

**Title:**

## Terrible Crimes and Wicked Pleasures: Witches in the Art of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

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**Abstract (summary):**

Early modern representations of witchcraft have been the subject of considerable recent scholarship; however, three significant aspects of the corpus have not received sufficient attention and are treated independently here for the first time. This dissertation will examine how witchcraft imagery invited discourse concerning the reality of magic and witchcraft and suggested connections to contemporary issues through the themes of the witch's violent autonomy, bestial passions, and unnatural interactions with the demonic and the dead. These three themes address specific features of the multifaceted identity of the witch and participate in a larger discussion that questioned the nature of humanity. Analysis of each issue reveals a complex, ambiguous, and often radically open treatment of the subject that necessitates a revision of how witchcraft imagery from this period is understood. Each understudied aspect of witchcraft imagery is explored through a series of case studies that have not appeared together until now. Previously unexamined artworks with inventive content are introduced and canonical pictures are examined from new perspectives. These images were created in the principal artistic centers, the Italian city-states, the German provinces, and the Low Countries, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the controversy over witchcraft was at its peak. Although they are few in number, these highly innovative images are the most effective and illuminating means by which to access these themes. These works of art provide valuable insights into important issues that troubled early modern society. Chapter 1 reveals how witchcraft imagery produced in the Low Countries is concerned with the witch's violent rejection of the social bonds and practices upon which the community depends for survival. Chapter 2 examines how the figure of the witch was used to explore concerns about the delineation and transgression of the human-animal boundary. Chapter 3 exposes an interest in the physical possibility of witchcraft; artists questioned the ability of witches and demons to manipulate the material world. Issues include the witches' capacity to reanimate dead bodies and create monstrous creatures. Together these images demonstrate active and meaningful engagement with the theories, beliefs, and practices associated with witchcraft.

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Originally published in 1983. Includes bibliographical references and index. Constantijn Huygens and The New World -- "Ut pictura, ita visio": Kepler's model of the eye and the nature of picturing in the north -- "With a sincere hand and a faithful eye": the craft of representation -- The mapping impulse in Dutch art -- Looking at words: the representation of texts in Dutch art -- Epilogue: Vermeer and Rembrandt -- Appendix: On the emblematic interpretation of Dutch art. In the early sixteenth-century, each faith had begun to execute activists that held the other belief; despite this, the common folk (including witches) were often ignored during this time. During the later 1500s, it had become clear that religious allegiance had settled; those of the Protestant faith had remained Protestant, and those of the Catholic faith had remained Catholic. The Reformation and the Counter-Reformation continued into the seventeenth-century; it was during this century that a witch craze had been able to occur as continental Europe was in a social, economical, and political crisis. The witch hunts at the beginning of the early modern era greatly broaden the question of the demonic origin of certain diseases as attested by the Bible, which at several points shows a demon capable of acting, by divine permission, on bodies and spirits. Until that time, beneficial or evil spells cast by witches on men or animals had a mysterious origin, and their effectiveness was not questioned. Beginning in the fifteenth century, these magical practices, which we find in all traditional societies, became extremely suspect: they could not but come from a pact with Satan; how else could the Witches in the Art of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth. Centuries. by Linda Gail Stone. A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements. Introduction Witchcraft presented a serious problem in the early modern period, as authorities struggled to comprehend the extent of the witches power and the danger they posed. While some theologians, jurists, and physicians challenged the reality of witchcraft, the majority of the populace perceived witches to be a genuine threat to society. The stakes were high; not only the lives but more importantly the souls of the community were at risk. To root out the problem some communities conducted witch hunts, employing torturous interrogation techniques, and administering horrendous punishments, 1In the middle of the sixteenth century in the so called "Great Supplication" to Ivan IV Ivan Peresvetov puts forward his ideas of a just, well-ordered State in a sententia-like comparison : "Like a horse without bridle so is an empire without dread."1 He then makes some concrete proposals for the improvement of the Muscovite State and underlines his propositions. The differences are closely linked to deep changes in the mode of argumentation at the court of the tsar in Moscow from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century. The authors try to convince in different ways because at the court of the tsar the idea of a well-built argumentation in the sixteenth century was fundamentally different from what it was in the seventeenth century. Two worlds -- two languages.

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