

**Kimberly Brennan**

**Third Semester**

**Haunted Houses: Narratives in Confinement and Madness in Literature and Cinema**

Beecher, Catherine. *A Study in American Domesticity*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company

Feury, Patrick. *New Developments In Film Theory*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2000

This is a new book on the study of film and I think for that purpose alone it will be helpful. It focuses on love, terror, body and passion, feminism, psychoanalysis, philosophy and semiotics.

One of the chapters that most interested me was on *Seduction: Gender, Genre and Power*. It is reiterating the theory that cinema is seductive and that the “seduced spectator is constructed by and, constructs, the film.” It is not a new concept but it is good to get a more recent take on film theories that still hold true since the older texts, like Laura Mulvey’s, were written.

Foucault, Michael. *Birth of a Clinic; An Archeology of Medical Profession*. Vintage, Reprint Edition, 1994

This book by Foucault fascinated me! It was amazing to trace the cultural influences that informed medical practices. It gave me a historical perspective on the treatments of nervous disorders like, hysteria that were shocking to me. To think we used such archaic forms of treatment that were abusive and actually life-threatening doesn’t seem that far off from how we treat mental illness today.

Foucault, Michael. *Discipline & Punish ;The Birth of a Prison*. Vintage Books, 1977.

This book was another favorite. It documents the form of punishment we have used throughout history and how those forms of punishment have been influenced by cultural reform. Supposedly inhumane forms of punishment, like public mutilation and quartering, were stopped. The more human forms of punishment were now done in private. It is interesting to see how those ideas influenced the architecture of prisons, school, and institutions. The idea being that there would be constant surveillance of these individuals and daily rituals performed to reform them. Religion played a big part in reforming social deviants. It was also an important book because of the historical reference to the confinement of certain individuals and how cultural perceptions influenced the idea of confinement. I saw a big connection to the Enlightenment period and the idea of contamination and the birth of institutions.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny*, Penguin USA, 2003

This book describes and documents the development of Freud’s theory on the uncanny. The uncanny is man’s primitive fear of immortality. The uncanny is defined as that which is familiar and invokes dread in us. It was important to my research because of Freud’s description of how we view insanity as uncanny.

Furie, Sidney J. *The Entity*, 1982

This movie scared the heck out of me! I believe the director uses the heroines “madness” as a way to exploit methods used by Freudian psychologists. It indeed reads like a page right out of “the Uncanny” as the psychologists blame the heroine’s attacks on her repressed desires.

Geller, Jeffrey L. *Women of the Asylum: Voices from Behind the Walls, 1840-1945*. Anchor, 1995

I have not received this book yet but I think it will provide me with actual documented examples of women confined to asylums and their struggles within the medical profession. The women documented in the book were committed against their will for behaving in ways that deviated from the norms of their day.

Gilman, Perkins Charlotte, *the Yellow Wallpaper*. The Feminist Press at CUNY; Revised edition 1996

This piece of literature is an autobiographical account, in some ways, of one women's experience with depression and ultimate confinement due to the prescribed "rest cure." The madwomen is used by the author to express her rage and anger against patriarchy. The wallpaper becomes uncanny as the heroine believes it confines a women who tries to creep out at night.

Holland-Toll, Linda J. *As American as Mom, Baseball, and Apple Pie: Constructing Community in Contemporary American Horror Fiction*. Bowling Green State University Popular Press. 2001

This book gives examples of how horror works in our culture and how it reflects the ills of society. The book challenges our ideas of what a monster is and makes the argument that the "monster" defies easy categorization. The book also makes the argument that the idea of community is a myth and that the monster "embraces commonality." An abusive government could be the monster in a film and not the serial killer we would normally expect.

Kaplan, Ann. *Woman and Film: Both Sides of the Camera*. Routledge, 1990

Kristeva, Julia and Leon S. Roudiez. *The Powers of Horror*. Columbia University Press, 1982  
Julia Kristeva defines the "abject" to us. The "abject" obeys no boundaries or laws and cannot be easily contained. I found a connection between the definition of the "abject" and the uncanny as it relates to insanity.

Marcus, Claire Cooper. *House as a Mirror of Self*. Conari Press, 1995

Mchugh, Kathleen Anne. *American Domesticity: From How-To Manual to Hollywood Melodrama*. New York: Oxford Press, 1987

The author makes a connection between 19<sup>th</sup> century literature on domesticity and 20<sup>th</sup> century films that reflect the culture. There is a strong emphasis on feminist film concerning domesticity and feminist film theory in academia. I think it will be an important book for my research because it focuses on the representation of domestic labor in American culture.

Mulvey, Laura. *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, (Art After Modernism)* David R. Godine, Mulvey Laura Publisher Inc. 1984

Stafford, Barbara Maria. *Body Criticism, Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine*. MIT Press, 1997

The description of the Enlightenment period and how it affects culture even today was amazing. The whole idea of categorization and confinement came out of this period of time. It influenced how Freud came up with the theory of the uncanny and how we look at mental illness still today. I found this book extremely helpful in setting the foundation for understanding Freud and Foucault's theories that all began with our fear of immortality. In that time period facial deformities meant that they could be carrying a life-threatening illness. Physical appearances were then wrongfully attached to disease and mental illnesses.

Vidler, Anthony. *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*  
Anthony Vidler describes how the Architecture can contribute to feelings of uncanny. He expounds on Freud's theory of the unhomely home, the "unheimliche" house, and how that has been translated to the haunted house.

Vidler, Anthony. *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*, MIT Press; reprint edition, 2002

This book talks about psychological space as the container for neuroses and phobias. This book supports Freud's theories on the uncanny as it relates to haunted houses. The haunting of a house can be the psychological projection of the inhabitants.