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LADY MACBETH AS A BLUEPRINT FOR SCARLETT O'HARA AND AMY DUNNE

The paper deals with the research of connection between the female characters in the works of literature that were created in different time periods. First of all, it deals with the significance of William Shakespeare's character Lady Macbeth that served as a blueprint for the creation of female characters whose power stems from intelligence, manipulation, and a willingness to transgress moral and gender norms. The aim of this paper is to emphasize the role and significance of the character of Lady Macbeth in creation of complex and ambitious female characters such as Scarlett O'Hara (*Gone with the Wind*) and Amy Dunne (*Gone Girl*). After analysing William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* and *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn, using the comparative and analytical-interpretative method, it is concluded that Scarlett O'Hara and Amy Dunne embody ambition, manipulation, and psychological complexity characteristic of Lady Macbeth, emerging as modern iterations of the same archetype that refuse to conform to limitations of any kind. In this paper, special attention is devoted to emphasizing the importance of the female characters who defy societal expectations and refuse to play by the rules and who disturb and fascinate audiences/readers in equal measures.

Key words: blueprint, female characters, ambition, manipulation, Lady Macbeth, Scarlett O'Hara, Amy Dunne

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

William Shakespeare is a man of countless epithets best known for his literary works, contribution to the arts and the whole of English language. The reason behind his fame has been debated for centuries but it is most often at-

tributed to his ability to manipulate language and utterly grasp the multitudes of human nature. One of the works where he masterfully showcased all of this and more was in his well-known tragedy *Macbeth*, presumably first performed in 1066 and later published in the First folio in 1623 (Boyce, 2005). When it is about his portrayal of female characters, he shows a deep understanding of their position in the society and the complexities of human character, that is to say that Shakespeare is not without a flaw in his depictions: „William Shakespeare reveals an uncanny insight into the social problems facing Elizabethan women throughout his plays. Shakespearean female characters take on a variety of roles and traits depending on the genre of the play“ (Greer, 2003: 135). He gives his female characters ambitions and their own personal convictions. However, most often he does at the end have them conform to the ideas of the Elizabethan society and those who do not, do not see a happy ending. More precisely, Lady Macbeth remains to this day synonymous with the ideas of ambition. But, the extent of the popularization of such character is the reason to look at two contemporary works written by female writers, *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell and *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn, and to explore the main female characters (Scarlett O’Hara and Amy Dunne), their stories and common themes, analysing to what extent can Shakespeare’s influence be felt (or is it that ambition and powerful women in fiction simply seem to fall into common tropes). Each of these characters understands and exploits the expectations placed upon women.

Lady Macbeth manipulates Macbeth by challenging his masculinity and masking her own intentions under a veneer of hospitality. Her famous line, „look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under’t“ (Shakespeare, 1965: 1.5.65), encapsulates her philosophy. According to Anna Jameson, Lady Macbeth though endowed with the profoundest affections, the loftiest energies, and the rarest powers, is nothing but „a fierce, cruel woman, brandishing a couple of daggers, and inciting her husband to butcher a poor old king“ (Jameson, cited in Bloom, 2008: 98). In her mind ambition is represented as the ruling motive, an intense passion which is gratified at the expense of every righteous principle and every feminine feeling. Her amazing power of intellect, determination of purpose, and strength of nerve, solidify her as fearful in herself as her deeds are hateful. Yet she is not a mere monster of depravity with whom other women have nothing in common. Lady Macbeth’s importance lies in her ability to influence her husband when she urges him to murder king Duncan. She even insinuates that he is „not an adequate man if he gives in to his fears“ (Boyce, 2005: 360). Her grim fervour not only makes her fascinating but also illuminates Macbeth’s relationship to evil as the most important element of the play. Moreover, Lady Macbeth is not a simple cartoon of villainy since Shakespeare’s characters are never one-dimensional. She too

is (though only subconsciously) repelled by the evil inherent in murder. The sleepwalking scene demonstrates that she simply cannot tolerate her too-hastily accepted immersion in evil. It must be acknowledged that she is (along with her husband) victim of evil as well as its instrument.

Scarlett O'Hara, the main character in *Gone with the Wind*, is a master performer playing the role of the charming Southern belle while secretly calculating her next move. She wins allies and resources through beauty and flirtation while concealing her true motivations: „Scarlett hasn't got time to worry about whether we love her or not; she drops the coquette act, then trots it out occasionally“ (Haskell, 2009: 118). Mitchell's masterpiece pleases audience with Scarlett's contradictory attitude or with her victimisation (a tool that incites readers to support her as a character). She possesses a rare powerful attitude which made her misunderstood and different: „Ultimately, Scarlett does pay the price for her independent nature – loneliness. She feels different from other women and other Southerners“ (Spanbauer, 2000: 52). Scarlett O'Hara is ruthlessly ambitious, willing to manipulate and deceive to preserve her family's wealth and status. What is more, her marriages are strategies, not romances, (much like Lady's Macbeth use of her relationship with Macbeth to achieve her goals). Often going beyond societal rules, Scarlett does what she thinks is right. In an age which constantly tried to subjugate women, she represented the free-spirited, self-willed, independent women: „She exercised power and was disciplined by mechanisms of power that operated in and through her“ (Spanbauer, 2000: 70).

Gillian Flynn's Amy Dunne is portrayed as a complex, morally ambiguous female character that sparked debates regarding gender roles, societal expectations, and the portrayal of women in contemporary literature. She uses emotional appeals, credibility, and logic to manipulate both, the characters within the story and the readers themselves. In her study, Ellen Bain argues that Amy's ability to persuade is a commentary on the power of mass media and public perception in shaping narratives, especially in the context of criminal justice. She also highlights how Amy's privileged status plays a crucial role in her manipulation, suggesting that her actions reflect broader societal biases favouring white women in the justice system: „Because of the utilization of her privilege as a white female 'victim', it was easy for Amy to convince everyone in the novel, including the readers, to go along with her side of the story“ (Bain, 2023: 34). Noting the debate over whether her portrayal is a feminist statement or a reinforcement of negative stereotypes about women professor Natalie Wilson who teaches Literature and Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies at California State University San Marcos, discusses the critical reception of Amy Dunne's character:

Yes, Amy is a woman, but she is an *excessively* privileged one. So privileged, in fact, that she has the necessary funds, skills, know-how and spare time to concoct a near iron-clad story in which she convinces the media, the law, her community and her family that she has been raped, abused by her husband. [...] Amy is a narcissistic, vain and shallow, and has enough time on her hands to fill her calendar with carefully labelled, colour-coded Post-Its with details of her murder plot.¹

She controls the narrative around her life, crafting an intricate plan to fake her disappearance to punish her husband and regain control. Her villainy is tied to how well she understands (and abuses) gendered assumptions.

These analyses provide a multifaceted view of Amy Dunne as a character who defies simple categorization. They highlight her as a product of her environment, shaped by societal expectations and personal experiences, and as a figure who challenges traditional narratives about women in literature.

Feminist or Just Strong Female Characters

The term *feminist* today is difficult to define with the waves that it has been through. First two waves of the movement which argued for access to education, voting rights and rights of female workers had clear and achievable goals. With the movement entering the third wave and the development of digital space, feminist theory began to branch out especially because of the presence of mainstream media and their (mis)use of the idea. What was once a fight for women to have equal rights and opportunities between sexes, „a strong female character“ (Austin, 2021: 3) became a marketing catch to promote a movie or a book which does not in reality dive into feminist history or theory, but simply uses the idea as a red herring for progressivism when the media may, in fact, be advocating for anti-feminist actions.

Before opening the discussion on the perception of characters created in the image of Lady Macbeth as a blueprint, there is a need to look back on how women were perceived at the time the character was conceived and (not only look at the position of the most important woman in the country, but all women) to what extent Shakespeare's writing reflects the ideas of women at the time. There is also an open question about how the digital postfeminist movement perceive Lady Macbeth, as a feminist character or as just another strong female character who lacks substance.

¹ Wilson, N. (2014). „What's Missing From the *Gone Girl* Debate? Privilege!“, *Ms Magazine*, March 10 msmagazine.com/2014/10/3/whats-missing-from-the-gone-girl-debate-privilege/, last accessed 5/20/2025

But, truth is that Lady Macbeth and the selected female characters, as having been constructed in her image, actually do not reflect the position of women in the time their stories are set. And even though they are women who reside in patriarchal society, especially Lady Macbeth, neither her nor Scarlett O'Hara nor Amy Dunne are feminist characters. If led by the contemporary idea of strong female character, Lady Macbeth and the other two above mentioned characters could be classified as belonging to that specific category.

LADY MACBETH AS A BLUEPRINT FOR SCARLETT O'HARA AND AMY DUNNE

The term blueprint is the key by which the female characters from different literary periods will be presented focusing on the points where the most similarities could be found. It does not mean that characters from the later literary periods are entirely based on the character of Lady Macbeth but that there is an intentional or unintentional similarity between them.

The works under discussion, *Macbeth*, *Gone with the Wind* and *Gone Girl*, are all set in different periods of time with hundreds of years between them. However, despite the mentioned time difference, what should definitely be taken into account are the ways in which the female characters of these stories share the same characteristics, what kind of a purpose do these characters serve and why do they rise to prominence.

Gender Issue

Many literary works with leading female characters deal with their positions in the society with a strict focus on gender and relationships between genders, and *Macbeth*, *Gone with the Wind* and *Gone Girl* are not an exception. One could easily say that the theme of gender is unavoidable because they are women, they identify as women, yet they possess qualities most frequently found in male characters. Another reason for gender being such a focal point is that it is a characteristic pointed out by all three of the characters as an item stopping them from achieving things otherwise available to their gender acting, as a restriction on their behaviour that is often excusable or justified in men.

Lady Macbeth immediately explains that cruelty is not a characteristic appropriate or found in a woman:

Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty. (Shakespeare, 1965: 1.5.39)

These lines help to discover that gender is something she feels held back by at least to a certain extent in contexts of an ability to be cruel and commit murder, hence wishing to be more like a man. According to Lady Macbeth, any cowardly or emotional behaviour is prescribed to be womanly:

Oh, these flaws and starts,
Impostors to true fear, would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool. (Shakespeare, 1965: 3.4.63)

When considered to what extent the notion of masculinity is connected to the themes of bravery in *Macbeth* and lack of one, it is then immediately equated as a woman's trait. Besides that instance of direct referral to a woman, Lady Macbeth is much more involved in the happenings of the court and kingship than any duties of a Queen. Her relationships to other women are non-existent. And both, *Gone with the Wind* and *Gone Girl* differ from *Macbeth* in that way. In both works there are female relationships crucial to the story but they lack true friendship or even an honest bond between two people.

In *Gone with the Wind* Scarlett O'Hara multiple times brings up the position and role of men in the society compared to women by expressing her desire to be a man: „Oh, you are – I wish I was a man! I'd call you out and –“ (Mitchell, 2021: 149). Reasons for her desire happen to be that of women a certain kind of behaviour is if not demanded than expected. Throughout the story it could be seen her progress from conforming to those expectations while she found herself in a position directly tied to class and marital status: „If she were a man she would have that mill, if she had to mortgage the store to raise the money“ (Mitchell, 2021: 413). Scarlett rightly points out that her gender is the obstacle standing in her way, stopping her from achieving something available to any man, even one less capable than her. When it is about relationship with other women, looking at *Gone with the Wind*, the relationship between Scarlett and Melanie, one could easily argue, is the most important one in the novel. Melanie considers Scarlett to be a sister to her as if they are blood related. On the other hand, even though Scarlett has actual sisters, her bond with Melanie is the closest one she has out of all female characters. Yet, time and time again she refers to Melanie as stupid: „How could Melly be so stupid as not to guess the secret of her love of Ashley?“ (2021: 216). But even Scarlett herself admits that despite being foolish Melanie does not lack common sense: „Melanie was like her aunt in many ways. She had her shyness, her sudden blushes, her modesty, but she did have common sense – ‘Of a sort, I'll admit that’, Scarlett

thought grudgingly“ (2021:103). To Scarlett, Melanie is stupid for a plethora of reasons but they all seem tied to *womanly* characteristics of kindness, tenderness and to an extent obedience and not actual foolishness/stupidity.

In *Gone Girl*, the female relationships exist although Amy Dunne observes women almost always from the perspective of male and female relationships. She actually hates men for what her husband did to her (infidelity) and she hates women because a woman was a part of her husband's infidelity. Explaining the concept of the Cool Girl as a passive woman submitting to her man's wishes, she offers perhaps the most in-depth insight into her perception not only of women but also of male and female relationships:

Men always say that as the defining compliment, don't they? She's a cool girl. Being the Cool Girl means I am a hot, brilliant, funny woman who adores football, poker, dirty jokes, and burping, who plays video games, drinking cheap beer, [...] Cool Girls never get angry; they only smile in a chagrined, loving manner and let their men do whatever they want. (Flynn, 2012: 210)

In this monolog Amy Dunne points out the dynamic in contemporary heterosexual relationships and expectations the society, and men in particular, put on women, but she also outright blames women for complying with it. She considers every woman who fits into her own perception of a Cool Girl to be pathetic and only behaving in a particular manner to please a man and not because it is her choice. And Amy's most meaningful female relationship is with her „best friend“, Noelle Hawthorne:

I knew I needed a pliant friend for my plan, someone I could load up with awful stories about Nick, someone who would become overly attached to me, someone who'd be easy to manipulate, who wouldn't think too hard about anything I said because she felt privileged to hear it. Noelle was the obvious choice. (Flynn, 2012: 244)

Noelle Hawthorne is a Midwestern stay at home mom who she (Amy) uses as a sort of an alibi that Amy Dunne was actually a good person, who also steals Noelle's urine to fake her own pregnancy.

After all, when it is stated „the desire to be a man“ regarding to selected female characters (Lady Macbeth, Scarlett O'Hara and Amy Dunne), specific moments are pointed out in the stories where the characters feel they would benefit if they were men in regards to male social status, physical or emotional (in)stability. The female characters in the stories that are of the main focus do not experience gender dysphoria or feel they would be more comfortable as men. They do not even necessarily think of men as outchassing women in any aspect of life either. In fact, there is a number of instances where the female characters put down male and other female characters.

Support, acceptance, respect, understanding, meaningful discussion that do not necessarily revolve around men are some of the staples of what is today considered a well written, meaningful portrayal of female dynamics. This cannot be found in *Macbeth*, *Gone with the Wind* and *Gone Girl*, at least not from the point of view of Lady Macbeth, Scarlett O'Hara and Amy Dunne. The ways in which these characters perceive other female characters tells a lot about their overall, not so good relationship with the female gender.

A Challenging (Over)Ambition

In *Macbeth*, *Gone with the Wind* and *Gone Girl*, ambition comes in a number of shapes and sizes but the fact is that Lady Macbeth, Scarlett O'Hara and Amy Dunne have a desire and a goal and make themselves unstoppable when it comes to achieving it. Their ambition is about propping themselves above others. However, ambition is not a trait which should be condemned when in the minds and hearts of people who consider justice and kindness to be positive, desirable things where many are allowed to progress. It is a desirable trait in business and academic fields and a reason behind numerous achievements of humanity. Unfortunately, humanity has also proven that like above mentioned female characters, people often will stop at nothing to achieve what they wish for. So, it can be said that these women are extremely self-centred and self-absorbed. According to Lady Macbeth:

What beast was 't, then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. (Shakespeare, 1965: 1.7.47)

To Lady Macbeth, the ends justify the means and what she wishes for must be achieved under any means possible.

For Scarlett O'Hara, examples of ambition are present in the entirety of literary work which is incredibly similar to Lady Macbeth, but perhaps one of the most striking ones is her marriage to Frank Kennedy:

Frank Kennedy, at present, was her future. At least, he had the store and he had cash money. And if she could only marry him and get her hands on that money, she could make ends meet at Tara for another year. And after that – Frank must buy the sawmill. She could see for herself how

quickly the town was rebuilding and anyone who could establish a lumber business now, when there was so little competition, would have a gold mine. (Mitchell, 2021: 410)

Her other marriages are notoriously devoid of love but the marriage to Frank is entirely out of self-interest and ambition. She sees him as a stepladder which could be helpful and in the process she even backstabs her sister by taking away the man she has fancied for years.

And when it comes to Amy Dunne, her ambition is expressed in a different but clear way. It is defined by the word *win*, as to her if she is not winning it is a pointless matter. In her love life she has to win by having the perfect boyfriend and husband and in death, her winning would be her cheating husband dying: „No, he does not get to win. So, I began to think of a different story, a better story that would destroy Nick for doing this to me. A story that would restore my perfection. It would make me the hero, flawless and adored“ (Flynn, 2012: 234). Amy is methodical and clever but lacks emotion. She is also ambitious but not necessarily in achieving higher status like other characters of the discussion because from the beginning to the end, she has everything. Her winning is personal and perhaps for that even more cruel.

Thinking ahead, how could Lady Macbeth, Scarlett O'Hara and Amy Dunne get their own way, how can they further their position, is not even second nature to them, it is actually, their only nature.

Murderous Ladies

Some might even prioritize cruelty to ambition as a defining trait of Lady Macbeth, Scarlett O'Hara and Amy Dunne when it comes to their personalities. Each of them has exhibited enough cruelty that one could easily argue how they do not perpetuate being ambitious women but cruel ones. When discussing the topic of cruelty, murder is an action that each of these three female characters has in common.

Lady Macbeth, even though perhaps most closely associated with taking one's life, is the only one out of three that does not do it herself. For that reason, when it comes to her one shall take a look at her advocacy for murder:

Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour

As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem 'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting „I dare not „wait upon“ I would,
Like the poor cat i'th' adage. (Shakespeare, 1965: 1.7.35)

She explains and argues in favour of murder by poking into Macbeth's masculinity and framing him as a coward for not wishing to murder a man, at first. Then, adds on that that murder is the only way because otherwise he would never get anywhere in life. To Lady Macbeth, loss of life for a crown seems a fair transaction without care what else gets lost in the prospect, at the time not aware how it might affect her.

To Scarlett O'Hara murder is not a planned event, instead it is something that happens to her and she does take responsibility for it but never voices remorse:

„I won't think about it anymore“, she decided. „It's over and done with I'd have been a ninny not to kill him. I recon – I recon I must have changed a little since coming home or else I couldn't have done it. She did not think of it consciously but in the back of her mind, whenever she was confronted by an unpleasant and difficult task, the idea lurked giving her strength: „I've done murder and so I can surely do this.“ (Mitchell, 2021: 298)

Not that she exactly wears it as a badge of honour, but it is just something that she does practically in the middle of the story. She justifies it swiftly, flatly admitting to herself what's done is done, and it almost serves as a reminder that if she could murder a man, she is capable of anything else in life.

And Amy Dunne, very similar to Lady Macbeth, is very murder obsessed. She plans her own disappearance and murder. She does it with an idea of framing her husband, getting him into prison and then on death row where he would be murdered. Almost at the end, she gets an opportunity to tie her own story up in a rather messy bow by committing murder: „'She killed him', I said. 'She killed Desi because he was basically... he was annoying her, he was power-playing her, and she realized she could kill him, and it was her way back to her old life, and she could blame everything on him...'“ (Flynn, 2012: 370). Amy's murder, unlike Scarlett's, is planned. Just as Lady Macbeth she sees it as a logical option, but her planning is far more meticulous than Lady Macbeth's. Amy pride herself on her intelligence, to-do lists and diligence. The murder is methodical since every step is planned by a woman who is either a clear sociopath, or has simply consumed too many crime thrillers. But it is also emotional as she kills the man who was at a point in past her boyfriend

which is the closest relationship between the female characters under discussion and their victims.

Motherhood in (Non)Existence

Motherhood could easily be labelled as one of the more interesting topics of discussion when it comes to drawing parallels between the characters of Lady Macbeth, Scarlett O'Hara and Amy Dunne. It is almost never the first thing to think of in association with them, but it is ever-present. Indeed, none of these characters exhibit a motherly instinct or kindness of a mother. Since *Macbeth*, *Gone with the Wind* and *Gone Girl* are set in different time periods, each period differs in the way of importance of bearing a child. From exponentially important to (today's) a choice to not have a child which is, by many, still being frowned upon but accepted. However, a queen not having a child at that time is a shocking ordeal, and Macbeth himself becomes a king without an heir. His wife is a queen that states how mother's milk is something that produces weaklings and nothing else:

I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to have the babe that milks me.
I would, while it was smiling at my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this. (Shakespeare, 1965: 1.7.54)

Her terribly cruel words along with shocking imagery paint a picture of an innocent child in the arms of its mother and getting crushed by her, the one we expect to protect the baby the most. Usually, a woman without a child will often be observed as if something is wrong with her which is harmful speculation, but in Lady Macbeth's case one almost feels glad that she has no children.

On the other hand, Scarlett O'Hara has three children and even that does nothing to endear her towards them: „Be a little man, Wade, and stop crying or I will come over and slap you.' Why had God invented children, she thought savagely as she turned her ankle cruelly on the dark road – useless, crying nuisances they were, always demanding care, always in the way“ (Mitchell, 2021: 269). Motherly instinct and love is not something that Scarlett ever discovers in herself. She is self-centred around her children as she is around anyone else. To her, they are a bother, a chore and she is not even the one that takes care of them. Children are something unfortunate that happens to her and ruins her figure and stop her from attending parties. She openly admits how she wishes she were unable to love them.

In *Gone Girl* children are an idea that slowly bides its time in the story and then at the very end becomes one of the key aspects. Amy Dunne often comments not only on the prospect of having a child but also birth: „I was the girl who battled oblivion and won. The chances were about 1 percent, but I did it. I ruined my mother’s womb in the process – my own prenatal Sherman’s March“ (Flynn, 2012: 221). The description of her own birth Amy presents with as vivid and brutal words as the words of Lady Macbeth. There is also Amy’s opinion on pregnancy and having children in the first place: „Americans like what is easy, and it’s easy to like pregnant women – they’re like ducklings or bunnies or dogs. Still, it baffles me that these self-righteous, self-enthralled waddlers get such special treatment“ (2012: 244). She also uses children as another tool in getting her own way. Her pregnancy becomes just another thing with which she can manipulate and control her husband.

CONCLUSION

In the character of Lady Macbeth, William Shakespeare introduced a female protagonist that offers insight into not only thoughts of a man who wrote the play but a woman who is wrong, immoral and cruel. She is also a woman who has enough ambition that even a fraction of it spread to the masses would likely better the world, if used properly. What is more, there are female characters from English literature that are believed to be created either intentionally or unintentionally in her likeness, such as Scarlett O’Hara and Amy Dunne. But also, Lady Macbeth from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Scarlett O’Hara from Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* and Amy Dunne from Flynn’s *Gone Girl* are unmistakably unique characters in their own right, regardless on their similarities.

Lady Macbeth serves as an early archetype for a woman whose power stems from intelligence, manipulation, and a willingness to transgress moral and gender norms. And Scarlett O’Hara and Amy Dunne follow in her footsteps, adapted to different eras and cultural backdrops but each one reflects the same core idea: the dangerous allure of a woman who refuses to play by the rules.

A defining trait of Lady Macbeth is her ambition. Upon hearing of the witches’ prophecy, she immediately envisions the path to the throne and urges Macbeth to seize power through murder. Her determination eclipses that of her husband, as she implores the spirits to „unsex“ her, reflecting femininity in favour of ruthless action. Scarlett O’Hara shares this fierce ambition. Amid the collapse of the Old South, she is determined to preserve her family’s plantation, and ensure her own survival. Like Lady Macbeth she uses her relationships strategically, marrying for wealth and security rather than love.

Scarlett's drive like Lady Macbeth's, challenges traditional notions of womanhood and domesticity. Amy Dunne, too, is driven by a desire for control and dominance. After feeling betrayed and discarded by her husband, Amy constructs a meticulous plan to fake her own disappearance, manipulating the media and public perception to punish him. However, her ambition is psychological rather than political, but no less potent.

Furthermore, Lady Macbeth's quest for power involves a conscious suppression of traditionally feminine qualities – compassion, tenderness, and maternal instinct. Her unravelling, marked by sleepwalking and hallucinations, reveals the psychological cost of this suppression. Similarly, Scarlett O'Hara rejects passive femininity. She is often portrayed as selfish or cold, but her strength and resilience are undeniable. Her actions, when judged by male standards, would be considered pragmatic and heroic. Yet, as a woman, she is condemned for her transgressions. And Amy Dunne exemplifies the modern evolution of gender subversions. She subverts every expectation – first of the dutiful wife, then of the tragic victim. Although her villainy is rooted not just in deception but in a deliberate dismantling of gender norms, Amy is still vulnerable. Her narrative explores the cost of living a life shaped by roles rather than authenticity.

In characters like Scarlett O'Hara and Amy Dunne, it could be seen the influence of Lady Macbeth's character reinvented to suit new cultural landscapes. All three women are ambitious, manipulative, and deeply aware of the power structures they inhabit. They transgress societal norms, forcing readers (audiences) to confront their own discomfort with powerful women represented as strong female characters. In this way, Lady Macbeth serves not just as a character, but as a literary blueprint etched into the DNA of modern female protagonists who challenge the world on their own terms.

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**SCARLETT O'HARA I AMY DUNNE KAO
KNJIŽEVNE KOPIJE LADY MACBETH**

Rad se bavi istraživanjem povezanosti ženskih likova u književnim djelima koja su nastala u različitim vremenskim periodima. Prije svega bavi se značajem Shakespeareovog lika Lady Macbeth koji je poslužio kao književni model za kreiranje ženskih likova čija moć proizilazi iz inteligencije, sposobnosti manipulacije i spremnosti na kršenje moralnih i rodnih normi. Cilj ovog rada jeste isticanje uloge i značaja lika Lady Macbeth u osmišljavanju kompleksnih i ambicioznih ženskih likova kao što su Scarlett O'Hara i Amy Dunne koje se mogu smatrati njenim književnim kopijama. Nakon analize drame *Macbeth* autora Williama Shakespearea i romana *Gone with the Wind* (*Prohujalo s vihorom*) autorice Margaret Mitchell i *Gone Girl* (*Nestala*) koji je napisala Gillian Flynn, uz korištenje komparativne metode i analitičko-interpretativne metode dolazi se do zaključka da Scarlett O'Hara i Amy Dunne utjelovljuju ambiciju, manipulaciju i psihološku kompleksnost karakterističnu za Lady Macbeth, pojavljujući se kao moderne iteracije istog arhetipa koje odbijaju povinovati se ograničenjima bilo koje vrste. U ovom radu, posebna pažnja posvećena je isticanju važnosti ženskih likova koji prkose društvenim očekivanjima i odbijaju igrati prema pravilima te koji na čitaoce/publiku djeluju istovremeno fascinantno i uznemirujuće.

Ključne riječi: *književna kopija, ženski likovi, ambicija, manipulacija, Lady Macbeth, Scarlett O'Hara, Amy Dunne*