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"She Killed Someone? Good for Her!": Character and Narrative Analysis of Women in the 'Good for Her' Horror Subgenre Films

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Copyright Statement

Abstract

This research analyses the depiction of women in modern horror movies under the "Good for Her" horror subgenre. This horror subgenre focuses on female protagonists asserting autonomy and agency in oppressive environments in morally ambiguous manners. This research conducts a qualitative content analysis of five films: Luca Guadagnino's *Suspiria* (2018), Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett's *Ready or Not* (2019), Ari Aster's *Midsommar* (2019), Robert Eggers' *The VVitch* (2015), and Jordan Peele's *Nope* (2022). Using Feminist Film Theory as the analytical framework, it utilises character and narrative coding to examine the depiction of female characters. This approach provides a detailed exploration of how these films portray female agency, autonomy, and empowerment. The Coding Sheet for Character and Narrative Analysis has five sections under Character Coding (Agency and Autonomy, Expression of Rage and Anger, Empowerment through Violence and Self Defence, Rejection of Male Control and Influence, and Character Complexity and Depth) and five sections under Narrative Coding (Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes, Theme of Female Rage and Liberation, Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation, Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation, and Narrative Arc of Empowerment).

The study addresses two key research questions:

1. How does the “Good for Her” horror subgenre depict female characters’ agency, autonomy, and expressions of rage through character behaviours and narrative structures?
2. How do female protagonists in this subgenre exemplify or defy the central tenets of Feminist Film Theory?

This research aims to contribute to the discourse on feminist horror cinema by highlighting the importance of the "Good for Her" subgenre in redefining representations of women in horror. It aims to emphasise these films not only reflect shifting cultural attitudes towards gender but also serve as a powerful medium for feminist storytelling.

This study finds that the “Good for Her” subgenre in modern horror reclaims female rage, autonomy, and power through violent or supernatural narrative arcs that challenge patriarchal structures and align with key tenets of feminist film theory.

Keywords: Feminist Film Theory, Good for Her Horror, Horror Films, Female Agency, Modern Horror Cinema, Patriarchy, Autonomy, Female Rage

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Introduction

The Role of Horror in Society

For as long as I have known, horror as a genre has functioned as a cinematic mirror that reflects society's darkest fears. What terrifies a society will be reflected in horror films. It can be collective panic, anxieties, or the unspoken zeitgeist of the time. And like any mirror worth its salt, horror does not lie. It simply shows. The genre has always been more than gory entertainment. It is a space where issues of power and gender are played out. Whether it's a ghost lurking behind the door, or a masked killer creeping in suburban shadows, horror has adapted through decades. A spike in release of horror films almost always align with historical or political turbulence.

Different periods produce different nightmares. During turbulent times, horror tends to crank the volume up on chaos. Its true essence, however, lies in metaphor. The monster is never just a monster. But it often wears the skin of whatever fear is most significant for a group of people. And from this comes the term 'meta horror' (Brehmer, 2016).

Historical and Cultural Triggers in Horror

The Cold War and the Fear of the 'Other'

Let's have a flashback to the Cold War era, somewhere between the 1940s and 1960s: The genre becomes flooded with aliens and invaders. America was busy fighting an invisible enemy, and by that, I mean communism (National Museum of American Diplomacy, 2023). Americans were stockpiling nukes and whispering about spies. Horror and sci-fi responded in kind. Alien invasion films, body-snatcher stories, and secretive antagonists became cinematic stand-ins for ideological anxiety.

Take *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) for instance. The plot is about humans being replaced by emotionless alien replicas known as *pod people* (Mainwaring et al., 1956). A not-so-subtle metaphor for the McCarthy-era panic. At the height of the Red Scare, the real horror wasn't from space, rather it was the possibility that your neighbour, or teacher, or relative might be a Russian spy, communist and what not. The film tapped into this unease. It offered paranoia not as subplot, but as the entire atmosphere.

The 1970s and 1980s: Gender, Family, and the Fear of Female Power

Fast-forward to the 1970s and 1980s, and the genre starts changing its form. The tension now lives inside the house, rather than outside. It's in the kitchens, bedrooms, and high school locker rooms. Patriarchy felt unstable once the feminist movements started and horror sensed it (Roche, 2017). Feminist thought was starting conversations around gender and power. Horror had to represent it.

Carrie (1976) is a gruesome portrayal of puberty, shame, and repressed female rage. Adapted from Stephen King's novel, director Brian De Palma's vision throws menstruation onto the screen as a trigger, but not just for telekinetic chaos, but for a girl's liberation and destruction (King & Cohen, 1976). The violence isn't random. It's revenge. It's the explosion that follows years of being repressed.

Then came *Halloween* (1978), where the infamous "Final Girl" trope was born (Mouradian, 2022). In a blood-soaked suburbia, the lone surviving girl is always the one who follows the rules. She says no to sex, no to drugs, and no to reckless decisions. This wasn't a coincidence though. It showed a culture that was still unsure about women's sexual freedom (Carpenter & Hill, 1978). Female liberation was happening outside the screen. Inside it, survival was reserved for the *pure*. And by *pure*, I mean women who followed patriarchal standards.

As the 1980s began, female rage (which is this research's central focus) took centre stage. *Aliens* (1986) didn't just give horror another female lead, it gave the world Ellen Ripley (who became the blueprint for most horror heroines who came after) (Cameron et al., 1986). Sigourney Weaver's character was maternal, but also lethal. Ripley wasn't just surviving the system, but she was fighting it. In her showdown with the alien queen, the genre found its feminist icon.

Contemporary Horror: The 21st Century and the Rise of "Good for Her" Cinema

Today, horror films still mirror the cultural weather. If Cold War-era horror was about ideology and 70s horror was about sexuality, 21st-century horror speaks in the language of female autonomy. The most compelling female characters are no longer victims, but they're the *writers* of their own fates. This is where the "Good for Her" subgenre takes root.

Think of *Midsommar* (2019). Think of *Ready or Not* (2019). These films don't present heroines who escape evil unharmed. Instead, they embrace power through hardships. Empowerment here doesn't always look clean, rather it's morally grey (Vaught, 2024). These women are not saved by others. They save themselves.

Horror continues to change as to reflect what society fears the most. In the newest chapters of horror, women are not running from monsters anymore, but they're burning the house down, and building something else from the ash.

Early Horror and Representations of Women

From the get-go, horror cinema had a lot to say about women. But most of it wasn't flattering. The genre's early years were marked by rigid portrayals of gender, with women often reduced to ornamental figures and passive victims. Their roles were almost always defined in contrast to the male protagonists. Women were there to offer nothing more than support, beauty, or vulnerability. These characterisations weren't new, rather they represented the gender norms

of the time. A woman, according to early horror logic, was either a saint who needed saving or a fantasy to be possessed.

Submissive and Victimised Roles

Agency, in early horror films, wasn't something women got to have. Most female characters existed on a spectrum that stretched from "damsel in distress" to "decorative collateral." The damsel trope became a genre staple, because it mirrored the social standard of early 20th-century femininity. Women *must be* pure, quiet, and entirely dependent on the men around her.

Dracula (1931) is a perfect example. Mina Harker is introduced not as a character with her own arc, but as a symbol. She is the one to be hypnotised and controlled by the titular vampire. She isn't just threatened by Count Dracula, but she also becomes a narrative device through which the male characters act. Whether it's Van Helsing plotting her rescue or Jonathan Harker worrying over her safety, Mina's journey is entirely dependent on men's grace towards her (IMDb, 1931).

But you see, this wasn't just a Universal Pictures problem. Outside America, the German Expressionist film *Nosferatu* (1922) repeated the same formula. Ellen Hutter is drawn into the clutches of Count Orlok. Her fragility makes her less a person and more a symbol of purity and sacrifice (Henrik Galeen & Stoker, 1922). The pattern in early horror was that women existed to be hurt, saved, or mourned.

Male-Centric Storytelling and the Male Gaze

Dig a little deeper and it becomes evident that the narrative lens itself was male-centric. Almost all early horror films were created by men: written, directed, and produced within an industry that exclusively supported male perspectives. As a result, female characters were often viewed less as people and more as projections. This phenomenon later became known

as the “male gaze,” a term coined by Laura Mulvey in 1975 to describe how cinema depicts women as objects of male pleasure (Mulvey, 1975).

For example, *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) depicts Christine Daaé into as the damsel in distress whose survival depends on the might and wrath of two men. Torn between the Phantom's obsession and Raoul’s chivalry, Christine becomes the object through which male characters express emotion (Julian et al., 1925). Her story revolves entirely around male possession.

Even when the genre offered a glimmer of female resistance, it was quick to punish it. *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) is a rare case where a female character rejects the role assigned to her. Created by men to be the monster’s mate, the Bride famously pulls back in horror at the creature (Whale et al., 1935). But rather than escape or gain autonomy, her refusal triggers destruction. Her agency is punished immediately.

The Rise of Feminist Horror

The 2000s brought in the era of feminist horror. Feminist horror expanded the genre's scope to not only critique patriarchal structures but also give voice to female characters reclaiming agency. This period saw a notable shift from passive victims to active, complex protagonists, and horror films became a space for exploring deeper themes of bodily autonomy, sexual agency, and the emotional and psychological impacts of gendered violence.

Feminist horror in the 2000s directly engaged with real-world issues such as gender-based violence, and the commodification of women’s bodies (Balanescu, 2022). These films often subverted the traditional horror trope where victims were punished for their sexuality or rebellion.

The feminist horror wave of the 2000s laid the groundwork for later films such as *Revenge* (2017), *Promising Young Woman* (2020), and *Fresh* (2022), all of which expand on the

themes of women taking revenge against male perpetrators. These films continue the dialogue about sexual agency and bodily autonomy. They push back against the objectification of women in traditional horror narratives.

The Rise of "Good for Her" Horror

Emerging from the aftermath of societal movements like #MeToo and modern feminist discourse, the "Good for Her" horror subgenre focuses on female protagonists who, after experiencing trauma or oppression, reclaim power through morally ambiguous or violent actions (Flora, 2023). Unlike the traditional horror formula, which often casts women as victims or mere survivors, these films emphasise women's agency, even when their empowerment comes in unsettling or destructive forms.

Key Characteristics of "Good for Her" Horror

These films depict female liberation as radical and unconventional. They explore the cathartic and often violent processes through which women gain autonomy and break free from patriarchal constraints. These stories move away from established horror tropes and allows female protagonists to rewrite their own narratives. This research will consist of narrative and character coding of five notable “Good for Her” subgenre horror films.

The Role of Horror in Feminist Discourse

The films in the *Good for Her* subgenre illustrate how horror serves as a tool for feminist storytelling. Instead of simply depicting women as survivors or passive victims, these films allow women to reclaim their power, sometimes through violent or unsettling means.

As more filmmakers embrace these subversive themes, the genre of feminist horror continues to evolve, engaging with cultural anxieties surrounding power, control, and gender dynamics. Horror, with its visceral engagement of societal fears, remains a crucial platform for feminist

expression as it provides an outlet for audiences to process and reflect on real-world issues surrounding gender and empowerment.

Research Questions and Objectives

Research Questions

1. How does the "Good for Her" horror subgenre depict female characters' agency, autonomy, and expressions of rage through character behaviours and narrative structures?
2. How do female protagonists in this subgenre exemplify or defy the central tenets of Feminist Film Theory?

Research Objectives

1. To study how the "Good for Her" horror subgenre depict female characters' agency, autonomy, and expressions of rage through character behaviours and narrative structures.
2. To analyse how female protagonists in this subgenre exemplify or defy the central tenets of Feminist Film Theory.

Literature Review

1. **Foundations of Feminist Film Theory**

    A. **Historical Context**

Second-Wave Feminism and Cultural Critique

Feminist film theory was born when the second wave of feminism, stretching from the 1960s to the 1980s, was challenging the status quo on every front (Hall, 2024). This movement wasn't just about voting rights or legal reforms anymore. It was about more personal battles such as reproductive autonomy, equality in the workplace, and how women were seen in culture and media.

As the movement grew, feminists started looking closely at how patriarchy wasn't just present in politics or economics, but it was baked into the very images and stories people consumed every day. Film with its mass reach and emotional pull became a key battleground. The question became clear: *What messages are these movies sending? And who gets to speak, act, and exist meaningfully on screen?*

Films, after all, don't exist in a vacuum. Every shot, every cut, every plot twist is packed with meaning. And too often, those meanings mirrored a world where women were expected to be silent, supportive, or simply there for someone else's story. The damsel in distress, the loyal wife or the seductress who's punished for stepping out of line. These were constantly repeating patterns which restated what society already believed about women's roles. In this environment, feminist scholars started asking: *Why do we accept film as neutral or harmless when it so clearly reflects and reinforces the biases of its time?*

Early Feminist Film Criticism

Before feminist film theory took root, there were already women who dared to challenge how Hollywood depicted femininity. Two of the most influential voices from this early period were Molly Haskell and Marjorie Rosen.

In *From Reverence to Rape* (1974), Haskell explained how Hollywood boxed women into narrow roles. She stated that even the so-called "strong" female leads were often written through a male lens, which means they were either put on a pedestal or knocked off it (Haskell, 1987). She points out how women were constantly reduced to two-dimensional figures: *the saintly virgin* or *the seductive threat*.

Rosen's *Popcorn Venus* (1973) took a similar approach. She coined categories like the "Eternal Child," the "Vamp," and the "Wife-Mother" to show how, no matter the decade, women were rarely allowed to be full, complex characters (Rosen, 1975). Even in comedies where women had sharp dialogue or independent streaks, like *His Girl Friday* (1940), their stories almost always looped back to romance or male validation (Lederer et al., 1940).

What made both Haskell and Rosen's work groundbreaking was that they treated film as serious proof of how deeply sexism was embedded in entertainment.

My personal example would be *Last Tango in Paris* (1972). The film's notorious rape scene was later revealed to have been unscripted and deeply traumatic for actress Maria Schneider (Jones, 2025). This is an example of how the industry's pursuit of "realism" often came at the expense of women's safety, consent, and dignity.

Haskell's and Rosen's critiques later set the stage for feminist film theorists like Laura Mulvey, who brought psychoanalytic and ideological frameworks into the conversation (Huiying, 2024).

2. Key Theorists and Contributions

a) Laura Mulvey and the "Male Gaze"

Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (1975)

Feminist film theory developed further in 1975, when Laura Mulvey published her essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. Mulvey started the conversation around how we watch films by introducing the idea of the "male gaze", a term that became foundational to feminist media analysis.

In the essay, Mulvey states that mainstream cinema is built for the heterosexual male viewer. She showed technical examples on how the camera's framing, movement, and editing often guide the audience to adopt a male point of view. This means the directorial vision always casted men as the active agents in the story and women as passive subjects to be looked at (Mulvey, 1975). Mulvey doubles down by saying women are stylised, framed, and presented for visual pleasure as glamorous images rather than fully developed characters.

One of the most well-known examples she discusses is Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954). In the film, Jeff (played by James Stewart) spies on his neighbours from his apartment, including a dancer nicknamed "Miss Torso" (Hayes & Woolrich, 1954). As viewers, we're encouraged to take pleasure in watching these women from afar. Mulvey argued that this kind of framing turns women into spectacles rather than participants.

Mulvey's essay argued that cinema teaches audiences how to *see* in a gendered way. Viewers are trained, often unconsciously, to take on a male perspective to find pleasure in looking at women rather than seeing *with* them.

Psychoanalysis and Cinematic Structure

To strengthen her argument, Mulvey turned to psychoanalytic theory, particularly the work of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan.

A key concept she drew from Freud was *scopophilia,* which translates to "the pleasure of looking." In film, this pleasure is structured along gendered lines: men look, and women are looked at. This gaze, Mulvey argued, is not innocent or neutral. It's a form of visual control that reinforces patriarchal power by positioning male characters, and by extension, male viewers as dominant observers who consume the female body as spectacle (Sathvika, 2025).

From Lacan, Mulvey borrowed the idea of the "*mirror stage"*, a moment in early childhood when a person first identifies with their reflection, forming a sense of self through an idealised image (Hewitson, 2010). In cinema, the screen becomes a kind of mirror. Spectators are encouraged to identify with the male protagonist, who represents an idealised ego figure. But the woman on screen complicates this process. She becomes what Lacan calls the "*lack",* a disruptive presence that challenges male identity and must be either controlled or eliminated for the narrative to regain balance.

The most significant outcome of Mulvey's theory was a shift in critical focus. Scholars began to interrogate the *form* of cinema and not just who appeared on screen. How they were shown and so on. From action blockbusters like *James Bond* to rom coms like *Pretty Woman,* to animated films like *The Little Mermaid*, critics asked: *where is the gaze directed? Who holds power in the frame, and who is being framed?*

b) Post-Mulvey Theorists and Challenges to Mulvey

Mulvey's Theory is not without contention. Key theorists such as E. Ann Kaplan, Tania Modleski, and bell hooks expanded the gaze in different ways that offered important counterpoints to Mulvey's analysis.

1. E. Ann Kaplan's Female Spectatorship

E. Ann Kaplan, in her critique of Mulvey's work in *Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera* (1983), argued that female viewers are not passive recipients of the male gaze but can actively interpret and engage with films in ways that reflect their own lived experiences (Kaplan, 2017).

Kaplan introduced the idea that women could identify with both male and female characters in films, depending on the structure of the narrative and the portrayal of those characters. She started the call for feminist film theory to embrace the multiplicity of women's experiences and viewing positions.

2. Tania Modleski's Narrative and the Feminine

In *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory* (1988) and *Feminism and Film Theory* (1988), Tanya Modleski argued that genres such as melodrama and soap operas which typically focus on emotional depth and domestic issues also provide female audiences with an emotional space that mainstream cinema often neglects (Modleski, 2005).

She stated that while these films may depict women trapped within traditional gender roles and patriarchal structures, they simultaneously provide opportunities for women to identify with characters who navigate and resist these limitations.

Modleski's expansion of the feminist film theory highlighted the importance of narrative and genre in shaping how women engage with cinema and the emotional pleasures it provides.

3. bell hooks: Oppositional Gaze

bell hooks' *The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators* (1992) challenges the predominantly white, middle-class lens through which early feminist film criticism viewed issues of gender and representation. She argues that the voices and experiences of Black

women were marginalised both in front of and behind the camera, with mainstream cinema offering few opportunities for Black women to see themselves represented in complex and empowering ways (Hooks, 1995).

In *The Oppositional Gaze*, hooks introduces the concept of the "*oppositional gaze*," which serves as a key framework for understanding Black women's engagement with cinema. This gaze is not passive, rather it is a form of active resistance. The oppositional gaze refers to the politically charged way that Black women approach films by rejecting stereotypical portrayals of Blackness and womanhood.

Black women have been excluded from mainstream media's portrayal of idealised figures of femininity and strength, but they have developed critical viewing strategies that allow them to subvert these representations. The oppositional gaze is a mechanism through which Black women engage with films to critically deconstruct them and create alternative readings that affirm their own identities, experiences, and power.

For hooks, Black women's voices are essential to any comprehensive feminist discourse on media representation, and their perspectives must be integrated into the broader critique of patriarchal systems in cinema.

3. Core Concepts in Feminist Film Theory

a) Representation and Narrative Power

One of the biggest questions feminist film theory raises is: *Who gets to be the main character?*

Teresa de Lauretis and Mary Ann Doane built on Laura Mulvey's early work by looking closely at the deeper structure of how stories are told and how women are positioned within them (Chaudhuri, 2006). They noticed how women often fall into binary roles, especially in genre films. One of the most common examples is the *virgin/whore* trope, which shows up a

lot in horror as I have stated in the Introduction. In slasher films like *Friday the 13th*, *Halloween*, and *Scream*, sexually active girls are usually killed off, while the virginal "final girl" is the one who survives.

Then there's the *mother/monster* binary, which we also see a lot in horror as well. Think about *Psycho* (1960), where the twisted idea of the mother becomes the root of violence (Stefano & Bloch, 1960). Or *Carrie* (1976), where Margaret White is less a nurturing figure and more a source of fear and repression (King & Cohen, 1976). On the flip side, *Room* (2015) offers a much more compassionate take, where motherhood becomes a form of strength and survival (Donoghue, 2016). That contrast shows how film can either reinforce or challenge harmful ideas about women depending on how the story is told.

Narrative power isn't just about who appears on screen, it's about whose choices *move* the plot, and who is allowed to grow. Take *Marriage Story* (2019). At first, it seems like we're getting both sides of a breakup, but as the story unfolds, it leans more into the husband's emotional journey. Scarlett Johansson's character starts off strong, but by the middle of the film, she feels more like a foil for Adam Driver's character development than a fully realised lead (Baumbach, 2019). It's a reminder that even "balanced" narratives often fall back into familiar patterns.

The issue isn't just on screen, it's behind the scenes too. According to a 2023 report from the Centre for the Study of Women in Television and Film, only 18% of key creative roles (like directors, writers, and producers) on the top 250 films were held by women (Lauzen, 2023). That lack of representation affects the types of stories that get told and how women are portrayed in them.

b) The Spectator's Position

Another key question feminist film theory asks is: *Who's looking, and who's being looked at?*

Scholars built on Mulvey's work to show the gaze can shift depending on the genre, the filmmaker, or the intended audience.

Think of *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* (2019), where director Céline Sciamma flips the gaze. Instead of turning women into visual objects, the film creates a sense of mutual looking (Smolarek, 2021). The characters see and are seen by each other, and the audience is brought into that space. It's careful and refuses to let us consume female bodies the way we've been taught to in mainstream film.

The way a film lines up our perspective about who we're meant to follow, root for, and emotionally connect with is just as important. If most films are still built around male protagonists, then audiences (no matter their gender) are often pushed to see the world through a male lens.

Linda Williams has done a lot of work on this, especially in horror. She looks at how the body responds to fear, desire, discomfort and how that tie into what we're shown. In horror, it's common to see extended shots of women screaming or running, not always to make us feel for them, but sometimes just to put their suffering on display. A film like *It Follows* (2014) uses long tracking shots and eerie framing to make us feel like voyeurs (Mitchell, 2015).

4. Application to Genre: Feminist Theory in Horror Cinema

Horror might seem like an unlikely place for feminist film theory but it's actually one of the richest. It's a genre that doesn't shy away from messy and uncomfortable emotions, which makes it a great space for exploring questions about gender, power, and the body. Horror forces us to confront things we usually avoid, and in doing so, it often reveals our cultural fears including those tied to femininity and control.

a) Gender Anxiety in Horror Films

Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous-Feminine* (1993) is a key work in understanding how feminist film theory interacts with horror films. Drawing from Julia Kristeva's theory of the abject, Creed talks about how horror films often portray women as monstrous, not just evil, but terrifying *because* of their biology (Creed, 1993). Characters like the possessed girl, the monstrous mother, or the deadly seductress aren't just scary but they represent society's deeper discomfort with female bodies, sexuality, and agency.

Motherhood, often seen as the ultimate symbol of femininity, also gets reworked in horror. Films like *The Babadook* (2014), *Hereditary* (2018), and *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) show motherhood as something heavy and even terrifying. These mothers aren't just nurturing but they're also broken and consumed. It's a reminder that motherhood isn't always joyful, and it can also be deeply scary.

b) Gendered Violence in Horror Films

Recent horror films are playing with and breaking the stereotype of the *Final Girl* which I have talked about in Introduction. In *You're Next* (2011), Erin takes charge from the start by outsmarting her attackers with skill and confidence (Barrett, 2013). In *The Witch* (2015), Thomasin doesn't get punished for her "sin" as she embraces it. She chooses power by rejecting the religious and societal expectations placed on her (Eggers, 2016). These kinds of endings flip the script. They show that "monstrous" women aren't always villains. Sometimes, they're just women taking control.

Even mainstream critics have started to notice this shift. Constance Grady wrote in *Vox* that horror is no longer just about women being terrorised, rather it's also about women *fighting back* (Grady, 2018). *The Atlantic* noted how female-led horror is on the rise, both critically and commercially (Meslow, 2012). Films like *Us*, and *Midsommar* aren't just scary, but

they’re layered with commentary about gender and power. And in these stories, women are no longer just screaming. They’re being heard.

5. The Rise of the “Good for Her” Horror Subgenre

Over the past few years, horror has taken a turn and a new wave of films, often referred to online as the *“Good for Her”* subgenre, has started to rewrite the way we see women in horror (Squires, 2023). Instead of watching them suffer or survive in silence, we now see them take back control messily and violently. It’s not about being perfect heroines. It’s about reclaiming space, even if it means burning everything down to do it.

a) What makes this subgenre so different?

The phrase *“Good for Her”* actually started as a meme. People were reacting to the endings of films like *Gone Girl* (2014), *Midsommar* (2019), and *Promising Young Woman* (2020). These are movies where the main character does something extreme and morally questionable, and instead of judgement, the audience goes: “*You know what? Good for her.*”

These films flip the script. Take *Gone Girl* for an example. Amy Dunne doesn’t just disappear; she carefully crafts a narrative that punishes her cheating husband and manipulates a media that feeds off female pain (Pfister, 2022). Her infamous monologue isn’t just a rant, it’s a *mic drop*. She takes control of her story, her body, and her public image. It’s not “nice” the way the Final Girl trope worked. It’s powerful.

What makes these films stand out is that they don’t give us neat resolutions or moral lessons. These women are not asking for approval. Their liberation is messy, uncomfortable, and yet weirdly satisfying. They show women pushing back in spaces where they were once powerless. Be it inside relationships, or society at large. And the violence we see? It’s not random. It’s symbolic. It's a reaction to years of being silenced and repressed.

b) How is the Fourth-Wave Feminism making way for this subgenre?

This shift in horror films can't be separated from what's happening in the real world. The *"Good for Her"* movement ties directly into fourth-wave feminism, which focuses on intersectionality, digital activism, and speaking out against systemic abuse (Ordaz, 2023). It's feminism that's online, and inclusive and it's changing the stories we tell.

Look at *Revenge* (2017) directed by Coralie Fargeat. It takes the familiar (and problematic) rape-revenge narrative and flips it (Fargeat, 2018). The violence isn't there to traumatise. It's about survival, and bodily autonomy. Or *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (2014) which is an Iranian vampire Western where the woman in the chador isn't a victim, but a predator, silently haunting abusive men in the dead of night (Amirpour, 2015). These stories reimagine what power looks like when women are wielding it.

The real-world influence is clear. Movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp cracked open conversations about trauma, and power that had been ignored for too long (Platts, 2024). And horror, in its raw way, became the perfect genre to process all of it.

And it's not just white, straight women getting this lens anymore. Recent films have brought intersectionality to the forefront. In *Master* (2022), we see horror shaped by the Black female experience inside an elite university (Diallo, 2022). In *Nanny* (2022), West African folklore fuses with the real anxieties of immigration and motherhood (Jusu, 2022). These stories prove that horror is more than just jump scares. It's becoming a space where women, in all their complexity, get to be the ones with the final say.

6. Why Feminist Film Theory and Horror Films? Why together?

Feminist film theory is like a toolkit which helps us break down how gender, power, and representation shape the way stories are told on screen. When you apply it to horror, it becomes even more powerful because it forces us to look beyond the screams and gore and

ask: *What are these films saying about women?* It highlights patterns we might've missed before like the constant victimisation of women, or how female monstrosity is used to reflect society's fears about female power. But it also shows us the potential for transformation. Horror can give women the chance to take control of their own narrative, even if it means doing something messy or violent to get there.

Take the shift from the monstrous-feminine to the empowered women in "Good for Her" horror. These aren't the passive victims we're used to seeing. They're complex characters who resist, fight, and ultimately take control of their destinies. This change in how we see women in horror films mirrors what's been happening in the real world, especially with the rise of fourth-wave feminism, where women are fighting for justice, visibility, and autonomy. These films feel like a direct response to those cultural movements happening both on screen and off.

For me, horror has always been something special. It's one of the reasons I decided to study broadcasting in the first place. But beyond the adrenaline rush, I've always wanted to understand what horror films are really saying about women. I wanted to look deeper into how they portray female experiences, and more importantly, how those portrayals shape the way we think about gender and power. That's why the "Good for Her" subgenre grabbed my attention. It's not just about women being empowered in a traditional way, but about them doing so in ways that are messy and rebellious.

Even though this subgenre is growing, there's still not much academic research on it. I hope that through my Final Year Project, I can contribute something to that conversation. It's my sincere hope that my work encourages more discussion and further analysis of how women are represented in horror. The success of films like *The Substance* (2024) proves that there's a market for stories that reflect women's complex lives and connect with audiences on a deeper

level. As horror continues to evolve, I truly believe it can be a space for powerful feminist storytelling that doesn't just entertain but makes us think about who gets to tell the stories and who gets to be in control.

Methodology

A. Research Design

Qualitative Approach

This study utilises a qualitative approach to research the depiction of women in the 'Good-for-Her' horror subgenre. This approach is used to explore the subjective meaning and thematic elements that are essential to the interpretive nature of Feminist Film Theory. Through the focus on character and narrative coding, a qualitative research approach aids the understanding of how female agency, autonomy, and rage are represented within the selected films.

To align with the research's focus on exploring feminist themes, the qualitative approach gives importance to character and narrative dimensions over quantitative metrics. It enables the coder to interpret character and narrative codes to explore whether these films follow the central tenets of Feminist Film Theory.

Content Analysis

Content analysis serves as the primary method to analyse the character and narrative components of the selected films. This is crucial to explore the ways in which feminist themes are integrated within character behaviors and narratives within the films. This is a structured but tangible approach to examine recurring patterns and deviations across the film.

The two core focuses of this study are character coding and narrative coding. A character's traits and actions are examined under character coding to explore their alignment with feminist concepts like agency and autonomy. Narrative coding is used to explore the plot structure and thematic framing and analyses the roader feminist underpinnings of each story.

Both types of coding are essential for a comprehensive analysis of the films' feminist depictions.

Focus on Feminist Film Theory

Feminist Film Theory is the theoretical framework used for this research. The theory is a critique on traditional representation of women in cinema. It also opposes constructs such as the male gaze and objectification of women. The central tenets of the Feminist Film Theory such a female autonomy, expressions of rage, and subversion of traditional gender roles are the basis of the codes created for the content analysis through character and narrative coding.

By applying Feminist Film Theory, this research aims to explore how the 'Good for Her' horror subgenre challenges patriarchal ideologies in cinema. For instance, examining the deconstruction of the male gaze and the depiction of female rage as a form of empowerment helps with analysing these films' feminist narratives.

B. Research Materials

Film Selection Criteria

The selection of films was guided by specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure relevance to the research objectives.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Films categorized within the 'Good for Her' subgenre in IMDb.
- Released between 2015 and 2022.
- Feature female protagonists.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Films not centered on female protagonists or lacking thematic alignment with Feminist Film Theory.

Selected Films

The following films were chosen based on their alignment with the criteria and their prominence within the ‘Good for Her’ subgenre:

1. **Suspiria (2018)**

A remake of the 1977 classic, Suspiria follows Susie, a young dancer who becomes entwined with a mysterious dance academy run by a coven of witches.

2. **Ready or Not (2019)**

This dark comedy horror film is about the newlywed Grace who has to survive a deadly game of Hide & Seek organised by her in-laws.

3. **Midsommar (2019)**

This cult horror follows Dani, who had recently lost her parents and her sister, as she follows her emotionally distant boyfriend to a Sweden to visit a Swedish cult.

4. **The VVitch (2015)**

Set in 17th-century New England, Protestant horror film The VVitch follows Thomasin and her family members who have been exiled by their clan due to witchcraft accusations.

5. **Nope (2022)**

This sci-fi horror blend of a film follows OJ and Emerald Haywood as an alien entity terrorises their neighborhood.

All these films are found under the ‘Good for Her’ tag in IMDb. They are tagged such way because of the transformation they undergo throughout the film and how they are portrayed at the end of it. By applying character and narrative coding to these films, this research aims to uncover the ways in which they challenge or conform to the tenets of Feminist Film Theory.

C. Data Collection

Data Sources

The films selected themselves will serve as the primary data for this research. They will be treated as audiovisual texts to be analysed using the codes created.

Supplementary data sources are also incorporated to provide contextual depth and enhance the analysis. These include academic reviews and critiques. Scholarly reviews and critiques serve as secondary sources as they can offer insights that may provide further context for the data analysis.

By combining these data sources, the study ensures a comprehensive exploration of the selected films, considering both textual content and contextual influences.

Data Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling strategy was used for this research to pull focus to the ‘Good for Her’ horror subgenre films that feature feminist themes. Purposive sampling allows the selection of films that best align with the research objectives and the theoretical framework of Feminist Film Theory.

The chosen films—Suspiria (2018), Ready or Not (2019), Midsommar (2019), The VVitch (2015), and Nope (2022)—were selected based on their thematic relevance, release date, and critical acclaim within the subgenre. These films represent a spectrum of narratives and feminist portrayals to ensure a focused data set for analysis.

Observation Units

Two primary observation units guide the analysis:

Character Level:

1. **Protagonist Traits**: Examination of the female protagonists' characteristics, including their autonomy, resilience, and expressions of rage.
2. **Actions and Dialogue**: Analysis of key actions and dialogue to assess how they embody or challenge feminist ideals.
3. **Interactions**: Exploration of the protagonists' relationships with other characters to uncover dynamics of power, solidarity, or conflict.

Narrative Level:

1. **Plot Structure**: Evaluation of the overall story arc, including moments of conflict and resolution, to identify feminist themes.
2. **Conflict Resolution**: Analysis of how the films resolve conflicts and whether these resolutions empower or marginalize female characters.
3. **Thematic Elements**: Identification of recurring motifs and symbolic elements that contribute to the feminist narrative.

D. Data Analysis

Coding Process

Character Coding

Character coding focuses on the female protagonists, using an extensive code sheet developed from the central tenets of Feminist Film Theory. This process involves systematically analysing the protagonists' traits, actions, and development to assess their alignment with feminist ideals. Key categories include:

1. **Autonomy**: Evaluation of the characters' independence in decision-making and control over their circumstances.
2. **Rage**: Analysis of how expressions of anger or defiance are portrayed and their role in the narrative.
3. **Relationships**: Examination of interactions with other characters, highlighting dynamics of solidarity, conflict, or resistance.
4. **Responses to Patriarchal Oppression**: Exploration of how the characters confront, navigate, or overthrow oppressive structures.

Narrative Coding

Narrative coding examines broader storytelling elements which focus on how plot structures and resolutions reflect feminist themes. This includes:

1. **Narrative Arcs**: Analysis of the protagonists' journeys, including moments of empowerment, transformation, or resistance.
2. **Conflict Resolution**: Exploration of how conflicts are resolved and whether the outcomes reinforce or subvert traditional gender norms.
3. **Framing of Female Empowerment**: Evaluation of how the narrative positions the protagonists' actions and choices within a feminist context.

Framework for Analysis

The analysis is guided by Feminist Film Theory as it provides a critical lens for interpreting the data. Key concepts include:

1. **Deconstruction of the Male Gaze**: Examination of how the films challenge or conform to the objectification of women through visual framing and narrative focus.
2. **Monstrous-Feminine and Female Rage**: Exploration of how these films depict female rage as a response to oppression and how it contributes to the narrative.

3. **Subversion and Autonomy**: Identification of moments where the characters or narratives defy patriarchal norms, highlighting themes of autonomy and empowerment.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is employed to identify recurring feminist themes across the selected films. This involves:

1. **Pattern Recognition**: Examination of common motifs, such as expressions of rage, solidarity among women, or resistance to patriarchal control.
2. **Comparative Analysis**: Comparison of feminist portrayals across different films to identify variations and trends within the subgenre.
3. **Contextual Interpretation**: Placement of the identified themes within broader feminist and cinematic contexts to understand their cultural significance.

By integrating character and narrative coding with thematic analysis, this research aims to provide thorough examination of feminist portrayals in the ‘Good for Her’ horror subgenre, and address both the textual and contextual dimensions of the films.

E. Ethical Considerations

- **Respect for Creative Integrity**

This research aims to uphold an ethical commitment to respect the creative intentions of the filmmakers while critically analysing the films through the lens of Feminist Film Theory. The interpretations aim to engage with the filmmakers’ artistic visions thoughtfully and ensure that the analysis neither misrepresents nor distorts the narratives or thematic elements of the films. Even with a critical lens applied, the study acknowledges that films may carry multiple meanings depending on the viewer's perspective.

- **Bias Mitigation**

Given the interpretive nature of qualitative research, mitigating personal bias is crucial for maintaining analytical integrity. Strategy used is:

Triangulation of Data: The integration of multiple data sources, such as film reviews, scholarly critiques, and creator interviews, ensures a well-rounded interpretation of the films. These sources provide additional perspectives that complement and challenge the coder's subjective viewpoints.

F. Limitations of the Study

- **Scope of the Study**

The study is intentionally focused on the 'Good for Her' subgenre of horror. So, it may result in the exclusion of broader feminist themes present in other horror subgenres. While this focus allows for an in-depth exploration of a specific cinematic trend, it inherently narrows the scope of the findings.

Additionally, the analysis is limited to five films due to the detailed and resource-intensive nature of qualitative content analysis. Although these films provide a representative sample of the subgenre, a larger selection might yield more generalised insights.

- **Interpretive Nature of Feminist Film Theory**

Feminist Film Theory gives importance to subjective interpretation of visual and narrative elements. This interpretive approach carries risks of researcher bias or over-reliance on feminist constructs. The analysis may unintentionally prioritise feminist themes over other critical perspectives, potentially overlooking alternative readings of the films.

- **Cultural Contexts**

The selected films predominantly originate from Western contexts and reflect Western sociopolitical and cultural dynamics. This focus may limit the generalisability of the findings to non-Western representations of feminism in horror. While the research provides insights into contemporary feminist themes in Western cinema, it acknowledges the need for further studies exploring non-Western feminist narratives in horror.

G. Tools and Techniques

- **Software for Analysis**

To ensure a systematic and organised analysis, qualitative analysis software Microsoft Excel is used. Microsoft Excel helps with facilitating efficient coding and categorisation of film data and enables a detailed examination of character behaviors, narrative structures, and thematic elements.

Analysis

* *The Character and Narrative Coding Analysis Tables for all five films are attached to the Appendices section. Please refer to it for a scene-by-scene breakdown of the Coding.*

Codes, Subcodes, and Descriptions

Character Coding		
Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**
A. Agency and Autonomy (AA)	**1. Independent Decision-Making (IDM)**	Were there instances where the character made decisions without male or external guidance?
	2. Defiance of Traditional Gender Roles (DTGR)	Were there any moments where the character acted against stereotypical "feminine" behaviors or roles? (e.g., passivity, submission)
	3. Self-Directed Goals (SDG)	Were there any goals or objectives that the character pursued on her terms (as a response to societal or personal oppression)?
B. Expression of Rage and Anger (ERA)	**1. Justified Rage (JR)**	Were there any instances where the character's anger was portrayed as a valid response to trauma, betrayal, or oppression?
	2. Rage as Empowerment (RE)	Did the rage lead to transformative or empowering actions?
	3. Visible Emotional Complexity (VEC)	Did the depiction of complex emotions (anger, sorrow, betrayal) counteract the "hysterical" stereotype often imposed on female characters in horror?
C. Empowerment through Violence or Self-Defense (EVSD)	**1. Defensive Actions (DA)**	Were there any instances where the character used violence or aggression in self-defense?
	2. Offensive Actions as Assertion of Power (OAAP)	Was violence used proactively to assert control or reclaim power from oppressors?

	3. Ambiguous Morality (AM)	Were there any actions that might have been morally ambiguous (especially if they lead to empowerment)?
D. Rejection of Male Control or Influence (RMCI)	**1. Resistance to Male Authority (RMA)**	Were there any situations where the character directly challenged or disregarded male figures trying to control her choices?
	2. Autonomous Relationships (AR)	Were the portrayed relationships (of any kind) characterised by equality or by the character maintaining control?
	3. Self-Sufficiency (SS)	Did the character show self-reliance and resilience in pursuing her goals without relying on male characters?
E. Character Complexity and Depth (CCD)	**1. Moral Ambiguity (MA)**	Were there any situations where the character's actions could not be easily classified as "good" or "evil"?
	2. Psychological Development (PD)	Were there any growth or change in the character's beliefs, goals, or sense of identity?
	3. Resistance to Objectification (RO)	Were there any instances where the character was portrayed in a way that resists the male gaze (more focused on her interiority rather than her appearance)?
Narrative Coding		
Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**
A. Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes (SHGT)	**1. Final Girl Reinterpretation (FGR)**	How did the character subvert the "final girl" trope? (such as through active agency or moral ambiguity)
	2. Female Monstrosity (FM)	Were there any moments where the female character took on "monstrous" qualities as an assertion of power?
	3. Rejection of Passive Victimhood (RPV)	Were there any narrative choices that avoided positioning the female character as a helpless victim?
B. Theme of Female Rage and Liberation (TFRL)	**1. Rage as Narrative Catalyst (RNC)**	Did rage drive the plot forward or lead to key character developments?

	2. Revenge as Empowerment (RE)	Were there situations where revenge was depicted as a justified reclaiming of power and not a descent into evil?
	3. Empowerment Through Transgression (ETT)	Did the female character's actions challenge any taboos as part of her empowerment journey?
C. Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation (RFSI)	**1. Female Solidarity (FS)**	Were there any instances where female characters allied with each other?
	2. Female Isolation (FI)	Was there any depiction of isolation because of divergence from social expectations?
	3. Social and Psychological Consequences of Liberation (SPCL)	How did characters' decisions for autonomy affect their psychological or social realities?
D. Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation (USVR)	**1. Symbolism of Rage and Power (SRP)**	Were there any recurring symbols (e.g., fire, blood) that represented female rage, power, or transformation?
	2. Costuming and Physical Appearance (CPA)	Were there any costumes or physical transformations that signified power shifts, independence, or defiance?
	3. Setting and Space as Reflective of Female Power (SSRFP))	How did the settings (e.g., isolated houses, cult-like communes) reflect or facilitate female empowerment?
E. Narrative Arc of Empowerment (NAE)	**1. Stages of Empowerment (SE)**	What was the tipping point that catalysed the character's empowerment journey from oppression to autonomy?
	2. Resolution and Catharsis (RC)	How did the narrative provide a sense of closure or catharsis (especially through revenge or liberation)?
	3. Ambiguity of Empowerment (AE)	Did the narrative present empowerment as wholly positive or did it leave ambiguity?

Suspiria (2018), Dir. Luca Guadagnino

Luca Guadagnino's Suspiria (2018) doesn't just retell a horror classic from Dario Argento, it completely reimagines it through a feminist lens. It confidently centers female characters while tearing down traditional power structures. It isn't just about witches and rituals, but it's about rage, trauma, and reclaiming control, all within a world built almost entirely by and for women. Suspiria was chosen for the Analysis because it goes against the presumed notion that in the 'Good for Her' horror subgenre, it is always women against men. Throughout the analysis, and while we go through these five different films, we'll come to the realisation that this subgenre does not pit women against men, rather it pits women against anything that tries to hold them down.

Set in 1977 Berlin, Suspiria follows Susie Bannion, a young woman from Ohio who comes to Germany to join the prestigious Helena Markos Dance Company. She quickly catches the eye of Madame Blanc, the company's director, and is given a lead role in their latest performance. But as Susie settles in, one of the dancers, Patricia, mysteriously vanishes, and Susie begins to notice strange things happening at the academy. Dr. Josef Klemperer, a psychologist who was treating Patricia, starts investigating her disappearance and uncovers some unsettling truths about the dance school.

It turns out the academy isn't just a dance school, but it's a secret coven of witches, and Susie might be the reincarnation of their dark Witch Mother, Mother Suspiriorum. As Susie rises within the company, tensions within the coven come to a head, leading to a violent and surreal confrontation. In the end, Susie reveals herself as the dark mother, bringing death to those who betrayed her and offering a merciful end to those who were caught in the coven's twisted plans. The movie closes with Susie accepting her true power: she was never the innocent dancer she seemed to be; she was always meant to rule.

Agency and Autonomy (AA)

Susie Bannion (Dakota Johnson) stands out as a woman who owns her choices from the beginning. She leaves her strict religious home and arrives in Berlin, not because someone pushed her to, but because she wants to. Even when the coven tries to steer her path, Susie never feels like she's being controlled. Her quiet confidence, even as things get darker, makes her autonomy feel earned rather than forced.

She's also not your typical horror protagonist because she's sensual, grounded, and completely unafraid of her own power. It is admirable that she doesn't fit the mold of the hysterical or helpless female character. Instead, she's calm and calculating in ways we don't often see from women in horror.

Expression of Rage and Anger (ERA)

What really hits emotionally was how the film treats female rage. When Susie summons Death and wipes out Helena Markos and her inner circle, it doesn't come off as cruel. Rather, it feels justified. That moment is messy, violent, and powerful, but more than anything, it feels like cleansing. Her rage isn't random; it's intentional. It says something about the systems women are forced to survive in, and how sometimes, the only way out is to burn them down.

Even characters like Sara Simms get space to show anger and frustration. Her drive to uncover the truth about Patricia and Olga pushes the plot forward. These women aren't just reacting to the horror, but they're confronting it head-on.

Empowerment through Violence or Self-Defense (EVSD)

Violence in Suspiria doesn't feel like a spectacle, but it feels symbolic. Susie's final act isn't about shock but it's about reshaping the entire world of the film. She doesn't just survive. She

actually takes over. That twist, when we learn who she truly is, redefines what female empowerment can look like in horror. It's not clean or pretty. It's raw, and it refuses to apologise and we see Susie as a witch at the end, rather than a survivor or a pure deity.

At the same time, the witches operate in a moral grey area. Madame Blanc's manipulation of Susie's dance to harm Olga adds complexity to the power dynamic. You're never really sure who's right or wrong and that ambiguity is what makes the film feel so honest. It also follows the functional meaning of what it means to be a 'Good for Her' horror subgenre film because women tend to work in morally grey areas in this subgenre.

Rejection of Male Control or Influence (RMCI)

One of the most satisfying things about this film is how irrelevant the male characters are. Dr. Klemperer, for instance, is there mostly to witness and reflect but never to intervene meaningfully. The police are reduced to clueless figures of ridicule when they decide to investigate the Dance Company after Dr Klemperer complains about the witches. It's a total reversal of the usual horror setup, where male authority tries (and fails) to save the day.

Susie doesn't need saving. She's already in control. Her arc is built entirely around her own decisions, and no man plays a significant role in that journey. This means the film follows Feminist Film Theory as one of the tenets of the theory is for women to have whole autonomy over their story.

Character Complexity and Depth (CCD)

None of the women in Suspiria are simple. Susie's final act of murdering the old coven can be read in a lot of ways. Is she freeing the women under Markos' rule, or just replacing one form of control with another? We never get a full peek into her head, which makes her even more intriguing. Her choices force us to sit with discomfort as she kills Helena Markos for lying about being the reincarnation of Mother Suspiriorum.

Even visually, the film resists sexualising its characters. These are dancers, but the camera never leers. Instead, it focuses on the emotion and power in their movements. Even the nudity feels ritualistic rather than erotic. It's one of the rare horror films where we never feel like we are watching women through a male lens.

Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes (SHGT)

Susie doesn't follow the "Final Girl" blueprint. She isn't the last one standing because she escaped danger, but she *becomes* the danger. That twist is such a powerful rejection of the idea that strength only comes after surviving trauma. Her transformation into Mother Suspiriorum is terrifying, yes, but it's also empowering.

Characters like Patricia and Olga, who do suffer, aren't just throwaway victims either. Their pain is rooted in a larger system of control. The film doesn't just kill them off for shock value but it uses their stories to critique the institution they were trapped in, whether or not it was also created by women.

Theme of Female Rage and Liberation (TFRL)

The film gives space to something we don't see enough, which is women's rage as something sacred. Susie's anger is the climax of the story, but it's not destructive for the sake of it. It's purposeful. Her rise to power isn't framed as evil but it's framed as necessary. Her rage isn't something she needs to suppress because it's the thing that sets her free.

That moment when she sheds the innocence we assumed she had and fully steps into her power, it is empowering. It also felt like a kind of rebirth.

Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation (RFSI)

The relationships between the women are complicated. There are moments of deep trust, like the bond between Sara and Susie, but also betrayal and isolation like what happens to Olga

and Patricia when they question the coven's authority. These dynamics felt real to me. Female spaces can be empowering, but they can also come with rules, expectations, and consequences.

What I appreciate is how the film doesn't romanticise solidarity. It shows how difficult and fragile it can be, especially when survival is at stake.

Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation (USVR)

The imagery in Suspiria is haunting. The blood, the rituals, the twisting, shifting dance studio… it all feels heavy with meaning. Susie's final appearance, all in red, powerful and composed, burns into the audience's brain. It's the visual culmination of everything the film's been building up to: the full arrival of feminine power, not as a savior, but as something ancient and unstoppable.

The studio itself becomes a symbol as a place where women find both refuge and danger. It's a closed system, free from men but still steeped in hierarchy and secrecy. We can once again connect this to Feminist Film Theory's tenet that states women should be given more authority over their own story in the narrative so they are not shown as passive characters that can be controlled.

Narrative Arc of Empowerment (NAE)

Susie's arc is subtle but powerful. She starts as a quiet outsider and ends as the god of this strange, insular world. It's not the kind of empowerment arc we're used to seeing because there's no speech, no moment of moral clarity. She simply becomes. That's what makes it feel so radical. This ambiguity is what cements Suspiria as part of the 'Good for Her' horror subgenre films. It also follows feminist film theory because the film refuses to justify what the women have done in order to liberate themselves.

Her journey challenges the idea that women must be broken or victimised to gain strength. Instead, Suspiria suggests that sometimes, the most terrifying thing is a woman who was powerful all along.

Suspiria (2018) is a film that stays with the audience, not just because of its imagery, but because of how it treats women. It doesn't flatten them into symbols of innocence or evil. It lets them be powerful, complicated, and sometimes horrifying. Through feminist film theory, it becomes clear that this isn't just a horror film. It's a story about rage, and reclaiming space in a world that so often silences women.

This is the kind of horror that matters because it makes you feel something deeply while also pushing you to think differently about gender in storytelling.

Ready or Not (2019), Dir. Tyler Gillett & Matt Bettinelli-Olpin

Grace, freshly married to Alex Le Domas, enters into a world that seems too good to be true. Alex's family is rich, eccentric, and, as it turns out, pretty terrifying. On her wedding night, Grace is asked to participate in a family tradition: drawing a card for a game. The card she picks is "Hide and Seek", which at first, sounds harmless, until she realizes the Le Domas family intends to hunt her down and kill her before sunrise. They believe this ritual is tied to a dark pact they made with Mr Le Bail (the Devil) that keeps their wealth intact.

As Grace desperately fights for survival, Alex's loyalty begins to shift, especially when his brother Daniel starts questioning the family's deadly tradition. Grace takes on the family one by one, narrowly escaping death at every turn. In a chaotic and bloody climax, the ritual goes horribly wrong, and Grace walks out of the burning mansion, covered in blood but victorious. Her survival is a defiant middle finger to the family's twisted, elitist ways and she walks away from it all, scarred but strong, and maybe a little more cynical about the world.

Ready or Not was chosen for the Analysis because it truly exemplifies what it means to be a 'Good for Her' horror subgenre film. The ending makes people wonder if she is in the right for killing off her husband even after he tried to sacrifice her. This is also the only film in the Analysis where female rage is very visible and audible and the heroine is put in literal physical harm. With this analysis, we can see how Grace's transformation throughout the film follows the tenets of the Feminist Film Theory.

Agency and Autonomy (AA)

From the moment Grace realises she's being hunted, she shifts into survival mode very fastly. What's refreshing is that she doesn't wait around for her husband Alex to save her. After his betrayal, she cuts emotional ties and takes matters into her own hands. This is where we really see her agency shine.

She also breaks away from typical “final girl” stereotypes. Grace isn’t quiet, submissive, or helpless. She’s angry, messy, and determined. She thinks on her feet, fights back, and sets her own goal: to survive at all costs. And that makes her incredibly compelling to watch. With this, Ready or Not follows one of Feminist Film Theories main tenets: women take charge of their own destinies.

Expression of Rage and Anger (ERA)

One of the most striking things about Grace is how the film validates her rage. She screams, curses, cries and none of it is framed as “too emotional” or hysterical. These emotional moments are completely understandable given the chaos she’s been thrown into, and they actually feel empowering.

Her anger is a key part of her transformation. It pushes her forward, helps her fight harder, and challenges the stereotype that women should always stay composed or polite, especially in horror films.

Empowerment through Violence or Self-Defense (EVSD)

Grace doesn’t start off violent, but she becomes so when she has to. And the film doesn’t shame her for it. When she kills or injures members of the Le Domas family, it’s out of necessity, not cruelty. But these acts also give her back a sense of control.

One particularly powerful moment is when she throws her wedding ring at Alex, a symbolic "divorce" that ultimately leads to his death. It’s harsh, but it feels earned. The film doesn’t present it as a tragedy, but as Grace finally choosing herself over a man who betrayed her.

Rejection of Male Control or Influence (RMCI)

Grace spends the entire film breaking away from male authority. At first, she trusts Alex but once he turns on her, she doesn't hesitate to cut him off. Her survival is entirely her own doing.

What's even more significant is how much of this story is tied to class and control. Grace isn't just fighting for her life but she's pushing back against a system that sees her as disposable because she's not "*one of them*." It's gendered, it's classist, and she tears right through it.

Character Complexity and Depth (CCD)

Grace isn't a one-dimensional "strong female character." She's layered. She cries, screams, makes mistakes and still, she fights back. Letting Alex die isn't a clean, triumphant moment. It's messy and emotional, but it's also a necessary act of self-preservation.

Her development over the course of the film is huge. She starts out just wanting to be accepted by this new family, but by the end, she fully rejects them and everything they represent. Her transformation is visual too. The pristine wedding dress turns into a torn, blood-soaked mess which is a perfect metaphor for how she's reclaimed her identity from tradition and male control.

Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes (SHGT)

Grace fits the "final girl" mold on paper, but Ready or Not flips that trope on its head. She doesn't survive because she's pure or innocent but she survives because she's angry, smart, and refuses to give up.

As the film goes on, she becomes more monstrous in the best way. The bloodier and more desperate she gets, the more powerful she becomes. And she doesn't get a hero to save her because she saves herself, over and over again.

Theme of Female Rage and Liberation (TFRL)

Rage fuels Grace's transformation. She's betrayed by the one person who should've protected her, and from that moment on, she stops trying to run and starts fighting back.

Letting Alex die isn't about revenge for revenge's sake. It's a reclaiming of power. He chose his family over her and she chose herself. The film doesn't judge her for it. Instead, it lets us cheer her on. Her actions are bold, destructive, and freeing all at once.

Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation (RFSI)

What's particularly sad and realistic is how alone Grace is. Not a single woman in the Le Domas family stands with her. Even Becky (her mother-in-law), who briefly shows her kindness at the beginning before the game starts, ultimately sides with the tradition.

There's a brief connection with Daniel, Alex's brother, but that only underscores the lack of female solidarity in the story. Grace's isolation makes her survival even more powerful because she didn't have a support system. She just had herself. This makes the film deviate from feminist film theory that champions female allyship, but this specific narrative arc makes Grace a better heroine.

Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation (USVR)

One of the strongest visuals in the film is Grace's scream, especially at the end when the Le Domas family almost succeed in killing her and she just lets out this guttural, cathartic yell. This marks the conclusion of her transformation into an independent woman.

Her costume tells a story too. She starts off looking like a traditional bride, all neat and white. But by the end, she's covered in blood, dirt, and rage. That dress becomes a symbol of everything she's endured and survived.

Narrative Arc of Empowerment (NAE)

The real turning point for Grace comes when Alex betrays her. Up until then, she was fighting to escape but after that, she stops trying to cling to love or loyalty and just fights for herself.

The ending is dark, wild, and oddly satisfying. Her in-laws explode one by one, almost like the universe is rewarding her for making it through. She's bloodied, exhausted, and done but she's alive. The final image of her smoking a cigarette in that ruined dress? That's power. That's autonomy. That's survival. And that is what makes Ready or Not a part of the 'Good for Her' horror subgenre and it also follows the main tenets of Feminist Film Theory.

Ready or Not is more than just a horror-comedy because it's a sharp, unapologetic takedown of patriarchy, wealth, and outdated traditions. Grace's journey is about saving herself.

Her rage, her violence, her refusal to be controlled are all framed as justified. She's not a victim. She's a woman who fights, screams, survives and reclaims her body, her voice, and her future in the process. That's what makes Ready or Not such a compelling feminist horror film.

Nope (2022), Dir. Jordan Peele

Jordan Peele's Nope is a bold piece of feminist storytelling. At the heart of it is Emerald Haywood, a character who flips so many expectations on their head. She's Black, bisexual, working-class and none of that is incidental. These parts of her identity are woven right into how she navigates the story, how she resists control, and how she ultimately reclaims power in a world that keeps trying to dismiss her.

In a quiet desert town, OJ and Emerald Haywood inherit their family's horse ranch after their father's mysterious death. OJ is quiet and reserved, trying to hold the ranch together, while Emerald dreams of fame. Strange things start happening: horses go missing, there's electrical interference, and they start noticing something odd in the sky. After teaming up with Angel, a quirky tech guy, and Antlers, a successful cinematographer, they decide to capture footage of what they believe is a UFO and get the famous "*Oprah shot*" that will change their lives.

But what they're dealing with is no spaceship. It is actually a massive, territorial creature that feeds on anything that looks at it. Meanwhile, former child actor Ricky Park, who owns a nearby theme park, has been feeding the creature to boost his business until it turns on him. The trio risks everything to capture footage and document the creature, only for it to devour the decoy they set up. The final scene leaves us with an unresolved feeling as OJ stands at a distance, alive, or maybe just a memory of the past, all while the creature still lingers in the desert sky.

Nope was chosen for the Analysis because it is yet another example of women going up against someone that isn't a man. This time it is Emerald against an alien. And it would be great to see how films portray women in a feminist light in genre-bending films because Nope is not only a part of 'Good for Her' horror subgenre, it is also part science fiction and Western.

Agency and Autonomy (AA)

Emerald doesn’t wait around for permission, she acts. Whether it's stepping up to promote the ranch or deciding how to deal with the alien, she constantly takes control of her own choices. She’s loud, confident, and honestly kind of bossy but in the best way. That dynamic she has with her brother, Otis Jr.? It’s clear that she’s had to fight her whole life just to be seen and heard, especially in a family that seemed to favour the men. Her actions aren't just about survival; they’re about finally being recognised on her own terms.

Expression of Rage and Anger (ERA)

One thing to appreciate about Emerald is how the film allows her to be angry without punishing her for it. So often in horror, women’s emotions, especially rage, are portrayed as either irrational or dangerous. But here, her anger feels earned. It’s focused. When she goes against Otis Jr. or hatches her own plan with Holst, it’s not rebellion for the sake of it, it’s her saying, *Enough*. That fury becomes her strength. It drives her to act, not fall apart.

Empowerment Through Violence or Self-Defense (EVSD)

When Emerald fights back against the alien (Jean Jacket), it’s not about being brutal for the sake of it. There’s purpose behind everything she does. She’s not the Final Girl who accidentally survives, she actually wins. Her showdown with Jean Jacket isn’t just survival, it’s a calculated move, a full-circle moment where she takes back power that’s been denied to her. That moment doesn’t feel like a fluke, rather it feels earned.

Rejection of Male Control or Influence (RMCI)

Throughout the film, Emerald doesn’t let anyone, especially not the men around her, dictate her path. Sure, she works with them, but she’s never dependent. She's the one pushing the plan forward, making the calls, taking the risks. Even in moments where others try to lead,

it’s clear that Emerald is her own boss. That self-reliance is powerful and it’s not shown as lonely or tragic, but as something she’s built for herself.

Character Complexity and Depth (CCD)

Emerald isn’t just a strong woman archetype because she’s layered. There’s grief, humour, ambition, anger. She doesn’t try to be “likeable” in the conventional sense, and that’s what makes her real. Her style, the way she dresses, how she speaks, it all rejects what we typically expect from women in horror films. She’s not there to be sexualised or saved. She’s there to do the saving, and she does it her way.

Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes (SHGT)

What really stood out to me is how Emerald takes the Final Girl trope and turns it upside down. Traditionally, Final Girls survive because they’re passive, pure, or somehow ‘good’. Emerald is none of that. She’s loud, impulsive, proud, messy and yet she lives, she wins, and she thrives. Her scream at the end after killing Jean Jacket is not a cry for help but it’s a war cry. It's her saying, *I’m here. I did this.*

Theme of Female Rage and Liberation (TFRL)

This film doesn’t shy away from female rage. It centres it. Emerald’s fury is what fuels the climax, especially after her brother’s death. But instead of portraying her as broken or vengeful in a toxic way, Peele shows her rage as necessary. It's what lets her rise. She breaks the unspoken rules women are supposed to follow: be quiet, be soft, don’t push too hard. And by breaking those rules, she sets herself free.

Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation (RFSI)

There’s not much sisterhood in this film but that’s kind of the point. Emerald’s journey is marked by isolation, especially growing up in a family where her voice didn’t matter as much

as her brother's. That lack of connection becomes part of her drive. She's not empowered because someone supports her but she's empowered *in spite* of the fact that she had to do it alone.

Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation (USVR)

Emerald's rage isn't visualized in clichéd ways such as flaming buildings or bloody revenge scenes. Instead, it's in the vastness of the ranch, the sound of her voice, the look in her eyes. And the alien itself? That giant, watching, consuming thing feels like a metaphor for all the systems that surveil, silence, and erase people like Emerald (black and female). And the fact that she is the one to destroy it? That feels monumental.

Narrative Arc of Empowerment (NAE)

Emerald's journey from being overlooked and underestimated to standing in the centre of the frame as the victor is nothing short of empowering. Her brother's death is devastating, but it's also the moment she fully steps into her own. That final line, "Nobody fucks with Haywood, bitch!" is so satisfying. It's bold, proud, and full of the kind of self-assurance that so many women are told to suppress. But here, it's celebrated.

Nope doesn't just entertain the masses but it reclaims horror as a space where feminist resistance can exist and flourish. Emerald Haywood isn't just a survivor, she's a fighter, a strategist, a woman who refuses to be sidelined. Through her, Peele gives us a Final Girl who reflects a different kind of strength. One built on defiance, intelligence, and an unapologetic demand to be seen. And Nope follows one of the most integral tenets of Feminist Film Theory. Emerald does not listen to those who try to control her, she doesn't expect any help, and this agency and autonomy is what helps her kill the alien at the end.

Midsommar (2019), Dir. Ari Aster

Ari Aster's Midsommar is one of those films that leaves you sitting in silence after the credits roll, not quite sure how to feel. At the heart of it is Dani Ardor, a woman trying to hold herself together after a tragedy (murder-suicide of her sister and parents), clinging to a relationship that's clearly falling apart. Looking at this film through a feminist lens, Dani's story becomes a twisted journey from emotional dependence to a strange kind of liberation. But it's not a clean transformation because her empowerment is tangled up in manipulation, trauma, and ritual.

Dani, broken by the recent loss of her family, joins her boyfriend Christian and his friends on a trip to a remote village in Sweden. They've come for Hårga's once-in-a-lifetime summer festival, a tradition held every 90 years. What starts as a peaceful escape soon turns unsettling as the villagers' customs grow more bizarre, and they witness increasingly strange and violent rituals. From psychedelic ceremonies to disturbing matchmaking, Dani and her friends begin to realise that this seemingly idyllic commune is hiding something darker.

As Christian drifts further away from Dani, she finds herself embraced by the community in ways she never expected. Meanwhile, her friends start falling victim to the village's brutal customs. Josh is killed for disrespecting their sacred texts, and Mark is murdered for trespassing. In the final ritual, Dani is crowned May Queen and given the choice to sacrifice either a villager or Christian who had just cheated on her. She chooses Christian, who is placed inside a bear carcass and burned alive. Dani, broken but reborn, smiles eerily as she embraces her new life among the cult, finally finding a place where she is seen.

Midsommar was chosen for the Analysis because the horror it brings to the table is not supernatural. It's the horror of being a woman in a relationship where the boyfriend is constantly gaslighting her. Dani also rarely, if ever, uses violence in the film. So, the

questions become: How close can you really follow the feminist film theory if there is no space for female rage? How else will this rage manifest?

Agency and Autonomy (AA)

Dani starts off in a really vulnerable place as she is emotionally drained, grieving, and stuck in a toxic relationship with Christian, who's emotionally unavailable at best and gaslighting at worst. She constantly second-guesses herself, apologises when she shouldn't, and basically waits for scraps of affection. Her decisions don't feel like her own as they're shaped by her fear of being alone. Even when she chooses to sacrifice Christian, it's hard to say whether it's fully her choice. She's high on psychedelics, emotionally wrecked, and under the influence of a cult. Her goals aren't about self-discovery, rather they're about being seen and loved, which makes her empowerment murky at best.

Expression of Rage and Anger (ERA)

What's interesting is that Dani doesn't show much overt rage until the very end but when it comes, it's powerful. There's a quiet moment when she questions her friend Simon's sudden disappearance from the commune that hints at her resentment towards Christian, but it's her final decision to condemn Christian that feels like a release. That last smile she gives as the sacrificial temple burns is chilling. Her rage isn't wild or chaotic; it's deeply internal and justified. And for once, it's not dismissed as "crazy" or "hysterical." It's cathartic, even if it's also a little terrifying.

Empowerment through Violence or Self-Defense (EVSD)

Dani doesn't physically fight back, but her decision to let Christian die at the end through ritualistic sacrifice by the cult feels like a symbolic act of self-defense, like cutting off the last thread tying her to emotional suffering. It's not the kind of empowerment we're used to

seeing. It’s not heroic. It’s messy, painful, and shaped by manipulation. But somehow, it still feels like a win for her. Not because it’s morally right, but because it’s hers.

Rejection of Male Control or Influence (RMCI)

For most of the film, Dani is under Christian’s emotional thumb. She tiptoes around him, trying not to be "*too much,*" and he takes full advantage of that. But by the end, she’s found something else: a community of women who offer her the kind of emotional mirroring Christian never could. This happens when she finds out Christian is cheating on her and she starts crying and the women in the commune start eerily mirroring her and she feels seen and understood. Whether that’s real or just another form of control is up for debate, but in that moment, she breaks away from him. It’s tragic, but it’s also a transformational shift.

Character Complexity and Depth (CCD)

Dani is one of the most complex female characters seen in horror. She’s grieving, insecure, and dependent, but she’s also deeply human. Her arc doesn’t follow a traditional empowerment narrative. Instead, it’s about surviving emotional starvation and finding strength in the strangest of places. She’s not sexualised, not flattened into a stereotype. The May Queen imagery of her wearing a flower gown might seem decorative at first, but it’s really about transformation. She becomes a symbol of power.

Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes (SHGT)

Midsommar flips a lot of expectations. Dani isn’t a “final girl” because she’s pure or clever. She survives because she was chosen by the cult to survive and be integrated from the moment they arrive. She doesn’t run away from the horror; she becomes part of it. Her choice to let Christian die is both monstrous and empowering. The film doesn’t condemn her for it. If anything, it leans into the discomfort of watching someone step into their power through something so brutal such as ritualistic sacrifice.

Theme of Female Rage and Liberation (TFRL)

This isn't a story about a woman lashing out. It's about what happens when she's pushed to her emotional limit. Dani's revenge isn't loud, but it's incredibly powerful. Choosing to kill the man who emotionally neglected her is an act of liberation, no matter how dark it looks. The film forces us to sit with that discomfort and ask: What does female rage look like when it finally erupts? And what happens when it's justified?

Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation (RFSI)

Dani's loneliness is palpable. Christian's friends treat her like an outsider, and Christian himself barely tolerates her. But then the Harga women step in, not just physically, but emotionally. They cry with her. They hold her. It feels genuine, even though we know it's part of the cult's manipulation. Still, in that moment, they give her something she's been craving all along: emotional connection. Whether it's empowering or just another trap is unclear, but it's powerful either way.

Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation (USVR)

The visual storytelling in Midsommar is stunning. The flowers, the white dresses, the sun-drenched setting. It's all so bright and soft, but underneath it is something really disturbing. Dani's flower-covered dress at the end is both a crown and a cage. She looks powerful, but also lost. The commune itself is like a feminine utopia turned inside out. Beautiful on the surface, but deeply controlling underneath because it is still a cult.

Narrative Arc of Empowerment (NAE)

Dani's journey is far from simple. She starts off dependent, fragile, and emotionally raw. But by the end, she's made a choice even if it's a horrifying one. When she sees Christian cheating on her with Maja, it's like a switch flips. That betrayal is the final push she needs to

let go. Her smile at the end as her boyfriend is dying in a burning sacrificial temple is one of the most haunting things in the film. Is she finally free? Or just trapped in a different kind of prison? The film never answers that, and that's what makes it so compelling.

Dani's arc in Midsommar is a chilling, complicated portrayal of female empowerment. It doesn't follow a clean, triumphant path. Instead, it asks hard questions: What does it mean to take your power back? What if that power is born out of trauma and manipulation? For me, Dani's story is about what happens when someone is emotionally neglected for so long that even a cult starts to feel like home. And maybe that's the scariest part of all. While being a part of the 'Good for Her' horror subgenre, the film never quite feels like it follows the tenets of Feminist Film Theory. Dani does experience cathartic liberation at the end, but we're never quite sure if she reached that point through manipulation by the cult or by herself.

The VVitch (2015), Dir. Robert Eggers

Robert Eggers' *The VVitch* is a haunting story set in 17th-century New England, but what lingers most isn't the horror, but it's the suffocating atmosphere of patriarchal control and religious paranoia. Through Thomasin's character, the film becomes a slow, painful exploration of how female autonomy is suppressed, and how liberation, when it finally arrives, doesn't come easy. It comes at a cost.

In 1630s New England, the Puritan family of William and Katherine is exiled from their plantation and moves to the edge of an eerie forest. Shortly after their arrival, their infant son vanishes while in the care of their eldest daughter, Thomasin. This triggers a slow unravelling of the family's sanity, with their faith in God shaken and suspicions of witchcraft creeping in. Katherine accuses Thomasin of being a witch, and even the younger children claim to be speaking to the family's black goat, Black Phillip, whom they believe might be a demon.

As their crops fail and tensions rise, the family's paranoia reaches a boiling point. Thomasin's brother Caleb dies under mysterious circumstances, and the twins fall into strange fits, adding to the suspicion that witchcraft is at play. With no other options, Thomasin defends herself and kills her mother. Alone and broken, she meets Black Phillip, who reveals himself as Satan. He offers her a chance to "live deliciously," and she accepts, signing her name in his book. The film closes with Thomasin joining a coven of witches, levitating into the night, leaving behind her shattered life.

The VVitch was chosen because it is the original blueprint film for how a 'Good for Her' horror subgenre film should be like. Robert Eggers takes on a classic horror story of a woman being accused of witchcraft and turns it in its head. He ensures that the victim of these accusations is liberated at the end. While doing so, he cements The VVitch as a film that follows the feminist film theory.

Agency and Autonomy (AA)

Thomasin starts off just like any daughter in a strict household where she is trying to follow the rules, do what's expected. But little cracks begin to show. The moment she decides to go into the woods with Caleb, it's subtle, but it's her first step outside the box. Then there's that scene where she finally snaps and calls out her father for accusing her of being a witch. It's not just a teenage tantrum, but it's her finally speaking her truth. Her final decision to sign the Devil's book is heavy. It's not framed as evil, but more like the only real choice she's ever had to make for herself. In this world, autonomy isn't something gently given, but it's something she has to seize, even if it means walking into the unknown.

Expression of Rage and Anger (ERA)

Thomasin's anger is quiet at first, but it's always there, building. She's constantly being blamed for the baby's disappearance, for seducing her brother, for being "the witch." And none of it's her fault. When she finally kills her mother, it's brutal, yes, but also inevitable. It's self-defense, but it's also years of repression spilling over. What's interesting is how the film lets her be hysterical, then completely calm. That emotional range isn't something you see often in horror heroines. She's angry, she's scared, she's grieving, but she's never flat.

Empowerment through Violence or Self-Defense (EVSD)

The violence in The VVitch isn't about thrill, it's about survival. When Thomasin kills her mother, it's the first time she physically fights back in the film. But even more powerful is her spiritual resistance because aligning with the Devil isn't about giving in, it's about taking back control in a world where no one protected her. It's morally murky, sure. But in that puritanical world, she had no safe path. This wasn't a descent into evil. It was the only door left open for her to escape her religious fanatic family.

Rejection of Male Control or Influence (RMCI)

Thomasin's rebellion starts with calling out her dad, and it's a bold move. But even with that, she never truly escapes male control. Not from her family and not from the Devil. Even her final act of "freedom" is orchestrated by Black Phillip, who speaks in a deep male voice. So, is she free? Or is she just shifting from one master to another?

Character Complexity and Depth (CCD)

What makes Thomasin so compelling is how layered she is. She's not perfect, not a saint, not a villain. She's just a girl who's been pushed too far. Her decision to join the witches isn't just shock value. It's a response to being gaslit, blamed, and isolated for so long by her own family. Her transformation from desperate for her parents' love to accepting a new identity is heartbreakingly real. But the film also keeps reminding us that her body is not her own. From her brother's disturbing gaze to being sexualised by the Devil, she's constantly being looked at, not just seen.

Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes (SHGT)

Thomasin isn't the Final Girl in the traditional sense. She doesn't beat the evil but she becomes it. But that's what's so fascinating. The film flips the script. Her "monstrous" turn is actually her claiming power, even if it's terrifying for the audience. She's never reduced to a helpless victim. Even when she's accused, even when she's alone, she endures.

Theme of Female Rage and Liberation (TFRL)

While revenge isn't the driving force here, Thomasin's choices are undeniably rooted in a quiet, deep rage. Rage at being controlled, blamed, and silenced. Her refusal to conform such as talking back, surviving, signing the Devil's book is its own form of rebellion. It's not loud, but it's powerful.

Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation (RFSI)

There's very little female solidarity in this film. Her mother hates her. Her siblings turn on her. She's completely alone. But then, at the very end, she walks into the forest and joins the witches. It's dark, yes, but for the first time, she's with women who *accept* her. It's a lonely kind of liberation, but it's still liberation.

Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation (USVR)

Black Phillip isn't just a goat, he's the embodiment of temptation, rage, and rebellion. The film uses visuals to say what the characters can't. Thomasin's shift from tight, modest clothing to complete nudity isn't gratuitous, but it's symbolic. She's shedding shame, stepping into her own power. And the woods which is wild, eerie, free mirrors her internal transformation.

Narrative Arc of Empowerment (NAE)

Thomasin starts the film voiceless and powerless. By the end, she's made her choice, even if it's a dark one. When her mother tries to kill her, something breaks. That's the turning point. The final scene of her levitating with the witches feels both unsettling and oddly triumphant. She's not who she was. She's something else now. And she *chose* it.

The VVitch is a masterclass on how to write a narrative where a woman's claim to power and freedom is ambiguous. Which is what immortalizes its place in the 'Good for Her' horror subgenre list. She faces so much torture from her own family that when she finally signs her name in the Book of the Devil and becomes free, we can't help but to say, 'Good for Her'.

Discussion

In this chapter, we'll discuss the analysis of the five films through the lens of feminist film theory to respond to our two research questions.

We'll relate the character coding and narrative coding analysis of the films to Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze, E. Ann Kaplan's exploration of the monstrous feminine, and Barbara Creed's concept of abjection. We will also connect it to the broader notions around female rage as resistance, especially within patriarchal and genre-based constraints. These theoretical approaches were used to analyse how the female protagonist in each film reclaims their story.

Research Question 1:

How does the "Good for Her" horror subgenre depict female characters' agency, autonomy, and expressions of rage through character behaviors and narrative structures?

Expression of Female Rage & Reclaiming Power

In the "Good for Her" horror subgenre, female rage is treated like something that makes sense. It is a response to the systems women are trapped in. Across all five films analysed, rage becomes a way for the women to take back power. These characters aren't portrayed passively. They fight back, through rebellion, revenge, or by just refusing to play by the rules. Interestingly, their anger is depicted to be respected and not punished.

In Midsommar, Dani's rage is slow burning. It's tangled up in grief and loneliness, especially after losing her family and being emotionally neglected by her boyfriend, Christian. She doesn't lash out violently, instead she goes along with the Harga's rituals. When she chooses to let Christian burn in the ritualistic burning, it feels like justice, not madness. Her story fits with what feminist film theorist E. Ann Kaplan calls the "monstrous feminine," where horror

gives space for women's suppressed emotions like rage to come out in strange but powerful ways. And Dani doesn't exist to be looked at anymore. She takes control of the narrative and makes her own choice.

Ready or Not gives us something different. Grace doesn't ease into her rage. She explodes right away. After realizing her new in-laws plan to kill her, she fights back. By the end, when she watches the house go up in flames with her husband inside, it's not just about survival, it's about saying, "I matter." That image of her sitting outside, bloodied and smoking a cigarette, is pure catharsis. She's not the polite bride anymore. She's done playing by their rules. Barbara Creed's idea of the "abject" fits here. Grace becomes the monstrous woman who survives by embracing everything she's not supposed to be. She's messy and angry and unapologetic about it.

In The VVitch, Thomasin's rage is a lot more internal. It builds slowly as her family keeps blaming her for everything that goes wrong. She endures for too long, then she finally breaks. Killing her mother in self-defense is a shocking moment, but it's also the point where she finally escapes the suffocating oppressions of her family. When she makes a pact with the devil, it feels more like freedom than evil. She's choosing herself for once. Kaplan's monstrous feminine applies here too. Thomasin isn't a villain. She's just done being controlled.

Suspiria goes even further. Susie doesn't just find personal power in the film, but she becomes something godlike. When she transforms into Mother Suspiriorum and wipes out the corrupt leader Helena Markos of the coven, it's terrifying but beautiful. The scene is full of blood and symbolism. It is not random violence. It's symbolism for power being reclaimed. Susie isn't just reacting to danger, but she is reshaping the entire system of the

coven. She's not an object of the gaze, as Laura Mulvey would put it. She *is* the gaze. She sees everything, and she decides what happens next.

And then there's Nope. Emerald doesn't scream or kill anyone, but that doesn't mean she's not angry. Her rage is quiet and strategic. She's navigating the exploitative world of Hollywood and the weight of her family's legacy, and she does it on her own terms. In the end, she outsmarts the alien with cleverness instead of brute force. It's powerful to see a Black woman in this role, given how rarely their stories of rage and resistance are centered in mainstream horror. Emerald doesn't fit the typical horror heroine mold and that's the point.

What ties all these films together is the idea that female rage isn't something to be feared or dismissed, but it's something powerful. Sometimes it's ritualised (Suspiria, Midsommar), sometimes explosive (Ready or Not), sometimes buried deep (The VVitch), and sometimes strategic (Nope). But in every case, it's treated as valid. These women take control of the narrative and flip the script on horror's usual gender dynamics.

Agency and Autonomy in Narrative Arcs

One of the most striking things about the "Good for Her" subgenre is how instead of being victims or background characters, the women in these stories gradually take charge of their own narratives. Across all five films analysed, the heroines move from being powerless to reclaiming control over their lives, often in intense and unexpected ways.

In Ready or Not, Grace's transformation feels especially satisfying. She starts off as a new bride caught in a violent family ritual and reduced to prey in a twisted game of survival. But over the course of the film, she refuses to stay in that role of damsel in distress. The more they try to break her, the stronger and more defiant she becomes. By the end, when she kills her husband, the very person who handed her over to be hunted, she isn't just surviving, it's a

brutal, cathartic moment that echoes Carol Clover's "Final Girl," but with a twist. Grace pushed back against male violence instead of just escaping it.

Dani in Midsommar chooses herself over her cheating boyfriend at the end, even if that choice happens within the strange, cult-like world of the Harga. Her final decision to sacrifice Christian is a complicated moment. On one hand, she's surrounded by manipulation. On the other, her smile at the end feels like she's no longer stuck trying to keep someone else happy. Her agency isn't straightforward, but it's there.

Then we have Thomasin in The VVitch, whose story feels the most isolating. She doesn't become a witch because she was evil, but she becomes one because it's the only way she can exist freely. That choice is still hers. As E. Ann Kaplan might suggest, Thomasin becomes the "monstrous feminine" not out of malice, but because it's the only space she's allowed to have power.

Suspiria's Susie stands out as someone whose power was always there, waiting to be realised. While the coven tries to manipulate her, she ends up flipping the dynamic entirely. When she reveals herself as Mother Suspiriorum, it's clear she's not just another pawn, but she's been in control all along. What's interesting here is how her power isn't about revenge or escape, but about becoming something greater. She redefines what the coven stands for. In this way, Susie becomes almost untouchable. She's not just a character we look at because she controls what we see, challenging even Mulvey's idea of the male gaze. She's both the subject and the one holding the camera, in a sense.

Emerald in Nope takes a completely different path. There's no bloodshed, no supernatural transformation. Her strength comes from being smart, focused, and emotionally resilient. In a story full of spectacle and exploitation, she keeps her cool. She sees the system for what it is and finds a way to outsmart it. She doesn't just survive the monster, she actually kills it.

Emerald's version of agency feels especially modern and intersectional. She's a Black woman navigating race, family legacy, and media spectacle, and she never loses sight of who she is.

Looking at all these characters side by side, you can see how varied the paths to autonomy are. Grace and Dani reclaim power through destruction. Thomasin and Susie turn to mystical or supernatural spaces for freedom. Emerald, on the other hand, quietly rewrites the rules without spilling a drop of blood. But they all challenge the structures that tried to contain them, whether it's a toxic relationship, religious control, family, or capitalist spectacle.

These films also push back against the traditional male gaze. Yes, these women are visible within the story, but they're far from passive. By the end of their arcs, they're not just part of the narrative, but they're in control of it. In fact, many of them end up holding the power of the gaze themselves, deciding what gets seen and what doesn't. The "Final Girl" isn't just surviving anymore, she's shaping her own ending, and that makes all the difference.

Narrative Structure and Female Autonomy

The way stories are structured in "Good for Her" horror films really shapes how we understand female autonomy and growth. These movies often borrow from classic storytelling frameworks like the Hero's Journey or the slasher format but they tweak them in a way that puts women front and center. Instead of being passive victims in someone else's story, the women in these films lead the plot themselves. These stories reflect women's inner journeys, especially those rooted in trauma and isolation.

Take Midsommar, for example. Dani's story is basically a flipped version of the Hero's Journey. Her "call to adventure" isn't a big epic quest, but it's her grief. She starts the film completely broken after a family tragedy and stuck in a toxic relationship. But instead of being saved by someone else, Dani slowly transforms. Her journey is tied to the rituals and seasons of the commune, and by the end, she's crowned May Queen, a symbol of authority.

The pacing of the film gives space for us to really sit with her finding agency through her sadness.

Ready or Not plays with the typical slasher structure but turns it on its head. Grace starts out as the hunted, but as the night unfolds, she flips the script and becomes the one doing the hunting. What makes it so satisfying is that the film keeps all the slasher beats such as gore, chases, tension, but the emotional weight is placed on Grace gaining control. By the end of the film, we see Grace owning the chaos and reclaiming power.

Then there's The VVitch, which is more of a slow burn. Thomasin's story is structured around complete isolation. Her family doesn't trust her, blames her, and eventually turns on her. The narrative takes everything away from her until she has no one left. But instead of breaking, she makes a choice to sign the Devil's book and reclaims autonomy through it.

Suspiria takes a very different approach. It barely follows a straightforward timeline or narrative logic. Everything's fragmented in the forms of dreams, symbols, and shifting perspectives. But that's intentional. Susie's transformation into Mother Suspiriorum isn't something you can explain neatly. The structure of the film is very much rooted in a feminine kind of power that's disruptive. There's no "rising action–climax–resolution" formula here, and that's the point. Her autonomy doesn't come from clarity, but the audience realise it from embracing the unknown presented in the film.

Nope blends horror with sci-fi and Western tropes. Emerald isn't the typical horror final girl. She's the one who captures the monster in the end, not her brother. The film sticks to a more familiar story arc (setup, confrontation, resolution), but what's cool is how Emerald takes control of it. She doesn't need supernatural help or a breakdown to find herself. She just quietly takes the lead. The narrative gives her room to be smart, funny, and resourceful. And in doing so, the narrative arc lets her rewrite what it means to be the hero.

Looking at all these films together, we can see a pattern: the stories are built to show a woman coming into her own power. Whether it's through violence, loss, or transformation, the structure of each film allows the heroine's autonomy to emerge slowly and steadily.

And that's what makes the narrative structure so important in this subgenre. It's not just about putting women into horror tropes. The screenwriters are very intentionally reshaping those tropes entirely. The "Good for Her" horror genre doesn't just tell stories about women. It tells them through women, with all the nuance that come with that and lets audience sit discomfort with the ambiguity of these women.

Research Question 2:

How do female protagonists in this subgenre exemplify or defy the central tenets of Feminist Film Theory?

Subverting the Male Gaze

"Good for Her" horror films clearly push back against the Male Gaze idea that women in cinema exist mainly to be looked at, usually through the eyes of a heterosexual man. Laura Mulvey talks about this in her essay Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (1975), where she explains how most mainstream films are built around male desire. But in this subgenre, things are different. Women aren't there to be just pretty, they're written to be complex and multifaceted.

In *Ready or Not*, we start off seeing Grace exactly how society expects a bride to look by being packaged in white. She's costumed as a symbol of purity. But as the film goes on, that image falls apart. Blood and dirt replace the delicate visuals. By the end, she's completely transformed with blood splattered across her bridal gown and face. The filmmakers don't romanticise any of it. She isn't framed as to be desired anymore. She becomes someone to

fear and respect. The horror genre doesn't often allow that kind of visual evolution, but here, it's the whole point.

Midsommar takes a different approach with Dani. Florence Pugh's performance is often front and center, but not in a way that feels exploitative. The camera gives her space to cry and to break down. Even in the sex ritual scene between Christian and Maja, the focus isn't on titillation. Ari Aster ensures that audience find it bizarre and are made uncomfortable by it. When Dani is crowned May Queen, her body is wrapped in flowers, but she's not sexualised. Instead, she's deified. This way, she's put in a godlike stature and does not fall into the male gaze.

In *The VVitch,* the absence of the Male Gaze is almost eerie. Thomasin is a teenage girl in a genre that usually uses that as an excuse to hypersexualise. Eggers' camera does it once when Thomasin's brother, Caleb, looks at her with lust and instantly punishes him for it in the narrative by killing him off. Besides that, her body is never framed to be ogled. The nudity in the final scene isn't sexy because it looks strange and sacred. It's a symbolic declaration that she belongs to no one now. That moment flips how we're used to seeing female bodies in horror.

Suspiria is probably the most radical in how it completely rejects sexualised imagery. The dance scenes are intense, but they're not meant to be pretty. The female body in this film is not soft or seductive. Guadagnino's camera doesn't glide across the dancer's bodies. The camera stumbles and jerks and fragments. That's intentional to show how messy female transformation can be when it isn't filtered through a male fantasy.

And then there's *Nope,* which handles it all more quietly. Emerald is cool, confident, and never sexualized. The film doesn't linger on her body, and her character isn't defined by romance or desirability. Her power comes from her quick thinking, her swagger, and her

control over the narrative. Especially in that final scene when she literally captures the deathe of the alien Jean Jacket on the well-camera. That image of her *becoming* the photographer is the perfect metaphor of how she's in charge of what we see.

In all these films, the Male Gaze has been kicked out. These women aren't framed for pleasure. Their stories unfold through defiance. Very rarely are there any soft lighting or flattering angles.

Monstrous Feminine and Reclaiming the *Witch*

If there's one recurring image that keeps showing up in these films, it's the witch. Whether she's literal or symbolic, she is there. But instead of being painted as evil just for the sake of shock value, these stories use the "monstrous feminine" to say something deeper. Women's anger when they fight against all odds can be sacred and beautiful.

In The VVitch, Thomasin is a teen girl in a family that sees her changing body and growing independence as a threat. So, when everything falls apart, and she's left with nothing, her final choice to sign the Devil's book to become a witch is more of a surrender to her destiny rather than just monstrous.

Suspiria takes that even further. Susie starts off soft-spoken and unassuming, but by the end, she's revealed to be a literal witch (Mother Suspiriorum). Her transformation into what's usually perceived as monstrous being is empowering. The gore and body horror aren't there to gross us out, but it is symbolic to show how deeply transformation hurts. How painful it is to shed your past and become something powerful. Her monstrosity isn't feared as much as it is honored by the filmmaker.

With Midsommar, the Harga offer grieving Dani warmth and ritual, and even though they're a cult, they give her something no one else has: a place to put her pain. Her decision to kill of her boyfriend at the end may look monstrous, but it is strangely liberating to see a cheating

man go up in flames. She's not called a witch, but the symbolism is all there. The flowers, the crown, and the human sacrifice mark her rebirth through fire and grief.

In Ready or Not, Grace isn't supernatural, but she still becomes a monster. At least to the wealthy family trying to kill her. Covered in blood and wedding dress in tatters, she's chaos incarnate. Her female rage that led her to her monstrosity doesn't fit into this world, but that's exactly why she survives. Her monstrosity is part of her becoming something her oppressors can't control.

Then there's Nope, which flips the pattern completely. Emerald isn't monstrous at all. She doesn't have to become something else to survive. She's already smart enough and emotionally aware. Her power is in showing up and being resourceful. She proves that women can be powerful without having to be feared or transformed into something grotesque.

Altogether, these films take everything horror usually says is scary about women such as their bodies, emotions, and independence and subverts the stereotypes. The *witch* isn't burned at the stake anymore. She's the one holding the torch.

Female Solidarity vs. Individual Empowerment

One thing that keeps coming up in these films is the push and pull between standing together versus standing alone. Feminism often talks about the power of sisterhood, but in these stories, that solidarity is either complicated or sometimes completely absent.

Midsommar gives the illusion of female bonding. Dani is surrounded by women who cry with her, dance with her, dress her like a queen. But it's all part of a ritual. A performance. At the end of the day, she's still alone, making the final call in a system that's just as manipulative as the one she left. The warmth she gets isn't free, it comes with her being controlled by the cult for the rest of her life.

In Suspiria, the idea of female community runs deep. It's a coven of witches, a dance troupe, a matriarchy, all at once. But it's not exactly nurturing. There are secrets, betrayals, women hurting other women in the name of control. Even when Susie rises to the top, it's not because the other women helped her, but it's because she transformed into something they couldn't predict. The coven is powerful, sure, but there is no solidarity.

Then there's Ready or Not, where Grace is completely on her own. None of the women in the Le Domas family back her up. In fact, they're just as complicit in the violence. Her survival doesn't come from sisterhood. It comes from sheer stubbornness and grit. She fights alone, bleeds alone, and wins alone.

The VVitch shows us a different path. Thomasin's blood family fails her by isolating her. But at the end, she finds a new kind of community. The witches welcome her, not because she conforms, but because she doesn't. It's still a dark and ambiguous ending, but it's the first time she gets to choose who she stands with.

Nope is the exception. Emerald and OJ (siblings, not sisters) stand by each other. Their bond isn't perfect, but it's real. They survive because they work together. That's rare in horror, especially when it comes to female characters. Emerald doesn't need to walk off alone to be powerful. She's already strong with Otis Jr. by her side.

These films give way for a bigger question in feminism today: is empowerment about the individual, or the collective? A lot of these stories lean into lone-wolf empowerment of surviving the horror, even if you have to do it alone. But Nope reminds us there's another way: that strength can be shared, and that being truly seen by someone else is its own kind of power.

Comparisons of Films

Key Similarities

Across all five films, there's a clear pattern: the women at the center of these stories go through major transformations caused by some form of systemic oppression. But what's important is that their stories are about taking back power by cutting ties with the systems or people that hurt them rather than just surviving quietly. Whether it's Thomasin breaking free from her repressive family in The VVitch, or Grace walking away from a lethal marriage in Ready or Not, each protagonist reaches a point where they stop being acted upon and start acting for themselves.

Violence, both emotional and physical, is a key tool in that process. These films don't shy away from it. In fact, they often frame it as necessary and cathartic. The traditional "good girl" image is replaced. We're not watching damsels in distress. We're watching women who fight back to reclaim their stories and completely rewrite what it means to be the "final girl."

Key Differences

Of course, not all their stories follow the same formula. Each film brings something unique to the table, especially in how they portray empowerment.

Nope stands out because it doesn't rely on violence. Emerald survives and wins through her brains, her instincts, and her bond with her brother. It's a refreshing contrast to the blood-soaked paths to power in other films.

On the other end of the spectrum, Suspiria and The VVitch go all in on the supernatural. Their protagonists ascend into something mythic, almost godlike, through witchcraft and ritual. Their arcs feel cosmic.

Then we have Midsommar and Ready or Not, which are more grounded emotionally. Dani and Grace go through hell, but their transformations feel deeply human because it is driven by grief and survival instinct. The horror in these films feels more personal, even as their climaxes veer into the theatrical.

So, while all these films tackle similar feminist themes, they do so with different textures. from collective rituals of ancestral power to solo acts of rebellion of modern-day girls.

What This Means for the Female Horror Lead

Taken together, these films show just how far we've come from the old-school "Final Girl" trope that Carol J. Clover identified. These women do more than just surviving. We seem them consciously making choices, taking control, and in certain movies, embracing the very things that once made them villains in the eyes of traditional horror.

What used to be seen as monstrous is now a badge of honour. These characters become the antithesis of the male gaze. They're no longer framed as objects or victims, but as complicated subjects with their own agency. Sometimes that comes through disorienting visuals or grotesque body horror. Other times, it's through subtle character shifts. But the result is still horror that centers women as the ones who lead the story.

What we're seeing here is a shift in the language of horror films. These messy and bloody women in the analysed films are the new character archetypes for feminist horror.

To answer the first research question: Yes, the "Good for Her" films really do portray female agency and rage as powerful and transformative forces. These women take back control, whether that means sacrificing others (Midsommar), unleashing hell (Ready or Not), or simply outsmarting a predator (Nope). Their choices challenge the systems that tried to control them. And importantly, their anger isn't framed as dangerous or irrational, but it's purposeful and often righteous.

As for the second research question: these characters absolutely resonate with the ideals of feminist film theory. Laura Mulvey's concept of the male gaze is challenged again and again, especially in how these women reclaim their own image and agency. Barbara Creed's monstrous feminine is reimagined too, especially in The VVitch and Suspiria, where deviance and abjection become tools for empowerment instead of punishment.

That said, there is a noticeable gap in these films: genuine female solidarity. Most of the time, these women are on their own. They fight alone, suffer alone, and win alone. Nope is the exception and it gives us a rare glimpse of what shared empowerment could look like, not just for women but for marginalised folks in general.

Overall, these films show how horror can reflect evolving feminist conversations. But there's still room to grow. Future research could dive into how queer, trans, and non-Western identities fit into the "Good for Her" narrative, or explore how horror might better reflect collective, rather than individual, feminist victories.

Because maybe the future of feminist horror isn't just about the lone survivor, it's about surviving together.

Conclusion

This research was carried out to understand how modern horror films in the “Good for Her” subgenre portray women, specifically how female characters take back control, express rage, and push back against the systems that hurt them. This research also aimed to study how these portrayals fit (or don’t fit) within feminist film theory.

Summary of Major Findings

These films reflect a big shift in how women are written in horror. The female leads are actively reclaiming power, often through violence or supernatural transformation. Their rage is focused, calculated, and even celebrated.

They challenge key ideas in feminist film theory:

The Male Gaze, as defined by Laura Mulvey, is disrupted. These women are not sexualised or objectified in the traditional sense. The heroines often control how the camera and the audience see them.

Barbara Creed’s Monstrous Feminine is subverted. Traits that were once framed as horrifying such as rage or emotional intensity become sources of strength.

Carol Clover’s Final Girl has been revamped. These women are portrayed as more than just survivors. They’re actively leading the story instead of being passive onlookers and become the ones who enact justice (or revenge).

The way these films are structured also matters. Whether through linear storytelling, disorienting editing, or symbolic moments, each one gives the female lead room to change. Often, they reach that change only after cutting ties with the men or institutions that have held power over them.

Implications

These films are speaking to an era where women's rage is finally being recognised as valid. The horror genre, which once punished women for stepping out of line, now offers them space to take charge even if that journey is violent or morally complicated.

Limitations

This research only covered five films from the subgenre. That's a narrow lens. The research also didn't explore how race, class, or sexuality intersect with gender in these stories except for Nope in which Emerald is a bisexual black woman.

This was also an audio-visual analysis. How audiences received or related to these characters weren't taken into consideration even though they're huge parts of feminist media study. Finally, the focus was on cisgender, mostly straight women. It has left out a whole range of voices and identities, including queer and trans perspectives.

Future Research Possibilities

There's so much room to expand when it comes to feminist horror research. Future research could look at non-Western takes on the "Good for Her" theme, especially in Southeast Asian horror. We can also use intersectional feminist theory to further study how race, class, and sexuality shape these stories. Besides, we can include audience reception studies to hear from viewers, especially women and marginalised folks, about how these films resonate with them. Also, a good research venture would be to examine how streaming platforms are shaping the rise of these films, especially with indie horror gaining visibility. Lastly, future research can explore whether trans and queer horror characters are starting to be included in this subgenre, or if they're still being left out.

Final Thoughts

At its core, the “Good for Her” subgenre signals a meaningful shift in horror cinema. These films no longer just show women as victims who are hunted, or helpless. Instead, they center women who fight back and transform through pain and rage. Whether it's through violence or strategy, these characters reclaim control in ways that feel both cathartic and confrontational.

What stood out the most is how these stories don’t just entertain, they actually rewrite the usual notions of what it means to be a female protagonist in horror. Rage isn’t something to be feared or silenced, but it’s valid. It’s powerful and in many of these narratives, it’s even heroic. These films prove that horror can be a space where feminist ideas aren’t just included but they’re expanded upon. They challenge the male gaze, embrace what’s been traditionally seen as “monstrous,” and let women take charge of their own stories, often on their own terms. In conclusion, this research proves that the “Good for Her” subgenre horror films reclaim female rage, autonomy, and power through violent or supernatural narrative arcs that challenge patriarchal structures and align with key tenets of feminist film theory.

Of course, there are contradictions. A lot of these journeys are individual, and sisterhood or collective resistance is usually missing. But even with those gaps, these films can be considered as part of a larger cultural moment in the film industry, one that’s finally letting women in horror be angry, complex, and free without punishing them for it. This freedom given to the heroines in the five films analysed comes with moral ambiguity, but it’s still freedom. That in itself feels like progress.

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Back in 2020, during the pandemic, I watched a horror film named ‘Rosemary’s Baby’ and it changed my life. What happened at the end of the film shook me to my core so much that I went to Google right away to find more movies like it. So, I watched three to five horror movies every single day for the next few months. That’s when I realised that I wanted to be a screenwriter. And that’s what led me to this Broadcasting Degree, Horror films have saved my creativity from dying, and in extension, it has saved me.

So, when the time came for me to do my Final Year Thesis, I went to Ms Jun and said something along the lines of, “Ms Jun, I don’t want to do surveys. Let me analyse these films instead.” Ms Jun gave me the greenlight and well, you just read what came of it. Ms Jun, thank you. Thank you for being an academic advisor who cares. I am so happy I got you as my FYP Supervisor as well.

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	Film Information:			
	Title :	**Suspiria**		
	Release Year :	**2018**		
	Director :	**Luca Guadagnino**		
	Screenwriter :	**David Kajganich, Dario Argento, Daria Nicolodi**		
	Character Details:			
	Name:	**Susanna (Susie) Bannion**		
	Gender:	**Female**		
	Role in the Film:	**Protagonist**		
	Description of Character:	**Tall and slender, ideal body for a dancer, red hair**		
	Intersectional Identities (if applicable):	**None**		
	Race/Ethnicity:	**Caucasian**		
	Class:	**Lower Class**		
	Sexuality:	**Shows hints of lesbianism**		
	Character's Relationship with Other Characters:	**Fellow dancer at the dance studio for the other dancers, Madame Blanc's prodigy**		
	Character's Motivations and Goals:	**Unclear till the end when she reveals herself to be Mother Suspiriorum (one of the Three Mother Witches)**		
	Character Coding			
	Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**	**Scene & Details of the Observation**
	A. Agency and Autonomy (AA)	**1. Independent Decision-Making (IDM)**	Were there instances where the character made decisions without male or external guidance?	Throughout the film, there is rarely any male guidance. However, there are external guidances, rather external coercion whenever the witches make the dance students do something through mind control. Susie Bannion is capable of independent decision-making. She leaves her hometown at the beginning of the film to chase her dreams of becoming a dancer. She also does not let Sara Simms talk her into leaving the dance school.
		2. Defiance of Traditional Gender Roles (DTGR)	Were there any moments where the character acted against stereotypical “feminine” behaviors or roles? (e.g., passivity, submission)	Susie Bannion did defy traditional roles in the film. She was too sexual, a trait that is often attached with male characters in films. She also actively harmed others at the end of the film when she revealed herself to be Mother Suspiriorum. Harming others is a trait that is traditionally not given to women in films. She was also not submissive when Helena Markos tried to sacrifice her.
		3. Self-Directed Goals (SDG)	Were there any goals or objectives that the character pursued on her terms (as a response to societal or personal oppression)?	Throughout the film, Susie Bannion's goals are quite unclear. However, she did pursue her goal of becoming a dancer on her own. She also attained the Head Witch position by killing Helena Markos. Even though, it is not a response to personal oppression, by killing her, Susie freed all the dance students from becoming future sacrifices.
	B. Expression of Rage and Anger (ERA)	**1. Justified Rage (JR)**	Were there any instances where the character’s anger was portrayed as a valid response to trauma, betrayal, or oppression?	At the end of the film, Susie Bannion reveals she is Mother Suspiriorum and sets forth the Death Demon which kills Helena Markos and also her supporters. This was a valid response to betrayal as Helena Markos sacrificed the dancers in her studio for her own gain.
		2. Rage as Empowerment (RE)	Did the rage lead to transformative or empowering actions?	No, it did not. However, the Dance Studio came into Susie Bannion's hands and the witches started serving her. Although it is not stated, we can believe that no more dancers will be sacrificed under Susie Bannion's care.
		3. Visible Emotional Complexity (VEC)	Did the depiction of complex emotions (anger, sorrow, betrayal) counteract the “hysterical” stereotype often imposed on female characters in horror?	Even in distress, all the female characters in the film refused to fall into the damsel in distress archetype. Sara Simms tried to help her friends so they won't be sacrificed. She got her points across without being hysterical. Susie Bannion did not get hysterical at all during the film. She was calm and collected from the beginning. The only time the witches were only hysterical when they were intentional about as they were revealing to the policemen that they were witches.
	C. Empowerment through Violence or Self-Defense (EVSD)	**1. Defensive Actions (DA)**	Were there any instances where the character used violence or aggression in self-defense?	Susie Bannion was never in any form of danger in the film. Even when Helena Markos ordered Madame Blanc to sacrifice Susie, she was being protected by Blanc.
		2. Offensive Actions as Assertion of Power (OAAP)	Was violence used proactively to assert control or reclaim power from oppressors?	Susie Bannion ordering the Death Demon to kill Helena Markos and her supporters is a form of reclaiming power from the oppressors.

		3. Ambiguous Morality (AM)	Were there any actions that might have been morally ambiguous (especially if they lead to empowerment)?	We need to recognise that the witches, despite being evil themselves, were also fighting for their own survival in the film. Madame Blanc tricking Susie Bannion into dancing and her dance movements eventually killing Olga can be considered as morally ambiguous. Yes, Madame Blanc killed Olga through Susie, but she did so in order to save the witches' identity from being revealed.
	D. Rejection of Male Control or Influence (RMCI)	**1. Resistance to Male Authority (RMA)**	Were there any situations where the character directly challenged or disregarded male figures trying to control her choices?	The witches disregarded the policemen who came to check the dance studio due to Dr Klemperer's complaint regarding them. The witches also emasculated Dr Klemperer by stripping him naked and making him a 'witness' to their sacrifice.
		2. Autonomous Relationships (AR)	Were the portrayed relationships (of any kind) characterised by equality or by the character maintaining control?	Susie Bannion maintained control in all her relationships. She did everything willingly even though the witches were trying to manipulate her into being the next vessel for Mother Suspiriorum.
		3. Self-Sufficiency (SS)	Did the character show self-reliance and resilience in pursuing her goals without relying on male characters?	Susie Bannion relied on no male characters till the end of the film.
	E. Character Complexity and Depth (CCD)	**1. Moral Ambiguity (MA)**	Were there any situations where the character's actions could not be easily classified as "good" or "evil"?	Yes. It made sense for Susie Bannion to kill Helena Markos but to kill her supporters as well seemed evil. But maybe it can be rationalised if we're to put ourselves in Susie's position and think that Helena Markos ideologies might be propagated by one of her followers even after her demise.
		2. Psychological Development (PD)	Were there any growth or change in the character's beliefs, goals, or sense of identity?	Unclear. We never really get a peak into Susie's psyche other than her dreams.
		3. Resistance to Objectification (RO)	Were there any instances where the character was portrayed in a way that resists the male gaze (more focused on her interiority rather than her appearance)?	Despite being a dancer, which is supposedly a sexy profession, Susie is always in long sleeves and long pants. Even when naked, she wears a see-through cloak and takes on a matronly role.
	Narrative Coding			
	Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**	**Scene & Details of the Observation**
	A. Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes (SHGT)	**1. Final Girl Reinterpretation (FGR)**	How did the character subvert the "final girl" trope? (such as through active agency or moral ambiguity)	Susie does become the Final Girl as she is the only girl chosen by Helena Markos that ends up not getting sacrificed. Rather than just surviving, Susie becomes the evil herself when she reveals that she is Mother Suspiriorum, one of the Three Mother Witches.
		2. Female Monstrosity (FM)	Were there any moments where the female character took on "monstrous" qualities as an assertion of power?	This happens twice. When Susie Bannion's dance moves kill Olga and when Susie becomes Mother Suspiriorum and kills Helena Markos.
		3. Rejection of Passive Victimhood (RPV)	Were there any narrative choices that avoided positioning the female character as a helpless victim?	The film went both ways. It showed a series of female characters as helpless victims who were sacrificed in order to save Helena Markos and then they broke the stereotype by letting Susie Bannion defeat Helena Markos.
	B. Theme of Female Rage and Liberation (TFRL)	**1. Rage as Narrative Catalyst (RNC)**	Did rage drive the plot forward or lead to key character developments?	This happens twice. When Susie Bannion's dance moves kill Olga and when Susie becomes Mother Suspiriorum and kills Helena Markos.
		2. Revenge as Empowerment (RE)	Were there situations where revenge was depicted as a justified reclaiming of power and not a descent into evil?	Yes. Susie's defeat of Helena Markos can be considered reclaiming of power even when it is gory because it leads to saving the dancers.
		3. Empowerment Through Transgression (ETT)	Did the female character's actions challenge any taboos as part of her empowerment journey?	The taboo against witches and witchcraft is broken when it is revealed that Susie Bannion herself is a witch. Not only does she become the Mother Witch, she also protects the dancers.
	C. Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation (RFSI)	**1. Female Solidarity (FS)**	Were there any instances where female characters allied with each other?	Sara Simms and Susie Bannion ally together when Sara wanted to know what their dance teachers (the witches) were doing. Sara Simms also was empathetic towards Patricia and Olga.
		2. Female Isolation (FI)	Was there any depiction of isolation because of divergence from social expectations?	Patricia, Olga and later on, Sara, were isolated from the other dancers by the witches as they did not agree to whatever that was required of them by the witches.
		3. Social and Psychological Consequences of Liberation (SPCL)	How did characters' decisions for autonomy affect their psychological or social realities?	Patricia, Olga and later on, Sara, were ostracised and sacrificed anyway.
	D. Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation (USVR)	**1. Symbolism of Rage and Power (SRP)**	Were there any recurring symbols (e.g., fire, blood) that represented female rage, power, or transformation?	Spectral lights paired with screams is the recurring symbol for female rage in the film. Susie sees it in her dreams, these lights visit her and at the end, guide her towards the sanctum where the sacrifice ritual is taking place. This can be taken literally as female rage guiding her towards freedom.
		2. Costuming and Physical Appearance (CPA)	Were there any costumes or physical transformations that signified power shifts, independence, or defiance?	Susie Bannion's see-through cloak at the end signifies her finally showing her true self to the coven of witches. It hints that she is taking over Helena Markos position.

		3. Setting and Space as Reflective of Female Power (SSRFP))	How did the settings (e.g., isolated houses, cult-like communes) reflect or facilitate female empowerment?	The setting is a dance studio placed at the far end of the city. It is isolated. It shows how women are isolated and treated different and how they survive through solidarity.
	E. Narrative Arc of Empowerment (NAE)	**1. Stages of Empowerment (SE)**	What was the tipping point that catalysed the character's empowerment journey from oppression to autonomy?	Susie Bannion was never oppressed.
		2. Resolution and Catharsis (RC)	How did the narrative provide a sense of closure or catharsis (especially through revenge or liberation)?	The Death Demon killing Helena Markos and the witches who supported her is both cathartic liberation for the oppressed dancers who were being led to sacrifice and closure for those dancers who have already been sacrificed.
		3. Ambiguity of Empowerment (AE)	Did the narrative present empowerment as wholly positive or did it leave ambiguity?	There was no room for ambiguity as the freedom the dancers received after the death of Helena Markos is empowering.

	Film Information:			
	Title :	**Ready or Not**		
	Release Year :	**2019**		
	Director :	**Tyler Gillett & Matt Bettinelli-Olpin**		
	Screenwriter :	**Guy Busick & R. Christopher Murphy**		
	Character Details:			
	Name:	**Grace Le Domas**		
	Gender:	**Female**		
	Role in the Film:	**Protagonist**		
	Description of Character:	**Average sized woman, unsure of her place in the new family**		
	Intersectional Identities (if applicable):			
	Race/Ethnicity:	**Caucasian**		
	Class:	**Lower class, lived in foster homes while growing up**		
	Sexuality:	**Heterosexual**		
	Character's Relationship with Other Characters:	**Wife to Alex Le Domas and in-law to the other Le Domases**		
	Character's Motivations and Goals:	**To survive her in-laws' deadly game of hide & seek**		
	Character Coding			
	Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**	**Scene & Details of Observation**
	A. Agency and Autonomy (AA)	**1. Independent Decision-Making (IDM)**	Were there instances where the character made decisions without male or external guidance?	Throughout the film, Grace makes her own decisions to survive her in-laws. Especially after Alex betrays her in order to become the new head of the Le Domas family.
		2. Defiance of Traditional Gender Roles (DTGR)	Were there any moments where the character acted against stereotypical “feminine” behaviors or roles? (e.g., passivity, submission)	Yes. Instead of falling into the damsel in distress archetype, Grace was independent and rebellious in order to survive her in-laws.
		3. Self-Directed Goals (SDG)	Were there any goals or objectives that the character pursued on her terms (as a response to societal or personal oppression)?	Yes. For Grace, surviving was the goal. She pursued this goal in order to not be oppressed by her new family. In this context, being oppressed would mean death.
	B. Expression of Rage and Anger (ERA)	**1. Justified Rage (JR)**	Were there any instances where the character’s anger was portrayed as a valid response to trauma, betrayal, or oppression?	Yes. Grace's anger at her in-laws and her new husband was a valid response to betrayal she felt that night when they were trying to kill her and the trauma she felt from all the physical harm she had to experience that night.
		2. Rage as Empowerment (RE)	Did the rage lead to transformative or empowering actions?	Yes. Grace's rage led to her escaping the Le Domas family.
		3. Visible Emotional Complexity (VEC)	Did the depiction of complex emotions (anger, sorrow, betrayal) counteract the “hysterical” stereotype often imposed on female characters in horror?	Even Though Grace was hysterical at certain points in the film, she was also brave and cunning with the ways she tried to escape the Le Domas family.
	C. Empowerment through Violence or Self-Defense (EVSD)	**1. Defensive Actions (DA)**	Were there any instances where the character used violence or aggression in self-defense?	Yes. Grace killed her mother-in-law and defended herself against her sister-in-law by harming her. She did so in order to defend herself.
		2. Offensive Actions as Assertion of Power (OAAP)	Was violence used proactively to assert control or reclaim power from oppressors?	Yes. Grace used violence in order to reclaim power from her in-laws (in this context, the oppressors).
		3. Ambiguous Morality (AM)	Were there any actions that might have been morally ambiguous (especially if they lead to empowerment)?	When Mr Le Bail (the Devil) punished the Le Domas family for not killing Grace but spared Alex Le Domas (because he was Grace's husband), Grace decided to break up with him which caused Mr Le Bail to kill Alex as well. While people might find it jarring that she killed her own husband, it is good to rationalise that Alex also betrayed Grace and tried to kill her at the end in order to take over as the new head of the Le Domas family.
	D. Rejection of Male Control or Influence (RMCI)	**1. Resistance to Male Authority (RMA)**	Were there any situations where the character directly challenged or disregarded male figures trying to control her choices?	Yes. Grace went against her new husband and also her father-in-law to protect herself.
		2. Autonomous Relationships (AR)	Were the portrayed relationships (of any kind) characterised by equality or by the character maintaining control?	None of the relationships Grace has with anybody has any sort of equality. This is because the Le Domas family members are rich and Grace is not and that itself is already a divide between them. Besides, the game of hide-and-seek means that if Grace stays alive, the rest of them die. So, Grace is deemed a threat in their eyes. So, the Le Domas always tried to maintain control in order to save themselves.
		3. Self-Sufficiency (SS)	Did the character show self-reliance and resilience in pursuing her goals without relying on male characters?	Yes. Grace did not wait around for her new husband to help her as her in-laws were trying to kill her. She was self-reliant in finding ways to escape.

	E. Character Complexity and Depth (CCD)	**1. Moral Ambiguity (MA)**	Were there any situations where the character's actions could not be easily classified as "good" or "evil"?	Yes. The last part when she breaks up with her husband for betraying her which makes Mr Le Bail kill him.
		2. Psychological Development (PD)	Were there any growth or change in the character's beliefs, goals, or sense of identity?	Yes. By the end of the film, Grace is not looking for her in-laws' approval. Rather, she has come to a mindset where she realises that she doesn't need them. Her sense of identity is also not attached with that of Alex Le Domas anymore. She is her own independent woman.
		3. Resistance to Objectification (RO)	Were there any instances where the character was portrayed in a way that resists the male gaze (more focused on her interiority rather than her appearance)?	At the beginning of the film, Grace is dressed in a beautiful bridal gown and by the end, the gown is bloody and torn. While she does serve the male gaze at the beginning, by the end, she looks the part of somebody who is actively resisting the male gaze.
	Narrative Coding			
	Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**	**Scene and Details of Observation**
	A. Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes (SHGT)	**1. Final Girl Reinterpretation (FGR)**	How did the character subvert the "final girl" trope? (such as through active agency or moral ambiguity)	Grace was not only the final girl, she was also the only girl who was placed in a possible victim position. She survives through actively defending herself. She also subverts the final girl trope by earning the respect of the Devil at the end when Mr Le Bail materialises out of thin air and nods to her after he kills her in-laws.
		2. Female Monstrosity (FM)	Were there any moments where the female character took on "monstrous" qualities as an assertion of power?	From the middle part onwards, after Grace experiences serious physical harms, she takes on monstrous qualities. She lets her female rage take over and becomes defensive to assert power.
		3. Rejection of Passive Victimhood (RPV)	Were there any narrative choices that avoided positioning the female character as a helpless victim?	The whole movie works in favour of 'women saving themselves' archetype. So, Grace made to seem like a helpless victim only at the beginning which was then subverted by the filmmakers to give way for character development.
	B. Theme of Female Rage and Liberation (TFRL)	**1. Rage as Narrative Catalyst (RNC)**	Did rage drive the plot forward or lead to key character developments?	Yes. Female rage drove the plot forward. Grace's desperate need to escape manifested itself as rage and led to key character developments.
		2. Revenge as Empowerment (RE)	Were there situations where revenge was depicted as a justified reclaiming of power and not a descent into evil?	As audience, we are rooting for Grace since the beginning that even when she makes a conscious decision to kill her husband, we only see it as revenge as empowerment.
		3. Empowerment Through Transgression (ETT)	Did the female character's actions challenge any taboos as part of her empowerment journey?	The taboo that Grace breaks in the film is going against the in-laws. She not only broke the taboo, she also killed them in order to escape.
	C. Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation (RFSI)	**1. Female Solidarity (FS)**	Were there any instances where female characters allied with each other?	Grace does not experience any sort of female solidarity in the film as all her female in-laws are trying to kill her. However, before the game of hide-and-seek began, Grace's mother-in-law does show her support. This support is quickly taken away when Grace becomes a threat to the family and Becky, the family's matriarch, also joins the rest of her family to kill Grace. Interestingly, allyship comes in the form of Danie, brother-in-law, for Grace. Daniel helps Grace to escape multiple times because he doesn't belief in his family's traditions and he loves his brother Alex so much.
		2. Female Isolation (FI)	Was there any depiction of isolation because of divergence from social expectations?	Grace was isolated from the her new family from the very beginning because her in-laws were not welcoming of her as a new comer. Grace also personally felt isolated because she was under the impression that her in-laws considered her a gold-digger who only married Alex Le Domas for his fortune.
		3. Social and Psychological Consequences of Liberation (SPCL)	How did characters' decisions for autonomy affect their psychological or social realities?	When Grace actively tried to escape her in-laws, she was further diminished by them. We can also see that Grace was in great mental strain as she was trying to escape her in-laws and grappling with the reality that her husband has brought her into a family of killers.
	D. Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation (USVR)	**1. Symbolism of Rage and Power (SRP)**	Were there any recurring symbols (e.g., fire, blood) that represented female rage, power, or transformation?	The recurring symbol that represented Grace's female rage was her screams. She let out guttural screams every chance she got. This showed that she was channeling her anger to hurt her oppressors but also the release of trauma that she was carrying after being betrayed by her husband.
		2. Costuming and Physical Appearance (CPA)	Were there any costumes or physical transformations that signified power shifts, independence, or defiance?	What started off as a beautiful bridal gown at the beginning of the film, turned into a torn bloody garment by the end of the film. It showed that Grace has lost her innocence about her new family and her husband, but also signifies that she has transformed into a warrior instead of a helpless victim waiting for her husband to help her.

		3. Setting and Space as Reflective of Female Power (SSRFP))	How did the settings (e.g., isolated houses, cult-like communes) reflect or facilitate female empowerment?	The setting was an isolated bungalow in the suburban area. It represented how women are isolated and stripped away from their powers when faced with an enemy that has material powers. In fact, at one point in the film, the in-laws use CCTV cameras to track down grace and they all had fancy weapons throughout the film. Grace overcoming all this reflected female empowerment because it shows that women can overcome anything that is put in front of them.
	E. Narrative Arc of Empowerment (NAE)	**1. Stages of Empowerment (SE)**	What was the tipping point that catalysed the character's empowerment journey from oppression to autonomy?	The tipping point for Grace was when her husband betrayed her and tried to kill her as well in order to please his own family. While Grace was trying to escape from the get-go, it was that betrayal that really empowered her to break up with him and that eventually killed him. At this point, we witnessed as Grace became independent from the things that were pulling her down.
		2. Resolution and Catharsis (RC)	How did the narrative provide a sense of closure or catharsis (especially through revenge or liberation)?	When Grace was free of all her in-laws and gained respect from the Devil (Mr Le Bail), it was a closure for both the audience and Grace. Grace's act of escape itself was cathartic with the screams she let out and the manic laughter she let out as all her in-laws exploded to death.
		3. Ambiguity of Empowerment (AE)	Did the narrative present empowerment as wholly positive or did it leave ambiguity?	The narrative presented empowerment as wholly positive.

	Film Information:			
	Title :	**Nope**		
	Release Year :	**2022**		
	Director :	**Jordan Peele**		
	Screenwriter :	**Jordan Peele**		
	Character Details:			
	Name:	**Emerald Haywood**		
	Gender:	**Female**		
	Role in the Film:	**Protagonist**		
	Description of Character:	**Strong woman who is rebellious.**		
	Intersectional Identities (if applicable):	**African American**		
	Race/Ethnicity:	**African American**		
	Class:	**Lower Class, trying to make ends meet after Father's passing**		
	Sexuality:	**Bisexual**		
	Character's Relationship with Other Characters:	**Sister to Otis Jr.**		
	Character's Motivations and Goals:	**To kill Jean Jacket (the alien) and save the Haywood Hollywood Horses Ranch**		
	Character Coding			
	Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**	**Scene and Details of Observation**
	A. Agency and Autonomy (AA)	**1. Independent Decision-Making (IDM)**	Were there instances where the character made decisions without male or external guidance?	Yes. Decisions like when Emerald chose to steal Jupiter's Claim's training horse and when she decided to ask Antlers Holst's help to videograph the alien (Jean Jacket) were done without male guidance.
		2. Defiance of Traditional Gender Roles (DTGR)	Were there any moments where the character acted against stereotypical “feminine” behaviors or roles? (e.g., passivity, submission)	Emerald takes on a more dominant personality throughout the film. She even overpowers her brother, Otis Jr., at times. In fact, in most of the scenes, Otis looks towards Emerald for help.
		3. Self-Directed Goals (SDG)	Were there any goals or objectives that the character pursued on her terms (as a response to societal or personal oppression)?	Emerald made it a goal to kill Jean Jacket after the alien killed Otis. Emerald also focused on her own goals instead of making Haywood Hollywood Horses Ranch as her main work as a response to personal oppression she felt from her Dad who never gave her as many opportunities as he provided Otis Jr.
	B. Expression of Rage and Anger (ERA)	**1. Justified Rage (JR)**	Were there any instances where the character’s anger was portrayed as a valid response to trauma, betrayal, or oppression?	Whenever Emerald disobeyed Otis Jr.'s orders, it was a direct response to the oppression she felt by the male figures in her life. She disobeyed Otis when he asked her to put the ranch first instead of her career, and when he ordered her to not contact Antlers Holst to videograph the alien, and when Otis told her not to chase the alien.
		2. Rage as Empowerment (RE)	Did the rage lead to transformative or empowering actions?	The rage Emerald felt towards the alien after it killed Otis Jr. led to Emerald's quick decisions in killing the alien. In this film's context, that was a transformative action.
		3. Visible Emotional Complexity (VEC)	Did the depiction of complex emotions (anger, sorrow, betrayal) counteract the “hysterical” stereotype often imposed on female characters in horror?	Emerald was never hysterical in the film. She was more angry than not whenever any sort of nuisance went down.
	C. Empowerment through Violence or Self-Defense (EVSD)	**1. Defensive Actions (DA)**	Were there any instances where the character used violence or aggression in self-defense?	Emerald is only violent towards the alien in order to protect herself and to avenge her brother's death.
		2. Offensive Actions as Assertion of Power (OAAP)	Was violence used proactively to assert control or reclaim power from oppressors?	Yes. She used violence to reclaim power from the alien and to kill it.
		3. Ambiguous Morality (AM)	Were there any actions that might have been morally ambiguous (especially if they lead to empowerment)?	No.
	D. Rejection of Male Control or Influence (RMCI)	**1. Resistance to Male Authority (RMA)**	Were there any situations where the character directly challenged or disregarded male figures trying to control her choices?	Yes. She disobeyed Otis Jr. regularly and almost all her choices turned out to be efficient.
		2. Autonomous Relationships (AR)	Were the portrayed relationships (of any kind) characterised by equality or by the character maintaining control?	There was a power struggle between Emerald and her brother, Otis Jr., but Emerald always steered the relationship.
		3. Self-Sufficiency (SS)	Did the character show self-reliance and resilience in pursuing her goals without relying on male characters?	Yes. Emerald barely relied on Otis Jr. in order to capture the alien in video. Despite receiving help from many males (Angel, Otis Jr., Holst), it can be seen that Emerald was always demanding them for help rather than relying on them for it.
	E. Character Complexity and Depth (CCD)	**1. Moral Ambiguity (MA)**	Were there any situations where the character’s actions could not be easily classified as “good” or “evil”?	No.Everything Emerald did was in order to kill the alien.

		2. Psychological Development (PD)	Were there any growth or change in the character's beliefs, goals, or sense of identity?	Towards the end, we see Emerald to be a more independent and liberated woman. Only now do we realise that even though she disagreements with her brother, she also adored him. In fact, she was so crushed by his death that it actually motivated her rage to kill the alien.
		3. Resistance to Objectification (RO)	Were there any instances where the character was portrayed in a way that resists the male gaze (more focused on her interiority rather than her appearance)?	Emerald's character design never serves the male gaze. In fact, Emerald herself is dressed in a tomboyish manner.
	Narrative Coding			
	Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**	**Scene and Details of Observation**
	A. Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes (SHGT)	**1. Final Girl Reinterpretation (FGR)**	How did the character subvert the "final girl" trope? (such as through active agency or moral ambiguity)	Even though Emerald is the Final Girl, she openly talks about sex. She doesn't come off as a puritan woman. In fact, she openly defies the male figures in her life and still gets to live instead of being punished for her rebellious nature.
		2. Female Monstrosity (FM)	Were there any moments where the female character took on "monstrous" qualities as an assertion of power?	Emerald's monstrous qualities come through when she goes on a rampage to kill the alien.She lets out guttural screams at the monster multiple times in order to get its attention.
		3. Rejection of Passive Victimhood (RPV)	Were there any narrative choices that avoided positioning the female character as a helpless victim?	Yes. When the storyteller chose to kill the male character instead of the female character, that had already cemented Emerald as not only the final girl, but also the survivor who kills the evil.
	B. Theme of Female Rage and Liberation (TFRL)	**1. Rage as Narrative Catalyst (RNC)**	Did rage drive the plot forward or lead to key character developments?	The rage does lead the film to its conclusion. It also develops Emerald's character and we realise at the end that she'd do anything to protect the things she love.
		2. Revenge as Empowerment (RE)	Were there situations where revenge was depicted as a justified reclaiming of power and not a descent into evil?	Yes. When she killed the alien in order to avenge her brother and to save her ranch.
		3. Empowerment Through Transgression (ETT)	Did the female character's actions challenge any taboos as part of her empowerment journey?	Emerald breaks the 'women must always obey men' taboo throughout the film whenever she is disobeying the male characters.
	C. Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation (RFSI)	**1. Female Solidarity (FS)**	Were there any instances where female characters allied with each other?	Emerald is the only female character in main role in this film.
		2. Female Isolation (FI)	Was there any depiction of isolation because of divergence from social expectations?	Only in the flashback scenes when Emerald's Dad isolates her and only teaches her brother how to wrangle her horses. We can assume that this is because her father probably thought horse-wrangling was a male profession.
		3. Social and Psychological Consequences of Liberation (SPCL)	How did characters' decisions for autonomy affect their psychological or social realities?	Emerald's refusal to be consumed by the alien made her a brave and capable woman who fought the alien off.
	D. Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation (USVR)	**1. Symbolism of Rage and Power (SRP)**	Were there any recurring symbols (e.g., fire, blood) that represented female rage, power, or transformation?	Emerald's screams can be considered female rage. The large hole at the bottom of the alien's body can be a symbol for camera and surveillance culture. It is important to recognise that Emerald possesses intersectional identities because she is both black and a woman and the alien itself can be a symbol for police violence and how black women become victims to it.
		2. Costuming and Physical Appearance (CPA)	Were there any costumes or physical transformations that signified power shifts, independence, or defiance?	No. Emerald was always in her tomboyish outfits. But that itself is opposing patriarchal values as it is against societal expectations of how women should present themselves.
		3. Setting and Space as Reflective of Female Power (SSRFP))	How did the settings (e.g., isolated houses, cult-like communes) reflect or facilitate female empowerment?	The setting is a vast and empty horse ranch. Seeing a woman take charge of her own survival in a vast space where she doesn't have much help is very liberating and powerful to watch.
	E. Narrative Arc of Empowerment (NAE)	**1. Stages of Empowerment (SE)**	What was the tipping point that catalysed the character's empowerment journey from oppression to autonomy?	The alien killing Otis Jr. was the tipping point for Emerald. After that, she was hyper-focused on killing the alien. This is because not was she empowering herself out of oppression, she also wanted revenge against the alien.
		2. Resolution and Catharsis (RC)	How did the narrative provide a sense of closure or catharsis (especially through revenge or liberation)?	Emerald screaming out of joy and shouting, 'Nobody fucks with Haywood, bitch!' gave a liberating sense of catharsis because we had just spent two hours of this alien terrorising the Haywood siblings and almost killing both of them.
		3. Ambiguity of Empowerment (AE)	Did the narrative present empowerment as wholly positive or did it leave ambiguity?	The empowerment was wholly positive.

	Film Information:			
	Title :	**Midsommar**		
	Release Year :	**2019**		
	Director :	**Ari Aster**		
	Screenwriter :	**Ari Aster**		
	Character Details:			
	Name:	**Dani Ardor**		
	Gender:	**Female**		
	Role in the Film:	**Protagonist**		
	Description of Character:	**Average sized blonde woman**		
	Intersectional Identities (if applicable):			
	Race/Ethnicity:	**Caucasian**		
	Class:	**presumably lower middle class**		
	Sexuality:	**Heterosexual**		
	Character's Relationship with Other Characters:	**Girlfriend to Christian Hughes**		
	Character's Motivations and Goals:	**Unclear throughout the film. Although, it can be said that she just wants to be understood by her boyfriend.**		
	Character Coding			
	Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**	**Scene and Details of Observation**
	A. Agency and Autonomy (AA)	**1. Independent Decision-Making (IDM)**	Were there instances where the character made decisions without male or external guidance?	Dani was constantly looking for guidance from Christian (her boyfriend) because she thought she could be dependent on him. (She went to him when her sister was sending her suicidal messages, she wanted him to invite her to Sweden for the Midosmmar festival)
		2. Defiance of Traditional Gender Roles (DTGR)	Were there any moments where the character acted against stereotypical “feminine” behaviors or roles? (e.g., passivity, submission)	No. Dani was very submissive to Christian and would not voice out how she truly felt whenever he was being distant from her.
		3. Self-Directed Goals (SDG)	Were there any goals or objectives that the character pursued on her terms (as a response to societal or personal oppression)?	No. Throughout the film, it can be seen that Dani is acting out of trauma from losing her family and the sadness of her boyfriend being distant from her. Even when she chooses to sacrifice Christian at the end in the ritual, she only does so because she is under the influence of drugs and because he had just cheated on her with Maja (the girl from the Harga cult).
	B. Expression of Rage and Anger (ERA)	**1. Justified Rage (JR)**	Were there any instances where the character’s anger was portrayed as a valid response to trauma, betrayal, or oppression?	Yes. When Dani gave a sneaky remark to Christian that he too would leave her the way Simon had just left her girlfriend. This is one of the very few moments when we can see that Dani is realising that her boyfriend is distant and mentally abusive. Her choosing to sacrifice Christian at the end can also be seen as a valid response to betrayal.
		2. Rage as Empowerment (RE)	Did the rage lead to transformative or empowering actions?	As the golden teepee burns down in flame and Christian is dying inside, we see that Dani starts to slowly smile. While jarring, this can be seen as a transformative moment for her.
		3. Visible Emotional Complexity (VEC)	Did the depiction of complex emotions (anger, sorrow, betrayal) counteract the “hysterical” stereotype often imposed on female characters in horror?	Dani was visibly shocked from betrayal in many part of the film. Especially when she saw that Christian is cheating on her with Maja. She is a complex character but she is mostly hysterical in the film.
	C. Empowerment through Violence or Self-Defense (EVSD)	**1. Defensive Actions (DA)**	Were there any instances where the character used violence or aggression in self-defense?	No. She only uses violence at the end of the film for revenge against her boyfriend.
		2. Offensive Actions as Assertion of Power (OAAP)	Was violence used proactively to assert control or reclaim power from oppressors?	Dani choosing to sacrifice her cheating boyfriend is a moment in the film when violence is used to reclaim power from an oppressor. Christian was distant from her and breadcrumbed her instead of telling her how he truly felt about the relationship. He also constantly gaslit her whenever she brought up concerns about the way he was treating her.
		3. Ambiguous Morality (AM)	Were there any actions that might have been morally ambiguous (especially if they lead to empowerment)?	Audience may think Dani killing her boyfriend at the end was too much. But it is rationalised from her point-of-view because he had been cheating on her and was also mentally abusive. Besides, she was also under the influence of drugs, so it is hard to recognise just how much of her decision came from her mind being sound.
	D. Rejection of Male Control or Influence (RMCI)	**1. Resistance to Male Authority (RMA)**	Were there any situations where the character directly challenged or disregarded male figures trying to control her choices?	No. Dani constantly obeyed whatever her boyfriend told her even when she was discontent with it.

		2. Autonomous Relationships (AR)	Were the portrayed relationships (of any kind) characterised by equality or by the character maintaining control?	Christian controlled the relationship with Dani up until the climax of the film by gaslighting and breadcrumbing her. Dani only felt she had equal power with the female villagers who showed her empathy when she found out Christian was cheating on her.
		3. Self-Sufficiency (SS)	Did the character show self-reliance and resilience in pursuing her goals without relying on male characters?	No. Because her only goal was to get closer to her boyfriend, to be seen and understood by Christian.
	E. Character Complexity and Depth (CCD)	**1. Moral Ambiguity (MA)**	Were there any situations where the character's actions could not be easily classified as "good" or "evil"?	Yes. When she chose to sacrifice her boyfriend for the Harga villagers ritual.
		2. Psychological Development (PD)	Were there any growth or change in the character's beliefs, goals, or sense of identity?	Throughout the film, we see Dani going from somebody grieving her family's demise, and to someone who is grieving the distance between her and her boyfriend and finally to someone who realises her boyfriend's emotional abuse tactics and breaking free from it.
		3. Resistance to Objectification (RO)	Were there any instances where the character was portrayed in a way that resists the male gaze (more focused on her interiority rather than her appearance)?	When grieving, Dani was dressed in casual clothes and had a messy look. But as she became the May Queen, she was dressed in a beautiful white garment with floral arrangements. While it may have served the male gaze, the dress-up also showed her like a royalty where she was gaining power.
	Narrative Coding			
	Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**	**Scene and Details of Observation**
	A. Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes (SHGT)	**1. Final Girl Reinterpretation (FGR)**	How did the character subvert the "final girl" trope? (such as through active agency or moral ambiguity)	While Dani is the final girl among the visitors, she did not make active decisions to survive. It was always in the plans by the Harga villagers to bring Dani into the fold.
		2. Female Monstrosity (FM)	Were there any moments where the female character took on "monstrous" qualities as an assertion of power?	While not visibly monstrous, Dani killing her boyfriend for cheating on her can be seen in such a way.
		3. Rejection of Passive Victimhood (RPV)	Were there any narrative choices that avoided positioning the female character as a helpless victim?	Yes. This is because the Harga villagers wanted to bring Dani into the cult from the beginning. So, they constantly did things to make her comfortable. (The village girls intentionally falling down during the Maypole Dance so that Dani would win and feel included, the village girls crying with her in unison when Dani cries about Christian cheating on her).
	B. Theme of Female Rage and Liberation (TFRL)	**1. Rage as Narrative Catalyst (RNC)**	Did rage drive the plot forward or lead to key character developments?	No. The plot was driven forward by all the decisions made by the Harga villagers in the background of the film. Dani's realisation that she was being emotionally abused by her boyfriend led to key character developments.
		2. Revenge as Empowerment (RE)	Were there situations where revenge was depicted as a justified reclaiming of power and not a descent into evil?	Yes. At the end when she chooses to sacrifice her boyfriend.
		3. Empowerment Through Transgression (ETT)	Did the female character's actions challenge any taboos as part of her empowerment journey?	The taboo of 'do not disrespect the male figures no matter what' is broken in the narrative. Dani goes so far as to even kill Christian for cheating on her.
	C. Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation (RFSI)	**1. Female Solidarity (FS)**	Were there any instances where female characters allied with each other?	Yes. Even though the village girls were performative with their allyship while crying in unison with Dani when she is crying about her cheating boyfriend, and when they intentionally fell to make Dani win the May Queen competition, it made Dani feel seen and included.
		2. Female Isolation (FI)	Was there any depiction of isolation because of divergence from social expectations?	Dani felt isolated from her group of friends (who are actually Christian's friends) from the beginning. This is because Christian expressed to his friends that he doesn't want to be with Dani anymore but wasn't honest with Dani. This made the group of friends treat Dani like she is unwanted.
		3. Social and Psychological Consequences of Liberation (SPCL)	How did characters' decisions for autonomy affect their psychological or social realities?	Dani's decision under the influence of drugs to sacrifice her boyfriend has now made her part of the Harga cult. She also smiles as the golden teepee is burning down and the victims are screaming from inside from the pain. It can be said that she has achieved cathartic liberation.
	D. Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation (USVR)	**1. Symbolism of Rage and Power (SRP)**	Were there any recurring symbols (e.g., fire, blood) that represented female rage, power, or transformation?	Flowers were constantly used as symbolism for power and transformation in the film. When Dani wins the May Queen competition, they make her wear a floral wreath. As she is brought to the ritual ground to sacrifice her boyfriend, she is wearing an entire garment made of flowers.
		2. Costuming and Physical Appearance (CPA)	Were there any costumes or physical transformations that signified power shifts, independence, or defiance?	Dani went from wearing casual pants and t-shirts to being dressed in a flower gown to signify that she has become the May Queen. But it also shows that she has gained independent from her emotionally abusive boyfriend.

		3. Setting and Space as Reflective of Female Power (SSRFP))	How did the settings (e.g., isolated houses, cult-like communes) reflect or facilitate female empowerment?	The Harga village is a cult commune. This is to show that Dani is isolated from the rest of her peers because they do not understand her grieve. And this isolation from her friends and inclusion from the Harga villagers eventually makes her feel like she is seen and included buy the Harga villagers.
	E. Narrative Arc of Empowerment (NAE)	**1. Stages of Empowerment (SE)**	What was the tipping point that catalysed the character's empowerment journey from oppression to autonomy?	Dani finding out that Christian is cheating on her with Maja.
		2. Resolution and Catharsis (RC)	How did the narrative provide a sense of closure or catharsis (especially through revenge or liberation)?	By making Dani choose to sacrifice her cheating boyfriend and smile as the golden teepee went down in flames.
		3. Ambiguity of Empowerment (AE)	Did the narrative present empowerment as wholly positive or did it leave ambiguity?	The empowerment was ambiguous. Dani is free from her boyfriend, but she is now in a cult. When the drug wears off, will she still be in peace with the decisions she has made?

	Film Information:			
	Title :	**The Witch**		
	Release Year :	**2015**		
	Director :	**Robert Eggers**		
	Screenwriter :	**Robert Eggers**		
	Character Details:			
	Name:	**Thomasin**		
	Gender:	**Female**		
	Role in the Film:	**Protagonist**		
	Description of Character:	**Female young adult, blonde**		
	Intersectional Identities (if applicable):	**None**		
	Race/Ethnicity:	**Caucasian**		
	Class:	**Lower class, settler**		
	Sexuality:	**Heterosexual**		
	Character's Relationship with Other Characters:	**Daughter to William and Katherine, Sister to Caleb, Mercy, Jonas, and baby Samuel**		
	Character's Motivations and Goals:	**To fight off the claim that she is a witch**		
	Character Coding			
	Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**	**Scene and Details of Observation**
	A. Agency and Autonomy (AA)	**1. Independent Decision-Making (IDM)**	Were there instances where the character made decisions without male or external guidance?	Thomasin did disobey her father's rules when she went to the woods with her brother Caleb. But most of the time, she obeyed her parents William and Katherine.
		2. Defiance of Traditional Gender Roles (DTGR)	Were there any moments where the character acted against stereotypical “feminine” behaviors or roles? (e.g., passivity, submission)	Due to being set in the 1800s, Thomasin was mostly submissive to her parents and even to her brother Caleb who is younger than her. The only time she did not stay passive or submissive was when she went against her father in a quarrel because he kept asking her if she was a witch. Thomasin proceeded to list out all her father's undercomings to emasculate him.
		3. Self-Directed Goals (SDG)	Were there any goals or objectives that the character pursued on her terms (as a response to societal or personal oppression)?	When she succumbed to the accusations against her and went to the goat Black Phillip (The Devil) to become a witch, she did so in response to religious oppression her by her family.
	B. Expression of Rage and Anger (ERA)	**1. Justified Rage (JR)**	Were there any instances where the character’s anger was portrayed as a valid response to trauma, betrayal, or oppression?	The two times when Thomasin was angered (emasculating her father and killing her mother), she did so because she was hurt from the betrayal she felt because her own family did not trust her.
		2. Rage as Empowerment (RE)	Did the rage lead to transformative or empowering actions?	The rage she felt led to her signing her name in the Book of the Devil and becoming a witch.
		3. Visible Emotional Complexity (VEC)	Did the depiction of complex emotions (anger, sorrow, betrayal) counteract the “hysterical” stereotype often imposed on female characters in horror?	Thomasin was constantly in a state of panic because her family members kept accusing her of being a witch. This could lead to her being hung or burnt at the stakes. So she was hysterical most of the times. However, after her whole family was killed, she composed herself and we saw this complexity within her as she finally accepted who she really is and made a pact with the Devil.
	C. Empowerment through Violence or Self-Defense (EVSD)	**1. Defensive Actions (DA)**	Were there any instances where the character used violence or aggression in self-defense?	Yes. When Thomasin killed her mother Katherine at the end because Katherine was strangling her because she was convinced Thomasin was a witch.
		2. Offensive Actions as Assertion of Power (OAAP)	Was violence used proactively to assert control or reclaim power from oppressors?	The violence is subtle and it is against God and religious teaching more than it is against her family. She makes a pact with the Devil to reclaim power from the religious patriarchal values that were used to oppress her.
		3. Ambiguous Morality (AM)	Were there any actions that might have been morally ambiguous (especially if they lead to empowerment)?	Thomasin signing her name in the book of the Devil might be considered ambiguous because even though she has escaped her family of religious lunatics, she is now in a pact with the Devil.
	D. Rejection of Male Control or Influence (RMCI)	**1. Resistance to Male Authority (RMA)**	Were there any situations where the character directly challenged or disregarded male figures trying to control her choices?	Yes. Towards the end of the film, Thomasin is tired of the accusations against her and starts quarelling with her father in order to emasculate and verbally hurt him.
		2. Autonomous Relationships (AR)	Were the portrayed relationships (of any kind) characterised by equality or by the character maintaining control?	No. In almost all scenes, Thomasin is losing control of the relationship to the other person. (She is controlled by her family members, and later on, she is controlled by the Devil.)
		3. Self-Sufficiency (SS)	Did the character show self-reliance and resilience in pursuing her goals without relying on male characters?	No. Even at the end when she signs name in the Book of the Devil, she is still giving control of her autonomy to a male figure (the Devil).

	E. Character Complexity and Depth (CCD)	**1. Moral Ambiguity (MA)**	Were there any situations where the character's actions could not be easily classified as "good" or "evil"?	Yes. Making a pact with the Devil is definitely evil by religious standards. But Thomasin had also just survived her mother's attempt of killing her. So, the decision becomes ambiguous.
		2. Psychological Development (PD)	Were there any growth or change in the character's beliefs, goals, or sense of identity?	At the beginning, Thomasin was grovelling fro acceptance from her parents. Because they were already banished from their commune and they were isolated in the woods. If the family also banishes Thomasin, she will be left stranded alone. Towards the end, she has no remorse about her family's passing because they have been torturous to her. She has realised that she can live on her own as an independent woman.
		3. Resistance to Objectification (RO)	Were there any instances where the character was portrayed in a way that resists the male gaze (more focused on her interiority rather than her appearance)?	No. Even when clothed properly, Thomasin is lusted by her own brother. And at the end, she is completely naked after making a pact with the Devil. Now she is serving the male gaze of the Devil.
	Narrative Coding			
	Code Category	**Subcode**	**Subcode Description**	**Scene and Details of Observation**
	A. Subversion of Horror Genre Tropes (SHGT)	**1. Final Girl Reinterpretation (FGR)**	How did the character subvert the "final girl" trope? (such as through active agency or moral ambiguity)	While Thomasin is the Final Girl, she only subverts the trope by making a pact with the Devil. She does not survive the evil. Rather, she becomes one with it.
		2. Female Monstrosity (FM)	Were there any moments where the female character took on "monstrous" qualities as an assertion of power?	Though not visibly shown, Thomasin becoming a witch can be seen as her taking on a monstrous role. This is an assertion of power against religious dogmatism.
		3. Rejection of Passive Victimhood (RPV)	Were there any narrative choices that avoided positioning the female character as a helpless victim?	Yes. When Thomasin has lost all her family members, she is practically stranded in the middle of the woods. But she does not become hysterical. rather, she accepts who she is meant to be and makes a pact with Black Phillip (the Devil) and joins the other witches in the woods.
	B. Theme of Female Rage and Liberation (TFRL)	**1. Rage as Narrative Catalyst (RNC)**	Did rage drive the plot forward or lead to key character developments?	No.
		2. Revenge as Empowerment (RE)	Were there situations where revenge was depicted as a justified reclaiming of power and not a descent into evil?	Thomasin does not take revenge on anyone.
		3. Empowerment Through Transgression (ETT)	Did the female character's actions challenge any taboos as part of her empowerment journey?	According to biblical values, as this film is set in the 1800s, Thomasin breaks the taboo of disrespecting her parents. She doesn't honor her parents and talks back to them when she has had enough of the accusations.
	C. Representation of Female Solidarity or Isolation (RFSI)	**1. Female Solidarity (FS)**	Were there any instances where female characters allied with each other?	No. Both Katherine (Thomasin's mother) and Mercy (Thomasin's sister) were against her from the get-go because they were convinced she was a witch.
		2. Female Isolation (FI)	Was there any depiction of isolation because of divergence from social expectations?	Even before knowing for sure she was a witch, Thomasin was mostly isolated from her family for disobeying her parents and for bringing Caleb into the woods. She was also deemed a thief when William stole Katherine's silver cups for money but did not confess till too late.
		3. Social and Psychological Consequences of Liberation (SPCL)	How did characters' decisions for autonomy affect their psychological or social realities?	In a twisted way, Thomasin gains autonomy by making a pact with the Devil. She is now without family but has earned a coven of witches.
	D. Use of Symbolism and Visual Representation (USVR)	**1. Symbolism of Rage and Power (SRP)**	Were there any recurring symbols (e.g., fire, blood) that represented female rage, power, or transformation?	Black Phillip himself was a symbol of transformation. It is Thomasin's transformation from being a religious pious woman who is constantly wronged by her family to a free woman even while having a pact with the Devil.
		2. Costuming and Physical Appearance (CPA)	Were there any costumes or physical transformations that signified power shifts, independence, or defiance?	Thomasin goes from layered clothing that is modest at the beginning of the film to becoming fully naked at the end shows her freedom from religious shackles that were oppressing her.
		3. Setting and Space as Reflective of Female Power (SSRFP))	How did the settings (e.g., isolated houses, cult-like communes) reflect or facilitate female empowerment?	The setting was an isolated woods. This is to show that women are often isolated from society when being shunned.
	E. Narrative Arc of Empowerment (NAE)	**1. Stages of Empowerment (SE)**	What was the tipping point that catalysed the character's empowerment journey from oppression to autonomy?	Thomasin's mother almost killing her which made Thomasin kill her instead to protect herself.
		2. Resolution and Catharsis (RC)	How did the narrative provide a sense of closure or catharsis (especially through revenge or liberation)?	When Thomasin finally succumbed to the accusations and made the decision to become a witch at the end. How humbling it is to have become the very person people accused you of being.
		3. Ambiguity of Empowerment (AE)	Did the narrative present empowerment as wholly positive or did it leave ambiguity?	It left space for ambiguity.