

A General Theory of Horror (Robin Wood)

Basic Repression vs. Surplus Repression

Basic repression: universal, inescapable, and necessary=allows the individual to function and survive in a society="what makes us human"

Example?

Surplus repression: specific to a particular culture/period (context again); the process whereby people are conditioned from earliest infancy to take on predetermined roles within that culture
(NOTE: surplus repression doesn't always work completely and it isn't all-powerful)

Example?

- Repression (that which is not accessible to the conscious mind, we aren't aware of it) vs. oppression (we are oppressed or held back/controlled by something "out there")
- What escapes repression must be dealt with through oppression (and it's not like that always works, either)

Influence of Freud/psychoanalysis (CONTEXT: psychoanalytic theory was, for decades, one of the most common approaches to the horror genre)

Horror genre="the return of the repressed" ("They're heeee-eere")

"The Other"

"Otherness represents that which bourgeois ideology [mainstream/status quo] cannot recognize or accept but must deal with in one of two ways: either by rejecting and if possible annihilating it, or by rendering it safe and assimilating it, converting it as far as possible into a replica of itself" (Wood 66)

External + Whatever is repressed in self and projected outward in order to be hated and disowned

- ex. Puritan settlers and Native Americans ("spawn of the Devil")
a classic and extreme case of the projection onto the Other of what is repressed in the Self in order that it can be discredited, disowned, and if possible, annihilated

The Other in Culture

Other people, period:

Woman:

The proletariat/working class:

Other cultures:

Ethnic groups within the culture: