

E-7

Film Approval Request

School: UHS

Department: English

Course: ENG 201

Grade Level: 10

Unit Alignment: "Inside the Nightmare: What is the Allure of Fear?"

Committee Members (5+): Brittany Goodman, Laurie Romero, Jenny Morelli, April Mckee, Nicole McGuire, Maureen Dreher, Megan Kaplan

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Title: The Others

Year: 2001

Director: Alejandro Amenabar

Rating: PG-13

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Summary of Plot: Nicole Kidman is awaiting her husband's return from World War II and her children suffer from a mysterious disease where they cannot be in the light. Three workers appear to the house responding to an ad put in the paper. The daughter claims that she is seeing ghosts. Later in the movie viewers come to find out that the ghosts that the daughter claims she is seeing throughout the house are actually real people. Toward the conclusion of the movie it becomes known that Nicole Kidman, her family, and the three workers are actually the ghosts. Nicole Kidman suffers from mental illness and both she and the children forget they are dead, and believe that their house is being haunted. Only upon the conclusion of the movie is the secret revealed that Nicole Kidman killed herself after killing her children and they are actually the one's haunting the house. (They don't actually show any of this, the characters don't even discuss that their mother killed them, it is implied).

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Language/Sexual Content: PG-13

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Rationale for Usage: I am requesting approval for showing this movie because in this unit students have just read two short stories. The first being Edgar Allan Poe's, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, and the second being, *House Taken Over*. In both stories the characters suffer from some kind of mental illness similar to that of Nicole Kidman in the movie. Additionally, the stories, and the movie

contain numerous Gothic Elements and Characteristics which is one of the things the students are required to identify and analyze in the literature throughout the unit. The houses in both stories also are given a Gothic, creepy, and evil connotation. This is also illustrated in the house that Nicole Kidman and her family live in during the movie. The entity in *House Taken Over* is left open for interpretation. In the movie, we find out that although the children think the house is haunted, they are actually the ones that possess the house. At the end of the movie they decide to stay and take their house back from the humans living there that are actually alive.

In the movie, the children do not realize they are dead. Interestingly, enough in the short story, *House Taken Over* the story can be interpreted as the brother and sister leaving the house due to the fact they are really dead and were pushed out by the living that took over the house. Also, in the story the siblings lock and close doors between corridors and rooms. Furthermore, in the movie, *The Others* Nicole Kidman is strangely obsessed with the locking and closing of doors when the family enters different rooms. Nothing can be left open. To continue, in both short stories, and the movie the characters are unable to leave the house. In Poe's story, the Usher twins are kept in the house by both their mental illnesses and strange eerie superstitions possessing the house. In *House Taken Over*, the sister, Irene never leaves. This goes along with movie where the children can never go outside. The characters in *Fall of the House of Usher* are described as pale, ghostly and emaciated. Likewise, in the movie the characters are extremely eerie and pale. The workers that also come to the house have a mysterious demeanor about them going along with the elements of Gothic Literature.

To conclude, the students at the end of this unit are required to write an expository essay where they compare both texts, and incorporate textual evidence from the literature to support their writing. I thought giving the students a visual depiction of the stories would give them another mode of discussion to add into their writing assignment. Having them analyze the movie as well as the two texts synthesizing the similarities helps students make the assignment more rigorous, but also allows the students to discuss different genres. One of the goals for this year is also having students go beyond the text to make comparisons between the literature and connections to the real world. Allowing the children to view this movie encourages higher order thinking skills, going beyond the text.

Finally, the students are required to do a PBA presentation at the end of the unit. Allowing the students to get the visual representations from the movie, as it contains extremely similar themes to their literature gives the students an additional mode of content to add into their presentations. The essential question of this unit is, "What is the Allure of Fear?" The movie, moreover, helps the students respond to this essential question in multiple venues. The first being, that as an audience what is the allure of fear in the movie? What keeps the audience interested, wanting to continue to watch the movie? As characters in the movie, what was the allure of fear that keeps Nicole Kidman's family from leaving the house? Lastly, what was the allure of fear for the three workers that came to the house? They know that there are strange things occurring in the mansion, yet they still come to work for the family, and put up with Nicole Kidman's strange behaviors.

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**Assessment Plan:** Students will be required to analyze and synthesize the movie and compare it to both short stories in the textbook, *Fall of the House of Usher*, and *House Taken Over*. Students will be required to use the information from both texts and the movie to create an explanatory essay, as well as create a Project Based Assessment which is a visual presentation at the completion of the unit. Students will use the information from all three sources to support their writing and include in their project.