on the previous research, the thesis combines the perspective of science and humanity to analyze this novel.

2. Conflicts Reflected in Frankenstein in Terms of Science

Since the late 18th century, with the rapid development of the Industrial Revolution, Britain had become the first industrialized country and enjoyed a reputation of “factory of the world”, which made it prosperous in both science and technology and literature, and new inventions and creations springing up. Admittedly, science has improved people’s living standard, brought about prosperity of the economy, but its potential risks cannot be ignored. To reflect people’s blind advocacy, Mary Shelley created the eternal classic Frankenstein based on the theory of evolution and electrophysiology experiment. In this book, she warns that the development of science actually implies a negative outlook that human beings gradually lose the halo of humanity under an increasingly technicalized environment. And she also indirectly reflects many intricate conflicts that society had hidden at that time.

2.1. Power of Science: a Double-Edged Sword

Science is the driving force for social advance, and it has infinite power. For human society, is the power of science a blessing or a curse?

Considering the tragic fate of Frankenstein, people are made to reflect on how to correctly deal with the problem of science (the means by which humans change nature). Victor Frankenstein should have a favorite major, a happy family and a bright future. However, his ambition to “explore the unknown powers, and unfold the world the deepest mysterious creation”[7]39 led him astray step by step. He explored the origin of life and created a giant out of curiosity. As a result, the created monster kills his brother, maid, friend and even fiancée one after another. This moment he had realized the source of tragedy: “Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow.”[7]67 The author challenges the role of knowledge and technology. For people who have already agreed that “Knowledge is power” and “Technology is the primary productive force”, it is a reminder for them to take a comprehensive view of science, not merely enchanted by its advantages.

2.1.1. The power of creation

Under the influence of the Industrial Revolution, the United Kingdom had witnessed great changes. People gradually engaged in exploring a new path for social development. The continuous development of science, such as the discovery of Kepler’s law, the law of gravity, has proved that human can use technology to change society and conquer nature, which is a huge power of creating. Mary Shelley portrays a young scientist obsessed with the origin of life. In the novel, Frankenstein said: “Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate.”[7]43 Science is an invisible power leading Frankenstein on a thrilling path to scientific creation.

Victor Frankenstein, keen to explore the eternity of nature, hoped that he would have a magic power to transcend nature, replace God and benefit mankind so that he would be worshiped by all. He imagined that “my imagination was too exalted by my first success (with lower animals) to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as man.”[7]35 In some ways, science does have a fascinating magic power that helps to create new lives, replace God, and dominate nature, which is an irresistible temptation for scientists. Indeed, if science is endowed with infinite power, like a source of energy, every creature can share. And those who are given this power will become the ruler, affluent, prestigious and invincible. Driven by this, Frankenstein explore origin of life with the help of scientific knowledge. However, it only remains a nightmare for him.

Victor created a third species by the power of science but fail to get what he had expected from its birth. Instead, he was frightened by its ugly appearance, suffering from insomnia even

mental illness. The created monster did not integrate into human's life as he had imagined, let alone brought benefits to mankind. Everyone is afraid when facing this creature neither man nor demon. For example, in the novel, the De Lacey's, they were scared to move away after meeting the monster. Although this amiable family had beautiful soul and gentle manners, they still couldn't accept the outcast which was randomly created by a crazy scientist. Being mercilessly abandoned, the monster found Victor and asked him to create a partner so that it could lead a happy life. Unfortunately, its request was refused, and it finally revenged on Victor. Random creation and bloody revenge have confirmed that science has infinite power of transforming: it can make the dead come back to life, but it has unimaginable power of destruction. For man is man, monster is monster, there is an impassable gap between them. Scientists are able to create a variety of magical products. However, when a thing reaches its extreme, it reverses its course. On the road of scientific creation, they should cherish what they have at the moment.

2.1.2. The power of destruction

In the novel, Victor Frankenstein is the representative of most scientists. The science-holic created a monster whose appearance is totally different from a man. It is eight feet tall with an extremely ugly face and every parts of its body is quite large. "Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch." [7]77 Undoubtedly, everyone will be frightened by its ugly appearance.

His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips. [7]57

From this description, readers will feel a sense of fear both visually and spiritually. The man-made man, created by the scientist, became a failure eventually. Science, powerful and mysterious, attracts millions of people to pursue wildly (like Victor Frankenstein, mad about the origin of life, created a monster without consideration). Scientists spare no effort to explore its mysteries, and believe that everything of science is perfect: it can benefit human and make them become conquerors. Nature is just a tool of survival. Delusion and recklessness led them to ignore the intrinsic nature of science which can be as ugly as a monster sometimes.

Science, like the monster, can help those in need and destroy all it hates. At first, the monster had a pure and clear heart, trying to integrate into human's life and seek its social attributes. It studied human's language, explored their lifestyle and improved its intellect by reading a volume of Plutarch's lives and the Sorrows of Werter. It didn't know where it belongs to and kept on asking itself: "Who was I? What was I? Whence did I come? What was my destination?" [7]195 It learned about human existence and natural rules through the farmhouse in which it lives. But this single environment is not enough for it to integrate into human's life. Moreover, the monster believed that kindness would help it to gain others' respect and be accepted by human. It collected firewood for the De Lacey's voluntarily so that they could go through a bitterly cold winter. Despite a malformed body, it could escape any natural disasters fearlessly, and go wherever it wanted at a very fast speed. Its capability and flexibility, beyond comparison, once enabled it to save a young girl who had stumbled into rapids. But its benevolence had not been recognized and appreciated by mankind, which aroused its inner nature of rebellion. Since it was created, the monster had had a relatively independent initiative which could not be controlled by others. If a scientist does not purify his motives and create something out of desire, the rebellion of creation is more difficult to estimate than the power of science. Victor did not treat the man-made man in a friendly way but leave it alone indifferently. He failed to give it the right of existence so that the monster could not find a sense of belonging, thus following a path to destroying human.

Victor Frankenstein, for the sake of self-interest and honor, created a monster with his sinful hands, which brought devastating disasters to mankind. While with its sinful hands, the monster destroyed the stability and harmony of society. Victor considered himself as the creator, believing that the creature he created would benefit human and he were able to replace God to create new lives. But he forgets that the creation of science is as self-conscious as human being, sometimes even above them. As the monster said: "You are my creator, but I am your master—obey!" [7]260 Victor also realized the facts that the monster was not only ugly but also extremely destructive, and humans might be persecuted by it at any time. What Victor got from the monster was only a shabby word, "your-hours will pass in dread and misery, and soon the belt will fall which must ravish from you your happiness forever." [19] Victor did not conduct scientific research on the basis of humanistic spirit, so he ultimately destroyed a happy life as well as a harmonious living environment of human beings.

2.2. The Betrayal of Ethics of Science

Since the 19th century, the wave of romanticism had gradually arisen in Britain, and the ideology promoted by the French Revolution, such as freedom, equality, and fraternity, were also widely spread. Ideologists strove for the liberation and dreamed of saving mankind. God can create Adam and Eve, so human can create man as well, without the process of pregnancy and childbirth. Humans look at the law of nature by egocentrism, but actually they are the center of that law. [3] Victor conceited that man was a tool of subduing the nature, and that he was the ruler of the center of the law. He is the representative of scientific researchers, while the monster was the product of scientific research which should have adapted to and served nature. But was that the case? Would the creation of science be controllable as the scientist had expected, serving nature and society? The tragedy of Victor Frankenstein had answered this question.

2.2.1. Violation of bioethics

This novel reflect on science based on emotion. It is emotionally hard for human beings to accept man-made man because they not only have biological attributes but also social attributes. Human cannot be put on a par with those created species and their unique rights and basic attributes cannot be deprived of. The bioethics of human is sacred and inviolable. The theory of bioethics, originated in the 1960s, and is a new subject flourishing continuously in western countries. It is also an interwoven subject with the fastest development and the most vitality. Advanced science and technology enables people to interfere in others' living and death and makes it possible for artificial insemination, which results in conflicts of values and concerns about people's destiny. Mary Shelley, who lived in the 19th century, thought that science could realize the anticipation of man-made man, but when this experiment being conducted, what changes will science bring to human beings?

Although living organisms can be created, whether it will help human beings to complete the mission of procreation is a question worth pondering and testing. It is well known that human procreation is an irreplaceable physiological function of motherhood. When a single sperm fuses with an egg, conception occurs and a baby will be born. This is the most fundamental bioethics that every nation and culture should strive to maintain. "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", "it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs." [7]75 Victor succeeded in creating a "man" by the power of science, which was not a perfect "man" as he had imagined, but an ugly monster who was abandoned by the rest of the world. Despite the identity of motherhood, he thought that he could create a perfect creature to made everyone bow to him. However, as a consequence, his daydream bubbled and his whole life was ruined by the creation.

Reversal of identity and subversion of natural bioethics will inevitably pose a threat to humans' life and destroy their interpersonal relationship. "And the same feelings which made me neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent, and whom I had not seen for so long a time." [7]70 This suggests that before the monster was created, the experiment had affected Victor's harmonious relationship with those around him. For this artificial reproduction, he was devoted to collection of experiment materials and studying of related knowledge. He had been working day and night for two years, only to create an unbearable monster which failed to get along with human beings. The monster didn't receive any love and care after its birth, so it took revenge upon Victor's family and friends, bringing him a huge chaos. Victor neglected the authority of natural fertility and violated the norms of bioethics to create this monster, resulting in endless crisis to human society. Artificial reproduction, incompatible with the law of natural survival, will make interpersonal relationship stranger and stranger. Violation of bioethics is ultimately attributed to the blind pursuit of science and technology, which requires scientists to take it seriously.

2.2.2. Violation of ecological ethics

With ecological ethics upsurging, people have gradually realized that rapid development of science and technology and hyper-industrialization of society will not only lead to ecological crisis to the world, but also pose a threat to human beings. In the era of Enlightenment, Britain, France, the United States and other countries had successively carried on the Industrial Revolution. Therefore, science, technology and culture were unprecedentedly prosperous. As science and technology improved constantly, human were paramount enough to be the master of nature, putting humans and nature in confrontation. While in the Romanticism of the 19th century, literature began to advocate ecological awareness of returning to nature, emphasizing harmony and unity between man and nature. Mary Shelley was deeply influenced by this, so in the novel, she vividly expressed a story that those who tried to go against nature would end up being punished.

Victor Frankenstein was a fanatic of science. His pursuit of science was not practical at all, but a kind of anti-science against ecological ethics and natural law. Nature, must be regarded as having the same status as human beings and cannot be used to achieve their self-interest. [13] From the very beginning, Victor's craze for science was basically due to his selfishness. His interest in science merely centered on his own interest, ignoring the fact that his action might have a side effect on society.

In the history of human development, ethical values that take human beings as the center to guide people's social practice occupy a dominant position. [14] In this book, the loss of ecological ethics is mainly due to Victor and people's attitude towards the creation (the monster). Victor recklessly brought the monster into society, making it suffer from isolation and apathy. Thus, its inner kindness was undermined and it took revenge upon human. At this moment, the monster had evolved into a spokesman for nature. Although it was a creation of science, it had been part of nature since it was created (whether human recognize its existence or not). If a scientist fails to treat his creation well and thinks little of handling the relationships between creation, human and nature, it will inevitably do harm to society. When Victor conducted the experiment with his selfish desire, the harmonious relationship between man and nature was broken. At the end of the story, Victor exhausted his life to chase the monster, and was finally punished by nature (the monster). "Thus spoke my prophetic soul, as, torn by remorse, horror, and despair, I beheld those I loved spend vain sorrow upon the graves of William and Justin, the first hapless victims to my unhallowed arts." [7]126 Nature, has given a profound lesson to those who break natural law and ecological ethics in a unique way.

3. Conflicts Reflected in Frankenstein in Terms of Humanity

Mary Shelly repeatedly mentions the beauty of humanity in the novel, which shows Victor and the monster's pursuit of good human nature. Victor Frankenstein loved Elizabeth's sweet smile, her unconditional trust, and her consolation which accompany him to go through the difficulties over and over again. The monster, abandoned by everyone, summoned up courage when thinking of Agatha's smile. And it was the goodness of mankind that restored its confidence when it suffered from depression and loneliness. However, the better kindness they pursue, the worse result they inflict. When evilness in their hearts is gradually released, finally they could not resist greedy desire, thus departing from reality and going astray. Therefore, the author's description and yearning for good human nature is not so much pursuing the goodness of mankind as mirroring the evilness they presented when giving vent to their desire.

3.1. The Complexity of Humanity

Humanity is complex. There are two kinds of interpretations in Modern Chinese Dictionary: one is the nature of a person; the other is the normal emotion and rationality that a person has.

Humanity is uncontrollable. There is a saying goes in China that Man on earth, Good at birth; The same nature, Varies on nurture. It is believed that everyone is born with compassion. While in the process of growing up, their nature seems to change and even becomes twisted.

Humanity is variable, or multiple. Like people who have schizophrenia dual personality, the variability is more than that. Human nature is changeable, and everyone has his hidden side. This point has been long argued since ancient times. Mencius regarded human nature to be good. While Hsun Tzu put forward that the nature of man is evil—his goodness is only acquired by training.[5] Whether human nature is good or evil, there has been no clear statement so far. For the original definition of humanity, the Bible describes human as evil. That is to say, man comes to this world with sin, and he is born guilty. It can be seen that humanity is originally complex and diverse. As time goes by, it is even more bizarre.

3.1.1. The doctrine of good human nature

The doctrine of good human nature was proposed by Mencius, developed on the basis of Confucianism. As for the interpretation of Ren 仁, Mencius said that Ren means humanity; and the harmonious combination of the two is called the Tao 道.[9]323 Namely, benevolence is the virtue that one must possess as a person. The goodness of the human nature is just like the downward tendency of water. Just as all water has a down-going tendency, all people have a tendency towards goodness.[19]245 He considered human nature to be good.

When I say human beings are inherently good, I am talking about their most fundamental emotional qualities. If someone does evil, it is not the fault of their natural endowment. Everyone has the feeling of concern for the well-being of others; everyone has the feeling of shame and disgust at their own evil; everyone has the sense to treat others courteously and respectfully; everyone has the sense of right and wrong.[19]251

That is to say, the essence of humanity is good. If there are bad behaviors, it is not an essential effect but caused by habit and environment.

In Mencius' theory, the concepts of Lei 类 and Si 思 are very important, which distinguish human from animals and attempt to elevate human from animals. Considering the doctrine of good human nature, the essence of Lei is Righteousness. He criticized Kao Tzu: "Then is the nature of a dog the same as the nature of a cow? Then is the nature of a cow the same as the nature of a person?"[19]247 It means that the essence of human nature is wiped out if it is said to be natural. "What is it that is the with people's minds? It is that they know the same principles of and the same Righteousness. The sages know the sameness of our minds beforehand. Therefore his principle and Righteousness fits to our minds, in the same way that the meat of grain-eating

animals fits our taste.”[19]253 Human are different from animals and their spiritual realm can be promoted. They are rational and moral, which is the main distinction from animality. Si refers to the ability of thinking and human cognition of the objective world and themselves. Human use their thinking ability to understand and transform the objective world to meet their needs. While animals simply rely on their instinct to adapt to the objective environment.

3.1.2. The doctrine of evil human nature

According to Christianity, God created the universe, human beings and all creatures. In the Holy Bible, the ancestor of humans, Adam and Eve, were created by God. Abetted by the serpent, they secretly ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which disobeyed The LORD God’s command and thus being driven out of Eden. They came to the earth living, labouring and multiplying. This is what Christianity call the fall of the ancestor. This sin committed by them, spread to their offspring with reproductive behavior, which become the original sin passed on from generation to generation. Therefore, Christianity believes that human are born guilty, and that they come to this world loaded with the original sin. For a person, the original sin is almost equal to his nature.

In nature, selfishness is a necessity for animal to survive. But as for a man, it is difficult for such a selfish person to gain his place in society and even he will do harm to others.

3.1.3. Goodness and evilness can be transformed

There is no absolute goodness or evilness in the world. Humanity is not a simple black and white affair, which is filled with various complexities. For a person, being good or being evil is never opposite. On the contrary, they can be transformed into each other.

Both being good and being evil are motivated. The good and the evil are to meet their own needs. For an individual, goodness is passive and occasional, while evilness occurs spontaneously under accidental conditions. There is no certain scope for goodness and evilness. They are closely related to people’s mood, usually changing with different environment. There is no strict boundary between goodness and evilness. The transformation from being good to being evil often occurs in an instant. In social attribute, humanity is gradually divided into goodness and evilness. The doctrine of good human nature is the advantage of humanity, while the doctrine of evil human nature is the shortcoming of humanity.

3.2. The Battle between Good and Evil

The novel demonstrates a fantastic plot of the life-creating scientific experiment. The alienated environment such as tombs, laboratories, steep cliffs, ice and snow, exaggerates a horrible and gloomy atmosphere. The monster’s violent murder and its revenge upon human society shock generations of readers. But if readers go deeper into the story, it is not difficult to find the author’s concern for humanity and a strongly tragic meaning.

What Victor Frankenstein created was not a heartless machine, but a life with its own thoughts, personality and emotion. There should be no hatred in its heart and it longed for peace and kindness. Because of people’s distrust and prejudice, its evilness finally exploded and it became a monster. While Victor, whose lover and relatives were killed by the monster he created, inflicted depression and sadness and failed to make up for his mistake the whole life. A lonely monster created on the operating table, an arrogant scientist who seems to lead a happy life, actually with psychological distortion, they tortured each other, hunt down each other and ended up with death interdependently. In this book, readers can see that goodness and evilness both exist in human nature.

3.2.1. Victor Frankenstein

Victor Frankenstein was an aspiring young man born in the purple with advanced ideas and fanatical motivation. Although he had family and friends who loved him so much, he resolutely went far away from home and pursued his studies in the university of Ingelstadt to explore the

origin of life. To recreate life, he stole corpses at midnight and tried to piece together a human body in a secret room. Spending a long period of time covered by darkness, he finally awakened his creation in a cold night. He attempted to create a perfect "man", but it turned out to be an ugly monster. Therefore, he could not put up with this reality, abandoned his creation and fled away mercilessly.

In some sense, Victor was the very monster, isolated, ambitious and selfish. He had unique but unsocial thoughts of his own, so he separated himself from the public, hiding alone in a secret room to weave his beautiful dream. He wanted to impress the world with his technology and creation, dreaming of the birth of his perfect creature, and conducting the experiment over and over again. However, when his creation opened its eyes, it turned out to be a monster that was eight feet tall, with shrivelled complexion, straight black lips and surgical sutures covered in its whole body. Failing to endure this ugly monster, Victor almost broke down and left it alone.

As a "true man" in the novel, Victor's abandonment of his creation violates the doctrine of good human nature. Man is different from animals. He is rational and moral, and this is the main distinction from animality. He has a sense of compassion. But Victor failed to do this because the "man" he created was ugly, and consequently he abandoned it out of fear. He lacked rationality, completely ignoring how this creation would survive in society and whether it would do harm to others. His morality and compassion are shrouded in his fear, thus releasing the "monster" that are dormant at the bottom of his heart. Even when taking revenge on the monster, he didn't show the rationality a man should have, just blindly following the pace of it.

3.2.2. The created monster

To some extent, Victor was to blame for his tragedy, then the monster's misfortune was entirely innocent. Raising the cover of its cruel revenge, readers can see a good and beautiful soul wrapped in its ugly shell. Since being created, it had become a social outcast, disgusted and even attacked by human, so it finally lost its humanity and reduced to a demon. The monster's experience is the result of distortion of humanity, as well as the root of degradation of humanity: the oppression of social environment. Its revenge is a manifestation of distorted human nature that has long been repressed.

In order to gain human sympathy and care of mankind, the monster showed extraordinary patience and great enthusiasm. To gain trust of the De Laceys, firstly it peeped for a long time and secretly helped them. Then it patiently studied their language and tried to understand their emotions. Finally, it sought the opportunity to reveal its feelings. The first round of failure did not make him lose heart. Instead, it wished to find another opportunity. But its effort to approaching human still ended in complete failure. When he returned to the farmhouse to find that the Felixes insisted on moving away, the pain of despair led it to take the first step of revenge on human: smash up their farmhouse. After calming down, it decided to turn to its creator Victor Frankenstein. On the way to looking for him, out of kindness, it rescued a girl who had fallen into the water, but it was shot mercilessly. Misunderstanding and discrimination from humans irritate it again. When seeing William, a lovely and native kid, it expected to gain his trust and friendship that could not be found in adults. However, its hideous appearance also disgusted the kid. This drove it nuts, making it kill that innocent kid and frame up Justin. Its rationality and goodness had gradually faded, and then evolved into ferocious evilness. At last, the monster begged Victor to create a partner for it. This reflects not only its desire for lust, but also its wish to be respected and understood: since it is impossible to gain respect and care from human, it expected to satisfy itself from its partner. Unfortunately, Victor could not understand its affection need, trying to deprive it of emotional freedom for love and hate, and even wanted to snuff out its life that was given recklessly. He considered it to be an abhorred monster, wretched devil the tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for its crimes.[7]145 When Victor ruined its only hope for future happiness, the monster's rational line of defense

collapsed completely. Its remaining conscience was dominated by a kind of morbid psychology that “neither you nor I will get what I cannot get”. From then on, it embarked on a bloody path of revenge. Its psychological distortion reflects the duality of human nature: If the goodness cannot be well nurtured, the evilness will be break out.

The monster’s humanity is not entirely passive from emerging to sinking, but it is full of and battle between good and evil. On the one hand, it does have an unforgettable hatred and takes revenge on whomever it considers to be enemies. On the other hand, revenge fills its heart with contradictions, guilt and pain, instead of satisfaction and happiness. As it confessed: “For while I destroyed his hopes, I did not satisfy my own desires. They were forever ardent an craving; still I desired love and fellowship.” [7]344 Helping the Felixes after being abandoned in the wilds, rescuing a drowning girl during a long trek, begging for forgiveness after killing William, from these action readers can see that the monster frequently wanted to renounce the devil and return to the fold. If Victor took a little responsibility for it, or the environment wasn’t so cruel, the battle between good and evil in its heart might have a different outcome. Throughout the story, however, he merely showed responsibility twice: the first time he met the monster on an iceberg and the second time he was about to die. This sense of responsibility was just a flash. He made no actual reaction at all. On the contrary, all he had was disgust and hatred against it. As a result, the monster struggled in pain and remorse over and over again. Without any help and salvation, it was sunk in the depth of vice.

3.2.3. The practice of creating “man”

Through exploration of science, Victor’s motivation of defeating death is good. But he paid no respect to life, collecting corpse in graves, getting materials from slaughterhouse and magnifying the creation into an eight-foot-tall monster. All these practices are antithetical to his grandiose intention.

Victor Frankenstein is the representative of scientism. As a scientist, he created a man-made man and touched on the issue of crime and punishment. He lacked social responsibility and was arrogant, wilful and vain. The so-called pursuit of truth is just an excuse. To pursue scientific knowledge about is not a fault, and social progress depends on growing knowledge and improving ability. Science and technology do not have distinction between good and evil, but those who have scientific knowledge do. There is nothing wrong with Victor’s scientific research. What’s wrong is that his reckless attitude towards the experiment and his indifference to the creation.

4. Conflicts between Science and Humanity

In the novel, the man-made man has been confused by its identity: Is it just a scientific product capable of thinking, or a new kind of human? Victor Frankenstein created it and put forward this problem ahead of the whole human race.

4.1. An Abnormal Creature with Human Genes

From the perspective of the monster, although it is an abnormal living creature, whose body is totally different from that of the ordinary people, it is created with human genes. It was afraid of loneliness and wanted to communicate with others, trying to gain itself an identity as a human being. The Felixes gave it such an opportunity, and it learned how to be a healthy person. After disappearance of this platform, the monster became helpless. Either killing William by mistake or framing up Justin deliberately reflected its desire to communicate. When finding communication impossible, it longed for being loved. It asked Victor to create a partner the same alien as it was, but actually what it expected was a human life. Failing to communicate with human beings, the monster still wanted to live an Eden-style life on a small scale if possible.

On the surface, the man-made man should hate Victor most. As its creator, he didn't give it any understanding or sympathy, but he was the first one who treated it as a monster and ruined all its hopes. The moment it killed his friends, it was torturing him in this way. The reason why it did not kill Victor directly was to make him feel the torture and pain deeply. However, from another point of view, the monster was dependent on its creator because only Victor was able to witness and justify its existence. It wanted him to experience what it had suffered and forced him to understand itself. Though it had suffered from hurt from human beings, the monster still regarded Victor as a friend at the bottom of its heart, and even wanted to treat other people as its friends. It was this disillusionment of hope that compelled it to be an enemy of mankind, so it said: "I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spumed at, and kicked, and trampled on." [35] This is its blame for morality and its call for humanity.

4.2. The Alien Cannot Be Accepted by Human

From the perspective of human beings, aliens will be aliens, and they can never be regarded as human. In Victor's mind, he would rather believe that what he created was a demon who had murdered his family and friends. This creation was his fault, because he ignored the will of God, engaging in the work of transgressing God. But the creation is human, or at least humanoid. Although everyone refused to accept it, in fact, the monster had not only a strong desire, but also a complete human nature. It said:

When I first sought it, it was the love of virtue, the feelings of happiness and affection with which my whole being overflowed, that I wished to be participated. But now, that virtue has become to me a shadow, and that happiness and affection are turned into bitter and loathing despair, in what should I seek for sympathy? I am content to suffer alone, while my sufferings shall endure; when I die, I am well satisfied that abhorrence and opprobrium should load my memory. Once my fancy was soothed with dreams of virtue, of fame, and of enjoyment. Once I falsely hoped to meet with beings who, pardoning my outward form, would love me for the excellent qualities which I was capable of unfolding. I was nourished with high thoughts of honour and devotion. But now crime has degraded me beneath the meanest animal. [7]343

The monster's longing for virtue and repentance for its sins was precisely the embodiment of humanity. When it committed a crime, it was condemned by its conscience, as if suicide was the only way to quell its inner guilt. This introspection even exceeds the moral level of some human beings.

But the monster's hope is the most fearful for Victor: if the creation has a spouse and continue to multiply, then a new group of creature will emerge. What will happen to the whole human race? As a human, Victor rejected any aliens deep in his heart, though he was proud of this creation at a time. He treated the man-made man as a monster, and other people never regarded the creation as a human. Victor used to be a gentleman. The Felixes were also kind, and they even helped the pagans discriminated by the French. Ironically, all of them could not put up with this monster. Influenced by scientific thought, the man-made man cannot be regarded as a human, for it had no specific social relations and failed to gain its identity through others' recognition. Pagans can be human beings, but the creation is just an alien of science and technology.

The profound meaning of Frankenstein is revealed from this perspective. During a long process of evolution, the human community has formed their ethical norms to ensure the stability and protect themselves from external invasion. Anyone who breaks away from this system will not be able to survive. The man-made man cannot enter the system as an alien, but it is the creation of human activity. With the development of science and technology, this is the biggest problem and fatal threat to mankind. External invasion never seems to shake the status of human beings, but internal danger will.

5. Conclusion

Frankenstein is a parable or metaphorical story that is restrained but not obscure.[1] Nowadays, with the rapid development of science and technology, its practical significance has aroused our great attention again.

First of all, Victor's fate forces us to think about the correct attitude towards science. Mary Shelley was in a society that relies on the benefits of the changes of natural sciences and the humanities.[12] So she described Victor Frankenstein as a fanatical scientist. Through his tragedy, she reveals that we should take a comprehensive view of advantages and disadvantages of science. Neither should we indulge in its favorable side nor have a blind faith in almighty myth of technology.

Secondly, from Victor's experience, we can also see the importance of human science. There should be some kind of forbidden area in scientific research, and it must be conducted under the guidance of human spirit. A healthy individual cannot do without the nourishment of human science. A healthy society cannot do without the guidance of the humanities. Human science is crucial in guiding the entire society and country to take the right path.

Contemporarily, the social function of science is more and more powerful, and its penetration to the whole society is more and more extensive. Therefore, it is more likely to trigger social, ethical and legal issues. Through this novel, we not only re-understand human nature but also the role of human beings in nature. At the same time, the social responsibility of scientists is particularly prominent and significant.

Frankenstein implies Mary Shelly's awareness of conflicts between science and humanity, and her concern about the destiny of mankind against the background of rapid development of science and technology. On the one hand, there is no impassable gulf between science and humanity.[18] Science has a set of logic systems and development trajectories, which may have a side effect on its masters at some time. When science and technology mature to a certain extent, humans seem to follow their demands so as to match their continuous growth. On the other hand, the respect for the awe towards nature is the foundation for mankind to reproduce. Humans' own limitation is not a flaw, but a perfect embodiment of humanity. The lack of awe means that there is no bottom line, and people's behavior will be out of control. The loss of rationality and calmness will accelerate the process of self-destruction.

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