

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

The debates about how the world and everything are made have been a long, never-ending discussion in many fields such as science, archaeology, geology, theology, and humanities. As it is mentioned by the archaeological community, thousands of years since the earth is created and refined by the God Almighty, the earliest human civilisations came forth and showed their existences in three areas, (1) the Tigris Valley in Iraq, (2) the Euphrates Valley in Syria, and (3) the Nile Valley in Africa (Bakir 2007). Much later after the period of these three early civilisations, scientists began to argue about how the very first living creatures existed, which eventually lead to the questions, where the humans, we, are from and how far we may break through the limits (van Loon 2019, 3). These scientific arguments and discoveries eventually complement the two perspectives to see the creation phenomenon, one of which is through mythology.

In the correlation with the creation of the earth itself, approximately a century ago, geologist had propounded Big Bang Theory (or also known as big bang incident) that is, a massive explosion in the galaxy that we called a supernova. Some people also argue that the earth is the result of the condensations among elements, gas, and dust from the stars' fraction around 4.6 million years ago (Charlesworth and Charlesworth 2017). Moreover, a long time ago, before the human could achieve that conclusion, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Jinasena from India, quoted from

Mahapurana preached that “Some foolish man say that creator made the world, such doctrine was ill-advised, and therefore, should be rejected.” The earth and everything inside was not created by anybody, it was somehow just there (Bakir 2007).

There are a few instances related to scientific creation in the modern era. Even though it does not directly point out the human creation, it is about the inventions made by humans, and it is still related to the act of giving life to another species. One example is the cloned sheep namely Dolly, it is also known for its code name 6LLS. The sheep was ‘born’ on 5 July 1996 in Roslin Institute in Scotland, though its existence was not recognised by the media until 22 February 1997. Later on, Dolly died in 2003, yet it was assumed that her death was not related to the fact that she was a clone. From here, it is obvious that people would think whether a similar experiment can be done to humans or not. The answer is still not blatantly given, but the idea is still ‘too scary’ to be practised. The human’s cells are too complex, and the cloning may result in dangerous diseases such as spinal cord injuries and Parkinson’s disease (Guinan 2002, 306).

Even though human cloning does not seem to appeal towards the continuation of scientific development, technology advancement does not give up the idea of making the ‘human replacement’. Engineers and roboticists begin to create robots which are functioned and utilized similarly to human using artificial intelligence or AI. The United States and Japan are two major countries that play roles in the creation of a humanoid robot, though these two countries have a different attitude for the establishment of the humanoid robot itself. Japan

roboticists seem to believe the idea that “if you do good and kind, the robot will treat you the same”, and therefore, the development of a humanoid robot is rapid in Japan. However, in America, such development is hampered and not always successfully done due to “Frankenstein Complex” that is rather popular in the West. The fear continues as the original intention of human and robots partnership is doubted, because humans experience more pressure to assist the necessity and ability for the robot’s machinery system. This is seen as the initiation process of the dreaded machine domination (Geraci 2006, 239).

From the examples above, there is one big issue with scientific creation, especially related to the connection between the creator and the creation. This similar issue also appears in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* where the creator fears its creation. The cloning project towards human is even considered as something beyond our limit because of the consequences brought from the practice itself. The fear continues with the humanoid robot creation. As it is mentioned above, the American roboticists experience what is called as “Frankenstein Complex” that is, ironically, derived from the novel itself where the creature’s strength and ability drive the creator, Victor Frankenstein, to be frightened, and he decides to run away from his creation. Humans as the creator, are scared of the possibility where the robots and machines can take over the world in the future.

Still related to the earth and human creation, in a different perspective, the early human civilisations that talk about this issue can be specified in three periods as follows, (1) The Mesopotamian cosmology, (2) The Theology of Memphis, and (3) The Hebrew Bible. According to the Epic of Enuma Elish, the Mesopotamian

was formed and existed in 1894-1595 BC. Enuma Elish recorded that god Marduk created the sky and its structure, planets, and the plants, and with god Ea, Marduk created humans. Later on, in 715-664 BC, the theology of Memphis (or Memphis theology of creation) was written to support the superiority of Memphis and their patron, god Ptah. Memphis itself was the capital of ancient Egypt. Theology of Memphis tells about god Ptah, the one who created the universe with his divine mind and speech, thus the universe was formed by his commands. The last one, the Hebrew Bible tells about the origin of Hebrew, written in 10<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. It also tells about the creation of the earth and human by Jehovah or Elohim (Bandstra 2008).

From those mythologies, it can be concluded that the earth and human are not created by humans, but by God (or also known as Deva in Sanskrit). Among the three concepts of creations, the Hebrew Bible is the closest one to be believed by the great religions in the world, those are the Semitic religions, and it is still very familiar until nowadays. Similarly, in the Book of Genesis, it tells about the first humans, Adam and Eve. They are created accordingly to the image of God, they live in Eden until eventually they are banished because of their sin. Contrary to scientific creation, theological creation shows the submissiveness of the creations to their creator, and the connection is supposed to be like that.

In general, the novel *Frankenstein* also talks about human creation. The problem is, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, human creation is triggered and established by the human himself. Interestingly, while the human-made creation is created perfectly both physical and psychical, this creation fails to communicate

with its creator, and it even becomes the enemy of its creator. The scientific creation and discovery are proven to exhibit the greatness of science, but it may also cause destruction. This is where, explicitly, the perspective of science in *Frankenstein* appears ambiguous and equivocal. This is what this thesis aims to discuss, that is the contradictive representation of science and knowledge and the presence of mythology in the *Frankenstein* novel.

There have been many discourses and studies on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Sherwin (1981), Gigante (2000), Marsh (2015), and Setyaningrum (2017), for examples, have successfully done four different studies with different focuses on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Through a close-reading, the researcher may conclude that those previous studies seem to agree to the notion where the tension between Frankenstein and the Monster initially departs from their connection as the creator and creation, how Frankenstein wants to make the creation so other people would owe him their lives, and how Frankenstein decides to play as the God himself by creating new species, yet being irresponsible for his creation that causes the Monster to revenge and demand for his rights. These interpretations are discovered by studies that are done through psychoanalysis, characterisation, historicism, biology, and sociology.

These previous studies are divided into two opposing sides, especially in characterising the creator and creation in this novel and related to the narrative of creations that are promoted by the mythological and scientific view. On the one hand, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is considered as a literary work that shows the great effect of scientific discovery regarding the created human (monster or creation

in this novel) and his embodied superhuman power; the ugliness that brings beauty in the activity of making creation. The human-creation activity itself becomes relevant again when science has invented the cloning system by the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, and similar invention can also be applied to the development in the robotics field and the artificial intelligence's advancement in the contemporary era. On the other hand, there is also a disagreement that the main character Victor Frankenstein is not supposed to initiate the activity of making the creation, and even so, he should have taken care of the creation that he made.

The problem with these results is that the reading used for those studies is still in a form of partial reading, meaning that they still circle human's psychology, biology, and their interactions through socio-study. These studies also seem to support one side and against another. The previous studies only argue about the novel is the exhibition of science development, and thus, it is always about Frankenstein for playing God by himself, and how science is shown superior whereas religion is the inferior. These previous studies only show one-sided depiction of Victor Frankenstein and science development in general, without considering the 'other meanings' that also appear in the novel related to the themes. They also project this novel for its scientific aspects and forgetting the possible different point of view where the novel can also be considered as a religious novel.

For that reason, the researcher thinks that Derridean deconstruction is the most relevant theory to reveal these theological meanings in this novel. Derridean deconstruction wants to show that a text always has multiple meanings. It has never been a signified, the delayed signified that is *differance*, and they are not fixed ideas

(Derrida 1997). Refusing the idea of absolute meaning, Derrida also offers the concept of *trace*. This concept supports that meanings are not singular, but more like open traces and intertextual, therefore the text can be interpreted continuously. The creation activity in the novel can be portrayed as something divine, terrific, and perfect, but can also be portrayed as something immoral, blasphemous, and ugly. Indisputably, the meanings in the deconstruction's viewpoint always evade in binary oppositions, inconsistency, ambivalence, and finally aporia.

In deconstruction's perspective, through the finding of *trace*, it can be concluded that the meanings in the novel do not only intersect with psychological, biological, sociological, and historical traces, but these meanings are also related to mythological trace. The mythological deconstruction towards this novel has an important significance in literary discourse in general, and specifically to discover the mythological contexts and the traces in the novel that are rather controversial with its problem, that is the connection between the science and religion (as part of the mythology itself), especially this novel is considered as disturbing, immoral, and sacrilegious. Because, no matter what, literary works are essentially derived from the ideology (*mythology*) that surround it.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problems**

The main issue of this research is to reveal how the deconstruction in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* works in term of the meaning-making throughout the text. To achieve this goal, this thesis is divided into two subtopics as follows.

1. How is the *differance* in science and mythology as it is shown in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*?

2. How is the *trace* in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* related to the science's development and the diminution of religion in English social life around the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century that may still relevant to present time?

### 1.3. Objectives of the Study

Theoretically, the objective of the research is to explore something, develop something, and to test a theory (Jabrohim 1996). The general objective of this study is to test a theory; that is Derridean Deconstruction. The specific objective of this study can be summarised as follows.

1. To identify the *differance* of science and mythology in the novel.
2. To collect the *trace* in Mary the novel that is related to the development of science and the diminution of religion in English social life around the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 1.4. Significance of the Study

If this research reaches its goal, there are at least two significances that can be accomplished; those are theoretical significance and practical significance. The theoretical significance can be explained as follows. The study of deconstruction always assumes that there are 'achievements' towards any literary texts, including a novel. By saying so, all novels can be examined scientifically as a work that contains *trace* narratives in *differance* narratives. Literary critics that have little to no toleration on text's meanings can easily judge a text without considering the *differance* narration throughout the text. For this reason, ontologically and

epistemologically, this study may further expand methodical knowledge and literary critique implementation.

The practical significance can be summarised as follows. As it is briefly mentioned in the background of the study, in deconstruction perspective, every literary text contains *a trace* of meanings. The activity of making creation contains *traces* in worldwide contexts, especially in term of science and technology's development during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in England, and the neglect in religion as a faith and a part of ideology (*mythology*) that shapes the social life. This is based on one view that sees the literary text as a microcosm of the macrocosm in reality. Because of this reason, the activity of making creation in Shelley's *Frankenstein* may be used as a reflection of modern 'Genesis'.

Besides, this study wants to show that both aspects, science and religion as one of the mythologies should develop side by side. In other words, science and religion should not deviate from one another and interfere with each other. Science should not ignore the moral values that religion holds, and at the same time, religion is not supposed to be the obstacle of science development. Science and religion may not be able to blend in completely, however, scientific purposes should be supported by religion in anyways, and any religious claims may need to be proven scientifically in some cases. In short, this study hopefully will reconsider people's perspective on the relation between science and religion.

### 1.5. Definition of Key Terms

*Ambivalence* : Ambivalence happens when there is a continual fluctuation between one and the opposite word (or also known as the binary opposition). In short, when two words conduct opposite meanings, there will be inconsistency for the each meaning's strength in the text, causing the contestation of the meanings, or also known as *aporia* (The Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary).

*Aporia* : The term *aporia* comes from prefix 'a' (not) and the word 'póros' (passage) which can be interpreted as 'impassable' 'having no way through' or 'difficult'. In deconstruction perspective, *aporia* refers to the meaning contestation in binary opposition. *Aporia* is the state where a text cannot be interpreted anymore because the referred text has shown way too many oppositions towards itself (Culler 1982).

*Binary opposition* : Binary opposition consists of related concepts that share contradictory meanings (Smith 1996).

*Mythology* : The term *mythology* is borrowed from Roland Barthes' concept, that is the human history converted the reality into speech (Barthes 1993, 110).

*Differance* : It is originally derived from French *differer* which means “to defer” or “to differ”. *Differance* refers to language’s characteristic that always postpones its meaning (Tyson 2015, 239).

*Trace* : Quoting Derrida’s words, “what it seems to be meaning, it is merely a mental trace throughout the signifiers” (Tyson 2015, 239). In other words, this concept supports that meanings are not singular, but more like open traces to be interpreted continuously.