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Becoming and being goth: how goths remember the scene's transition from the eighties into the nineties.

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Abstract

Goth emerged from post-punk, and by the eighties became an identifiable feature of the popular music scene and wider popular culture. Fuelled by the success of bands such as The Sisters of Mercy, goth music and culture spread around the world interacting with wider alternative, gothic fashions. At the end of the 1980s, goth reached a peak of interest followed by retrenchment into the alternative, sub-cultural spaces from which it had emerged. Nonetheless, it survives. In this paper, we interview goths who became active in the 1980s and who remain goths in order to understand how they became goths and what goth meant to them then. Using memory work, we are interested in how these goths construct their own histories and goth mythologies, and what this might tell us about the political and sociological importance of goth as a counter-hegemonic space at a time of globalization, consumption and commodification. We explore how they remember goth emerging from the post-punk scene with its radical politics and alternative, anti-mainstream culture. We examine the way these individuals remember becoming goth and their awareness of being in a goth scene. We then show how they remember and construct stories of when goth retrenched in an alternative underground that reconstructed the counter-hegemonic politics of punk and post-punk. Finally, we show what happened in the late 1980s and early 1990s and argue that the scene, or that part of the scene represented by our goths, is following a dialectical path carved out of the neo-Gramscian concept of negotiation when faced with the culturally and aesthetically hegemonic effect of a dominant culture.

Key words: goth; hegemony; liquid modernity; memory; neo-tribes

Introduction

There is a great deal of literature available concerning the United Kingdom (UK) goth scene, both academic and popular in focus, with the work of Hodkinson being the first and often quoted academic work on the culture (Hodkinson, 2002). Hodkinson was clearly influenced by the work carried out on subcultures by Hebdige (2003), Hall (2006) and Cohen (1973). Others such as Bibby (2007), Goulding and Saren (2006) and Wilkins (2004) have delved into specific aspects of UK goth that indicate the breadth and depth of the scene in their focus. These and other writers take various norms and values of the scene as read and as almost ontologically a priori.

Popular writers seem to have a greater awareness and a clearer overview in-regards the continued evolution of the scene, with a broader recognition that the values and norms evolve and were also subject to further dialectical change. Authors like Baddely (2002), Mercer (2009) and Scharf (2014) indicate progression and change. Baddely (2002) provides a holistic social picture for the creation of the goth mind set and the goth scene, as does Scharf with her focus on the goth aesthetic as paramount. Mercer takes a more pragmatic musical, classical-subcultural stance. As Spracklen and Spracklen (2014, 2018) argue, goth has survived and grown in this century into a global form of popular culture, but it owes its origins to the postpunk scene in the UK in the late seventies and early eighties.[1]

Our intention with this paper is to concentrate on how goths themselves remember the formative years of the scene, the 1980s, and the changes brought about in regards to the scene's movement into the 1990s: how did they become goth, and how did they realise they were goth? That is, we are interested in how they constructed their own mythology of becoming goth and being goth. We are also interested here in exploring how goths remember the massive and fundamental change which came about once the mainstream media moved away from its support of the scene in the late 1980s as shifted its focus to what it considered to be other fresher and current music-based movements that were ripe for commodification and recuperation (Robert Chasse, 1969) (Debord, 1970).

What was so devastating about the mainstream media and music industry's abandonment of the scene and its music was that, essentially, it aesthetically and culturally stranded a subcultural section of the UK population. A population that was used to finding out about the culture and music of their scene via the medium of commercially focused and controlled mass media (that is, music publications, radio and television) appeared to many, both inside and

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[1] Spracklen and Spracklen (2018) insist on using goth in the lower case. We follow this rule here.

outside of the scene, to be excommunicated in some way from the normal conventional channels of information and cultural consumption. This caused the scene to look deeper and inward to find material, cultural and musical alternatives to reinforce and to consolidate its identity. The commodifying forces had, accidentally, created a subcultural (countercultural) pocket of resistance that became the fuel that refocused and redirected the scene. For many involved, this shift of focus or, as many in the scene called it, this 'fall from grace' was important in the consolidation of their goth identity and an important evolutionary moment in the process of being goth.

What is goth?

The definitive historical origin of goth, and in this case UK goth, has been the subject of an ongoing and developmental debate that has been covered many times and in a variety of depths and perspectives. Both on the internet and academic and non-academic publications. Many of the definitions cite different and competing claims for the first usage of the term 'gothic' in regards a form of music and its connected culture. But with equal frequency there are moments of parity and consensus. The 'truth', the definitive history of goth, is probably somewhere in between. As with many things in regards the evolution of a scene or culture, the flow of cultural material in any given moment is available to the members of all within any given society, and from their possible contribution to, and perspective of. They may all be correct, rather as if one were to be holding a collection of different jigsaw pieces in one's hand and they all seem to fit. We now explore a number of perspectives on what people believe goth to be, as a way of giving a short overview of the culture's believed meaning as it exists within important corners of contemporary culture.

What is this thing called goth?

As Gunn (1999) has argued the gothic subculture emerged in Britain in the early 1980s, in the wake of a musical genre originally referred to as post-punk. The characteristic features of goth, whose early protagonists included bands like Bauhaus and Siouxsie and the Banshees - were echoing guitars, slow, repetitive drums and wailing vocals fused into an eerie, hazy sound. Song lyrics revolved around the dark recesses of the human soul: death, suffering and destruction as well as unfulfilled romance and isolation, but also the more arcane, taboo aspects of magic and mythology (e.g. ancient rituals, vampires). The presentation of this music involved elements of theatrical performance, most notably pale make-up, black clothes and melodramatic gestures. Adopted and further developed by the fans of the genre, these

performative features came to constitute the mainstays of what is called *Goth, Gothic* or simply *Black* style." (Brill, 2008, p. 1). Furthermore, Spracklen and Spracklen (2018, p. 1) argue goth:

> emerged as a sub-genre label for a number of bands in the post-punk movement in the United Kingdom at the beginning of the 1980s. Since, it has survived and become globalised as a cultural practice associated with being alternative and transgressive.

Where did it come from?

Spracklen and Spracklen (2018) explore the origins of the term goth in popular music, and while it is not the purpose of this paper to revisit the arguments in there, it is necessary to give an overview. Ian Astbury of the band Southern Death Cult, is cited by Ogg (2009), cited in Spracklen and Spracklen (2018, p. 38):

> It was (NME writer) David Dorrell, later manager of Bush, who was the instigator [of the term goth]. It came from Andi of Sex Gang Children. He lived in this Victorian apartment block in Brixton. We referred to him as Count Visigoth and his followers, the gothic hordes. And Dave Dorrell was around Brixton at the time, and it kind of became a joke. Just sort of teasing Andi, because he had the curtains drawn all the time and was always wearing a Chinese robe. At that time you would see girls with teased black hair, occasionally you'd see a girl wearing bat earrings or something, principally followers of Siouxsie And The Banshees, and that's what it derived from. And then I think David wrote an article referring to 'goth' in that way. That was pretty much it. Anything that looked dark with spiky hair was called goth.

In fact, goth had been used to describe the music of Joy Division (Carpenter, 2012; Spracklen and Spracklen, 2018), and was floating around as a signifier in the music press for post-punk and positive punk since 1978. In the South of England, dark fashions emerged out of the Batcave scene, influenced by The Misfits. But Spracklen and Spracklen (2018) argue that Leeds and the F-Club were instrumental in fixing the look and the sound of goth (see also Spracklen, Henderson and Procter, 2016): the Sisters of Mercy came from there with their dry ice, black hair, black shirts and drum machine, and their song 'Alice', released in October 1982, brings together and blends everything dark and transgressive about Bauhaus and Joy Division then develops it into a new and more digestible, and arguably commercial form. The Sisters toured extensively, working in the alternative underground circles around the F-Club, soon became international superstars: this was the era when what is goth was constructed, or at least

what is generally considered to be goth in the mind's eye of the majority of UK based goths and non-goths alike. Spracklen and Spracklen (2018) show that F-Club founder John Keenan was instrumental in getting 'goth' into popular consciousness by suggesting the name to a reporter at the local newspaper in 1983. Culturally and aesthetically, then, goth was constructed from the post-punk underground grafted with an older gothic literature and Johnny Cash by way of Iggy Pop (Spracklen and Spracklen, 2018).[2]

Critical Theory

To understand goth as a subculture we draw on Gramscian ideas as used by Hebdige (2003) in his analysis of the "negative" use of style as rebellion against hegemony, and as a semiotic act that consolidates and reinforces identity. We also use Hall and Jefferson (1976, (2006) because of their analysis of youth culture and its ritualistic resistance against the dominant culture that:

> represents itself as the culture. It tries to define and contain all other cultures within its inclusive range. Its views of the world, unless challenged, will stand as the most natural, all-embracing, universal culture. Other cultural configurations will not only be subordinate to this dominant order: they will enter into struggle with it, seek to modify, negotiate, resist or even overthrow its reign—its hegemony (1976, p 12)

In consideration of the powerful effect and idea that change is a key and foundational factor in understanding the phenomena in question, and that fluidity and adaption appeared to be another major factor, we consider Bauman (2000) and his work on liquid modernity. Bauman (2000) moves on from the work of Marx (1887) and Engels (1925) in considering dialectical forces and uses the Marxian perspective to ask direct questions concerning the effect of modernism and post-modernism in-regards to our understanding and analysis of current social events. We also take into consideration the perspective put forward by post-modern/modernist writers in regard to the concept of subcultures in the form of the work of Bennett (1999) and his assertion that there are no longer any [?] subcultures: rather, according

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[2] Spracklen and Spracklen (2018) report stories that Andrew Eldritch and others at the F-Club saw Iggy Pop dressed all in black. Iggy Pop himself was influenced by [?] Johnny Cash.

to Bennett, things are more fluid and intrinsically less static, less stable and have faded over the recent decades. Identity is no longer as strongly tied to notions of class and obvious stylistic rebellion as postulated by structuralists such as Hebdige (2003); rather,identity is tied into the notion of sociality, according to Bennett.

However, in considering this fluid subcultural participatory and individualistic stance on the analysis of subcultures (or as some other writers have said, 'scenes') for the purposes of this paper a dialectical neo-Gramscian paradigm has been used as a structural framework. This framework is fit for purpose when considering the interview data as it avoids us traveling down post-modernist paths of infinite individual variance where no solidity can be founded.

On goths

Academic authors on the gothic scene and culture are crucial to this paper. These writers to a large but not exclusive extent are (or were) 'insiders'; as such they bring real world experience and relevancy to our critical lens. As we have already said in the introduction, Hodkinson (2002) produced the first academic book to analyse the gothic scene. Although the work has dated and is narrow in its focus, it does provide a large amount of information and high-quality analysis that counterbalances any criticisms of subjective contingency. His work also lays the foundation for other writers on the topic of the gothic scene and continues to be the academic touchstone for the study of goth.

Spracklen and Spracklen's research (2014, 2018) is framed by the lead author's extensive work in the field of leisure with his interests moving naturally into the area of music and spectacular cultures spaces where different Habermasian rationalities are being contested. We draw on Spracklen, Henderson and Procter's (2016) post-Marxist notions of the commodification of the spectacular and the memories and value of identity work and myth making within the F-Club scene in Leeds, to explore memory, identity, belonging and the effects of commodification in the UK goth scene in the period.

Methodology

We are exploring the scene's folk memory of these times, including its rise in status and mythology from a period that covers the years 1988 through to approximately 1994. People's recollections are contingent and subjective, but by asking people from the scene to reflect, we have gathered data that reveals at least part of what people remember as being the key events that shaped the scene and their experience of it (Spracklen, Henderson and Procter, 2016). This data was gained through semi-structured interviews with members who have been active

continually since the 1980s. Trevor Bamford constructed a series of questions connected to themes that he considered would be important in underscoring and understanding the themes mentioned. He held the interviews over Skype or in cafés or pubs and recorded the full conversation on a wav recorder. The sample of interviewees were recruited partially from Bamford's circle of contacts within the UK goth scene, and partially from a request posted up on the Facebook group 'UK Goth Scene the 80s into the 90s'.

We tried to construct a sample of interviewees that balanced out gender, socio-economic backgrounds, as well as locality. The total of individuals interviewed was eight people, four men and four women. We analysed the data using discourse tracing (Le Greco and Tracy 2009) to construct a picture of the time in question and the personal recollections and feelings of the interviewees regarding the period in question.

Discourse Tracing Analysis.

<u>Awareness of gothness, alienation and self-identity</u>

We begin our analysis by providing evidence of how our goths reported similar tales of becoming aware of goth, identifying with it as it went from an underground sub-culture to something to be seen in the mainstream popular culture.

"*I wasn't really aware of any changes as the scene moved from the 1980s into the 90s as I lived in a place that was a long way from any scene, even an alternative one. Whatever we got just came along and we took it on board.*" DJLM.

"*Where I grew up was rural and quite isolated, anything we learned about came as word of mouth and from posters and fanzines. Also, everything was a bit mixed up with punk and other things.*" PE.

"*I come from a small market town and everything we got came as second hand. I was too young at that time to go out to the big cities where I knew there was a bigger scene, so everything I got was word of mouth from the older gothic types I knew and from TV and the radio. I always thought that goth was an offshoot of punk.*" GH.

"*We grew up in small market town and as far as we were concerned, we were a kind of punk. Not your usual punk, a different kind of punk. We noticed that back in the 80s there was a drift away from the typical anarchy type of punk rock look and that skulls and things like that were becoming popular because of people like Dave Vanian and Siouxie Sioux.*" TMC and CMC.

With these set of interviewees, several factors contribute towards the concept of identity. The first factor is the concept of isolationism in-regard to both physical location and personal interest proclivities. 'The Only Goth in The Village' -type syndrome seems to have been a common development and a factor in defining both the individuals involved in the scene and how that syndrome translated to the development of the scene in the 1990s (Productions, 2015). It is worth noting here that this part of goth history and its development took place before the rise of the internet and social media in forming and underscoring goth identity. Something that in later years would become an integral aspect of the scene and its development. However, the time-period we are looking at in this paper was before digital media took its influential effect on trans-local and transnationalism in regards the consolidation of (sub)cultural identity. In these pre-social media times, people were far more reliant on the information transmitted by the mass media (newspapers, radio, television).

Baumeister (Baumeister, 1995, p. 497) suggests that 'much of what human beings do is done in the service of belongingness'. The behaviour of the individuals in the goth subculture during the early 1990s can be understood as conforming to this. They wanted to make sense of the world as it related to them as individuals as well as to find where they belonged in the order of things. They wanted to find validation, happiness and fulfilment in their subcultural world; and perhaps they still do. Feelings of isolation are a powerful force for development and change, and just as 'nature abhors a vacuum', individuals need to feel part of something. This is especially noticeable when change has been instigated by large external agencies. One important factor that was apparent in all of the interviewee's answers above was the contingent dependency on the agents of the mass media. Despite there being subcultural 'mix ups' here and there, in general the respondents used the flow of information from the mass media to begin to construct their goth identities. It is important to note that, once these aesthetic and cultural information lifelines had been effectively cut by the mass media, the desire to further continue to construct and to consolidate identity was still there, and that the desire to continue the process drove the scene onwards as an oppositional act against the media's hegemony.

The 1980s: peak goth

The following accounts detail how our goths experienced the 1980s and how important this era was to them.

 "The 1980s scene wasn't gothic as we would understand it, rather it was proto-gothic, a kind of taste of things to come. All the sociological norms to do with the scene were formed at that

time, but even people who were involved in the scene at that time didn't consider the scene to be gothic. Back in the 80s the term wasn't used at all. [3]
The term came about a bit later, towards the end of the 80s." DJLM

"Where we came from things were a bit blurred and mixed up. I wasn't sure I was a member of a scene (gothic) until I moved to Nottingham in the 1990s. My 80s experience was a bit mixed up and not clear." PE

"*Back in the late 80s the term was foistered on certain bands to describe a certain look. It wasn't till the 90s that the gothic term and culture had any feeling and meaning".* GH

"*The 80s was sort of punk rock, but a different kind of punk, a kind of a gothic scene but very different to what it would become. It was a bit mixed up and not clearly gothic until the 1990s."* TMC

"*The 80s scene was not really a gothic scene at all, but a rough mixture of a lot of things that eventually became re-fined and known as goth. But if it wasn't for the 80s scene, there would be no gothic scene as we know it.*" MN

"*Yes, the 80s was gothic, in a way, in my mind it was the defining concept of what gothic is, the 1980s sound and look".* HS

"*The scene back in the 80s wasn't what we would understand as gothic, it was a spin-off of punk and the New Romantics. Punk was a dirty word at that time due to the yobbish behaviours associated with it and people who wanted to be different moved towards this scene which was then just called "alternative" to be different, but not punk. The darkness of the music owed a lot to what was happening in the UK at that time. (Falklands war, The Miner's strike etc".* SMCB

The views of the interviewees above demonstrate that they all considered the 1980s to be the foundation of the idea of what goth is, but that it was not until the 1990s that the term goth, and the goth scene, became culturally consolidated. Essentially, the scene embraced and took charge of the term during the 1990s, as a way to reinforce their own social identities, and to ensure that what they both identified with and enjoyed, was to continue.

By way of further clarification regarding the individual's identification with 'goth-ness', we asked linked questions concerning the nature of the 1980s scene as opposed to the scene in the 1990s. The intention was to ascertain whether the 1980s scene was truly authentic and

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[3] The term goth was known and used at that time, but its usage was unknown by the interviewee. Or they have forgotten it was used.

whether it deserved the goth designation. We wanted to find out the amount of personal identification with, and contingent understanding of, the scene as it was at that time and how people felt things changed, or as DJLM would put it, 'mutated'. The respondents varied in their view of the 1980s scene, but all of them acknowledge the impact of that decade on shaping the UK goth scene as it is today. Additionally, all of them have shown that they also identify with the term goth and that the cradle of their own individual goth identities was forged in the scene at that time. One of the defining and most important characteristics of the concept of identity, and identity within the scene was a general shared sense, no matter how ephemeral, of like-mindedness connected to a collective set of shared values, regardless of their geographical location to each other (Hodkinson, 2002).

The 1990s and the goth sense of self and community

The next set of accounts explain how the goth scene adapted and survived.

 "Absolutely, the 90s caused the scene to adapt to the changes in society and take on board new ideas, but it (the gothic scene) also shut its self-off to protect and preserve itself. It closed all the doors and battened down the hatches. The attitude we had in the scene at that time was, yes I am a goth, I do love this kind of music so fuck you!" DJLM.

"Yes, the scene did survive and thrive in the 90s because the music is so powerful and original, and the gothic aesthetic is so strong. People will always be attracted to the darker side of things. It's human nature and what I love!" PE

"Back in the 90s people were far more willing to travel to support a gothic club night, I used to travel halfway across the country for a night. Also, back in the 90s all the underground goth events started up. "Carnival of Souls" "WGW", "Gotham" "Black Celebration" "The Morecombe Goth Weekend" ETC as well as goth-based music companies such as Nightbreed Recordings and "Resurrection Records". GH

"The scene grew up in the 1990s, we all started liking other things than just music, we liked literature, films, architecture etc. Whereas back in the 80s we just liked the music that we heard." MN.

"The scene sort of did thrive and sort of didn't back in the 90s, it wasn't as good as the 80's but it did get its own flavour. The 90's is when all those silly sub genres started which I thought were unnecessary." HS

"The scene did thrive in the 90s because not everyone wants the same thing in society, some people want something a bit different and not commonly liked. People will always seek out the darkness and the melancholy, that's why loads of people like horror films as it all connects

with your childhood fears, we all like to be frightened a bit. But I think it's more to do with how you love the beauty and the darkness." SMCB

The respondent's comments as can be seen above, show to varying degrees, how their personal identities were confirmed, underscored, defined and forged by the changes in the scene. Their individualistic passions and opinions are dynamic, variable but intrinsically unmistakable. Semantically, when the individuals concerned talk abstractly of the ninety's goth scene, they are talking about themselves and their consolidative identification with the refining scene of that time. The quoted comments demonstrate something like a 'royal we' kind of mind set, suggesting that the individuals concerned have identified and shown partial ownership of the goth scene to which they feel personally connected. This connection is something which has larger import, which we will return to as it is part of the identification process for what we term 'goth radicalism'.

Classical theorists on what was originally termed youth culture, and what is now called either a 'spectacular' culture (Hebdige (2003)) or a music-based culture, postulated that subcultures came into being as a natural result of a communicative (if not fully articulated) response to capitalistic hegemony. The marginalised and disenfranchised of our society constructed an identity out of the material they had access to or had collected from whatever sources they could find.These sources could be gleaned from the mainstream, the underground or a combination of these two (perceived) things in order to negotiate a relationship with the parent culture (Hebdige, 2003) (Gramsci, 1999) . Hebdige puts forward the observation that this was done to create 'relative autonomy' (2003) (Jalbert, 1999) within a society fractured by class and a multitude of differences.

Mainstream culture, being both an instrument of hegemony and a provider of pleasures and distractions for everyone within, causes the lines between what is perceived as 'authentic' and what is perceived as more 'commercial' and more trend-driven to be blurred, especially when dealing with a scene or culture that is not in complete parity with wider society. When observing such a complex relationship in a social setting, reflexively speaking, it is sometimes difficult to separate the cause from the effect.

It is fair to say that the respondents had their own personal journey in-regards how they arrived in the goth scene and how they embraced the goth designatory tag. It is also transparent that they felt involved and did and do identify as being goth when they look inward, and their sense of belonging and ownership of their personal identity and its connection to the goth scene is both real and profoundly linked to their own beliefs and personal set(s) of values.

Awareness of change and radicalisation.

"*I knew there was change, but it was sort of gradual, things sort of mutated into other things as new ideas came along, the (goth) scene just adapted and I just went with the changes as that felt natural. No big conflicts, I just did what seemed right.*" DJLM

"*In the 1990s the punk DIY ethic bit hard, when the scene was mainstream in the 80s, I didn't do much but like and support bands, but when it went underground, I started writing for magazines, and helped promote and support the scene in any way I could. It's your personal responsibility to support the bands and scene. If a band is playing let's say only 50 miles away from you. Go and see them! It's your personal and moral responsibility to support and perpetuate the scene. Supporting a band is like your chance to vote, whereas voting does not change things, but going to see a band, supporting a night etc, does.*" PE.

"*Even though the mainstream moved away from the scene, it was now up to the scene to fend for itself. If you want something to still go on, you have to do something yourself*". GH

"*In the 90s suddenly everything and anything was possible. The scene fractured, but in a good way as there were suddenly loads of different ways you could express yourself. All was available, you just had to do it!*" CMC

"*…. there was a move away from just listening to bands and towards the cult of the DJ and dressing up etc. Suddenly individuals were rising to the top in the scene and the scene was not just so band focused.*" TMC

"*In the 80s we just loved the music, but in the 90s everything was a lot more considered and more serious, you had to put more in to find out things and be more directly involved.*" MN

"*I had to look harder to find out about the music I liked, I used to search YouTube and Spotify for new bands as well as take recommendations from friends and from people talking about various bands on Facebook or from tapes or mp3s people sent me*". HS

"*A lot of people were really lazy at that time, they could not find out stuff easily, so they drifted away from the scene instead of putting in the work to find out about new bands and events. I used to get recommendations from people, I even bought a few CDs on spec and now I see that a lot of the people who left the scene, are now drifting back due to the fact the scene has survived,(and) they are now wanting to put the clock back*". SMB

We asked the respondents how aware they were of the change in the scene as it moved from the eighties to the nineties. We were also interested to find out if the respondents became what we term 'goth radicals' due to the changes in the scene. By radical, we mean that the individual or individuals concerned became more active rather than passive in their personal

pursuit of the goth cultural aesthetic. Equally, though, we are interested in whether the experience as outlined in all of the analysis above, would not just motivate them to be more proactive, but to be contributory or even, evangelical in their desire to find goth culture (usually encapsulated by music, and secondarily echoed by clothes and appearance as a form of 'signs' in action (Barthes, 1972) (Lefebvre, 1971)). In some of the interview quotes already used, it is obvious that some respondents were exhibiting additional aspects of clear radicalisation. However, we would like to clarify and underscore our assertion that radicalisation was not only in evidence but that it was, in the philosophical sense, 'necessary' (Flew, 1979).

Discussion

Returning to our critical theory framework, what have we uncovered in-regards the notion of "becoming goth", and how does that fit with our chosen framework?

Our interviewees clearly indicated that their response to a (believed to have been enforced) commodity-capitalist change was fuelled by a form of negotiated resistance against what they saw as a kind of formless hegemony. To our interviewees, this was generally unknown in nature, but it was a threat to their developing identities, nevertheless. They did not evoke the negative use of style in quite the same way as indicated by Hebdige (1979) when he wrote about punk rock. Rather, the goth scene employed the semiotic trappings of its culture (clothes, hair, artefacts, makeup and music) as an act of bohemian aesthetic resistance against the then-breaking wave of manipulative capitalistic forces. These forces had developed from simple recuperation to a far more direct (sub)cultural threat to the collective and individual identities of those involved in the scene.

Once again, the way that the scene appeared to behave conforms to the patterns analysed by (Hall Jefferson, 2006), but without the need to overthrow. Rather the scene was (and arguably still is) wanting its resistance to be acknowledged, or at least accepted, as being both apparent and valid. Any modification actions instigated by the scene were in the form of a negotiated use of the existing cultural strands and forms left open to the scene members. As its isolation inside the wider culture's body of accepted and supported aesthetic and subcultural norms became clear. The avenues of the media left open to goth in the form of the developing aspects of the internet in the early 90's, which would in time become what we know collectively as social media, were effectively explored and put into action by active members of the scene. Additionally, the underground network of the time (alternative magazines, fanzines, goth clubs etc.) were also important, prior to the arrival of social media. All these methods of scene consolidation and promotion were confirmed as being both necessary and important by our

interviewees, suggesting a reactive modification of the mainstream hegemony. An action that could be seen, as both carving out and protecting a valued cultural identity was seemingly under threat by the actions of the mass media and record companies. Once again, this is clearly evidenced in the interviews we conducted.

Shifting our lens again to view the data gathered via the concept of liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000), it appears that the concept of a fluid or 'nomadic' sense of self in society is in play and yet, rather like a quantum particle, is ontologically unstable. Considering the content of the interviewees' replies, it is possible that the concept of a fluid identity in the late eighties and early nineties was in play. Revisiting the interviewees earlier comments regarding the seemingly mercurial nature of their own early individual identities. Where they tended to move from one self-perceived kind of identity into another prior to becoming focused and consolidated in their self-identification as being "goth". For example:

"*Where I grew up was rural and quite isolated, anything we learned about came as word of mouth and from posters and fanzines. Also, everything was a bit mixed up with punk and other things*." PE.

"*We grew up in small market town and as far as we were concerned, we were a kind of punk. Not your usual punk, a different kind of punk. We noticed that back in the 80s there was a drift away from the typical anarchy type of punk rock look and that skulls and things like that were becoming popular because of people like Dave Vanian and Siouxie Sioux*." TMC and CMC.

The individuals we interviewed were not entirely sure of who and what they were at that time and where they fitted in, in-regards to the larger society. Nonetheless, they all indicated a kind of cultural nomadism consistent with Bauman's ideas of an individual reaction to the uncertainty brought about by continued modernism within highly developed global societies. As such it could be seen that this capitalism induced alienation caused the scene to, existentially speaking, become adrift and to develop a mindset of moving and changing rather than to set upon one fixed course. This induced a kind of survival-driven adaptiveness in the individuals interviewed.

However, where the liquid modernity perspective is not so clear from the interviewee data, the indicated goth radicalisation that the interviewees exemplified with their collective 'DIY' response to the effects of the mass media's dwindling interest in the scene after the 1980s *is* identifiable. In this sense, the fluidity of individual identity becomes to a large extent coagulated, or at least mostly viscid - it appears that there were a general set of norms and values knitting the nineties scene together along with a clear set of a shared identity and shared

core values as put forward by our respondents' replies. This could be seen as an example of the 'tourist in one's own body' effect as put forward by Bauman (Bauman, 1996-2000). Such would, to a significant extent, no longer be completely applicable once the individuals of the scene found their own identity, in thatthey were now no longer just passive consumers completely influenced by and reliant upon the powers of larger society consumerist commodification. Rather, having found this identity, they were helping the subculture [?] in any way they could in-order to affect its development and continued existence, as is evidenced by their own activities within the scene.

A modernism-orientated theorist could of course say that the fluid effects of modernism are/were still at work here, the difference being just a matter of scale and perspective. However, what can be argued is that the existential alienation effect that individuals have experienced in Western society - with the extension of modernity rather than a neat Marxist causal diamat (Engels, 1925; Fichte, 1988; Flew, 1979) - has been at the very least ameliorated by the scene finding a new footing and focus from the 1990s onwards. Rather than individuals having to 'shape shift' from one identity into the next due to the apparent failure of a final delivery of the Marxist diamat, something else has happened. We can see upon analysis of our data that there is change to the norms and values of the scene, and to some degree they are malleable and subject to development and revision as the effects of society and it's ever changing progress gradually evolves over time. Nonetheless, the quintessential core of shared values within the scene stayed firm, despite the effects of motion, whereby changing over time is a necessary response to external developmental forces. This quintessential core of shared values can be summarised as a fluid identification with the general values of UK goth culture, and a proactive involvement in some way or other to ensure its continuation as well as a personal desire to contribute towards the scene's development.

When considering the notion of fluidity in regards to the values of and identity within a scene, the concept of Neotribes (Bennett, 1999) could come into play as another critical lens from which to evaluate the interview data above. Bennett's belief develops from Bauman the concept of late modernity and its postulated fluidity. In that development, notions of class are negated by the extension of modernity in that "notions of identity are 'constructed' rather than 'given', and 'fluid' rather than 'fixed'." (Bennett, 1999, p. 1). By 'given', we can conclude that this refers to the notion of the realisation of the imobile nature of class as related by Marx (Marx, 1887).Bennett and Bauman reject the idea that such is a 'given', a static concept, which was shared by those that directly followed in the footsteps of Marx. The concept of a

constructed identity created by the individual, which flow's necessarily from the individual's nomadic self-disassociation within developed western society (as put forward by Bauman), is opposed to Marx's more fixed ideas regarding the action of the determined diamat.

At the heart of Bennett's perspective appears to be a notion that the extension of both modernity and postmodernist views intersect in a relativist morass of individualistic reactions and notions of choice. An individual in society could move from one set of norms and values to another, whenever they might feel the need. An individual could, without putting down any kind of solid roots, move from one tribe to another, possibly without any consideration to long-term loyalties.

As we have discussed in regards to Bauman's use of the concept of late modernity, the concept of fluidity can be seen equally as the action of materialism flow rather than the effect of the extension of modernism (or, in fact, the post-modern self). Connecting this to Bennett's perspective of post-modern choice and neo-tribe shape shifting, the evidence of solid long-term commitment to the UK goth scene (which all our interviewees showed in their replies) is in opposition to this neo-tribalistic notion of fluid relativism. The people interviewed for this paper effectively stopped flowing and shifting once they discovered what they consider to be their true, or fully formed identity and felt no need to move into another tribe or scene once they had arrived at the UK goth scene. One could suggest that this position may be considered impossible as the motion and flow of society will always force forward change. However, one could conclude that instead of the individuals reaching an untenable position of torpor, the actions of the changes are smaller ones, but still consistent with the forward motion of change. This could be seen as being in contrast to the notions of fluidity, and post-modern neo-tribe shape shifting.

As such, it is entirely possible that the effect of the eighties into the nineties 'fall from grace' experience, as illustrated by our interviewees, has shown that certain long-term shared norms and values are evident and necessary within the scene, and these shared values may be shared across the country and given the notion of what goth is as a collectively understood identity, possibly more widely than just the UK. Indeed, considering the longevity of the scene, it might also be possible that these shared beliefs and collective identity (or variable identities within a range of commonly accepted shared norms, perhaps better put) are more foundational and static than traditional thought on the concept of music-based cultures commonly take as read. This flies in the face of post Marxist theories concerning music-based cultures as well as post-modernist theories concerning fluidity of identities within a given scene.

To take a more pragmatic overview, and to further consider Bennett and his work on neo tribes, there is within any scene, a certain amount of identity fluidity and transience. But equally, there are also the 'hardcore' (for example, what we have termed 'gothic radicals' in the case at hand) that stay true to the essential identity of a subculture (e.g. UK goth culture). Taking on new and connected ideas where commonly deemed appropriate, but at the same time staying focused on the consolidated core scene identity. All of this was made very clear from the data put forward by the UK goths we interviewed.

If identities are constructed, then the material from which individuals in the scene construct their goth identity is gleaned and gathered. Taken from a whole collection of elements and concepts that are available in our society. Some from the mass media, which in turn could have been fully, or partially constructed for commercial purposes and as such could be either partially or fully inauthentic but are pressed into service to underscore an authentic purpose. Or the material that could have evolved organically and as such be part of genuine commonly agreed and shared values. Then this process could be seen as an act of hegemonic negotiation in the face of the scene's perceived disinterest in its culture. This explanation of identity construction appears to be the most effective conclusion that could be reached given the material provided due to the confirmation of long-term dedication to the goth cause as exemplified by our respondents. Rather than a tourist-like transient visit before morphing into a new version of the scene or a new scene entirely. Which is something that does not appear to be happening.

Conclusion

The loss of media and music industry interest in goth at the close of the 1980s had profound consequences for our respondents (Spracklen, 2015). The scene went from being part of the UK mainstream music culture to being an underground subculture that managed to escape hegemonic annihilation which commodity fetish theory (Marx, 1932) would suggest should have necessarily followed. The scene continued, adapted and survived to such a point that the term 'goth' and 'gothic' is in common cultural parlance and the scene has now become the longest surviving post war spectacular culture (Mercer, 2009). Especially when one views the musical and cultural diversity present within the culture as well as the scene' propensity to always move forward and embrace new ideas and technology. A factor although evident to some degree in other spectacular scenes, the forward motion of accepting new technology and ideas is not as strong as within the goth scene. So The constituent elements of the scene have been appropriated and referred to by many different artists ranging from music to film and to

literature, which is as it ought to be as these elements are also part of the goth identity (Spracklen and Spracklen, 2018). In regards to the cultural theory paradigms we have used, it appears that the 'best fit' in regards an effective valuation of the data gathered would be that the scene is following a path carved out of the neo-Gramscian concept of negotiation when faced with the culturally and aesthetic hegemonic aggression of an over culture. But it is also clear that further research is required into the motions of the UK goth scene in- order to fully come to a consolidated understanding of how things work. Both then, now and moving into the future.

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