**Prof. Scanlan’s Definition of Homesickness and Gothic Homesickness**

Homesickness is a feeling associated with a lost home or a longing to return home. It can occur when a person misses some aspect of home. This concept is complex and ties together several ideas about home and loss. It is also a yearning to recover some aspect of a home that is no longer available: an object from a previous home, the memory of having fewer responsibilities as a child, or the loss of a family member are common examples. More specifically, homesickness may be an idealization of a special part of the past, and it may be individual or collective. But it can also be a Janus-faced feeling for a past home, a feeling in which a homesick person perceives the old home positively and negatively, the result of which is that he or she may reconfigure the idea of home and seek a different, possibly better, future home. One feels homesick due to comparison and recognition; the self, in the act of remembering the past home, collides with the remembered older self, and the recognition of the difference between the new self and the old self leads to a type of shock that points that person’s attention in three directions at once: back to the past, into the present moment, and into the future. In sum, homesickness is complex and historically embedded; it recruits memory, environment, and experience to aid a person in making decisions about the present and future.

Gothic Homesickness is based on the above definition, especially the feeling of missing something related to home that is now gone. Gothic homesickness, however, is more extreme than homesickness in that the such feelings and decisions about home may destroy the actual home. What this means is that the negativity surrounding the home may activate violent—perhaps even deadly—decisions to destroy. Gothic homesickness is related to terms like haunting and the uncanny, but unlike these softer, more reflective terms, gothic homesickness leads to drastic decisions to do something violent, to change the idea or physical reality of home. Gothic homesickness leads to destructive decisions whereas homesickness leads to more logical decisions to reinvent or move. Gothic homesickness need not lead to physical violence, the violence can be internal or psychological. For example, an individual can be negatively affected by an uncanny memory that resurfaces with such force that it stops the individual from achieving balance or well being. Characters can slide into and out of gothic homesickness: it is a feeling and not a rigid category.

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