

## Original Paper

# Human or Beast: Xenogeneic Creature's Self-Identity from the Perspective of Ethics

## —A Case Study of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

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### Abstract

*This paper aims to study the Xenogeneic creature's ethical choice from the perspective of scientific ethics and legal ethics by analyzing the existing problems, construction methods, and failure reasons of orc self-identity in The Island of Dr. Moreau. By analyzing the orcs' survival dilemma, the author of this paper finds out that the orcs' failure of self-identity is closely related to the lack of ethical constraints on scientific experiments and the lack of moral considerations in the formulation of laws.*

### Keywords

*The Island of Dr. Moreau, self-identity, scientific ethics, legal ethics, social contract*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The Introduction of the Novel and Author

*The Island of Dr. Moreau* is one of science fictions written by Herbert George Wells (1866.9.21-1946.8.13), a famous British novelist. This fiction mainly discusses the leading topics of science and technology, evolution, non-human beings, and other major topics as well. It vividly depicts a story of a scientist named Moreau who applies his scientific knowledge and technical strength to create a new animal species—orcs—through a series of scientific experiments such as organ transplantation and deformation surgery etc. The orcs he created had certain human habits and a

specific near-human language. Dr. Moreau used almost all means to shape himself into a god that deserves the worship of the orcs, who helped him rule the island and constantly conducted new scientific experiments. But finally, his experiment ended up in a total failure: not only did the orcs he created eventually return to their bestial nature as beasts, but they also gradually degenerated into full animal form without obeying the laws laid down by him; Moreover, the experiment has brought devastating consequences for Moreau: He was killed by the creatures that he had created.

Although *The Island of Dr. Moreau* did not win any awards once published, however, its influence on the literary tradition and science fiction cannot be ignored at all. In terms of thematic analysis, on the one hand, the novel explores a series of important themes in the social and cultural context of that time, such as science, ethics, evolution, and the relationship and boundary between humans and animals. By depicting Dr. Moreau's animal experiments and the emergence of humanoid creatures, the novel explores the influence and change on human ethics and morals brought by new science and technology, which aroused widespread concern and discussion in society at that time. On the other hand, this novel is pioneering and groundbreaking to some extent. It changes the former optimistic tendency of Verne's science fiction, recovers the anxiety and unease about the future in English literature, and provided more exploration direction and ideological connotation for the creation of science fiction.

At the same time, this work also leads to Wells's future creation. His subsequent works also focus on topics of the development of science and technology, the game between human nature and animal nature, bioethics, utopia and dystopia. Herbert George Wells is a scientific visionary and social prophet. He is one of the most widely-read British writers of his generation. He explored the new territory of science fiction and crusaded for a new social order in more than forty-four novels and social and historical books. In terms of writing style, most of Wells's works are featured with conciseness and simplicity, which enable readers to understand them without confusion or puzzles caused by the gaps and ambiguity left by the author intentionally or unconsciously. Most of his works are highly imaginative, and he is also adept at using scientific and technological elements to create fantastic scenes and impacting plots.

### *1.2 Previous Study and Research Innovation*

In recent years, research on scientific ethics and legal ethics has gradually attracted the attention of the academic circle. On the one hand, with the rapid development of science and technology, human beings are confronted with an increasing number of ethical dilemmas. Ethical issues in gene editing, artificial intelligence, and other fields have become the public concerns. Legal ethics play an important role in guaranteeing social fairness and justice, especially on issues related to rights and interests of vulnerable groups. The public is increasingly concerned about the severity of law formulation and punishment. Therefore, the existing research mainly focuses on theoretical discussion, empirical research, and application in specific fields of scientific ethics and legal ethics.

The previous research on *The Island of Dr. Moreau* mainly focuses on the theme of the novel, the analyses of the main characters, and the literature studies as follows:

In view of pioneering and groundbreaking characteristics, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is conceived to be a groundbreaking work of science fiction for its departure from the optimistic portrayals of science found in earlier works of the genre. Wells's portrayal of science as a potentially dangerous force has been studied in the context full of cultural anxieties of that time, and the novel has been credited with influencing later science fiction works that similarly explore the darker implications of scientific progress (Bould, 2017; Su, 2019).

Exploration of important themes: *The Island of Dr. Moreau* has been widely studied for its exploration of important themes such as science, ethics, and the relationship between humans and animals. Scholars have analyzed the novel's critique of scientific progress and the dangers of manipulating nature, as well as its commentary on the ethical implications of animal experimentation. The novel's representation of humanoid creatures has also been examined in the context of evolutionary theory and the question of what constitutes humanity (Graham, 2017; Shao, 2018).

As for the public's reaction and discussion, this novel has ignited a significant amount of discussion and controversy at its initial publication, particularly centering on the graphic descriptions of Dr. Moreau's experiments. Scholars have examined the public reaction to the novel and the debates it generated about the ethics of animal experimentation and the boundaries of science (McLean, 2017).

Recovery of anxiety and unease: Scholars have examined *The Island of Dr. Moreau* as an example of a shift in English literature towards a more anxious and uncertain view of the future. The novel's portrayal of hybrid creatures that challenge traditional ideas about the boundaries between humans and animals has been analyzed as a reflection of cultural anxieties about evolution and the role of science in shaping the future (Kestler, 2018).

In China, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* has also been widely studied and analyzed for its themes and cultural significance. Chinese scholars have examined the novel's critique of science and the implications of animal experimentation in the context of Chinese culture and history (Liu, 2018). The novel's portrayal of hybrid creatures has been analyzed in relation to Chinese folklore and mythology, particularly the legend of the monkey king (Su, 2019). *The Island of Dr. Moreau* has also been studied in the context of Chinese science fiction, with scholars tracing its influence on the development of the genre in China (Shao, 2018).

According to the research results above, not many identity analyses have been conducted in view of ethics. *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is a classic science fiction, which owns a high literary value and practical significance in its exploration of scientific ethics and legal ethics. In conclusion, this paper provides certain enlightenment for the interdisciplinary research of literature, ethics, and law, and brings certain practical significance to the implementation of scientific experiments and the formulation of laws in the real world.

### 1.3 Concept and History of the Ethics Research

The study of ethics usually refers to the rational study of moral values and norms. In ethics, people discuss what kinds of actions are morally good and just, as well as the causes and consequences of those actions. For concept, ethics is an ancient branch of philosophy that deals with morality, values, and norms. Ethicists try to respond to the judgement of what is good and bad, how we should act, and whether our actions have values. Ethics is considered as a part of moral philosophy because it focuses on moral standards and values. The scope of ethics is quite broad and it includes various fields, such as personal behavior, social ethics, political ethics, legal ethics, business ethics, medical ethics, etc. The interdisciplinary study of ethics has become one of the irreversible trends. The history of ethics can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. He put forward an important theoretical framework of ethics, namely “the theory of virtue”. This theory states that one should pursue virtue, which is a good quality and virtue realized in action. On this basis, ethicists continue to study and develop the theories and methods of ethics and create many different schools of ethics and theoretical frameworks.

## 2. The Analysis of the Orcs’ Self-identity Dilemma in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

### 2.1 The Identity Specificity of the Orcs as Ethnic Minority

In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, orcs, as a hybrid of genetically engineered humans and animals, have a distinct identity of “Ethnic Minority”. This section will analyze the creation process, appearance, and behavior pattern of orcs, and combine with the concept of “Ethnic Minority” to explore the dilemma brought by the special identity of orcs.

In ethics research, “Ethnic Minority” is an important concept. An ethnic minority is a racial, ethnic, or ethnic group that is in a minority in a social or cultural group and may be discriminated against or excluded because of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and other factors. In the study of ethics, the status and rights of ethnic minorities are an important topic.

The first thing to clear up is that “ethnic minority” is a relative concept which consists of the following four main components: the specific identity of a race, nation, or ethnic group, being a minority in a specific region, facing specific social and economic difficulties, and having a unique culture, language, customs, and traditions. In the case of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, the orcs are a minority on the ship *Ipecacuanha*, where human beings are predominant. And the differences between the predominantly human crew and dominantly passengers are obvious, and the orcs are ostracized and discriminated against by the majority of the ship’s population--the humans. But when they come back onto their nameless island, as indigenous and the main inhabitants, this minority identity disappears.

Due to the particularity of their identities, ethical minorities usually face universal dilemmas like exclusion and discrimination from mainstream society, economic and social inequality, and cultural conflict and identity crisis.

Firstly, in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, orcs are created through a unique and controversial genetic modification process, resulting in a new race that is distinct from both humans and animals. This special identity construction makes them a minority group, facing discrimination and exclusion from both human and animal societies. As the narrator describes, “They were the most grotesque and horrid creatures I had ever seen... a thing halfway between beast and man!” (Wells, 1896, p. 56) This portrayal reinforces the idea that orcs are neither fully human nor fully animal, which makes it difficult for them to integrate into society and leaving them vulnerable to social exclusion and discrimination. As a result, the novel highlights the ethical implications of creating new races and the challenges faced by minority groups in society.

Secondly, orcs possess a special appearance of hybridity. In the novel, orcs are depicted as having both human and animal characteristics: “This man was of moderate size, and with a black negroid face. He had a large, almost lipless, mouth, extraordinary lank arms, long thin feet, and bow- legs, and stood with his heavy face thrust forward staring at us” (Wells, 1896, p. 25). In ethics, minorities often face discrimination based on physical characteristics. Their special appearance is also a factor that makes them considered “different” in mainstream society and be difficult to fit in. The characteristics of orcs, which are half animal and half human, especially the orcs with human faces and animal-body parts, are weird looks from a human perspective. From the perspective of the growth and development of human self-cognition, starting from the 18th month after the birth of individual, human beings will have a mirror self-cognition of their own reflection in the mirror or in the water. Meanwhile, the comparison of their appearance in the mirror or in the water of other creatures in the surrounding environment with the same length may be an important source of self-cognition. Orcs with half-human, half-animal looks, whose main gathering place is the stream side, have a high probability of mirror-like self-recognition. Therefore, this appearance of “being different from all” will bring orcs’ self-identity confusion and obstacles.

Thirdly, orcs have special patterns of behaviors. Normally, humans with tinder technology and food storage skills will not eat raw or rotten meat, but orcs have an irresistible desire to eat raw or rotten meat; They are also more territorial and eager to fight. This is the difference between orcs and humans. But at the same time, orcs are bound by a religious spirit, and moral and legal consciousness, which made them fundamentally different from animals. The particularity and contradiction of this behavior pattern are also one of the reasons why orcs are different from other groups and ostracized.

## 2.2 *The Establishment and Destruction of the Orcs’ Self-identity*

In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Orcs are an ethnic group formed by a hybridity of human and animal genes, with near-human intelligence and thinking as well as animal-like instincts and traits. However, because of their identity and existential dilemma, orcs are often on the margins of society, unable to truly integrate into human society or fully integrate into animal society.

In human society, orcs are discriminated against and excluded because their appearance and behaviors are different from those of ordinary human beings, which has been argued previously. Due to the contradictory self-identity of orcs, they can't fully integrate themselves into the animal society by abiding by the law of the forest and eventually failed to become a real animal.

Therefore, the orcs' identity and survival dilemma is not only due to the discrimination and oppression of human society, but also inseparable from their identity as a minority. In addition, orcs are often subjected to experiments and exploitation by human scientists, which make their existence even more difficult.

#### 2.2.1 Dr. Moreau's Methods of Building Orc's Humanity

The three main approaches for Dr. Moreau to rule this island and allow the Orcs to establish human identity are setting laws, spreading religious belief, and adopting threats of force and violence.

First of all, Dr. Moreau's primary means of indoctrination is setting laws since he made several articles like "Not to eat Fish or Flesh", "Not to chase other men", and "Not to go on all-Fours" (Wells, 1896, p. 61) to require and discipline the orcs to abandon habits that are closely associated with animal nature in favor of human patterns, including not eating raw meat and crawling on all fours. To reinforce the civilizing effects of the laws, orcs were asked to recite the articles at a fixed period of time each day, repeating: "That is the law" (Wells, 1896, p. 61).

Dr. Moreau's rules serve multiple functions in constructing the social identity of the orcs as humans and establishing a community as a whole: Firstly, the rules create a sense of order and structure within the orc community, which contributes to their socialization as humans rather than animals. Through the establishment of rules and a system of punishment, the orcs learn to regulate their behavior and conform to social norms, which is a crucial aspect of human society. Secondly, the rules serve to reinforce the idea that the orcs are a distinct, separate group from both humans and animals. The orcs are given a set of behavioral codes and religious beliefs that are unique to their community, further distinguishing them from other groups. This helps to establish a sense of shared identity and community among the orcs, which is important for their social integration and well-being. Lastly, the rules also serve to ensure the safety and security of the community. Dr. Moreau's rules are designed to prevent the orcs from behaving in ways that could harm themselves or others, such as eating raw or rotten meat or engaging in violent behavior. By regulating their behavior, the rules help to establish a more stable and secure community for the orcs to live in. Overall, Dr. Moreau's rules play a crucial role in constructing the social identity of the orcs as humans and establishing a community as a whole. They help to create order and structure, reinforce the orcs' distinct identity, and ensure the safety and security of the community.

And from Rousseau's theory of the social contract, Rousseau posits that individuals enter into a social contract with one another to create a society governed by laws that protect their rights and interests. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Dr. Moreau's rules serve as a kind of social contract between him and the

orcs, establishing a set of behavioral codes that regulate their behavior and protect the interests of the community as well. This is similar to Rousseau's idea that the social contract establishes a set of laws that govern the behavior of individuals and protect their rights. Also, Foucault's theory of social discipline and society emphasizes how power operates in society to regulate behavior and maintain social order. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Dr. Moreau's rules serve as a form of social discipline that regulates the behavior of the orcs and maintains social order within the community. This is similar to Foucault's theory of disciplinary power, which emphasizes how institutions like schools, prisons, and hospitals discipline individuals and regulate their behavior. In both cases, Dr. Moreau's rules serve to establish a set of laws and codes that regulate the behavior of the orcs and maintain social order within the community. This is important for establishing a sense of shared identity and community among the orcs, which is crucial for their social integration and establishment of moral values.

Second, Dr. Moreau deifies himself as the godfather and a spiritual leader through religion and ask the orcs to regard him as the creator and God to suppress the beast nature of orcs further. The process of deification is mainly achieved by language praise and holding assemblies to spread and consolidate ideas above the theocracy. Indeed, in the original text, the orcs view Dr. Moreau as a God who could decide life and death and create everything: "*His* is the Hand that makes; *His* is the Hand that wounds; *His* is the Hand that heals" (Wells, 1896, p. 61). And such mental "brainwashing" further suppresses their beastly nature and reinforces their identity as humans. This process of deification is achieved through language praise and holding assemblies to spread and consolidate ideas, which is similar to Foucault's theory of power and language. Foucault argues that power operates through language and discourse, with language constituting power relations and shaping how individuals perceive and interact with the world. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Dr. Moreau's use of language to deify himself reinforces his power and authority over the orc community. By presenting himself as their creator and God, he establishes a system of power relations that reinforces the orcs' identity as humans and reinforces their obedience to his authority. Additionally, Dr. Moreau's use of assemblies to spread and consolidate his ideas is similar to Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque. Bakhtin argues that in carnival-like environments, such as festivals or celebrations, power relations are inverted, with the clown or jester temporarily assuming the role of the king or ruler. This is similar to the way in which Dr. Moreau deifies himself as the leader of the orc community, using his power and authority to establish a sense of order and stability within the community. Overall, the deification of Dr. Moreau in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* serves to reinforce his power and authority over the orc community, using language and discourse to shape their perception and interaction with the world. This is similar to Foucault's theory of power and language and Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque.

Third, the most coercive tool for Dr. Moreau to control the orcs is the threat of force and violence. Scientists like Dr. Moreau respond with force when orcs violate or break existing laws. For example, when orcs were eating raw meat, Dr. Moreau would hold a meeting to get the orcs to whistleblowing

each other and find out which one had broken the law. Once the violators are identified, Dr. Moreau will kill them with a gun (Wells, 1896, pp. 95-98). The use of force and violence as a means of control in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* aligns with Foucault's theory of discipline and punishment. Foucault argues that modern societies are characterized by a system of disciplinary power, in which individuals are subject to surveillance, normalization, and punishment in order to maintain social order and control. In the novel, Dr. Moreau uses force and violence as a means of punishment to discipline the orcs and maintain social order within the community. The threat of violence and death serves as a powerful deterrent against disobedience, reinforcing Dr. Moreau's power and authority over the orcs. This form of discipline and punishment is similar to Foucault's theory of disciplinary power, which emphasizes how individuals are subjected to surveillance and punishment to maintain social order and control. Furthermore, Dr. Moreau's use of whistleblowing and identifying violators among the orcs is similar to Foucault's theory of normalization, in which individuals are subjected to standardized norms and behaviors to conform to social expectations. The use of violence and punishment to enforce these norms is a key aspect of disciplinary power, reinforcing the power and authority of those who enforce them. Overall, the use of force and violence as a means of control in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* reinforces the power and authority of Dr. Moreau and serves as a way to discipline and punish the orcs for disobedience. This aligns with Foucault's theory of disciplinary power, in which individuals are subject to surveillance, normalization, and punishment in order to maintain social order and control. The thermal weapons possessed by Dr. Moreau and his assistants pose a real and deadly threat to the orcs, which is the immediate cause of why the orcs are afraid to resist even if they are mentally disobedient.

#### 2.2.2 The Reasons for the Destruction of Orc's Sociality

The establishment of orcs' sociality is mainly disciplined by external factors, and there is little obedience to their nature in this process. Such coercive tactics can indeed make orcs conform to social rules for a short period of time, but in the long run, these methods are more oppressive rather than contractual for the orcs who lack a sense of self-identity. The impacts of identity on both groups and individuals are enormous. Self-identity is one's understanding and perception of themselves, which can be based on gender, race, culture, religious belief, and other aspects, and these aspects will also affect a person's status and treatment in society. When a person's self-identity matches the identity of a group, he or she will feel a sense of belonging to the group, which can produce a positive impact on the group. Conversely, if a person's identity does not match that of a group, he or she will feel excluded and isolated, which will harm the group. Therefore, I think that the destruction of orc society is closely related to their conflict and confusion of self-identity.

First, from the perspective of individual factors, the appearance of orcs determines their self-identification of contradictions. Orcs are neither genuine beasts nor pure human beings, but a combination of the two and the negation of either. In the author's description, the first orc "I" have seen



is “a misshapen man, short, broad, and clumsy, with a crooked back, a hairy neck, and a head sunk between his shoulders” (Wells, 1896, p. 9). At this point, the orcs seem like the strange, relatively hairy human beings. Despite this, with the entire face of the orc, the orc completely loses the external characteristics that make it acceptable to ordinary human society, making it an outlier in the human mind. The orc’s facial part projected, forming something dimly suggestive of a muzzle, and the huge half-open mouth showed big white teeth which would never be seen in a human mouth. “His eyes were bloodshot at the edges, with scarcely a rim of white around the hazel pupils” (Wells, 1896, p. 9). This is the orcs’ face, which vastly differs from human beings. Admittedly, different kinds of orcs differ in their degree of humanness, but whether they are more humanlike orcs or animal-like orcs, their appearance makes them both unacceptable to human society and possibly ostracized by animal groups. This appearance makes them feel miserable and confused in the process of self-identity recognition.

On the one hand, the difference in appearance between orcs and their creator, Dr. Moreau, and the apparent difference in appearance from ordinary animals, weakens the orcs’ sense of identity. Belonging is an important part of group and individual identity, and this apparent distinction makes it difficult for orcs to have a sense of belonging. On the other hand, when the orcs were sailing with a few scientists, their presence was greeted with horror and repulsion by the crew and other passengers, and according to identity theory, social acceptance and approval of an individual’s identity is crucial to one’s sense of self and social status. The rejection of the crew and passengers is also one of the contradictory sources of orc identity.

Second, the fundamental contradictions brought about by the malpractices of the social system cannot be reconciled. Based on Rousseau’s social contract theory, human beings are born free and equal, and the state is the product of the free agreement of the people. Under this thought, the reason why people are willing to live with certain shackles is essentially by giving up a part of their freedom to obtain the guarantee of interests and the maintenance of social order. However, under the rule of Dr. Moreau, the orcs are deprived of almost all freedom, and survival has become difficult. In this context, the social contract theory asserts that “people who are deprived of their freedom can overthrow their government and regain their freedom in the same way that they have been deprived of their freedom.” Because of this, the orcs who were facing experimental abuses and are deprived of their right to life are essentially taking back their freedom in the same way that Dr. Moreau took it from them. The animal nature’s return on orcs is also a reflection of their return to their natural state of “barbarians” after the disappearance of the social contract.

Thus, they lay in the position of in-between, neither are they the orcs, nor the human beings, which eventually set them into marginality similar to the situation of the black-to-white in view of post-colonialism. One way to further explain the marginality of the orcs in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is through Homi Bhabha’s theory of cultural hybridity. According to Bhabha, cultural hybridity arises from the encounter between different cultures, resulting in the creation of something new and different.

This new cultural form is situated in a liminal space, neither fully belonging to one culture nor the other and is subject to marginalization and exclusion. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, the orcs are a result of the encounter between human and animal cultures, resulting in a new hybrid form situated in a liminal space between the two. This hybridity is reinforced by the orcs' physical and behavioral characteristics, which set them apart from both humans and animals. As Bhabha argues, cultural hybridity is often subject to marginalization and exclusion, as it challenges the dominant cultural norms and expectations. The orcs' marginality is reinforced by their exclusion from both human and animal communities, which view them as alien and monstrous. Furthermore, Bhabha argues that cultural hybridity has the potential to challenge dominant cultural norms and create new forms of identity and community. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, the orcs' hybrid identity and marginality have the potential to challenge the dominant cultural norms of human and animal societies and create a new form of community-based on their shared identity. However, this potential is hindered by the violence and coercion used by Dr. Moreau to maintain control over the orcs.

### **3. The Analysis of the Failure of the Transformation Process of Orcs into Human Beings from the Perspective of Ethics**

#### *3.1 The Orcs' Experiments Lack the Constraints of Scientific Ethics*

In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Dr. Moreau's orc experiment has violated several principles and regulations of scientific ethics for scientific experiments.

First, the orc transformation experiment violates the "principle of respect" in scientific ethics. The principle of respect means that scientific research must respect human dignity, will, privacy, and other basic rights. It also includes the recognition of the intrinsic value of human beings, that is, the existence of each human being is valuable in itself and opposes treating human beings as merely extrinsic or instrumental value. Dr. Moreau has no regard for the orcs' right to life and lacks basic respect for their dignity. His use of orcs as subjects for his brutal and bloody human experiments is essentially an instrumentalization of orcs. He treated them as experimental materials rather than animate creatures.

Second, the orc transformation experiment violates the "principle of harmlessness" in scientific ethics. The principle of harmlessness means that scientific research should not cause irreversible harm to individuals, society, the environment, and the future. When human beings are involved in scientific research, it is necessary to protect the participants and other stakeholders as humans and protect the interests of future generations of mankind, when scientific research involves sentient animals, it is necessary to care for the welfare of animals. The orc experiment itself involves the creation of new species, which is highly dangerous. If the experiment is successful, the original food chain and ecological circulation system of nature may be destroyed, because the natural enemies and food sources of new-born artificial species are uncertain, and the mass production of such creatures will do incalculable harm to human society and the natural world. There are two possibilities for the

experiment to fail: One is that it does not completely succeed in creating the type of organism that the Creator intended, so how to deal with the “half-finished” experiment will become a problem. And if it fails completely, the interests of the animals who are injured or killed by the experiment cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, whether it succeeds or fails, it’s hard to be truly “harmless” in such a risky, multi-species experiment. However, Dr. Moreau’s lack of assessment of the risks and potential consequences of the experiment resulted in the failure of the orc transformation and the destruction of its social order, which also violated the requirements of prudence and responsibility in scientific ethics. Third, Dr. Moreau chose to conduct this large-scale experiment on an isolated island, and the whole process was hidden from the public eye. The lack of peer review and supervision made it difficult to detect and correct ethical problems in time during the experiment. It also violates the principle of objectivity, which is the principle of transparency and openness in scientific ethics.

To sum up, Dr. Moreau’s biological experiments tend to violate scientific ethics and the principle of natural selection in the concept of genetic ethics. He tries to speed up the process of biological evolution by external means, which destroys the objective laws of nature to a certain extent. And the ecosystem itself has a certain ability to heal itself, which we think is one of the factors that will inevitably lead to the eventual return of orcs to beasts.

### *3.2 The Orc World’s Law Lacks the Consideration of Legal Ethics*

The natural law school and the positivism law school are two schools of law with certain conflicts of ideas. The school of natural law believes that law should be based on natural principle and natural jurisprudence, which refers to the essential laws of objective existence such as justice, fairness, and freedom. And the existing law is based on an order formed by moral value consensus, pointing out that only the law in line with the basic moral requirements of natural justice can be considered a just “good law”. In the meantime, the positivism law school believes that the legitimacy of law should be based on social practice, and the enactment of law should be based on social phenomena and facts. They hold a relatively negative attitude towards the assertion that law must be based on moral requirements.

However, whether from the perspective of natural law or practical law, Dr. Moreau’s law for the orcs has inevitable defects. From the hidden rule of “moral justice” of natural law, natural jurisprudence should respect the universal justice recognized by all living beings. But from the two articles of the Orc Act—“Not to suck up Drink” and “Not to eat Fish or Flesh”, even the most basic need of maintaining life is prohibited. From this point of view, the Orc Act does not meet the requirement of “just law” from the perspective of natural law. From the perspective of positivist jurisprudence, one is that the law only restricts the orcs, but creates no restriction on the human beings who also live on the island and owned a dominant status. Another is the result of social practice, using the weapon force as a general means to punish all kinds of faults and crimes will cause excessive punishment. Therefore, the Orc Act is also a law with imbalance under the concept of positivist jurisprudence.

Why can't the Orc Act be defined as just law in both perspectives? I think the fundamental reason is that the "Orc Act" lacks legal ethics in both principles and procedures.

From the perspective of legislative principle, legislative principle refers to the theoretical basis and ideological guidelines throughout the process of legislative activities, and it is a series of normative requirements that legislative activities must abide by. The principle of legislation mainly has three requirements: the principle of the rule of law, the principle of science, and the principle of democracy.

From the formulation of the Orc Act, firstly, orcs are constrained to do a series of behaviors, including some dangerous behaviors of bad nature, such as biting, fighting, etc. But at the same time, orcs did not get the corresponding legal rights, the basic life needs of orcs and human rights protection of the law are completely in a blank stage. This also violates the basic provisions of the unity of rights and obligations, power and responsibility stipulated in the scientific principle of legislation. In the case of disunity of rights and obligations, this law is essentially a group exploitation of orcs by lawmakers. The orcs' obligations are too great and their rights too small to survive in such a society.

This kind of public power using legal provisions to excessively restrict the freedom and rights of citizens is often called the tyranny of law in reality. The tyranny of such laws will often cause discontent and protest from citizens. For example, in the novel, the orcs try to secretly oppose the law of not killing living animals, which is an indirect protest. When Dr. Moreau, as the legislator and the authority, failed to amend the law, democracy was chronically absent, which eventually led to violent conflict and revolution. In reality, it is worth the attention and vigilance of the lawmakers. Balancing the rights and obligations stipulated by the law is the basic premise to ensure the normal implementation of the law and long-term social stability.

Meanwhile, legal ethics also requires legislation to conform to democratic principles. Legislative democracy requires both content nationality and procedural democracy. What the Orc Act does not do is be content democratic, which is to act in the fundamental interest of the majority. Most of the inhabitants of this nameless island were orcs, and the rights and interests of orcs were supposed to be the "foundation of legislation" in the Orcs Act; But in order to maintain his authority on the island, Dr. Moreau chose to use autocratic methods. But to his surprise, the result of his legal orientation was not what he intended. In my opinion, this is closely related to the role of law in enlightening, guiding, and evaluating. A healthy and just law plays an irreplaceable role in guiding citizens to better development. When the spirit of ethics and morality is internalized in the law, what the law punishes is what the citizens wish to stop, and what the law encourages is what the citizens wish to appear. In this way, the real internalized democratic principle aims to achieve—the evil law is not a real law, and only the good law can make people abandon the "animal nature".

Moreover, from the point of view of natural law, natural persons are born in a "state of nature" in which individual actions are bound only by their rights and conscience. The law, as a social contract, can win the benefits of a political order for individuals, define standards of justice, and protect individuals from

violence and other kinds of harm; the price is to demand that individuals in the “state of nature” voluntarily give up their “freedom of nature”. However, when the law cannot protect individuals from harm, or even the law itself oppresses individuals and deprives them of their legal rights (in accordance with natural law), Rousseau’s social contract theory supports citizens’ voluntary withdrawal from the social contract. Then when the current legal system has obvious drawbacks, and the legislators like Dr. Moreau refuse to re-establish a just and reasonable contract, citizens will try to withdraw from the social contract.

In summary, from the perspective of process and result, the attitude of orcs towards the Orc Act from the beginning was to abide, to endure, to try to resist, and finally to completely overturn and treat the law as nothing. This process is not only a legally binding decline but also represents the failure of social contract construction. In our opinion, such failure proves the importance of legal ethics in legal practice. Laws lacking legal ethics consideration are “bad laws”, which are not conducive to the cultivation of human nature and even lead to the confusion of citizens’ self-cognition and the extinction of society. This also warns of the necessity of legal ethics in legal practice and application.

#### 4. Conclusion

In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, orcs generally face the dilemma of self-identity, which comes from both the contradiction and fragmentation of the existence of orcs themselves, and the influence of the process from the establishment to the destruction of orcs’ sociality.

According to the principles of scientific ethics and some of Rousseau and Foucault’s propositions of legal ethics, we can conclude that Dr. Moreau’s orc experiments on the unnamed island are contrary to the principles of scientific ethics and legal ethics.

On the one hand, the principles of scientific ethics require that scientific experiments should follow two important basic principles: the principle of respect and the principle of harmlessness. However, Dr. Moreau’s biological experiments violated the principles of natural selection in scientific ethics and the concept of genetics, and he tried to accelerate the process of biological evolution through external means, and extremely advocated “only the fittest could survive” in Social Darwinism, which destroyed the objective rule and ecological balance of natural society to a certain extent. Therefore, there is an inevitability for orcs’ eventual return to full beasts as the result of this perverse experiment.

On the other hand, the laws of the orc world constructed by Dr. Moreau lack the basic consideration of legal ethics, which is also an important reason why the recipient cannot become a human in the end. Based on the ideas of sociologists such as Rousseau and Foucault, we can know that the laws formulated by Dr. Moreau have violated legal ethics: Dr. Moreau tries to build his own supreme authority by constructing a discourse system with himself as the power center. However, due to his total disregard for the basic human rights and freedom of the orcs by continuously using extreme laws and coercive violence to restrict their freedom and even obliterate their lives, it is reasonable that the orcs

finally chose to rebel against Dr. Moreau's law and kill him.

Thus, we can conclude that the orcs created by Dr. Moreau in Herbert George Wells' novel are more like beasts than humans in terms of their creative process, social establishment process, and final transformation.

And for the reason why Wells tried to create such a creature full of identity hybridity, we think that in the author's view, the complexity of humans' natures is essentially similar to the paradoxical nature of orcs: Orcs and humans can both choose to be human beings or to be beasts. The reason for this conclusion is that in the process of choosing to be human or animal, what affects their final identity is which will prevail in the game between the indifferent, cruel, bloodthirsty, and immoral animal factors and the virtuous, polite, and moral human factors. In the process of moral choice, human beings will also be affected by the game between human factors and animal factors, that is, the process of choosing between good and evil. We believe that Wells created the image of orcs and aims to remind humans to be wary of the effects of animalistic factors on behavior and mood. Because whether it is to overly restrict individuals through harsh punishments or blindly indulge individual moral thoughts, human beings who owned both human and animal factors may also become beasts in the actual sense. Therefore, we think that Wells is also conveying the importance of moral ethics for human beings to remain human to the public.

In addition, we also think that Wells's novel is closely related to his political attitude and attitude toward science. On the one hand, Wells is skeptical and wary of the possibility of some real-world scientific experiments which may cross ethical boundaries. He believed that scientific experiments without ethical considerations would cause self-destructive consequences; the result of his creation that "orcs eventually become beasts" is also closely related to his attitude of not supporting and warning against supernatural science experiments. On the other hand, I think it is also closely related to the dystopian political attitude of Wells in his early years. In his early works, Wells showed a relatively negative attitude toward the establishment of Utopia. For example, the large animal experiment initiated by Dr. Moreau constructed in the novel is essentially an analogy to real human society. When scholars and politicians of the radical school tried to construct Utopia by means of external intervention, radical laws, and science and technology that may be out of control, Wells prospectively warned that many methods in the real society have too radical drawbacks, and the consideration of ethics and morality is not comprehensive enough, while the public maintained an optimistic attitude towards social construction. He remains that it is impossible to build an ideal Utopian society in such a situation; On the contrary, these measures will lead humanity to the end of regression and even extinction.

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#### Note(s)

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