
“Wouldst thou like to live deliciously?”: Female Persecution and Redemption in The Witch

By Chloe Carroll

Throughout Western history, the witch has existed as a gendered entity. The *Malleus Maleficarum*, a documentation of witchcraft written by agents of the Catholic Church Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger and published in 1487, claimed that since women are the weaker sex they are more vulnerable to the Devil’s possession and his influences. Following these declarations, the design and characteristics of a witch were thus identified alongside those of a woman; “since they are feebler both in mind and body, it is not surprising that they should come under the spell of witchcraft”.[\[1\]](#)

The *Malleus Maleficarum* enforced gender constructs and “catapulted the female sorceress to fearful new heights”.[\[2\]](#) Women were perceived as a threat to the social order and thus it was excused that they had to become more regulated by the patriarchy. As Kramer and Sprenger dictated, “What else is woman but a foe friendship, an unescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil of nature, painted with fair colours!”.[\[3\]](#) Although the Catholic Church disavowed the *Malleus Maleficarum* in 1490, the fear of the female witch had become embedded into social consciousness by then. The effects of the *Malleus Maleficarum*’s misogynistic doctrine are arguably still evident in culture today.

Various Renaissance artists were instrumental in ensconcing this misogynistic view of women in visual culture. Dutch painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c. 1525-1569) established the iconography of witchcraft by depicting women on broomsticks with their black cats and cauldrons. The signature black, pointed hat was introduced by William Hogarth in his 1762 print *Superstition, Credulity and Fanaticism*, creating the stereotyped depiction of the witch in Western popular culture still in existence today.[\[4\]](#) It is this imagery of the witch, and her respective mise-en-scène, that has consistently been replicated throughout visual history, and which serves as the conventional onscreen representation of the witch as a wicked woman, a seductress, a deceiver of children and men and above all, a symbol of defiance of the social order.

The development of the onscreen image of the witch has reiterated social constructs surrounding gender and often reinforced witchcraft as a signifier of the femme fatale. Beginning with silent cinema, most notably *Häxan* or *Witchcraft Through the Ages* (Benjamin Christensen, 1922), its imagery of witches is strongly built upon signifiers and constructs discussed provided by the *Malleus Maleficarum*. Then, during Hollywood's classical period, *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939) illustrates and offers two forms of the witch; the green and malicious Wicked Witch of the West and the distinctly feminine Glinda the Good Witch of the North. The binary opposition between these two witches reinforces gender roles and dictates pure femininity as 'good' whilst also illuminating a witch beyond her evil origins. Though Glinda is not inherently evil and negotiates the construction of the witch she still reinforces negative gender constructs through her emphasis upon natural femininity.

Later, the witch emerges on the cinema and television screen in various waves. In the midcentury, most notably, she appears in *I Married a Witch* (1942), *Bell, Book and Candle* (1958) and *Bewitched* (1964-1972) where the focus on her is through the lens of lighter themes of drama and comedy. Though the witch was being tamed on screen, during this time she was being integrated into the public sphere to provoke gender discussions and negotiate women's marginalized position in society. Kristen J. Sollée observes that when "the feminist movement first gained visibility in the early 1960s, the witch began to transcend her evil origins".^[5] Throughout feminist waves, the witch has transcended her vilified position and restraints of socially constructed femininity to embrace her powerful position and combat patriarchy's attempt to subdue her. Beginning in 1968, a group in New York utilised the iconography of witches as a united front towards women's liberation and formulated W.I.T.C.H (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell). Their manifesto stated "if you are a woman and dare to look within yourself, you are a Witch. [...] You are a witch by being female, untamed, angry, joyous, and immortal".^[6] The group confronted what they considered creations of the oppressive environment inflicted upon women by targeting beauty pageants, Playboy clubs and wedding marches. They aimed to tackle patriarchal attacks on the bodies through marital rape, abuse and anti-abortion laws and claim ownership of their bodies. By claiming ownership of the marginalised witch they were embracing the right to revolt.

The second wave of witch film and television content includes prominent titles *The Craft* (1996), *Practical Magic* (1998), *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (1996-2003) and *Charmed* (1998-2006), which blended comedy and drama whilst alluding to the darker themes of witchcraft without fully exploring them. Rather, these witches appealed to a new audience with

focus placed upon coming of age narratives.[7] As the feminist agenda progressed, so did depictions of the witch in film and television. Though there were still stereotypical figures, such as the child consuming witches of *Hocus Pocus* (1993) and *The Witches* (1990), the witch was becoming prevalent in pop culture and tapping into immense power beyond evil intent. This served to regenerate the witch in a favourable way.

Contemporary witch texts are arguably more progressive, addressing contemporary issues of sexism and the threat of a return to traditional social structures and values. The current wave of witch films includes *The Witch* (Robert Eggers, 2016) and *The Love Witch* (Anna Biller, 2016). Witches are no longer malevolent forces in cinema, rather, the witch is contesting the history which sought to persecute women and reclaim her power. An analysis of the new wave of magical women through a historical context can reveal how the witch has been repurposed to draw attention to the renewed attacks on women's rights and sexuality through oppressive patriarchal power and social subjugation.

Director Robert Eggers restores the witch to her vilified roots as a woman in New England in *The Witch* or *The VVitch: A New England Folktale*. Eggers strived for historical authenticity, spending five years researching and paying meticulous attention to detail even going as far as to build the house and barn only with tools available during the period. The film explores the cultural construction of the witch through a Puritan family in the 1630s who are exiled for different interpretations of the New Testament.

The family's exile is the first example of religious persecution within the film. The bible was a "violent force" amongst Puritans, utilised to build the foundation of oppressive New England and justify punishments against those who threatened the social order.[8] In the opening scene of the film William, the patriarch of the family, questions the authority of the council and provides insight into how Puritanism functioned as lived religion. William's pride and rigorous religious beliefs prevent him from being judged by "false Christians" to the extent he will displace his family. Eggers describes his film as "a Puritan's nightmare", intended to reveal how the strict religious beliefs of Puritan society intertwined with their superstitions created witch hunts and damned women.[9] *The Witch* explores the suppression of female power and sexuality in a strict religious environment through Thomasin who strives to conform to the image of the ideal Puritan girl. From the beginning Thomasin is portrayed as good; she prays and fulfils her duties and is visibly distressed at being banished alongside her family. Thomasin is utilised to explore, as Egger states, "the dark side of humanity but mainly the dark side of women".[10] Her coming-of-age narrative illustrates not only ambivalence surrounding women but also women's fear of power in a

male dominated society. Thomasin's first dialogue scene illustrates her inner turmoil and position within the family as she prays; "I here confess I've lived in sin. I've been idle of my work, disobedient to my parents, neglectful of my prayer. I have, in secret, played upon my Sabbath. And broken every one of thy commandments in thought. Followed the desires of mine own will, and not the Holy Spirit". It is from this moment she is marked for the Devil's possession as she reveals her dissatisfaction with Puritan life. Though she has not actually sinned, she is fearful of the potential as Puritans conceived a world in which God and Satan vied for souls and the temptations of witchcraft were a sinister threat to their goal of salvation. Her lapse in religious holding condemns her to a Puritan witch hunt as she begins to embrace the darker side of her humanity.

A woman who embraces her sexuality in Puritan society is a deviant and threat. The witch is the "anti-mother" within this text, a disgrace to her femininity and disregards religious and social concerns. In Puritan society women were held to strict expectations and motherhood was considered the most significant aspect of female identity and an inherent ability. For instance, rejecting maternal instincts would be considered a signifier of corruption by the Devil, when in actuality it was more likely postpartum depression. During this time, women who did not adhere to feminine expectations were at risk of genuinely believing they were witches as they were so thoroughly permeated by religious ideologies that they considered themselves vile and evil by nature.^[11] Judith Butler states gender is learned through performative acts built upon the "reenactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established".^[12] Thomasin has learnt her position as the inferior sex through the Puritan culture of religious persecution inflicted by misogynistic men who dictated women were weaker in mind and body and easily seized by the Devil's temptations due to their weak will. Expectations are placed upon Thomasin to conform to the family structure by serving their needs in preparation of when she will have her own family. Her mother, Katherine, is distrustful of Thomasin's impending womanhood and pleads with William to send her to the service of another family; "Our daughter hath begat the sign of womanhood". Despite her devotedness to her family and faith, Thomasin is condemned from the beginning due to her burgeoning sexuality. Her sexuality is presented as a test to her younger brother Caleb, who peers at her cleavage, whilst to her mother she is a rival and later deemed a "proud slut".

The family seek to blame witchcraft as the source for their despair when trying to establish a life within their exile, whilst it appears their grievances amongst one another conjured the witch. The witch first appears after kidnapping Samuel, creeping through the forest towards her hideaway where she disembowels the infant and uses him to create a

flying ointment.[13] William claims Samuel was taken by a wolf, though Katherine directs her anger upon Thomasin who is expected to tend to the children. The family are struggling to survive within their exile and William fails to provide for his wife and children which develops a family crisis and “opens the door to Satan and the witch”. [14] The twins, Jonas and Mercy, illustrate the effects of witchcraft accusations and how the youth contributed to creating a witch hysteria through expressing dramatic outbursts whilst still exempt from social blame.[15] This is particularly evident through Mercy’s antagonising behaviour towards Thomasin, knowing her mother holds her in low regard and provides Mercy an amount of freedom and satisfaction from her rebellious behaviour. At the stream, Mercy taunts Thomasin by openly disobeying her parents, leaving the farm and speaking of witchcraft, behaviour her parents would not tolerate within their strict household. Though Thomasin is the one blamed for the misfortunes on the farm, it is Mercy who consorts with Black Philip, the family goat and assumed mortal vessel of Satan, and declares that Thomasin allowed the witch to take Samuel. It is Thomasin’s environment which ultimately turns her to accept the Devil; she is full of self-loathing which is only reinforced through her family’s attacks on her. During the scene at the stream she responds to Mercy’s taunts, stating she is the witch of the wood; “I am that very witch. When I sleep my spirit slips away from my body and dances naked with the Devil. That’s how I signed his book. He bade me bring him an unbaptised babe, so I stole Sam, and I gave him to my master. And I’ll make any man or thing else vanish I like”. This momentary indulgence seals Thomasin’s fate; she is a witch. She has departed from the narrative of the ideal Puritan girl and succumbed to the pressure of her role which, in Puritan values, transcribes to witchcraft. The witch was seen as “inverting not only the natural order in general but specifically the image of the ‘good woman’”. [16] In this witch text, Thomasin is rewriting the victim narrative through the witch by shedding societal expectations and beginning to embrace her female power.

Caleb’s death marks a significant turn in the film. Though Samuel’s disappearance was claimed to be due to a wolf, Caleb returns from the woods in an undeniably bewitched state and confronts the Puritan family with their greatest fear. The twins accuse Thomasin of being a witch and replicate Caleb’s inflictions. There is no saviour for Thomasin; her younger siblings condemn her, her mother accepts the accusations without question based on her intent to rid the farm of her, whilst her father does not waver in his commitment to Puritan values. William is sure of Thomasin’s guilt based upon what he has seen and intends to inform the council of his daughter’s witchcraft, ultimately issuing her a death sentence as witch trials were designed to prove a woman guilty of witchcraft, or kill them trying. They have created a fictional witch in

Thomasin which leads her to embrace that which they despise. She tells her father he is a hypocrite for demanding she speaks truth of her witchcraft when he is deceptive and utilising her as a scapegoat for his lies; “You let mother be as thy master. You cannot bring the crops to yield. You cannot hunt. Is that truth enough? Thou canst do nothing save cut wood”. This only solidifies Thomasin as a witch in her father’s mind, as a young girl’s relationship to their father was particularly significant within Puritan culture. A father’s authority and judgment was absolute and she deferred to him as she would the man she would marry.[17] This also explains why Katherine perceives Thomasin as her rival within their exile and her relationship to both Caleb and her father threatens Katherine’s position; “Did you not think I saw thy sluttish looks to him, bewitching his eye as any whore? And thy father next!”. This emphasis upon how women should conduct themselves in relation to men has been imbedded into Thomasin’s being, she has known and identified as the Other and she attempts to readjust herself within this framework, now, as a witch.[18]

Revisiting history has illustrated how witchcraft transcribes into feminist values.[19] Thomasin’s outburst against her father is her revolt against the Puritan patriarchy which vilifies her as a woman and thus, a witch. Puritan men harboured a deep suspicion of women as potentially willing and able to disrupt the social and moral order, assigning women roles within society which dictated that they remain submissive and obedient to the male heads of family and society.[20] The *Malleus Maleficarum* is an example of how women were feared and convinced of their inherent evil nature to subdue them. Puritan culture relied heavily upon socially constructed misogyny and enforced patriarchal values which further divided women and prevented overthrow of the social and moral order.[21] Patriarchy not only restricts women’s freedom but also presents a patriarchal mindset which is responsible for all forms of oppression including social forms such as sexism, racism, classism and personal forms of rationality against intuition and emotion and mind against body.[22] Society has predominately been male dominant or patriarchal and presents multiple barriers for feminists to deconstruct, this is amplified within Puritan culture. The witch represents female empowerment and freedom from patriarchy. Ultimately, she is a feminist figure. *The Witch* illustrates the extent of women’s subjugation within Puritan culture through religious and social persecution; Thomasin’s redemption begins when she rejects the religion which displaced her. It was Satan who offered her salvation within a culture that sought to persecute her; “Wouldst thou like the taste of butter? A pretty dress? Wouldst thou like to live deliciously? Wouldst thou like to see the world?”. The Devil did not coerce Thomasin or initiate contact. Rather, her choices led her towards a delicious life, beginning when she confesses her sins and dissatisfaction with Puritan existence.

Though the witch was conceptualised as a means of subjugation, Eggers makes the witch a reality within his film to illustrate how deep rooted the fear of female sexuality and power was within Puritan culture. Aviva Briefel observes how *The Witch* uses its careful detail “not merely to revive a past but to deepen it so far that those details finally turn strange and disturbing, until the aesthetic of verisimilitude gives up its monsters – a set of gender experiences that history cannot represent – and severs the viewer’s access to historical truths”.[\[23\]](#) The film presents a personal form of female experience within Puritan society which departs from the victim narrative in place of a declaration of female independence whilst negotiating women’s place within history. The current wave of witches and magical women on the screen aims to deconstruct stereotypes which, like Puritan culture, have deemed them inherently evil and signifiers of femme fatale. By revisiting its historical roots, *The Witch* confronts dangerous womanhood and “refuses to contain female monstrosity within its controlling narrative frame”.[\[24\]](#) In embracing her sexual awakening rather than suppressing it according to Puritan social dictations, Thomasin demonstrates her sexuality as a source of power and deconstructs the witch figure as a feminine monstrosity whilst combatting an oppressive social order. She is not villainous and deviant nor wicked in appearance, rather by embracing her Otherness and female sexuality she is vilified within Puritan culture. Like Benjamin Christensen, director of *Häxan*, Egger’s attempts to remove his audience from socially contained thinking and reveal the truth of a culture which created the witch.[\[25\]](#) Indications of *Maleficium* permeate the film; when Thomasin breaks an egg it reveals a bird’s bloody fetus and when milking a goat blood is produced from its udder. The animal familiars also present themselves as an indicator of witchcraft and forebode the family’s crisis. The failure of the crops was a subtle addition of the period as many historians discuss how fungi on crops could produce LSD-like experiences, possibly explaining witnesses accounts of witchcraft.[\[26\]](#) Eggers aims to illustrate how although there are reasonable explanations for the various aspects of witchcraft, they are interpreted as damning evidence of evil in Puritan culture so he strives to make them a reality and allow the audience to perceive things through the same lens. Ultimately, Puritan settlers did not find the Devil in New England: they brought it with them.

The representations of witchcraft in the film illustrate the duality of the witch. She is a form of feared womanhood untamed by society. She is a seductress, a hag, and most importantly, a woman. The witch who seduces Caleb is profound in her youth and beauty until the hand she clasps him with becomes wrinkled with age and provokes a response of horror. She is both a reminder of the dangerous temptations a woman’s sexuality presents in a male dominated society and a fear of ageing and infertility. Whilst the seductress can be suppressed and convinced of her

evil nature to subdue her, the hag exists in a void where patriarchal society renders her useless for all intents and purposes. Puritan society only accepts women who conform and embody their oppressive values. The destruction of the family dynamic released Thomasin from her responsibilities to the family and her father's domination. Finally, free from Puritan righteousness, she "floats in the air, set apart from her father's line, as she finally pledges a wholly new self to someone who is not a man".^[27] Thomasin joins ranks amongst the coven of witches in the forest away from civilisation, once again experiencing exile; powerful women could not exist within the Puritan framework. Outside the restraints of Puritan patriarchy they are an untamed force of female solidarity and represent a threat to the Puritan social structure.

The Witch has been regarded as a feminist text and important addition to a new wave of magical women on screen. Witches in film and television have altered as gender discourse moved towards equality and women's rights became integrated into the public sphere. Social constructs became a prominent point of inspection during this movement. This has been reflected through the development of the witch on screen, altering how she is interpreted whilst providing progressive and diverse representations of women. The current wave of witches engages with contemporary feminism, allowing Egger's *The Witch* to revisit Puritan New England through a feminist lens. Michèle Barrett states, "cultural politics are crucially important to feminism because they involve struggles over *meaning*".^[28] Barrett further acknowledges that fictional, imaginative and aesthetic dimensions of works must be taken into consideration as meaning is "socially created in the consumption of the work".^[29] Meaning can exceed the intention of the creator as it relies upon interpretation. The imagery and meaning of the witch depicted in film and television has developed throughout the good witch versus bad witch conflict. Early trends of witchcraft alluded to the more malignant aspect of witchcraft and its history while contemporary American television and film has revitalised the witch and fully embraced the darker themes and provoking history. In contradiction to previous witch trends, contemporary depictions have revived historical accounts of what defines a witch through a feminist reassessment of these marginal figures. Films such as *The Witch* rely on factual representations which emphasise that the accused women were just that: women. The growth and progression of the witch on screen reflects how "American society was changing fast, as people were pushing cultural boundaries, challenging accepted standards of behaviour, and redefining roles and limitations with regard to sexuality, race, politics, gender, religion and so on".^[30] Due to this, the image of the witch and the meaning associated with witchcraft has developed within society and become a form of empowering female representation.

The witch has been revived as a political scapegoat for deflecting patriarchal accusations. The current wave of magical women on screen aims to illustrate that witch hunts were not an attack on the elite, rather, they were an attack on those who could not defend themselves, the already oppressed and subjugated. The contemporary witch engages with cultural politics through a feminist lens. Puritanism is being revived to illustrate the threat of a return to traditional values. This threat is evident within contemporary politics, predominately through controversy surrounding Donald Trump's presidency, violence against women and renewed attacks on women's rights. The current threat towards women's place within society has created "a visible and dramatic crisis which occurs on a national level through media exposure".^[31] A new age of the witch has been prompted as a response to this crisis. Powerful women such as Rachel Notley and Hillary Clinton are being labelled witches and attached to the negative stereotypes created by misogyny. Christina Lerner explores if a witch hunt was a "thinly disguised woman-hunt" as the majority of women prosecuted "were disturbers of social order; they were those who could not easily cooperate with others; they were aggressive."^[32] In 1712, Jane Wenham, an English woman of over seventy years old, was accused of witchcraft. Jane's reputation was unfavourable within her community; not adhering to the demands of respectability as she had two husbands, a "bad temper and a sharp tongue".^[33] Farmer John Chapman accused Jane of witchcraft, claiming: "you are a witch and a bitch". What is irregular about this particular accusation is Jane's response, she rebelled and sought action for slander. She was awarded a shilling for her charge of defamation but did not accept this as justice. In response to Jane's lack of conforming and inability to subdue her confrontational nature and reduce her to her submissive gender role, she was subjected to a witch hunt. Anne Thorne was a servant supposedly afflicted by Jane's power. Her accusations are speculated about if she was a genuine believer, a deceiver, or pregnant and trying to avoid the community's wrath by directing attention elsewhere. The most plausible reasoning, generally associated with youthful girls during the witch hysteria, is that she was "trying to find ways to express sexuality and rebellion in a dramatic and personally satisfactory act which exempted her from social blame".^[34] This is a common assumption, that "vicious girls" who embraced an opportunity to exercise control and power in an otherwise oppressive society, are the cause of the witch trials and provoked the extent of the violence.^[35] Like most accused witches, Jane was used as a tool to unite a community against a common enemy whilst also being utilised to gain social and political favour for her alienation.^[36] This ideology is consistent within the structure of Puritan society and the persecution of the marginalised witches. Women are purposefully juxtaposed and positioned to police one another. In Puritan society feminism cannot exist. Jane's position as an accused witch and her actions thereafter place her amongst the

“resistance fighters against the oppression of women”.[\[37\]](#)

In *The Witch*, Thomasin is the equivalent of the ill-tempered Jane, marginalised and persecuted by her community and seeks refuge in the witch from societal restraints. Rachel Moseley observes:

The witch as a metaphor for female resistance, witches as representative of women who lead unconventional lives - outside that which patriarchal society deemed acceptable in relation, for instance, to female-centered communities or sisterhoods, personal and sexual freedom and political resistance - and who were punished for this. [\[38\]](#)

Witch hunts and Puritan ideologies are a prominent aspect of history but they still provide impact in contemporary society. Rather than avoiding the narrative, *The Witch* embraces Puritanism, the historical women of witch hunts and the patriarchy that condemned them. Despite being set centuries ago, it speaks to contemporary issues, as Eggers states he prefers “to go in the past to look at humans today”.[\[39\]](#) Although feminism has achieved women numerous rights and freedom, there is still a patriarchal force that threatens to oppress them. *The Witch* illustrates that the threat of traditional values is not relegated to the past. Though Thomasin may not be a radical feminist openly attempting to dismantle the patriarchy, she is stripped of agency and embodies fears and ambivalences surrounding women and female power. The social and religious persecution of Thomasin mirrors issues in contemporary society, though Egger’s did not intend to delve into political agendas, feminism rose to the top of his investigation of the witch.[\[40\]](#) The new wave of magical women on screen has presented an opportunity to negotiate women’s history whilst providing a progressive and diverse representation of the witch during a politically challenging period for women. In the age of an oppressive president gaining international attention, rape culture and attacks on women’s bodies and rights, *The Witch* deviates from the victim narrative to provide a historical reflection of cultural politics. Through the witch, women can find their source of empowerment and rebel against a society that seeks to revert them to their historical status as the oppressed and the lesser. Through the witch, women can reclaim their power and live deliciously.

Notes

[\[1\]](#) Jakob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum* (New York: Dover Publication Inc, 1971), 44.

[\[2\]](#) Kristen J. Sollée, *Witches, Sluts, Feminists: Conjuring the Sex Positive* (Berkeley: ThreeL Media, 2017), 23.

[3] Ibid, 43.

[4] Debbie Lee, *Romantic Liars: Obscure Women Who Became Impostors and Challenged an Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 87.

[5] Ibid, 112.

[6] Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1986) 206.

[7] Notable contemporary example *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Robert Aguirre-Sacasa, United States, 2018-Present).

[8] James P. Byrd, *The Challenges of Roger Williams: Religious Liberty, Violent Persecution, and the Bible* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2002), 1.

[9] Robert Eggers, "Robert Eggers on 'The Witch', Familial Trauma, and the Supernatural," *Vice Talks Film* YouTube channel, 20th February 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGNrHzCXpTM&frags=pl%2Cwn>

[10] Ibid.

[11] Elizabeth Reis, *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England* (London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 2-3.

[12] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 191.

[13] The historical context of the flying ointment, or witches unguent, is based upon witch hunt beliefs that the ointment required the entrails of an unbaptized infant and when applied to a broom it provided the ability to fly.

[14] Cynthia J. Miller and Bowdoin A. Van Riper, *Divine Horror: Essays on the Cinematic Battle Between the Sacred and the Diabolical* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2017), 23.

[15] Phyllis J. Guskin, "The Context of Witchcraft: The Case of Jane Wenham (1712)" (*Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 15 (1), 1981), 63.

[16] Elspeth Whitney, "The Witch "She"/ The Historian "He": Gender and the Historiography of the European Witch-Hunts" (*Journal of Women's History*, 7 (3), 1995), 77.

[17] Stacy Schiff, *The Witches: Salem 1692, A History* (London: Little,

Brown and Company, 2015), 131.

[18] Simone De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) asserts "[o]ne is not born, but rather, becomes a woman". Woman identifies as everything man is not, thus, she is the Other due to gender constructs and binary opposition.

[19] Marion Gibson, *Witchcraft: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 61.

[20] Elspeth Whitney, "The Witch "She"/ The Historian "He": Gender and the Historiography of the European Witch-Hunts" (*Journal of Women's History*, 7 (3), 1995), 85.

[21] Ibid, 87-88.

[22] Cynthia Eller, "Relativizing the Patriarchy: The Sacred History of the Feminist Spirituality Movement" (*History of Religions*, 30 (3), 1991), 287.

[23] Aviva Briefel, "Devil in the Details: The Uncanny History of *The Witch* (2015)" (*Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 49 (1), 2019), 6.

[24] Ibid, 18.

[25] Richard Baxstrom and Todd Meyers, *Realizing the Witch: Science, Cinema, and the Mastery of the Invisible* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 5-6.

[26] Roger Clarke, "*The Witch*" (*Sight and Sound*, 26 (4), 2016), 66.

[27] Aviva Briefel, "Devil in the Details: The Uncanny History of *The Witch* (2015)" (*Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 49 (1), 2019), 9.

[28] Michèle Barrett, "Feminism and the Definition of Cultural Politics" *Feminism, Culture and Politics* (Ed. Rosalind Brunt and Caroline Rowan. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982), 37.

[29] Ibid, 57.

[30] Heather Greene, *Bell, Book and Camera: A Critical History of Witches in American Film and Television* (North Carolina: McFarland & Co Inc, 2018), 4.

[31] Megan K. Maas, et al., "I Was Grabbed by My Pussy and Its

#NotOkay': A Twitter Backlash Against Donald Trump's Degrading Commentary" (*Violence Against Women*, 24 (14), 2018), 1741.

[32] Darren Oldridge, *The Witchcraft Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 255.

[33] Phyllis J. Guskin, "The Context of Witchcraft: The Case of Jane Wenham (1712)" (*Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 15 (1), 1981), 50.

[34] *Ibid*, 63.

[35] Robert Detweiler, "Shifting Perspectives on the Salem Witches" (*The History Teacher*, 8 (4), 1975), 600.

[36] Jacqueline Pearson, "Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting, and politics in early modern England" (*The Seventeenth Century*, 31 (3), 2016), 375-6.

[37] Rachel Moseley, "Glamorous witchcraft: gender and magic in teen film and television" (*Screen*, 43 (4), 2002), 410.

[38] *Ibid*.

[39] Katie Rife, "The Witch director Robert Eggers on Fellini, feminism, and period-accurate candlelight" (*AV CLUB*, 2016).

[40] *Ibid*.

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About the Author

During Chloe Carroll's academic pursuits at the University of Limerick and its sister college Mary Immaculate College for her MA, she pursued studies in magical women, film and television, and their histories. Chloe is currently preparing her research for PhD level to complete the proposed study of the image of the witch throughout film and television, and how the gendered identity has existed in waves and is currently undergoing a new transformation. Having just completed an MA thesis '*The Handmaid's Tale* from Ronald to Donald: A Feminist Analysis' Chloe is predominately interested in the persecution of women revived from history to serve a renewed purpose for the screen.