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# Modifying the Gothic: Gender in Crimson Peak

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MODIFYING THE GOTHIC: GENDER IN *CRIMSON PEAK*

by

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## AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

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TITLE: MODIFYING THE GOTHIC: GENDER IN *CRIMSON PEAK*

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Walter Metz

*Crimson Peak* takes the expected horror genre roles and flips them. Typically, in horror, a dominant, male monster pursues a helpless female. In *Crimson Peak*, the hero is Edith Cushing, an aspiring author. After her father is murdered, Edith moves to England with Thomas Sharpe into his family's decrepit mansion where his sister, Lucille, also resides. Not only is the hero a woman, as in much of contemporary cinema, but so is the villain, making for a confrontation that foregrounds the values and experiences of femininity. More so, the two men exhibit non-traditional gender roles as they are completely ineffectual: Thomas is submissive to his sister, and Dr. Alan McMichael fails at his attempts to save Edith; conversely, she saves him.

I read *Crimson Peak* through exemplar horror texts to highlight how this film takes a genre known for the repression of women and gives them significant agency; both the heroic and villainous acts are performed by women. Edith assumes an augmented version of Carol Clover's Final Girl, defined in *Men, Women, and Chain Saws* (1992). Lucille's villainy can be analyzed in terms of Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous Feminine* (1993), which describes the roles other than victim that women take on in horror films, especially the form of the monster. I'm interested in the atypical depiction of gender roles in *Crimson Peak*, as well as the film's place within the Gothic genre to suit modern times. I argue that *Crimson Peak* achieves this by modifying the Gothic by empowering the female characters instead of repressing them through the roles of helpless victims as is dominant in the genre.

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## HEADING 1

### INTRODUCTION

*Crimson Peak* (Guillermo del Toro, 2015) diverges from traditional genre conventions of the Gothic. Frequently in Gothic horror—such as Universal’s monster movies—women have been victimized by a male monstrous Other. The roles of victimized women are extremely passive and exemplify the issues of gender representation brought forth by Laura Mulvey in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” The traditional Gothic monster movies place the female characters in passive roles whereby their sole function is “to-be-looked-at-ness.” The female characters in these films never forward the action; they instead act to freeze the narrative and become an obstacle to its development.

One of the first such Gothic monster movies produced in the early mechanically-reproducible sound period of the Classical Hollywood Cinema was James Whale’s film adaptation of Mary Shelley’s novel, *Frankenstein* (1931). In *The Horror Film*, horror studies scholar Rick Worland notes that the “Golden Age” of Hollywood cinematic horror (1931-1939) introduced a Gothic cycle of films adapted from classic novels, which also included adapting Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.<sup>1</sup> Worland explores Gothic literature, the trick films of Georges Méliès, the Grand Guignol theater, and German Expressionist films as the forerunners of Universal horror.

To Worland, “the foundation for the modern horror genre was laid in late eighteenth-century England when a taste for what came to be called gothic literature—stories of terror, mystery, and the supernatural—first gained relatively wide popularity.”<sup>2</sup> He notes that these stories were dubbed Gothic because they tended to have settings of medieval architecture, locations such as decaying castles with “eerie rooms.”<sup>3</sup>

To expand on Worland's definition of the Gothic, in "Introduction: Haunted Landscapes and Fearful Spaces – Expanding Views on the Geography of the Gothic," Yang and Healey identify the common conventions of Gothic fiction; these include features common within Gothic horror cinema such as haunted castles and mansions, graveyards, hidden passageways, attics, supernatural beings, persecuted heroines, and corrupt villains.<sup>4</sup> Many horror films assuming Gothic characteristics use a combination of these. The Universal version of *Frankenstein*, for example, involves Dr. Frankenstein's lab—within a Gothic castle—as well as graveyard digging, a corrupt scientist aspiring to transcend natural law, and the unnatural monster he creates.

Worland's second precursor to Universal's Gothic horror is Georges Méliès' trick films. A magician turned filmmaker, Méliès ensured his movies contained the mystery and spectacle of magic. His most famous trick film is *Voyage dans la lune* (or *A Trip to the Moon*; 1902)—an early science fiction film—whereby space travelers encounter alien creatures on the lunar surface. In the film, Méliès creates cinematic magic using stop-motion camera technique, allowing the fantastic disappearance of characters. In the film, the space traveler characters bob the alien creatures on the head with umbrellas. The creatures disappear and a small cloud of smoke appears in their place. Worland calls *A Trip to the Moon* "one of the single most influential works in the medium's history."<sup>5</sup> The horror film borrows this same sense of spectacle and dependence on special effects.

The third influence Worland identifies is the Grand Guignol theater. Considered a theater of the bizarre, the Grand Guignol features "realistic presentation of shockingly graphic mutilations, eviscerations, stabbings, beheadings, electrocutions, hangings, rapes, and other atrocious acts performed live on stage."<sup>6</sup> Although the influence of the Grand Guignol on horror

cinema is immediate, its “method of intense visceral shocks and disturbing amorality would not be adopted by Hollywood horror films until the end of formal censorship in 1968.”<sup>7</sup>

Finally, films of German Expressionism influence early Hollywood horror cinema. German Expressionist films arise in the wake of World War I. Over twenty million people died in the war; millions more suffered both physical and emotional injury.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the emotional and psychological state of the people making films affected their filmmaking.<sup>9</sup> *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*; Robert Weine, 1920) is the film most frequently mentioned as influencing early Hollywood horror cinema. In the film, the psychological discontent of the characters is paralleled in the sharp angles in the set design. Worland notes the influence of German Expressionism on Hollywood horror increases as German filmmakers fled Nazi Europe and transitioned to Hollywood.<sup>10</sup> This influence of German Expressionism on Universal’s Gothic cycle begins with their first monster movie production: the cinematographer of *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931), Karl Freund, immigrated from Germany in 1929 to work for the Technicolor Company after gaining an international reputation.<sup>11</sup>

In *The Hollywood Studio System*, Douglas Gomery provides an overview of individual studios, including Universal. He notes that Universal mishandled its decision to focus on “rural and small town exhibitors”; by doing so “Universal missed its chance to acquire first-run picture palaces.”<sup>12</sup> While in 1930, other studios enjoyed one of the most profitable years in the history of film, Universal suffered losses because it had not adequately expanded into exhibition and was thus left behind. Universal’s horror cycle began in 1931 and its specialization in horror films filled part of Universal’s profit void.<sup>13</sup> The production of these films was profitable because Universal could reuse sets from previous films and rely on talent already under contract. The

economic benefit of making less expensive “B-movies” paired with an audience hungry for new movies made the horror cycle beneficial for Universal.

*Crimson Peak*—as a film produced by Universal Studios—exists within an established horror tradition; a tradition that began with Gothic narratives. *Crimson Peak* begins in typical Gothic fashion to the classic Gothic movies of the 1930s. A European stranger, Sir Thomas (Tom Hiddleston) comes to America and romances a virginal victim, Edith (Mia Wasikowska). Edith falls for the mysterious newcomer instead of the more appropriate suitor, Dr. Alan McMichael (Charlie Hunnam). The female characters, aside from Edith and Lucille (Jessica Chastain), are passive and without agency. Ghosts are threatening, as evidenced by Edith’s fear when approached by her mother’s ghost.

Even before any of these narrative considerations, *Crimson Peak* opens with the Universal Studios production logo. This first image alludes to the film diverging from the expected. The traditional blue spinning globe of Universal’s logo has been washed out by red, setting this film apart from the studio’s other films and establishing it as Other; even though the classic Gothic films of the 1930s and 1940s—films like *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *The Mummy* (Karl Freund, 1932), and *The Wolf-Man* (George Waggner, 1941)—were also produced by Universal.

The red bleeding through the production logo parallels the red clay of the film: seeping from the ground, staining the snow and oozing through the floorboards of Allerdale Hall as the house sinks into the ground. A haunting lullaby accompanies the modified production logo; a song, associated with the character Lucille, heard in multiple moments throughout the film.



Figure 1: *Crimson Peak*'s modified Universal production logo

The alteration of the Universal production logo suggests a bifurcation. *Crimson Peak* becomes a hybridization of a traditional Gothic story with a Hollywood film. The beginning of the film functions similarly as Universal's monster movies. The gender expectations are disrupted in *Crimson Peak* whereby the main confrontation of the film occurs between two female characters. *Crimson Peak* subverts the traditional patriarchal system generally observed in Gothic narratives. In the film, gender roles are reversed. No longer passive and powerless, the female characters—Lucille and Edith—hold the agency. The male characters—Alan and Thomas—exist in the background as submissive or insignificant. The ways in which *Crimson Peak* modifies the Gothic genre are by offering a representation of the monstrous-feminine that occurs in a feminine instead of masculine space, exemplifying the final girl archetype typically reserved for slasher horror, and sending the passive male characters into the background. Thereby, *Crimson Peak* becomes feminist Gothic cinema.

## HEADING 2

### TRANSITIONING FROM A MASCULINE TO FEMININE SPACE

Horror often concerns itself with “the terrible place.”<sup>14</sup> This space is the location in which the horror takes place, often the place in which the main character must go to enact the final confrontation. Terrible places refer “not just [to] their Victorian decrepitude but the terrible families—murderous, incestuous, cannibalistic—that occupy them.”<sup>15</sup>

Traditionally, in the Gothic Universal monster movies, the terrible place represents a masculine space: Dracula’s castle or Dr. Frankenstein’s laboratory. These monster movies occur in male-dominated worlds. Dracula, for example, exists in a masculine space: in the opening, Renfield travels to Count Dracula’s castle. The characters driving the narrative action are all men: Dracula, Renfield, John Harker, and Van Helsing. The women exist as objects to be looked at and to serve as Dracula’s victims. In the film’s climax, Van Helsing defeats Dracula by driving a stake through his heart, a phallic attack without any reference to the feminine whatsoever.

Similarly, although *Frankenstein* was written by a woman (Mary Shelley), like *Dracula* before it, occurs in a masculine space. Dr. Frankenstein creates life unnaturally, taking the woman out of the equation. The creature, then, inflicts horror upon the female characters. When he encounters the little girl, Maria, he accidentally kills her. Later, he causes Elizabeth, Dr. Frankenstein’s wife, to scream. Elizabeth Young positions this as a rape scene in her article “Here Comes the Bride: Wedding Gender and Race in ‘Bride of Frankenstein.’” She notes:

[Frankenstein’s creature] enters Elizabeth’s room on her wedding night and corners her behind the locked door; the camera cuts away to the people in the house hearing her screams. When they break into her room, her white dress is disheveled and she lies across one corner of the rumpled bed moaning desperately[...].<sup>16</sup>

This reading of *Frankenstein* persists in other adaptations. In the National Theater play directed by Danny Boyle, *Frankenstein*, the creature rapes and murders Elizabeth. The implied rape, occurring off camera in Whale's film; horrifically occurs explicitly on stage in Boyle's play.

In *The Bride of Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1935), although named after the feminine monster, the film has little concern for women. The majority of the film takes place in the male-dominated laboratory and focuses on Dr. Frankenstein and Dr. Pretoris as they attempt to recreate life, this time to create a mate for the creature from the first film. Elizabeth is completely replaced in the film by Pretoris, as Dr. Frankenstein spends all his time and energy with Pretoris, ignoring Elizabeth. The bride is not introduced until the last ten minutes of the movie, whereby she serves the function of object to be looked at by the audience and the masculine characters on screen before being given to the creature as his mate. Her entire existence is based on objectification.

Thus, Universal's monster movies occur in male-centric worlds and often exhibit a gendered struggle between human and monster. It would be easy to consider this struggle a function of the era in which they were produced. Women were not overly liberated in the 1930s, after all. However, this trend extends through Universal's two contemporary re-makes of *The Mummy*.

*The Mummy* (Stephen Sommers, 1999) also occurs in a male-dominated space. The library in Cairo, Egypt in which Evelyn works is directed by men. Early in the film, Evelyn is coded as an incompetent female by knocking bookcases over while tending to her duties as librarian. The prison scene that introduces Rick is also a masculine space. Evelyn stands out in the prison as someone who does not belong. Rick objectifies Evelyn by kissing her without

consent. When Evelyn goes into the desert to find the lost city of Hamunaptra, she is surrounded by men. The mummy in the film, Imhotep, focuses his energy on Evelyn, thereby gendering the film's conflict.

In a gender reversal, Alex Kurtzman's *The Mummy* (2017) features a female mummy, Ahmanet, who stalks the male lead, Nick. The film establishes its masculine space by opening in a war zone in present day Iraq. Being released in a time of so-called post-feminism, *The Mummy* (2017) should not be built upon the passivity of women. Alas, this is not the case. The terrible place at the end of the film is the labyrinthine underground passageways of Dr. Jekyll's lab. In one of the rooms, Ahmanet is chained to the floor, bound in an unnatural bodily contortion. In this sense, she is helpless to enact any free agency of her own and is subject to the gaze of the masculine characters surrounding her. Additionally, the female supporting character of the film, Jenny, an archeologist, has the sole function to be Nick's love interest and would-be competition for Ahmanet. At the end of the film, Jenny is killed, only to be resurrected by the supernatural power briefly wielded by Nick. Thus, even though the film features a gender-reversal of the story, the male character still holds the majority of the agency and the female characters are subdued or rescued via his triumphant masculinity.

*Crimson Peak* begins in a similar masculine space. In the first scenes of the film, Edith finds herself within a male-centric world. The major locations include her father's house, her father's office, and Alan's medical practice. Act One begins in Buffalo, NY with the whistle of a steam engine. The sound and visual design of the establishing shot suggest a town at the tension between old fashioned life and modernity. The inclusion of the steam engine suggests that Buffalo is a city of wealth and commerce. Additional background noise emphasizes the bustling nature of the business district such as the chatter of people, the stampeding of feet, and the



clomping of horse hooves as carriages pass by the foreground. Most importantly, the people seen are mostly male, establishing this economic progress as male progress.



Figure 2: The masculine space of Buffalo, NY in the late-eighteenth century

Furthermore, when Edith enters her father's office building, the mise-en-scène identifies it as an upscale building with wooden accent fixtures, furniture, and ornate railings on the staircase. On the stairs, she runs into Alan, who informs her that he is in the process of moving into his medical practice upstairs. This further emphasizes the male progress of late-nineteenth century Buffalo. Indeed, later in that same building, Edith meets with a publisher and finds herself victim to sexism of the time. When he reads her manuscript it does not conform to his expectations. He suggests she write a love story and not a ghost story, as he believes female authors should only concern themselves with romance.

However, two of the most masculine spaces in Act One are associated with Edith's father, Carter Cushing, thereby positioning him as the film's representation of the patriarchal structure of eighteenth century America. The first scene occurs in the board room of the Cushing

Company when Thomas Sharpe meets with the board of lenders to acquire a loan to fund his clay excavator in England. In the scene, effeminate Thomas is surrounded by the masculinity valued by American culture at the time. In the scene, Carter describes those values: “[conducting] honest, hard work.” He tells Thomas of his previous hard labor, explaining that he “rais[ed] buildings before [he] could own them.” Thomas, a baronet, having grown up with privilege instead of manual labor, stands out as abject in the American form of masculinity at the brink of modernity. Effete British manhood contrasted with practical, rugged American masculinity makes this a clichéd representation of his character. Edith stands against the wall during the scene; she is silent in the room of men, standing apart from them as she has no place within the public sphere of the society of men.



Figure 3: Thomas stands against the masculine space of the Cushing Company board room

The second overtly male-dominated space of the first act is the bath house. This space emphasizes the idea that American society rewards and respects the hard work of men. This is yet another place from which women are forbidden. In the scene, Carter is assisted by an

attendant who plays Carter's favorite music but also acquires the breakfast he orders (a meal with coffee and port) and the morning paper.



Figure 4: Private masculine space of the bath house

After Carter is murdered, Edith marries Thomas and moves into the Sharpe's decrepit Gothic castle in England, Allerdale Hall. When Edith moves to England—after the literal death of patriarchy, upon her father's murder—she enters a feminine space. Lucille has control of Allerdale Hall. She is the only one with keys.



Figure 5: Barrenness of the feminine space of Allerdale Hall

Where Buffalo was associated with warm colors and the bustle of modernity, Allerdale Hall is bathed in a bleak darkness, exuding barrenness and seclusion. Thomas describes the harshness of life in this setting after Edith calls her tea bitter; saying, “I’m afraid nothing gentle ever grows in this land, you need a measure of bitterness.”



Figure 6 Edith enters the bleak house of Allerdale Hall

Where the trappings of life in America were indicative of progress and wealth, Allerdale Hall shows the result of wealth squandered, untended. The house is grand; what was once representative of Victorian wealth, has decayed. Snow falls in from the ceiling and clay seeps in through the floorboards. Put another way, Buffalo is vibrant because it follows the rules of proper society; Allerdale Hall is dark and disintegrating because the Sharpes represent that which has no place in the modern world. The house is haunted, both figuratively and literally, by the ghosts of their impropriety. It is the terrible place in which Edith must struggle to survive. To do so, she must embody the qualities of the “Final Girl.”<sup>17</sup>

### HEADING 3

#### (RE)IMAGINING THE FINAL GIRL WITHIN THE GOTHIC

In the seminal essay of feminist film studies, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Laura Mulvey identifies the bifurcated function of female characters. They function as both sexualized objects and carriers of the threat of castration.<sup>18</sup> Female characters are always passive, objects to be looked at, and act to freeze the narrative. To Mulvey, the cinema is primarily concerned with providing pleasure for the male viewer by reducing female characters to their to-be-looked-at-ness.

Influenced by Mulvey, Linda Williams studies the function of monsters in classic Gothic horror films. In “When the Woman Looks,” Williams argues, “[c]learly the monster’s power is one of sexual difference from the normative male.”<sup>19</sup> The woman’s gaze is punished in horror films because of the similarity between the woman and monster; they both are seen as the abject other in the patriarchal system, when compared to the normative male.<sup>20</sup> Thus, “the monster [functions] as double for the women” in horror films.<sup>21</sup>

Williams uses Rupert Julian’s *Phantom of the Opera* (1925) as one of her examples. She says, “the monster’s body is perceived as freakish in its possession of too much or too little.”<sup>22</sup> The monster (the Phantom) and the woman (Christine) are similar when applying psychoanalysis because they both symbolize a lack. The woman’s lack can be understood in terms of Mulvey’s castration threat as exhibited by the female character’s lack of a penis. Similarly, the Phantom has a physical lack. He lacks normativity by having a deformed face. The lack of the classic Universal monsters is obvious within their overly masculine spaces. Dracula is effeminized by being associated with blood; this, along with his abjection—existing as a being of the undead—makes him a mere fraction of the normative man.

Mulvey's cinematic gaze is challenged at the end of *The Bride of Frankenstein* as the bride stands before the camera in a white dress, appearing disoriented. In "Here Comes the Bride: Wedding Gender and Race in 'Bride of Frankenstein,'" Elizabeth Young discusses the ways in which the scene challenges the typical Hollywood cinema—a cinema focused on the male gaze—described by Mulvey in "Visual Pleasure." Young says:

For the moment when the bride shrieks is also one in which she gazes: in the first moment of her creation, a close-up shows her looking directly at the camera, disrupting the cinematic economy that usually presents women as objects of looking. In the context of film monstrosity, moreover, this look would seem to reverse what Linda Williams has identified as the visual crux of the cinematic confrontation between women and male monsters, namely a moment of doubled self-recognition, whereby what the woman sees is actually her own monstrosity, reflected back, Medusa-like, in the figure of the monster.<sup>23</sup>

Intertextually, the opening and closing scenes of *Crimson Peak* are in dialogue with this scene from *The Bride of Frankenstein*. *Crimson Peak*'s Edith looks directly into the camera. Her breathing seems labored and she appears stunned and bloody from a traumatic ordeal. She stands in a Victorian white gown as the camera zooms into close-up, revealing her tear-filled eyes.



Figure 7 The bride looks into the camera, moments after her creation, in *The Bride of Frankenstein*



Figure 8 Edith looks into the camera after the final battle of *Crimson Peak*

The intertextual interaction between Edith and the bride occurs on multiple levels. Most obviously, the scenes break the male gaze. The opening scene of the plot (Edith looking into the



camera) takes place near the end of the story (after the final confrontation between Edith and Lucille).

The bride looks into the camera in *The Bride of Frankenstein* at the moment of her birth. Likewise, Edith looks into the camera at the end of *Crimson Peak* at her rebirth. The mise-en-scène of both images include artifacts of the masculine worlds the bride and Edith challenge. In the background of the bride is the medical and scientific equipment used by Dr. Frankenstein and Dr. Pretorius to create life unnaturally. Edith is in the foreground of Thomas' excavator used to mine the clay deposits in the ground on the Sharpes' land. Both images are the result of the oppression and horror derived from the patriarchy's machinery situated behind them. The bride was created for the sole purpose of becoming a mate for Frankenstein's creature, while Edith survived the brutality of the Sharpes as they enact unspeakable horrors to fund Thomas' mining operation in order to survive.

Early in *Crimson Peak*, Alan's mother mocks Edith by calling her a "Jane Austen." She does this to imply that Edith will die alone and never marry. Edith quickly quips back that she would rather be a "Mary Shelley" because Shelley died a widow instead of a spinster. At the end of the film, Edith achieves her wish to be like Mary Shelley through the death of Thomas (making her a widow). She authors a Gothic story: where Mary Shelley created *Frankenstein*, Edith has written *Crimson Peak*, evidenced by the film's containment between bookended images of an old Gothic novel. Edith becomes a Mary Shelley by assuming the role of the Final Girl.

In her analysis of gender in the slasher film, Carol Clover contradicts Mulvey's description of the passive female character by introducing a role common in the horror genre, the Final Girl. In *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, Clover says:

The image of the distressed female most likely to linger in memory is the image of the one who did not die: the survivor, or Final Girl. She is the one who encounters the mutilated bodies of her friends and perceives the full extent of the preceding horror and of her own peril; who is chased, cornered, wounded; whom we see scream, stagger, fall, rise, and scream again. She is abject terror personified. If her friends knew they were about to die only seconds before the event, the Final Girl lives with the knowledge for long minutes or hours.<sup>24</sup>

*Halloween's* (John Carpenter, 1978) Laurie Strode exemplifies the quintessential Final Girl.<sup>25</sup> Laurie emerges as the sole survivor of the movie. Michael Myers torments her throughout the film, stalking her throughout the day. He watches her while she sits in class, he follows her as she walks home from school with her friends, and he spies on her through her window later that afternoon. He further terrorizes her by killing her friends. Annie's and Lynda's deaths are quick as Michael doesn't draw out the suspense of their inevitable murders. This is not the case with Laurie. Michael stalks her, torments her, and pursues her. Michael draws out his attack on Laurie. He chases her across the street as she screams in horror. After entering the house, he follows her, breaking into a closet in which she hides to evade him. Michael's attack on Laurie lasts ten times as long as his attacks on Lynda or Annie. Laurie's resolve allows her to survive his pursuit until Dr. Loomis appears and shoots Michael multiple times, causing him to fall from the second story of the house.

Although *Crimson Peak* is a Gothic romance, not a slasher movie, Edith assumes the role of Final Girl. Edith begins the film as a repressed character just like Laurie in *Halloween*. Through most of the film, Laurie is a repressed and sexually inexperienced doormat. She is very content to spend her afternoons knitting and babysitting instead of running after boys like her promiscuous friends. When Annie tells Laurie that she set her up on a date with a boy she likes, the panicked Laurie demands that Annie break it off. In a majority of the conversations between

the three friends, Annie and Lynda mock Laurie for being a good girl. Laurie allows it by offering no rebuttal. Similarly, in *Crimson Peak*, Edith is a repressed and sexually inexperienced character.

Edith's repression is most noticeable in the form of gender inequality, commensurate with eighteenth century American culture. Early in the film, she meets with a publisher in hopes of getting her book printed, one of the many ways Edith is meant to evoke Mary Shelley. The older male publisher, Ogilvie, does not treat Edith as his equal. She faces him as he reads her manuscript, but he turns his back on her. Ogilvie offers derisive feedback on Edith's ghost story. He suggests she add a love story, with the implication that female authors should only concern themselves with romance novels.



Figure 9 Edith meets with Ogilvie about her manuscript

That evening, at dinner, her father gives her a new fountain pen as a gift, with which she might write her future pages. However, Edith proclaims that she will go to his office in the morning as to type her manuscript before sending it for publication. She adds that her

handwriting appears too feminine and identifies her as a female author. This acts as an example of gender inequality: she should devote herself to love stories, while male authors have the freedom to write in a variety of genres.

In *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, Friedrich Kittler demonstrates how technology strips us of our humanity. Handwriting is as individual as fingerprints. Kittler notes, “typescript amounts to the desexualization of writing, sacrificing its metaphysics and turning it into word processing.”<sup>26</sup> Thereby, Edith’s decision to hide her gender by typing her manuscript instead of hand-writing it is a particularly Kittlerian maneuver, Edith counteracts the patriarchal system by removing all traces of her feminine identity.

Edith’s sexual inexperience and what appears to be a significant discomfort around men is apparent in two scenes in the first act of the film. First, she serendipitously runs into would-be-suitor Alan before her meeting with Ogilvie. They pass each other on the stairs; Alan is the one to notice and call out to her. He initiates conversation with her and is much more excited to talk to her than she is to talk to him. She stands on the level above him and he rushes to bridge the gap between them. As they talk, Edith clutches her manuscript tightly to her breast, protecting her body and her heart from Alan’s presence.



Figure 10 Edith figuratively protects herself against Alan's intentions

The second scene occurs while Edith is at her father's office typing her manuscript and Thomas arrives for an appointment with her father. Thomas reads the first few sentences of the manuscript—*her* manuscript—and immediately becomes interested about its author. As Thomas flips through the top pages, she holds the rest of her manuscript tightly against her chest, reenacting her protective stance from her earlier conversation with Alan.



Figure 11 Thomas becomes interested in Edith's manuscript

In the two scenes, Edith physically puts her writing as an obstruction between intimacy with the opposite sex. She protects herself from romantic involvement by engulfing herself in her writing. Her writing offers her a safe place to explore the supernatural and love, while in the real world romantic feelings invite the chance of getting emotionally hurt. In both scenes, her manuscript shields her heart from any advances in which the opposite sex might attempt to engage.

Later that evening, Thomas stops by the Cushing house to invite Edith to a dinner party at the McMichael's. A party to which her father and Alan had both previously invited her. Edith once again keeps physical distance from him by speaking to him from the staircase, hiding behind the bannister. Thomas is finally able to convince her to attend by asking, "Tell me, why would you want to stay here all alone?" This rhetorical question hints at the tension about her identity: Is she a Jane Austen or a Mary Shelley?



Figure 12 Thomas invites Edith to the McMichael dinner party

Although initially coded as repressed and passive, Edith assumes a more active role after making love to Thomas. Shortly after moving into Allerdale Hall, after Edith and Thomas marry, Lucille embarrasses Edith in a conversation. Lucille shows Edith a book that has pornographic images hidden within its fore-edge. Lucille adds, “now, this can’t shock you now that Thomas and you have...” Edith responds, “he was very respectful of my mourning. Nothing happened, we travelled in separate cabins”; referring to mourning her father’s murder earlier in the film, the catalyst for her marriage to Thomas.

However, later in the film, Thomas and Edith must spend the night at the post office due to inclement weather. This provides them with the opportunity to consummate their marriage. They discuss Edith’s manuscript. Thomas comments that he likes Cavendish while referencing the darkness within the character; clearly identifying with him as he has a darkness of his own. He asks Edith if he survives until the end of the story. She explains to him that it is entirely up to Cavendish, saying that characters make choices that inform who they become. Thomas becomes pensive as he silently reflects upon the choices he has made in his own journey to becoming the man that he is.

Away from the house, separated from the watchful eye of his dominant sister and incestuous lover, Lucille, Thomas makes a choice that changes the path he is on. He chooses Edith exemplified by his decision to engage in physical love.

When Edith and Thomas return to Allerdale Hall, the tension between Lucille and Edith climaxes as Edith transcends her former passive role and becomes the active character, driving the action. Upon her return to Allerdale Hall, Edith begins following what Noël Carroll calls “the discovery plot,” whereby Edith begins to piece together the clues leading to the gruesome truth about Allerdale Hall and the Sharpes.<sup>27</sup> She discovers wax cylinder recordings made by Thomas’

previous wife along with a box of documents and photographs that detail Thomas' past marriages. While listening to the wax cylinders, she discovers that they poisoned the tea of Thomas' former wives and realizes that she is also being poisoned in the same way.

Thus, Edith takes on the qualities of the Final Girl. Much like Laurie who was tormented by Michael, Edith is plagued by Lucille. Lucille watches Edith's every move and determines what Edith is allowed and not allowed to do. When Edith and Thomas are alone in his attic workshop, they come close to sharing an intimate moment, one interrupted by Lucille. Lucille also slowly torments her by poisoning her tea. The abuse suffered by the Final Girl is extended; thus, instead of a swift stabbing, Edith must slowly suffer the anguish of being poisoned.

After learning that Thomas' former wives were murdered, she is no longer afraid of the ghosts haunting Allerdale Hall. She tries to communicate with them, thereby allowing them to express what they have been trying to tell her all along. Edith encounters a ghost that points towards the attic. When she goes up there, she discovers that Thomas and Lucille engage in incest. A discovery that functions much like the narrative of an example of American Gothic, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher."<sup>28</sup> In the story, the narrator visits the dreary Gothic castle of Roderick Usher, whereby he discovers Usher's incestuous relationship with his sister. Like the Sharpes' in *Crimson Peak*, the Usher's are tied to their mansion by their familial legacies. Speaking of the house the narrator says, "I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all."<sup>29</sup> In Poe's short story, much like Del Toro's film, incest tarnishes those that engage in it as well as the private space in which the unspeakable obscenity occurs.

Edith's discovery serves as the second turning point of the movie. Now that Edith knows the truth about Thomas' former wives and the truth about Thomas and Lucille, the confrontation



between Lucille and Edith becomes inevitable as only one of them can be with Thomas. The confrontation that follows accentuates Edith's role as Final Girl and Lucille's as a representation of the monstrous-feminine.

## HEADING 4

### THE MONSTROUS-FEMININE

Feminist film scholar Barbara Creed suggests that all cultures invoke archetypes of the monstrous-feminine, that which makes women abject and thus horrifying.<sup>30</sup> In her book, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, Creed identifies a collection of monstrous-feminine representations in film:

the amoral primeval mother (*Aliens*, 1986); vampire (*The Hunger*, 1983); witch (*Carrie*, 1976); woman as monstrous womb (*The Brood*, 1979); woman as bleeding wound (*Dressed to Kill*, 1980); woman as possessed body (*The Exorcist*, 1973); the castrating mother (*Psycho*, 1960); woman as beautiful but deadly killer (*Basic Instinct*, 1992); aged psychopath (*Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*, 1962); the monstrous girl-boy (*Reflection of Fear*, 1973); woman as non-human animal (*Cat People*, 1942); woman as life-in-death (*Lifeforce*, 1985); woman as deadly femme castratrice (*I Spit on Your Grave*, 1978).<sup>31</sup>

In her case study of the archetype of castrating mother, Creed analyzes Mrs. Bates/Norman in *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960). She notes, “[t]he monstrous mother is central to a number of horror texts. Her perversity is almost always grounded in possessive, dominant behavior towards her offspring, particularly the male child.”<sup>32</sup> Some of the issues of the mother-child relationship identified by Creed are repression, sacrifice, and incestuous desire.<sup>33</sup>

Mrs. Bates in *Psycho* exemplifies a castrating mother. Norman hears her voice in times that he could potentially have impure thoughts. Mrs. Bates acts as the guardian of Norman’s child-like immaturity. To Creed, *Psycho* “emphasizes the power of the mother as the moral guardian of family values. Marion says she would like [to meet Sam] at her place with her mother’s picture on the mantel. [...] The mother stands for social and familial respectability. The

film draws attention indirectly to the mother's look. It is as if she is able to watch everything from her position in the picture frame."<sup>34</sup>

In *Crimson Peak*, Lucille becomes the surrogate castrating mother to Thomas. The movie novelization explores the abuse the siblings endured at the hands of their parents in much greater detail than the movie does.<sup>35</sup> In both the novelization and the film, Lucille protects Thomas from the extreme punishments of their parents. Eventually, Lucille murders their parents at a young age, leaving her and Thomas as orphans. Lucille acted as Thomas' protector and guardian and in the process, became the dominant sibling. The film emphasizes this when Thomas shows Edith his attic workshop, containing toys and dolls he would make to please Lucille. The fact that Thomas still makes toys in adulthood becomes evidence of his inability to grow up. The controlling behavior of Lucille stunts Thomas' emotional growth and keeps him forever a vulnerable and passive adolescent in need of Lucille's acceptance and guidance.

Lucille offers her guidance and approval to Thomas in key moments of the film. During the dinner party near the beginning, Lucille indicates to Thomas when he should propose to Eunice, Alan's sister. After Thomas chooses to pursue Edith instead, Lucille once again tells him when the time comes to propose.

In the first scene of *Psycho*, Marion tries to get Sam to engage in a more socially respectable relationship instead of their clandestine meetings during lunch breaks. She indicates that she no longer wants to take part in a secretive, dead-end relationship and will only see Sam again if he comes to her home to have dinner, with her mother's picture on the mantel. He agrees and adds playfully that he would want to turn her mother's picture around after dinner, suggesting the carnal activities he would prefer to enact. Much like Marion's comment about her mother's picture on the mantle in *Psycho*, a portrait of Mrs. Sharpe on the wall watches over all

the horrors enacted in Allerdale Hall. In the beginning of the movie, it seems that Mrs. Sharpe watches over the siblings ominously. This is a live action re-enactment of the cartoon trope in which a person stands behind a painting on a wall, replacing the painted eyes with their real ones. We see Norman Bates peeking at Marion from inside the wall, resisting the cliché but replicating the situation of clandestine spying.

In a conversation with Lucille, Edith comments that she could imagine Lucille and Thomas playing in the room as children. Coldly, Lucille says, “we were not allowed in here as children; we were confined to the nursery, in the attic.” As Lucille recounts their mother’s cold nature, bereft of nurturing, Edith stares at the large portrait of her that looms over the entire room. The portrait looks dark and menacing. An old lady stands underneath a dark, cloudy sky with a stern look on her face. In the background is a wall of stone. It is easy to believe she would be distant, cold, and strict. Lucille muses, “I like to think she can see us from up there, don’t want her to miss a single thing we do.”

Lucille reveals pride and enjoyment in knowing that Mrs. Sharpe watches over all their monstrous actions: from incest to murder, Mrs. Sharpe sees all. In the case of the Sharpes, there remains no social or familial respectability left for her to protect. Her husband gambled away all their money, thereby tarnishing the Sharpe name and forcing the family into poverty. Her children, then, destroyed the little that remained by engaging in an incestuous relationship. Lucille, to completely demolish their familial legacy, becomes a murderer who kills her parents, Edith’s father, and all of Thomas’ wives, their only hope to create a new generation of viable children.

At the end of the film, after Edith has discovered the nature of the relationship between Thomas and Lucille, Lucille attacks Edith. Edith falls from the second story down to the main

level. Soon after, Alan arrives to save her from the Sharpes. Of course, he says too much by revealing all that he knows about their past. Lucille realizes he cannot be allowed to live. She demands that Thomas kill him, in the process revealing that Thomas had never killed anyone, by saying, “you should do this [kill Alan], get your hands dirty.” As Thomas stabs Alan and Lucille murders the dog that Edith adopted, Edith responds, “you’re monsters, both of you!” With a sense of satisfaction, Lucille replies, “funny, that’s the last thing mother said, too.”



Figure 13 Allerdale Hall (Crimson Peak) stained with the horrors committed by the Sharpes

Immediately after Lucille kills the dog and Thomas stabs Alan, the film cuts to an exterior shot of Allerdale Hall (its nickname Crimson Peak finally brought to fruition in the image). The purity of the white snow is contaminated by the Sharpes’ villainous nature. Incest and murder infects the land allegorically as the red clay stains the snow.

Crimson Peak extends its exploration of the natural world in a way resonant with Gothic horror films. Creed notes the connection between Mrs. Bates and birds. She says, “Norman associates his mother with the deadly passivity of a monstrous bird of prey probably because she

was the parent who hovered over him, watching his every move, threatening to pounce when he committed a mistake.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, in *Crimson Peak*, Lucille is associated with black moths while Edith is connected to butterflies.

The park scene explicitly addresses this association, when Lucille and Edith talk about the brutality of nature. They seemingly talk about butterflies, but they are really discussing their relationship with each other. Lucille says, “They’re dying. They take their heat from the sun and when it deserts them, they die. [...] Beautiful things are fragile. At home, we have only black moths. Formidable creatures, to be sure, but lack beauty. They thrive on the dark and the cold.” Edith responds, “What do they feed on?” Lucille’s dour answer is: “Butterflies, I’m afraid.”



Figure 14 Lucille is associated with black moths



Figure 15 Edith's association with butterflies

This discussion reveals important traits of the two characters, especially in the eyes of Lucille. Edith is bright, colorful, and beautiful, like the butterfly to which Lucille compares her, holding the insect up to Edith's face. She thinks butterflies are fragile, much like her opinion of Edith. Later in the film, during the major confrontation between the two female characters, Lucille explains that the women she selects—or, targets—as Thomas' next wife all have similar traits: “money, broken dreams, and no living relatives.” Lucille chooses women who she identifies as being like butterflies: fragile.

Lucille sees herself as a black moth. When she says they “lack beauty” and “thrive on the dark and the cold,” she is metaphorically talking about herself. When explaining to Edith why she preyed upon all those women, Lucille says, “the marriages were for money, of course; but the horror, the horror was for love. The things we do for a love like this are ugly, mad, full of sweat and regret. This love burns you and maims you, twists you inside out. It is a monstrous love and it makes monsters of us all.” Lucille sees herself as ugly, as anyone would after committing such horror. Her world and self-worth are tied to Thomas. She, like the black moths,

thrive in the dark and the cold because she cannot survive in any other setting. She could not assimilate to life in Buffalo, one that exists on socially respectable ideas of normativity. Her way of life can only thrive in the bleakness and seclusion of Allerdale Hall. Their incest can only survive when no one else bears witness to it.

After they discuss the relationship between butterflies (Edith) and black moths (Lucille), Lucille puts the butterfly she had been holding in her hands onto the ground. However, ants immediately attack and eat the butterfly. This foreshadows Lucille's attack on Edith once she has separated her from her environment.



Figure 16 Butterfly consumed by ants

The final confrontation between Lucille and Edith occurs after Lucille discovers that Thomas is in love with Edith, and plans to leave her. In a fit of rage, she stabs Thomas multiple times before stabbing him in the face. Upon realizing what she has done, she immediately blames Edith for Thomas' death and begins a brutal, vicious attack. She chases Edith through multiple levels of the house, beginning in the attic (where all the horror of the movie must begin



as it is both the location of Thomas' and Lucille's seclusion as children and the place they enact their monstrous love for one another), into the basement (where Thomas' former wives were buried in clay vats, yet another evocation of "The Fall of the House of Usher," as Usher buried his sister alive inside a vault in the mansion's basement), and finally outside to the clay mines near Thomas' excavator. In this confrontation, the men are completely inconsequential. Alan comes to save Edith and fails and Thomas gets killed in his attempt to save Edith; thus the film feminizes its male characters, rendering them powerless, in the moment that films typically give them the most agency.

## HEADING 5

### THE INCONSEQUENTIAL MASCULINE

The masculine characters of the Universal horror movies from the 1930s and 1940s were commanding. Dracula functions as manipulative, clever, and authoritative. Like Linda Williams discusses in her analysis of Count Orlok in *Nosferatu* (F. W. Murnau, 1922), Browning's Dracula commands via his gaze. The key feature is "the desiring look of the male-voyeur-subject and the woman's look of horror."<sup>37</sup> The look of horror on the female character's face exhibits "a trancelike passivity that allows him to master her through her look."<sup>38</sup> Dracula exhibits dominance over the female characters of Lucy and Mina via his gaze; when he tries to similarly influence Van Helsing, it fails. Van Helsing, the hero, saves Mina from Dracula at the end of the film by stabbing him in the heart with a wooden stake. As in Dracula, Frankenstein's monster, the Wolf-Man, and the Mummy also terrorize mostly female victims and are defeated by the male hero. In these films the male characters have agency, while the female characters exist as prey.

However, the male characters in *Crimson Peak* do not exhibit such agency. Thomas and Alan are subordinate, passive characters. In her analysis of gender in *The Projected Man* (Ian Curteis, 1966)—a B-movie horror and science-fiction hybrid about a scientist that transforms himself into a monster while experimenting with a laser—Anna Claydon explores the idea of abjected masculinity. Claydon says of the monstrous-masculine: "being abjected from society, he can only exist on the borders of definition, as being both things at once. He fails to soothe the audience, as Neale would have him do, and therefore, like his feminine counterpart, magnifies the fear through his eventual self-destruction and marked so-called feminine traits."<sup>39</sup> She describes three conflicts that exist within the monstrous masculine: "a) his fear of

disempowerment, b) his death drive as manifestation of the wish to no longer be abject and, c) the psychological confusion of the split personality the monster represents existing between both positions.”<sup>40</sup>

Thomas Sharpe exemplifies the monstrous-masculine in *Crimson Peak*. Claydon describes the dejected male as “a lost subject, marginalized by society, who struggles to find a place within the world and thus possesses a decentered identification with everything which is Other and abject, made undesirable by the world.”<sup>41</sup> The introduction of Thomas Sharpe positions him as abject from society. He comes to America from England in hopes of securing money to fund his business enterprise in the clay mines. He schedules a meeting with Edith’s father there. The meeting goes poorly and Carter denies Thomas’ request, dismissing Thomas as a man with “a toy and some fancy words.” He explains American values of the early twentieth century to Thomas. He became successful through manual labor, only later becoming a businessman. He emasculates Thomas by saying, “Feel my hands, rough, a reflection of who I am. You Sir, when I shook your hand, you’ve got the softest hands I’ve ever felt.” Thomas appears Other within this culture as he comes from a family that had been wealthy in the past but now poor, both monetarily but also for not having experience with manual labor.

After marrying Edith, Thomas shows her his attic workshop. In this space, his effeminate nature is emphasized. By submitting to his sister throughout his life, his emotional growth has been stunted. Emotionally, he is not a grown-man, but a child who makes toys for his older sister. This is exemplified by his workshop filled with toys. A working excavator for the clay mine is merely an extension of these childhood objects into adulthood. As Edith looks around his workshop, Thomas tells her he used to make toys for Lucille, “to keep her happy.”



Figure 17 Thomas surrounded by toys in his attic workshop

Much later, the film reveals Thomas' true abjection: he enacts an incestuous relationship with his sister.

Claydon also notes the self-destructive nature of the monstrous-masculine:

What this withdrawal from society and self-destruction of the monstrous-masculine (within all these texts) suggests is that narrative conventions require that the aberrant masculinities represented by the monstrous be brought in line and made to conform with the "normal." However, the monstrous-masculine, as a deject, is caught within a Catch-22 situation. If he does not conform, the aberrant masculinity is destroyed; if he attempts to achieve integration back into society, he is driven towards autopunition and, consequently in the case of *The Projected Man*, death.<sup>42</sup>

*Crimson Peak* features a similar tension. Thomas longs to break free from his abjection. He attempts to fund his clay mining operation by respectable means, trying to borrow money from the bank through Edith's father. He attempts to sever his incestuous relationship with Lucille by falling in love with another woman. Both attempts fail spectacularly. When Thomas' efforts to borrow money from the bank fail, he falls back into a pattern of destructive behavior, whereby he marries for money and then Lucille poisons his wife after obtaining the money. This,

of course, violates his wish to break free from his revulsive bond with his sister by starting a life with Edith. For Thomas, both roads lead to death. If he stands by his sister, he will be hanged for his role in their horrible deeds. If he leaves his sister for Edith, Lucille will kill him; which indeed she does at the end of the film.

In her analysis, Claydon refers to the “feminine traits” of the monstrous-masculine.<sup>43</sup> Thomas acts submissively throughout the film, the behavior of the female victim of classic Gothic horror films. Thomas constantly obeys Lucille. The incestuous relationship establishes Lucille as dominant and Thomas as submissive. Lucille was the older sibling who took care of him when they were younger. Thus, she manipulated him and preyed upon him as an innocent child, converting his innocence to monstrosity. Similarly, Thomas also submits to Edith.

When Edith and Thomas finally make love, Thomas takes on the submissive role. Thomas is undressed while Edith is completely clothed on top of him. The scene between Edith and Thomas acts in opposition to the sex scene between Lucille and Thomas. There is passion and romance between Thomas and Edith. In the scene with Edith, Thomas smiles and is an active, engaged participant. He tends to Edith’s needs and eventually submits to her. The scene with Lucille lacks passion and any engagement from Thomas. The scene with Lucille seems to be more habitual, while the one with Edith represents a choice. His choice to sacrifice his unhealthy relationship with Lucille, for a healthy, socially respectable future with Edith.

The editing of the scene between Edith and Thomas foregrounds their future. The sequence of them in bed dissolves into an image of the Sharpe family crest on the entrance gate of Allerdale Hall, an ominous skull that suggests this happy union cannot last and will lead to inevitable destruction.



Figure 18 Edith and Thomas make love



Figure 19 The image of Edith is superimposed over the skull crest on the Allerdale Hall gate



Figure 20 The gate to Allerdale Hall, complete with the Sharpe family crest

The final way *Crimson Peak* feminizes Thomas occurs during Edith's battle with Lucille. In "Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema," Laura Mulvey suggests that one of the functions of female characters in Hollywood cinema is that she freezes the narrative, acts as an obstacle, and slows the flow of action.<sup>44</sup> Twice during battle, Lucille tells Edith, "I won't stop until you kill me or I kill you." When she repeats it during their battle on the clay-stained snow near Thomas' clay excavator, Edith whispers "help me!" in response. Edith asks Thomas' ghost to help her in her battle with Lucille. When Lucille sees Thomas' ghost, the action stops. Seeing Thomas distracts Lucille as she becomes heartbroken over losing him. This stop in the action allows Edith to enact her final attack on Lucille and thereby survive the horrors of *Crimson Peak*.

## HEADING 6

### CONCLUSION

Applying horror theory to Gothic romance, my reading of *Crimson Peak* reveals its antithetical function to traditional films of Universal's Gothic cycle. *Crimson Peak* offers a hybrid experience within the larger horror genre as it is in dialogue with the Universal Gothic movies of the past, most obvious in its aesthetics and execution of certain plot devices; however, it offers a sophistication such that it bucks against past tradition by also exhibiting influences from *Psycho* and slasher horror. This maneuver is particularly unexpected considering *Psycho* is the film that removed horror from Gothic castles and Romanticism and placed it into real life. There, the Gothic old dark American house looms over the motel, tactically located right off of the highway that leads to the real world. Thus, *Crimson Peak* injects the horror back into the traditional Gothic space but in the process offers new ideas about the contemporary culture in which it was produced.

When Edith transitions from the safe patriarchal world exemplified by both her father's house and America more generally, she enters the feminine space of Lucille's terrible house. In the patriarchal world, she was oppressed by being forced into the culturally appropriate roles of women in the nineteenth century. She was expected to marry and not worry about the more masculine role of establishing a career. If she were to write stories, the expectation is they would be love stories, not Gothic stories involving ghosts. In the masculine space, she was meant to first abide by her father's rules and expectations until she marries, in which case she would then submit to her husband's.

However, when she enters Lucille's feminine world, Edith discovers that her oppression is much more severe in this space than it had been in the patriarchy. Here, it is not her mere



identity in crisis, but her mortality. When she moves to England and into Allerdale Hall, Lucille begins poisoning her, a severe attack instead of the sporadic oppression of her father's world.

Universal's Gothic monster movies featured passive women who were objectified, as the object to be looked at for the audience and the victim for the monster on screen. *Psycho* rectified some of the problematic representations of women by giving Marion agency. She was a sexually liberated woman with agency, not passive. Of course, she was still punished by Hitchcock's conservative cinema for her transgressions; but she was not the passive, background character from horror movies past. Similarly, slasher films evolved to give their Final Girls agency. Unlike Marion in *Psycho*, at least the sexually inactive women were allowed to live. The Final Girls were independent, active characters, having the grit to survive the killer's antics. Granted, these women were not allowed sexual liberation and were forced to follow the conservative sexual politics of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Regardless, these were all steps in the right direction: giving women agency, making them responsible for their own destinies and survival, not forcing them into passive and submissive roles that required a male savior.

*Crimson Peak* transcends the gender representations and expectations of both the Universal Gothic tradition as well as the stereotypes of the contemporary horror film. Female characters are given agency and depth of character beyond the victim for the monster. Gendered conflict is destroyed, as the major confrontation is between two female (human) characters instead of the stereotypical male monster and female victim. A more complete human experience is allowed through the film's acceptance of Edith's sexuality.

## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Worland, *The Horror Film*, 55.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 27
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>4</sup> Yang and Healey, "Introduction," 3.
- <sup>5</sup> Worland, *The Horror Film*, 34.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.
- <sup>9</sup> Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 5.
- <sup>10</sup> Worland, *The Horror Film*, 50.
- <sup>11</sup> IMDB, *Biography of Karl Freund*.
- <sup>12</sup> Gomery, *The Hollywood Studio System*, 150.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 154
- <sup>14</sup> Clover, "Her Body, Himself," 78.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> Young, "Here Comes the Bride: Wedding Gender and Race in 'Bride of Frankenstein,'" 426.
- <sup>17</sup> Clover, "Her Body, Himself," 82.
- <sup>18</sup> Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 174.
- <sup>19</sup> Williams, "When the Woman Looks," 20.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 154
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 35.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.
- <sup>26</sup> Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 187.
- <sup>27</sup> Carroll, "The Nature of Horror," 57.
- <sup>28</sup> Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher."
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.
- <sup>30</sup> Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, 35.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 1.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.
- <sup>35</sup> Holder, *Crimson Peak*.
- <sup>36</sup> Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, 143.
- <sup>37</sup> Williams, "When the Woman Looks," 18.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> Claydon, "The Projected Man," 484.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 489.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 484.
- <sup>44</sup> Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 37.

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