



# Witch Hunts in The United States from the Salem Trials to the #MeToo Movement

Clara Lopes Marques

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**UNIVERSITÉ DE FRANCHE-COMTÉ – BESANÇON**

**INSPE DE FRANCHE-COMTE**

**Mémoire de deuxième année de Master  
“Métiers de l’Enseignement de l’Éducation et de la Formation”**

Clara LOPES MARQUES

*Witch Hunts in The United States from the Salem Trials to  
the #MeToo Movement*

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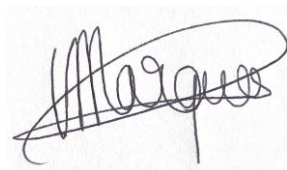
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# **RESEARCH THESIS:**

## **WITCH HUNTS IN THE UNITED STATES, FROM THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS TO THE #METOO MOVEMENT**

### **Introduction**

“Witch hunts are always spooked by women’s horrifying sexuality awakened by the superstud Devil.”<sup>1</sup> Arthur Miller’s words represent properly the everlasting problem of the persecutions that has occurred throughout the centuries. Witch-hunts also question the position of women in society since the female gender is mostly concerned, nay, always concerned. This is one of the guiding ideas that will be explored and analyzed throughout this thesis on Witch-hunts in the United States.

When we think of witch-hunts in the United-States, what first comes to our mind are the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692-93 because of the way they were represented in literature, movies, tv shows, and also paintings, and consequently because of their popularity. However, if we think deeper, in a figurative way, witch-hunts in the United States can evoke many events, from purging Communists out of the country during the Red Scare of 1947-1954, to discriminating women who have participated in the #MeToo Movement.

The expression “witch-hunt” has two definitions. *Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines a witch-hunt as “a search for people accused of witchcraft with an ensuing persecution” and also as “the investigation and deliberate harassment of those (such as

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Miller, on President’s Clinton relationship with Monica Lewinsky, Oct 1998, (last accessed 05/21/2021).  
<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/11/12/specials/miller-salemoped.html?scp=7&sq=salem&st=cse>

political opponents) with unpopular views”.<sup>2</sup> Both these aspects of a Witch-Hunt will be developed in this thesis, from the proper 1692 Witch-Hunts in Salem to the more political reference to the Red Scare and the societal challenge of the #MeToo Movement.

The Salem witch-hunt and trials took place between 1692-1693 during the colonial period, in the town of Salem, Massachusetts. Accusations of witchcraft against several inhabitants of Salem, mostly women, were multiplying. Following the accusations, trials were organized and a real witch-Hunt started, ending with the death of twenty persons and more than hundreds of people were accused of witchcraft. The Salem witch-hunt is often put in parallel with the Red Scare in the United States, a vivid fear of Communism during the Cold War, between 1947 and 1954. The link between both periods is obvious in Arthur Miller’s play *The Crucible*, published and performed in 1953. Miller wrote a tragedy, recounting the events of Salem with some adjustments and imaginative situations, whose real aim was to denounce the Witch-Hunt of the fifties, in other terms the Red Scare. By publishing *The Crucible*<sup>3</sup> and reminding Americans that it had already happened in the past, Miller wanted to put an end to unfounded accusations towards an uncountable number of people accused of being Soviet spies, Communists or supporters of Communism and the Soviet Union.

Since women are *still* often the target of discriminations, my thesis will also discuss women’s condition today, including the battle for women’s rights and the #MeToo Movement that started in 2017, a crusade created to gather women around their terrible experiences of sexual abuse. This movement has since allowed women to speak up, denounce and bring the light on events that in the previous decades and centuries used to be hidden.

I would like to focus on the meaning of the word “witch”, usually referring to a person with malignant supernatural powers, especially a woman usually practicing black witchcraft with the aid of a devil or similar creatures. Another definition describes “an

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<sup>2</sup> “Witch Hunt,” *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/witch-hunt> (last accessed 24/05/2021).

<sup>3</sup> Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible*, Penguin Play, London, 1984.

ugly old woman”, “a hag”. A third understanding alludes to “a charming or alluring girl or woman”. A fourth definition evokes “an adherent of Wicca”<sup>4</sup>: Wicca is a religion influenced by pre-Christian beliefs and practices of Western Europe which affirms the existence of supernatural power (such as magic) and of both male and female deities who inhere in nature and that emphasizes ritual observance of seasonal and life cycles.<sup>5</sup> This thesis will therefore focus on the four definitions of Witch as they all match the different types of witches and witch representations discussed here.

I have chosen this particular subject because I am fascinated by the way witches are represented in films and TV series. I also find it remarkable that we do not need “witches” to engage in witch hunts in a figurative way and that is why I wanted to talk about McCarthyism and the Red Scare along with the #MeToo Movement, including other issues such as discrimination against women regardless of their race. Also, I found the story of the Salem Trials really thought-provoking and very instructive as regards justice and the way towns were ruled in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. I will therefore also explore the various responses that Americans have had and are having towards the different witch-hunts their nation experienced.

In a first part, I will review and analyze the famous witch-hunts in the United States. The details of these witch-hunts, the historical context as well as their resonance in the world will be considered. The Salem witch trials, the Red Scare and the #MeToo Movement will be at the center of this first part.

A second part will discuss the position of women in society that is to say, the general condition of women during the colonial period to explain the Salem Witch-hunt. And mostly the evolution of women’s living conditions throughout the centuries, the movement of feminism, including the important women figures who are part of this movement, and finally, intersectionality, in order to prove how women may be victims of numerous discriminations.

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<sup>4</sup> “Witch,” *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

<sup>5</sup> “Wicca”, *Ibid.* (last accessed 05/24/2021).

The final part of the research section of this thesis will focus on the representation of witches and the evolution of their representation. This evolution includes their representation on screen, whether in TV series or movies, as well as in arts and various media.

# **1. Witch Hunts in the United States**

The United States has experienced different Witch-hunts at various times in its history. For this analysis I have decided to focus on three of them: the Salem witch-hunt and trials of 1692-93, the Red Scare of 1947-54, and the #MeToo Movement that portrays women as victims of assaults.

## **1.1. Salem Trials**

The Salem Witch-hunt of 1692-93 was the first major Witch-hunt in the United States. Let us overview the historical context.

### **1.1.1. The Accusations**

The first well-known witch hunt in the United States concerned the village of Salem, Massachusetts, and the ensuing Salem Trials of 1692-1693, nurtured by many allegations from the villagers themselves. At first, the charges were targeting a group of young girls who started to act in an odd way, having seizures accompanied by hysterical reactions, unprompted and unprovoked laughter, crying, and irrational babbling; they also tried to fly, and occasionally were caught by hypnotic trance.

Today, the arrival of these symptoms has been explained by two theories, among which we can mention:

- Convulsive ergotism: caused by the ingestion of rye as a cereal and as a common ingredient of bread, infected with ergot, a disease of rye and other cereals caused by an ergot fungus.<sup>6</sup> The ergot creates symptoms such as those provoked by the hallucinating drug LSD, therefore women might have been basically under the effect of a drug.

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<sup>6</sup> "Ergot", *Ibid.* (last accessed 05/24/2021).

Men as well could have been affected by the effects of ergot, but at that time, they were not often accused of witchcraft, thus, the light was only on women. If any man got affected, the village would have blamed these symptoms on something other than witchcraft. This proves there was (and *still* is) a systematic accusation over women who were (and *are* sometimes) considered second-class citizens.

- A combination of stress, asthma, child abuse, boredom and delusional psychosis such as hysteria for example. As said previously, men were not often accused of witchcraft so even if a man had these types of symptoms, women would have been accused of having infected him.

Back in the village of Salem in 1692, the only possible theory was that the girls were possessed by the Devil. The girls' symptoms, as understood by 17<sup>th</sup> century colonists, resulted in a complete madness from the whole village. The young girls were pressured to name those who "bewitched" them. People started to accuse one another of witchcraft and in total there were around 150 to 300 persons accused, and eventually 20 persons were executed (fourteen women and six men). The very first person to be accused by the village was Tituba, a Barbadian slave working for the town's reverend, Samuel Parris. The fact that she was a slave from Barbados made her an easy target for the whole village, with numerous rumors told about her involvement in witchcraft and black magic. People started to accuse her of teaching the village girls magic potions and recipes as well as night rituals in the woods. A mass hysteria started and more accusations were held. Afterwards, two other women were accused, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborn: one was a beggar, the other was old, belligerent and had not attended church for over a year.<sup>7</sup> At that time, women with such characteristics were considered suspects, especially when they did not attend church. As Mona Chollet writes,<sup>8</sup> it was suspicious to miss mass too often, but it was also suspicious to never miss it; suspicious to regularly gather with friends but also to have a lonely life. Journalist Mona Chollet writes that this situation is well represented by the bath test, when the woman was tossed in the water: if she sunk, she was innocent; if she floated, she was a witch and

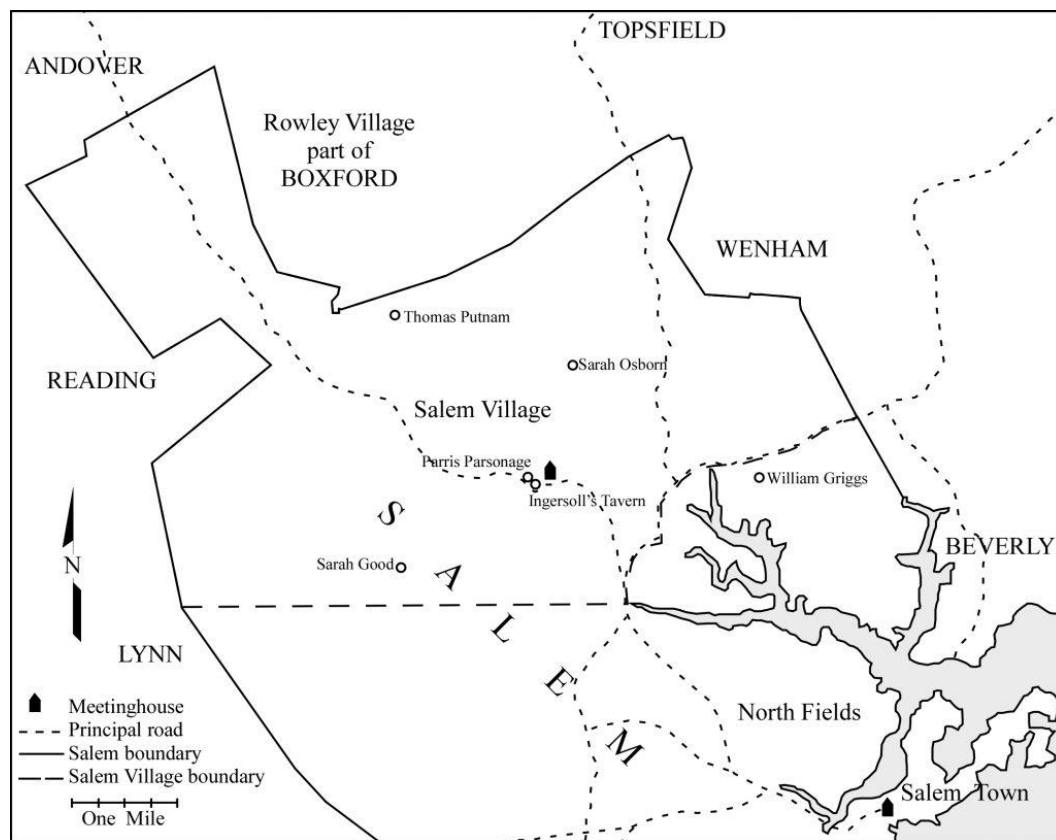
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<sup>7</sup> Linder, Douglas, *The Witchcraft Trials in Salem: A Commentary*, University of Missouri, School of Law, Kansas City, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Chollet, Mona, *Sorcières La Puissance Invaincue des Femmes*, Paris, Zones, 2018.

therefore had to be executed, either ways, the woman had to die. From the moment she is accused, there is no way out for her other than death.

This madness was also emphasized by King William's War in Massachusetts (1689-1697), as well as by the violent attacks of the Wabanaki Confederacy, a powerful North-Eastern Algonquian confederation, upon a rather infant and weak colony. It was also accentuated by the lack of successful protection from England. The men from Salem who had participated in that war returned to their village<sup>9</sup> and talked about the horrors and violence they had experienced. This contributed to spread madness.



Salem map with details of the town's boundaries and houses of the protagonists of the trials of 1692-93.

<sup>9</sup> See Salem maps above.

*Unobscured with Aaron Mahnke* (n.d.) <https://historyunobscured.com/resources1/> (last accessed 05/04/2021).



Map of the Natives Tribes around Salem.

Thus, the historical context is important here. The war mentioned before with the economic conditions in the colony that will be evoked in our second part, along personal jealousies among the villagers, all contributed to nurture this mass madness.

### **1.1.2. The Trials**

The Trials took place from February 1692 to May 1693. The hangings of the accused witches continued until September. Some defendants were not hanged but they often had to languish in jail for months waiting for their trial. Between June and September 1693, twenty persons were executed: Bridget Bishop, Rebecca Nurse, Sarah Good, Susannah Martin, Elizabeth Howe, Sarah Wilds, George Burroughs, Martha Carrier, John Willard, George Jacobs Sr., John Proctor, Martha Corey, Mary Easty, Ann



Pudeator, Alice Parker, Mary Parker, Wilmott Redd, Margaret Scott and Samuel Wardwell. Some were sentenced to death but died in prison. Therefore, the number of deaths following the trials was higher than twenty victims.

Before the official trials took place, the defendants had to wait in jail and as the number of accusations grew, jails began to be overcrowded, thus the trials had to be organized in a fast motion. The then Governor William Phips created a new court – “the court of oyer and terminer”, meaning “to hear and determine” –, which was a commission where judges were asked to make inquiries regarding treasons, felonies and misdemeanors.<sup>10</sup> In Salem, there were five judges including Puritan Pastor Cotton Mather and witch hunter William Stoughton. Their procedure was far from legal since hearsays and gossips were taken into account as evidence. Likewise, defendants had multiple tests to take and pass, such as the examination of the body resulting of checking the body of the accused person for the Devil mark (moles, stains...), or again the touching test, in which the defendant had to touch the accuser’s body to see if the touch stops the accuser’s symptoms<sup>11</sup>. In short, many procedures were adopted which in our modern world would have been rejected as lack of evidence.

The trials were very different from those of today, as the defendants did not have any lawyers or witnesses who could testify on their behalf, therefore defendants could not appeal against the judges’ decision. The defendants could, however, speak for themselves, produce evidence and cross examine their accusers. However, those “advantages” depended on their position within the community and their influence: since the so-called offenders were often misfits or enemies of the village’s powerful families, they would not really enjoy those advantages.

The trials usually started by interrogating the defendant and asking the accuser multiple questions about the suspects, such as: “What do you say (speaking to one afflicted (*sic*)): have you seen this Woman hurt you?”<sup>12</sup> These trials were not objective

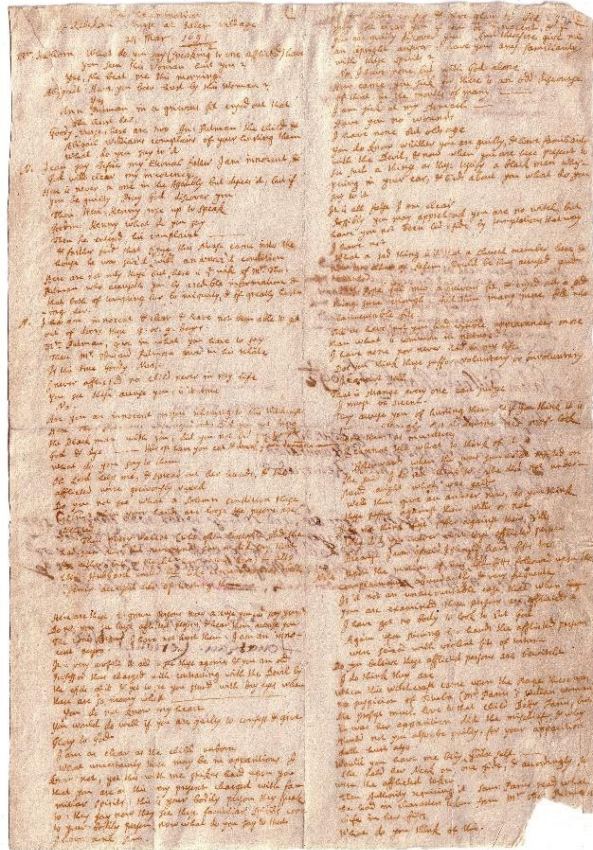
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<sup>10</sup> *Procedures, Courts and Aftermath of the Salem Witch Trials* (n.d.), Legends of America. <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/ma-salemcourt/3/> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

<sup>11</sup> Linder, Douglas, *The Witchcraft Trials in Salem: A Commentary*, University of Missouri Kansas City, School of Law, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> See the photo of the court record above.

since the wealthier people of Salem maintained control over the final decisions, using this Witch-Hunt as a way to handle their own problems with different villagers. Witchcraft was often an excuse to justify their personal revenge.



Court Record, Rebecca Nurse's Examination.

To conclude on the topic of the trials, it was not only those accused of witchcraft who were hanged. The villagers who opposed this Witch-hunt, its trials and all the ensuing accusations were also hanged. The best example of this being that of a farmer, John Proctor, whose wife was accused of witchcraft by people from their inner circle. He subsequently became a famous figure in *The Crucible*<sup>13</sup> because of the way he opposed the witch hunt in his village: he was hanged but his wife was not, “saved” by her pregnancy.

Court Record, SWP No. 094 : Rebecca Nurse. (n.d.) <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n94.html> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

<sup>13</sup> Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible*, Penguin Play, London, 1984.

## **1.2. Arthur Miller's *Crucible*, a Modern Witch Hunt**

*The Crucible* by Arthur Miller is a modern Witch-hunt because of the way this play perfectly represents the situation of the 1947-1954 Red Scare, which was nicknamed a witch-hunt against Communists.

### **1.2.1. The Parallel Between the 1940s Witch Hunt and the Salem Trials**

A parallel need be drawn between old Salem, Massachusetts, and the Red Scare, i.e. the period from 1947 to 1954 that corresponded to an anti-Communist era.<sup>14</sup> What links Salem and the Red Scare is the publication of *The Crucible* written by Arthur Miller in 1953. The play is about the events of 1692-93 in Salem; the story is partially fictionalized, but the background and the main events remain close to the historical events. The play is an allegory of McCarthyism as Miller wanted to show how unjustified rumors can erode society. We have had an example of it in the twenty first century with former US President, Donald Trump, and his fake news and other rumors, including his questionable point of view on women.

The Red Scare is the scare of communists, which took place during the Cold War. After World War II, the Cold War between Soviet Union and the United-States started creating a vivid fear of Communism in America which caused the development of the Red Scare. US politicians began to think that there were Soviet spies in the Federal government, sapping American democracy from within. There were many changes during this period, in the educational field for instance: textbooks or literary books were destroyed for a variety of reasons, the mention of sex or Marxist socialism, or if they had been published in the Soviet Union. This book burning was reminiscent of what had just occurred in Europe before WW2, in the 1930s, when Nazis had burnt books that Hitler did not approve of (books that advocated ideologies opposed to Nazism: socialism,

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<sup>14</sup> Foster, Stuart J, *Counterpoints*, Vol. 87, "Red Alert Educators Confront the Red Scare in American Public School, 1947-1954" (2000), pp. 1-10, "Chapter 1 : The Red Scare : Origins and impacts".

communism, liberalism and so on and books written by Jewish authors), thus suppressing freedom of speech.

McCarthyism globally refers to this period also known as the Witch-hunt, beginning in the 1940s and continuing through the 1950s. McCarthyism can be defined as the use of indiscriminate, often unfounded accusations, inquisitorial investigative methods and sensationalism, ostensibly in the suppression of communism.<sup>15</sup> From 1953 to 1954, Joseph McCarthy, who was a US Senator from Wisconsin, started his witch-hunt, tracking millions of Americans that were submitted to many HUAC (House Un-American Activities Committee) inquests and police investigation, as we will see next.

### **1.2.2. People Concerned by the Hunt**

McCarthy's first targets were politicians but also artists from the entertainment industry, writers, actors, film directors, and scenarists like Charlie Chaplin, Jules Dassin, Dalton Trumbo, Lena Horne... Some of these people lost their jobs or saw their career being shattered, some of them were even imprisoned.

The House Un-American Activities Committee was created at the end of the 1930s in order to identify those who could be Un-Americans – therefore, at that time, Fascists or Communists. This Committee conducted many hearings during the Red Scare, the most famous were those of the Hollywood Ten – several actors, actresses and movie directors – who were accused of being communists and later were blacklisted by the industry. Yet, the Red Scare went beyond the Hollywood Ten or the House of Un-American Activities Committee. The Red Scare took place in many different fields, as mentioned earlier, in education for instance, but also in business, religion, and labor. In “McCarthyism was more than McCarthy : Documenting the Red Scare at The State and Local Level”, Don Carleton defines the Red Scare as a tool for members of the community to use against unwelcomed developments threatening their conception of the perfect community. These unwelcomed developments included “the growth of

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<sup>15</sup> Carleton, Don E., *The Midwestern Archivist*, “McCarthyism was more than McCarthy : Documenting the Red Scare at The State and Local Level”, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 13-19, 1987.

labor unions, the rise of racial and ethnic consciousness, and the penetration of local schools and churches by non-traditional ways of looking at the human condition.”<sup>16</sup>

Just as with the supposed witches of Salem, those suspected of being Communists were encouraged to confess and name other Communists in order to escape jail or other punishments. This chase resulted in a whirlwind of accusations and, since many innocent people were accusing others to save themselves, it perpetuated madness and created the image that the United States was overwhelmed with Communists.

To add some words on the changes in the educational field, the teachers must be evoked. During the Red Scare they were working in a climate of fear and had to be extra careful expressing their opinion, especially on controversial subjects, and watch out what they taught. They could risk imprisonment if they did not discard discussions and courses related to the Soviet Union. This situation can be put in parallel with a recent event that occurred in France in October 2020, when a French History-Geography teacher, Samuel Paty, was assassinated. Indeed, during a class on freedom of speech he had shown his students cartoons of the 2012 *Charlie Hebdo* cover depicting the Islamic Prophet Muhammad in a manner that Muslims students found offending. In the furrow of this crime, many teachers started to be scared and were very attentive regarding the contents of their classes: this recent assassination is proof that there is still a lot of work to do concerning freedom of speech that, as we can say, has regressed over the years. During the Red Scare in the 1950s, teachers had to self-censor themselves just as teachers after the assassination of Samuel Paty did, which in 2021 can seem unbelievable. social media participated to spread the craze that led to the murder of the French teacher (the content of his class was revealed first on social media and led to the implication of outsiders to the school). On one hand, social media encouraged the freedom to react to what was perceived as offensive, but on the other hand, they also created terrible situations, such as the Samuel Paty crime.

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<sup>16</sup> Carleton, Don E., *The Midwestern Archivist*, “McCarthyism was more than McCarthy : Documenting the Red Scare at The State and Local Level”, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 13-19, 1987.

### **1.3. The #MeToo Movement**

The #MeToo Movement is a movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault of women.

#### **1.3.1. The Advent of this Movement**

The Movement was founded in 2007 by Tarana Burke, an African American Civil Rights Activist who wanted to create unity around women of color dealing with sexual harassment.<sup>17</sup> However, it was really exposed in 2017 with the Weinstein case following the intervention of actress Alyssa Milano who started relaying the #MeToo on Twitter.

The Weinstein case is a case of sexual abuse accusing film producer Harvey Weinstein of using his influential position to commit several criminal sexual acts (rape, sexual harassment) on at least 80 women. He usually gave appointments to fame-aspiring actresses in his hotel room, making them believe that he would make them famous and give them this or that role, but really what happened behind the curtains were sexual abuses. He used to ask his victims to massage him while he was naked, they had to perform his sexual requests while being under his control and perform sexual favors in exchange for a promise of a role or career boost. From October 2017 to May 2020 around 70 women pressed charges on him and denounced his sexual abuses, among whom many famous actresses such as Uma Thurman, Angelina Jolie, and Salma Hayek.

The movement gained momentum on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 when *The New York Times* published a story detailing decades of allegations of sexual harassment against Harvey Weinstein. During all those years, Weinstein had never pleaded guilty and on the contrary always said that either women were consenting, or even that some were in love with him. On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 he was sentenced to 23 years in prison for rape and

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<sup>17</sup> Camus, Caroline, *Dissecting the #MeToo Movement : A Powerful Call to Action or a Futil Fuss ?* Volume 4, No. 1, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.

sexual assault. We are now in 2021 and this scandal is still topical since April 2021, since his lawyers launched an appeal arguing that the judges made technical errors that denied his right to a fair trial (BBC News). Over the last four years, a lot of people from the film industry including actors have given their support to the victims and used their voice to highlight the scandal. In October 2017, actor Tom Hanks told the BBC: “His last name will become an identifying moniker for a state of being for which there was a before and an after.”<sup>18</sup> Hanks implies that there is no way back for Weinstein, which is a major breakthrough since this scandal has given the victims a chance to speak out and expose what they went through, opening doors for many women, outside of the celebrities circle, who have been and still are victims of sexual abuse.

The movement is characterized by a “#” as befits social media, since 2017 social media have indeed been relaying stories of harassed women in order to show to other victims, especially the weakest ones, that they are not alone. The main aims of this movement being to empower women and give them a voice, it puts the light on women and help them open up about their traumas and eventually press charge against their abuser and finally have justice.

### **1.3.2. The #MeToo Movement: The Instigator of a Battle for Women’s Rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Many celebrities have started relaying this hashtag, actress Alyssa Milano being the first. She posted on Twitter that “If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote ‘#Me too’ as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem.” Many posts and responses from American celebrities such as Gwyneth Paltrow, Ashley Judd, Jennifer Lawrence and Uma Thurman followed, all testifying about their own experience.

#MeToo is the starting point of a modern battle for women, which was initiated on social media but actually ended up impacting a whole legislation on the rights of

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<sup>18</sup> BBC News, *Harvey Weinstein Timeline: How the Scandal Unfolded*, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-41594672> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

those sexually abused. In 2018, many US states started to place limits on nondisclosure agreements that were enacted by abusers to silence victims over long periods of time, exchanging victim's cooperation for financial settlements or job offers.<sup>19</sup> In the case of Weinstein, his collaborators (who knew about the abuses) offered great amounts of money to the victims in order to keep them quiet, which reveals major problems within the movie industry that has silenced women. Instead of putting light on them and their testimonies.

The movement has had a great impact in America, but also beyond the USA. In France, the movements #BalanceTonPorc, which led to the accusations of famous movie director Roman Polanski or even politicians such as Jean Lassalle; in Spain #YoTambién (translated literally by "MeToo") and in Italy #QuellaVoltaChe (translated by "the time when") also have relayed this battle. Concerning the French movement, psychotherapist Nathalie Rapoport-Hubschman wrote in her book that the campaigns of #MeToo and #BalanceTonPorc have unquestionably highlighted what one did not want to see and allowed a necessary collective realization.<sup>20</sup> She summed up the aim of the different movements around the world and highlighted the need to let women speak for themselves and fight for their battle with the understanding of everyone, without judgments, misogyny, or male power interfering.

With #MeToo or any other feminist action, hyper masculinity has likewise reached a climax. What comes out from the rise of hyper masculinity is the creation of alliances such as the Anti-Gender Equality Alliance at the United Nations, a conservative delegation, and also the Transnational Patriarchal Campaigns by Evangelical Protestant Christians whose goal is to limit women's reproductive rights and to stigmatize gay, lesbian and transgender people.<sup>21</sup> Hyper masculinity often comes from conservative people who refuse the modernization of society and, by extension, gender equality.

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<sup>19</sup> Camus, Caroline, *Dissecting the #MeToo Movement : A Powerful Call to Action or a Futil Fuss ?* Volume 4, No. 1, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.

<sup>20</sup> Rapoport-Hubschman, Nathalie, *Les Barrières Invisibles dans la Vie d'une Femme*, Albin Michel, Paris, 2018.

<sup>21</sup> Enloe, Cynthia, *Journal of International Affairs*, "Hypermasculinity and #MeToo", Vol. 72, No. 2, Dynamics of Global Feminism (Spring/Summer 2019), pp. 119-124.



With this movement, different points of view have emerged, which all define different “witches”. The present discussion is about how women are still considered and treated as witches and so much more so if they denounce violence and harassment. This argument here examines the fact that women are systematically stigmatized, accused of lying or overdoing it, and claiming attention, if not money.

The #MeToo movement is a battle for women’s right in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, since by giving a voice to silenced women it has also triggered an accrued criticism on the part of men, and even of some women, causing increased “toxic masculinity,” an intense form of virile behavior. It shows that the battle is only starting and that there is still a lot of work to accomplish in order to deconstruct what society has instilled throughout the centuries.

## **2. The Position of Women in Society**

Throughout the centuries, women have seen their conditions change, yet, their social positions have often been decided upon by their husbands and/or by male politicians and law makers.

### **2.1. Women's Social Status**

Therefore, if women's social status has evolved, it is almost entirely thanks to women's movements that have precipitated legislations more favorable to women. Let us have a quick historical overview here.

#### **2.1.1. During the Colonial Period**

Women's living conditions during the Colonial Period have been the cause of such events as the Salem Witchcraft Trials. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in the colonies, women did not have many rights and this lack of rights have caused unfair trials and accusations. Evidence from various judgments and writings of the time has shown a gender bias, since records were kept by men and the legal proceedings led again by men.<sup>22</sup> At the time, women could not be a part of trials as leaders: therefore, their condition was always determined by the goodwill of men.

During the Colonial period, men imposed numerous constraints upon women and, in the end, what was left for them to do was gossiping, which allowed them to have a certain degree of control over their lives and the lives of others. The benefits they drew from this gossiping was that it allowed them to keep track of what was going on in the neighborhood, in terms for instance of who was buying which house, or how well the town was doing economically – everything that was actually hidden from them by their husbands, or men in general.

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<sup>22</sup> Hartman, Holly, *Gender Roles in Colonial America*, (n.d.), Western Oregon University. <https://wou.edu/history/senior-capstone/> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

There are not many records written by colonial women since men were in charge of the writings, therefore, only men's point of view was highlighted. Women's role was not public, but rather private: they were recognized as housewives and mothers. The community expected them to be accountable for the expansion of the colony by having children and raising them so that they could reach adulthood and be useful for the community.

The example of the town of Salem is a good one because the town evolved a lot during the colonial era. The settlement started as a small farming colony where women were quite involved, and their help in agriculture was much needed to make the colony viable and ultimately an important mercantile hub. At that point, women started to be less involved in the community since the economy expanded and their contribution to the town's economy was not seen as crucial anymore; men decided then that women were no longer required to help them in the agricultural field. The rare women who continued working were under the control and supervision of men. Women could still work in the fields and take care of animals, but their labor was not recognized in the community: only their nursing and midwifery was truly appreciated. The women that were enslaved quite logically did not have any rights and were working in the household with the wives who managed them.<sup>23</sup>

Concerning their marital relationship, in the early years of the colony, women used to fight back if their husband was abusive, however, as the colony grew, they slowly became more passive and did not fight back anymore. Women felt weaker and more scared of their husband, thus they decided to remain quiet rather than lose more rights. As soon as women married, they lost all their properties and could not vote and basically their whole life was managed by their husbands.

"They were not mentioned in the Declaration of Independence, they were absent in the Constitution and they were invisible in the new political democracy. They

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<sup>23</sup> *National Geographic*, "Women and Children in Colonial America", April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020.  
<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/women-and-children-colonial-america/> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

were the women of early America.”<sup>24</sup> This quote by Howard Zinn in *A People’s History of the United States* (1980) confirms women’s position during the Colonial Period and later. Passed the colonial Period, women were still held in inferior positions to men.

### **2.1.2. Evolution Through the Centuries**

Women’s living conditions have obviously evolved from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but while women saw their rights expand, new discriminations appeared. Let us take the example of women’s suffrage: in 1920, all women of any state of the country were officially allowed to vote. However, it is only in 1965, with the Voting Rights Act,<sup>25</sup> that African American, Asian American, Hispanic American and American Indian heritage women were allowed to vote. As in practice, the law of 1920 did not “guarantee” women of color, especially with the literacy tests, their voting rights. This is one of the many instances of discrimination against this particular group.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was therefore room for an evolution of women’s rights, especially as will be granted by the Supreme Court. To start with The Reproductive Rights, as defined by the World Health Organization:

*“They rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. They also include the right of all to make decisions concerning reproduction, free of discrimination, coercion and violence.”*<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Zinn, Howard, *A People’s History of the United States*, Harper Perennial Modern Classic, Harper Collins, New-York, 1980.

<sup>25</sup> “Voting Rights Act of 1965.”, *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, CC BY CA.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting\\_Rights\\_Act\\_of\\_1965](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting_Rights_Act_of_1965) (last accessed 05/24/2021)

<sup>26</sup> “Reproductive Rights”, *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*,  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reproductive\\_rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reproductive_rights) (last accessed 05/24/2021).  
Definition by the World Health Organization.

In 1965, a state ban on the sale of contraception became unconstitutional for married couples; in 1972, for unmarried people; and in 1973, the abortion ban became unconstitutional.<sup>27</sup>

Apart from these improvements and the fact that the United States is a Western world democracy, there are still many taboos regarding (and strangely despite) women's liberation and their sexual revolution. In 2006, only 20 states required sex education classes in schools and among them, only ten gave information on contraception. There are two different types of sex education classes that are offered in schools: comprehensive sex education and abstinence-only sex education. The first one still promotes sexual abstinence but also teaches young people about age of consent, safe sex, contraception (condoms and pills) and abortion. The second type of class exclusively promotes sexual abstinence before marriage as the only way to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), with a focus on family values. These two types of classes have their advantages and disadvantages; nonetheless abstinence-only classes have *not* shown any decrease of unwanted pregnancies or infections by STIs. This type of class is highly controversial because considered religiously-motivated by opponents of the method. On their end, proponents of abstinence-only classes claim that comprehensive sex-education encourages pre-marital sexual activities.<sup>28</sup> All in all, these arguments against one method or another only create a wider gap between conservative and progressive people and is clearly not beneficial to the main goal: the sexual education of young Americans.

Another controversy about women's rights in the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the Equal Rights Amendment. The amendment, which was to bring equality between men and women –, a major advance for women – has repeatedly - again in 2021- failed to be ratified by a majority of states. Let us examine the context.

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<sup>27</sup> *A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States*, "Women's Reproductive Rights", Georgetown University Law Library, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

<https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/c.php?g=592919&p=4172361> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

<sup>28</sup> "Sex Education in the United States", *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, CC BY CA.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex\\_education\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_education_in_the_United_States) (last accessed 05/24/2021).

Two women, both leaders of the suffrage movement, first drafted this amendment in 1923, since it was to them the logical consequence of their access to the ballot granted in 1920. The amendment did not make any major progress during the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century since the Congress was composed of a large majority of men. It was adopted by the House of Representatives in 1972. The amendment text sent to the states was the following: “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.”<sup>29</sup> The passing of this article was helped by the 1960s second-wave feminist activism and many states quickly ratified it but in 1979, only 30 of the 38 required states had ratified it. The ratification deadline was extended to 1982 however, no additional state ratified the amendment, because of the country’s Republican, Puritan backlash under the Reagan Administration.<sup>30</sup> Thirty-two years after the end of the deadline, many improvements have been made that in the lives of American women make things more equal, however, despite those improvements, gender discriminations, disparities in wages, sexual harassment and violence, and unequal representation in American institutions do persist. The law still has a long way to go to achieve gender equality.

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<sup>29</sup> Cohen, Alex and Codrington III, Willfred U, *Brennan Center for Justice*, “The Equal Rights Amendment Explained”, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/equal-rights-amendment-explained> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

<sup>30</sup> *A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States*, “The Equal Rights Amendment”, Georgetown University Law Library, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

<https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/c.php?g=592919&p=4172365> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

## **2.2. Feminism**

Feminism is a movement that cannot be set aside from the present discussion. According to *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, feminism is the belief in and advocacy of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes expressed especially through organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests.<sup>31</sup> To support this movement, important figures stood out, among whom Betty Friedan.

### **2.2.1. "Trailblazing" Women**

Before analyzing the actions of some particularly active women, we will examine the waves of feminism in the United States.

Four waves of feminism are usually pointed out. The first wave started at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, resulting from an environment of urban industrialism, and liberal, nay socialist politics. The main goal at the time was to open new doors for women, starting by the universal suffrage.

The second wave took place in the 1960's and continued until the mid-1990's. It started in a climate of anti-war and civil-rights protests. The main issues of this wave were Reproductive Rights and sexuality and this is when the Equal Rights Amendment was brought before the Congress. This wave was based on a fusion of neo-Marxism and psycho-analytical theory and began to associate the subjugation of women with huger critiques of patriarchy, capitalism, heteronormativity, and women's traditional role as wives and mothers. Sex and gender were differentiated – the former being biological and the later a social construct that varies culture-to-culture and over time.<sup>32</sup>

The third wave started in the mid-1990s. Notions of universal womanhood – body, gender, sexuality and heteronormativity – were deconstructed. However, this wave took for granted that gender equality had been reached, based on the major

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<sup>31</sup> *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, (n.d.), Feminism, in *Merriam Webster Dictionary* website. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/feminism> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

<sup>32</sup> Rampton, Martha, *Four Waves of Feminism*, Pacific University Oregon, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015. <https://www.pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

progresses of the second wave (birth control, women leadership into the country's institutions, etc), which somehow resulted in weakening the feminist movement. The fourth wave is presently on, going back to the battles of the second wave, but basing itself on intersectional conceptions of structural oppressive mechanisms.

To fight for their rights, women have needed activists and equal rights advocates. In 1963, famous American feminist and essayist Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*<sup>33</sup>, a feminist essay that became the starting point of that second wave. Friedan's discourse denounced the cultural pressure upon women whose destiny was to be happy housewives. Throughout her essay, Betty Friedan, who was in tune with Simone de Beauvoir, conveyed different messages, such as the benefits of the contraception. She also defined chosen motherhood as a real liberation and she mentions women's choice, one free of guilt, to control their own bodies. It was reassuring for women at the time because contraception was taboo. Having someone telling them that it was ok to choose was a major relief. Friedan also questioned the social position of women. She was particularly flabbergasted that US society only realized something was wrong with women when it impacted those women's sons. Indeed, numerous women went to see psychologists about their unhappy marriage or life. Those troubles had not been taken under consideration until they started having an impact on their sons (unhappy wives make unhappy mothers). That they could have an impact on their daughters did not matter, which again proved that gender-based discriminations were quite the norm.

Other feminist figures have made their voices heard closer to us, and unlike what we may assume they are not always scholars. These new figures are often actresses and singers. An American singer Taylor Swift, for instance, uses her songs as a way to convey feminist messages. In a song entitled "The Man"<sup>34</sup> she imagines herself as a man and lists all the things she could do without being judged, like not being criticized because of

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<sup>33</sup> Friedan, Betty, *The Feminine Mystique*, Penguin Modern Classic, Penguin Group, London, 1963.

<sup>34</sup> TaylorSwiftVEVO, director. *Taylor Swift – The Man (Official Video)*. YouTube, YouTube, 27 Feb. 2020, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqAJLh9wuZ0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqAJLh9wuZ0) (last accessed 05/24/2021).



her so-called long list of ex-boyfriends; she imagines what the media and people would say about it if she was a man, “They’d say I played the field before I found someone to commit to.” By using the expression “to play the field,” she emphasizes her message since men often use this type of expression when chasing women. Later, in the chorus she denounces what she experiences as a woman and claims that if she were a man, she would be THE man “I’m so sick of running as fast as I can, wondering if I’d get there quicker if I was a man, and I’m so sick of them coming at me again, ‘cause if I was a man, then I’d be the man.” This type of song is comforting for women and young girls since it unveils what women have to go through during their life and shows them that they are not alone in this situation. It can also show men and young boys what it is to be a woman in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **2.2.2. Long-Lasting Beliefs**

I would now like to turn back to this association of women to witches. All along history, women have been accused of witchcraft. But why women in particular? Back in Salem during their Witch-hunt of 1692-93, the symptoms of the girls who accused villagers of witchcraft<sup>35</sup>, were symptoms of hysteria (or at least of the definition given by scientists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). According to *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, hysteria is either defined as a “psychoneurosis marked by emotional excitability and disturbances of the psychogenic, sensory, vasomotor and visceral functions”, or as “a behavior exhibiting overwhelming or unmanageable fear or emotional excess”.<sup>36</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for people, only women could be hysterical. Actually, the word *hysteria* comes from the Latin word “hystera” and in Greek “matrice”, meaning “uterus,” that is why scientists and psychotherapists at the time believed it only affected women. This proves that from the beginning women are accused and considered whether as witches or as weak human beings, often victims of such behaviors as hysteria.

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<sup>35</sup> See page 5-6 (1.1.1 The Accusations) on how the girls were pressured to name those who bewitched them.

<sup>36</sup> “Hysteria”, *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

When we first think of a witch, what comes to our minds is the old single spinster living with her cat, in her house in the woods, riding her broom and casting spells on people. Through the centuries, this idea of the witch has prevailed in our minds. However, the women accused of witchcraft were rarely inhabitants of huts in the forest, but mostly working-class women. As Mona Chollet describes it in her book,<sup>37</sup> the women accused of witchcraft were in the hands of entirely masculine institutions: interrogators, priests or pastors, torturers, prison guards, judges, and executioners. All that context was conducive to enhance the victims' distress, not to mention that they were very much left alone: their families were not their best supporters, when they were not *their* accusers. In short, being a woman was sufficient a condition to be accused of witchcraft.

The old beliefs that witches are women are still hard to deconstruct nowadays. In the past witches were imagined as old women, sometimes widows or single, ugly and scary for sure. Throughout the centuries, very beautiful women who have used their charm to get what they wanted likewise used to be called witches. In the end victims were not only old women, but *all* women. Societies are in need of scapegoats, and oftener than not, those scapegoats are often women.

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<sup>37</sup> Chollet, Mona, *Sorcières La Puissance Invaincue des Femmes*, Zones, Paris, 2018.

## **2.3. Intersectionality: Women Still Fighting for Their Rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

According to *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, intersectionality is the “complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.”<sup>38</sup>

As someone who never had to endure racism or homophobia, I might not be the best person to speak about it but as it is an important subject, I wanted to be committed to non-racist representation and be an ally here to those suffering from racism or homophobia.

### **2.3.1. Women and Racism**

The most common form of intersectionality is a woman victim of racism. In Salem during the Witch-hunt of 1692-93, the first woman accused of witchcraft was Tituba, the Barbadian Slave of the town’s minister, Reverend Samuel Parris. Her ethnic difference is also the reason why she was accused. However, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, at the time of Salem, slaves had more rights than after the Revolution of 1765-1783. For instance, they could gain their freedom after a long process, obviously, and own lands. It is only at the beginning of the 18th century that slavery, in which enslavement was lifelong, hereditary and solely based on racial categories, was established in the colonies.<sup>39</sup>

From that moment on, the battle started, especially for African Americans who had to go through slavery, abuse and segregation. In the end, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, racism

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<sup>38</sup> “Intersectionality”, *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

<sup>39</sup> *We and They in Colonial America*. (n. d.). Facing History and Ourselves. <https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-2/we-and-they-colonial-america> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

has sprawled beyond skin color since gender and sexual orientation are also to be taken into account.

Audre Lorde (1934-1992), an important figure of African-American Feminism, has fought for her ideas and her rights all her life. She was an American writer and civil rights activist and described herself as a “black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet”. During her life, she addressed injustices of racism, sexism, classism, capitalism, heterosexism and homophobia.<sup>40</sup> She thought that even if differences in gender are often pointed out, other differences must not be forgotten. They must be addressed and not judged.

In her book *Zami; Sister Outside; Undersong*, and as a black lesbian, Lorde defines survival as “learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish.”<sup>41</sup> Here she addresses the struggle of being heard and making a place in a society that does not fully accept and recognize who you are. She also mentions the fact that in Western societies, people expect women of color to educate white women about racism, which should not even be something that she has to address. White women need to educate *themselves* on these types of topics and it is not the role of women of color to educate them. She continues her argumentation and regrets that:

*“it is the responsibility of the oppressed to teach the oppressors their mistakes. I am responsible for educating teachers who dismiss my children's culture in school. Black and Third World people are expected to educate white people as to our humanity. Women are expected to educate men. Lesbians and gay men are expected to educate the heterosexual world. The oppressors maintain their position and evade responsibility for their own actions.”*

This really puts the light on the main problem of our society: whoever the oppressors are, they usually do not take accountability for their actions. Finally, what I found interesting in Lorde’s book *Zami ; Sister Outside ; Undersong* is the fact that she also raises awareness within her own community:

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<sup>40</sup> Wikipedia, *The Free Encyclopedia*, “Audre Lorde” CC BY CA.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audre\\_Lorde](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audre_Lorde) (last accessed 05/24/2021).

<sup>41</sup> Lorde, Audre, *Zami ; Sister Outsider ; Undersong*, Quality Paperback Book Club, New York, 1993.

*“Because of the continuous battle against racial erasure that Black women and Black men share, some Black women still refuse to recognize that we are also oppressed as women, and that sexual hostility against Black women is practiced not only by the white racist society, but implemented within our Black communities as well.”*<sup>42</sup>

Racism is still very present in the United States but a window of optimism has opened since the election of Kamala Harris as Vice President of the USA. Not only is she the first female Vice President, but she also has Jamaican and Indian origins, which makes her the first Black woman and person of Indian descendant to be in this position. We can therefore hope to see an evolution in this battle for women’s social recognition.

### **2.3.2. Discrimination Over Women’s Sexual Orientation**

As we saw in the previous part “Women and Racism”, discrimination over women’s sexual orientation is also an important issue. Women who are homosexual are often considered as witches by some religions or family-oriented people in general. Especially in religion, homosexuals are considered unnatural and as allies of the devil: witches. In some families, parents do not hesitate to send their child to conversion therapies where they are being forced to change their sexual orientation by praying repeatedly, for instance and by making other “religious efforts.” As the article *The Lies and Danger of Efforts to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity*<sup>43</sup> explains, “So-called “conversion therapy,” sometimes known as “reparative therapy,” is a range of dangerous and discredited practices that falsely claim to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.”

These practices have been promoted by right-wing religious groups, they promote the concept that: "an individual can change their sexual orientation or gender

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<sup>42</sup> Lorde, Audre, *Zami ; Sister Outsider ; Undersong*, Quality Paperback Book Club, New York, 1993.

<sup>43</sup> *Human Rights Campaign*, “The Lies and Danger of Efforts to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity”, (n.d.), (last accessed 05/24/2021). <https://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy>

identity, either through prayer or other religious efforts, or through so-called "reparative" or "conversion" therapy." These practices are banned in many countries such as Germany and Brazil, they are also banned, in many states of the United States for instance: California, Nevada, Oregon and many more. The reason for this banishment is the fact that it has been obviously shown that these therapies were non effective and harmful for the persons who were sent there. These therapies can lead the victims of such practices to depression, anxiety, drug use, homelessness and suicide.

I have found a quote written by Audre Lorde in *Zami ; Sister Outside ; Undersong* which describes one of the main problems of Western societies. Differences other than in gender must be highlighted and addressed:

*"It is not our differences which separate women, but our reluctance to recognize those differences and to deal effectively with the distortions which have resulted from the ignoring and misnaming of those differences. As a tool of social control, women have been encouraged to recognize only one area of human difference as legitimate, those differences which exist between women and men."*

Before focusing solely on women, I would like to mention an event that took place in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States, known as the Lavender Scare . During the Red Scare of 1947-54, Homosexual people were being dismissed of their jobs especially among the government – just like Communists had been. In other words, the way there was a Communist hunt, there was a homosexual hunt. Homosexuals<sup>44</sup> were said to be Communists sympathizers because of the rumors saying that Homosexual persons were inclined to being manipulated. Former United States Senator Alan K. Simpson has written "The so-called "Red Scare" has been the main focus of most historians of that period of time. A lesser-known element ... and one that harmed far more people was the witch-hunt McCarthy and others conducted against homosexuals."<sup>45</sup> The expression "Lavender Scare" comes from the term "Lavender Lads"

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<sup>44</sup> Here, I am using the term homosexual and not LGBTQ+ to be coherent with the terms used in the 1950's.

<sup>45</sup> *Wikipedia*, The Free Encyclopedia, "The Lavender Scare" CC BY CA.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavender\\_scare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavender_scare) (last accessed 05/24/2021).

used repeatedly by Senator Everett Dirksen to qualify Homosexual males in the 1950s, a color today retuned as “pink,” when applying to the LGBTQ+ community.

Homosexuals and Communists were seen as subversive persons because of the way they were characterized. It was believed that both Homosexuals and Communists were a “threat to the American way of life” (as Joseph McCarty qualified them) because of their lifestyle, they would have different cultural codes and their own – secret – place where to meet. Also, it was believed that they were recruiting psychologically weak or disturbed people. The word “recruiting” is interesting because it gives an odd impression, as if Homosexuals and Communists were part of a sect, which can be put in parallel with the way witches gatherings are often considered as sects meeting, which they are not.

Let us return to women’s discrimination. In an article from the website *Woman of Color Network*<sup>46</sup> depicting violence endured by members of the LGBTQ+ community, it is mentioned that:

*“Transgender people were 3.32 times as likely to experience police violence compared to non -transgender people. Transgender people of color were 2.46 times as likely to experience physical violence by the police compared to white non-transgender people. Transgender women were 2.90 times as likely to experience police violence compared to overall people reporting violence.”*

This explains why transgender people are more reluctant to make a complaint against an oppressor, as they are scared to endure violence once in prison or by the police.

In this article it is also said that concerning domestic violence among LGBTQ+ couples, couples of color are more reluctant to go to the police because they are scared that their partner can be treated more harshly by the institution because of their sexual orientation and skin color even if the person is indeed guilty of violence.

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<sup>46</sup> *Woman of Color Network* website. <https://wocninc.org/publications/> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

I would like to conclude on this part with a quote from Audre Lorde “I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own. And I am not free as long as one person of Color remains chained. Nor is any one of you.”<sup>47</sup> In other words, with this quote, Audre Lorde invites women to gather together and create unity. Women must stand out for themselves and their rights, they must be united towards their cause and battle

### **3. Evolution in the Representation of Witches**

Witches can be represented in a variety of manners, and media, whether onscreen as in mainstream and social media, or in arts. Their representation likewise fluctuates depending on the periods. This is what we aim at examining in this new chapter..

#### **3.1. Their Representation Onscreen**

Witches are often represented in TV series or movies. Their representation differs depending on the context and the atmosphere of the story told.

##### **3.1.1. Witches in TV Series**

Many TV series portray witches, the most famous one being *Bewitched*.<sup>48</sup> The series tells the story of Samantha, a witch who marries a mortal man, Darrin. It started to be broadcast in 1964, a time when women were still seen as perfect housewives, and we can feel that especially in the first episode where Samantha reveals to her newly husband that she is a witch. To appease Darrin’s prejudgment, she promises that she

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<sup>47</sup> Lorde, Audre, *Zami ; Sister Outsider ; Undersong*, Quality Paperback Book Club, New York, 1993.

<sup>48</sup> Saks S., Ackerman H. [Executive Producers] (1964-1972). *Bewitched* [TV series]. Ashmont Productions, Screen Gems Television. ABC.



will be the wife of his dream; when he decides not to leave her because of her powers, she says “I will be the most loving wife that has never existed,” to which he replies, “You’ll have to do the cooking and cleaning and my mother will come dinner every Friday night.” This shows the priorities of the time: having a loving wife who can take care of the house. Samantha’s powers are even seen as faults as to highlight the abnormality of the situation: Darrin says to the camera “My wife is a witch then what? A husband must pass over his wife little flaws”.<sup>49</sup> At the end of the first episode, Samantha has to clean the kitchen, and she uses her power for that. So even if the show is full of 1960s preconceptions about women, magic still overcomes. In a way, it gives more power to Samantha because she is not like the other housewives who need a lot of time to fully clean their homes, for instance.

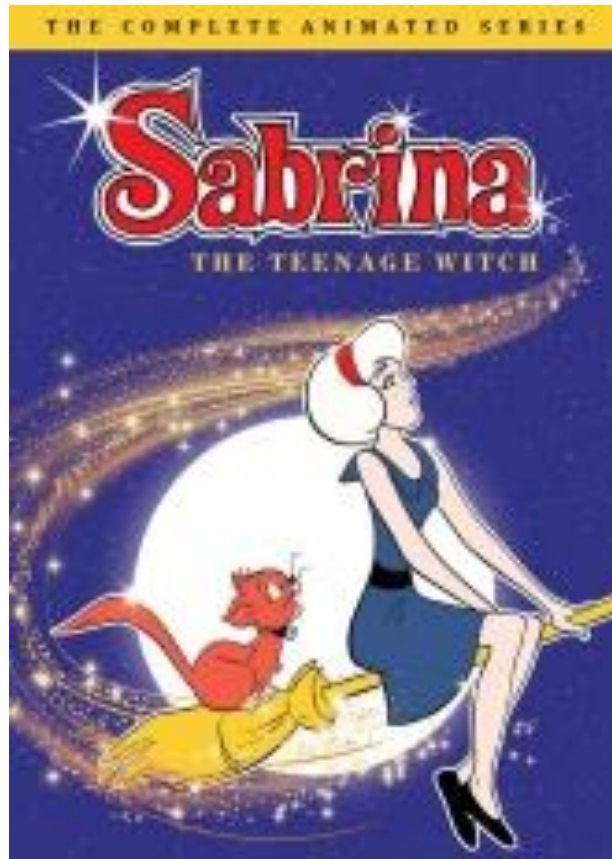
The series fully reflects women’s rights in the 1960s because of the chores mentioned in the series: cleaning the house, cooking and the way those chores are always associated with a woman’s tasks, here with Samantha. Also, what Darrin wants from Samantha – to be the perfect housewife – is a representation of the time period of the series. In the 1960s, women were expected to be nice and perfect housewives. They had to cook for the family or for important dinners (such as with the husband’s boss or clients), clean the house, take care of the children and many more tasks. The husband would come home from work and everything would be prepared, he would only have to relax. Yet, by putting a woman as the central figure of the series, and not her husband, the TV show was also reflecting upon the new, yet nascent role that women were taking on for themselves.

Another famous Witch TV Series is *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*. It has been adapted four times, all the adaptations being based on the *Archie Comics Sabrina The Teenage Witch*. The first two adaptations are animated series and the two others are TV

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<sup>49</sup> Saks, S., (09/17/1964) *I, Darrin, Take this Witch, Samantha* [TV Series]. ABC. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4y5xi5> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

Series.<sup>50</sup> The present analysis will focus on the two TV series *Sabrina The Teenage Witch*<sup>51</sup> and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*.<sup>52</sup>



Promotional poster for the animated series *The “Sabrina The Teenage Witch” Show*.<sup>53</sup>

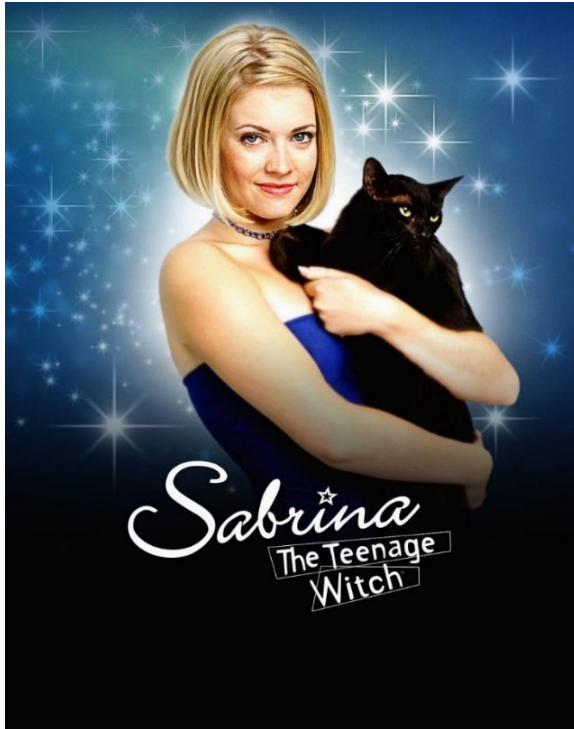
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<sup>50</sup> See the photos in this page (34) and under (pages 35 and 36).

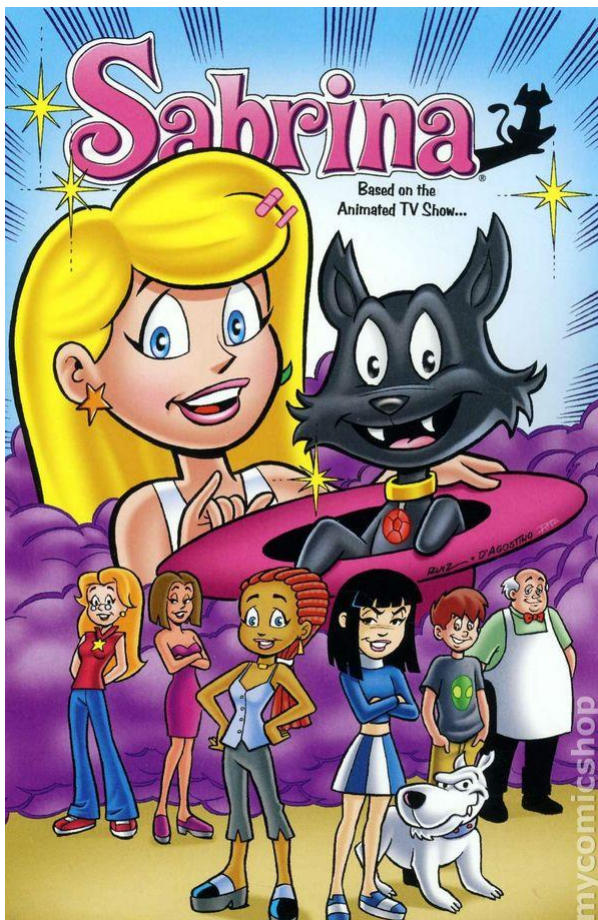
<sup>51</sup> Hart, P. [Executive Producer] (1996-2003). *Sabrina The Teenage Witch* [TV Series]. Archie Comics, Hartbreak Films, Viacom Production. CBS Television Distribution.

<sup>52</sup> Krieger L.T., Goldwater J., Schechter S., Aguirre-Sacasa R., Berlanti G. [Executive Producers] (2018-2020). *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* [TV Series]. Archie Comics, Warner Bros Television, Berlanti Production. Netflix Streaming Services, Warner Bros. Television Distribution.

<sup>53</sup> *The “Sabrina The Teenage Witch” Show*. Filmation, CBS, 1970.



Promotional poster for the TV show *Sabrina The Teenage Witch*.<sup>54</sup>



Promotional poster for the TV show *Sabrina The Teenage Witch: the Animated Series*.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Sabrina The Teenage Witch*, CBS Television Distribution, 1996.

<sup>55</sup> *Sabrina The Teenage Witch: the animated series*, Buena Vista Television, 1999.



Promotional poster for the TV show *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, Part 3.<sup>56</sup>

In short, Sabrina Spellman is a witch living with her aunts in the fictional town of Greendale. She has mortal friends who do not know about her powers, but eventually three of her closest friends find out. In each episode, Sabrina uses her powers to help her friends or to save the witch world but it often goes wrong and her aunts have to fix her mistakes. The two series oppose in many ways, including their tone. In *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, the tone is darker. There are rituals such as when on her sixteenth birthday Sabrina has to choose to stay in the mortal world or in the witch world. Also, there is a dark lord (aka. The Devil) and a real witch Coven<sup>57</sup> (an assembly of at least thirteen witches). We do not find this in *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, which is

<sup>56</sup> *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, Part 3, Netflix, 2020.

<sup>57</sup> Merriam Webster Dictionary, (n.d.) Coven, Merriam Webster Dictionary website. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/coven> (last accessed 05/24/2021).

a sitcom, thus with a lighter tone; instead of having Sabrina fighting the Dark Lord, she is using magic to help herself with her school projects for instance.

An entirely different representation of witches is shown in those two series. In *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* we can still feel the atmosphere of the 1990s where women were put in the light but still as nice girls, in this case using magic in a reasonable way. Indeed, in the 1990s women were not seen as perfect housewives anymore, however, they were still expected to behave in a “proper” way and they could not be represented as being too empowered or free. In *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, we can feel her power and the place she has in the series: it is centered on her, and her concerns are more serious than just school projects; what is more, she has a position of life savior because, during almost all episodes of the four seasons, she has to save both the mortal and the witch worlds. Sabrina’s position as a witch in *Chilling Adventures Of Sabrina* is similar to the witches of the TV Series *American Horror Story (Coven*<sup>58</sup> and *Apocalypse*<sup>59</sup>) who fight important battles as in *Apocalypse*, for instance, where they save the remaining witches of their coven after a world apocalypse. In the two seasons of this TV series, women are represented as more powerful than male wizards: their coven counts only women, which creates a sense of unity. In *American Horror Story: Coven*, there are different types of witchcraft exposed, including voodoo. Voodoo is presented through the character of Marie Laveau, a famous voodooist Creole origins who lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in New Orleans. In the series *Coven*, the witches and the manbo voodoo (name of the persons practicing voodoo in Haiti) have to unite to fight black magic forces, which creates a link between two different types of magic, yet, women remain in charge of everything.

The representation of witches in *Bewitched* and *American Horror Story* are different because directed at different periods, yet they are also somewhat similar like when Samantha’s powers are usually used to save and defend herself, just like in more modern series such as *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* and *American Horror Story*. Yet, In *Bewitched*, Samantha, as well as being a witch, carries the 1960s image of a housewife

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<sup>58</sup> Di Loreto D., Falchuk B., Murphy R., Buecker B., Salt J., Wong J. [Executive Producers] (2013-2014) *American Horror Story: Coven* (Season 3) [TV Series], 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox. FX.

<sup>59</sup> Di Loreto D., Falchuk B., Murphy R., Buecker B., Salt J., Wong J. [Executive Producers] (2018) *American Horror Story: Apocalypse* (Season 8) [TV Series], 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox. FX.



taking care of the house, which is not part of the storyline at all in *American Horror Story* where women are portrayed as very independent individuals who do never rely on men. Also, in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, topics such as homosexuality and gender transitioning are mentioned which represents the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the important subjects of this time. If the “witch” is dressed as a normal teenager in the *Sabrina* series in *Bewitched* and *American Horror Story* the witches are all very stereotypical, wearing black clothes and in *Bewitched* Samantha is even wearing a pointed hat.<sup>60</sup>



Outtakes from the TV Show *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, Part 3.

Here we can see that Sabrina is dressed as a teenager would dress in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



Scene from the opening title of the TV Show *Bewitched*.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> See photos above: page 38. And pages 39-40.

<sup>61</sup> *Bewitched*, ABC, 1964.



Scene from an episode of the TV Show *Bewitched*.

In these two photos we can clearly see that Samantha is represented in a way that witches were usually imagined in the 1960s: beautiful women dressed in black, wearing a pointed hat and riding a broom.



Scene from the TV show *American Horror Story Coven*.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *American Horror Story Coven*, FX, 2013.



Scene from the  
TV show  
*American Horror  
Story  
Apocalypse*.<sup>63</sup>

As illustrated by those examples, the representation of witches in TV series relies mostly on the epoch it was filmed and on the society's moral codes.

### **3.1.2. 21<sup>st</sup> Century "Witches" Opinion on their Onscreen Representation**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some women still determine themselves as "witches", they represent feminist women who practice witchcraft. They naturally have their own opinions about the way their community is represented in TV Series especially in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*. Let us see what their views are.

The trap in which TV series creators can fall into is the exaggerated use of stereotypes and the false information given about witchcraft. Daizy October, a "witch" practicing Hoodoo (a type of spiritual practices, traditions and beliefs created by African slave in North America that were held in secret from slaveholders) highlighted the fact that inconsistencies were present in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*. She points out the fact that witches do not praise Satan, she even says that some practitioners do not have any concept of "the devil" on their spiritual traditions. To her, the way witchcraft is associated with the devil is only nurturing the dreadful narrative surrounding Black

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<sup>63</sup> *American Horror Story Apocalypse*, FX, 2018.



people and Native practitioners who struggled with the appellation “Satanists” and had to endure beating, hangings and other atrocities. She concludes her argumentation by saying, “I want people who watch the show to remember that practicing a non-Christian faith does not include signing your soul over to the devil.”<sup>64</sup>

Another witch, Pam Grossman, focused on other aspects of *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* and she noted positive points such as unity among the witches and their battle against patriarchy. She describes the female characters (Sabrina and her female friends) as women who seek their own way to practice witchcraft without being pressured by men and she concludes with this quote: “that is actually one of the truest reflections of the practice of witchcraft that I’ve seen on television.”<sup>65</sup>

Another witch named Alexis Sivera, who considered herself as a Bruja (a type of witch that traces her roots to Caribbean Folklore), is interviewed to give her opinion about the series. What she highlights is again the presence of Sabrina as a teenager questioning herself about her position in society and the reasons why she would have to give any man (the Devil in the series) power over her body. Alexis Sivera also mentions Sabrina’s club created by her friends in their school: WICCA (Women’s Intersectional Cultural and Creative Association), which shows the way society’s concerns are at the center of the series. The name of the club (WICCA) is a nod to the religion WICCA.<sup>66</sup> She insists on the fact that some scenes are slightly exaggerated especially regarding Satanic rites, which usually witches do not do since there are more focused on their connection to the earth and harnessing positive energy. The show sometimes only represents witches as blood drinkers and Satan worshipers, which can give a false image of witches.<sup>67</sup>

These interviews show that there are as many opinions as there are humans on this earth and the series is not just good or bad, black or white and right or wrong. Some

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<sup>64</sup> Kuruvilla, Carol, “Here’s What Real Witches Think of Netflix’s ‘Sabrina’ Reboot”, *huffpost.com*, <https://bit.ly/3wg7mTx>

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> See Wicca’s definition on page 3 (Introduction).

<sup>67</sup> Shea, Courtney, “A Real Witch Reviews Netflix’s Chilling Adventures of Sabrina”, *refinery29.com*, 2019. <https://www.refinery29.com/en-ca/2018/11/215784/witch-reviews-chilling-adventures-of-sabrina-netflix>

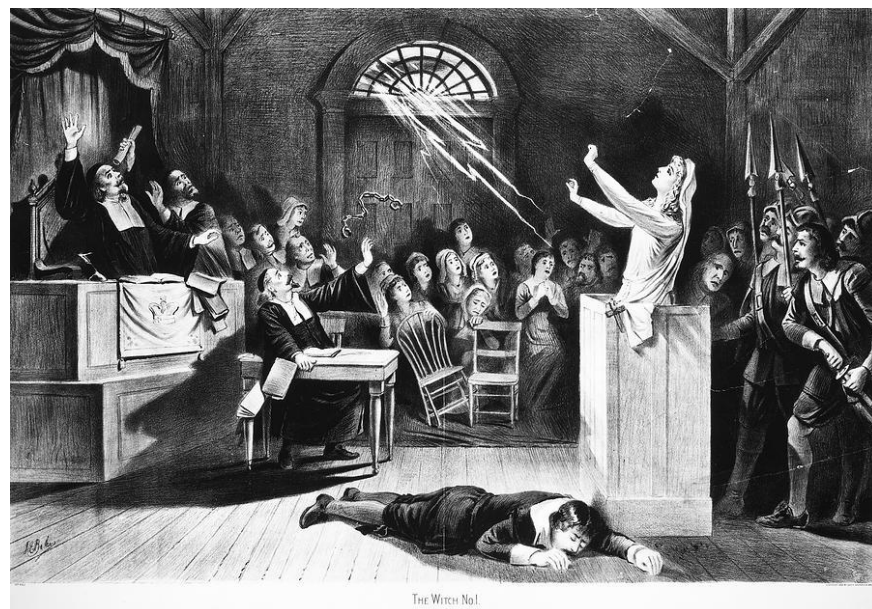
aspects of the representations need to be adjusted: producers have to be careful about their use of strong witches stereotypes. Other elements need to remain as they are: displaying women's empowerment.

### 3.2. Witches' Representation in Fine Arts

Arts play an important role in the representation of witches because it allows the viewer to have a representation of events they could not attend to for instance. Therefore, we are going to analyze some paintings.

#### 3.2.1. Painting the Salem Trials

The Salem Trials have been represented in paintings by many painters. These scenes were painted to show people the Trials proceedings and, thus, to show how witches were.



<sup>68</sup> Joseph E. Baker, *The Witch no. 1*, Lithograph, 1892

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<sup>68</sup> <https://www.onthisday.com/photos/salem-witch-trials>

Joseph E. Baker's lithograph represents a courtroom with a witch on the right side and villagers standing behind her. The judges are on the left side and the public and accusers in the background, as if surrounding, blocking the defendant. What is striking in this lithograph is the way the witch is represented: she is in white contrary to the other people who are dressed in darker tones. She is illuminated by a flash of lightning. The fact that her arms are lifted up to the sky, in addition with the flash, makes us think that she is whether casting a spell or receiving it. People around seem to be frightened and there is a man on the ground who has fainted or possibly dead. The witch is a woman in white, in the light, which is paradoxical since people around her are terrified, usually white and light are not associated with fear. The people around the witch are in dark colors, which have a fearful connotation, therefore, it shows that they are the real threat to her. In fact, they are the hunters and she is the prey.



<sup>69</sup> Tompkins H. Matteson, *Examination of a Witch*, oil on canvas, 1853, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.

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<sup>69</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Examination\\_of\\_a\\_Witch\\_%28painting%29#/media/File:Examination\\_of\\_a\\_Witch\\_-\\_Tompkins\\_Matteson.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Examination_of_a_Witch_%28painting%29#/media/File:Examination_of_a_Witch_-_Tompkins_Matteson.jpg)

Tompkins H. Matteson's painting is also interesting. It represents the examination of a witch during the Trials, with people looking for the Devil's marks on the witch's body. Contrary to the lithograph, the painting is more colorful, however, the dominant color is red, which is associated with blood and death. Therefore, the witch is still highlighted: she is the only white element of the painting, the people around her are all wearing black and red clothes, the witch is naked and her white skin stands out among the public. Even though the scene does not put the witch in a comfortable position, she is still at the center and illuminated which shows her importance. There are two people on the right side who have fainted, presumably because of the scene to which they are attending. The witch is examined as a beast and the old lady holding the witch points out a stain which probably points to the Devil's mark. The woman on the painting is Mary Foster, a British Quaker who arrived in Massachusetts in 1692. She was not welcomed by the Puritans and was considered as a stranger. As soon as she arrived, she was arrested, jailed, and did not even have access to food. Then, the scene of the painting happened: she was stripped and searched for signs of witchcraft.<sup>70</sup> There was a vivid fear of strangers at the time and Mary Foster was a victim of that fear.

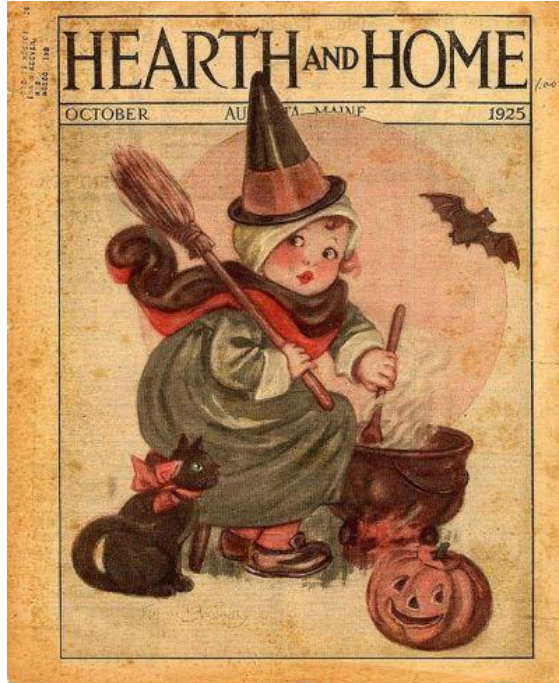
At the time of the Salem Trials up until the arrival of television, painting was one of the only ways to show scenes to people and to help them visualize historical moments. By painting the Trials, people could be familiar with these events and more specifically the witch-hunting mania that developed in colonial New England.

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<sup>70</sup> Ottawa Art Gallery, (n.d.), Description of the painting *Examination of a Witch* by T. H. Matteson (last accessed 05/24/2021). Museum-Catherine-Oag.pdf

### 3.2.2. Witches in Magazines and Comic Books

With the progress of media other than painting, witches would often find themselves on front covers of newspapers or magazines.



<sup>71</sup> *Heart and Home Magazine*, October 1925

This *Hearth and Home* Magazine was issued in October 1925 only in the city of Augusta, Maine. The cover page represents a witch as we often imagine them: with a broomstick, a pointed hat, a black cat and a cauldron. Since this issue was out in October, we can imagine that the author represented a witch for Halloween purposes, especially with the drawing of a carved pumpkin on the bottom right of the picture. In 1925, this was still the way witches were represented – not scary looking. But in the 1920s the only witch people had heard of were those of the fairytales, which explains those stereotypical representations .

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<sup>71</sup> Front page cover of magazine *Heart and Home*, October 1925



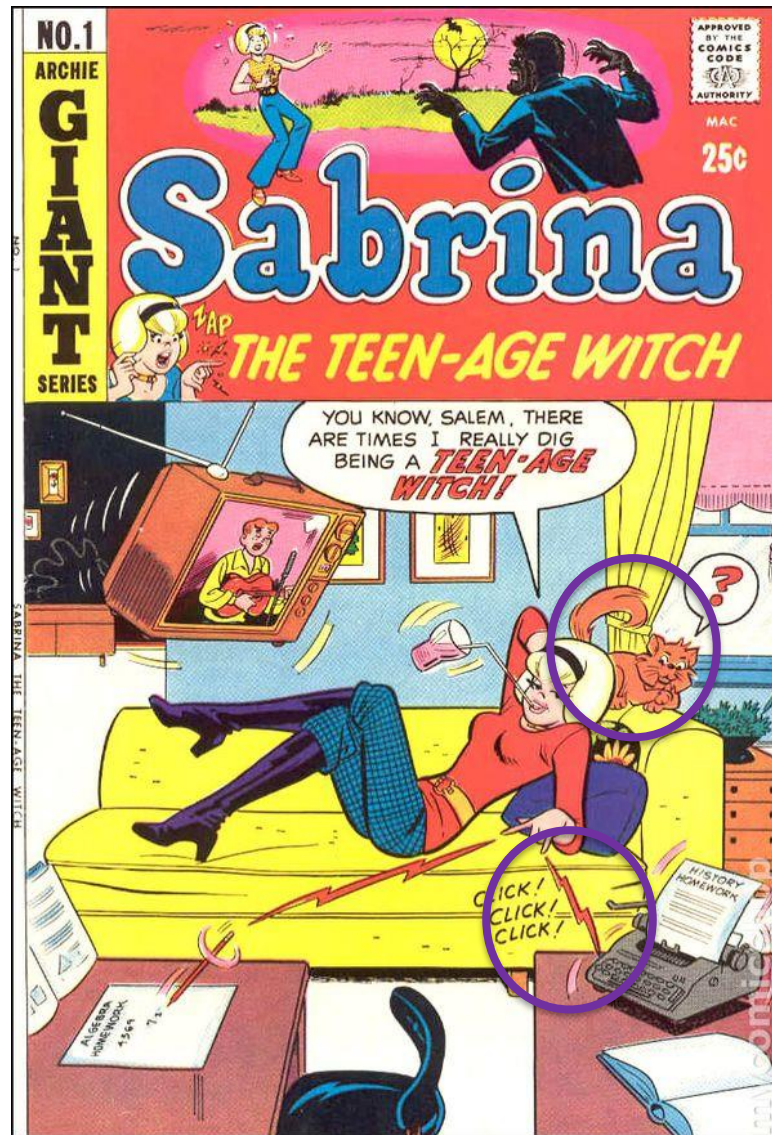
<sup>72</sup> *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, September 1945.

This other magazine issued in September 1945 also represents a witch but a very different one from those of the 1920s. The black cat is still present but instead of being an old rather chubby woman, the *Cosmopolitan* cover represents a sophisticated kind of *femme fatale*, with black hair and makeup. She represents the witches of her time, young and beautiful women playing with men's hearts. Their brooms and cauldrons? Long gone.

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<sup>72</sup> Front Cover of *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, September 1945.





<sup>73</sup> *Sabrina the teenage witch: Archie Comics, 1962.*

As mentioned earlier, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* was a comic book before it was adapted to the little screen. In *Archie Comics*, Sabrina is represented as a young woman experiencing her powers. On this cover page, we can still see the cat, but it is not black contrary to the two other witches' representation we saw. There are also flashes of lightning representing Sabrina's power; the same type of flashes that were represented in the lithograph by Joseph Baker. Here we can see the witch using her spells to do her homework, playing with the tv set, and handling her glass. Sabrina is represented as a

<sup>73</sup> *Sabrina the teenage witch, front cover, Archie Comics, 1962.*

“normal” woman, wearing no hat, carrying no broom and no cauldron. This representation is the most accurate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century representation of witches: Sabrina is not dressed as in the *Hearth and Home* cover (with a pointed hat) for instance, she is dressed like a teenage girl (with simple pants, a simple top, etc.). So, even if this cover is dated 1962, Sabrina is still represented that way in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as in the tv series *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* for instance.

The representation of witches whether in paintings or in magazines has evolved taking into account the time beliefs and how people were seeing witches at a certain era. Their representation will probably keep on evolving as time passes by and our societies change.

### **3.3. Witches in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century some women still determine themselves as “witches”. In other words, they are feminist women practicing witchcraft with their special skills. In this part I will first analyze a survey I have created for the purpose of this paper, in order to collect people’s opinion on witches in general. I will thus address the issue of modern “witches”.

#### **3.3.1. Witches as Seen by People: my Survey**

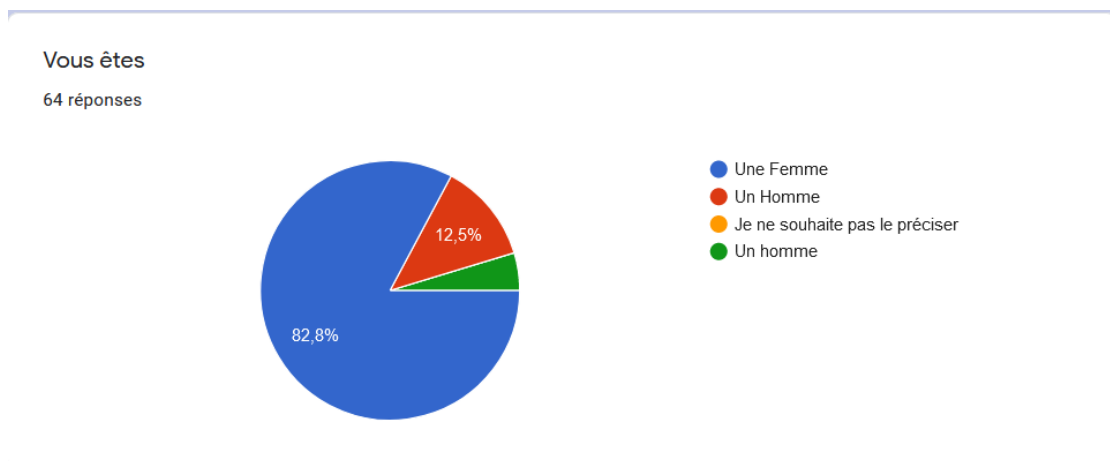
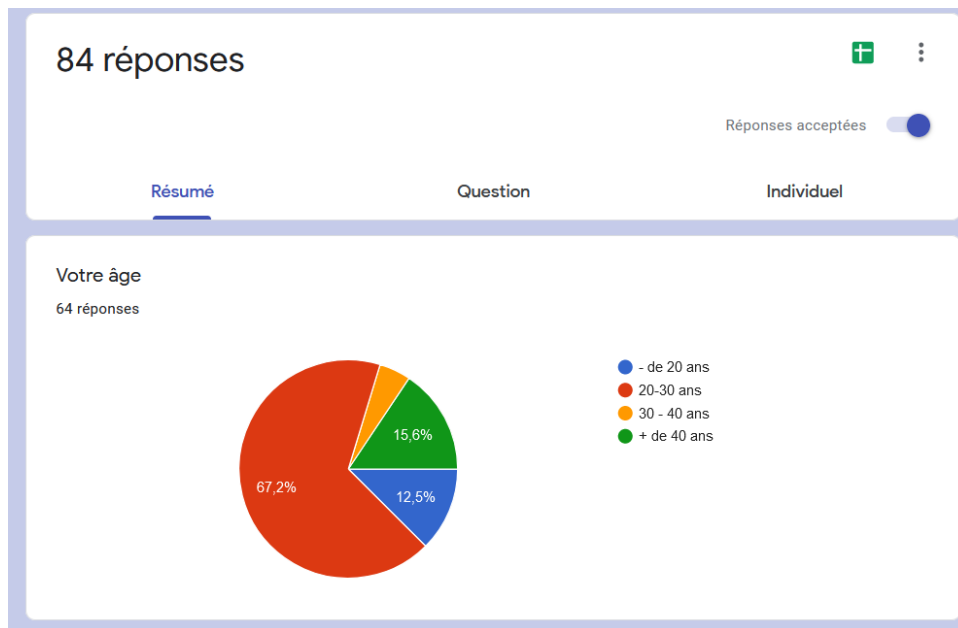
The goal of this survey was to gather different respondents’ points of view on how they pictured witches, what period they associated the witches with, and other similar questions.<sup>74</sup>

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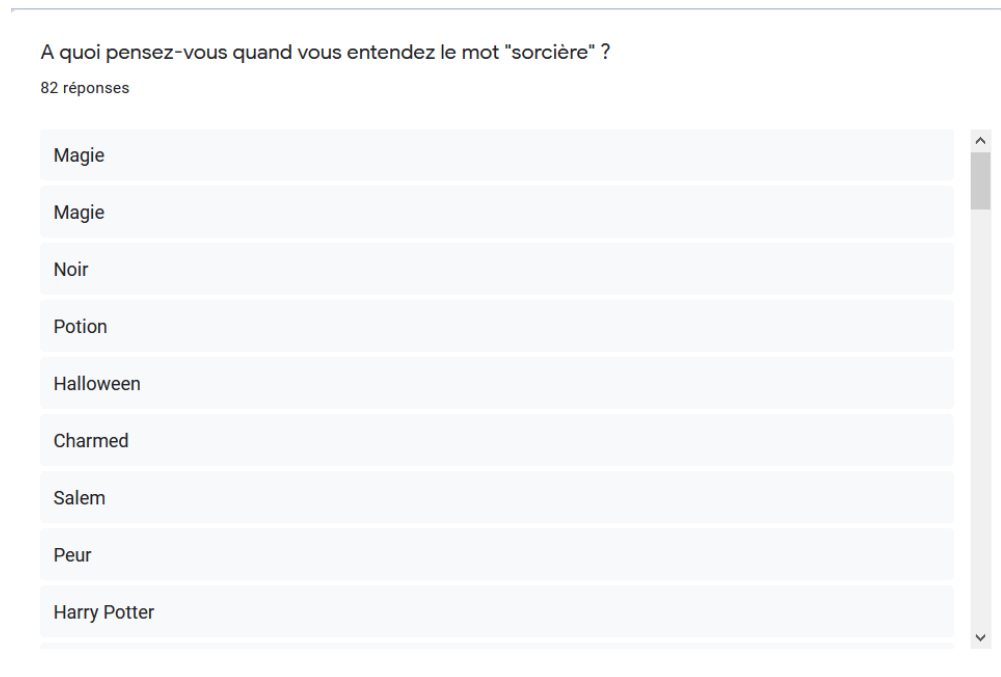
<sup>74</sup> Link to the survey:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSctSmWMDB\\_Hvt9Hv1wdHdhgi4QKoyNEK-8qwYR\\_MZ5ozTdJig/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSctSmWMDB_Hvt9Hv1wdHdhgi4QKoyNEK-8qwYR_MZ5ozTdJig/viewform)

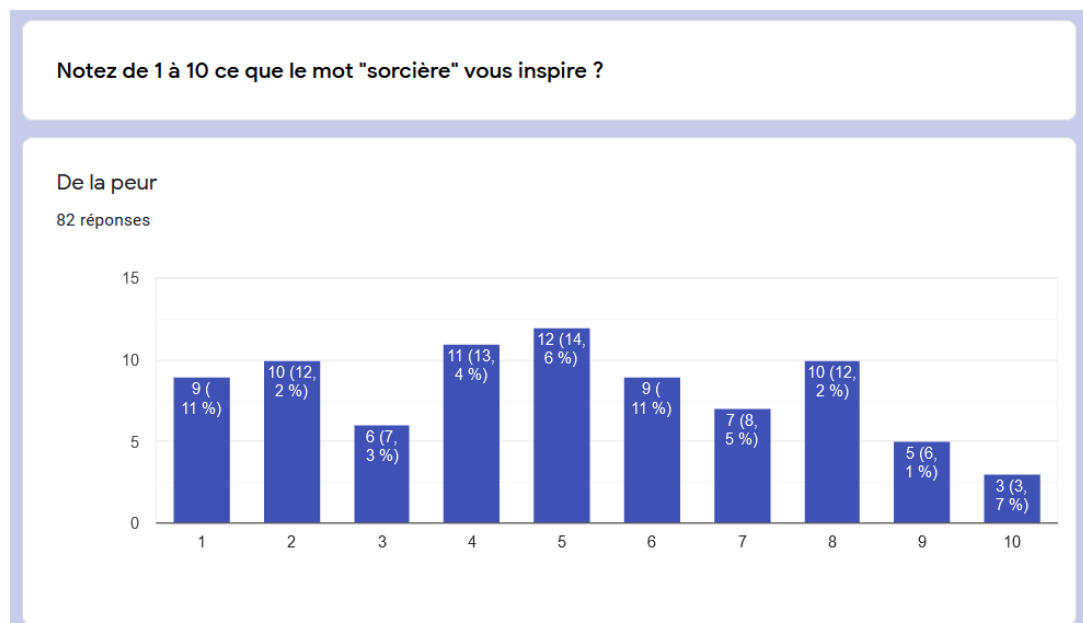


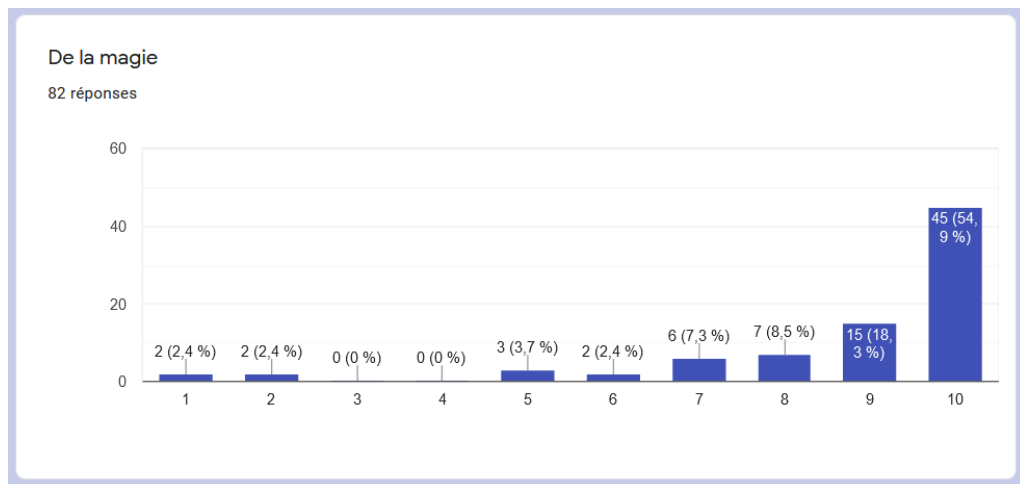


I shared the form on my social media and 84 people from under eighteen years old of age to forty and older have answered the questionnaire. A net majority (82.8%) of women have answered, and the 20-30 years old topped the age group, with 67.2%, followed by the 40 and older with 15.6% (those aged under 20 years old were only 12.5% and the last category is 30-40 years old with only 4.7%). Young adults are those who answered the most probably because they are from the same age group as myself and they saw it easily on my social networks which I admit biased my survey, however I have collected many interesting answers from adults aged 30 to 40 and older, I will dissect them along this part.



The first question I asked after the age and gender is “What do you think of when you hear the word witch?” what came back a lot was magic, potion and a stereotypical description of a witch with her black hat, broomstick, cat, hooked nose with warts. Those answers are the reflection of the main stereotypes concerning witches. Women were also mentioned a lot, which shows how witch is directly link to woman for people.



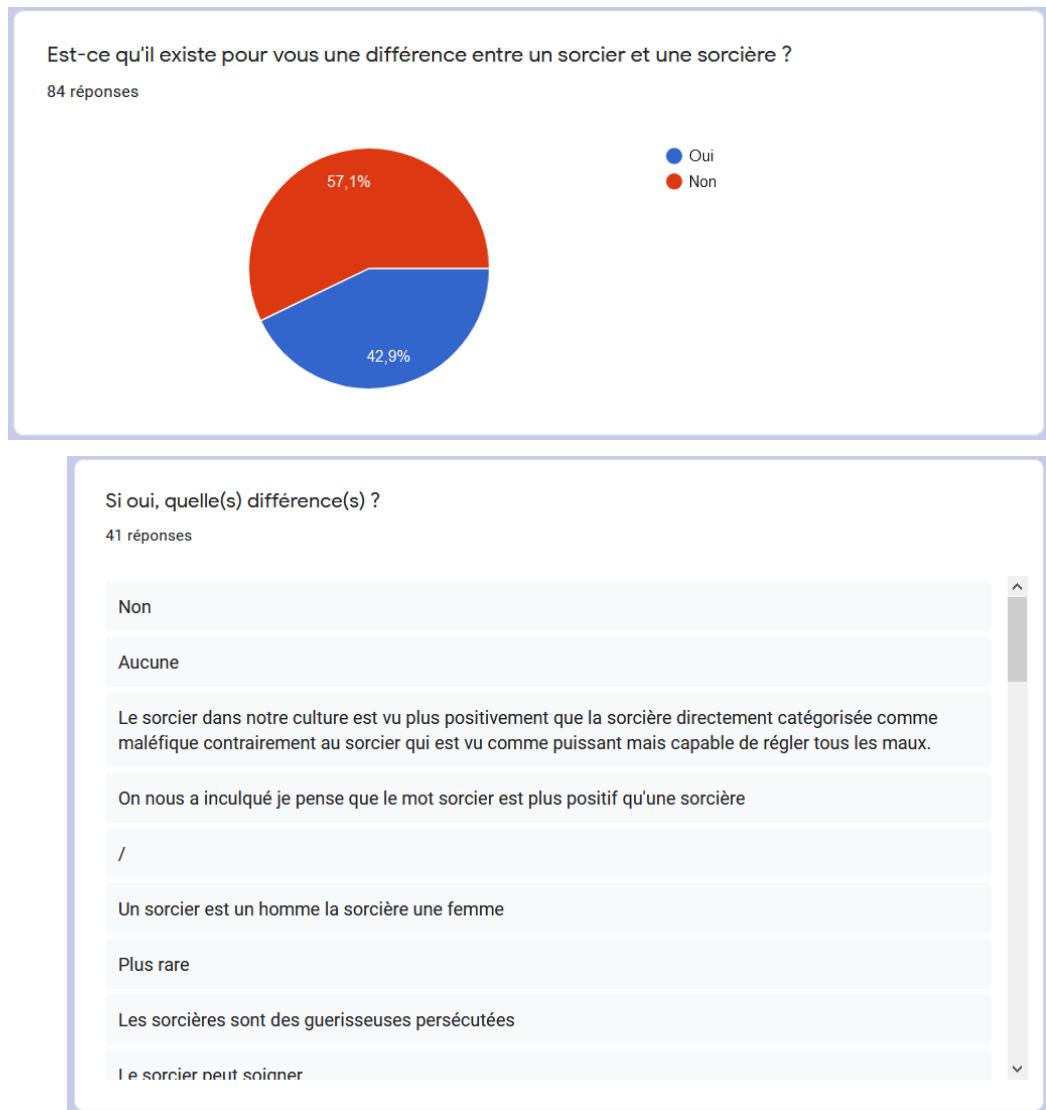


I then asked people to rank on a scale from one to ten what the following words related to witches inspired them the most – 1 being “not a lot,” 10 being “very much”. “Fear”, “positivity” and “negativity” were mixed, usually, people ranked these words on 5. “Power”, “magic” and “curiosity” were mostly ranked on 9 or 10. “Disdain” was only ranked on 1. These results show that witches are not constantly seen as negative and inspiring fear but rather as people with special powers.

A question I find was important was: “To which epoch do you associate the witches with? (multiple answers can be given)”, I wanted to know if people were seeing witches only as old figures from the past or if they were still seeing them in a modern society like ours. The majority answered “before the 19<sup>th</sup> century”: 72.6%; 35.7% answered, “19<sup>th</sup> century”; 21.4% answered, 20<sup>th</sup> century; 22.6% answered, 21<sup>st</sup> century and 10.8% of people answered “all epochs”.

The next question is a justification of these answers and most people said that they associated witches with the Middle-Age and old beliefs; some people, however, highlighted the fact that witches are timeless and that the representation of witches is based on the evolution of society. There are two different sides and I have noticed that young adults and younger people tended to consider witches as timeless, contrary to the 40 years and older who mostly considered witches as old beliefs. These differences can be a representation of the contrast between generations and the way younger people and young adults have grown up with the Internet, films and tv series, social

media, which is not the case for every 40 and more people (at least social media) who saw the evolution of these media but not always had access to it at a young age, where things get implanted easily in our minds.



Another question that was important to me was “Do you make a difference between a witch and a warlock?” I wanted to know how people were seeing these two categories and how they considered them. 57.1% of people answered that they did not make any difference between the two categories and 42.9% replied they did make a difference. What came back a lot was the fact that a warlock was seen in a positive way contrary to a witch who is often diabolized. Some of them highlighted their social

representation, with the fact that men have more rights than women, which was exemplified in the way they responded. There is, however, a dimension of the witch that combats clichés and is quite emancipating. Also, I have noticed that most women answered that they saw a difference between a witch and a warlock in their representation, highlighting the negativity surrounding the witch, the fact that she is always considered as a mean person contrary to the warlock who is seen as a healer. Men did not mention these representations and mostly answered that there was no difference between both terms. This difference in the male and female respondents highlights the societal gap between men and women: women are more sensitive than men when other women, be they witches, are negatively described.

I asked other questions such as “To what do you associate the term ‘witch’: your childhood, your teenagerhood or adulthood,?” Most people answered “childhood” (48.8%) and “adolescence” (40.2%), mentioning fairytales, fantasy books, tv series and films. Only 8.5% associated witches with adulthood. The next question was about whether the respondents associated witches with history or with fairytales and fiction, the majority answered fairytales and stories (65.5%), which confirmed the previous question and showed that people saw witches as story characters rather than real people.

Comment vous représentez-vous une sorcière ? (tenue, caractère, habitudes, style de vie...)

76 réponses

- Chapeau noir avec des verrues
- Chapeau pointu, habillée de noir, fais des potions chez elle et pratique des rituels.
- Cheveux gris, chapeau pointu, nez crochu
- Tenue sombre aigrie solitaire (tout un stéréotype)
- Chapeau pointu noir, grand nez, vêtement noir, chaumière au fond d'un bois
- Physiquement tout à fait normale. Leur caractère dépend de l'individu, pas du fait qu'elles soient sorcières. Leur quotidien vacille entre normalité et concoction de potion ou sorts
- Fort caractère, d'apparence normale avec une vie normale mais avec des pouvoirs extraordinaires
- Elle peut avoir toutes les apparences
- Style

One of the last questions was “What is your representation of a witch (clothes, lifestyle, habits...)?” Most people answered with a stereotypical description of a fairytale witch: a woman with a black hat, a cape, a cat, a cauldron, and a broomstick. However, eighteen people answered that they imagined witches looking just like us but with extraordinary powers.

Thanks to this questionnaire, which I admit has its own limitations, I was able to have an overview on how witches were seen, depending on gender and age. Older people were more focused on the traditional representation of witches, wearing something like a Halloween costume. On the contrary, younger people tended to be more curious and slightly open to the fact that witches are not just from the past, but very well part of the present. In addition, I did not realize that gender would play that much of a role but I have noticed a major difference between the answers of men, who tended to imagine witches as seductive, manipulating and mean women and those of women, who described witches as strong emancipated women.

### **3.3.2. Modern “Witches”: their position in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some women define themselves as “witches”, but what does it mean? The topic of witchcraft is still taboo in our modern societies. When a woman says she is a witch (a woman practicing witchcraft), people usually diabolize her or minimize her powers. I have done a lot of research to find records of these modern witches and I have mostly found videos explaining their experience and lifestyle as witches.

The first video concerns two witches who live in Salem, Massachusetts, and who introduce themselves as Erica and Lorelai. There is a major age difference between them and I will address this topic later on. They discuss their vision of witchcraft based on their age and education.<sup>75</sup> To Erica, the younger one, apart from making shrines, pulling tarot cards and owning crystals being a witch means being a feminist; she even adds that she

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<sup>75</sup> NBC Left Field, video journalist, producer, editor. Haimy Assefa, *The modern witch of Salem: Feminist, empowered and anti-Trump*, YouTube, 23 Jan. 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lNxtjD3Onw>

usually uses the acronym WITCH, or “Woman In Total Control of Herself” to describe herself. Moreover, she considers this take on life a political distinction: *“After the election especially, you know, I think what the witch is good for, is being a force of divine feminine power and witches are what men like Donald Trump are afraid of, so it’s like this perfect symbol.”*

She is part of the modern witches who consider their powers as a way to fight patriarchy and misogyny.

To Lorelei, (who is older than Erica, probably in her 60s) being a witch is something she was born into, her mother was a witch and taught her the rudiments of witchcraft. She is a traditional witch and she teaches witchcraft to young witches in Salem: girls and boys. She has a different practice of witchcraft, being more modern than Erica. To her, a spell is: “a prayer to the universe. We have chalices full of water, you have candles, something that represents the god, the goddess, just like you pray in church.” She draws a parallel with religion. Concerning feminism, she has her own opinion, “The thing about the new word ‘feminist’, it is a great thing, but it’s something that we’ve been doing for years. So, weird, maybe a little different than the younger generation, we may not be as hardcore. I still want a gentleman to open the door for me.” In her affirmation we can feel her traditionalism especially with the use of the word “hardcore” to qualify modern feminism.

Erica describes her coven<sup>76</sup> as “youthful, light, and trendy,” a less traditional conception than Lorelai’s but they are still witchcraft practitioners. To her, women’s gatherings created by the #MeToo movement and other campaigns is like a coven of witches coming up together to heal a trauma. The way Erica practices witchcraft is very much focused on femininity and a sense of sorority, contrary to Lorelei who is more focused on the very art of witchcraft.

The last witch I would like to introduce is not American. Her name is Jill Vandermeulen and she is Belgian. She is a TV presenter and YouTuber. On her YouTube channel, she has uploaded a video entitled *I am a witch*<sup>77</sup> in which she presents her

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<sup>76</sup> See Coven’s definition page 26.

<sup>77</sup> SilentJill. (2021, May 2). Je suis une sorcière ! Draw my life [Video]. YouTube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVUhlmoSzmQ>

journey with witchcraft. She describes herself as a “2.0 Witch,” in other words, a modern version of a witch. She starts her video by saying “I am a witch. No, obviously not a witch flying in the middle of the night on her broomstick, nor the one who lives alone in an old, thatched cottage in the middle of a big dark forest. No. I’m a 2.0 witch. Glowing woman, mother of a large family, divorced, businesswoman, athletic, accepted by society, free and released.” Right from the beginning of her video, she is breaking with the cliché of the old witch flying on her broomstick. She gives her own definition of witch, blowing the old taboo away.

To her, a witch is “a woman who has the gift of being in harmony with the nature around her, in harmony with her own body and heart. She can hear, understand and use – as for her wisely – what is around her.”<sup>78</sup>

She does not especially link witchcraft with feminism or her femininity but when she tells her story we can feel that more women around her are touched by witchcraft. It started with her grand-father (as I said before, men can also practice witchcraft especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where people are more open-minded), but it was transmitted to her by her mother, who herself transmitted it to her own daughter to whom she taught how to use her force and handle her emotions. The type of witchcraft Jill is practicing is called “instinctive witchcraft”: she goes with what her mind and instincts tell her to do; when she wants to do a ritual for instance, she does not use books.

In short, modern witches are all very different and do not practice their craft in the same way. They do not feel the same things and that is why witchcraft is so interesting. There are as many types of witchcraft as there are witches. Every practice is different and that is why witches are so strongly bonded together, they each bring something different to the table.

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*



## Conclusion

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*"It is important to remember that we all have magic inside us."<sup>79</sup>*

This quote of JK Rowling (author of Harry Potter) represents the fact that everyone can have a part of "witchness" inside of them. Witch-hunts whenever they took place were usually unfair and not justified. Persecuting a minority – women here, is never fair. The goal of this project was to raise awareness towards the way minorities or a targeted group of people can be persecuted. By using the expression "witch-hunt" I wanted to prove that women were and *still* are "hunted" and persecuted for many reasons, but especially for their gender. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century many changes have been done to give women the social status that they deserve: one that is equal to men. Nevertheless, this goal has unfortunately not been fully achieved despite a series of great improvements.

Our Western societies have known many witch-hunts and hopefully with time people will understand that instead of looking for scapegoats it might be more effective to take accountability for one's actions. Women must not be associated with witches anymore or at least with the negative definition that we in the collective imaginary of what witches are. Along this paper, I have tried to show that witches are not necessarily negative and that modern witches *do* exist. They are not dangerous and should not be considered as oddities.

The subject of this thesis also coincides with a strong popularization of the theme of witchcraft today. Many books, works and videos are published concerning the art of witchcraft and witches, from books denouncing the treatment of women, such as Mona Chollet's essay *Sorcières la puissance invaincue des femmes*, to more subtle books, such as *Mes Tutos de Sorcière Bienveillante* by Mademoiselle Audrina a French author and

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<sup>79</sup> J.K. Rowling, writer of the *Harry Potter* books.

illustrator. Witches are becoming a mainstream topic, thus we may wonder whether this trend is indeed a trend or if it is here to stay.

What has changed in our 21<sup>st</sup> century representation of witches is mostly the way they are considered. With her book *Mona Chollet* has depicted women as strong people, and the word “witch” is only used to illustrate her sayings and add context to her battle but in the end, she does not speak about witches but about women. Mona Chollet explains that women all have a witchy side and that this witchy side is what gives them power and status.

The focus is placed on women’s strength and their relationship with elements. For instance, it is said that women are closely linked with the moon because of the female cycle. This link between women and nature used to be only part of rites and customs but as the topic of witches is increasingly gaining interest, the shift today is towards understanding how a woman through her menstrual cycle goes through different lunar energies. For example, in her book *Gardiennes de la Lune* Stéphanie Lafranque highlights the way women are connected with the moon and gives tools to re-connect with this element to find back our original nature and open up to a better understanding of ourselves. These types of books do not expressively mention “witches” but with their consideration of women as strong individuals and by pushing female readers to rely upon their femininity as a powerful tool, a link can be made with witchcraft.

We can also wonder why there is such a fascination over the art of witchcraft and modern witches who have special abilities, such as divination, for instance. I think that people have always been curious about paranormal manifestations and people with special faculties. The increase of films and tv series covering these topics has raised people’s curiosity in the field. However, one must be careful about the drawbacks of the popularity of witchcraft; indeed, ill-intentioned persons can use witchcraft as a way to make money and swindle people.

Finally, I will conclude by saying that apart from this whole argumentation about witches, women should not be considered as inferior to men anymore and deserve to be equal to them. The battle is not finished and as women, we are still going to fight for

our rights but we must also teach our daughters *and sons* about gender equality, tolerance and empathy. They are our future.

## II - PARTIE DIDACTIQUE : WITCH HUNTS THEN AND NOW

### Introduction

L'objet de cette partie didactique reposera sur l'adaptation du sujet de ce mémoire de recherche dans une situation d'enseignement. Je n'ai malheureusement pas pu expérimenter cette séquence sur un public d'élèves n'ayant pas de classe à charge cette année.

Cette séquence se destine à des élèves de classe de terminale générale en enseignement de spécialité LLCER – AMC (Langues Littératures et Civilisations Etrangères et Régionales – Anglais Monde Contemporain). Le niveau du Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues (CECRL)<sup>80</sup> visé était C1, notamment en réception : compréhension orale et écrite (CO et CE). Cet enseignement de spécialité que les élèves peuvent choisir en classe de première et terminale "vise à sensibiliser les élèves à la diversité des sociétés et des cultures du monde anglophone. Entité complexe [...] On pense avant tout au Royaume-Uni et aux pays du Commonwealth, à l'Irlande et aux Etats-Unis."<sup>81</sup> Le but étant de familiariser les élèves au monde anglophone en introduisant l'analyse d'enjeux sociétaux, économiques, politiques, géopolitiques, culturels et scientifiques du monde anglophone contemporain en partant de questions actuelles et en les restituant dans leur contexte historique.

Ce chapitre rentre dans une des 3 thématiques proposées dans le programme d'AMC "Faire société" dont les pistes proposées concernent l'axe d'étude "égalités et inégalités". Ce qui correspond parfaitement à l'idée principale de la séquence puisqu'elle repose sur l'évolution des droits des femmes et de la position de la femme dans la société en utilisant le terme de "witch-hunt" les sorcières étant les femmes.

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<sup>80</sup> Le Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues défini à l'échelle européenne les différents niveaux de langue et par conséquent des paliers à atteindre par les élèves.

<sup>81</sup> Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de la Jeunesse et des Sports, *Bulletin Officiel de l'Éducation Nationale, Programme de langues, littératures et cultures étrangères et régionales – anglais, monde contemporain de terminale générale*, Juillet 2020, [www.education.gouv.fr](http://www.education.gouv.fr)

La présentation de cette séquence se déroulera en trois parties. La première traitera des objectifs de la séquence sous forme de tableau synoptique. La deuxième partie concernera le déroulé de la séquence séance par séance. Finalement, la troisième partie se concentrera sur l'exploitation détaillée d'un document.

La spécialité AMC en Terminale compte six heures de cours par semaine. Par conséquent, les séances décrites dans cette partie didactique dureront deux heures : une séance = deux heures de cours.

Je vais utiliser de nombreuses abréviations lors de la description de ce projet pédagogique, leur signification est listée ci-dessous :

### **Système d'abréviation**

PRL → Pratique Raisonnée de la Langue (réflexion sur la langue permettant une explication d'un phénomène langagier).

CECRL → Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues (défini les niveaux de maîtrise de compétences entrant dans la réalisation de tâches).

TF → Tâche Finale.

TI → Tâche Intermédiaire.

AL → **Activités Langagières** :

EO → Expression Orale.

EE → Expression Ecrite.

CO → Compréhension Orale.

CE → Compréhension Ecrite.

EOI → Expression Orale en Interaction.

EOC → Expression Orale en Continu.

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## 1. Objectifs du Projet Pédagogique

<b>Titre :</b> Witch-Hunts Then and Now
<b>Problématique :</b> Are Witch-hunts synonym of Women hunts ?
<b>AL Dominante :</b> Expression Orale en continu (EEC) et expression écrite (EE)
<b>Entrée dans la séquence :</b> Document iconographique → Men supporting Women

<b>Classe</b>	Terminale : Spécialité – Anglais Monde Contemporain.
<b>Niveau</b>	C1 réception.
<b>Axe</b>	<u>Thématique</u> : Faire société. <u>Axe d'étude</u> : Egalités et Inégalités.
<b>Tâche Finale</b>	For international Women's day on March 8th, the school's radio prepares a special programme entitled "Celebrating Women" in which each of you present a <u>five-minute</u> talk about an important woman in your life, your role model. It can be someone of your family or a celebrity. Present her and say why you are admiring of her.

<b>Tâche Finale - EOC</b>
For international Women's day on March 8th, the school's radio prepares a special programme entitled "Celebrating Women" in which each of you present a <b><u>five-minute</u></b> talk about an important woman in your life, your role model. It can be someone of your family or a celebrity. Present her and say why you are admiring of her.

<b>Culturels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Salem Witch Trials → 1692 Massachussets, Arthur Miller's adaptation <i>The Crucible</i>, 1954 // The Red Scare.</li> <li>* Young Women rising → Taylor Swift (Song <i>The Man</i>) + Emma Watson (supporting women's rights and equality).</li> <li>* Modern Witches → A community in Salem.</li> </ul>
<b>Grammaticaux</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Réactivation auxiliaires modaux → SHOULD + WOULD (Women <u>should</u> have the same rights as men because... / If I were a man I <u>would</u> be able to do...)</li> </ul>
<b>Lexicaux</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Voc relatif à la lutte pour le droit des femmes → feminist, feminism, gender, sexualized...</li> <li>* Voc qui se réfère aux sorcières et leurs pratiques → Witchcraft, bewitched, spell, shrine, tarot cards, crystals, coven...</li> <li>* Voc relatif au procès → charge somebody with something, attorney, witness, testimony, guilty, blame...</li> </ul>
<b>Phonologiques</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* -ism de feminism</li> <li>* Intonation montante et descendante.</li> <li>* Gap-fillers.</li> <li>* W<u>o</u>men /ɪ/</li> </ul>
<b>Pragmatiques</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Être capable de structurer une argumentation orale</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-linguistiques</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Lexique <i>The Crucible</i> = vieil anglais (Goody, aye...).</li> <li>* Accent anglais Emma Watson (CO)</li> </ul>
<b>Citoyens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Démocratiser la parole des femmes.</li> <li>* Sensibiliser à la cause de l'égalité hommes-femmes.</li> </ul>

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## 2. Déroulé de la Séquence

### Séance 1 :

<b><u>Supports :</u></b>
1) Image "Men supporting Women" (Annexe 1).
2) Vidéo <i>The Modern Witch of Salem : Feminist Empowered and Anti-Trump</i> jusqu'à 3'04. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lNxtjD3Onw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lNxtjD3Onw</a> (Annexe 2).
3) Fiche questions par groupe + classe entière (Annexes 3 et 4).
<b><u>Objectifs :</u></b>
- Entrée dans la séquence, présentation du thème.
<b><u>Activités Langagières :</u></b> EOC + CO
<b><u>Activités d'apprentissage :</u></b>
1- Construction d'hypothèses sur le thème de la séquence avec l'image "Men supporting Women". Découverte du vocabulaire de la séquence.
2- CO sur une vidéo divisée en 3 parties, 1 partie par groupe, questions de compréhension globale sur cette vidéo, puis récap en classe entière. Vidéo divisée en 3 pour favoriser la différenciation pédagogique (1 <sup>ère</sup> partie plus facile à comprendre) → permet aux élèves plus faibles de ne pas se sentir trop submergé par l'afflux d'informations qu'ils auraient du mal à traiter.
3- Suite de la CO avec questions de compréhension détaillée en classe entière → Après avoir décortiqué la vidéo en surface, les élèves passent à des questions plus détaillées en s'entraînant.
<b><u>Devoirs ou Evaluations :</u></b>
Faire la partie "Your turn to compose" de la fiche de questions de compréhension détaillée.



## **Séance 2 :**

### **Supports :**

- 1) Script CO (Annexe 5).
- 2) Affiche film *The Crucible* (Annexe 6).

### **Objectifs :**

- Vérifier la bonne compréhension d'une vidéo par les élèves grâce au script.
- Revoir la manière d'analyser une image (there is / are, in the background / foreground...)

### **Activités Langagières :** CE & CO + EOC.

- 1- Vérifier les devoirs de la dernière séance et en lire quelques un (sur la base du volontariat) → Permet de mettre en valeur le travail des élèves volontaires.
- 2- Lecture Script CO, élèves lisent une phrase chacun à l'oral.
- 3- Rédiger la trace écrite qui résume le document → Permet d'avoir une trace de l'activité faite précédemment.
- 4- Description d'image (who, what, where, when...) pour introduire Salem Witch Hunt.

### **Devoirs ou évaluations :**

- Résumer en 5 lignes ce qui a été dit sur l'image.
- "Sum up in 5 lines what we said today about the film poster."

## **Séance 3 :**

### **Supports :**

- 1) Extrait de la pièce de théâtre *The Crucible*.

### **Objectifs :**

- Comprendre et faire faire le lien aux élèves entre écrits littéraires et événements historiques. Comprendre comment deux événements historiques peuvent être liés et par quel biais (ici par la littérature).
- Revoir la méthodologie de compréhension d'un texte littéraire.

- En apprendre plus sur la culture d'un pays (ici les Etats-Unis).
<b><u>Activités Langagières :</u></b> CE
<b><u>Activités d'apprentissage :</u></b> 1- Vérification des devoirs, lectures de certains travaux sur la base du volontariat. 2- Extrait pièce de théâtre <i>The Crucible</i> , Act One, de "Reverend Paris is praying now" à "troubles in this house eventually lands on her back" et "Parris : I cannot blink what I saw" à "They will howl me out of Salem for such corruption in my house." 3- Questions de compréhension sur le texte. 4- Récap à l'oral → Permet de vérifier la bonne compréhension des élèves, évite d'aller plus loin dans le document et que certains élèves se perdent. 5- Rédaction de la trace écrite résumant l'intrigue du texte et ajouter un point culturel sur le procès de sorcières de Salem ainsi qu'un lien entre l'histoire de la pièce et l'époque à laquelle elle a été écrite (1954 : Red Scare aux US).
<b><u>Devoirs ou évaluation :</u></b> * Evaluation - Tâche intermédiaire : sous forme de DM. (EE) Write an article summarizing The Salem Witch Hunt & Trial, to guide you, use your lesson. 200 words. (3 jours pour rendre la TI).

## **Séance 4 :**

<b><u>Supports :</u></b> 1) Chanson <i>The Man</i> par Taylor Swift (Annexe 7). 2) PRL – Auxiliaires Modal WOULD.
<b><u>Objectifs :</u></b> - Analyser une chanson. - Voir l'engagement de la chanteuse derrière des paroles de chanson. - Travailler sur l'utilisation des auxiliaires modaux.

**Activités Langagières : CO & CE.**

**Activités d'apprentissage :**

- 1- Ecouter la chanson une première fois sans prendre de notes.
  - 2- Deuxième écoute de la chanson avec une prise de note (thème, mots qui ressortent...)
  - 3- Troisième écoute avec une fiche de travail : les paroles de la chanson avec des trous au niveau des mots importants, à retrouver par les élèves lors de l'écoute.
  - 4- Début de la PRL → Les élèves doivent repérer l'aux. Would dans les paroles de la chanson (surligner). Revoir les emplois différents de Would : le conditionnel, un renvoi à l'avenir et la probabilité.
- Pour aller plus loin : leur faire différencier l'utilisation d'autres modaux, Should par ex.

**Devoirs ou évaluations :**

- \* Exercices d'application de la PRL avec 5 phrases sur le thème des droits des femmes.
- \* Annonce de la date du devoir de fin de chapitre, les élèves ont une semaine et demie pour réviser la séquence.

**Séance 5 :**

**Supports :**

- 1) Emma Watson's speech on gender equality, jusqu'à 1'25.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSHJYyRVilU&t=19s>
- 2) Script de la CO (Annexe 8).
- 3) Tâche Intermédiaire.

**Objectifs :**

- Sensibiliser à l'égalité homme femme en passant par l'audiovisuel → Permet une accroche différente.
- Faire un retour aux élèves sur une production réalisée durant la séquence, cibler les difficultés. Permet de faire le point sur les compétences acquises par les élèves en

milieu de séquence. Aide les élèves à se préparer en ciblant les points à revoir avant le test de fin de séquence mais également les points déjà acquis.

**Activités Langagières :** CO et EOC.

**Activités d'apprentissage :**

1- CO en conditions BAC → 3 écoutes avec une pause d'une minute entre chaque écoute.

Cette épreuve étant normalement couplée avec une épreuve d'EE et de CE qui dure deux heures, les candidats disposent du temps qu'ils veulent pour organiser leur épreuve. Ne faisant ici qu'un entraînement à la CO dans cette séance, les élèves disposeront de dix min pour la restitution de la vidéo en Français (temps normalement conseillé aux candidats pour cette épreuve).

2- Les élèves me remettent leurs compte-rendu, ils seront notés pour pouvoir se situer mais la note ne comptera pas dans leurs bulletins si elle est inférieure à 10/20 → donne la possibilité aux élèves les plus faibles de profiter d'une note bonus pour remonter leur moyenne sans les pénaliser si la note est faible).

3- Lecture ensemble du script Les élèves lisent une phrase chacun à l'oral puis re-visionnage vidéo en suivant le script.

4- Remise des tâches intermédiaires → Vérification ensemble des points qui ont le plus posé problème et explication.

**Devoirs ou évaluations :**

\* Compte-rendu de la CO.

\* Pas de devoirs.

## **Séance 6 :**

**Supports :**

1) Script de la CO (Annexe 8).

2) Vidéo de la CO.

3) Tâche Finale (Annexe 9).

**Objectifs :**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mêler les points de vue différents des élèves au sein de la classe.</li> <li>- Faire naître un débat et apprendre à débattre sur un sujet de société.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Activités Langagières :</u></b> EOC & EOI.
<b><u>Activités d'apprentissage :</u></b> 1- Discussion à l'oral élève-élève et élève-enseignante. <u>Consignes :</u> * To you, what is a feminist? Think of a definition → demander à un garçon ET une fille pour voir si une différence se fait sentir. Permet de confronter les points de vue au sein de la classe. * Who is Emma Watson? What do you know about her? * Do you think it is important that celebrities support a cause? 2- Explications de la consigne de la Tâche Finale.
<b><u>Devoirs ou évaluations :</u></b> * Tâche Finale. Les élèves ont 2 semaines pour la rendre.

## **Séance 7 :**

<b><u>Supports :</u></b> 1) Devoir sur table de fin de séquence.
<b><u>Objectifs :</u></b> - Evaluer les élèves sur les notions acquises ou non au long de la séquence.
<b><u>Activités Langagières :</u></b> CE & EE. (La CO étant évaluée en amont et l'EO évaluée par le biais de la TF, ce devoir ne nécessite par conséquent pas d'évaluer d'autres AL que la CE et l'EE).
<b><u>Activités d'apprentissage :</u></b> 1- Devoir sur table. Conformément aux directives concernant l'épreuve d'AMC prévue au Bac, les élèves devront élaborer une synthèse, en anglais, d'un dossier composé de trois documents

sur le thème de la séquence. Les élèves seront guidés par trois questions et / ou consignes pour les diriger. → Environ 500 mots.

**Devoirs ou évaluations :**

\* Devoir sur table de fin de chapitre.

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### 3. Exploitation détaillée d'une activité

**CO : Vidéo - *The modern witch of Salem: Feminist, empowered and anti-Trump***

Obstacles	Éléments Facilitateurs	Pré-requis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Longueur de la vidéo.</li><li>→ Débit de la journaliste et des personnes interviewées.</li><li>→ Lexique spécifique (witchcraft, shrines, tarot cards, chalice, worshiper).</li><li>→ Le lien avec Trump peut ne pas être forcément évident.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Images très représentatives.</li><li>→ Phrases courtes.</li><li>→ Explication du procès des sorcières de Salem résumé clairement.</li><li>→ Vidéo dynamique.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Repérer l'implicite d'un document.</li><li>→ Description orale détaillée.</li><li>→ Utilisation de connecteurs logiques à introduire lors d'une expression écrite.</li></ul>

Objectifs de cette activité :

Permet une entrée en douceur dans la séquence. Le thème est bien présenté tout au long de la vidéo et des éléments historiques qui seront vus plus loin dans le chapitre sont déjà mentionnés. Permet également de familiariser les élèves au sujet.

**Anticipation :**

Anticiper un document avant de le travailler avec les élèves permet d'appréhender le sujet en douceur. Dans ce cas-ci avec une vidéo, utiliser une image tirée de ce même document permet de familiariser les élèves au thème avant de rentrer dans le vif du sujet où un flux d'informations leur sera proposé en continu.



- Anticipation du document audiovisuel avec cette image tirée de la vidéo.
- Construction d'hypothèses à l'oral sur le thème de la vidéo :
  - \* Identification des différents objets présents sur l'image.
  - \* Qui peut être cette personne ?
  - \* Que représentent les objets qui l'entourent ? etc.

### **Compréhension Globale :**

En salle informatique, je divise la classe en trois groupes → cela permet de fragmenter une vidéo plutôt longue et offre la possibilité de mettre en place une différenciation pédagogique. La première partie de vidéo est un peu plus simple et comporte moins d'implicite, les élèves un peu plus faibles se sentiront plus confiant de travailler sur cette portion que sur une partie de la vidéo où beaucoup d'informations doivent être traitées simultanément.

Les trois groupes ont accès à leur partie de vidéo qu'ils peuvent visionner autant de fois que nécessaire dans le temps que j'aurai donné (environ quinze minutes).

**Voir annexe 3 – fiche questions par groupe.**



### **Compréhension Détaillée :**

Se déroule en classe entière après que chaque groupe a partagé ses réponses à l'oral.

Les élèves répondent aux questions de compréhension détaillée (les élèves doivent accéder à l'implicite du document).

**Voir annexe 4 – Fiche questions compréhension détaillée + restitution.**

### **Restitution :**

A faire à la maison en devoir pour la prochaine séance.

Permet de faire le compte rendu de la vidéo et prépare la trace écrite qui va résumer tout le document.

**(Annexe 4).**

## Conclusion

Pour conclure cette partie didactique, je terminerais en ajoutant que ce projet pédagogique se doit d'être expérimenté en classe. N'ayant pas de classe à charge cette année je n'ai pas pu le faire. En présentant cette séquence à un public d'élèves, il y aura certainement plusieurs ajustements à faire. Des séances à moduler, des documents à intervertir, etc. Traiter ce sujet de recherche de manière didactique a cependant un fort intérêt d'après moi puisque cela permet de montrer que des sujets de société importants peuvent être enseignés et modulés dans un cadre scolaire.

Cette séquence proposée initialement pour une classe de terminale peut être adaptée à n'importe quelle classe de lycée vu le thème abordé, les documents doivent simplement être adaptés. Concernant le collège le thème peut être repris mais avec un gros changement au niveau des documents avec des support plus accessibles pour un niveau de collège. Ces ébauches d'exploitation pourront donc servir de base réflexive afin de pouvoir éventuellement adapter cette séquence en adéquation avec les niveaux qu'il est possible de trouver au collège.

## Annexes partie didactique

### Annexe 1 – Document d’anticipation de la séquence.<sup>82</sup>



### Annexe 2 – Image utilisée pour l’anticipation de la vidéo *The modern witch of Salem:*

*Feminist, empowered and anti-Trump.*<sup>83</sup>



<sup>82</sup> <https://www.flickr.com/photos/worldsdirection/34146030872/>

<sup>83</sup> NBC Left Field, video journalist, producer, editor. Haimy Assefa, *The modern witch of Salem: Feminist, empowered and anti-Trump*, YouTube, 23 Jan. 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lNxtjD3Onw>

Annexe 3 – Fiches de travail de compréhension globale pour les trois groupes  
différents.<sup>84</sup>

**The modern witch of Salem:  
Feminist, empowered and  
anti-Trump**



**First group : From the beginning to 1'05.**

Answer the following questions about the video.



1) Name the city and the State where the video was shot and its nickname.

.....

.....

2) Identify the main topic of the video.

.....

.....

3) How does the woman who is being interviewed consider herself and what does this word mean to her ?

.....

.....

4) Name her job

.....

.....




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<sup>84</sup> Fiche de travail créé par mes soins avec l'appui de la vidéo NBC Left Field, video journalist, producer, editor. Haimy Assefa, *The modern witch of Salem: Feminist, empowered and anti-Trump*, YouTube, 23 Jan. 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lNxtjD3Onw>

## **The modern witch of Salem:** **Feminist, empowered and** **anti-Trump**



**Second group : From 1'06 to 1'57.**

Answer the following questions about the video.   

1) Write down the information about the woman introduced here (name, occupations...).

.....

.....

2) Do you think she is more of a traditional or modern witch ? Justify with a quote from the video.

.....

.....

3) List all the accessories she uses to practice witchcraft.

.....

.....

4) How does she consider a spell ?

.....

.....

## **The modern witch of Salem: Feminist, empowered and anti-Trump**



**Third group : From 1'58 to 3'04.**

Answer the following questions about the video.



1) Cite the expression used here to qualify witches.

.....

.....

2) List the different qualification of the women who are part of Erica's coven.

.....

.....

3) For what reason is the word "witch" used according to the journalist ?

.....

.....

4) Who did the Puritans blamed for their problems and what caused that ?

.....

.....

## **The modern witch of Salem:** **Feminist, empowered and** **anti-Trump**



Answer the following questions about the video.



1) Pick out the lexical field of witchcraft.

.....

.....

2) Explain Lorelei's thoughts on feminism.

.....

.....

3) Why are the women in the video linking the fact that they are witch with politics ?

.....

.....

4) Explain the utility of a Coven.

.....

.....

5) List the different things the witches, in this video, do to practice witchcraft depending on whether they are traditional or modern witches.

Traditional witches	Modern witches
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

<sup>85</sup> Fiche de travail créé par mes soins avec l'appui de la vidéo NBC Left Field, video journalist, producer, editor. Haimy Assefa, *The modern witch of Salem: Feminist, empowered and anti-Trump*, YouTube, 23 Jan. 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lNxtjD3Onw>

	-
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6) Write down the number of persons accused of witchcraft and the number of people who were executed for it.

.....

.....

7) According to you, why were the widows or women with bad reputation more accused of witchcraft ?

.....

.....

**Your turn to compose ! **

By using your own words, sum up the video, mention its tone and the hints present in the document.

10 lines maximum.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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.....

.....



**Annexe 5 – Script CO *The modern witch of Salem: Feminist, empowered and anti-Trump*<sup>86</sup>**

**Oral Comprehension script : The modern witch of Salem:  
Feminist, empowered and anti-Trump**



Witches have always been somewhat feminists. We have been fighting for the rights to be treated correctly. Witches are what men like Donald Trump are afraid of.

“Witches. The word alone immediately conjures up certain images in our minds. But what does it really mean to be a witch today?

Salem, Massachusetts. A place known for trying and executing accused witches, is now affectionately called Witch City and it seems that a growing number of young women and some men are being drawn to a brand of witchcraft and it’s political.”

“I use the term witch to describe myself. I usually cite the acronym ‘Woman In Total Control of Herself’. I am the owner of *HausWitch Home and Healing* in Salem, Massachusetts. I practice witchcraft, I pull tarot cards, I have crystals everywhere, I make shrines, I cast spells. I meditate, but it’s sort of a political distinction and I think it, like, speaks to my radical feminism.”

“Both male and female witches are studying the craft under a long time Salem witch and clairvoyant: Lorelei. You’ll notice a significant difference in how the more traditional witches look and practice.”

“I’m what you call a natural witch, I started it about 12, my mother practiced. The thing about the new word ‘feminist’, it’s a great thing, but it’s something that we’ve been doing for years. So, weird, maybe a little different than the younger generation, we may not be as hardcore. I still want a gentleman to open the door for me. *And he and the man, may you always have romance, lust, and trust so mote it be.* A spell basically is a prayer to the universe. We have chalices full of water, you have candles, something that represents the god, the goddess, just like you pray in church.

“After the election especially, you know, I think what the witch is good for is being a force of divine feminine power and witches are what men like Donald Trump are afraid of, so it’s like this perfect symbol.”

---

<sup>86</sup> Document créé par mes soins avec l’appui de la vidéo NBC Left Field, video journalist, producer, editor. Haimy Assefa, *The modern witch of Salem: Feminist, empowered and anti-Trump*, YouTube, 23 Jan. 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8INxtjD3Onw>

“Around Erica’s store has formed a coven made up of astrologists, Reiki masters and healers, including Erica’s fiancée Melisa, who does Salem witch tour with a feminist focus.”

“This isn’t your grandmother’s coven: it’s youthful, light, and trendy. Though some are embracing the word, the term ‘witch’ has been used to ignite fear and shame.”

“The Salem witch trials of colonial Massachussets started just when Europe’s so-called witch craze was beginning to wind down. A combination of limited resources, of family rivalries, and extremely strict religious practices set the foundation for Puritans to blame the devil and ‘devil worshipers’ for their problems. And more than 200 people, mostly widows or women with bad reputations, were accused of being witches and 20 were executed.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lNxtjD3Onw>

#### Annexe 6 – Affiche du film *The Crucible*<sup>87</sup>



<sup>87</sup> Hytner, Nicolas, *The Crucible*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1996.

**Image** : <https://www.walmart.com/ip/The-Crucible-27x40-Movie-Poster-1996-27-x-40-Inches-By-Pop-Culture-Graphics-USA/123105308>

**Annexe 7 – Paroles chanson *The Man* de Taylor Swift (doc utilisé pour la PRL)<sup>88</sup>**

I would be complex, I would be cool  
They'd say I played the field before I found someone to commit to  
And that would be okay for me to do  
Every conquest I had made would make me more of a boss to you

I'd be a fearless leader  
I'd be an alpha type  
When everyone believes ya  
What's that like?

I'm so sick of running as fast as I can  
Wondering if I'd get there quicker if I was a man  
And I'm so sick of them coming at me again  
'Cause if I was a man, then I'd be the man  
I'd be the man  
I'd be the man

They'd say I hustled, put in the work  
They wouldn't shake their heads and question how much of this I deserve  
What I was wearing, if I was rude  
Could all be separated from my good ideas and power moves  
[Pre-Chorus]  
And they would toast to me, oh, let the players play  
I'd be just like Leo in Saint-Tropez

I'm so sick of running as fast as I can  
Wondering if I'd get there quicker if I was a man  
And I'm so sick of them coming at me again  
'Cause if I was a man, then I'd be the man  
I'd be the man  
I'd be the man

What's it like to brag about raking in dollars  
And getting bitches and models?  
And it's all good if you're bad  
And it's okay if you're mad  
If I was out flashing my dollars  
I'd be a bitch, not a baller  
They'd paint me out to be bad  
So, it's okay that I'm mad

---

<sup>88</sup> Swift T. , Little J. , *The Man* [Song], Sony Music Entertainment, Taylor Swift Music, 2019.

I'm so sick of running as fast as I can  
 Wondering if I'd get there quicker if I was a man (You know that)  
 And I'm so sick of them coming at me again (Coming at me again)  
 'Cause if I was a man (If I was a man)  
 Then I'd be the man (Then I'd be the man)  
 I'm so sick of running as fast as I can (As fast as I can)  
 Wondering if I'd get there quicker if I was a man (Hey)  
 And I'm so sick of them coming at me again (Coming at me again)  
 'Cause if I was a man (If I was a man), then I'd be the man  
 I'd be the man  
 I'd be the man (Oh)  
 I'd be the man (Yeah)  
 I'd be the man (I'd be the man)  
 [Outro]  
 If I was a man, then I'd be the man

#### Annexe 8 – Script CO, discours d’Emma Watson aux Nations Unies<sup>89</sup>

### Oral Comprehension script : Emma Watson’s speech at the United Nations.



The more I have spoken about feminism, the more I have realized that fighting for women’s rights has too often become synonymous with man-hating. If there is one thing I know for certain, it is that this has to stop. I started questioning gender-based assumptions a long time ago, when I was eight, I was confused for being called “bossy” because I wanted to direct the plays that we would put on for our parents, but the boys were not. When at fourteen I started to be sexualized by certain elements of the media. When at fifteen my girlfriends started dropping out of their beloved sports teams because they didn’t want to appear “muscly”. When at eighteen my male friends were unable to express their feelings. I decided that I was a feminist and this seemed uncomplicated to me. But my recent research has shown me that feminism has become an unpopular word. Women are choosing not to identify as feminists. Why has the word become such an uncomfortable one ?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSHJYyRViIU>

<sup>89</sup> Document créé par mes soins avec l’appui de la vidéo CNN, *Emma Watson’s speech at the United Nations*, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSHJYyRViIU>

## Final Task



For international Women's day on March 8th, the school's radio prepares a special programme entitled "Celebrating Women" in which each of you present a **five-minute** talk about an important woman in your life, your role model. It can be someone of your family or a celebrity. Present her and say why you are admirative of her.

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<sup>90</sup> Document créé par mes soins.

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**Abstract:**

This thesis' goal is to explore the various responses that Americans have had and still have towards the different witch-hunts their nation has gone through. Here, I am reviewing and analyzing famous witch-hunts in the United States. I am taking into account details, the historical contexts, as well as their resonance in the world. I am highlighting events such as the Salem witch trials of 1692-93, the Red Scare of 1947-54 and the #MeToo Movement that started in 2017. I am also discussing the position of women in society: the general condition of women during the colonial period to explain the Salem witch-hunt, and mostly the evolution of women's living conditions throughout the centuries, the movement of feminism, including the important women figures who are part of this movement, and I close this part with an examination of intersectionality, in order to prove how women may be victims of numerous discriminations. Finally, I am focusing on the representation of witches and the evolution of those representations. This evolution includes their representation on screen, whether in TV series or movies, as well as in arts and various media.

**Keywords:**

Witch-hunts, Feminism, Women, Witches, Representation of Witches, Salem trials, Witchcraft, the Red Scare, the #MeToo Movement, Media, Intersectionality.