

## Chapter 3

### Representations of Women in Relation to Desire

Desire is different from love. In talking about desire, people sometimes think about sexual desire. Goldman (1976), studying qualities of human desire, analyzes the character of sexual desire as follows:

Normal sexual desire...is purely the desire for contact with another person's body and for the pleasure which such contact produces. The desire for such contact is both sufficient and necessary to make the desire sexual; and this physical contact, rather than the feelings and emotions that the contact might express, is the goal of sexual desire. (Goldman, 1976 : 268-9, quoted in Brown, 1987 : 47)

Desire or sexual desire is mainly identified with physical contact, not emotions. Physical contact - for example, kissing, embracing, or touching, under certain conditions - signify human sexuality and simultaneously are the aims of sexual desire. As sexual desire is aroused by physical contact, it is different from love, which is constructed from non-tangible emotions.

Love and sexuality are very close to each other. It is quite difficult to separate them completely. Brown (1987), studying similarities and differences between sexual desire and love, uses Goldman's ideas about the character of sexual desire in analyzing love:

Love...has differentiating features:... is always directed at a specific object whereas sexual desire can be free-floating, has many fewer people toward whom it is directed, and affects much larger areas of the personality to a much greater depth...sexual activity can be bought and sold; love cannot. (Brown, 1987 : 54)

Love is directed towards and created for a special person, but sexual desire is not. Love comes from deep feelings for fewer people, but causes great effects. It can be defined in various ways from different perspectives. Moreover, men and women

define their loves differently. Fine (1992), discussing men and women's views about love, remarks: "It is the general opinion that love is more important to a woman than to a man, and many writers have taken the position that women's troubles are due to frustrated love, men's to frustrated sexuality" (Fine, 1992 : 24). This implies that women pay more attention to love and feelings than men do, and that belief brings them problems. It is believed that women devote themselves to their loved-ones (parents, lovers, husbands, and children) whereas men also require and give love to their beloved but in different, and possibly less committed, ways. As stated by Lord Byron (1819), the romantic poet and one of Mary Shelley's friends: "Man's love is of man's life a thing apart / 'Tis woman's whole existence" (Quoted in Fine, 1992 : 24). It conveys a western belief in the early nineteenth century that a man's love was only one of his life's factors while a woman spent her whole life in completing her love. Love seems to be related to and to be essential to every step throughout a woman's life.

According to Lord Byron, in the close relationship between love and sexuality, women focus on love while men focus on sexuality. Therefore, in their love relationship, women and men would see and treat each other differently. Women may tend to treat men as thinking and feeling subjects, while men are more likely to treat their partners, at least in part, as objects to serve their sexuality. This might also be influenced by gender stereotypes of women and men. Wood (1999), discussing men's and women's ideas about the opposite sex, observes how media reflect and promote traditional arrangements between the sexes: "Women are portrayed alternatively either as decorative objects, who must attract a man to be valuable, or as victims of men's sexual impulses. Either way, women are defined by their bodies and how men treat them" (Wood, 1999 : 313). Representations of women in both the print and broadcast media are often limited and dependent on men and male values. Women seem to have few alternatives in being represented. Consequently, with traditional values in treating the sexes and gender socialization influenced by the media, in a certain situation or relationship women and men will exhibit different behavior patterns.

The original novel and Branagh's film of *Frankenstein* show such differences clearly. Although the original novel was written by a female author, she presented her story through male points of view, so it represents predominantly masculine ideas. On the other hand, the film, though developed from the original story, presents the story differently. Its historical context makes the film more aware of female thoughts. My study on representations of women in relation to desire in both Shelley's novel and in Branagh's film will focus on two main issues – the objectification of women and representations of romantic love.

## **Representations of Women in Relation to Desire in the Novel**

Shelley's novel was written at a time when men were considered superior to women and controlled the society, so issues in the novel might be expected to be dominated by masculine values, including women's objectification by men and representations of women's and men's love in romantic relationships. My study on the objectification of women in the novel (section 1) will expose how traditional masculine values present women as objects deserving men's desire, and the section on the romantic love myth (section 2) will show the influence of male values in the patriarchal society on female writing, subordinating female expressive love to male instrumental love.

### **1. Objectification of Women in the Novel**

As the original novel of *Frankenstein* is the work of a female author narrated by first-person male narrators the readers receive masculine ideas, masculine information and the thinking processes of men through the writing of a nineteenth century female. The narrative point of view affects the portrayals of females in the story; how men in certain conditions think about or describe women. In the present section, my analysis will expose how traditional socialized masculine values influence women's objectification from a male perspective, and how this is communicated through physical descriptions and the silence of women's voices in the novel.

In patriarchal societies, men usually take the role of observers and women are the objects of men's perception. Gazing may be a way for men to express their power and authority. Mulvey (1992 : 750) observes women's roles as sex objects satisfying men's requirements: "Women displayed as sexual objects is the leitmotif of erotic spectacle...she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire." Women play the role of the watched and men are the watchers. Consequently, women's visual images depend on men's desire as the watchers. In being watched, women are not only treated as objects, they are stereotyped and labeled in relation to male sexual desire. Zoonen (1994 : 87) agrees with Mulvey on women's limited position as objects of the male gaze: "This common feature of popular and high culture alike ... suggests that in western society to be looked at is the fate of women, while the act of looking is reserved for men. Even if women do the looking they do not seem to do it through their own eyes." Women do not have rights as watchers. They even learn to look at themselves through a male perspective. Women are not represented explicitly as objects of men's gaze in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, but their positions might be interpreted as such through their limited portrayals through male narrators. Women in the novel are indirectly the objects of the male gaze, but without any explicit relation to sexual needs.

In the early nineteenth century, when women were not permitted to go to school, they usually had lessons in housekeeping or developing idealized female qualities from female adults at home. With limited education and knowledge, women were dominant only in the domestic sphere, and this condition affected men's ideas of women. Men learned to believe that women were inferior to them, had less knowledge, and consequently deserved to be regarded as objects and properties (Nava, 1992). Female characters in the novel are thus realistic portrayals of the objectification of women by men at that time. They are described in physical detail but the readers learn nothing about their knowledge or their minds, as in the following passage:

...this child was thin and very fair. Her hair was the brightest living gold, and, despite the poverty of her clothing seemed to set a crown of distinction on her head. Her brow was clear and ample, her blue eyes cloudless, and her lips and the

molding of her face so expressive of sensibility and sweetness. (Shelley, 1992 : 34)

This is the first picture of Elizabeth portrayed through Frankenstein's eyes. It is noticeable that every detail concerns her physical appearance, not her ideas or knowledge. Frankenstein further describes Elizabeth as "...a child fairer than a picture cherub – a creature who seemed to shed radiance from her looks, and whose form and motions were lighter than the chamois of the hills" (Shelley, 1992 : 35). This passage shows Frankenstein's first impression of Elizabeth, which is determined by her looks. Her appearance affects not only Frankenstein, but also his mother, Caroline. It is because her beauty and loveliness impress Caroline so much that Caroline decides to accept Elizabeth as her own daughter. Therefore, it might be said that Elizabeth's beauty brings her a better life. It may further imply that female's lives depend on their physical appearance. Elizabeth is not accepted and praised because of her wisdom or knowledge, but only because of her attractive looks. It is noticeable that Elizabeth does not even say a word to express her ideas yet Caroline makes the important decision to accept her as a daughter. Caroline's attitude shows social beliefs about the value of females, especially their physical appearance, and also shows that women themselves internalize these beliefs.

Beauty is an external quality of an object or person. To identify a woman's value by referring only to her physical appearance is the same as giving a description of an object. In the novel, such objectification is not only evident in the presentation of Elizabeth, but also other female characters, such as Agatha and Safie. The monster describes his first impression of Agatha as follows: "I beheld a young creature, with a pail on her head, passing before my hovel...Yet she was meanly dressed, a coarse blue petticoat and a linen jacket being her only garb; her hair was plaited, but not adorned..." (Shelley, 1992 : 107). The monster describes Agatha only in terms of her physical appearance. Throughout the story he never mentions Agatha's intellect. Likewise, Safie, an Arab who Felix, a male character, loves, is also objectified through many physical details: "Her hair of shining raven black, and curiously braided; her eyes were dark, but gentle, although animated; her figure of a regular proportion, and her complexion wondrously fair, each cheek tinged with a lovely

pink” (Shelley, 1992 : 116). It is noticeable that each of these three female characters is described basically in terms of her physical appearance. Although they are portrayed through different male narrators with different backgrounds (Frankenstein and the monster), they are still subjected to the same evaluation. This may imply that a man, with or without knowledge, learns to value a woman in terms of her degree of beauty, not her intellect.

Stereotypical portrayals of women in terms of their bodies or emotions are also represented in the description of female characters in the novel in predominantly passive terms: “the *lovely* girl”, the *sweet* orphan”, “the *sweet* Arabian”, and “the *sweet* Safie”. The italicized descriptive adjectives here may suggest positive images of beautiful women, but they also indirectly imply the use of female bodies as things to be consumed. Normally, “sweet” refers to sweets or candies, not the main dish. Therefore, women are in a way presented as marginal. Moreover, ‘sweet’ is related to feelings of love and satisfaction. It may be used to mean charming or attractive, relating to physical appearance again. In addition, if you are ‘sweet on’ somebody, it means you like him very much or are in love with him or her. In various ways, then, ‘sweet’ refers to attraction and satisfaction and it conveys the sense of women as objects to be consumed.

The most significant and obvious evidence reinforcing the view of women as only objects in men’s minds again relates to the first time Frankenstein, the novel’s protagonist, meets and accepts Elizabeth as his sister:

On the evening previous to her being brought to my home, my mother had said playfully, - ‘I have a pretty present for my Victor’...and when, on the morrow, she presented Elizabeth to me as her promised gift, I ...looked upon Elizabeth as mine – mine to protect, love and cherish...- my more than sister, since till death she was to be mine only. (Shelley, 1992 : 35-36)

Frankenstein’s childish tendency to see Elizabeth as an object or a gift may come from his learning. He learns this traditional social value from his mother’s words, “a pretty present,” which shows that his parents also treat Elizabeth as only an object. Therefore, Frankenstein learns and adopts this value as his own, and from

Frankenstein's point of view, Elizabeth is presented as his exclusive possession – “mine” and “till death she was to be mine only”.

It may be concluded that there are various factors influencing men to treat women as objects. Women's limited education, as reflected in the character of Elizabeth, is a significant factor bringing them limited potentials, being considered to lack intellect in men's minds. Frankenstein may not intentionally value Elizabeth and other female characters as objects, but traditional conceptions are still conveyed through the names that he uses to refer to women. Men's instinctual focus on sexuality may be an important factor, but the traditional social belief, often unintentionally transmitted to male youths, is also significant. Frankenstein himself was not born with the idea of treating women as objects, but his society, the people around him, teach him to possess that value.

Moreover, the social system and social values in the male-dominated society of the early nineteenth century also influenced Shelley in making her female characters dominant only in a limited area, or even completely objectified as *silent* objects:

In Mary Shelley's novel, women are occasionally the objects of discourse – most notably Margaret Saville, who cannot respond (or is at least represented as not responding), but also Justine and Elizabeth, whose responses to discourse aimed at them are in each case truncated by their deaths at the hands (in Elizabeth's case, quite literal) of the violent system of male authority within which the narrative is inscribed.... In the public world of the time, the story is much the same.... As objects of discourse, women were continually reminded of their 'proper' and 'natural' place in private familial and public extrafamilial interaction. (Behrendt, 1995 : 71)

Margaret Saville, Captain Walton's sister, reflects the silencing of women in the nineteenth century. As mentioned in chapter II, she functions as only a listener for her brother. She gives no reply, no voice and expresses no identity. Her existence completely depends on her brother. As for Justine and Elizabeth, although they are not presented as such silent objects, they are created to die without any argument for themselves. It is most obvious in the case of Justine, who is accused of murder by the

monster, and is even forced to accept the punishment: “I did confess; but I confessed a lie. I confessed that I might obtain absolution.... Ever since I was condemned, my confessor has besieged me; he threatened and menaced, until I almost began to think that I was the monster that he said I was” (Shelley, 1992 : 87). Justine is accused by a man (he) and his authority in the patriarchal society, and in a way she is killed by male power. Likewise, Elizabeth is the instrument of the monster in taking revenge on Frankenstein. Both women are guiltless, and are even idealized perfect ladies, but they are created to die to serve men’s power. Each of the three female characters exemplifies women’s role as objects of discourse. They are not only literally objects of men in the story, but also the objects of men’s stories.

This story might be said to demonstrate the effect of a social system of male authority on a female author in the early nineteenth century. More specifically, the male literary society in the early nineteenth century also affected the positions of women authors. For example, Shelley had a chance to express herself in composing a novel, but she was still influenced by a system that privileged masculinity. It has been observed that Shelley, like her female characters, became an object of discourse when her husband revised her *Frankenstein*: “Shelley corrected the final proofs from Lackington in 1817, oversaw his wife’s manuscript at every stage of development, corrected grammar, spelling, and even suggested some of the themes and ideas contained within the novel” (Florescu, 1996 : 172). The novel was also reviewed by males, which further reinforced Shelley’s position as an object of discourse: “The woman writer (who becomes herself an originator of discourse by publishing) is ‘represented’ within public culture as an object of discourse when her work is reviewed by the (generally male) critic” (Behrendt, 1995 : 71-72). Shelley seemed to be the agent of her work, as the writer, but in fact she was still the object of discourse (her *Frankenstein*) because her work was controlled, censored, by male power, in part through her husband’s editing.

It can be seen, then, that the subjugation of women by men in this novel is achieved in two ways: 1) the description of women as men’s physically beautiful objects and 2) the silencing of women’s voices. This is a consequence of women’s



objectification by the male gaze, their limited education (further limiting their own values in terms of physical beauty and emotions) as well as their typical stereotyping as silent subjects in the patriarchal society. Shelley, as a woman of that time, presents her subordinated identity and women's limited roles and statuses through her work. Her concealment of her female authorship behind her male narrators reflects women authors' subordinate social position at that time. It is well-documented, for example, that female authors often used male pseudonyms to avoid male censorship in the nineteenth century (Homans, 1992 : 344). This novel, therefore, not only presents the objectification of women in literature, but also reflects the silencing of the voices of women in the society at large.

## **2. Shelley's Novel, Women and the Romantic Love Myth**

The original novel of Frankenstein has science as a main theme, so it might be classified as a type of science fiction. However, as this story was written in what we now call the Romantic period (1780-1830), it was also influenced by romantic styles of writing. Romantic writers focused on nature, instincts and emotions: "Romantic literature...often sees man in communication with the natural world, rather than with other men. It trusts instincts, the emotion and the heart, rather than intellect and the head" (Stephen, 1991 : 221). Although the basic plot of Shelley's story is an early form of science fiction, the message conveyed also reminds the readers of the significance of nature and warns the readers about the dangers of human ambitions. It seems to want readers to reaffirm the importance of nature. The story talks about the significance of nature and emotions. Consequently, in dealing with the issue of desire, Shelley might have been influenced by romantic conceptions to celebrate feelings and emotions in her fiction:

Among the romantics there was unquestionably a cult of feeling. Doubtless some of its initiates indulged their emotions for the simplest of reasons: because feeling strongly felt good.... They also redefined the role of emotion in understanding reality.... The literary result, especially among the great English Romantics, was poetry of intense feeling. (Brian, 1987 : 7-8)

The romantics largely had feelings as the main element in their work because feelings and emotions gave literature more impact and perhaps brought it closer to real life. Consequently, romantic literature mostly dealt with intense feelings. Although Shelley's novel is not entirely devoted to romantic love, which is often exposed in romantic literature, it is certainly an aspect of the novel worthy of analysis. In studying how the romantic love myth informs the novel, I will be mainly interested in how masculine values in the patriarchal society influenced Shelley in representing women's love in romantic relationships, specifically the relationship between Elizabeth and Frankenstein.

Critics believe that Shelley's *Frankenstein* was much influenced by famous romantic poets, Shelley's husband Percy and their friend Lord Byron. Percy is believed to have been crucial in organizing this novel. With his revision, Percy might have inserted romantic concepts in the novel. Byron did not deal with the revision of *Frankenstein*, but he was still a significant factor in Shelley's use of nature imagery: "The substance of Byron's influence on Mary lay perhaps in the stark, desolate, and melancholic effects that the mountains had upon his own poetry..., and which had some bearing on Mary's own use of mountains in the plot" (Florescu, 1996 : 173). Thus Shelley's husband and her intimate friend, Byron, were significant in promoting romantic concepts in the story of *Frankenstein*.

The romantic concepts Shelley got from Percy and Byron might also have been used as fundamental resources in presenting the romantic relationship between Frankenstein and Elizabeth. As well as maternal love from Caroline, Frankenstein receives romantic love from Elizabeth. Elizabeth seems to be in a better position than Margaret, Captain Walton's sister, as her concerns and feelings are presented through her letters, or at least through Frankenstein's narration, but Margaret's are totally absent from the novel. However, although Elizabeth is presented as the primary female character, she is still distanced from the readers. Her love and her attitudes are presented through the filter of Frankenstein's narration, not expressed directly and freely through her own voice. Frankenstein's feelings and ideas towards anything and anybody are freely presented; by contrast, the information about Elizabeth is only an

indirect, passive and somewhat distant message. Consequently, the reader does not receive direct information about the female characters' experience of love.

Moreover, throughout the story, Elizabeth never verbalizes love for Frankenstein. On the other hand, Frankenstein verbally and directly expresses his love in confirming to his father that he will marry Elizabeth: "I love my cousin tenderly and sincerely" (Shelley, 1992 : 151). The romantic relationship between Frankenstein and Elizabeth is constructed through Frankenstein's feelings and awareness; he tells how close Elizabeth and he are and how much Elizabeth impresses him. Of course, this may again be in part due to Shelley's decision to narrate through a male voice. But even concerning their marriage, the readers learn not only of Frankenstein's feelings and ideas but also those of the relatively minor character – Alphonse. On the other hand, little information concerning Elizabeth's feelings or ideas about Frankenstein or their relationship is given. It seems in this respect almost to be like an arranged marriage.

In this respect, it can be seen that women's romantic love in this story is marginalized. Love in this story is primarily instrumental because of the dominance of masculine self-centredness and a corresponding diminution of feminine love, which focuses on inner feelings increasing the intensity of romance. Women and men have different styles of love, with the typical masculine love influencing men to focus on their beloveds' physical wellbeing: "Everything was made to yield to her wishes and her convenience. He strove to shelter her... from every rougher wind and to surround her with all that could tend to excite pleasurable emotion in her soft and benevolent mind" (Shelley, 1992 : 33). Alphonse expresses his love for his wife by taking care of her physical wellbeing, not by dealing with her intense feelings. He reflects men's conception of masculine love as protecting and taking care of their lovers. This tendency continues today. Cancian (1987 : 75) found in a study of masculine love that "Giving practical help and spending time together were more important to men." Revealing this same tendency two centuries earlier, Shelley has Alphonse give practical help at an appropriate time when Caroline needs it: "He came like a protecting spirit to the poor girl, who committed herself to his care... Two years

after this event Caroline became his wife” (Shelley, 1992 : 32). Caroline is in trouble, having become an orphan after her father’s death, but fortunately Alphonse comes in time to help her. He expresses and proves his love with his practical help by saving and taking care of her. He does not express his love through sweet words, but Caroline understands him. Caroline’s attitude seems to imply that women also accept this male method of expressing their masculine love.

Men not only develop their love by taking care of their partners’ wellbeing, but also create closeness through doing activities. They prefer sharing activities with their partners, so men seem to be in a way closer to male friends as they do more activities together. Sometimes, from women’s perspectives, men seem to be indifferent and to neglect them. That is because men and women often do not spend time together due to their different interests. Wood (1999), analyzing men and women’s different behaviors, observes that,

...women communicate directly and verbally with each other to share themselves and their feelings. Men typically share activities and an interest with friends...what is central to friendship differs between the sexes: for men, it tends to be doing things together, for women, being and talking together is the essence of close personal relationships. (Wood, 1999 : 204)

Frankenstein and Elizabeth also have problems because of this difference. Frankenstein, as a man, automatically develops his intimate relationships by sharing activities, but Elizabeth cannot share the same activities with him due to her different level of education and different interests:

...I was capable of a more intense application, and was more deeply smitten with the thirst for knowledge. She busied herself with following the aerial creations of the poets.... While my companion contemplated with a serious and satisfied spirit the magnificent appearances of things, I delighted in investigating their causes. (Shelley, 1992 : 36)

It is noticeable that their different characters and interests seem to imply the different concepts of Romanticism and Classicism. Elizabeth is interested in poets and the beauty of nature so she seems to represent the spirit of Romanticism, while Frankenstein is interested in knowledge and the cause of natural phenomena,

representing Classicism. Moreover, with a typically masculine drive, Frankenstein devotes himself to his studies and may develop his intimate relationships with friends in scientific lessons or experiments (a subject I will examine further in Chapter IV). Consequently, Elizabeth is unintentionally excluded from his world of interests and she has fewer chances in developing their relationships by spending time with him or sharing the same interests. Here, Shelley provides a quite realistic portrayal of the male and female divide concerning romantic love, perhaps especially in her own time, and the way in which women can be adversely affected by this.

Consequently, it can be said that although Shelley's *Frankenstein* might be defined as romantic literature, on the issue of romantic love, women's love is still presented in limited ways. It is subordinated to male instrumental love. Male values determine the representations of female identity and female romantic love again. The representations of women and their love are heavily influenced by patriarchal values since they are made through male points of view. For this reason, the representations of women and their love is an issue which can be regarded as reflecting a certain exclusion based on gender.

### **Representations of Women in Relation to Desire in Branagh's Film**

In making the film, Branagh changed not only the plot of Shelley's novel, but also representations of romantic love. The film seems to be less masculine and seems to present more about feminine identity. The greater representation of females in the film brings more information about women's love. Consequently, audiences may gain a greater sense of the role of female love from the film.

However, women's representations in the film are still limited and problematic. This section will reveal factors affecting the objectification of women in Branagh's film (section 1), and the influence of ideas concerning the presentation of romantic relationships (section 2).

## 1. Objectification of Women in the Film

As already mentioned, some information concerning women in the film is different from that in the novel due to the different historical contexts in which they were produced. Feminist movements in the late twentieth century urged society to give women more opportunities and represent women's issues in the media more carefully. However, as seen in patriarchal society at large, women even today are not treated completely equally and representations of women in the media are still problematic. This is evident in the representations of women in Branagh's film, partly because the film was produced in what was still a patriarchal society in which masculine values controlled social constructs. In this section, therefore, I will analyze women's sexual objectification in the film, which will reveal the conflicting effects of the values of a male-dominated society, feminism and the medium itself.

Besides being portrayed as mothers, women in the film of *Frankenstein* are also portrayed as objects of desire, even as sex objects. The sex object, according to Ferguson (1981 : 8), "is man's pray, the fulfiller of men's sexual needs, respectable for his passions." Sex objects serve male pleasure, and women are forced to play the role of taking care of men's needs.

It was mentioned in relation to the novel that men traditionally take the role of observers, women being constructed as objects in men's eyes. This traditional division of roles is seen even more explicitly and significantly in the visual medium of the film. The readers of the novel receive information through male narration, as if they are looking through the male narrators' eyes, but the film portrayals are actually more direct expressions of the male gaze. While in the novel, Frankenstein gazes at Elizabeth and Shelley describes Elizabeth's appearance through his narration, the film explicitly shows the double operation of men's gaze: through male characters' eyes and through the eyes of cameras in men's hands.

Stereotyping men as the watchers and women as objects being gazed at is instrumental in creating gender identities. As observers, men tend to be active, and prefer discovering and investigating new creations. On the other hand, women

typically accept their positions as serving men's gazing and become used to being investigated and represented without any argument. They learn to view themselves through male eyes. Such behavior patterns are most obviously seen in visual images in films. Zoonen (1994), studying women's role in the media, discusses women's position as objects of the male gaze in Hollywood films:

The patriarchal definition of looking as a male activity and being looked at as a female 'passivity' allows for a reconciliation of the two contradictory, but constitutive pleasures of narrative cinema. In mainstream Hollywood film, women function simultaneously as erotic objects for the male audience who can derive scopophillic pleasure from their presence, and as erotic objects for the male protagonist with whom the male audience can identify. (Zoonen, 1994 : 89)

Females are positioned as erotic objects for both the male protagonist's and male viewers' (scopophillic) pleasure, in looking. Mulvey (1975) agrees with Zoonen that representations of women in films, particularly Hollywood films, are constructed through the eyes of males:

The cinematic forms of the dominant Hollywood cinema reproduce unequal gender relations through their construction of narratives based on an active male protagonist. The audience are invited to view the action through the point of view of this male protagonist, and – crucially – also to view the woman in the film, who is erotically coded for 'to-be-looked-at-ness', from this male perspective...Through this organization of looking in film, women's activity and subjectivity are denied: instead, they are subordinated to the look and the needs of the male. Film, thus represents and reproduces the patriarchal power relations of society, in which men act and women are, men look and women are looked at, men's pleasures are served and women's are ignored. (quoted in Marshment, 1997 : 141)

Mulvey then concludes that females are not only objects of the desire of the active male protagonist, but also that of the male audience. This element supports social values promoting male desire and marginalizing the desire of females. Mulvey's discussion, therefore, exposes the work of media in both reflecting and continuing the power of patriarchal values. As discussed earlier, women in Branagh's film are doubly presented through male perspectives: through the male characters' eyes and through the eyes of cameras in men's hands. This film is, then, an example of mass

communication influenced by the values of the male gaze in a male-dominated society.

Nevertheless, in some respects, Branagh's *Frankenstein* seems to present an improvement in women's representations in comparison to the novel. Female characters in the film seem to be portrayed somewhat more positively and developed to possess more active roles. They can directly express their own ideas and desires by themselves while these expressions are presented only through male narration in the novel. They even fight to fulfill their desires.

The change in women's representations in media was largely caused by the increase in feminist activities in the late twentieth century. Ending sexist images of women in the media is one of the main issues raised by feminists since the 1970s. Feminists realized that images of women both in the print and broadcast media contributed to sexism in societies (Decard, 1975), so they increasingly fought to end the use of female bodies in the media. Their efforts have succeeded in making some changes in films:

Films, too, have offered us some new visions of women.... One of the most controversial adult films in recent years was *Thelma and Louise*, which was a bold departure from former images of women as supportive sidekicks to men.... Thelma and Louise defined themselves as independently of men and as entitled to respond strongly, even violently, to male assaults and devaluation of them. (Wood, 1999 : 373)

*Thelma and Louise* (1991) undermines traditional images of women being dependent on men. The characters reflect new traits feminists expect for female characters in films. Some changes in images of women are also seen in the other strongly visual medium, television, as Ang (1996) reports:

Heroines such as Maddle Hayes (*Moonlighting*) and Christine Cagney (*Cagney and Lacey*) did not fit into traditional ways in which female characters have generally been represented in prime-time television fiction: passive and powerless, on the one hand, and sexual objects for men, on the other hand. (Ang, 1996 : 85)



Filmmakers and television producers, then, have become increasingly conscious of their presentation of women. Women in some films and some television fictions in the late twentieth century became less passive and less powerless. It might be said that feminist movements brought such improvement. The improvement can also be seen in the characterization of female characters in *Frankenstein*. Although female characters in *Frankenstein* are not developed completely according to the feminist ideals seen in *Thelma and Louise* and *Moonlighting*, they are portrayed with more complexity than in the novel. They are not completely independent, but they can express their feelings, ideas, and needs by themselves to some degree.

European upper-class women in the early eighteenth century, the setting for female characters in the original story, were largely dependent on men, being dominant only in the domestic area, and were rarely allowed to express and fight for their desires and needs. But female characters in the film are characterized a little differently from in the novel. In the film, Elizabeth expresses her needs and desires by herself, not through letters and Frankenstein's narration. She worries about her lover, so she goes to see him and expresses her feelings of anxiety. This is different from Elizabeth's actions in the novel, which usually entail waiting for Victor and his reply at home.

However, this change does not entirely overcome the marginalization and sexual objectification of female characters in the story. The film eventually leaves the main power and the significant roles in men's hands, and women remain constricted within traditional images and dependent on the male characters. Women's images as sex objects are still presented, but less obviously. Women are indirectly presented serving the same purpose. Culley and Bennett (1976), studying the relationship between sex-object images and women's social situation, noted how even after the 'feminist revolution' had begun women were still indirectly treated as sex objects: "The decrease in sex-object images of women is further compensated by an increased emphasis on female physical beauty" (quoted in Cealemans, 1979 : 9). Female characters are less crudely portrayed as sex objects, but their bodies are still used

indirectly to convey the same message because they are presented in ways that serve the desires of men.

Likewise, female characters in Branagh's film are still created to serve their traditional function as objects of desire. Certainly, the psychology of the character of Elizabeth is subservient to her visual image. Branagh's *Frankenstein* is (among other things) what has been called a "costume drama." Its costumes work effectively in bringing the audience back to the nineteenth century; however, "fashions of the nineteenth century not only accentuated but also elaborated and constructed gender difference" (Bruzzi, 1997 : 40). It is noticeable that Elizabeth is always portrayed as physically beautiful and well-groomed while Frankenstein is portrayed as having little care for his appearance due to his obsession with his work, a stereotypical masculine trait. During his experiment, Frankenstein is always in dirty dress. Sometimes he is stripped to the waist to show muscles and thus masculine strength. His neat and clean looks before and after the experiment contrasts with his being bearded during the experiment. This implies that work may have such a strong influence on men that they readily neglect their appearance. The same does not apply to images of Elizabeth, which is typical of the costume drama genre.

Through such stereotypical gender images, male and female characters in popular films are typically developed within certain boundaries. Male heroes in films can be ugly because their success, not only their physical appearance, will define their values. At the same time, for commercial reasons, it is generally not acceptable to have less than beautiful heroines in popular films. Filmmakers need to attract a larger audience and serve people's traditional pleasure in viewing beautiful female characters. This is why the conception of women in *Frankenstein* is not much improved, but remains limited. While this may in some ways be a realistic representation of upper class European society in the eighteenth century, the film, a product of the 1990s, offers few positive concessions to social change. Female characters are created mainly following their characterizations in the original novel. They remain beautiful and generally passive, exposing little information about their intellect. Therefore, it might be said that while women's movements in the late

twentieth century had some effect on the portrayals of female characters in Branagh's film, their efforts and influence have not been enough to eradicate traditional sexual objectification in the film.

Elizabeth, the most significant female character in *Frankenstein*, is always presented beautifully with a good figure and lively personality. In the novel, the readers get information about Elizabeth's loveliness through narration in details:

Among these there was one which attracted my mother far above all the rest. She appeared of a different stock...this child was thin, and very fair. Her hair was the brightest living gold, and despite the poverty of her clothing, seemed to set a crown of distinction on her head. Her brow was clear and ample, her blue eyes cloudless, and her lips and the moulding of her face so expressive. (Shelley, 1992 : 34)

Elizabeth is presented through physical details, gradually part by part. The description begins with a broad picture of Elizabeth - *thin and very fair* - to show the size and overall picture, and then the small details - *hair, clothing, brow, eyes and lips* – to allow the readers to gradually imagine Elizabeth's beauty. Such literary devices help readers to perceive the significance and privilege of Elizabeth. The portrayal of Elizabeth in the novel is physically detailed. The film continues to present women through such physical images, though perhaps more effectively because film is a visual medium. In her introductory scene in *Frankenstein*, Elizabeth is portrayed as a pretty little girl. She is firstly presented in an extreme long shot, then a long shot, and finally a medium shot. The audience gradually perceives her loveliness through the advancing shots. Elizabeth is focused on as the central object, and seems to be granted significance as a visual spectacle. In this scene, Elizabeth is the object of Frankenstein's and the audience's gaze as the audience looks through camera shots that suggest Frankenstein's own male visual perspective.

Growing up as a pretty girl, Elizabeth's beauty is further emphasized. She is presented as a young, thin, lively, and vulnerable girl. As earlier mentioned, because visual images in the film are developed from male narration in the novel, Elizabeth's portrayals can be viewed as concrete presentations of Frankenstein's vision of her. Her beauty is constructed from her good figure, fair complexion, curly hair, little pink

lips and bright eyes. She looks like a doll, a figure without brains. She is always well dressed in sweet-colored dresses, and more often in red or pink, which is significant because these colors suggest a traditionally feminine emotional being.

Her red dress in the scene where she goes to see Frankenstein in Ingolstadt makes a bright and passionate contrast to Frankenstein's dim and dirty workplace, and clearly reflects the cinematic prejudice that "a man's clothes are a function of his relation to society and a woman's clothes are a function of her relation to man" (Laver, 1969 : 173, quoted in Bruzzi, 1997 : 41). This scene exemplifies how women (and perhaps even men) are portrayed through limited images. Elizabeth is in the foreground, with a background of female domestic products: the jars for having a bath and the pink divider. On the other hand, Frankenstein is portrayed amid a setting of dirty work-related objects. This shows that his life is always identified with his work, while Elizabeth, as a woman, is always identified with the domestic area.

Elizabeth's red dress conveys emotions and life again in the scene in which she is shown writing a letter in the forest. The background of a green field may refer to nature, freshness and the origin of life, while her red dress conveys the different meanings of human life, with blood, emotions and passions. Elizabeth is portrayed through such characteristics many times. The identity she expresses deals only with feelings or emotions, but not with knowledge or ability.

Elizabeth's pink dresses similarly convey emotional involvement. Pink dresses may not suggest such strong emotions as red dresses, but they may refer to impressions or pleasure related to the traditionally passive feminine, like the word 'sweet' in the novel. Female characters in the film are not addressed through terms referring to consumption and satisfaction as they are in the novel, but their pink dresses define them. Pink dresses may refer to attractiveness and men's pleasure in women, but they indirectly convey women's subordination to men. Although pink may not refer to sexual desire, it has certain negative implications relating to passivity, subordination and women's traditional stereotypical image of being weak and soft. Such images help to procure women's marginalization in the film.

Along with this simple, traditional color-coding in Branagh's *Frankenstein*, the camera is also used to reinforce stereotypes of female passivity and male activity. Although dolly shots are similarly used for both male and female characters, there are differences. In presenting Frankenstein, the camera is moving along with his actions. When the camera follows him, it confirms the masculine stereotype of activity. On the other hand, although dolly shots are used to present female characters, only the camera is moving while the characters stay still, as in the childbirth scene. This reinforces female stereotypes of passivity. Likewise, Elizabeth and other female characters are portrayed through stationary cameras which "tends to convey a sense of stability and order, unless there is a great deal of movement within the frame" (Giannetti, 1987 : 95). Stationary cameras render female characters as passive objects.

Editing may also be used to imply less active personalities. For example, classical cutting presents Elizabeth's and Frankenstein's psychological conditions when Elizabeth goes to see Frankenstein at his laboratory in Ingolstadt. The director cuts from Elizabeth, entering the laboratory, to Frankenstein in a dialogue exchange, then cuts to a reaction shot of Elizabeth. The sequence of the shots presents a psychological cause-effect pattern (Gianetti, 1987 : 114) in which Elizabeth is reactive, not active or assertive. She is defined not by what she does, but how she looks.

Beautiful images of women are created to serve men's pleasure. Their beautiful and neat clothes in some respect limit them within images serving men's desire, as the famous French feminist Simone de Beauvoir (1979 : 543, quoted in Bruzzi, 1997 : 41) remarked: "...excessively feminine clothes have nothing to do with glorifying or emancipating women, but are devices of enslavement that make them prey to male desires." Women in the film are presented so as to satisfy men's desire for beautiful, emotionally expressive, vulnerable and sensitive women. As women have traditionally been taught to consider themselves subordinate to men, to comfort and console them, women themselves learn to accept the primary role of satisfying men. It is noticeable in this respect that not only Elizabeth, the female protagonist, is

presented through beautiful images, but Caroline and even Justine's aunt. It is common for female characters to be portrayed in this way in films generally: "Women are portrayed as significantly younger and thinner than women in the population as a whole, and most are depicted as passive, dependent on men, and enmeshed in relationships or housework" (Wood, 1999 : 304). Reflecting this bias, Caroline and Justine's aunt are not as young as Elizabeth, but both of them look better, thinner, and younger than might be expected. Caroline, with a son of Frankenstein's age, and Justine's aunt, with plenty of housework, should look older and, maybe, fatter than they do. Justine is an exceptional case: she looks good for her age. But compared with Elizabeth, who is around the same age, she is represented less glamorously. She is always in white or light blue dresses, which are less obviously or exclusively feminine. This may be because the film needs only one main and dominant female character. Any other females of Elizabeth's age must be subordinated in terms of beauty because this is the dominant frame of reference for popular interpretation of female characters. Thus the portrayal of women in *Frankenstein* can be said mostly to reflect traditional stereotypes of women in films.

The limiting of female characters in films is still partly dependent on cinematic production control. Men still control women's roles and their representations through the hands of male directors. Women in popular films cannot escape from sexual objectification because they (we) do not arrange or control their (our) own representations:

Representation is a political issue. Without the power to define our interests and to participate in the decisions that affect us, women – like any other group in society – will be subject to the definitions and decisions of others. These others (men, in this case) are likely to produce definitions and decisions that serve their interests rather than ours. (Marshment, 1997 : 125)

Women's images in media are limited partly because women have few chances to manage their representations. Most film production teams are dominated by males. For this reason, films continue to focus on male themes or plots in which women are unnecessary or insignificant, presenting women through certain images related to their physical appearance.

Importantly, the patriarchal construction of social codes and the social conditioning of individuals lead even women themselves to perceive their identity in terms of appearance. It might be said that both beautiful images and women's obsessions with beauty serve men's sexuality and reinforce women's sexual objectification by men. In the novel, female characters do not express their identities by themselves, or even express their desires. The beautiful images of women that the readers perceive also come from male values, but the women themselves do not express either their satisfaction or displeasure with their beautiful images. However, in the film *Elizabeth* represents women's conceptions in terms of beauty directly.

The film conveys this value clearly in its climax, which is significantly different from that of the novel. Frankenstein has decided to recreate the murdered Elizabeth without being concerned about *her desire* to live such a life or not. He claims that he still wants her to be with him because he loves her. After waking up from death, Elizabeth finds herself with little memory, and extremely ugly. The protracted duration of the close shot of her deformed face makes the viewers feel pity for her appearance. Frankenstein reminds her of his name to recall her to be the same Elizabeth he loves. Abruptly, the film gives an image of contrast as the monster comes to take his bride. He expresses his feelings towards Elizabeth, reassures her by praising her ugly appearance. Elizabeth feels surprised to see a strange, ugly man repeating that she is very beautiful. With astonishment, Elizabeth goes to see the monster more closely and sees many sewn wounds. Immediately, she finds such wounds on her hands and all over herself, as if she is looking at herself in a mirror. She realizes that now she is in an ugly recreated body like the monster. When she finds that she is not really as beautiful as the monster said, and realizes that this is because of Frankenstein, the man she loves, she expresses anger and disappointment. Certainly, she cannot accept her new ugly appearance, and burns her own ugly body.

Elizabeth's decision to end her terrible life with an ugly appearance seems to convey and consolidate ideas of female narcissism. Tong (1998) discusses how women's behavior too often reflects the idea of female narcissistic desire:

Woman is frustrated as a subject because she is not allowed to engage in self-defining activity and because her feminine activities are not fulfilling.... Woman then becomes her own object. Believing herself to be an object – a belief confirmed by most everyone around her – she is fascinated by, and perhaps even fixated on, her own image: face, body, clothes ...the end result is that woman is enchained by the need to please man. (Tong, 1998 : 185-186).

In female narcissism, women's pride is mainly dependent on the degree of their beauty. Women tend to keep themselves beautiful to please themselves and a society in which the social values controlling women's ideas come from men's desire. To satisfy themselves and men, women - Elizabeth, for instance - would want themselves always to be beautiful. Beauty is a quality inseparable from the woman's sense of herself. Consequently, in Elizabeth's situation, a woman would find it difficult to accept the change into ugliness and would be willing to put an end to her 'tragic' condition by herself.

Another point reinforcing the traditional relationship between female images and their identities concerns the presence of the monster. The monster and the recreated Elizabeth are in the same circumstance of having an ugly appearance, but the monster can better cope with this terrible situation. He does not commit suicide to escape here. Although the film observes through the monster that people also evaluate men in terms of their physical appearance, the ugly monster does not feel as hopeless as Elizabeth. This may be because women or female characters, such as Elizabeth, are created primarily for being looked at; they cannot express their whole identity as men can. The monster, though having an ugly image, has chances to express his identity and desire. It might be said that Elizabeth is in a worse position than the monster because she has only one way to express her existence, by displaying her beauty. As a woman, Elizabeth faces so much suffering and oppression that she cannot live any longer. Such a difference between the monster and Elizabeth in their response to their ugly appearance reinforces the difference between men and women where desire and identity are concerned.

It can also be observed in this climactic scene that Frankenstein repeatedly reminds Elizabeth of his name, which relates to inner feelings and subjective identity.



On the other hand, the monster mentions only her physical appearance as a beautiful woman. She goes to see him closely and seems to trust him. This further reinforces the idea that women are familiar with being defined primarily by their appearance. Moreover, the close-shot of Elizabeth's face, expressing her feelings after realizing that she is no longer beautiful, arouses the audience, who accept this view of women without question, sympathizing with her feelings of grief. In the end, Elizabeth must burn herself to death, not just to end her suffering, but to prevent the audience having to put up with an ugly woman.

In addition, when Frankenstein and the monster are fighting to possess Elizabeth, the film presents another example of male desire's objectification of women. Both the monster and Frankenstein express clearly that they see a woman as an object for men:

Frankenstein : She is mine.

Monster : She is mine.

Both of them express their demand to possess Elizabeth. They show their possessiveness without thinking about Elizabeth's needs. Being treated like this, Elizabeth is not different from an object without feelings, mind or brain in men's minds. Initially, Elizabeth does not accept this stereotype. She is aware that both Frankenstein and the monster are treating her as an object. They are not concerned about her feelings. Her attitudes and suffering are presented. Finally, she makes these two men, and possibly the film's audience, aware of her existence as a thinking subject by deciding to burn herself. It seems to imply that Elizabeth cannot live with either her deformed ugly body or her position as only an object to Frankenstein and the monster.

Influenced by the strong feminist movement, then, the film seems to pay a little more attention to femininity and women's identity than the novel, but in doing this it focuses on passive female beauty. It does this in several ways: its composition, characterization, camera work and plot. Female characters in the film are still

objectified as in the novel, and even more concretely in some respects. The similarities in the objectification of women in the novel and in the film signify the continuation of women's marginalization in male-dominated society. This is due to the power of male values in the patriarchal society at large, financial reasons, as well as male authority in the film industry. These factors underly Branagh's objectification of women in his film.

## **2. Branagh's Film, Women and the Romantic Love Myth**

Branagh's film not only portrays women through popular images of classical beauty, but also presents conservative views of women's concepts and expressions of love. In Anglo-Saxon cultures in the nineteenth century, when the original novel of *Frankenstein* was written, feminine love and the family were separated from the masculine spheres of work. Women were expected to provide love, warmth and care for the family, while men provided money (Wood, 1999). Gender role stereotypes distinguished feminine love from masculine self-centeredness, and influenced the feminization of love. Love became identified with women and with qualities seen as feminine, such as tenderness or expressing feelings. The attention to and expressions of feelings by women would identify the degrees and definitions of romantic love; however, romantic love focusing on the expressions of feelings might be expressed by both sexes, not only by women. Branagh's film, paying attention to romance and making romantic love a significant issue, displays how differently men and women expressed their romantic love at the end of the twentieth century. My study in this section will distinguish the different forms of women's and men's romantic love presented in the film, comparing this to the novel and revealing how women's position in this respect is complex: there are positive and negative aspects. I will look at the former first.

Women and men define their romantic love differently; likewise, they treat their love and lovers differently. As noted in relation to Part 2 in the section of novel, conventionally, men prefer sharing activities, spending time together or providing help to express their love, while women like talking about inner feelings or disclosing

their inner self. Masculine love is thus defined, as instrumental while feminine love is expressive (Wood, 1999). However, people typically identify love with emotions and expressions of feelings; therefore, it might be said that society “feminizes” love:

We identify love with emotional expressions and talking about feelings, aspects of love that women prefer and in which women tend to be more skilled than men.... This feminized perspective leads us to believe that women are much more capable of love than men. (Cancian, 1993 : 288)

People identify love with expressing emotions or taking care of feelings, which favours those qualities associated with women’s experience of love. This seems to infer that love ought to exhibit feminine qualities. The qualities of romantic love presented in Branagh’s film can be seen to follow this norm. However, although romantic love in the film might increase the presence of women and feminine love, it is noticeable that women’s representation in this respect is still problematic.

In the original novel, women’s love, with its feminine qualities, is not explicitly attended to, as the story proceeds through male narrators, narrating the story through male perspectives and consequently presenting more masculine views of desire and relationships. By contrast Branagh’s film pays more attention to women’s love and even feminizes love because the story is not entirely presented through verbal male narration. In the film, Elizabeth has more chances to express her love and even fight for her love. After Frankenstein goes away to Ingolstadt and does not contact his family or her, Elizabeth feels uncertain about their romantic relationship. She immediately fights for her love by going to see him in Ingolstadt. This behavior in the character of Elizabeth in the film is different from the one in the novel. It might be said that the female protagonist in the film is portrayed with a better image in this respect, fighting for her love and daring to ask her man to marry her. Again, this perhaps reflects the impact of feminism in inspiring more active and positive representations of women in the media. Ceulemans (1979 : 27) observes that women’s movements have made people in the film industry pay more attention to the ways women have been represented. Branagh’s *Frankenstein* can be seen in some way to embody the effects of this reassessment of film from a feminist perspective.

In the novel, Elizabeth seems to be only a distant character, described in vague terms to the readers, but here in the film the character expresses her identity and her desire explicitly. This would seem to imply that the film pays more attention to female desire for love and allows more assertive and expressive portrayals of women. Yet, her attempt to fight for her love by going to see Frankenstein could easily be interpreted as craziness or senselessness. Her attitude in rushing to Frankenstein's laboratory could also be seen by a popular audience to show aggressiveness. Consequently, the film's attempt to enhance women's roles in relation to love might not always have a positive effect. This is because in romantic love, women are still expected by many in mainstream culture to be passive. Nevertheless, this film should be recognized for its attempt, however limited, to broaden women's roles and even make feminine love more valuable by making romantic love in the film more feminized and significant than in the novel.

Moreover, the film even, in some respects, feminizes male love, confirming a more pervasive idea in the late twentieth century that "the way to make relationships more loving is for men to become more like women" (Cancian, 1993 : 288). This change again suggests the influence of the idea of feminization of love in the twentieth century, which privileges love with feminine qualities. Frankenstein in the film pays more attention to his romantic relationship with Elizabeth than in the novel. Moreover, he seems to change his ways of expressing love to be more feminine. In the novel, after his departure to Ingolstadt, Frankenstein seems to neglect his romantic relationship with Elizabeth. Although he has chances in narrating his life to do so, he overlooks talking about his love for Elizabeth. On the other hand, in the film Frankenstein explicitly discloses his feelings to Elizabeth, when he says that he loves her so much that he cannot let her leave him:

Frankenstein : Please wait. I have to say to you. Please!

Elizabeth : What do you want to say?

Frankenstein : Don't go. Please, don't go. I have...

Elizabeth : I have..., what?

Frankenstein : I've done something so terrible, so evil. And I'm

afraid that if I tell you the truth, I will lose you.

Elizabeth : You will lose me if you don't.

Frankenstein : I...don't...know...what ..to...do.

Elizabeth : Will you marry me, Victor? Marry me today.  
 Tomorrow tell me everything, but you must tell me  
 everything. And together we will face anything. But if  
 you don't, whatever happens...I love you.

Here Frankenstein is afraid to lose Elizabeth so he discloses his sense of moral failure to her. He expresses his inner feelings and assures her of his love, which follows the character of feminine love. After that, Frankenstein tells her everything and they are prepared to face problems together. The scene seems to imply that self-disclosure or talking about inner feelings, characteristics of feminine love, make them better understand each other. It might be concluded that the film seems to pay attention to the romantic relationship between Frankenstein and Elizabeth, which increases Elizabeth's role in the film as well. The increase in Elizabeth's role and positive portrayals of feminine love and women's position in the romantic love in the film seem to improve the overall picture of women in Branagh's film.

However, as mentioned, there are both positive and negative aspects of women's position in the presentation of romantic love. In presenting this issue in his film, Branagh also implicitly presents women's subordination. It is noticeable that Frankenstein's physical image when he feminizes his love is not totally positive. He looks weak, unstable, underconfident and irrational. Consequently, it might be inferred that feminine traits do not bring a positive identity, no matter whether the person is male or female.

Moreover, the increase in presentations of romantic love in the film, giving female characters more opportunities in expressing women's ideas and desires, does not necessarily represent an improvement in representations of women in relation to desire. Firestone (1999 : 90) noted that romantic love, strongly explored in romantic works, is "a cultural tool of male power to keep women from knowing their condition." Therefore, romantic love limits women's roles under male authority, as

seen in the film. For example, in presenting romance, marriage is typically an issue to be dealt with. Female characters usually have marriage as their goal because marriage represents achievement in love and even a kind of narrative closure. However, marriage does not itself improve representations of women. The Ingolstadt scene discussed above reinforces the view that women's primary desire is for marriage, the only real means to fulfillment of their lives. Elizabeth wants to marry Frankenstein apparently because she understands that their marital relationship may solve their problems, or that they might understand each other after marriage. This is a common situation in portrayals of women's desire: "...when films focus on women developing their consciousness about their own identity, or about their relationship with men and society, women's real goal is always marriage and monogamy as the only fulfilling mode of life" (Tasker, 1998 : 67). Even when the film seems to give opportunities for women to develop their character in being conscious of their identity and their significance to men and society, it does not entirely free women. Women's real goal is still marriage, which again renders them as servants of men. Women return to being indirectly under male control.

Influenced by this type of romanticism, women have been marginalized and misrepresented through the media, and the situation may actually have become worse in recent times: "Thus the extension of romanticism through modern media enormously magnified its effects. If before culture maintained male supremacy through Eroticism, Sex Privatization, and the Beauty Ideal, these cultural processes are now almost too effectively carried out: the media are guilty of 'overkill'" (Firestone, 1999 : 93). Firestone suggests that romanticism might have had a great influence in the media, implicitly empowering males in distorting women's values, by treating women as craving love above all and thus willingly presenting themselves as love and sex objects. Firestone is anxious that modern media using romanticism in this way might worsen the situation for women dramatically because media such as films or television more efficiently and effectively reach their audience, which thereby speeds up the distortion of women in the media. Newland (1979 : 89), studying gender in the media, agrees that representations of women are still problematic in romance in films: "In entertainment programs and popular fiction,

women figure as passive or dependent creatures *with few concerns outside the domestic theme or the romance.*” Women’s limited roles in domestic settings or romance do not actually improve the representations of women in the media, however, prominent those roles maybe.

Zoonen (1994), observes that women and men are portrayed differently in romance, which affects gender stereotypes in society as well:

The transformation of the reserved and indifferent male into a warm and loving human being signifies a victory of female values of care and nature. However, the hero is not a weak man...He should be a man confident in public life and ideally he is portrayed as intelligent, wealthy and acknowledged..., the heroine on the contrary ...has an unusual job, is sexually innocent and unaware of her own irresistible beauty...she is special and independent, ignoring the events and actions in the narrative that demonstrate otherwise. (Zoonen, 1994 : 109)

Zoonen thus claims that women, though *seeming* more independent and free, are still actually portrayed in limited romantic roles, which do not enhance women’s images in the media and even worsen them. In presentations of romance in the media, although the heroine is one of the two central characters - along with the hero – she is often given little more than romantic significance. Therefore, even though the character of Elizabeth has a greater role in the film, related to romantic love, it might not mean a qualitative improvement. Romantic love is not an issue emerging to improve the representations of women in the media, and the genre of romantic films is not created to positively represent women.

Films focusing on themes that limit or devalue women brings film companies a great profit, so the filmmakers continue to present those themes in their films. Ceulemans noted in 1979 that “The potential of strong actresses remains unexplored, due to the profit-orientation of the film industry, which perpetuates the production of money making films focusing on violence, sensationalism, and sex” (57). For this reason, it might be overly optimistic to expect entirely positive representations of women in profit-making films such as Branagh’s *Frankenstein*.

I have shown in this section that masculine instrumental and feminine expressive love are different. Typically, men prefer practical expressions of their feelings, whereas women's love is identified with emotional expressions. Compared to the novel, Branagh's film portrays expressive female love and increases women's roles in relation to love. The changed plot reflects the influence of social changes in the twentieth century – particularly feminism – in affecting the way male filmmakers represent women. However, while Branagh's film may increase women's role in the film through its romantic subplot, the representations of women are still problematic because women have certain subordinate positions in romance.

### **Conclusion**

Representations of women in relation to desire in the novel might be considered to be mainly influenced by patriarchal values in the society. The male gaze and women's limited opportunities in education indirectly influenced the objectification of women by men in the novel. Female characters in the novel are described as objects in terms of their physical appearance and even presented as distant, silent characters. Even on the issue of romantic love, where women might be expected to be better regarded in the role of conserving romantic relationships, the representations of women's love are still problematic, as they are portrayed through male points of view. Consequently, males again control the representations of women's expressive love through their own practical love. Shelley's novel, then, effectively portrays women's marginalization in relation to desire as an effect of male supremacy in patriarchal society in the nineteenth century.

Due to the different historical contexts, the film reflects women in their relationship to desire quite differently by increasing women's expressions in relation to romantic love. However, male power in the male-dominated society in the late twentieth century perpetuated both the objectification of women and limited portrayals of feminine love, reinforcing women's marginalization in the film. There are some similarities in representations of women in relation to romantic love in Shelley's novel and Branagh's film, which lead to the limited overall picture of



women in the texts. In the film, women are still presented mostly within domestic settings, and as responsible for family members (physical and mental wellbeing). Male desire is still dominant whereas active female desire is largely removed from interest. Such characteristics of women in the novel and the film convey the continuation of the marginalization of women in the media, which has perhaps partly been because of male authority in the film industry. Women have continuously been overlooked. This suggests that although societies have changed and women are more accepted and have more opportunities, the continuation of certain patriarchal values, along with cinematic and financial factors influence representations of women in the media. Representations of women in the media remain problematic through the different times and different historical contexts.