Stroupe

Notes on the Gothic Mode

1. At the center of all Gothic or Gothic inflected stories is a pathology (physical, mental, moral, social, spiritual disorder). This pathology can result in/from...
   A. ...an inability to grow, change or adapt
   B. ...a dis-integration or disassociation from
      1. from self
      2. from society
      3. from history
      4. from “reality”
   C. ...withdrawal and isolation, which leads to an effect of secrecy and mystery. (The effect of an unseen or unseeable pathology is terror; the effect of a pathology that’s graphically revealed is horror.)

2. In the Gothic mode, pathology and dis-integration are embodied in split or doubled characters.
   A. a split personality that is divided against/from itself
   B. pairs of characters who are really two sides of one healthy person and who are incomplete--and thus pathological--without one another

3. Gothic settings can also be dis-integrated like the characters.
   A. Settings are typically divided up into lots of hidden spaces by trap doors, sliding panels, revolving bookcases--or twisted into maze-like and labyrinthian confusion.
   B. Many Gothic settings are also dis-integrated from the world (society, history, “reality”)
   C. Disintegrated settings and spaces lend the effect of mysteriousness, confinement, isolation
   D. Common Gothic settings include a house, ship, village, forest

4. In the Gothic mode, settings and objects are anthropomorphized (attributed human motivations and characteristics to inanimate objects, places, etc.) or constructed as symbols for...
   A. a divided or pathological mind of a character
   B. a dis-integrated or pathological family
   C. a dis-integrated or obsolete culture or social order

5. Many Gothic stories are set against a background of the modern, mundane, or otherwise “common sense” world, which enables the writer not only to tell a Gothic tale but to comment on social, historical, or psychological issues. For instance, a writer may...
   A. ...celebrate a vanishing, ghostly world of obsolete but admirable values set against a modern, if perhaps more mundane world
   B. ...describe a tenacious enclave of backward, de-evolved, degraded, or corrupt values, as opposed to the modern world
   C. ...portray irrational, supernatural or otherworldly events set against a rational, natural, or everyday background.
   D. ...present a pathologically abnormal or deviant character coming into Gothic-style contact with the normal and conventional world

6. Gothic pathology necessarily suggests an contradiction of common-sense assurances, and may variously represent a rejection of, a challenge to, a criticism of common-sense norms (radical function), or a enactment of the need for common-sense vigilance and for continued “normalization” (conservative function). Sometimes these two functions can operate, potentially, in the same text.