Mary shelley: submissive women in writing

In the writing of Mary Shelley'sFrankensteinor, The Modern Prometheus, she creates four submissive female characters all of who are negatively affected by the hands of Victor Frankenstein. These four submissive female characters are Agatha, Safie, Elizabeth, and Justine.

Each of these women is proposed as passive and nonessential. The women, Agatha, Safie, Elizabeth, and Justine, make a pathway for the creation of action for male characters. The actions that happen with/to these women negatively affect them for the purpose of teaching one of the male characters a lesson or inflicting deep emotions to the male characters.

Agatha's purpose to man in this book was teaching the monster. " The girl [Agatha] was young, and of gentle demeanour…she looked patient, yet sad." (Shelley 75, 76). Agatha teaches the monster many things mostly by him observing her interactions with her blind father and studying her actions and mannerisms. " Agatha listened withrespect, her eyes sometimes filled with tears, which she endeavored to wipe away unperceived"(Shelley 80). Agatha teaches the monster about respect, sensitivity, and human relationships.

Safie, a close friend of the De Lacey's, comes on horseback to the cottage. Safie is Arabian and doesn't know or understand english, so the De Lacey's give her lessons. Safie's lessons in language andculturebecome the monster's lessons as well. " My days were spent in close attention… I improved more rapidly than the Arabian…

I comprehended and could imitate almost every word that was spoken… I also learned thescienceof letters"(Shelley 85). Safie is another passive female character that caused action by the monster. To the audience it is

insignificant weather or not Safie learns english, but it is furthering the monster'seducation. Thus it was for the sake of teaching a male character a lesson and of no real benefit to the female character.

Justine is one of the most passive, submissive female characters and hardly even has a voice in the novel. Justine is ultimately framed for the murder of William Frankenstein, yet she remains collected and serene. Justine handles herself with poise even with her unfortunate circumstances.

" God knows how entirely I am innocent... I rest my innocence on a plain and simple explanation of the facts which have been adduced against me"(Shelley 56). Justine's purpose becomes clear when she is framed. She becomes static, a victim of her circumstance.

Mary Shelley describes Elizabeth as submissive and tender. Elizabeth is the most influential character associated with Victor Frankenstein, causing a roller coaster of emotions. Mary Shelley writes Elizabeth's submissiveness quite obviously when she says, " she presented Elizabeth to me as her promised gift, I [Victor], with childish seriousness, interpreted her words literally, and looked upon Elizabeth as mine...since till death she was to be mine only"(Shelley 19).

This belittles Elizabeth and essentially makes her a victim of the monster because of her relationship with Victor. Even when the monster threatens Elizabeth, Victor doesn't try to protect her entirely, and puts his frustration with the monster over Elizabeth. Elizabeth is belittled along with the other female characters, making them mere tools to get revenge.

There is one more hidden female character, without whom, the novel would not succeed. Margret Saville is the most passive, submissive female character. There is no way to know if she even exists entirely, but her significance is one of great magnitude.

Margret Saville is the reason Robert Walton writes the letters explaining what has happened and what Victor has told him, thus creating the whole story. Margret is so submissive that she doesn't even get a voice in the novel; there is never a response from her.

Mary Shelley created many submissive female characters, all of whom were used, objectified, and castaway after greatly impacting man's life. They are used as tools of revenge and decried for the works of the men who used them.