

ATTENDEE INFO PACK

MONSTROUS MAIDENS AND CUNNING CRONES: THE ABJECT WITCH ON SCREEN

A five-week film course exploring cinematic representations of the abject witch and asking why witches, who are most commonly portrayed as women, are so frequently depicted as monstrous within patriarchal discourse.

Over the course of five weeks, we will delve into the psychoanalytical concept of the abject and explore how this concept has been applied to on screen witches resulting in portrayals of women who symbolise both patriarchal fears and feminist fantasies. We will explore how, over the course of the past century, witches have been transformed from dangerous monsters to victims of violent patriarchy.

WEEK ONE

THE ABJECT WITCH

This week we will start to understand the concept of the abject as exemplified in Roeg's *The Witches* (1990). We will explore both physical and social abjection and think about why patriarchal ideology sought to make monsters out of powerful women and why, in turn, feminists have sought to reclaim this monstrosity.

Film of the week: *The Witches* (1990), available on Now TV or for rental via Amazon

Optional but recommended listening: Monstrous Flesh podcast WITCHES 2. The Witches (Roeg, 1990) with Emily Smith, available on Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/3omLC5E4UbZxEbOjaZOsaS?si=rytu4xwXROWEESrsMqE7ow> or
Apple podcasts: <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/witches-2-the-witches-roeg-1990-with-emily-smith/id1677924018?i=1000653391291>

WEEK ONE REFERENCES:

- Arya, Rina, *Abject Representation: An Exploration of Abjection in the Visual Arts, Film and Literature* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)
- Creed, Barbara, *Return of the Monstrous-Feminine: Feminist New Wave Cinema* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2022)
- Creed, Barbara, *The Monstrous Feminine* (New York: Routledge, 1993)
- Hocus Pocus*, dir. by Kenny Ortenga (Buena Vista Pictures, 1993)
- Jennifer's Body*, dir. by Karyn Kusama (20th Century Fox, 2009)
- Kosmina, Brydie, *Feminist Afterlives of the Witch: Popular Culture, Memory, Activism* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023)
- Kristeva, Julia, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982)
- Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, dir. by David Hand (RKO Radio Pictures, 1937)
- The Craft*, dir. by Andrew Fleming (Columbia Pictures, 1996)
- The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1*, dir. by Bill Condon (Summit Entertainment, 2011)
- The Witches*, dir. by Nicolas Roeg (Warner Bros., 1990)

WEEK TWO

GREEN-SKINNED GIRLIES

This week we will explore the original abject witch on screen, the Wicked Witch of the West. This green-skinned crone's shadow looms large over media depictions of witches and during this week's session we will uncover how *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) helped to establish the legacy of the abject witch.

Film of the week: *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), available on Now TV or for rental via Amazon

Optional but recommended watching: *Wicked* (2024), available on Now TV or for rental via Amazon

WEEK TWO REFERENCES:

- ‘Bewitched Bunny’, *Looney Tunes* (Warner Bros. Cartoons, 1930 to present) 5 (1954)
- ‘The Flying Sorceress’, *Tom and Jerry* (MGM Cartoon Studio, 1940 to present) (1956)
- ‘Treehouse of Horror VIII’, *The Simpsons* (Fox, 1989 to present) 9, 4 (1997)
- ‘Which Witch’, *Tom and Jerry* (MGM Cartoon Studio, 1940 to present) (2007)
- Arya, Rina, *Abject Representation: An Exploration of Abjection in the Visual Arts, Film and Literature* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)
- Creed, Barbara, *Return of the Monstrous-Feminine: Feminist New Wave Cinema* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2022)
- Creed, Barbara, *The Monstrous Feminine*, 2nd edn. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023)
- Ezra, Elizabeth, ‘Witchcraft and the Uncanny Origins of Cinema’, *Gothic Studies*, 26.1 (2024) pp. 1-17 <<https://doi-org.nottingham.idm.oclc.org/10.3366/gothic.2024.0182>>
- Ferrier-Watson, Sean, ‘The Many Roads of Oz’, *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 28.2 (2017), 219-235 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26499448#metadata_info_tab_contents>
- Greene, Heather, *Lights, Camera, Witchcraft*, 2nd edn. (Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications, 2021)
- *ParaNorman*, dir. by Sam Fell & Chris Butler (Universal Pictures, 2012)
- *Sleeping Beauty*, dir. by Les Clark, Clyde Geronimi, Eric Larson and Wolfgang Reitherman (Buena Vista Distribution, 1959)
- *The Wizard of Oz*, dir. by Victor Fleming (Loew’s Inc., 1939)
- *Wicked*, dir. by Jon M. Chu (Universal Pictures, 2024)

WEEK THREE

MONSTROUS MAIDENS

This week we will spend some time examining one of patriarchy's worst nightmares: powerful teenage girls. We will delve into what it is about the cisgender female body that poses such a threat to patriarchal ideology and how monstrous puberty can be both an oppressive and liberating process.

Film of the week: *Carrie* (1976), available on Amazon and Apple TV

WEEK THREE REFERENCES:

- *American Horror Story: Coven* (FX, 2013-2014)
- *Burned at the Stake*, dir. by Bert. I. Gordon (International Film Market, 1981)
- *Carrie*, dir. by Brian De Palma (United Artists, 1976)
- *Ginger Snaps*, dir. by John Fawcett (Motion International, 2000)
- Grossman, Pam, *Waking the Witch: Reflections on Women, Magic, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019)
- *Jennifer's Body*, dir. by Karyn Kusama (20th Century Fox, 2009)
- King, Robert, 'A Regiment of Monstrous Women: Female Horror Archetypes and Life History Theory,' *Evolutionary Behavioural Sciences*, 9.3 (2015) 170-185 <<https://doi.org/10.1037/ebs0000037>>
- King, Stephen, *Danse Macabre* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2006)
- Leiber, Fritz, *Conjure Wife* (Canada: Must Have Books, 2022)
- Madden, Victoria, "We Found the Witch, May We Burn Her?": Suburban Gothic, Witch-Hunting, and Anxiety-Induced Conformity in Stephen King's *Carrie*, *The Journal of American Culture*, 40.1 (2017), 7-20 <<https://doi-org.nottingham.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/jacc.12675>>
- *Rosemary's Baby*, dir. by Roman Polanski (Paramount Pictures, 1968)
- *Satan's School for Girls*, dir. by David Lowell Rich (20th Television, 1973)
- *Teeth*, dir. by Mitchell Lichtenstein (Roadside Attractions, 2007)
- *The Craft*, dir. by Andrew Fleming (Columbia Pictures, 1996)
- *The Crucible*, dir. by Nicholas Hytner (20th Century Fox, 1996)
- *The Exorcist*, dir. by William Friedkin (Warner Bros. Pictures, 1973)
- *The Witch*, dir. by Robert Eggers (A24, 2015)
- *Virgin Witch*, dir. by Ray Austin (Tigon Film Distributions, 1972)

WEEK FOUR

THE DARK NIGHT OF ABJECTION

This week we will examine a more contemporary witch text to uncover how the figure of the witch can be used to turn the tables and articulate the abject nature of patriarchy. Contemporary feminist scholarship has offered insight into how we can view patriarchy as abject and therefore see the witch as a generative agent of revolt.

Film of the week: *The Witch* (2015), available to rent on YouTube, Apple TV, and Amazon

WEEK FOUR REFERENCES:

- ..‘Gingerbread’, *Buffy* (The WB, 1997-2003) 3, 11 (1999).
- *Agatha All Along* (Disney+, 2024)
- Arya, Rina, *Abject Representation: An Exploration of Abjection in the Visual Arts, Film and Literature* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)
- *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, 2018-2020)
- Chollet, Mona, *In Defence of Witches: Why Women Are Still on Trial*, trans by. Sophie R. Lewis (London: Pan Macmillan, 2022)
- Corcoran, Miranda, ‘A Short History of Teenage Witches’, *Horror Homeroom* (2019) <<https://www.horrorhomeroom.com/a-short-history-of-teenage-witches/>>
- Creed, Barbara, *Return of the Monstrous-Feminine: Feminist New Wave Cinema* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2022)
- *Maleficent*, dir. by Robert Stromberg (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, 2014)
- Rivers, Nicola, *Postfeminism(s) and the Arrival of the Fourth Wave*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017)
- *The Love Witch*, dir. by Anna Biller (Oscilloscope Laboratories, 2016)
- *The Witch*, dir. by Robert Eggers (A24, 2015)
- *Witches*, dir. by Elizabeth Sankey (Mubi, 2024)
- Zwissler, Laurel, ‘I am That Very Witch: On The Witch, Feminism, and Not Surviving Patriarchy’, *Journal of Religion and Film*, 22.3 (2018), 1-33 <<http://nottingham.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/i-am-that-very-witch-on-feminism-not-surviving/docview/2214900918/se-2>>

WEEK FIVE

DECLAWING THE WITCH

In the final week of the film course, we will explore the effects of making the witch less monstrous which can be both positive, leading to more positive powerful female characters, or negative, leading to depoliticised depictions of witches. We will consider how capitalist commodification can undermine the witch's radical potential.

Film of the week: *Hocus Pocus 2* (2022), available on Disney+.

Optional but recommended watching: *Hocus Pocus* (1993), available on Disney+.

Optional reading: 'The Witches are Back!': Reframing the Witch and Abjection from *Hocus Pocus* (1993) to *Hocus Pocus 2* (2022), available here: <https://www.cine-excess.co.uk/lsquothe-witches-are-backrsquo-reframing-the-witch-and-abjection-from-hocus-pocus-1993-to-hocus-pocus-2-2022.html>

WEEK FIVE REFERENCES:

- *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, 2018-2020)
- Creed, Barbara, *Return of the Monstrous-Feminine: Feminist New Wave Cinema* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2022)
- Federici, Silvia, *Witches, Witch-Hunting, and Women*, (Oakland: PM Press, 2018)
- *Hocus Pocus 2*, dir. by Anne Fletcher (Disney Platform Distribution, 2022)
- *Hocus Pocus*, dir. by Kenny Ortenga (Buena Vista Pictures, 1993)
- Kosmina, Brydie, *Feminist Afterlives of the Witch: Popular Culture, Memory, Activism* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023)
- *ParaNorman*, dir. by Sam Fell & Chris Butler (Universal Pictures, 2012)
- Rivers, Nicola, *Postfeminism(s) and the Arrival of the Fourth Wave*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017)
- *The Craft: Legacy*, dir. by Zoe Lister-Jones (Sony Pictures Releasing, 2020)
- *The Love Witch*, dir. by Anna Biller (Oscilloscope Laboratories, 2016)
- *The Witch*, dir. by Robert Eggers (A24, 2015)
- *Wicked*, dir. by Jon M. Chu (Universal Pictures, 2024)