

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES: HOW THE HORROR GENRE REVITALIZES

MACBETH

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How the Horror Genre Revitalizes Macbeth

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ABSTRACT

This project examines Rupert Goold's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in terms of the horror genre. Using filmic elements of the horror genre, touchstone horror texts, and Carol Clover's *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*, this project examines the Witches and Lady Macbeth as they are situated in the horror genre using various filmic elements. This project examines the character tropes of the horror genre – the monster, the victim, and the hero, and the ways in which the Witches and Lady Macbeth are at various points all three of these characters – an impossibility, within the horror genre. This adaptation, this project finds, disrupts the tropes of horror characterization, in order to illustrate the ways in which these still used tropes are problematic and damaging in terms of gender identity.

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of Jon Elliot Crisman -

You helped me see the value in myself and my efforts. I miss you, Dad.

For Jacquelyn Edith Crisman, with all my love.

You inspired me to work hard – without you, this project would never have happened.

For Abigail Jacquelyn Patton Crisman, my delightful sister -

You bring out the best in me, you challenge me, and you support me through all my efforts.

For all men and women who break the mould –

you are the reason society can progress and endure.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
INTRODUCTION	1
Argument & Methods.....	1
Defining Horror Character Tropes & Filmic Genre of Horror	7
TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF GOOLD'S MACBETH: HOW THE HORROR GENRE HIGHLIGHTS AND INVALIDATES HORROR CHARACTER TROPES IN <i>MACBETH</i>	11
CONCLUSION: WHY HORROR? WHY <i>MACBETH</i> ?	33
REFERENCES	36

INTRODUCTION

Argument & Methods

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is, perhaps, one of his best known tragedies, and for good reason. The play embodies many poignant themes, notably ambition, greed, ruthlessness, human nature, the corrupting nature of power, the ways in which guilt can drive people to insanity, and the inevitability of a downfall with motivations such as these. It is a cautionary tale that resonates with readers through many ages, because these are themes with which we grapple regularly in our own lives (albeit, perhaps, on a smaller scale). Adaptations ¹of *Macbeth* on stage and screen have altered setting, language, prominent characters, and more to appeal to audiences in different times and for different purposes. In doing this, themes and messages of the play are altered, pulled to the foreground, or alternatively pushed to the background in ways that reflect societal values or offer commentary on problematic elements of culture. Many filmed adaptations have attempted to make The Scottish Play even more alluring to modern audiences using a variety of filmic elements, such as score, special effects, post-production and sound editing, and camera moves. For many, however, the more captivating elements of the play are not the themes or the morals or even the special effects, but the elements of the supernatural and other-worldly, chiefly the Witches.

Rupert Goold in 2007 adapted *Macbeth* for stage. Following the success and acclaim of his post-WWII adaptation on West End and Broadway, BBC commissioned a filmed adaptation of the staged production. When filmed, Goold was able to retain the horrific lighting, makeup

¹ Linda Hutcheon's *Theory of Adaptation* defines adaptation as being a work of its own merit, that it "haunted" by the original work. For this project, I refer to Goold's *Macbeth* as an adaptation of Shakespeare's play of the same name. Goold made editing, revising, and filming decisions that altered the themes of the play for his filmic version, thus truly adapting it to screen.

and costuming, settings, and props, but was also able to go beyond those stage manifestations of the horror genre – post production editing including sound, lighting, and special effects work with his vision to highlight characters and themes, but most notably his vision centers on the Witches and Lady Macbeth. Goold uses special effects to make the Witches disappear into thin air as they shut the elevator door on Macbeth, and he uses sound editing to distort the Witches' voices as they address Macbeth. Thanks to the use of film editing techniques the Witches, in this adaptation, are placed securely in the realm of the supernatural. Lady Macbeth is, in Goold's adaptation, a foil to the Witches, and it this foil that I will explore in this project.

Other filmed adaptations have used supernatural elements, as well, but not to the extent that Goold's does. For example, the BBC episode of *ShakespeaRe-Told*, directed by Mark Brozel in 2005 starring James McAvoy, is set in a modern 3 Michelin Star kitchen. This adaptation uses present day English to update the dialog, and puts the play's events in the modern hierarchical structure of the food-service industry. This adaptation keeps the themes of *Macbeth* intact, and captures the suspense of Macbeth's ascent to power and descent into paranoia and madness well. However, this adaptation, while suspenseful, removes much of the supernatural by making the Witches three intoxicated garbage-truck operators whose powers of divination are not only open to interpretation, but also apparently derived from the substances they take. This adaptation makes the supernatural normal, and places anything else supernatural, like visions or ghosts, within the realm of Macbeth's own developing insanity. More importantly, the presence of the Witches is limited to their major speaking moments, when the Witches hail Macbeth as king, and when they set the parameters for his ascent and fall. Because these Witches play such a small role, their presence is both odd because of its limitedness, and normal because of their apparent, simple humanity.

Another example can be found in Justin Kurzel's 2015 adaptation of *Macbeth*, starring Michael Fassbender. This adaptation is set, as the original play was, in Medieval Scotland, and retains Shakespeare's Early Modern English. In this adaptation, there are some supernatural elements, most notably the ghost of a boy slain in the opening battle sequence, whose presence is explained by Macbeth's traumatic war experiences. The Witches have limited presence in this film, and appear as human women who have some passive ability to predict how Macbeth's future will unfold. This adaptation moves away from the supernatural and the focus is shifted from the themes of fate and onto the political and military aspects of the play.

In other filmed adaptations, the vision steers away from the Witches in favor of the normal. But Goold's adaptation brings these Witches to the forefront. Goold's Witches are inhuman – they are seen reanimating corpses, disappearing into thin air, and speaking in voices that are not their own. They are also decidedly in control of the other characters and their futures. For example, during the dinner Macbeth hosts in which he sees the Ghost of Banquo, the Witches take his seat at the head of the table, and when he sees them sitting in it, they rise and move away slowly and deliberately while maintaining smug eye contact, indicating that he has that chair only because they allow it. Ultimately, I argue that Goold's adaptation uses the filmic horror genre to bring the Witches to the foreground not only so that the Witches are effective foils to Lady Macbeth, but also to spark a conversation about the characterization of characters in horror, which forces characters to perform as either the monster, the victim, or the hero. Goold's adaptation takes the Witches and Lady Macbeth specifically, and moves them between the monster, victim, and hero tropes in ways that mirror each other. In terms of these horror character tropes, however, such movement is impossible, as these tropes disallow for degrees, shades of grey, spaces between, or the possibility of one character being all three character types

– monster, victim, and hero. In Goold’s *Macbeth*, the Witches and Lady Macbeth mirror each other and move from one horror character trope to the other, and at times are all three horror character tropes simultaneously, which effectively proves the inadequacy of these tropes in horror as a model for specifically female characterization and identification within the horror genre.

Of course, *Macbeth* has been discussed by prior scholars ²and critics, who, when they discuss adaptations of *Macbeth*, have largely focused on themes, loyalty to the source text, the purpose of re-imagining time period and setting, and how changes made to setting and language speak to societal values in the time that adaptation premiered. For example, Víctor Huertas Martin wrote about the 2010 Goold adaptation of *Macbeth* in his article *Rupert Goold’s Macbeth (2010): Surveillance society and society of control* in terms of the “surveillance film” genre, and spoke to the ways in which this adaptation observes and reflects on society’s need for control in modern times. Another scholar, Marguerite A. Tassi, wrote in her article *Rapture and Horror: A Phenomenology of Theatrical Invisibility in Macbeth* *The South-Central Renaissance Conference 2017 William B. Hunter Lecture* regarding the invisible elements in stage and screen adaptations, and the purposes they serve.

However, while the Witches and Lady Macbeth are interesting and well-known features of the play in general, my research has turned up nothing in terms of discussions of these characters as foils of each other, and especially in terms of Goold’s adaptation or his use of the horror genre to highlight the problematic nature of these persisting horror character tropes. My

² This is not to say that other scholars have not examined the strong female characters in *Macbeth*, nor is it to say that other scholars or adaptations have neglected feminist approaches to *Macbeth*. Goold’s adaptation has an intentional feminist focus that brings the Witches specifically at the heart of his *Macbeth*. My scholarship focuses on Goold’s *Macbeth* for the simple fact that not many scholars have focused on this adaptation, and none have focused on Goold’s adaptation with quite the approach that I do.

project will examine the Witches and Lady Macbeth as foils to fill this gap in the conversation. I argue that Goold's adaptation draws attention to the horror character tropes through the foiling of the Witches and Lady Macbeth, and more obviously through this adaptation's use of the filmic horror genre. The Witches, as I will demonstrate, move easily between innocence (or the performance thereof) and monstrosity, ultimately being both the hero and the monster and simultaneously neither in Goold's adaptation. As this happens, audiences witness the change mirrored in Lady Macbeth, who begins as a monstrous woman who maintains a place as an equal with her husband, ends up a victim of her husband's ambition, one confined to domestic roles as a hostess and a bedfellow, who visibly recoils at the touch of her husband before she descends into madness and eventual dies. The Witches and Lady Macbeth are shown to move seamlessly through multiple roles within horror character tropes as the film progresses, and serve, I argue, as symbols of the damaging nature of the persistence of these horror character tropes, for women in particular. My project takes this approach primarily because while logically society generally accepts that humanity is complex and multifaceted, the horror genre in particular continues to force people – women in particular – into categories that are easy to identify, but neglectful of complexity.

Using a combination of film studies and feminist theory, I will first define the filmic horror genre, and illustrate the techniques that Goold employs to situate this adaptation within the horror genre. I will then examine Carol Clover's *Men, Women, and Chainsaws* (1997) in order to examine and define the horror character tropes of the monster, victim, and hero. In a close-reading of the Witches and Lady Macbeth's scenes, I will break down where specifically Goold uses elements of filmic horror to highlight where the Witches and Lady Macbeth mirror each other, and how he uses the filmic horror genre to illustrate how the Witches and Lady

Macbeth transition between horror character tropes. Here, I will refer to Carol Clover's description of character identification in horror films, taking her observation that there are only three main character types – the monster, the victim, and the hero. This characterization intentionally places characters into boxes in opposition of each other, and because it disallows for one character to be the monster, victim, and hero at different points, it is a limiting and problematic construct. More than that, these tropes continue to be used in horror today. Part of Goold's adaptation's vision is his disruption of these horror character tropes – he disrupts the monster, victim, hero archetypes by situating the Witches and Lady Macbeth as all three, and that is part of the success of his adaptation. I argue that the Witches and Lady Macbeth are at various points in this adaptation monster, victim, and hero, and therefore are all elements of horror character tropes. I argue that in enabling the downfall of Macbeth, the Witches become the heroes of the story in that they lead to the fall of a dictator and a tyrant. I also argue that in her suicide, Lady Macbeth becomes the hero also because not only is she breaking free of her husband's dismissal of her, but through her and through the horror genre, Goold's adaptation is able to spark a conversation about the impossibility of such restrictive tropes, in addition to sparking a conversation about the damage that such an impossible standard can do to real, every day women.

Defining Horror Character Tropes & Filmic Genre of Horror

The horror genre is designed to elicit fear and discomfort from viewers, and uses techniques designed to play on audience fears. For this paper, I focus mainly on things such as lighting and editing (sound and post-production). More pertinently, I will focus on the ways the horror genre portrays women to comment on Goold's use of the horror genre to highlight the Witches and Lady Macbeth's transition between the monster, the victim, and the hero.

Lighting is one of the most important and universal elements of the filmic horror genre. The horror genre is known for its darkness, both in terms of plot and in terms of setting and lighting. In a blog titled "Cinematography Tips for Horror Filmmakers" Noam Kroll, a filmmaker and owner of Creative Rebellion (which is a production company based in Los Angeles), cites underexposure (or a dark, shadowy lighting technique) as one of the most common and effective techniques used in horror filmmaking. "On a horror film, underexposing can be extremely effective as it'll leave more areas of the frame in the shadows and create a more mysterious feeling" (Kroll). There are a number of ways to accomplish this task of under exposition. "Although you could technically expose normally and just color grade your footage to darken it in post, the end result won't be quite the same. You want to actually light your scene in a way that feels organically underexposed" (Kroll). Goold employs under exposure with frequency in his production to build suspense and illustrate how the characters operate in the shadows. Kroll also discusses colored gels used to affect lighting, specifically the use of red in horror films. Goold uses red gel to correct the light in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's boudoir, a technique that effectively blends Lady Macbeth into the background of that scene. The use of color, according to Kroll, is unnerving, and is suited to the horror genre because of how

unnatural it is. Lighting is a trope that horror movies such as *The Ring*³, *Crimson Peak*, *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*, *The Conjuring*, *Cabin in the Woods*, and *Insidious* all employ.

Sound and the lack thereof are other elements of the horror genre that Goold employs. His score is sparse and used only in key places, but he does make use of sound effects to build tension – a particular favorite of Goold’s in his adaptation of *Macbeth* is dissonance. He does this through a combination of digetic (sounds heard in the movie as a part of the setting, like footsteps of screeching owls off-screen that Lady Macbeth responds to) and non-digetic (out-of-movie sounds, such as musical score). Emma Shehan, a film studies MA from Carlton University, published her article titled “Sound, Screams, and the Score: An Exploration of Sound in Classic Horror Slashers” for *The Carlton Graduate Journal of Art and Culture* in which she addresses horror sound as “often atonal and dissonant, creating a creepy sense of the foreboding” (Shehan 1). Goold uses sound in exactly that way, when he edits the Witches voices most notably. Examples of horror films using similar sound and score include the series *The Haunting of Hill House* on Netflix, *The Conjuring*, *Crimson Peak*, *The Exorcism*, and *The Ring*.

Lastly, Goold uses special effects incorporated in post-production editing. In his *Macbeth*, Goold edits movement and layers images to create either unnatural motions or to make his characters disappear. A trope called the horror movie crab walk focuses on irregular movement is one that Goold employs to edit the movements of the Witches in particular. This trope was made popular in horror film by *The Exorcist*, and continues to be used in various forms, notably in *Crimson Peak*, *The Conjuring*, *The Ring*, and *Insidious*. In horror films,

³ Throughout my paper, I will use these horror films as touchstone texts to illustrate how the effects Goold used in his adaptation of *Macbeth* have been used in other horror films, thus illustrating Goold’s adaptation’s situation within the horror genre through the use of these horror conventions in film.

irregular movement is used to signify inhumanity, and Goold's use of it on the Witches through editing techniques is especially important for interpreting their transition between monster and hero specifically.

More important to this paper, however, is Carol Clover's *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*⁴, which explores horror and slasher tropes, but more specifically the treatment of women through these tropes. In her introduction, Clover examines the film *Carrie*, and whether Carrie is the monster, hero, or victim. "The answer would seem to be that Carrie... is all three" (Clover 4). This examination supposes that there are three dominant archetypes in the horror genre, the monster, hero, or victim, and that Carrie is all of them. Clover's character identification also supposes that a relationship between the tropes of monster, victim, and hero irreconcilable – the monster is that which torments the victim, and they cannot be the same. Like with Goold's adaptation of *Macbeth*, however, this supposition is one that Clover refutes in stating that Carrie is all three – the monster, the victim, and the hero.

Clover also focuses on the viewers of horror films and what "gaze" means to different viewers. She writes, "Commentators tend to distinguish between primary identification (with the camera, whatever it may be and whatever it may be up to) and secondary identification (with the character of empathetic choice). Both are fluid, character-identification on the psychoanalytic grounds that competing figures resonate with competing parts of the viewer's psyche (masochistic victim and sadistic monster, for example)" (Clover 8). This excerpt reveals that horror movies intentionally restrict characters to make them easier for viewers to identify. To

⁴ Clover's text describes the three primary roles in slasher films – the monster, the victim, and the hero. The monster and the victim are in opposition to each other, and the hero stands in the middle, conforming to neither the monster nor the victim, and yet conforming to both.

disrupt these character tropes in horror, Goold's adaptation uses the horror character tropes of the monster, the victim, and the hero, but makes the Witches and Lady Macbeth transition between the three to illustrate the complexity of human nature, and to illustrate the frustrating and harmful effects of such restrictive character tropes. Like Clover illustrated with her *Carrie* example, Goold uses the Witches and Lady Macbeth to show that female characters can be monster, victim, and hero. They can be all three (or perform all three, in the case of the Witches), and I argue that Goold's adaptation uses the horror genre to illustrate that. In doing this, I conclude that when the Witches disrupt Macbeth's fight for his life and his throne, are both monstrous and heroic, thus complicating the horror character tropes described by Clover. Furthermore, when Lady Macbeth is driven to suicide by the expectation that she be either the monster or the victim, she becomes the hero because she frees herself from both her monstrosity and her victimhood, and she becomes the hero when Goold's adaptation uses her destruction to spark a conversation about the ways in which the irreconcilability and impossibility of these horror character tropes damages and destroys people.

**TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF GOOLD'S *MACBETH*: HOW THE HORROR GENRE
HIGHLIGHTS AND INVALIDATES HORROR CHARACTER TROPES IN
*MACBETH***

In this section of my paper, I perform a close reading of scenes involving Lady Macbeth and the Witches, organized in the order they appear in the film. For reference and comparison to Shakespeare's text, I will refer to and quote from *The Norton Shakespeare*, which contains the complete works of William Shakespeare. I organize it this way for two reasons: first, because it is easier to follow the progression of the film, the Witches, and Lady Macbeth if their scenes are discussed in order of appearance. Second, because it is easier to understand how the Witches and Lady Macbeth transition between Clover's horror character tropes if they are analyzed chronologically. My ultimate conclusion, that Goold's adaptation uses the horror genre to illustrate the ways in which horror character tropes are ultimately invalid and harmful, will be interwoven in and supported by my close reading.

The opening sequence of Goold's *Macbeth*, the first dialogue of which comes from Act 1 Scene 2 of the play, sets the Witches apart from the men in the scene for a few reasons – most notably, because they are the only women shown in the foreground or in the background of the first five minutes of the film. They work in a crowded hallway that is splattered with gore and grime, and as Duncan speaks to the captain, the camera shifts to focus on the Witches instead of on the men. For example, as the officers hold the captain and question him, the camera focuses on the Witches, who apply electrodes to the captain's chest. This is a significant moment, because it sets the tone for the adaptation. As the captain continues to talk, the focus shifts from him to the Witches a number of times as they tend him, using close-up shots of their hands placing the electrodes and as they inspect his injured knee. The focus on the Witches is always

brief, but it interrupts the focus on the captain and the other male characters in the scene and instead focuses on the Witches. In this scene, viewers are clued in to the fact that while the men plan and scheme in the foreground, it is the Witches to whom the most attention should be paid, a trend that the film carries through to the end. Second, because the scene begins with close-up shot of a bloodied hand (which belongs to the captain), clenching and unclenching in spasms of pain, this shot, in its under-exposed setting and gory subject matter, sets the tone for this adaptation's situation in the horror genre. The opening sequence is disjointed - the captain's progress down the hall is interrupted at various points by black-and-white footage of tanks and cannons, situating the play's events in either the WWII or post-WWII eras, then later by cuts away to two armed soldiers (later revealed to be Macbeth and Banquo) as they stalk through the forest along the outskirts of a large stone wall. The brief moments in each situation aren't enough to give the viewer a clear idea of what is going on in the first moments of the film, and this confusion adds to the horror elements of the adaptation.

Further use of the horror genre is in the setting and the lighting of the early moments of the adaptation. The hall, which alternates between glaringly bright and under-exposition, is crowded and dirty, incorporating not only elements of horror through the lighting, but also through the anxiety caused by congestion and grime. The diegetic battle sounds and the havoc they wreck on the people in the hall continue to situate the adaptation in the horror genre, as the boom of cannon heard off-screen causes the ceiling to shake, and screams of pain and panic are heard as debris falls. Finally, the tone of supernatural horror is introduced as the Witches and the captain suddenly find the crowded hallway deserted. At this point, the Witches inject the captain with something, and captain, tense and writhing in agony, dies. The Witches, expressionless, watch as the lights slowly switch off, and in this moment all focus is switched to the Witches,

who look directly into the camera as they remove their surgical masks and switch to dialogue from Act 1 Scene 1 of the play's text. By this point, all hall lights are turned off but the Witches are backlit, bathed in a halo at odds with their voices – edited in post-production to be layered, with one layer being the original spoken tone and another being dramatically lowered to a nearly inhuman octave – and their murder of the captain. Simultaneously, as they speak the name of Macbeth, the Witches turn to face the camera and address the camera directly, in a fourth-wall-breaking moment that makes the audience complicit in their actions. One Witch, as the other two maintain eye contact with the camera, plunges her hand into the captain's chest and pulls out his heart. Then, they walk toward the camera, fading into nothing in another post-production layering technique, dissolving them into thin air by fading out the image filmed at the foreground and fading in the shot of the deserted hallway, as the lights are turned back on.

This introduction to the Witches depicts them not only as important and central to the plot of this adaptation, but also as inhuman, through the use of horror conventions. With the soft blue lighting and the halo in which they are bathed, these Witches are performing domesticity and heroism, especially as viewers are introduced to them as nurses who appear to be intent on saving the captain. However, their violent removal of the captain's heart to make their charm casts doubt on this reading, as the removal of hearts and indeed the practice of witchcraft has been vilified throughout history. Furthermore, their ability to disappear into thin air – a horror trope linked to ghosts, demons, and other supernatural monsters in film, according to Kroll - shifts the Witches onto into the monstrous role according to Clover, and complicates audiences' understanding of the Witches as either hero or monster, because in this scene they appear to be both. The horror genre's complication of the Witches, and its ability to make them appear inconsistently as both hero and monster, therefore, sets the tone for Goold's adaptation in several

ways. First, it sets viewers up to focus on the female characters by shifting the focus from the male characters to the Witches – as they speak and plan, the camera focuses not on them, but on the Witches who are working on the captain. Second, it uses horror conventions to situate this adaptation in the horror genre. Third, it uses the horror genre to situate the Witches as both apparently heroic and monstrous the span of a few minutes, effectively making them both hero and monster, similar to Clover’s findings on *Carrie*.

The next time audiences see the Witches, they perform the first instance of witchcraft seen in this adaptation, from act 1 scene 3 of the play. The Witches have a Grayson IV pole at the ready, on which is hung a blood bag. Also on the pole, they place a wool trench coat and glasses similar to the coat and glasses worn by Ross, a thane and the butt of many jokes in this adaptation. As they dress the pole, the Witches chant their “weird sisters hand in hand” (1.3.30) dialogue and use the heart of the captain to add to the potency of their charm. Their movements are quickened by speeding up the motion in post-production editing, which is an incorporation of a horror trope of irregular movement. A similar technique can be seen in *The Ring*, when Samara, the film’s monster, climbs from the well and out of the TV. As the “charm’s wound up” (1.3.35), using the same post-production layering sequence described earlier, the witches vanish down the dark hallway, wheeling the Ross-dressed pole. The scene is shot in an under-exposed way, adding another element of the horror genre to the scene. This scene does not move the witches from their position from hero to monster or vice versa, but the incorporation of further filmic horror techniques continues to add to the audience’s understanding of the Witches as monstrous. Similar techniques are used later in the film to the same effect.

The next scene viewers observe in which the Witches appear as either hero or monster in the continuation of Act 1 Scene 3, when Macbeth and Banquo are introduced properly. Macbeth

and Banquo enter a large gymnasium or ballroom, and a large, dimly-lit space is revealed with a gothic moulded ceiling and small crystalline chandeliers emitting soft, weak yellow light. The majority of the light in the room is supplied by three sky-lights, under which the Witches and the dressed up Grayson IV pole are situated – another example of the horror genre’s under-exposure, but this time with soft blue tones that give the Witches a soft look again. Except for the pole, the Witches, Macbeth, and Banquo, the room is empty. A minor-key non-diegetic, organ-based score plays sinisterly before Macbeth speaks, incorporating filmic horror score tropes into the adaptation. Extreme close-ups of the Witches in profile dominate the screen as they prophesize Macbeth’s upcoming kingship – these are backlit by the skylights, obscuring the witches faces because of both the angle at which they are shot and the shadows produced by the under-exposed lighting.

As the Witches speak, the same sound-editing that makes their voices layered and double-timbered is employed, distorting their voices and incorporating more dissonant horror sound-tropes, similar to those found in *The Ring* and *The Conjuring*, in addition to the voices of the ghosts in *Crimson Peak*. Furthermore, the Witches voices as they speak echo throughout the space, though they speak at the same volume that Macbeth and Banquo speak at, though the voices of neither Macbeth nor Banquo echo as noticeably as the voices of the Witches, indicating that the Witches’ voices were further edited to amplify the echo, using a mix board. This contrast is made apparent when Banquo addresses the Witches and asks them to elaborate on why they don’t address him and what proof they have that they know the future – though he stands within three feet of the Witches and raises his voice in excitement, and though their volume does not alter above normal speaking volume, the voices of the Witches echo greatly and supernaturally when Banquo’s does not echo perceptibly. As the Witches move past Banquo and Macbeth, the

lighting appears darker as it comes from above and behind the characters present. Further, as Macbeth tries to put himself in the Witches' way to stop them from leaving, they pass through him entirely. This effect was done through the use of filmic layering – in that shot, Macbeth and Banquo were filmed separately, and the Witches were filmed walking separately, and the two scenes were layered on top of each other in post-production, making the Witches able to pass uninterrupted through Macbeth. Then, as Macbeth pursues and presses the Witches for more insight into his advancement, the Witches vanish within the wire-caged elevator, which is lit from above with bright streams of blue light, creating a heavenly effect. Here, the Witches seem more heroic than monstrous, though they are situated supernaturally. They appear to Macbeth and Banquo as harbingers of success and glory, and deliver a prophecy for greatness. This interpretation is enhanced by the soft blue light into which the Witches vanish, almost as though they are being summoned through the pearly gates in heaven. This is itself a move from the obviously monstrous to the harmless, in that earlier the Witches perform domesticity and are revealed as monstrous when the crowd fades, but here they appear harmless, if strange.

Here enters Lady Macbeth to mirror the Witches. As discussed, when audiences are first introduced to the Witches, they appear heroic and move towards the monstrous. Lady Macbeth appears the opposite, and remains monstrous for some time before appearing as a victim. When we first meet Lady Macbeth, she is reading a letter Macbeth sent her from Act 1 Scene 5 of the play, recounting all that the Witches had told him. The letter is read out loud in Lady Macbeth's voice as a voice-over, which layered a voice recording of Kate Fleetwood (Lady Macbeth) reading the letter over the footage of her silently riding in the elevator, going down. It is moderately lit and a bit grimy in the elevator, but Lady Macbeth is seen in a spotless ivory dressing gown. Lady Macbeth is shot through the cage, a move made to foreshadow her later

entrapment as a victim. She is shot carefully so that her face is not revealed. This is a typical trope in horror according to Kroll – shooting a character through a barrier separates the audience from the character, and obscures the character and their thoughts from the audience, building tension. Lady Macbeth's hands, clothes, and the letter are clear enough, but audiences do not see her face in its entirety – only in profile, seen through a barrier of caging and hair. When she is turned in full towards the camera as the elevator continues to travel downwards, the shot is blurred to obscure her face and the rest of her features, by the simple method of adjusting the focus of the camera lens, another trope of horror discussed by Kroll.

As Lady Macbeth is in the elevator, the camera is restless, resting on her hands, the letter, the caging of the elevator, and back again. The restlessness of the camera mirrors Lady Macbeth's own restlessness, as she paces within the elevator and is constantly turning to face the camera, and then turning to face away from the camera. As the elevator reaches its destination deep in the bowels of the bunker, Lady Macbeth throws open the elevator cage, still obscured by the unfocused lens until she steps out, and the camera comes into focus on her face in a close-up shot. In this moment when her face is revealed she speaks her first line without the use of a voice-over, though because she is lit with underexposure typical of the horror genre, and because of the unsettling way the angularity of her face casts a shadow that still obscures part of her face, Lady Macbeth remains in the shadows the way horror monsters do. What we can see of her face is set with hardened determination, as she expresses doubt that Macbeth could do what is necessary (kill Duncan) to obtain the crown. The camera focus on her body and the letter she holds as she speaks, something that is especially noteworthy as she delivers her “unsex me here” (1.5.39) dialogue and determines that she will do all she can unto murder in order to make Macbeth king, even if she needs to become less feminine, less sexualized, or less of a woman

traditionally to accomplish the murder of Duncan. The camera pays attention to her body in a way that is observant of its action – it focuses on her hands that hold the letter, yes, but also on the deep v-neck of her dressing gown and the curve of her body, before reluctantly tracing its gaze back up to her face, which is stern, angular gaunt, and determined. This focus harkens back to Clover's assessment of the male gaze in horror, and works to sexualize the character of Lady Macbeth. Her voice is low and husky, and she speaks with a sing-song intonation as she wishes Macbeth nearer so that she might manipulate and bend him to action. She states her intent to use all the tools at her disposal to move Macbeth to murder, and her tone, expression, and the camera itself indicate that sexual manipulation would be at the top of her arsenal, another move that situates Lady Macbeth as monstrous

Act 1 Scene 5 continues after the scene cuts to the kitchen – a scene which continues to situate Lady Macbeth solidly on as monstrous, because she is asking for repayment in exchange for sexual favor. When she and Macbeth meet on screen for the first time, Lady Macbeth is in the kitchen, still in her dressing gown, which in the light of this scene takes on a semi-sheer effect. As Macbeth places his gun on the table, without saying a word, Lady Macbeth pauses her wall-scrubbing and turns slowly, her hair coming undone from its pinning and her gown open to the navel, though held partly closed by the belt at her waist. Macbeth removes his hat, his eyes fixed on her, and she speaks his titles in an elated moan as he crosses the room to her, picks her up off the stool on which she stands, and carries her to the kitchen table, where she begins to undress him as she talks about her plot to get him the crown. He stills her unbuttoning hands and insists that they talk more about the matter after, to which Lady Macbeth insists that she can take care of it. She continues to unbutton as she finishes speaking, and the scene cuts to the kitchen and the dinner prep.

This scene continues to sexualize and fetishize Lady Macbeth, in that it takes the mundane task of scrubbing and cleaning and makes it sexy, in a way that recalls Clover's examination of the male gaze in horror. This gaze expects and is gratified by the sexualization of the victim. An example of the sexualization of the victim can be seen in *Cabin in the Woods*, in which Jules is repeatedly and overtly sexualized before her death (a death which was assured by the fact that she was an overtly sexual woman, through various manipulations of the plot). This understanding of the sexiness of Lady Macbeth is foreshadowing to move her to the role victim in Goold's horrific adaptation. In this scene, though, Lady Macbeth is powerful, sexy, and strong, is made up flawlessly, and appears in a state of teasing undress as she performs the duties of a domestic. What's more, she uses this moment to plant the seed of murder in Macbeth's mind, in a way that promises a great reward for the doing of the deed. She strokes Macbeth's ego and assures him of his worth and of her attraction to his power and gumption, and expects him to purchase her continued affection in addition to the crown with the act of murder. Monstrously enough, however, the payment she seeks is human life, rather than money or other gifts. She expects payment for her affection, and reserves the right to withdraw it when Macbeth fails to perform his duty in payment.

Later, the Witches and Lady Macbeth share the spotlight in Act 1 Scene 6 of the play, in which Lady Macbeth greets Duncan in the kitchen in the midst of the meal prep, and the Witches work in the background performing domesticity – one washes dishes, one plucks a chicken and skins rabbit, and the other dices vegetables. There is plenty of diegetic noise in the way of chopping sounds, clinking pans, running water, and other kitchen din. However, as Lady Macbeth, Duncan, and his entourage exit the kitchen, a minor-key non-diegetic score that sounds like wind blowing over a valley creeps in and the three women (revealed to be the Witches)

pause in their work and turn slowly to watch the party leave. Each of the Witches holds a knife, foreshadowing violence to come. This scene situates both the Witches and Lady Macbeth as monstrous because they converge here, with the Witches mirroring Lady Macbeth's duplicitous intentions towards Duncan in their knife-wielding.

Act 1 Scene 7 sees the continuation of Lady Macbeth's monstrosity, but this scene also sets up a stark contrast between her at the zenith of her power, and her at the lowest point in her downfall. After Macbeth announces that he does not want to kill Duncan, there is a lot of back-and-forth in the under-exposed kitchen. She uses shame to guilt Macbeth into listening to her plans, all the while insinuating that she could do the deed better, pointing out her more masculine qualities and his more traditionally feminine. This reversal is described by Clover as a psychoanalytic move typical of the horror genre, and one that could "cause neurosis in the adult" (Clover 15). Toward the goal of Duncan's Murder, Lady Macbeth proposes, with a tone of mocking mirth, to get the chamberlains on duty outside of Duncan's quarters drunk, by creating a little party in which she would partake to help ease the chamberlains. She is shot in an extreme close-up – a shot typical of the horror genre – as she informs Macbeth that with the chamberlains so drunk, anything would be possible to accomplish, even murder. The resolution of the shot is sharp and harsh – the camera focused close enough on Lady Macbeth's face to see the makeup settling into the creases around her eyes, a makeup look reminiscent of the monster in *Insidious*. The focus on her makeup here is also a focus on her falseness – it is a closeup on her performativity of domesticity, and the makeup sits as unnaturally on her face as the expectation that she should conform to feminine norms sits in her life. Macbeth seizes her and gives her a look that is equal parts admiring and chastising as he comments on her resolution, saying that her resolution to commit the murder and her lack of pity are masculine traits that she has no reason

to possess, not being a man, echoing her earlier sentiments and further foreshadowing her downfall into victimhood. However, after more conversation and debating, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are resolved. They clasp hands and make their way back out to the party, in a show of solidarity. They walk slowly down an under-exposed hallway furnished with heavy wood panels and gothic décor, and before both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are engulfed in shadows, they exchange a look and continue on their slow walk back to the party – a minor-key, non-diagetic score drones in the background as they walk into the camera and into the shadows. As an extreme close-up of their hands fills the screen, the scene cuts to the night outside the bunker, which boasts a palatial stone gate, dormant and bare deciduous trees, moon-lit clouds, and the cawing of ravens.

After she intoxicates the chamberlains in Act 2 Scene 2, Lady Macbeth appears in a darkened, under-exposed hallway, where she contemplates the success of her and her husband's goal of murdering Duncan. This scene, again, continues to set up Lady Macbeth as a monstrous body. She continues to compare her masculinity to that of Macbeth, and continues to display a monstrous disregard to human life in a manner similar to the monster in a slasher film. She does, however, begin to move a little closer towards grey area rather than stark monstrosity, when she says "Had [Duncan] not resembled my father as he slept, I had done't" (2.2.12-13). This statement contrasts her posturing words in the kitchen as she emasculated Macbeth for having second thoughts, as it contradicts her vow that if she had promised to kill her own child, she would without hesitation. In this instance, she pins her hesitation to kill Duncan herself on his resemblance to her father, indicating a much more human mindset than she had earlier given herself credit for. Lady Macbeth has reached the height of her power and influence in this scene – she has become more than an accomplice in the murder of Duncan, and further expresses her

mettle to murder, thus continuing to embrace the monstrous despite her expression of sympathy towards Duncan. She is illuminated by the side as she scurries to the window, and is breathless with excitement. She is anxious, jumpy, and nearly manic in the impending success of her and Macbeth's murder of Duncan. She is emboldened, in her words, by the drink she consumed, and sways a bit where she stands. Her expression and tone indicate that she takes some pleasure in her mischief and in the plotting of the bloody deed.

However, she jumps at the sounds of owls outside, and expresses fear at every sound – while she is clearly excited at the prospect of success in the murder, she reveals fear at being caught. Lady Macbeth does not, in this scene, express remorse for her part or the part of her husband in the killing of Duncan, rather she expresses fear in being caught. Lady Macbeth knows that her actions and those of her husband are wrong, she just doesn't care. She won't let guilt stand in the way of her success. This is indicated in her jumpiness, which is soothed when she realizes that it is only an owl and not a witness that she hears. She leans back on the sink and sways as she speaks, and she is lit from above in a bright, harsh light in contrast with the rest of the under-exposed hallway in which she stands. She leans forward into shadows, the light taking a harsh yet dim yellow tone that casts sharp shadows in her face. She jumps again as the door opens and a man, cast in shadow and unidentifiable (revealed in moments to be Macbeth) makes his way toward her. She dashes for cover, shaken and unsteady, but quickly. Throughout the following encounter with her husband, Lady Macbeth is cold, irritable, impatient with his conscience, and determined that she is made of sterner, more calculating stuff. She is unsympathetic towards his qualms and his fears, and pushes him to think less about what he has done and move on. She wants him not to dwell on the fact that he has murdered, and enjoy the aftermath of his success, free of guilt. She returns from framing the chamberlains for the murder,

taunting Macbeth for his weakness in being unable to frame the men himself, and they move hand-in-hand to their room as knocking on the door begins to rouse the household.

Lady Macbeth is pushed into the role of a victim in her scene with Macbeth in Act 3 Scene 1. Lady Macbeth and Macbeth are riding horses together and bid farewell to Banquo and his son. Here, Lady Macbeth still appears to be at the very least her husband's equal, and rides beside him as an equal and still, perhaps, thinks of herself as his superior. But this moment is the turning point for her active presence as his partner, and the factor that pushes her into the role of victim. As she stands victorious and proud of her position, Macbeth dismisses her and continues to scheme alone. Macbeth engages with her only absently and in a perfunctory way – he does not face her, and looks after Banquo, preoccupied with his independent scheming. Lady Macbeth says nothing in response, but looks at Macbeth with a look of mingled betrayal, dismay, consternation, hurt, shock, and fear as she stumbles uncertainly away.

As she moves away from Macbeth, she looks back at him occasionally, as though attempting to determine what his dismissal of her could mean for her. While she retreats, she is a blurred form in the background, making her way off-screen, while Macbeth is the focal point of the shot. This is a reversal of their earlier interactions, in which Lady Macbeth was either the focal point of the shot, or shared the focus with her husband. In this moment where she is dismissed, the camera reflects the change in the power dynamic between the two characters. No longer is she his equal, because Macbeth takes Lady Macbeth's power and choice from her – this is the moment where her move towards the victim begins. This move is especially stark in contrast to Lady Macbeth's previous scenes, in which she was murderous, scheming, and shot in under-exposed settings. This scene takes place outside, in broad daylight, and offers Lady Macbeth no place to hide from her downfall. This scene features a marked lack of horror

conventions such as under exposed lighting and sound, and therefore through tone indicates a shift for Lady Macbeth in terms of her role as either victim or monster.

When we see Lady Macbeth next in Act 3 Scene 2, she is in her chamber preparing for Macbeth's dinner party. She is upset. The room in which she sits is covered in red wallpaper and has red furnishings, and Lady Macbeth is dressed in a red velvet gown, which is long, tight, and low cut. She does not look comfortable in it, and scarcely either breathe or move. The room is lit in red light, using the colored gel effect described by Kroll (a similar lighting technique can be seen in *Crimson Peak*), and when Macbeth comes in dressed in black and white, he stands out in comparison to Lady Macbeth, who blends in. He absently grabs her breast in greeting, not looking at her or responding to her words. This grab sees the return of Clover's sexualization of the victim, hinted at earlier on and continued here as Lady Macbeth begins her move toward her own victimization. Macbeth is preoccupied with securing his rule, and dismisses Lady Macbeth when she urges him to relax and rest easy in his power. But this scene continues his dismissal of Lady Macbeth, as she may as well not be there at all, for all the credence Macbeth gives her words and her presence. Her discomfort stems from Macbeth pushing her to the background – a move made visual by the fact that Lady Macbeth blends in with the room and its furnishings, and by the use of the camera focus to once again marginalize her. She has become little more than an object. He ignores her as she recoils when he takes her hand to lead her from the room as they make their way down to the party – her shoulder is cocked up and her face is drawn tight in discomfort and pain, whether the dress or her marginalization is to blame is unclear, though an educated guess would say that the latter were at fault. This walk recalls their walk from the kitchen and the murder scene earlier in the adaptation, when they were equal partners in the plotting. The walk Macbeth and Lady Macbeth shared seemed natural and comfortable in a way

that this walk in Act 3 Scene 2 doesn't – it is forced and unnatural here, and speaks to Lady Macbeth's fall from equality and into victimhood.

When they do make their way down to the party in Act 3 Scene 4, Lady Macbeth is used as a prop, a ceremonial figure-head of a hostess, and speaks when prompted and acts to support and maintain her husband's power when he begins to act oddly, but her actions and tone are nervous throughout, and her expression is that of a doll throughout the gathering – awkward and posed, and unnatural. She is at her most empathetic in this scene, in that for the first time audience members begin to feel something other than contempt for her – according to Clover, viewers of horror tend to empathize with the victims and the heroes, so this continues to illustrate Lady Macbeth's move from monstrous and into victimhood. She stands as a doll, stiff and unnatural in her dress, and is moved to sit by Macbeth's hand and his direction, not, it would seem, of her own volition. She sits still, and though she raises her spoon at one point to her mouth, she does not open her mouth or take the bite. Her expression falls here, and she abruptly stands and draws Macbeth's attention back to his duties as host and away from his intrigue with the assassin, breaking in that moment from the pain of her displacement as his equal, his partner, and his confident. As he returns to the table and dismisses her concern again, Lady Macbeth shakes her head and closes her eyes, and uncomfortably sinks back into her seat.

As the dinner continues, Lady Macbeth is roused to action as she tries to calm Macbeth from his vision of Banquo's ghost. The room descends deeper into under-exposition when the ghost of Banquo is introduced – only Macbeth can see this specter. Banquo's entrance is shot in slow-motion, incorporating the return of the irregular motion horror technique that began with the Witches earlier on. Lady Macbeth rushes to Macbeth to calm him and hopes to regain her place as his partner, and acting in compassion and concern for him. She is also acting heroically

to save herself from victimhood. This time, though, it is an unsuccessful move towards the hero role indicated by Clover, and its lack of success continues to situate Lady Macbeth as a victim.

In the midst of this, the Witches stand at attention, waiting to be allowed to serve the dinner hosted by Macbeth in another instance of performed domesticity. They watch him as he works the room, but the focus remains on Macbeth as he mingles with and torments his guests. When the party is seated, the witches work to serve the dinner in the background as Macbeth addresses one of Banquo's assassins. The camera focuses on the face of one of the Witches as she serves wine, but her face is trained on the task at hand and remains expressionless. She is, for all intents and purposes, performing domesticity in this shot. The camera takes another moment to focus on the Witches as Macbeth admonishes the assassin for not killing Fleance, Banquo's son. They all move in unison, and their expressions betray mild interest in Macbeth's conversation. It is when Macbeth returns to the table from his intrigue that the Witches really steal the show from him – he is prompted to sit at his place when he notices that the table is full. When the porter corrects him and directs his attention to the seat put aside for Macbeth, the Witches have clustered around the seat and one of them sits in it. They make eye contact and maintain smug, slightly sinister expressions as they rise from the seat, allowing him to take the chair – a moment witnessed by the guests, but not commented on by them. A tense moment passes as the Witches allow Macbeth to take the seat, and he seems shaken and humbled by the encounter. The Witches dance with the guests during the game of Musical Mop, and leave when the guests do.

After Macbeth's second outburst, Lady Macbeth dismisses the guests and collapses into his seat, tears running in mascara-blackened streaks down her face, in a garishly made-up moment that, again, recalls the monster in *Insidious*. The make-up in this instance, though, is a

moving reflection of her fall into victimhood, especially as she begins to show signs of insanity, which Clover explains can be the result of prolonged periods of flipped gender norms, like Lady Macbeth experienced. She glances at her hands, terror on her face, and rubs at her fingers as though trying to remove blood thereon. This is the moment in which she withdraws completely, having lost her place as an equal to her husband, who takes no notice of her distress in wake of his own musings and plotting. As he speaks of going to the Witches for more information, though, the camera focuses on her reaction. Her tears replenish and her teeth are set on edge – to her, the Witches are her replacement while she is now only a wife, a decoration, and a creature of duty. She begs him to sleep, for his sanity and hers, hoping again that his dismissal of her in favor of the Witches is the result of temporary insanity, but she is pulled from her seat by Macbeth as he, again, dismisses her concerns. This is the moment where the Witches and Lady Macbeth converge and move past each other in terms of horror character tropes – Lady Macbeth has become a victim of her husband’s growing ambition and her own hubris, and the Witches replace her as Macbeth’s monstrous and superior partner-in-crime.

When the Witches next appear in Act 4 Scene 1, it is in a morgue, and they are at their most conventionally and horrifically monstrous through the use of horror conventions. The lighting is harsh and bright, over exposing the Witches to the degree that they nearly appear to be shot in black and white, if it weren’t for the splotches of red blood dripping from the transparent plastic tarps hanging behind them. The Witches dance around three gurneys, on which lay three corpses. As they dance, the Witches chant their “Double , double, toil, and trouble” (4.1.11) dialogue in heavily edited voices, their raspy whispers dissonant and hard-to-decipher. The Witches are, again, edited in post-production. In this instance, single frames are removed from their motions to create a halting, unnatural pattern of movement. This effect is used to amplify

the already unnatural and unsettling movements of the Witches, who exaggeratedly extend their limbs and move in strange and contorted ways. The removal of the single frame here and there exaggerates the difference between motions further, and makes their dance all the more unsettling. Similarly, much of the chanting is missed by viewers, as the Witches voices are edited again, layering their voices on top of each other after lowering and raising the pitch on the original. This, paired with a non-diegetic score of beeping medical equipment and eerie whispered screeches of what Lady Macbeth might say was an owl (as she identified a similar sound earlier in the adaptation as belonging to an owl), sets out a disturbing tableau for viewers.

This scene continues for nearly three minutes, eventually settling on the faces of the Witches. The camera focuses on the face of the chanting Witch as her eyes roll back onto her head. She throws her head back as she speaks, in a similar manner to characters in horror films who have been possessed, such as *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*. As the scene cuts to Macbeth riding down to meet the Witches, the Witches movements cease to be edited, as do their voices (for the moment). The lighting also returns to a less harsh state. The camera shakes as it focuses on the Witches, and jostles. The scene cuts to Macbeth opening the elevator door, and it could be that the camera shook because the audience was meant to be seeing the Witches from Macbeth's perspective. As the Witches engage with Macbeth, the editing returns as they reanimate the three corpses, horrifically, and compel them to speak Macbeth's future to him. The voices of the Witches are edited and layered as they ask him if he wants to hear their insights from their own mouths, or from their master's, employing the same demonic layering technique discussed earlier (an example of which can be seen in *The Conjuring*, when the mother becomes possessed and speaks with her own voice and the film's monster's voice). As the Witches begin their revelations, a strobe light is used to distort what viewers are able to see, an effect that is

enhanced again by the post-production removal of a single frame of movement here and there. The camera shakes again, further limiting what viewers are able to discern of the action. The Witches each have a corpse that they reanimate, and while the revelations are relayed sometimes through the Witches, at other times they puppet the corpses so that the revelations come from the dead.

A new editing technique is introduced here, also, in which the action is sped up, but the vocal capture is kept the same, meaning that the mouth of the Witches and the corpse she controls move faster than the words they speak. This quickening of the motion, paired with the shaking camera and the distorted voices is unnatural and unsettling, and amounts to the least human moment of the film. Once the Witches reveal that Macbeth will never be defeated until the forest moves on Dunsanain, and Macbeth becomes manic in his relief, they sidle up to him, embracing and caressing him in a moment of oddly sexualized and child-like affection that is at odds with their monstrous power and bloody, macabre tendencies. When he asks about his future as king, however, the Witches pull away and leave him in the bloodied morgue without glancing back, and leave him with a vision of a line of Fleance clones wearing the crown. The voices of the Witches are, again, layered and distorted as they walk away. They speak once more after Macbeth comes to from his vision in the ballroom, as distorted disembodied voices assuring him that his vision was accurate. This scene is the least human that viewers see the Witches, and it is the most sexualized that they appear to viewers. Not only are they strangely affectionate with Macbeth, but the Witches also at one point climb on top of the corpses and jolt their bodies in order to give the corpses life. This, paired with the heavy use of editing used to distort and modify the Witches, makes it clear that the Witches are monstrous in nature, whatever other roles they may simultaneously perform.

Lady Macbeth, when we see her next, has descended into madness. She is dressed plainly, in a white slip and a blue sweater. Her hair is unpinned and loose, and she wears no perceptible makeup. She is no longer elegant or overtly sexualized, but is plain and simple and even modest to a degree – a change that reflects her move into the role of a victim. She emerges from the elevator in view of her maid and the doctor who has come to examine her, lit from behind in a soft glowing light. She carries a flashlight. The hall into which she emerges is dark and dingy – leaves are strewn on the floor and a general air of decay is about the place. She stands in the shadows and speaks as she begins to scrub at her hands to remove the blood she thinks is there. She no longer stands upright or walks with a confident stride. Rather, she slants slightly when she walks, and moves with the same furtive step that she used when replacing the daggers with the chamberlains after the murder of Duncan.

Lady Macbeth mutters to herself and repeats sentiments that she had either expressed to Macbeth after the murder, or lets out thoughts that she had kept to herself since that time. She pours straight bleach onto her hands and scrubs, to no effect, reliving the night of the murder without rinsing the bleach off. She reaches for Macbeth's hand (though he is not there, and she gasps and recoils in disappointment when her hand remains untaken). She then goes into the elevator and leaves the scene alone. This is the last time we see Lady Macbeth before her suicide. Lady Macbeth in this scene is driven insane by her victimization at the hands of her husband, who refused to accept her as his equal and expected her to step aside and embrace more traditional, feminine gender roles.

Lady Macbeth was crushed by her husband's inability to accept her as his equal or superior – instead, she was cast aside and diminished to a decorative presence. This is the victimhood of Lady Macbeth – she was a powerful figure, a driving force behind her husband's

success. But when Macbeth dismissed her and removed her agency and power, she became his victim and it was her inability to reconcile her vision for herself with that of her husband's that drove her to insanity, and to her ultimate suicide. It is in Lady Macbeth that we get the film's hero. Lady Macbeth kills herself to free the victim that she has become, she kills the monster her monstrosity created, becoming her own hero and, like Clover notes of *Carrie*, she ultimately embraces and becomes the monster, the victim, and the hero. More than that, the fact that Goold's adaptation uses her path from monster to victim to dead and heroic extends her heroism outside of the film, because of the cautionary tale Lady Macbeth tells. It isn't that women or female characters should not be monstrous – her monstrosity was her embodiment of masculine traits, after all, even more than it was her bloodlust. It isn't that women or female characters should, if they are to have any value at all, embrace femininity and victimhood – Lady Macbeth had value to her husband as his partner-in-crime before being de-valued and forced into submission. The moral of Goold's adaptation is that everyone has both monster and hero and even on occasion victim in them, and that there can be a middle ground – it is when society refuses to accept that fact through the perpetuation of these strict and confining horror character tropes that tragedies such as that of Lady Macbeth's suicide are in danger of occurring.

To further underscore this moral, Goold brings back the Witches in Act 5 Scene 10, where they watch as Macbeth and Macduff fight. In an under-exposed setting so quintessential to the horror genre and the dissonant, minor-key chanting score with which the Witches were first introduced, Macbeth is distracted from his killing blow on Macduff when from the corner of his eye, he sees the Witches, expressionless and monstrous, lit from above by a flaring halo of light, similar to the light shining through the halo of angels on stained glass windows in gothic cathedrals. As he stands, dumbfounded, and declares "Hold, enough" (5.10.34), the doors open

in the great hall wherein Macbeth first met the prophetically angelic Witches, and wherein he will die. Bright light floods in, engulfing the Witches. As they walk, the sharp and juicy sound of a knife slicing through flesh is heard, and Macbeth dies. The Witches here are emboldened by their embodiment of both the heroic and the monstrous, and embrace the role of hero when they distract Macbeth in his moment of triumph and lead him to his downfall. In turning their backs on him after enabling his death, they are ridding the nation of a brutal, monstrous tyrant, and paving the way for the restoration of order. But the real victory is the power of the Witches. They are the monsters and the heroes, and in the end their embodiment of both simultaneously, paired with their expression of the radiant glory that comes with that acceptance, is the moral of Goold's adaptation. Their message is that all societal evils (or most, anyway) can be thwarted when people of all gendered identifications embrace and accept that we are not restricted to any one role. We are a monstrous, victimized, and heroic spectrum, and we are all capable of being all at once.

CONCLUSION: WHY HORROR? WHY *MACBETH*?

The adaptation process is a complicated one, involving many decisions designed to communicate a specific message, to specific audiences, and for specific purposes. Adaptors have a hard task on their hands – how do they determine form, genre, and content, when adapting source material into another form? How do they decide what to retain from the source material and what gets left out? If they change anything, why and to what end? Goold's adaptation of *Macbeth* takes Shakespeare's play, dialogue, and plot and updates the setting and adds an enhanced focus on the Witches and Lady Macbeth in order to speak to audiences – through an incorporation of the filmic horror genre, Goold communicates his cautionary tale regarding gender roles and identity, reflecting in particular on the character tropes present in the horror genre. The women in his adaptation, notably the Witches and Lady Macbeth, at various points occupy the roles of monster, victim, and hero, but are seen to transition between these roles and even occupy several of these roles at once as the film goes on. This progression is, as previously stated, problematic. Goold's adaptation's use of the filmic horror genre further complicates this idea, because of the terrifying ways the genre highlights the rise and fall of the characters.

The Witches are pulled to prominence and are made more obviously inhuman than in other adaptations through the use of the horror genre – their movements, voice, and the ways in which they are filmed use techniques often employed in the horror genre, especially in the haunted house, possession, and the monster sub-genres of horror. Likewise, Lady Macbeth's decline is a typical fixture of the horror genre, in her own victimhood. These fixtures of the horror genre were necessary to bring to light the magnitude of the issue – the horror genre highlights gender norms and illustrates the ways in which woman in particular are traumatized by elements of society, or are forced into acts of violence against themselves because of the

impossibly confining nature of expected gender roles that do not match the natural inclinations of the women in question. Furthermore, as *Macbeth* is a Shakespearian tragedy with a pre-existing focus on the supernatural, it was a direct translation from the traditional page and stage to the modern horror screen.

Ultimately, the Witches and Lady Macbeth are painted using the horror genre to highlight the problematic nature of horror character tropes in converging and inverted ways. While Lady Macbeth begins as monstrous and progresses towards victimhood in a downward spiral that leads to her death, the Witches begin as neutral beings and move between monstrous and heroic to facilitate the furtherance of their own goals, before dropping their façade of domesticity gloriously and victoriously in their final scene and becoming monstrous heroes. More than that, the messages presented by Lady Macbeth and the Witches through the horror genre in regard to the nature of the horror genre's character tropes is starkly contrasting. For Lady Macbeth, she escapes gendered expectations and insanity through her own suicide, embracing Clover's hero when first she kills herself (here the monster) to save herself (the victim). The message that Goold is teaching through Lady Macbeth here is that when forced into boxes, all that can come of it is tragedy. In teaching this lesson, too, Lady Macbeth is made heroic, for the potential her fall has to spark a conversation about the dangers of the continued imposition of these impossible and problematic character tropes, specifically within the horror genre. For the Witches, the message is one of hope and triumph – they are heroic because they enable the defeat of a tyrant, yes, but also because of their potential to change the continued use of these character tropes as a standard characterization tool for women in literature, notably horror. When women are forced into a role, as Lady Macbeth was, they fall. When the Witches revealed and forced the other characters to accept all the heroic and monstrous elements in the Witches, they achieved

greatness. As Carol Clover indicates in *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*, it is natural and easy to see people as either one thing or the opposite – it is how we identify people in movies and in life. But the point that Goold's adaptation makes through the use of horror is that we are set free by our ability to choose, we are set free when we choose not to choose between elements of ourselves, and when we set ourselves free, for better or for worse, we can finally take control of our own destinies and enact meaningful change on our world and the people in it.

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