
Frankenstein By Mary Shelley: The Effects Of Unconventional Experiments

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* portrays Victor Frankenstein's responsibility towards his creation of life and the penalties that come with it. The curiosity to ask and answer questions is what motivates scientists to keep going forward in their research. The consequences of Victor's actions in *Frankenstein* can be learning lessons for many scientists in the modern world. These lessons include the importance of judging how the discovery will be used in a modern world, justifying the ethical questions that arise with the discovery that disrupts the course of nature, and assessing the necessity of a certain discovery despite the sacrifices associated

It is up to the scientist to assess the outcomes of discovery and how it will be used in the modern world. The consequences of one's work can be one that propels the world forward or on the contrary, can cause negative outcomes. Whichever way, the scientist must take ownership of what his/her discovery has brought to the modern world. Throughout the years there have been many unorthodox experiments conducted by scientists. One of which was conducted by John Watson in 1920 at the John Hopkins University. The Little Albert experiment was conducted on a nine-month-old boy to further test behaviorism. Every time Albert saw a rat, Watson made a "loud noise by hitting a metal pipe with a hammer" (Cherry, 2019). This created fear whenever he came across a rat and other similar furry objects. Although this experiment helped Watson study and develop the theory of methodological behaviorism but at what cost? He did not take Albert's interests and the effects this experiment would have on him into consideration. Instead of taking ownership of Albert and making sure, he was fit to go back into society, he was "unable to attempt to eliminate the boy's conditioned fear" (Cherry, 2019). Just like Watson, Frankenstein was thrilled and fascinated by natural philosophy and pursued to create the Monster. Once Frankenstein creates the Monster, his curiosity was fulfilled. However, he left the Monster out in the open to live for himself. He says "I ... was bound towards him, to assure, as far as was in my power, his happiness and well-being" (Shelley et al. 181). This quote shows how Victor feels responsible for his creation, his wellbeing, and his integration into society. If Frankenstein had done his part, the Monster would have never committed the crimes.

In certain discoveries, the results may cause a discussion based on ethics. This is especially true when a certain finding can alter the natural course of nature. In *Frankenstein*, Victor tries to play God by disrupting the natural creative process. Frankenstein says "a new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe they're being to me" (Shelley et al. 37). This quote shows how Victor is aware of what he is doing. He knows he will be disrupting the natural course of nature by creating a new species, but he lets his immaturity? Get to him? Was it right for Victor to want to play God or should he have not meddled with nature? There are certain experiments that raise similar ethical questions. This can be compared to the genetically modified organisms' debate. Dolly the sheep was the "first mammal to be cloned from an adult cell" (The Roslin Institute, 2014). The experiment was successful and Dolly lived until she was 6 years old. Since Dolly, other animals such as "cats, rabbits, horses, donkeys, pigs, goats and cattle" (The Roslin Institute, 2014) have been cloned as well. However, scientists still do not have the rights to experiment with humans. The advances of cloning technology are used to improve DNA structures, many people do not

consider this to be natural. Some believe that playing with genes will make the cloned humans lose their individuality (Manninen). There are concerns that “they would be treated in undignified ways by their creators, or that they would be damaged by society’s expectations that they should be more like those from whom they were cloned” (Manninen). These concerns were confirmed in Frankenstein when he says “I had desired it with an ardor that far exceeded moderation ... I rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep” (Shelley et al. 42). Frankenstein did not want any connection back to his creation, he was mortified by what he created and wanted to destroy the Monster. Due to this, human cloning is banned in many countries.

Before starting any experiment, the scientist must assess the steps involved in an experiment to see if it is worth the cost, time, and effort. The scientist must determine the costs, and see if the end result is worth the expense. The scientist must consider the time it will take and if it is a reasonable time to be working on a project. Finally, it takes the scientist’s effort and also the people around him. Frankenstein’s experiment comes as an inconvenience to many people around him. He only thought about himself and his curiosity which ultimately led to the destruction of his family. If Frankenstein analyzed the purpose of his experiment and asked questions such as ‘how would this creation integrate into the society? Would he be accepted and fit in? And is there a threat to the people around him?’, then maybe Frankenstein would not have gone ahead with his curiosity. From 1970 to 1994, Russia invested in the Kola Superdeep Borehole experiment, to see “what was going on in the Earth’s crust” (Andrei, 2018). Despite the scientists’ curiosity, the experiment was closed due to the lack of funding. Imagine, what would have happened if they kept digging, how would have this affected the surrounding area and population?

Scientists today are better at evaluating the moral and ethical concerns that are involved within an experiment. Science experiments are essential to moving forward in invention and discovery. However, scientists should always evaluate the risks of the results and the risks towards their society. Without the proper regulations in place, there would be replicas of Frankenstein’s creations walking amongst us. Frankenstein created the Monster out of his desire for natural philosophy, however, he does not take ownership of the creature. It is the scientists’ duty to ensure the experiments they conduct are ethical and serve a purpose.

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