

A young woman in a gothic lolita outfit stands in a public square. She wears a black dress with white lace trim, a black headband with lace, and black boots. She holds a large black umbrella and a silver handbag. The background shows other people and a street lamp.

Becoming Goth: Geographies of an (Un)Popular Culture

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Abstract:

Within this thesis I explore what can be achieved when culture is critically assessed through a series of theories that mobilise a spatial imaginary. I place the concepts of atmosphere, connection, site and encounter, and theories of emergence via terms such as movement, practice and embodiment, into tension with a single case study: Goth. Goth is a music based grouping, emerging from Punk, New Romantic, Indie and Glam Rock style and music cultures in the late 1970s, with a significant near-global presence in the popular culture industries and links to several salient media controversies; including the *Columbine High School* massacre, the murder of Sophie Lancaster, and fears over self-harm and suicide. I specifically draw on the vocabularies from within non-representational geographies of *performance*, *relational materiality*, *affect* and *social anxiety* to re-work understandings of this collectivity. I question what is involved in the material practices of Goth, explore how the practice and experience of Goth is articulated through specific sites, examine how Goth participates in the production and circulation of cultures of anxiety or (un)popularity; and reconsider the concept of 'subculture'. To do so, I employ a range of methodologies, from guided walks to photo-diaries, within multi-site field research throughout the UK, Tokyo and New York City. I conclude that Goth and culture more generally can be theorised in a number of ways: it emerges as a performed series of embodied acts; it is co-produced in complex relations with non-humans; it can be thought of as a series of modulating affective atmospheres; it coalesces as a collectivity and circulates through events; and it is co-produced through sites and media events. None of these dominates over or diminishes the other; rather they are co-constitutive and interdependent.

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Introduction

I approach this thesis seeking to ask certain questions about the concept of 'culture'. The initial spark emerged within a cultural geography tutorial focussed on the topic of globalisation and culture. Discussing how each of us felt we participated in the global flows and circulation of commodities, ideas and labour, my fellow students made reference to their *Levi* jeans, *Nike* trainers and leisure time spent consuming *McDonalds* burgers, as examples of how their practices were connected to those of many young people all over the world. As a participant in rather more niche practices associated with a culture labelled 'Goth', I did not own any jeans but preferred lace and velvet flowing skirts, actively shunned the products of sports brands favouring instead boots from army surplus stores, and I spent my leisure time in dark clubs dancing to Goth music in its many permutations. Exposure to such literature and discussion triggered questioning: I wondered how an encounter with geographical thinking might influence how Goth could be conceptualised as an entity or culture. I was also curious as to the spaces in which others in various locations enacted their Goth practices- what could be considered a 'Goth' space? I wanted to know whether these individuals received similar, sometimes positive but often negative, reactions while walking down the street, and how this process of anxiety generation could be theorised. Ultimately, I questioned what such an investigation might feed back into the theorisations of identity, belonging and resistance within cultural geographies. What follows in the thesis is thus the result of this shift to a spatial imaginary regarding culture.

The decision to focus on Goth was further reinforced by several significant events. Within the UK, USA and other locations including Russia (Michaels 2008), and Mexico (The Guardian 2008, TIME 2008), Goth has been implicated in a series of high profile media events regarding anxieties surrounding youth practices; a consistent response to such groups reported in subcultural studies

accounts since the 1920s. I suggest however, that the anxieties generated and the media coverage surrounding Goth have been particularly significant. While other 'subcultures' have raised concerns and controversy such as the organised fighting between the Mods and Rockers (Cohen 2002), drug use in Rave (Pini 2001) and the anti-religious messages of Metal music (Haenfler 2010), Goth has been implicated in an event of mass murder at *Columbine High School* in 1999 in which two students identified as Goths via their clothing choices, killed thirteen people and injured twenty-one others. This group has also become the target of violence in 2008 wherein 19 year old Sophie Lancaster, was brutally kicked to death in an attack motivated by her visible status as a Goth (e.g. Jenkins 2008, Yeoman 2008). Furthermore, a longitudinal study published in the *British Medical Journal* (Young *et al.* 2006) reported in the popular media (e.g. Lister 2006), has conflated youth involvement with Goth to an increased likelihood of self harm and suicide, quoting statistics of 53% of those considering themselves Goths practicing self-harm and 47% having attempted suicide.

Such media events have led to significant consequences, including the banning of Goth clothing in US schools in several states following *Columbine* (Griffiths 2010), petitions to the UK government to change the hate crime laws to include those identifying with a subculture in reaction to Sophie Lancaster's murder (10 Downing Street 2008), and the debate of a bill in the Russian State Duma in 2008, proposing the banning of Goth clothing styles within public buildings in order to protect youth from trends framed as damaging to their mental health (Michaels 2008, Fremuse 2008). Goth can thus be considered to *make a difference* as well as reflecting wider and consistent concerns regarding youth practices more generally.

Conversely however, Goth has also been adopted within the culture industries. Goth fashion style was featured in British *Vogue* as a key trend for Autumn/Winter 2008; it featured in an exhibition and symposium at the *Fashion Institute of Technology* in New York celebrating the impact of Goth aesthetics on high fashion; and has filtered down to the high street via *Top Shop's* autumn 2009

collection entitled “Horror Girl”. *The Times* (Vine 2008) reported that “if ever there was a year to embrace your inner dark side, 2009 [is] it” while *The Guardian* (Neustatter 2005) claimed that “Gothdom is proving to be as enduring as a *Chanel* bouclé suit or a *Burberry* trench”. Furthermore, ‘Goth’ characters have appeared in various soap operas including *Coronation Street*, *Hollyoaks* and *Glee*, while the Gothic figure of the vampire features in the adult *True Blood* series, the films in the *Twilight* saga popular with a teen audience, and the animated CBBC programme *Mona the Vampire* aimed at children under ten. Such popularity sparked an article in the *New York Times* (LaFerla 2009) asserting that “black-clad vampires are, well, the new black”, while *Time Out New York* (Lee 2008: 81) advised readers on how to “explore their dark side”, accompanied by “5 killer reasons to turn Goth”.

It is especially these interesting contentions between Goth, thought of as variously threatening but also enrolled in discourses of victimhood surrounding prejudice and intermittently emerging within the popular culture industries, and conflict between the static ways in which it has thus far been theorised and ideas within contemporary cultural geographies, that I considered to provide potential for a compelling research project. Despite this potential, Goth has yet to be thought through using the spatial imaginary of cultural geographies. This study thus represents an initial foray into such terrain while also being somewhat unusual within cultural geography literatures by presenting a monograph based on one cultural group. I suggest that engaging intensively with this set of practices allows alternative means of engagement, such as encounters with the dancing body and the ways in which materials are mobilised within creative practices. This singular focus has also allowed the use of several theoretical vocabularies as tools for analysis structuring the substantive chapters to follow, vocabularies which I will now introduce.

Theoretical Beginnings

To investigate how Goth can be thought through, I initially turned to literatures from Geography's cultural turn wherein such entities were thought of as 'subcultures', terminology borrowed from cultural studies. Work at the *Chicago School* from the 1920s for example, analysed the spatial distribution of youth practices in US cities, while later work at the *Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies* (CCCS) embarked on symbolic readings of British, working-class youth such as Punk (Hebdige 1979) and Mod (Cohen 2002) cultures. Here, conceptions of culture move away from Sauer's 'cultural landscape' and 'superorganic' theories by focussing on how meanings and subjectivities are continually contested within spaces, akin to what Crang (2008: 1) terms, "culture wars". Geographers such as David Ley and Roman Cybriwsky (1974) participated in such knowledges by investigating the spatial patterning of graffiti and gang behaviour in Philadelphia, demonstrating how these markings signified spaces of conflict within the urban environment.

Accompanying such subcultures work however, have also been critiques of its narrow focuses, rigidity in thinking through group boundaries and limitations to the methods or viewpoints considered. McRobbie and Garber (1976) questioned the lack of attention to the experiences of women, while others critiqued the predominantly urban focus, an over-emphasis on working-class demographics (Irwin 1977) and the consideration of youth as the only group to consume products such as music (Bennett 2006). Those such as Sarah Thornton (1995) highlighted the problematic framing of a well-defined 'subculture' positioned in rigid opposition to a 'mainstream' population and media, instead preferring to think of each culture as mutually constitutive. Furthermore, several scholars have pointed to the methodological weaknesses of semiotic readings of subcultural resistance, in which subcultural practices are not considered from the point of view of the individuals in question but via abstract readings. Those including Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) note how conversely, such practices can be 'fun' for individuals rather than functioning as a means of class-based resistance.

Equally, while such subcultural studies works have been cited in influential 'new' cultural geography texts, including *Maps of Meaning* (Jackson 1989), work on globalisation has demonstrated problems with the consideration of subcultural space presented within such accounts. Feeding into critique from within cultural studies, Crang (1998: 175) recognises the: "need to think of cultures and spaces in ways other than as bounded containers", as "culture" is no longer tied to the geographies of the bounded nation state or locality. As Appadurai (1990: 7) argues, culture cannot be thought of as a holistic way of life but instead composed of complex elements or a series of "-scapes". It is thus necessary to broaden the geographical concern of subcultures from a street corner (Whyte 1955) or bedroom (McRobbie and Garber 1976).

Such rigid definitions of community boundaries and research focuses have been challenged by more contemporary trends within understandings of cultural experiences as "tribal" (Bennett, A. 1999), "individualized" (Miles 2000) or "postsubcultural" (Muggleton 2000), developing largely from research conducted at the *Manchester Institute for Popular Culture* from the 1990s. Andy Bennett (1999a: 603) for example, has argued that subculture "imposes rigid lines of division over forms of association", and has called for an incorporation of developments from postmodernism; namely promoting the fragmentation of style and engagement with multiple, shifting subjectivities generated as a result of consumerism. Theorists such as Ted Polhemus (1997) argue that individuals can now pick and choose from a "supermarket of style", while David Muggleton (2000) asserts that a sense of cultural "authenticity" no longer exists. As a result of such arguments, many alternative concepts and terms have been suggested to replace subculture; including "clubculture" (Thornton 1995, Redhead *et al.* 1997), "neo-tribe" (Maffesoli 1996) and "scene" (Irwin 1977, A. Bennett 2004)

Existing work on Goth and other recent accounts however, reject these post-subcultural perspectives precisely because of this emphasis on hyper-fluidity. Sociologist and long-term

participant in Goth practices, Paul Hodkinson (2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2006b, 2007, 2011), has called for a return to a subcultures-based perspective in theorising such groups. Along with scholars such as Haenfler (2006) working on Straight-Edge culture, Sweetman (1999) and Winge (2003) on tattooing and Allett (2010a) on Extreme Metal, Goth, he argues, is more what he terms “substantive” (2002: 30), than post-subcultural theories allow for. He suggests four ways in which this substance can be illustrated: the “consistent distinctiveness” of Goth practices such as style and music; a strong sense of collective group identity; a high level of commitment to this identity and these practices; and a relatively autonomous subcultural infrastructure, including magazines, clothing designers and record labels (2002: 30-32).

These insights challenge Polhemus’ (1997) argument that style is chosen freely and without consideration to consistency with subcultural norms, and Bennett’s (1999) thesis that style is unrelated to musical preference as Goths display their allegiances in often very ‘conspicuous’ ways (Brill 2008). Furthermore, contrary to the focus of new cultural geographies and the CCCS, Hodkinson (2002) cautions against a focus on symbolism and meaning especially regarding resistance and Goth. He has highlighted the dangers of reading subcultural style as text, arguing that Goth’s morbid aesthetic does not correlate to an inner psychology or any attempt at class-based resistance (see also Malbon 1999).

To attempt to negotiate these tensions, I turned to another area of geographical work termed ‘non-representational theory’ (NRT). Coined by Nigel Thrift in 1996, the differing approaches encompassed by this term can be thought to adopt the complexity and contestation surrounding culture developed within new cultural geographies, but analysis moves away from investigating symbolism and towards practice. Utilising the metaphor of *performance* for example, such works highlight that identity categories such as ‘Goth’, or indeed ‘male’ and ‘female’ (Butler 1990, 1993a), do not relate to any inherent quality of individuals but are in fact continually brought into being

through practices, thus framing the world as processually “becoming” or “acted into” rather than pre-given (Thrift 2007: 144). Within this conception, culture thus cannot be considered a pre-existent container for subjectivity.

This approach also seeks to take up the challenges proposed within new cultural geography of presenting more inclusive accounts. Initially established as a school of thought which moved away from the predominantly rural focus of American cultural geographies, this ‘new’ set of works sought to make cultural geography “relevant” (Mitchell 2000: 3) by investigating a wider range of social life. Non-representational imaginaries seek to take this inclusivity further and respond to critiques of a new cultural geography divorced from the ‘messy’ or ‘fleshy’ materialities of bodies and everyday daily lives (Jackson 2000, Longhurst 2003). Non-representational approaches challenge this critique by enrolling a relational materialist perspective inspired in part by Actor Network Theory, with the aim of recognising the agency of nonhuman objects within the co-constitution of social lives (Whatmore 2002, 2006, Crang 2003a, Anderson and Tolia-Kelly 2004, Bennett 2004, Latour 2005, Anderson and Wylie 2009). Culture is thus not solely the domain of human subjects, but is intimately connected to ‘things’.

Furthermore, non-representational accounts seek to open up research into different registers by stressing that cognitive reasoning is only one way through which the world is experienced and understood. As Thrift (in K. Anderson *et al.* 2003: 13) argues, NRT seeks to cultivate an approach to a universe comprised of “sweeping planes of sensuality” that must be effectively understood by developing a “vocabulary of movement and emergence”. Theorists have adopted the concept of *affect* in order to achieve such aims. Affect can be considered a “form of thinking” (Thrift 2007: 175) on a distinctly different register than emotion and feeling: affect is a pre-discursive process that occurs before or in excess of the cognitive formation of a definition or freezing in the form of an emotion, and works to shape cultural and social lives by preparing bodies and minds for action in

certain ways (Demos 1995, Connolly 2002, Massumi 2002a, Thrift 2007). Being attentive to such vectors thus precludes treating culture as a text to be read, but instead as something within which we are viscerally immersed.

As a result of this shift towards practice and away from semiotic analyses, the enhancement of new cultural geography's inclusivity and yet response to criticisms by showing willingness to become involved in messy materialities, and the potential of exploring pre-cognitive affects, I thus decided to seek to position my work within accounts that incorporate these concepts and ally this with a focus on subculture. For example, Ben Malbon's (1999) study of "oceanic experience" within Rave clubbing in the UK and Arun Saldanha's (2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2010) exploration of how bodies become experienced as raced within the geographies of Goa Rave parties, stress the role of the material, fleshy embodiment and the generation of affects in the working up of such collectivities. Culture within this broad school of thought thus not only escapes the boundaries of nation state, but also operates beyond the conscious mind and the interrelations of human bodies. Exploration of such a theoretical stance opened up thinking about how the case study I will work through, Goth, can be theorised and in turn what this can contribute to how culture is thought through. I will now detail what is at stake within such a consideration by introducing Goth more thoroughly.

Introducing: Goth

Since the late 1970s, certain bands have been labelled by music journalists, managers and promoters as producing 'Goth' music and their fans referred to as 'Goths' (Mercer 1991, Voltaire 2004, Kilpatrick 2005). Clubs, festivals, gigs and events all over the world are termed 'Goth', and are advertised on 'Goth' forums, websites, blogs and in magazines (*e.g. The International Gothic Club Listing, Gothic Beauty Magazine, Goth.net, La Carmina*). A 'Goth' cruise sails around the Caribbean every October (Gothic Cruise 2011) and 'Goth' dating (*e.g. Gothic Match, Dark Love, Goth Scene*) and social-networking websites (*e.g. Vampire Freaks, Gothers*) facilitate international interaction.

Individuals participating in such real or virtual events, share elements of coherent dress and makeup styles: global clothing and accessories brands such as *New Rock*, *Lip Service* and *Cyberdog*, alongside individual craftspeople trading on, for example, *Etsy*, supply trends dominated by the colour black and a gloomy aesthetic to a 'Goth' consumer. They may dance to relatively similar DJ playlists, distributed by several independent record labels (e.g. *Metropolis*, *Cleopatra Records*, *Dancing Ferret*). They may have conversations about related forms of Gothic literature and art while waiting at the bar, or discuss ways in which to incorporate their Goth looks into work attire (see Corporate Goth.com) or decorate their homes appropriately (See Voltaire's (2005) *Paint it Black: A Guide to Gothic Homemaking*).

As introduced above, Goth has also been implicated in a number of high-profile media events. The wearing of 'Goth' clothing items were banned in schools in certain US States following the *Columbine High School* massacre (Wilgoren 1999, Griffiths 2010,), while 'Goths' were portrayed as targets of hate crime following the murder of Sophie Lancaster (Jenkins 2008, Yeoman 2008, Morrison 2008). Furthermore, 'Goth' style has featured in the pages of British *Vogue* magazine, within *Top Shop* collections and such black-clad characters appear in popular drama and film. What has become clear throughout the research project is that from Tokyo to London to New York and beyond, there appears to be something referred to as 'Goth' which is acknowledged by both those declaring themselves as such and wider publics.

In this thesis I will specifically question how these people, objects, sites, events, websites and music termed 'Goth' can be theorised. Through such engagements, I will argue that an encounter with Goth forces us to reconceptualise subcultures. As introduced above, the dominant approach has arisen within cultural studies, in which sociologists have framed such diverse milieu as 'subcultures', defined as: "groups of people that are in some way represented as non-normative and/or marginal

through their particular interests and practices, through what they are, what they do and where they do it" (Gelder 2005: 1). However, a central contention in the thesis is to argue that it is more useful to investigate such collectivities through the series of dynamic verbs and geographical metaphors taken from within cultural geographies rather than the stabilising nouns associated with traditional theorisations of subculture.

I develop this conceptualisation by taking insights from new cultural geographies as a starting point, and further enrol the theoretical vocabularies within non-representational geographies of performance, relational materiality and affect. Such insights afforded by this initial interaction with the spatial imaginary provided by new cultural geographies, highlight potential for further study and the necessity to reject the more rigid subcultures framework while simultaneously avoiding the hyper-fluidity of post-subcultural theory. I therefore adopt a stance in which Goth is emergent, based on the concepts of encounter, connection and movement, which more thoroughly complicate the assumptions involved in labelling bounded cultures. I will argue that entities such as Goth are more productively conceptualised as collectivities coalescing around a series of becomings.

To elaborate on this point, subculture can be thought of as a representation; a way of fixing and fitting understandings of groups into a grid-like structure, with the simultaneous effect of compartmentalising social reactions generated within others (Massumi 2002a). I have adopted non-representational approaches to recognise the potential of looking prior to and in excess of such representations. For Thrift (2007) however, these theories do not abandon representations altogether. I will take a perspective of investigating what Hayden Lorimer (2005) terms, the "more-than-representational" (p84) or "extrarepresentational" (p86) rather than rejecting representation altogether. To illustrate, a photograph of a 'Goth' may still be considered, but instead, analysis is taken beyond a semiotic reading to include the performative actions that constitute such an image, the role of the nonhuman in enacting this subjectivity, the affective power of such a photograph as a

material object in itself, and how this affective capacity circulates between sites. My work thus aims to take up the imperative to bridge the perceived 'gap' between new cultural geographies and non-representational accounts, addressing one of Lorimer's (2005) concerns with the "compatibility" of NRT. I will investigate the very traditional concern taken up within geography's cultural turn, subculture, but, via enrolling vocabularies such as performance, I will focus on the practices that work to enact the figure in the image as Goth, for example through the moving or dancing body.

Overall, I considered NRT to be particularly strong as the ontological and epistemological stances demanded by such perspectives allow collectivities such as Goth and cultures of anxiety circulating around them to be viewed from an active and mobile perspective, highlighted as essential in contemporary social sciences (Urry 2010). Ontologically, it also allows a sense of "life" (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000, Thrift 2004a, Thrift 2007) to be brought into such accounts of culture by giving greater recognition to other actors such as the nonhuman, spaces and the subconscious, affective register.

With this focus on lively accounts it is particularly appropriate then, that I have chosen to focus on a group linked strongly with the imagery and symbolism conversely associated with death. I propose that 'Goth' is a particularly interesting array of social practices for study by cultural geographers for several further reasons; central to which is its longevity as a label used to refer to those following particular styles of fashion and music since the late 1970s. Unlike other 'subcultures' such as the Mods, Teds and Punks which are no longer widely active or foregrounded within the popular cultural imagination, Goth has retained its momentum (despite a period of decline in the early 1990s (Spooner 2007)). Goth has maintained a substantive internal infrastructure of record labels, magazines, clubs, shops and online spaces providing subcultural products and spaces for socialisation (Hodkinson 2002, 2003, 2006b), alongside long-running, annual festivals in Germany

such as *Wave-Gotik-Treffen* established in 1987 attracting over 20,000 enthusiasts from all over the world (Nym and Hoffert 2011).

Furthermore, while the Mods for example, were largely a British post-war subculture emerging in reaction to local socio-economic conditions (Cohen 2002), Goth music and style initially emerged in the UK but has spread and mutated rapidly within the USA and established a presence in many countries, particularly within Europe but also further afield (Kilpatrick 2005, Goodlad and Bibby 2007a, Brill 2008, Godoy 2009). The *International Goth Club Listing* (2009) website lists clubs in South Africa, throughout South America, Australia and New Zealand, Indonesia, East Asia and emerging club scenes in Israel and Singapore. Goth is thus a particularly intriguing collectivity to study from a multi-sited, geographical perspective. Indeed, based on my previous multi-site fieldwork in the UK, France, Japan, Australia and the USA, inspired by the tutorial discussed at the opening of this chapter, I identified Goth as a “glocal” (Robertson 1995, Swyngedouw 1997, 2004) set of practices wherein globally consistent Goth style and musical trends were present but widely adapted within local consumption cultures to produce local innovations, including for example the sub-genres of *Gothic Lolita* in Japan and *Deathrock* in the USA; trends which in turn circulate beyond their local contexts to enrich broader Goth practices (Enstone 2003).

From this initial research, it became clear that Goth practices were not homogenous or fixed over space and so are more appropriately examined from a cross-cultural, multi-site perspective. Based on these previous field experiences, I therefore decided to focus my DPhil research on three locations: the UK and USA (New York) as origin points and historic centres of Goth activity, and Japan (Tokyo) as a site in which Goth practices have been interpreted in differing ways outside a ‘Western’ context or point of origin (Godoy 2009). While Dunja Brill (2008) has studied the gender dynamics within Goth in the UK and Germany, there remains limited academic literature on Goth from a cross-

cultural, multi-site perspective, with no academic accounts currently considering the UK and USA alongside Japan.

Key Questions and Themes

Recognising this potential of Goth as a case study to explore the tensions involved in theorising culture from within cultural studies and contemporary cultural geographies, I will consider four interrelated key questions:

- To rethink the question of what is involved in the material practices of Goth;
- To explore how the practice and experience of Goth is articulated through specific sites;
- To examine how Goth participates in the production and circulation of cultures of anxiety, and;
- To ultimately, reconsider the concept of 'subculture'.

These abstract nodes of enquiry trigger specific questioning that I will take up within the substantive thesis chapters, the final point being addressed in the concluding chapter. I attempt to scrutinise Goth subjectivities more widely and flexibly than existing accounts by putting to work ideas within geography to investigate how such cultures are enacted, circulate and trigger various societal responses. The first node for example, works to question the dominant ideas within subcultural studies literature on Goth by engaging with the metaphor of performance to consider whether theories in which identities are conceived of as fixed differences between individuals remain useful.

Drawing on the theoretical work of Judith Butler, I will begin by assessing what theorising identities as 'performed' and 'performative', does for Goth: what happens when Goth is viewed as emergent? I go on to ask if such a consideration shifts research focuses to productive areas of lively activity, or are there problems when removing subjective agency when considering subcultures as opposed to

identity categories such as gender? Here I seek to take accounts such as Hodkinson's (2002) further, without losing the valuable insights that Goth has an extensive internal infrastructure and can constitute a significant ethos, social scene and "way of life" for participants (Mercer 1991). Ultimately, through such an assessment I question whether cultures such as Goth can be successfully conceived of as in process, or whether this precludes the longevity of certain cultural forms such as Goth.

Furthermore, taking up Jackson's (2000) call for "rematerializing" cultural geography, I ask what role the nonhuman plays within Goth practices. Engaging with literatures from posthumanism, I consider whether an engagement with Goth style practices supports a transhuman or posthumanist conception of the role of the nonhuman: are materials merely additive to the body or can they be thought to be transformative of subjectivities and social relations? Can the nonhuman be thought of as an active agent in the co-constitution of subjectivities and the milieu labelled 'Goth'? In working through this question, I will draw specifically on Donna Haraway's (1991) work, and in turn question the success of her cyborg as a figuration; ultimately considering whether engaging these concepts with my research materials suggests an alternate, more appropriate analytical figure.

A consideration of how spaces are produced as Goth continues this focus on the nonhuman and engages with the second key aim: to investigate the role of sites. While Goth operates across many sites and national boundaries, I contend that certain spaces are significant and act as points of articulation and coalescence. Such sites include the biannual *Whitby Goth Weekend* festival celebrating its sixteenth year in 2011. Initial consideration of such an event leads to the question: what produces a site as 'Goth'? While Whitby is famed for its *Dracula* connections and houses a ruined abbey positioned on the cliff-top, the festival website reveals that the location was chosen instead due to the expected tolerance of local hoteliers, accustomed to *Dracula* events and strangely dressed individuals (TopMumPromotions 2005). This suggests that Gothic architectural qualities and

narrative references are perhaps not sufficient in themselves to make a space 'Goth'. Similarly, this brings into question subjectivities- do those attending the festival enter these spaces and sites as pre-defined 'Goths', or is there potential for considering subjectivity and site as a series of co-produced becomings? To explore such issues, I will draw on the concepts of affective atmosphere (Anderson 2009) and enchantment (Holloway 2000, 2006, Bennett 2001, 2010) to enrich considerations of space and subjectivity beyond the cognitive register.

The third node regarding Goth's framing as an (un)popular culture generating social anxieties, forms a consistent refrain throughout the thesis. Key questions I explore through the thesis include: how does Goth generate anxiety?; is resistance a useful concept?; how might resistance be challenged?; and how might the generation of anxieties be considered beyond the cognitive register? Initiated by a consideration of the material, a review of media coverage of school shootings in the USA since the 1970s reveals that reports do not foreground the clothing such as jeans and t-shirts worn by the majority of perpetrators, but the black leather trench coats of the 'Goth' Columbine killers were heavily emphasised. Furthermore, such Goth clothing items were the focus on legislative response via banning in schools (Griffiths 2010), while the phrase: "don't make me go trench coat on you" reportedly circulated in the teenage vernacular (Wilgoren 1999). The conclusion one may take from this is that wearing jeans does not identify someone as a serial killer, but a black trench coat just might.

I will question what it is about such items that have such influence and generate such anxiety: can such clothing be thought of as simply representing a scapegoat in a troubling situation or can more be investigated via looking at the affective register and the qualities of these materials; even the micro-geographies of the colour black? Having worked up such a stance, I will combine insight into materialities and affect to suggest ways in which to move productively beyond vocabularies of resistance when thinking through the practices of groups such as Goth. Finally, having adopted

“social anxiety” (Jackson, Everts 2010) theories as a framework, I will consider ways in which such anxieties can be potentially resolved in order to evaluate the usefulness of this approach.

The questions outlined above and the theoretical stances harnessed to approach them, will be put into tension with my research material generated in various field sites within the UK, Tokyo and New York. I will now introduce how I approached the field and sought to answer these questions.

Approaching the Field

Multiple methodologies have been adopted to respond to criticisms of traditional ethnographic approaches within non-representational epistemologies. Thrift (2000: 3) argues that dominant methodologies within cultural geography drawn from anthropology, register only a “narrow range of sensate life” due to their focus on: “bringing back data and representing it (nicely packaged up with illustrative quotations)”. Such critiques draw on the focus on identity politics and the need for reflexivity on the part of the researcher, developed within new cultural geographies (e.g. Crang 1998: 185). These accounts have recognised that the role of the researcher is not to approach the field in order to uncover hidden meanings, apply value judgments and represent the results in the form of a research report (Lorimer 2005: 84).

Instead, both Dewsbury (2003) and Thrift (2000: 556) position researchers as “witnesses” who: “must become an observant participant rather than a participant observer” in order to explore the import of process and “doing”. For Thrift (2007a: 148) methodologies that allow “participants equal right to disclose, through dialogical actions rather than text, through relations rather than representation” must be adopted, while Latham (2003: 1993) calls for “engaging with how individuals and groups inhabit their worlds through practical action”.

I respond to such insights by employing a range of methodological techniques, including photo-studies and guided walks alongside adaptations of more traditional approaches such as “observant participation” (Thrift 2000: 556) and interviewing utilising photo-elicitation to structure the exchange, in order to make such methodologies “dance a little “ (Latham 2003: 2000). To stress the focus on action, observant participation at key Goth sites such as clubs and shopping areas in the study locations was conducted. Equally ‘actively’, participants in New York and Tokyo conducted guided walks of locations important to their experiences of Goth. This technique allowed the links between biography, place and events to be understood, while evoking multi-sensory responses and memories (Kusenbach 2003, Pink 2007).

To provide in-depth and multi-media data, Latham’s (2003) “diary-photograph, diary-interview” approach was adapted and enrolled in two different ways: in ‘event’ and ‘lifestyle’ phases. Firstly, participants attending *Whitby Goth Weekend* festival were asked to produce a diary charting their activities and experiences of the event and take a maximum of twenty photographs expressing something significant about this experience. They were then interviewed using the photographs as a stimulus for conversation, thus allowing the participant to structure discussion of the role that different festival sites and atmospheres played in their experiences. Secondly, a lifestyle phase involved photographing important people, objects or places, producing a short text as to why each shot was chosen, and photo-elicitation interviewing. Focusing less on spatial dimensions, the images were used to trigger memories and emotional responses regarding involvement within Goth.

While these methodologies will be discussed in detail in chapter two, I wish to foreground within this introduction the significance of my role as an ‘insider’ or participant within the practices I have studied. New cultural geographies, adopting insight from feminist work on positionality, have highlighted the need for self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher in order to recognize power relations and ethically situate the research (e.g. Valentine 1997, Crang 1998, McDowell 2001, 2003).

In the spirit of this self-reflexivity, I will now outline my involvement and investment in Goth before going on to sketch the thesis structure.

My Goth Becomings

I somewhat tentatively describe myself as: 'Goth'. While this term does not encapsulate all notions of my own subjectivity, to me this means that I enjoy consuming Goth music and participating in Goth clothing and dancing styles; I regularly attend Goth events such as clubs, gigs and festivals; and socialize, both on-line and in person, with those who share similar interests.

My Goth becomings could be considered to begin at age fifteen when I was participating in the fashions and Industrial and Metal music aligned to the label 'Mosher' after being taken to a local club by a friend. One crowded night about a year later, we decided to take a short-cut to reach the foyer through one of the other rooms playing a different style of 'Alternative' music. Stepping into this room was as if entering a different world. It was much darker, almost saturated with dry ice smoke and sparsely populated by bodies with exaggerated hourglass silhouettes, long black hair, pale skins and striking makeup. There was a different energy here: the music was less frenetic than the Metal we had just left, and the bodies responded by stepping to each side and moving their arms in beautiful, graceful gestures instead of the stomping and crashing I was accustomed to.

This space, which I would later discover was the 'Goth Room', had a very different feel and I was intrigued by it. In truth, while I loved the music, I had never felt entirely comfortable as a Mosher, clomping about in clunky patent Doc Martin boots, a ripped fishnet top, and the vintage red tartan kilt borrowed from my Mother's store of 1960s clothing. Goth seemed like a natural progression: after all, I was a skinny contemporary dancer studying the poetry of the Romantics and *Frankenstein* for my English Literature A-Level. Maybe I would have something in common with these people beyond music taste.

Over the next eighteen months, I gradually explored Goth practices. My style began to change: at first manifesting in make-shift concoctions using a long off-cut of purple velvet, (literally) safety-pinned into different skirt shapes and a cheap bodice found in a high street sale. Once I had saved enough, I bought my first pair of knee-high fetish inspired boots, a purple velvet steel-boned corset and learned how to apply liquid eyeliner into the characteristic feline 'flicks'. I was educated in several sub-genres of Goth music by my friend who had completed extensive internet research; and after several weeks of observation, I also began to experiment with the unique dancing styles of these genres and developed my own technique of expression. After several months, I summoned the courage to speak to others in the room and eventually developed friendships that carried outside the club environment. At the end of these eighteen months, my friend and I somewhat cemented our commitment to our newly evolving subjectivities by attending the *Whitby Goth Weekend*, a music festival gathering together over 2,000 Goths in a tiny town by the sea. This remains one of the best weekends of my life, and I continue to visit nine years later.

My Goth activities now involve regularly attending my local club and occasionally DJing, as well as travelling further afield to clubs throughout the UK. Many of my friends and acquaintances are Goths, and we organize trips to gigs and festivals, as well as hosting dinner parties and going for picnics in the summer. My Goth becomings are far from 'finished': I have experimented with several sub-genres of Goth style including: a 1980s Punk inspired 'Batcave' and 'Deathrock' styles; a romantic, Victorian or 'Trad. Goth' look; neon, cyborgian 'Cybergoth'; burlesque or 'Gothabilly' corsets and dark cabaret outfits; and a 'Corporate Goth' image, incorporating pinstripe fabrics and subtle detailing for everyday wear. Various practices associated with Goth have now become habitual; they have become part of my way of life, something that I engage with, yet adapt, each day.

I am now also studying Goth. The consequences and responsibilities of my insider positionality will be discussed fully in chapter two, but it is necessary to note here that I have decided to use first person perspective throughout the thesis to recognize my presence within the work (Crang 1998: 185). When considering the question: could a 'non-Goth' have completed this research? I would argue yes, but perhaps with differing results and certainly different aspects of difficulty. My status as an active participant allowed me access to spaces which are prohibited to non-Goths due to explicit dress codes, but also via more subtle codes of behavior, crucial due to the high level of suspicion of 'outsiders' due to the frequent abuse experienced by many Goths (Hodkinson 2005). I have been able to utilize my position and prior knowledge to gain access to an otherwise closed or self-segregating group, and I found this broad sense of shared experience invaluable when relating to research participants and gaining trust.

However, while inevitably coloured by my biography, my arguments are not uncritically based upon my prior experiences or opinions but instead upon encounters with multiple research participants and environments. This is also why studying in a variety of environments of Tokyo, New York, and throughout the UK, has been significant in allowing a breadth of encounter outside of my prior geographies of experience, and to allow an element of being "dazzled" into the research process (Strathern 1999). Having now outlined the key questions of the thesis, the theoretical tensions from which they are drawn and the methodologies that I, as 'a Goth', will utilise, I close this introduction by providing an outline of the structure I have adopted for the thesis as a whole.

Thesis Structure

Chapter one entitled *Theoretical Engagements*, begins by addressing and expanding on the theoretical insights and troublings that will be explored throughout the thesis. I take four central

theoretical engagements of cultural studies: identity, belonging, experience and resistance, and explore how these concepts are problematised and reformulated when put into tension with the geographical perspectives and specifically, the non-representational approaches of performance, relational materiality and affect. In chapter two, I outline the **Methodological Orientations** employed within fieldwork in the UK, USA and Japan, alongside a critique of traditional anthropological techniques, the methodological demands of non-representational theories and the ethics of my positionality as researcher and participant.

In chapter three, **Becoming Goth: Mobilising Performance and Performativity**, I initiate my focus on movement and dynamism when thinking through Goth by exploring the concepts of performance and performativity. I critically interrogate theories of performance within the work of feminist scholar, Judith Butler (1990, 1993a, 1997), and bring her work into tension with non-representational mobilisations of performativity and my empirical research material. The chapter seeks to question how the metaphor of performance mobilised by Butler and non-representational geographers can be utilised as a dynamic technique to think through Goth and in turn what limitations, adaptations or commentary can be offered towards such theoretical standpoints through an interaction with my research materials.

I then move on to consider the role of materials via a fourth chapter entitled **Encounters with the Nonhuman**. Here I draw on three diverse Goth style practices: *Cybergoth* incorporating cyborgian inspirations, *Steampunk* integrating home-made, Victorian inspired, imagined technologies into their visual practices, and *Gothic Lolita* imitating the image of a Victorian porcelain doll. Such practices are used to think through debates within posthumanism, drawing on Donna Haraway's (1985, 1991, 1997) cyborg figuration in particular. I follow two theoretical aims in this chapter: firstly, I use engagement with these subgenres within Goth to explore interpretations of posthumanism as

transhuman or posthumanist and secondly, I assess certain weaknesses of the cyborg and explore the potential of Haraway's (1997) vampire as an alternate figuration.

Having considered the performative coming into being of Goth subjectivities and the role of the nonhuman in such enactments, the 'excessive' elements within these relations are then introduced. Within chapter five, *Sensing and Sense-Making: Affective Intensities and the Gothic*, I use the concept of affect as developed in non-representational geographies to argue that it is not just allusion to representational associations classed as 'Gothic', for example taking up the image of a skull, bat or spider, that the emergence of Goth relies upon. Instead, I explore how sensing and sense-making take place on a pre-cognitive, embodied level. Here, I also incorporate research materials in a different way; by drawing on the discursive inheritance carried by the terms 'Goth' and 'Gothic' alongside the concepts isolated in previous chapters of "unusual beauty" and the colour black as analytical categories. Ultimately, I consider how affect can be used to think through the significance of belongings and in the exploration of anxiety generation.

The sixth chapter takes such insight regarding affect as a starting point to question what it might mean to think of a space as 'Goth'. The chapter focuses on *Sites of Encounter* and takes place within one site or range of sites considered 'Gothic': the *Whitby Goth Weekend* festival. Utilising research materials generated in the photo-diaries of four participants and observant participation at three festival events, I argue that spaces such as Whitby are not produced as Goth solely through associations to Gothic literatures, discursive histories and architectural qualities, but through more complex relations.

Before a Conclusion to the thesis, a final analytical chapter is necessary to consolidate insight regarding the key question of why cultures of (un)popularity or anxiety consistently form surrounding Goth and wider youth practices. Within chapter seven, *Re-working Resistance:*

Affective “Attraction/Repulsion”, I note how I was faced with a profusion of conflicting reactions and presentations regarding Goth, all of which led me to struggle to place it within the ‘resistant subculture’ framework. However, participants’ accounts of moments when their stylistic choices have generated negative reaction as well as several significant media events concerning Goth cannot be ignored. I thus utilise three salient events: the *Columbine High School* massacre, health scares, and the killing of Sophie Lancaster, to work up a rejection of humanistic understandings of subcultural resistance and instead utilise the “social anxieties” framework developed by Jackson and Everts (2010) as a tool or methodology through which to theorise the continuing emergence of anxieties.

Before exploring such questions however, it is necessary to expand on the discussion of the work that cultural geographies and non-representational theories perform when considering collectivities such as Goth. In the following chapter I juxtapose the theoretical engagements of the thesis from subcultural studies with non-representational geographies in particular, to outline how my thinking has been shifted regarding identity, belonging, experience and resistance through such engagements. This thinking informs my work throughout the thesis, from the research questions formulated, to the methodological orientations chosen and the subsequent techniques of presentation.

Theoretical Engagements

Introduction

Within the introduction chapter, I outlined my intention to problematise cultural studies approaches towards studying collectivities such as Goth by adopting ontologies and epistemologies from within cultural geography, specifically utilising the vocabularies of non-representational theories. In this chapter, I will further investigate and question how non-representational geographies hold potential for challenging the ways in which Goth is thought through.

Such initial claims lead to a number of questions: what makes up the amorphous entity labelled 'Goth'? What terminology can be attributed to it? Can it be thought of simply as a group of people and their associated practices? On what scale should analysis be conducted? As noted above, these questions have been traditionally approached within the subcultural studies field of sociology. Early work within this area depicted groups of young people with shared tastes in elements such as music and clothing, as bound 'subcultures' with well defined values, practices, moral codes and even unique language use. The majority of literature on Goth as a contemporary cultural grouping has utilised this perspective; Paul Hodkinson (2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006b, 2007, 2011) for example, insists that classical subcultural theory is the most appropriate lens through which to view this group.

However, post-subcultures work emerging from the *Manchester Institute for Popular Culture* from the 1990s (e.g. Thornton 1995, Bennett, A. 1999, Redhead 1996, Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003) sought to investigate such groupings differently. Post-subcultural theory presented a challenge to the *Chicago School* and *Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS)* approaches by incorporating different views of subjectivity based on post-modern identity politics, and introduced

alternative theorisations and terminology such as “scene” (Irwin 1977), “neo-tribe” (Maffesoli 1996) or “clubculture” (Redhead 1997). Goth has yet to be considered using theoretical techniques that incorporate such ideas, or from perspectives within cultural geography such as non-representational theory. While recognising the extensive contribution of subcultural studies work, I seek to utilise approaches from within cultural geographies to offer alternate ways of thinking through collectivities such as Goth.

A detailed and thematic discussion of the issues outlined above is provided in this chapter to highlight the complex tensions between various subcultures literatures, situate existing work on Goth and introduce insight from cultural geography. Using the themes of thinking through culture as ‘subculture’, concepts of ‘identity’, what is considered as ‘aspects of experience’ and notions of ‘resistance’, the broad schools of thought within subcultural studies are interrogated and ways in which cultural geographies and non-representational theories add to and move beyond such debates are highlighted.

In this chapter, I explore these themes utilising four key theoretical lenses of performance, materiality, affect and anxiety from within cultural geographies, and suggest ways in which these concepts will be employed to re-work subcultural studies outlooks. It is argued that a focus on the performed nature of subjectivities, an expanded notion of belonging, consideration of pre-cognitive dimensions of experience such as affect, and the consequent revising of concepts of ‘resistance’ that non-representational geographies in particular can offer, generate alternate understandings of Goth and other cultural collectivities. Such an approach seeks to shift lines of questioning and draw out diverse aspects of experience in order to provide greater “texture” (Malbon 1999) or bring “life” (Thrift 2004a) into accounts of the emergence of previously termed “subcultural” subjectivities and affinities, and go some way to account for the persistent anxieties surrounding such groups.

Identity: Performance and Emergent Subjectivities

“Persons are maps of concern, constantly forming and breaking up”

Nigel Thrift (2008a: 88)

As introduced above, post-subcultural approaches have progressively viewed identities as fluid and changing, a perspective that academics studying Goth have largely rejected, preferring instead to emphasise the coherent or “substantive” elements (Hodkinson 2002: 30-32, 2004b, 2007, Brill 2007). However, I approach the concept of identity differently in this thesis. Responding to insights from poststructuralism, non-representational philosophies take analyses beyond postmodern concepts of identity and an emphasis on identity politics by challenging assumptions regarding the location and geographies of the self or ‘subject’. While recognising that the subject remains in some capacity, and despite criticisms that non-representational theories are excessively “individual” in outlook (e.g Nash 2000, Castree and Macmillan 2004, Lorimer 2007), Nigel Thrift (2007a: 7) stresses how subjectivity is re-worked and “expanded” beyond conventional understandings. This section will detail such insight and explore the resultant and interrelated notions of identity or subjectivity as performative and distributed.

Drawing on a variety of philosophical and sociological concepts, non-representational theories broadly take a decentred and anti-subjectivist stance towards theorising identity and the self. Wylie (2010), for example, suggests that such accounts draw on ontologies and ideas of subjectivity from both Deleuze and Derrida. A broadly Deleuzian approach focuses on: “non-personal, pre-personal and trans-personal relations of becoming, currents of intensity and affectivities- a world which, in its ongoing creative evolution, refuses to ever really settle down into more familiar patterns of subject and object, animate and inanimate, cause and effect” (Wylie 2010: 105). Here, the world is considered to be in flux and profoundly creative and additive rather than a fixed entity to be analysed in retrospect.

Subjectivities therefore, cannot reflect back from a detached position, but the “creative subject” as Wylie (2010: 106) terms it, is changeable and undergoes transformations. Derrida’s more “sombre” subject is equally unstable. He rejects the idea of “being”, and instead argues that the subject can never be completely known or “coincide” with itself and can thus never be considered “finished” (*ibid*). This is because Derrida’s ontology requires that a subject must include influence from outside itself and is defined in part by that which it rejects in its self definition (p107). Subjectivity is thus experienced as a form of “mourning” or “loss” for these denied aspects, neither completely absent nor totally present: the “subject *as* ghost, or trace” (p108).

Non-representational geographers such as Thrift (2008a) also draw on Gabriel Tarde’s (1962) theories of the social to formulate understanding of the subject. As Thrift notes, Tarde’s sociology: “neither assumed the existence of an autonomous individual nor of a global network of interconnected individual nodes” (Thrift 2008a: 84). In Tarde’s theories, instead of conceiving of an individual subject, the smallest unit of analysis is the “monad” which, when combined together in networks of interaction, make up a “whole”. However, Tarde stresses that each monad has greater complexity than larger structures: compare the structure of a single brain to that of the government of a nation state (Latour 2002). The basic operation of social life for Tarde is thus the relation or communication between a variety of agents rather than a focus on a whole individual to be later modified (Toews 2003, Latour 2005, Barry and Thrift 2007). Instead of a unified subject, these theories develop a, “notion of subjectivity as lines or fields of concerned and affecting interaction taking place in time” (Thrift 2008a: 85). Thrift goes on to describe such lines or fields not as “individuals” but via geographical metaphors: “waxing and waning territories of interest and desire” (*ibid*). As the opening quote to this section notes, a “person” can thus be understood as a constantly evolving “map of concern” (p88).

These perspectives suggest several points to draw out. With an emphasis on movement and use of geographical terminology and analogies, these perspectives consider subjectivities as active and in process. The metaphor of “performance” has been mobilised within several fields of study, including some post-subcultures work, to think through these notions. It works to acknowledge that subjectivities cannot represent an internal, biologically determined state as humanist approaches suggest (Thrift 2007, Wylie 2010, 2008a). It further challenges the view that subjectivities are end points or representations, and instead focuses on how such positions emerge or come into being.

This metaphor highlights an aspect of non-representational ontological concerns, drawing on Henri Bergson’s concept of “duration”; an understanding of the world as unstable and constantly “acted into” or “emergent” (Thrift 2007: 114). The work of Judith Butler (1990, 1993a, 1997) for example, has insisted that identity categories do not relate to any inherent qualities of individuals, but are generated through the repetition of acts. Such acts or practices produce an individual subjectivity rather than the converse. Categories and differences- social, sexual, gendered and physical- are thought to exist, but are no longer interpreted as signs of an ontological essence, but as developed through practices. The nature of such practices is determined by the norms of behaviour generated around such subject positions within dominant societal discourse, reinforced through aspects such as language. For example, the act of naming a child a ‘girl’ at birth defines her as such and outlines sets of practices she is expected to, and will subconsciously perform in order to enact this identity. This introduces the possibility that subject positions may be changed and subverted as repetition is never exactly the same, thus generating inevitable divergence, variety and stresses the emergent nature of culture and the social.

However, non-representational approaches also place emphasis on Butler’s concept of ‘performativity’: something excessive and unconsciously produced as opposed to ‘performance’ as an individual act. I will expand on such excess below in discussion of affect, but regarding

subjectivity, this works to hint that the conscious mind is not the location of or 'container' for individual subjectivity, but it is instead one point amongst many (Thrift 2008a). The subject thus also emerges as decentred. Using a geographical analogy, Thrift (2008a: 84) contends that, "it seems very hard to argue any longer that the geography of subjectivity is rooted in an individual subject, a nation state militantly united in the pursuit of consciousness". Instead, identities or more appropriately, "subjectivities", are increasingly thought of as profoundly interactive, embodied and in process (Pile and Thrift 1995).

Non-representational accounts adopting performance, performativity and notions of subjects as distributed have therefore focussed on "doing", "encounter" (Lorimer 2005) and "the heterogeneous entanglements of practice" (Latham and Conradson 2003: 1901). As actions are productive of the self, the body must be considered a site of significance, as demonstrated in influential work on dance (e.g. Thrift 1997, McCormack 2002, 2005, 2008b). Equally, Crouch's (2003a) study of allotments illustrates the importance of process rather than analysing a fixed end-point in the form of a representation or 'identity'. He argues that the repetitive and habitual physical interaction with the land involved in allotment keeping, is "affirmative of, and can impel, a powerful sense of being, or 'practical ontology'" (p18).

As Thrift (2008: 112) summarises, a key objective of non-representational theory is therefore, "to counter the still-prevalent tendency to consider life from the point of view of individual agents who generate action by instead weaving a poetic of the common practices and skills which produce people, selves and worlds". 'Identity' then, must consider a wider array of factors than other social theories allows for. As Lorimer (2007: 96) observes, "to more traditional signifiers of identity and difference (class, gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality, disability), have been added another order of abstract descriptors: instincts, events, auras, rhythms, cycles, flows and codes". Goth subjectivity then, must also include factors 'excessive' to structural considerations.

Such insights have been applied to some extent in understandings of music-based subcultures within post-subcultures work. Performance is touched upon by Shields (1992a, 1992b) and those utilising Maffesoli's work. Shields (1992b: 108) notes the temporal nature of collective identities which move between sites of consumption and are reconstructed appropriately, concluding that "personas are 'unfurled' and mutually adjusted". Equally, Malbon (1999) describes the identities of clubbers as "always in the process of formation", and centred on relationality or "identification" rather than a purely individual process of self-definition. Embodied practices of dancing are considered by Malbon (1999) and Pini (1997) on clubbing and Allett (2010a) on Heavy Metal, as productive of the self and indicative of the emotional and embodied work required within these sub-groups. As Malbon (1999: 184-185) notes, these practices can be complex and subtle: "clubbing is not just about wearing specific clothing, but also the way that clothing is worn;...not just about dancing in an acceptable way, but also about dancing in an acceptable space at that right time and possibly with the right people".

It cannot be said however, that such accounts take on the radically pre-individual, non-representational subject. Allett (2010a) for example, concludes in favour of a modified subcultures perspective as opposed to any break from such ideas of the subject, and while Butler's notion of performance has been drawn upon, it has not moved forward to accommodate more fully the concept of performativity. Furthermore, no work specifically considering Goth has tackled such ideas. Indeed, when theorising subjectivity as emergent or 'becoming', problems emerge for the consideration of groupings that appear to have a sense of consistency or collective subjectivity. To provide a striking example, Giles Deleuze as introduced above, is one influential theorist drawn upon by non-representational geographers. In a conversation with Clare Parnet, Deleuze outlines his philosophy of becoming as follows:

“To become is never to imitate, nor to ‘do like’, not to conform to a model, whether it’s of justice or truth. There is no terminus from which you set out, none which you arrive at or which you ought to arrive at. Nor are there two terms which are exchanged. The question ‘What are you becoming?’ is particularly stupid. For as someone becomes, what he is becoming changes as much as he does himself.” (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 2)

In this understanding, ‘Goth’ cannot be conceived as a “model” to which individual subjectivities must “conform” via imitation, as implied in some subcultures perspectives. It suggests that as subjectivity becomes, this changes how ‘Goth’ is thought through via a reflexive relationship: subjectivities or indeed labelled groupings are not finished or complete with a neat beginning and end point. As it is not valid to ask “what are you becoming?”, this raises certain fundamental questions that I will approach in the thesis: how can we negotiate experiences and understandings of ‘Goth’ as a relatively fixed entity with an ontology of subjectivity as becoming or performed? What happens if we focus on an investigation into how embodied practices of Goth such as dancing or corset wearing contribute to the “flow” (Lorimer 2007: 96) or “waxing and waning territories” (Thrift 2008: 112) of these subjectivities? How can these practices indicate the possibilities of something “ghostly” (Wylie 2010: 108) exceeding their representational qualities, beyond the possibilities of a semiotic analysis of these practices and objects can highlight?

Such ideas will be explored throughout the thesis, chapter three in particular will interrogate Judith Butler’s contribution to the performed and performative nature of subjectivities and using work on embodied movement to trouble such ideas and push them further toward non-representational ends. Significantly, this consideration of the philosophy of becoming also calls into question how group belonging and boundaries are theorised, and it is thus necessary to explore alternative views of culture and the social.

Boundaries and Belonging: The Challenges of Relational Materiality

“Humans, their desires and plans, are clearly not the only things active in the world, in fact often we may be a very small player in much bigger trans- and nonhuman systems and complexes”

Ben Anderson and Paul Harrison (2010: 12)

As introduced above, Hodkinson (2002: 30-32) argues that Goth involves a strong sense of “group belonging” with relatively fixed and consistent boundaries. He insists that themes of darkness and femininity “cut across diversity and change” and the ways in which artefacts are “added to the overall Goth assemblage were often relatively consistent and predictable” (2004: 143). He concludes that Goth displays: “certain indicators of movement, dynamism and flux”, but holds a “relatively substantive overall form” (p147). However, such theoretical stances have been challenged within cultural geographies. Within new cultural geography and cultural studies more broadly, ideas of group identity as rigid and tightly bound, for example within a nation state, have been confronted by the increasing cultural fragmentation of the contemporary world (e.g. Robertson 1995, Crang *et al.* 2003, Jackson 2004). Equally, Rose (1997b) notes shifts in wider cultural theory which move away from a conception of ‘community’. She critiques “the idea of purity of communal identity, with its territorialised and territorialising boundaries between same and other” (1997: 185), as this assumes members know themselves and each other completely, and fails to allow for internal difference.

Within this section I argue that when adopting non-representational perspectives based on movement and a geographical imaginary, with ‘identity’ re-worked as various intersecting, performed and distributed maps of subjectivity as outlined above, then these conventional notions of group belonging and concepts of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ are equally challenged. I suggest that from such a theoretical perspective, the concept of culture must be re-drawn as firstly, tight boundaries of

belonging are not so easily theorised in contemporary cultural life, and secondly, this perspective necessarily denies that culture is a purely human domain.

Firstly, the fluid nature of group boundaries is echoed by post-subcultural work as noted above, most notably by those utilising Maffesoli's (1996) theoretical stance. However, work on Goth has taken a more moderate stance similar to that of Thornton (1995, 1997), who portrays contemporary dance music culture as interwoven with wider cultures and other sub-groups. Despite Hodgkinson's (2002) observation that Goth initially utilised mainstream media and record labels and borrowed influence from New Romantic, Indie, Metal and Rave cultures, and his avoidance of a semiotic analysis by emphasising the 'play' involved in Goth stylistic choice, he chooses to focus his analysis instead on what unites Goth as a relatively stable whole and does not problematise the notion of 'play'.

As introduced above, 'difference' or 'invention' is a key focus for Tarde. In his *Laws of Imitation* (1903), in which he outlines a model of how societies emerge in contrast to Durkheim's notion adopted in much social science, Tarde insists that cultures form from the diverging imitation of practices. This perspective differs from the Deleuzian notion of becoming outlined above, by acknowledging a element of 'imitation', if a diverging one. As Thrift (2008a: 84) insists, instead of looking at an "individual", "he was concerned with the sites at which behaviour was modified, that is with the moment, the location, and the mechanism through which difference or invention was produced". I therefore, suggest that such moments of dissent or evidence of a "misbehaving" (Hinchliffe 2010: 308) or inventive world thus hold greater potential for analysis within the ontologies put to work here. Equally, Thrift (2007a: 119) characterises "play" as: "a process of performative experiment" centred on "producing variation" rather than consolidating any collective group identity, thus once again stressing the necessity to investigate multiplicity and divergence and trouble the term 'subculture'.

Secondly, it is equally possible and necessary to take such boundary breaking further to tackle more fundamental philosophical divides; namely that between nature and culture. Adopting once more Thrift's (2008a: 88) argument, he notes that "a sense of self comes from the geography of concerned involvement in the world", and thus "personhood is bound up with objects". This quotation demonstrates how Thrift's work links to other fields of concern incorporated within non-representational approaches; including Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and arguments within the diverse area labelled "posthumanism". While approaches to materialism are varied, non-representational ontologies broadly adopt a relational materialist approach developed within such disciplines to theorise belonging and culture (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly 2004, Whatmore 2006).

Such a stance recognises that action is not determined solely by conscious willpower and cannot be thought of as mono-directional from actor to acted-upon. Instead such qualities are "relational phenomena" (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 7), a perspective stressing that nonhuman "things": "might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid and so on" (Latour 2005: 72). These comments from various authors suggest that elements previously considered external to bodies, actions and the social within humanist philosophies are thus no longer regarded as a neutral "background", but as active participants in forming hybrid selves within complex assemblages of connection (Whatmore 2002).

Theorists including Sarah Whatmore (2002, 2006, Whatmore and Thorne 1997), Jane Bennett (2001, 2004, 2005a, 2007, 2010) and Donna Haraway (1991, 1985, 1997, 2003) stress such points by highlighting that it is increasingly difficult to consider human populations as separate from "natural" Others such as animal life or apparently 'inert' objects and technologies. Whatmore (2002) highlights the BSE crisis whereby virus cells originating in cows were shown to circulate to humans and stresses the intimate relationships we engage in with food (Whatmore and Thorne 1997).

Equally, Bennett (2007, 2010) notes the capacity of nutrients such as Omega-3 fish oils to alter brain chemistry and mood and bestows equal agency to technologies; foregrounding electrical wiring as an actor within the North American blackout crisis. Haraway's (1985) "cyborg manifesto" works towards a prosthetic sociality in which "we are all cyborgs" (1991: 150), always co-constituted by the technologies we employ.

Latour (2005: 68-70) further reinforces such arguments for considering the nonhuman in accounts of the social by noting how "social skills" alone are not sufficient to explain enduring aspects such as inequality. Utilising the example of baboon communities based on social skills alone, orders of hierarchy and power must be re-created each day. This contrasts to human communities, wherein such qualities and orderings appear to be more durable. He argues that "it is difficult to maintain symmetries, to durably entrench power relations, to enforce inequalities" and thus, "so much work is being constantly devoted in shifting the weak and fast-decaying ties to *other types* of links" (p66 original emphasis). Such "links" and relative durability can be accounted for by incorporating objects into considerations; Latour concluding that, "it is always things- and I now mean this last word literally- which, in practice, lend their 'steely' quality to the hapless 'society'" (p68).

While those such as Hebdige (1979, 1988) focussed on the symbolism of clothing within Punk and the influence of the scooter, I will work to suggest that such insight can be advanced further by utilising these perspectives from ANT. Latour (2005) critiques approaches from within the "sociology of the social" for turning "matter" into: "mere intermediary faithfully 'transporting' or 'reflecting' society's agency" (p84), whereas in his "sociology of associations" (p8), "anything that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor" (p71). Ultimately, while these nonhuman objects may not solely determine action: "there exists many metaphysical shades between full causality and sheer existence" (p72). I therefore suggest that 'society', 'culture' or 'subculture' are necessarily re-worked within non-representational theories. Drawing on Latour

(2005) and Actor Network Theory, society or culture are not pre-existent entities or contexts in which individuals act. As Latour (2005: 64-65 original emphasis) argues, the “social”: “doesn’t designate a domain of reality or some particular item, but rather is the name of a movement, a displacement, a transformation, a translation, an enrolment”.

I will thus question throughout the thesis how Goth as a ‘subculture’ can be thought through from a perspective of emergence and relational materialism. I will ask: can ‘Goth’ be thought of as a shifting assemblage of interacting actors, both human and nonhuman, that come together in specific relations in time and space? How can qualities of apparent durability be accounted for? Is there potential in considering certain objects or controversies, for example academic and media descriptions of Goth in the form of books and articles? However, before doing so, there is another aspect of culture and the social which must be considered: an affective dimension. As Anderson and Harrison (2010: 16-17) assert, “the social is affective because it is often through affect that relations are interrupted, changed or solidified”. It is to such pre-conscious and pre-personal aspects of experience that I will now turn.

Aspects of Experience: Affective Engagements

“Issues like identity and belonging quiver with affective energy”

Nigel Thrift (2007: 172)

In *Maps of Meaning* (1989), Peter Jackson outlined an imperative of the new cultural geography as the broadening out of what was considered culture. He argued that: “unlike most geographical approaches to culture, this definition is not limited to the realm of material things”, but instead, “includes the less tangible world of consciousness and experience” (p48). An aim originally developed when referring to ideology and the notion of exploring symbolic meaning, I seek to tackle

this endeavour slightly differently based on ideas from non-representational geographies. Additional to the distributed notion of the subject and increased complexity in considerations of group belonging, non-representational approaches also expand the vectors through which the world is experienced. Instead of looking at “consciousness”, I will thus also seek to consider how ‘culture’ is produced and experienced via pre-conscious mechanisms.

Aspects of experience considered in early subcultures work focussed on structural factors such as being unemployed and working class, while the CCCS conducted symbolic readings of practices such as music consumption and stylistic choice. In the thesis *Introduction*, I detailed a series of cultural practices that can be used to define broadly what might be involved in participation as a ‘Goth’: listening to specific music, going to clubs, gigs and festivals, wearing predominantly black clothing, consuming magazines and various Gothic and science fiction literatures, contributing to on-line forums and blogging. In later chapters however, I will take such conceptions of practice, involvement and action as a starting point, but expanded what is included in the everyday ‘Goth’ performances or experiences via engagement with the concept of pre-cognitive affect.

Subcultures scholars such as Maffesoli (1996: 21) include the concepts of “emotion”, “feeling” and a certain “ambience” or “aura” as uniting elements of his neo-tribes theory. He notes that “a large part of social existence cannot be accounted for by instrumental rationality” (*ibid*), and Malbon (1999: 48), confirms that in his study of dance music cultures, “microstructurings of shared sentiments, experiences and emotions appear to be playing a more important part in people’s everyday experiences”. Maffesoli (1996) characterises contemporary tribal sociality as a series of “feeling communities”, brought together not through class, gender, age or consumption of a musical genre, but a shared “feeling” or *puissance* (“will to live”) (pp31-53). He concludes that: “we are witnessing the tendency for a rationalized ‘social’ to be replaced by an emphatic ‘sociality’, which is expressed by a succession of ambiances, feelings and emotions” (p11). Supporting such conclusions,

Nicola Allett (2010a, 2010b) uses music elicitation methods to investigate the emotions that unite and define the Extreme Metal community. She concludes that this group can be: “characterised by notions of shared feeling that are linked to the distinct feeling structures of Extreme Metal” (p117), such as extremes of emotion displayed by fans in dancing practices and reflected in musical style and lyrics.

However, Allett ultimately returns to the subcultures matrix, arguing that Extreme Metal remains: “non-normative because it has distinct and shared values, practices, speech, hierarchy, and notions of authenticity”, and “the collective identity of subculture” is seen in “the interactions and identifications of its members reinforced through distinctions of taste and habitus” (*ibid*). In contrast, within this thesis, I intend to retain to concept of fluidity and dynamism by drawing on ideas surrounding affect; specifically those ideas developed within non-representational geographies.

There are several theoretical vocabularies surrounding the concept of affect within different fields. Affect theory within psychology was heavily influenced by the work of Silvan Tomkins (1962, 1963) who brought together the ideas of drive and affect in his *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*. As Demos (1995: 19) summarises, “Tomkins argues that affects function as analogue amplifiers that create within the organism experiences of urgency”. To elaborate further, Shouse asserts: “affect is what makes feelings feel”, as it is a mechanism that adds “intensity” or “a sense of urgency” to subconscious awareness of organs and limbs and their location in relation to one another, known as “proprioception”. Affect can thus be seen as: “the body’s way of preparing itself for action in a given circumstance by adding a quantitative dimension of intensity to the quality of experience” (*ibid*).

Tomkins (1978 reprinted in Demos 1995: 88) uses the example of the pain mechanism as a parallel of affect to illustrate how this intensity works: when an injury occurs to the body, without this pain

mechanism there is no urgency to solve the problem and thus a person would bleed to death, illustrating how “the apparent urgency of the drive system”, is “borrowed from its co-assembly with appropriate affects as necessary amplifiers”. Here affect is related to “emotion” and “feelings”. As Shouse (2005, emphasis in original) notes, “feelings are *personal* and *biographical*, emotions are *social*, and affects are *prepersonal*”. A “feeling” is “a sensation that has been checked against previous experiences and labelled”, whereas emotions are the public “projection/display of feeling” which may be genuine or artificial in order to conform to sociably acceptable norms. Affects on the other hand cannot be labelled by reference to experiences and cannot be feigned as they occur prior to consciousness. Affect is thus a “*form of thinking*” (Thrift 2008: 175 original emphasis), a pre-discursive process that occurs before or in excess of the cognitive formation of a definition or freezing via a representation.

Accounts incorporating the notion of affect emphasise these ideas within psychology and neuroscience, suggesting that what colours perception of the world and influences behaviour is not solely cognitive and conscious decision-making processes (Connolly 2002). Consistent with Spinoza’s idea of a singular matter, the mind is not the only location of thinking and instead the idea of “thinking through the body” is foregrounded (Thrift 2007: 176). This is based on the notion that bodies and senses filter most of the myriad signals that are received at each moment, and only a limited number reach the conscious mind for consideration, evidenced by findings in neuroscience of a 0.5 second gap between the receipt of a stimulus and the conscious register of that stimulus (Massumi 2002). As Thrift (2008) asserts, perception of, and response to a situation, are intertwined and thus we rely on “an artful use of a vast sensorium of bodily resources” to navigate the world rather than conscious thought.

These ideas lend greater support to the concept that humans are linked with rather than isolated from other individuals and the nonhuman world, as introduced above (Whatmore 2002; McCormack

2004). Affects are generated in the gap between stimulus and cognition and they emerge out of encounters of many kinds: including social interactions, images, environments and objects (e.g. Crouch 2001, Wylie 2002, Crouch 2003b, Latham and McCormack 2004, Cloke *et al.* 2008). Brian Massumi (2002) argues that affect is relational and autonomous as it “escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is”. Affects can be captured in the form of emotions, but something always “escapes” or as Massumi (2002: 35) states: “something remains unactualised, inseparable from but unassimilable to any particular, functionally anchored perspective”. What escapes can be conceived of in the form of an “event”. This can be negative in the form of a shock or jolt via the “interruption of functions or connection”, but it can also be positive allowing “the perception of one’s own vitality” (Massumi 2002: 36).

As Thrift (2008: 176) proposes, “between oneself and the world there is a new term, a holistically sensed, new texture in the social moment, and one that relates to others in and through that emergent and transforming experience”. Connolly (2002: 11) details how these interactions are “transformative” as they influence our perceptions by shaping the “virtual memory” and “sensory experience”. “Virtual memory” refers to the subconscious recall of an affective “trace” created by a past event, rather than a conscious visual image. This trace may be in the form of a “sensory experience” such as smell, sound or touch.

This opens up the possibility that, as Shouse (2005) argues, despite being an unconscious mechanism, affect is social and can be “transmitted between bodies”. As seen above, these “affective charges” influence both mind and body: they “move thinking and judgment in some directions rather than others” (Connolly 2002: 27. 8) and “prepare the body for action” in certain ways (Thrift 2008: 40). Shouse (2005) argues that, “every form of communication where facial expressions, respiration, tone of voice, and posture are perceptible can transmit affect”, highlighting how interpersonal interaction as well as the communication via the media involve the generation of

affect. When looking at the potential power of the media, it follows that “in many cases the message consciously received may be of less import to the receiver of that message than his or her non-conscious affective resonance with the source of the message” (Shouse 2005). To illustrate, Massumi (2002) details how Richard Nixon was re-elected not based on the content of his policies or his ability as a speaker but he had a pleasing tone of voice and projected an air of “confidence”.

I will therefore, utilise affect as a way in which to think through the excessive nature of the everyday and to acknowledge the emotional as well as non-verbal aspects of experience, aspects which, as introduced in previous sections, are significant and involved in the production of traditional signifiers such as socio-economic position, race or gender. As such affects are generated in interaction between people, nonhuman actors and environments, the relational materialist approach outlined in the previous section is particularly appropriate. I suggest that while subculture may be appealing due to its solid and graspable qualities (e.g. see Latour 2005: 121), it is not necessary to return to this model to think through belonging and definitional qualities of niche groups such as Goth. I will adopt affect as an approach to seek to investigate the role of the pre-conscious and pre-personal within the performative emergence of ‘Goth’ subjectivities and feelings of belonging. I will further stress the potential for considering the affective attraction and repulsion triggered by ‘Goth’ assemblages, something which I will now introduce.

Resistance Re-Worked

“I have always had problems with the word ‘resistance’”

Nigel Thrift 1997c: 124

Within this final section, I suggest that the insights offered by considering performance, relational materiality and affect, not only open up questioning regarding how the world is experienced, how

subjectivities some into being and how culture is produced, but also call into question a final key point explored within subcultures work: the concept of 'resistance'. As I noted in the *Introduction*, Goths may trigger some sort of reaction in many contexts as they are generally experienced as 'different' from others. This 'difference' is framed within subcultural studies accounts as based on stylistic choice and/or other aspects of behaviour, and is thought to generate anxieties within wider publics. Such a response is indicative of consistent reactions to youth groups and cultures centred on music for many decades. For example the Mods and the Rockers framed as "folk devils" triggering "moral panic" in the 1960s (Cohen 2002), two groups which seem relatively 'tame' in contemporary contexts of Rap music and connections with gang violence and controversial, anti-religious Industrial Metal musicians such as *Marilyn Manson* (Jones 1991, Korpe *et al.* 2006).

The *Chicago School* theorists thought of this difference as "deviant" from the norms of society; groups of "delinquent boys" (Cohen 1955) coalescing on the street corners of Chicago, unemployed and thus operating outside the constraints and norms of working lives, while "Taxi-dancers" engaged in morally controversial employment, selling their bodies as dance partners to clubs lacking a sufficient female cohort (Cressey 1932). The CCCS (e.g. Hall and Jefferson 1976, Mungham and Pearson 1976, Hebdige 1979) later shifted the framing of subcultural "deviance" to one of "heroic resistance" (Gelder 2005: 12). The practices of such groups they considered "spectacular subcultures" were seen as symbolically resistant and highly political (Hodkinson 2011, Gelder 2005, Hall, S. and Jefferson, T. 1976). Drawing on Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony, subcultural involvement was theorised as a way in which youth could reassert their threatened working class sense of community and generate their own political and discursive space, thus 'resisting' the more persuasive ideologies of the dominant in society. Punks for example, employed techniques of "bricolage" by juxtaposing familiar objects in unfamiliar combinations to engage in "semiotic guerrilla warfare" designed to shock and provoke (Hebdige 1979).

Moving away from CCCS accounts largely focussed on male youth, Angela McRobbie (1994b: 162) in her study of teenage girls in bedroom spaces, argues for thinking of resistance at “the more mundane, micrological level of everyday practices and choices”. Such techniques echo Michel de Certeau’s (1984) notion of “la perruque” (“the wig”) in which resistance is framed as rarely overt but largely covert, for example subtly using the internet at work for social purposes. While these practices are inherently political at some level in that they represent an “investment in society” (McRobbie 1994b: 156), they are not necessarily anti-authority or working against class power structures. By considering the varying scales or “geographies” (Pile and Keith 1997) of resistance and its overt or covert nature, greater complexity has thus been taken into account (Williams 2007).

However, these interpretations draw on a specific notion of a disempowered minority working against a dominant majority, or a “David and Goliath” approach as Thrift (1997:124) asserts, in which: “everything has to be forced into the dichotomy of resistance or submission and all of the paradoxical effects which cannot be understood in this way remain hidden”. This critique opens up questions when considering Goth: can Goths be thought of as a “disempowered minority” when many individuals hold higher degrees and corporate positions usually associated with a more ideologically powerful majority (Hodkinson 2002, Brill 2008)? How can we respond to Hodkinson’s (2002) observation that a primary goal in participation within Goth is not to “resist” but to have “fun”? Finally, how can the varying positive and negative reaction to Goth be accounted for when “resistance” or “submission” are the only options?

While geographical accounts have sought to add complexity, such as the various interacting scales of the real and virtual “geographies” of resistance considered by Pile and Keith (1997), I suggest that a further alternate idea explored in such literatures is more productive: that of social anxiety. Some have suggested that we are living in an ‘age of anxiety’, and while this ‘age’ is a flexible concept with anxieties linked to periods of rapid change such as the Industrial Revolution, contemporary anxieties

are thought to include terrorism, health scares, food pollution, and particularly following the rioting of 2011 I argue, 'youth' (e.g. Beck 1992, Wilkinson 2001, Ungar 2001, Whatmore 2002, Bauman 2006, Jackson and Everts 2010). While there are several ways in which to approach anxieties theoretically, I suggest that a strength of the social anxieties concept is the moving away from a simplistic, 'us versus them' understanding implied by 'resistance'. Anxieties frameworks, including that developed by Jackson and Everts (2010), focus attention on the myriad elements that work to produce anxiety events as well as foregrounding analysis of the consequences and potential for resolution of such incidents. It also facilitates a different viewpoint; allowing for the fact that subculturalists may not seek to resist actively, but the effects that this perception in others may have, can be considered.

It is clear that there have been consequences to such media events surrounding Goth as noted at the outset of the thesis *Introduction*. However, the theoretical techniques employed and engagements with my research material both complicate the notion of 'resistance'. Framing Goth as 'resistant' is problematic due to the dominant demographic position as largely "middle class" (Brill 2008), the co-development of Goth with other niche practices as well as 'mainstream' record labels, and the lack of evidence that Goths themselves seek to 'resist' (Hodkinson 2002). Theoretically, as groupings such as Goth have been theorised as coming into being rather than pre-existing, and incorporate a range of actors, conceiving of 'Goth' as a tightly bounded entity neatly separated from an idea of a 'wider culture', is invalid. As a constant refrain throughout the thesis, and culminating in chapter seven, I will question how 'difference' is experienced, both beyond the limits of the visual register and as something dynamic and in flux. I further suggest alternate vocabularies to take into account how Goth and youth more generally continue to *make a difference* to the flows of daily life.

Conclusions

The chapter has opened up questioning regarding how Goth can be thought through: is it a “street-corner” culture (Whyte 1955), a way in which youth resist dominant power discourses through stylistic “bricolage” (Hebdige 1979), language (Becker 1966) or use of space (Whyte 1955)? Is it co-defined and produced through media definitions (Thornton 1995) or does it remain relatively underground and internally-defined in nature? Is it more fluid: one stylistic and musical option in the supermarket of style to be incorporated into the milieu of other options (Polhemus 1997)? Does this thing called ‘Goth’ come together only at sites of consumption such as the club or festival (A. Bennett, A. 1999)? Do such identities and identifications come together to produce scene-defining peak experiences (Malbon 1999), emotional sensations (Allett 2010a) or imaginatively empowered worlds (Pini 1997)? Is it defined by a set of shared experiences- an ephemeral set of emotional bonds between disparate people within a specific space-time (Maffesoli 1996, Pini 1997, Malbon 1999, Allett 2010a)? Finally, is it a community formed in opposition to a dominant Other?

Within this chapter, I have discussed approaches to examining collectivities such as Goth within cultural studies, focussing on identity, belonging, aspects of experience and resistance. I have suggested however, that such approaches are somewhat limited in their outlook. Juxtaposing these ideas with the differing ontologies proposed within cultural geographies, and specifically, non-representational theories, a more dynamic approach is taken, in which the world is continually brought into being and stable categories, including ‘culture’ and ‘identity’, do not pre-exist the myriad actions and encounters producing them.

My theoretical aims within this thesis are parallel to that of Anderson and Harrison’s (2010: 13 original emphasis) summary of non-representational theory as a body of work that attempts to: “attend to life that occurs *before* and *alongside* the formation of subjectivity, *across* human and nonhuman materialities and *in-between* distinctions between body and soul, materiality and

corporeality". Subjectivity then, will be thought of as a "sense of being" (Crouch 2003a: 18) and a series of practices and acts which must be constantly repeated and thus can never be exactly the same at each cycle (Butler 1990, 1993b). Subjectivities thus includes ephemeral 'feelings' as Maffesoli (1996) argues, but are also highly grounded as they emerge through embodied and practical action; viewed as a shifting territory or map of fluctuating desires and concerns (Thrift 2008a). What is apparent from this viewpoint is that subjectivity is thus profoundly social and boundaries or divides cannot be considered permanently fixed. As seen in the discussion of Tarde's sociology, bodies affect one another and there is something dynamic and excessive about subjectivities (Latour 2002, Barry and Thrift 2007).

Furthermore, as non-representational geographies draw on a relational material perspective from within fields including ANT, I also adopt this expanded view of what counts as a social actor to include the nonhuman (Whatmore 2002, 2006, Anderson and Tolia-Kelly 2004, Anderson and Wylie 2009). Culture and the social are thus profoundly re-thought, not as a specific domain, but as webs of connection (Latour 2005). Subjectivities are also expanded, conceived of as a distributed consciousness and therefore, actions are no longer necessarily centred in the conscious mind. I will question how 'Goth' is experienced through the body as well as non-cognitive and pre-personal factors such as affect (Connolly 2002, Massumi 2002a, Anderson and Harrison 2006, Thrift 2007).

From such perspectives, resistance is problematised: generated in the space between various actors and environments, affects are seen as intensities that can influence perceptions, actions and come to define certain experiences, and are therefore, crucial to understandings of the world. I will thus question what such approaches offer to thinking through the persistent generation of cultures of anxiety accompanying collectivities such as Goth within a social anxieties framework.

A review of the literature has revealed many tensions within subcultural studies and between this field and cultural and non-representational geographies. Amongst the many strengths of subcultural studies approaches in this context are the case-study driven nature of much of this work, with a focus on fieldwork and a concern with 'getting involved' in the lives of participants. Subcultural approaches have also been useful in recognising that a sense of belonging within niche cultural groupings is often very significant to how the world is experienced and daily lives. My task in this thesis is thus to unravel how such subjectivities and sense of becoming 'Goth', comes about. I will however, argue that the formation of such groupings and senses of belonging" can be thought through in a different way by shifting analysis towards more theoretically dynamic territory and by thinking spatially about culture.

This thesis can thus be positioned within literatures that seek to provide more 'textured' (Malbon 1999) and dynamic accounts of everyday experience. I will utilise certain insights from subcultural studies; including the focus on cultural practices, progressive work considering objects more directly (e.g. Hebdige 1988) and accounts focussing on affect and emotion (e.g. Maffesoli 1996, Allett 2010a). However, I will seek to move away from 'subculture' or even 'neo-tribe' or 'scene', as such terms can be framed as an unhelpful series of stabilising nouns. Instead, I contend that geographical or spatial terms hold greater potential.

There has however, been resistance to exploring such ideas within existing accounts of Goth culture; Paul Hodkinson (2002) arguing that a modified subcultures concept is most suitable. Despite this, I will look at what happens when subjectivities are co-produced, conceive of these as distributed and consider embodied actions, affects and a wide range of actors producing 'Goth'. There are tensions between subcultures as a solid entity or noun and post-subcultures and non-representational ontologies conceiving of sociality as a coalescence of ephemeral affects and grounded materialities. While the subculture framework might be appealing as it provides a firm entity to evaluate and

quantify, when viewing the world from the ontological standpoints introduced above, this is not possible: nothing is fixed for long or works independently from simultaneous transformation, folding, flux and excess.

Such an approach seeks out what is excluded from other studies, including internal variation, what does not fit the mould, the creativity and the role of objects as agents in producing culture. In this spirit, I do not limit my considerations to 'traditional' definitions of Goth based on 1980s Goth Rock music and a Victorian horror aesthetic. I will recognise the Cybergoths, Gothbillys Steampunks, Deathrockers, Corporate Goths and Gothic Lolitas that co-inhabit clubs, gigs, festivals, shopping areas and on-line spaces, as participants to producing 'Goth'.

Furthermore, non-representational approaches do not deny the import of participation in activities associated with Goth to the lives of individuals; in fact, they may enhance their status. For example, an investigation into the performative and embodied nature of Gothic subjectivities in chapter three indicates that 'Goth' subjectivities come into being alongside others such as gender, previously considered to be inherent and thus more substantial than subcultural belongings. Chapter four probes the roles of nonhumans in such processes, and demonstrates how bodies and minds can be transformed through engagements with such actors. Chapter five includes a consideration the aspect of "unusual beauty" via the enrolment of the colour black ('darkness' being a key theme isolated by Hodkinson (2002)), but from a stance in which the affective enhancements and diminishments of such a concept are traced. Chapter six continues such insight in relation to spaces of the *Whitby Goth Weekend* festival, while the final chapter consolidates such theoretical ideas in an exploration of several media controversies surrounding Goth in order to re-work resistance.

However, before launching into such explorations, it is necessary to outline the methodological orientations employed as a consequence of these chosen theoretical engagements. If the world is to

be considered from a certain perspective, then the methods through which knowledge about this world is to be obtained, must be consistent with such ontological standpoints. In the following chapter, I will outline the use of methodologies including photo studies, event-based photo-diaries and guided walks, and further reflexively consider my position as “critical insider” (Hodkinson 2005).

Methodological Orientations

Introduction

Within the previous chapter, I outlined how the theoretical standpoints adopted from within cultural geographies have shaped the nature of the research questions posed. These theoretical questions and standpoints must be investigated utilizing appropriate methodological orientations or ways of knowing. Within this chapter I will discuss how such ontological positions demand certain epistemological approaches. The question posed in this chapter is thus: if a focus on emergence and the “more-than-representational” (Lorimer 2005: 86) is central, how can I effectively employ methodological orientations to make my account, as Thrift and Dewsbury (2000) term it, “live”?

Central to this chapter is an emphasis on how my research brings into tension techniques from within cultural studies and the demands of cultural geography, in particular, a non-representational approach. Subcultural studies work has largely relied upon ‘traditional’ ethnographic methods of participant observation on the street corner or dance hall, with a further semiotic analysis of cultural practices including style, introduced by the CCCS. As introduced in previous chapters, more recent work has responded to critiques of such techniques from within cultural studies. These accounts have challenged concerns similarly adopted within new cultural geographies regarding the generation of ‘exotic others’ within the research process and a focus on limited field locations. While I have already outlined how I intend to overcome the problematic of limited field sites by adopting a multi-site approach, I also suggest that adopting a non-representational outlook adds further complexity to such critiques by taking issues of subjectivity, research ethics and questions of culture beyond concerns regarding cultural politics and reflexivity (Gray 2003).

For example, Thrift (2000: 3) stresses how dominant methodologies within cultural studies drawn from ethnography register only a “narrow range of sensate life” due to their focus on “bringing back

data and representing IT (nicely packaged up with illustrative quotations)". Such an approach assumes a pre-formed world awaiting discovery by academics, rather than acknowledging a processual ontology of becoming. Instead, for Thrift (2007: 148) methodologies must allow "participants equal right to disclose, through dialogical actions rather than text, through relations rather than representation", while Latham (2003: 1993) calls for "engaging with how individuals and groups inhabit their worlds through practical action". It is thus clear that a semiotic "reading" of culture as text, detached from the mess and action of social lives is thus inappropriate when mobilising such theories.

To elaborate further, I contend that there are several specific implications of the key theoretical lenses of performance, affect, relational materiality and social anxiety that guide this thesis. Firstly, the question opens up: if, ontologically, the world is constantly coming into being or emerging as theories of performance dictate, how is knowledge to be gained about such a dynamic universe? By way of response, Thrift (2007: 147) argues that methods which "produce a sense of engagement with the world by emphasizing the 'push'" and allow for the "poetics of encounter", are essential. Attempts to fix stable definitions or concepts in such a world and make grand knowledge claims, must therefore be abandoned and a more modest approach taken. Within this project, I do not attempt to make sweeping claims about the character of 'Goth' within a UK, USA or Japanese context, or suggest monolithic explanations of social anxiety, but instead explore factors that may contribute, factors specifically highlighted by the theoretical vocabularies adopted. Methods have therefore been selected to allow for flexibility, surprise, or what Strathern (1999) describes as an openness to being "dazzled" by encounters.

Secondly, as I stressed in the previous chapter, a key concern of non-representational geographies is the notion that conscious reasoning is only one way through which the world is experienced and understood. The introduction of an affective dimension acting before conscious decision-making

processes, requires methodologies that not only focus on representation but also allow the researcher to “approximate” (Anderson 2009) this pre-conscious domain. Theorists have emphasised the difficulties involved in investigating processes that occur before cognition; habitual actions, for example, are an area of life not easily identified by research participants themselves or conventionally considered interesting to academics (Lorimer 2005, 2008). Furthermore, a focus on affect necessitates the highlighting of practices or aspects of experience that are difficult to verbalise or express. Some argue that once affects become solidified within the vocabularies of emotion, they can no longer be thought of as pre-cognitive. I thus encountered the problem of how to investigate processes, atmospheres or intensities that are unexpressed or even inexpressible without eradicating their lively capacities.

Thirdly, coupled with this affective concern is the focus on a relational materiality. As introduced in the previous chapter, one consequence of such a stance is the requirement of methods which are attendant to both the human and nonhuman. As Whatmore (2006: 606-607) has argued, methods that respond to “more-than-human” styles of working must be enrolled to account for ways of being beyond the humanist status quo. The challenge was taken up to adopt techniques of engagement that allow an openness to the excessive qualities of existence, operating beyond an ontology of the human body as sealed and separate entity, distinct from worldly things.

As a result of such considerations and challenges, I decided to implement multiple methodologies within the three study locations. This chapter begins with a detailed account of these methodologies. Participant observation is adapted to become what Thrift (2000: 556) terms “observant participation” within the three study sites; Alan Latham’s (2003) “diary-photography, diary-interview” method is put to work in two capacities, within what I term, ‘lifestyle’ and ‘event’ phases; and semi-structured interviewing and guided walks are utilized with participants in Tokyo and New York to maximize the field-time available and adapt to the needs of participants.

While describing the research process, I will also outline difficulties I experienced and stress how it was necessary to adjust certain methodologies. I suggest that such adaptations can be applied productively to similar work surrounding music and style collectivities or within the research contexts of music festivals. Recognizing what Gray (2003: 5) describes as a “reflexive approach to research”, methodologies were not considered to be frameworks “set in stone” or “tools to be taken up and tried”. Instead, I adopted a philosophy in which methods are techniques of approach, “generated through the development of the project” (*ibid*). Indeed, modifications were necessary as I came into contact with the complexities of cultural practices and used the theoretical approaches outlined in the previous chapter as techniques of thinking. Methodologies including the guided walk and diary-photography, diary-interview technique (Latham 2003) for example, were adapted from their contexts within Latham’s account in order to be enrolled more effectively within my research.

Ethical considerations at all stages of the research process will then be detailed. I foreground how ethics are ongoing and constantly negotiated throughout the research process; considerations especially salient due to my position as an ‘insider’ (Thrift 2004b). This section includes a consideration of the advantages but also the challenges of conducting research as an active participant in the cultural practices of the populations involved in co-generating research materials. While Paul Hodkinson (2005), himself identifying as an active Goth, calls for “critical distance” in such situations, I suggest that while a critical stance was essential, such distance is not only impossible to achieve but also somewhat undesirable when taking into account the geographical insight utilized here.

Further consequences of my insider position are then discussed in a section detailing my decisions regarding the recruitment of participants. This section introduces details of my research participants and discusses the nodes of recruitment. I outline my decision to feature myself transparently within

the research promotional material in order to gain trust and legitimacy, by negotiating a careful balance between stressing my own “cultural capital” (Thornton 1995) and ethical considerations concerning the power dynamics within research (Valentine 1997).

Finally, I will discuss techniques of working with research material through both managing and interpreting data and via the various writing techniques that I enrol in the thesis. I justify decisions for omitting qualitative data software to manage, structure and analyze my research material and explain why I have chosen to employ assorted writing styles. I argue that it is necessary to include my “voice” both as an insider but also as a participant in co-producing the research material, something achieved through the use of the first person perspective throughout the thesis, and the inclusion of vignettes drawn from my field diaries (Crang 1998). Firstly however, I will begin the chapter with a discussion of how I responded to the ontological standpoints adopted, by outlining the methodological techniques of engagement employed.

Techniques of Engagement

Observant Participation

Following the focus on “action” discussed above, what Thrift (2000: 556) describes as “observant participation” was conducted at key sites including Goth clubs and shopping areas in the study locations (see Appendix 1 and 2 for detailed calendars of events and locations attended in the study sites). Such an approach seeks to extend beyond ethnography and participant observation by stressing the need to become ‘messily’ involved in the practices one wishes to research, and acknowledges ways of knowing gained through action rather than a more detached cognitive reasoning process. Both Dewsbury (2003) and Thrift (2000: 556) position researchers as “witnesses” who: “must become an observant participant rather than a participant observer” in order to explore the import of such process and ‘doing’.

As Dewsbury (2009: 326-327) goes on to explain: “the idea is to get embroiled in the site and allow ourselves to be infected by the effort, investment, and craze of the particular practice or experience being investigated”. He concludes that: “the move, in immersing ourselves in the space, is to gather a portfolio of ethnographic ‘exposures’ that can act as lightning rods for thought” (*ibid*). Observant participation within clubs for example, attempted to take up such an imperative: it involved being attentive to and participating in practices such as movement, gesture, stance, dancing style and the atmospheres and energies of such spaces. Furthermore, sensory inputs such as sound and smell experienced during participation were considered in order to expand reflection beyond vision alone (Smith 2000, Wood *et al.* 2007).

One practical issue incorporated within this focus on practice was how to record or document such experiences; something essential in a research project spanning several years. I turned to Actor Network Theory and Bruno Latour (1999) for guidance, and decided to keep detailed research diary notes recorded in a small notebook at each event and embellished afterwards, which were later typed up with the date, location and time. While this focus on description meant many late nights following club events ensuring detailed notes, these interjections provided important contextual information and formed several initial starting points or “lightening rods” (Dewsbury 2009: 326-327) for investigation into Goth cultural practices and the experience of space.

Photo-Diaries and Photo-Studies

To attempt an approximation of the affective register and include the experiences of others alongside my observant participation, Alan Latham’s (2003) “diary-photograph, diary-interview” approach was utilized. Latham uses this methodology to investigate the uses of space by his participants, asking them to produce detailed time-space diaries including photographing and description. I utilised this methodology to target the processes through which individuals become ‘Goth’ through everyday embodied practice and how identities are negotiated within different

contexts (e.g. Holliday 2001). However, following a troublesome pilot stage wherein this methodology was tightly followed, I adapted this technique to be used in two different ways.

This methodology was deployed in what I term, 'lifestyle' and 'event' phases. Firstly, within the event phase, participants attending *Whitby Goth Weekend* festival in Whitby, North Yorkshire, were asked to produce a diary charting their activities and experiences of the event, and take a maximum of twenty photographs that expressed something important about this experience. They were then interviewed using the photographs as stimuli for conversation, thus allowing the participant to structure discussion of different festival experiences (see appendix 5). The box below includes the detailed instructions distributed to participants:

Box 1: Instructions for event photo-diary participants

Taking part involves: the completion of a photo-diary during 'Whitby Goth Weekend' and a follow-up interview lasting approximately one hour. The aim of this methodology is to investigate the multi-sensory experience of events.

This can be divided into four interrelated tasks:

- 1. Please take a maximum of **20 photographs** (using your own digital camera or I can provide a disposable one) of anything that you feel is significant to your experience of the event. This may be the space in which you get ready to go out, the journey to/from Whitby, a picture which captures the atmosphere of the event for you etc. (NB: If you wish to take photos including other people, please ask their permission first);*
- 2. Briefly note down **why** you have taken the photographs;*
- 3. Create a **diary of your activities** and experience of the event. For example, what do you do during the day? This methodology is open to your own interpretation, so feel free to use plain text, narrative, poetry, song lyrics or draw pictures if preferred;*
- 4. During the **follow-up interview**, we will use the photos to structure our discussion and I will ask you to elaborate upon the photographs chosen.*

Secondly, this methodology was adapted to fit the wider needs of the study by loosening the diary requirement and re-formatting the methodology as a 'photo-study'. This decision was made

following the pilot phase of the research conducted in the UK in August to September 2008. During this pilot phase conducted over eight weeks, three participants were asked to complete the photo-diary in the format outlined by Latham (2003); including producing a diary of activities over a three week period comprising of photographs and explanations. However, while one participant produced a diary of activities spanning three weeks, including twenty photographs and descriptions, one participant pulled out due to work commitments and the remaining participant did not produce a diary but instead submitted detailed notes regarding each photograph. As a result of such problems, I decided to modify the methodology to make it more straightforward and manageable, while still attempting to generate the quality and depth of multi-media research material.

Instead, individuals were asked to photograph people, objects or places significant to their experiences of participating in Goth cultural practices, and produce a short text to explain why each shot was chosen (see box 2 below). It was suggested that these images may be taken over a three week period in order to set a limit to the time between recruitment and follow-up interview; a technique especially crucial within the twelve week field visit to New York and the ten weeks in Tokyo¹. The final stage was to take part in photo-elicitation interviewing, in which the images were used to trigger memories, emotional and embodied responses.

¹ The field visit to Tokyo was reduced from twelve weeks to ten due to a plane crash at Tokyo's Narita airport on the day I was to arrive. All flights into Tokyo were cancelled. The earliest replacement seat was available two weeks following the original date of departure and return flights could not be changed. However, I had spent an additional six weeks in Tokyo while at summer school learning Japanese and had already gained initial contacts.

Box 2: Instructions for lifestyle photo-study participants

What does taking part involve?

Taking part involves: submitting up to 20 photographs taken over approximately a 3 week period; noting down why the shots were taken; and a follow-up interview lasting approximately 1 hour. The aim of this methodology is to investigate how Goth identities are negotiated in different situations.

This can be divided into three interrelated tasks:

- 1. Please take a maximum of **20 photographs** of objects/situations/places that are important to your experiences as a Goth. You may wish to complete this task over a 3 week period. This may include a photograph at a club, the space in which you get ready to go out, the clothing you wear, a CD/book/DVD collection, artwork or decoration etc. There is no “wrong” way to complete this task- it is down to your personal interpretation. (NB: If you wish to take photos including other people, please ask their permission first);*
- 2. Note down a description of **why** the shot is important to you. This written aspect of the process is again, open to your own interpretation, so feel free use plain text, narrative, poetry, song lyrics or draw pictures/maps if preferred;*
- 3. Finally, during the **follow-up interview**, we will use the photos to structure our discussion and I will ask you to talk more about the photographs submitted.*

The research material generated in this approach, despite being representations in themselves, aim to reflect the: “interwovenness of objects, texts, images and technologies in people’s everyday lives and identities” (Pink 2007: 7) by allowing writing (diary and notes), talk (interviews) as well as the “visual imaginations” (photographs) of participants to be expressed. As Latham (2003: 1993) argues, this methodology is a way of “engaging with how individuals and groups inhabit their worlds through practical action”, especially as photographs: “can carry or evoke three things- information, affect and reflection- particularly well” (Rose 2007: 238). Furthermore, as Rose (2007: 238) goes on to stress, geographers (e.g. Goin 2002, Edensor 2005) have used photographs as they can: “convey the “feel” of specific locations effectively”, and are useful in investigating “the elusive qualities that define a sense of place”, difficult to express in writing as introduced above.

I found this approach particularly strong in, as Latham (2003: 2003) emphasizes, triggering a depth of emotive discussion. The methodology immediately facilitates closeness between research and participant, but on terms dictated by the participant. For example, it allows access to spaces which a researcher might not be granted access, for example private bedroom spaces. However, this access is mediated by the participant by how they choose to photograph such sites and which details they choose to discuss. I found that the photographs were also used as a way in which to communicate issues that were difficult or painful to discuss in words, such as self-harm or mental illness problems. Conversely, such issues were sometimes discussed following an image of activities, a place or person connected to their involvement in Goth that had helped the individual.

Despite these strengths, such a technique could be criticised for being far from 'non-representational' via the use of images and text. However, as outlined in the thesis *Introduction*, I have chosen to take a "more-than-representational" (Lorimer 1995: 86) stance; recognising that despite the value of a focus on the pre-cognitive and fluidity, the world is also experienced through representations and in moments of relative fixity. Furthermore, the images generated in the research are not treated uncritically as faithful or neutral representations of objective 'truth' (Rose 2007). Instead, they are used a way of collating experiences significant to the participant through a manageable methodology, and are used as triggers for discussion. I found that they proved a useful way of 'getting at' or "approximating" (Anderson 2006) affect, as, while an atmosphere cannot be literally represented in a photograph, images triggered rememberings of such aspects. However, acknowledging the focus on action as crucial, I also found it necessary to enrol a further methodology to incorporate this concern more directly: guided walks.

Guided Walks

Participants in New York and Tokyo conducted guided walks (e.g. Kusenbach 2003, Pink 2007b) of locations important to their experiences within Goth. Participants were asked to choose a location important to them and guide me through different sites explaining why the areas are significant. Photographs were taken at specific points of interest directed by the participant, and jottings were made in a notebook throughout the meeting. Jason's guided walk for example, included locations where he had met famous musicians, a clothing store, a second hand music exchange, venues where he had played gigs with his band, a stand of motorcycles, as well as stops at an art gallery and for a drink in a significant bar.

While Pink (2007b) advocates using a video to record journeys, this was deemed inappropriate in this setting for several reasons. Jason's walk for example, lasted for over four hours and thus made video practically impossible to conduct, and while such techniques are useful in gaining information regarding "routes and mobilities" (Lee and Ingold 2006), this method was utilised for different purposes here. Instead, this technique of walking, talking and photographing, allowed the links between personal biography, place and events to be understood, while also evoking multi-sensory responses and memories (Kusenbach 2003, Pink 2007). In a similar vein, it also allowed for flowing conversation between myself and the participant, in which the questions I posed occurred in a natural way unlike within a contrived interview situation. As Lee and Ingold (2006: 67 original emphasis) argue, the act of walking with participants can aid in relationships with researchers and engender involvement within the field context, as: "to participate is not to walk *into* but to walk *with*, where 'with' implies not a face-to-face confrontation, but heading in the same way, sharing the same vistas, and perhaps retreating from the same threats".

Finally, while this method primarily focused on memory work, it also allowed for spontaneous and surprising encounters. For example within Aki's guided walk of Harajuku, she was suddenly drawn to

a particularly striking green and pink dress within a shop containing mostly white clothing. The conversation paused as she hurried over to the dress and picked it up, taking a moment to trace the intricate trimming with her fingers. Aside from this tactile action, this encounter led to a personal discussion about her distinctive tastes developed from childhood and her decisions to start her own clothing business, something which I may have not thought to ask about and which she may not have otherwise felt comfortable divulging.

As with the photo-diary-interview methodology, I also encountered certain challenges with this technique. I would have liked to conduct guided walks at *Whitby Goth Weekend* and arranged two pilot studies in October 2008. However, after waiting for over an hour for the participants and the lack of phone reception, the meeting did not take place. These incidents highlighted the difficulties of conducting research at music festivals or within spaces wherein alcohol consumption from the night before can impact the willingness or ability of individuals to participate. Having the diaries already in place, I decided not to pursue this methodology further, but I would certainly experiment with it further in future research.

Participant-Structured Interviews

Finally, participant-structured interviewing was conducted with several participants in Tokyo and New York. This was conducted for practical reasons, as several participants expressed the desire to contribute but were unable to submit photographs for various reasons. While some interviews were more structured than others, for example email interviewing in which I asked specific questions, the general structure of this methodology was left intentionally flexible to allow for differential techniques to be developed within each unique situation. The general methodology began in the same way: instead of using photos to elicit discussion, I asked participants to come prepared with themes or aspects of their participation in Goth that were particularly significant to them. Within the recorded interview however, techniques of encounter varied.

In one instance, a participant found on-line involvement significant and so, as the interview was conducted in my apartment, I asked him to give me a 'virtual tour' using my computer. He then demonstrated his interaction by logging in to the on-line gaming site he participated in every day, commented on a Goth forum, engaged in conversations and commented on the photographs of others. This was a way in which to allow action and practice to be conveyed within an interview situation. Another example was a more informal interview held within a club, which allowed the conversation to broaden out to include comments triggered by events taking place, including the presence of non-Goths in the club, particular songs and response to them by those on the dance floor and interactions with other Goths as they approached to greet us. Similar to the motivation behind the guided walks, while challenging and requiring quick thinking on my part, retaining flexibility and adapting to different situations was a way in which to allow myself to be surprised or as Strathern (1999) terms it, "dazzled" by research material generated most definitely 'in action'.

Having outlined the methodologies put into effect, a focus on action and process have been stressed, and techniques to approximate affective intensities and emotive investments were deployed with varying difficulties and necessity for adaptation. I will now introduce the participants involved in the research and detail the techniques through which these individuals were recruited, before going on to discuss research ethics and how research material was managed and finally, written with.

Research Participants

In this section, I will outline the pathways through which participants were recruited and provide details of these individuals who have contributed research materials to the study. Through such a discussion, I will demonstrate how great care was taken in interactions with participants and in how the research was presented and promoted, which will lead to a detailed discussion of research ethics in the following section.

Gaining Access

I utilized several vectors to recruit participants, including both on-line techniques and in-person flyer distribution and personal contact in shopping areas, at clubs and 'meet-up' events. A detailed table of the recruitment pathways is included as appendix three and four but a summary of the different techniques is given below.

On-line recruitment

The initial phase in recruiting participants was establishing an on-line presence. I created a website in both English and Japanese briefly outlining the overall *Research* aims, a personal *Biography*, and *Instructions* describing what was involved in participation, and *Links* to my other internet profiles and contact information. The home page was carefully crafted to provide a personal greeting and to outline the purpose of the site in a few brief sentences. The aesthetics chosen on the site reflect the consistent image or branding that I used in all on-line content regarding the research (see figure 1 below).

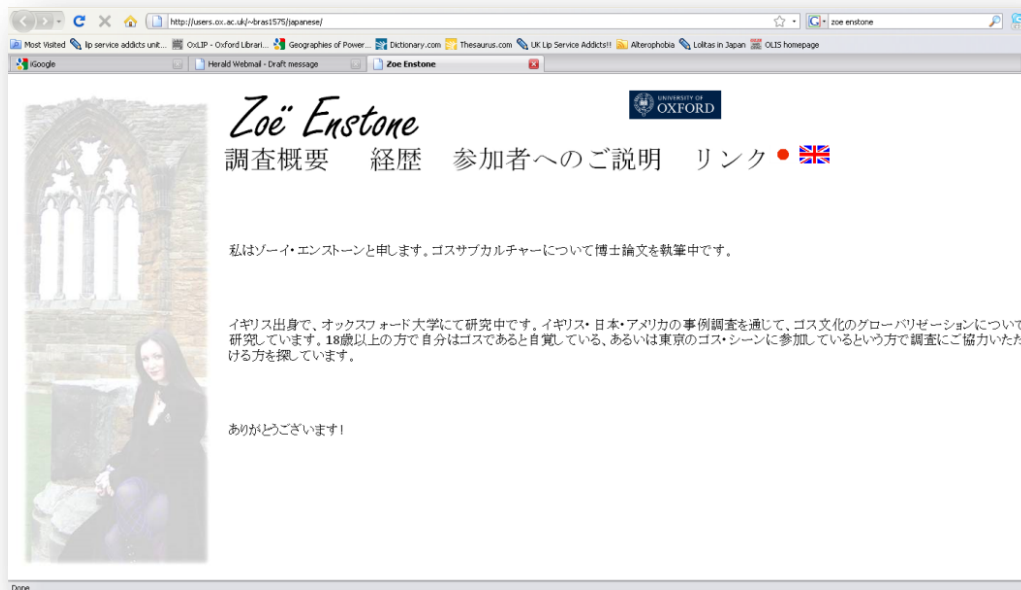
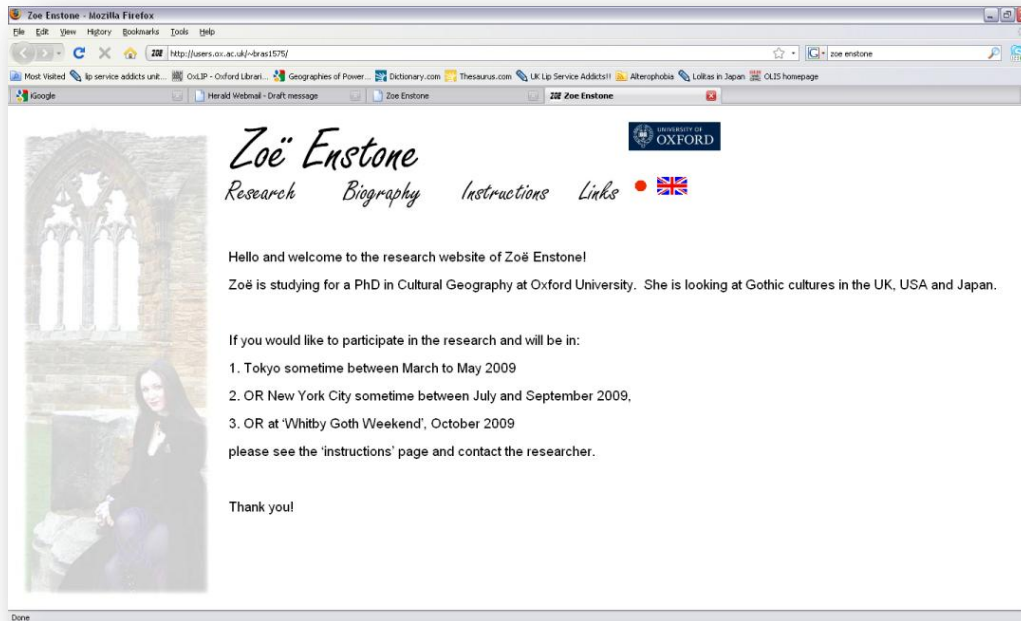


Figure 1: Research website, live in January 2009

I decided to feature a photograph of myself as a part of this branding, in order to stress my position as an insider to the group (discussed in detail in the following section), alongside a relaxed, easy to read font and simple and direct text. The same image and text are used in other on-line recruitment

techniques: including the establishment of an academic page on the *Oxford University School of Geography* website; a research “Group” on *Facebook*; and personal profiles on social networking sites *MySpace* (global) *Vampire Freaks* (predominantly US) and *Gothers* (predominantly Asia). This consistency was important to facilitate trust and generate legitimacy for the research project. I considered this especially important due to the nature of the diary-related methods, requiring a degree of personal information from participants. Such consistency was also applied to recruitment posts placed on message boards, internet communities and groups, with similar text and links to other on-line resources to confirm my identity (see the sample post below).

Box 3: Sample recruitment post on the *Whitby Goth Weekend* forum

Subject: PhD research on Goth- looking for participants at Whitby!

Message:

My name is Zoë Enstone and I'm lucky enough to be doing my PhD research on Goth! The study is specifically focussed on every day practices, the sensory experience of events, and social anxieties generated towards the group.

I am currently looking for participants who are attending “Whitby Goth Weekend” and would like to produce a photo-diary of their experience at the festival (including 20 photographs and a description as to when and why they have been taken). Participants would also be interviewed by me within a few weeks following the festival.

More details about my research can be found on my [website](#), [departmental page](#) and on my [Facebook Group](#). [hyperlinks]

Please email (zoe.enstone@email.com) if you are interested in finding out more and getting involved in the study. Your information will be kept confidential and strict ethical guidelines followed.

I've been personally involved in the Goth scene for almost 10 years, so I'm very keen to produce an account that will do it justice- any help you can give will be greatly appreciated!

Zoë

While this method of recruitment may be considered exclusionary, limiting access of participation to those with internet access and savvy, such techniques have been highlighted as particularly

appropriate in the case of Goth. My previous research emphasised that many Goths I interviewed utilised the internet for finding information about clubs and communicating with others across space. This is something also emphasised by Hodkinson in his work on the “netGoth” (2003) web portal and the popularity of blogging and sites such as “LiveJournal” for Goth socialisation (2006b). However, I also supplemented this on-line presence with in-person recruitment.

In-Person Recruitment

Once I had established the research website, departmental page, profiles on various social networking websites and posted a call for participants on relevant groups and forums, I began attending events to publicize the research by word of mouth and through distributing flyers and business cards.

When speaking to an individual about the research, I gave them a business card including my email address and phone number in the location (I hired mobile phones in Tokyo and New York), to provide them with the option of contacting me further. Although distributing business cards at a night club or gig may seem formal, this technique was especially essential within the Japanese context. As found in earlier field visits, and as Joy Hendry (2003) notes, business cards or *meishi* (めいし), are distributed by young people and not restricted to business situations. It is polite to exchange cards when meeting someone and take time to examine and appreciate the details of the card, as many are intricate, including the favourite bands or “catch-phrases” of the individual. I translated my name into *katakana* (ゾーイ エンストーン) to allow for easy pronunciation, and included a brief note reading: “Zoe is studying for a PhD in Cultural Geography at Oxford University” under this to provide contextual information (see figure 2 below).

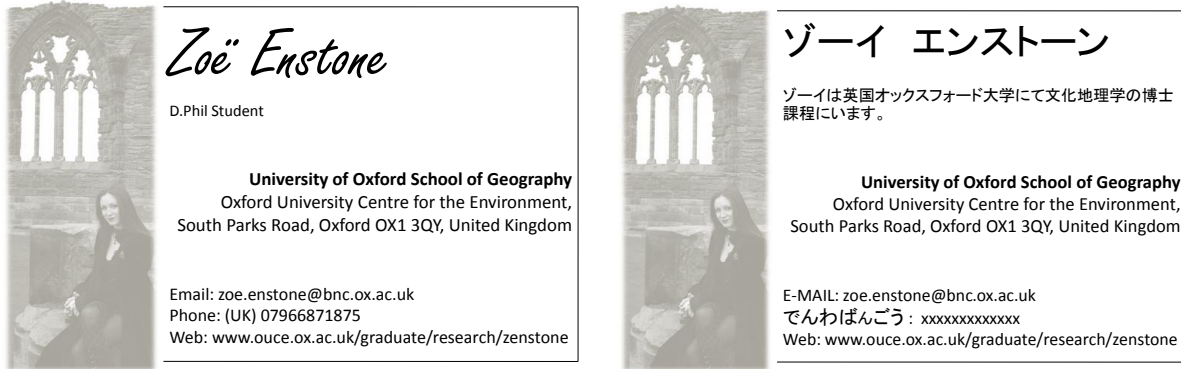


Figure 2: Business cards used in UK, USA (left) and Japan (right)

A second method of in-person recruitment was the distribution of flyers. These were left in shops or ticket sellers within shopping areas such as Camden, Shinjuku and the East Village, permission always being sought before leaving them. The flyers were also put on tables within clubs, and the design printed on UV reactive white paper was particularly eye-catching for such contexts which typically featured black-light lamps (see figures 3 and 4). While the flyers used in the UK and USA were designed to trigger interest in the project, the flyers utilized in Tokyo contained details of the methodology, written in the appropriate formal tone, to also overcome language barriers and fulfil ethical commitments to inform participants fully as to the research process and its aims.



Figure 3: Flyer distributed in the UK and USA



Figure 4: Flyer distributed in Japan

Participants

The research participants involved in the study are detailed within the following tables. Participants' pseudonyms, their location, occupation, age, the type of research material submitted and the date of contact, are detailed in the following tables. As can be seen, a broad sampling frame was adopted and achieved, with participants drawn from across age ranges and from a variety of occupations in all three study locations. While six lifestyle photo-study participants are from the UK, three were recruited from both Tokyo and New York as a result of the more limited field time and restrictions to the time available to participants, as discussed above. The alternate methodologies of guided walks and participant-led interviewing were also conducted in these locations as adaptations to the necessities of the field.

Table 1: Lifestyle photo-study participants

Name	Location	Occupation	Age	Research Material	Date
UK					
William	Oxford	Artist	31-35	Photos, description and interview	<i>The Gloucester Arms</i> , Oxford, 20 th October 2008, 3-6pm
Rachael	London	Museum curator	21-25	Photos, description and interview	<i>The World's End</i> , Camden, 7 th December 2008, 2-4.30pm
Victor	Oxford	Teacher	36-40	Photos and interview	Brasenose College, Oxford, 21 st January 2009, 11am-12.30pm
Charlie	Basingstoke	Lawyer	36-40	Photos and interview	Cafe, Central Basingstoke 19 th November 2008, 5-8pm
Elena	Reading	Student	21-25	Photos and interview	Cafe, Reading, 4 th December 2008, 4-6pm
Carolyn	London	Theatre wardrobe manager	41-45	Photos, diary and interview	<i>The Devonshire Arms</i> , Camden, 7 th December 2008, 7-9pm
USA					
Lev	New York	Student	18-20	Photos and interview	My apartment, East Village, 3 rd September 2009 7-9.30pm
Anton	New York	Psychiatric Nurse	36-40	Photos and interview	Penn Station cafe, 11 th September 2009 6-8.30pm
Anwil	New York	Former US army officer	31-35	Photos and interview	Restaurant, East Village, 21 st August 2009, 7-10pm
Japan					
Robert	Tokyo	Teacher	25-30	Photos, description and interview	<i>Detour Café</i> , Harajuku, 7 th May, 11am-12.30pm
Yukiro	Tokyo	Student	18-20	Photos and interview	My apartment, Kotake Mukaihara, 14 th May, 7-8pm.
Nekoi	Tokyo	Musician and Manga artist	35-40	Photos and interview	My apartment, Kotake Mukaihara, 15 th May, 7-8pm.

Table 2: Event photo-study participants

Name	Location	Occupation	Age	Research Material	Interview Date
Morgan	London	Student	20-25	Photos, descriptions and diary	<i>The World's End</i> , Camden, November 13 th 2008, 3.30-6pm
Taylor	Newcastle	Club promoter, IT Professional	35-40	Photos and description notes	<i>The Station Hotel</i> , Newcastle, November 28 th 2008, 6-8pm
Isabel	Stockton-on-Tees	Teacher	30-35	Photos, description and a diary	<i>Café Nero</i> , Stockton-On-Tees, November 29 th 2008, 1pm-4pm
Alexis	London	Student	25-30	Photos, description and diary	<i>The World's End</i> , Camden, January 30 th 2009, 2.30pm-5pm

Table 3: Guided walk participants

Name	Location	Occupation	Age	Research Material	Date
USA					
Jason	New York	Property manager and musician	31-35	Guided walk of the East Village and Chelsea	23 rd August 2009. 11am-4pm
Anwil	New York	Former US army officer	31-35	Guided walk of the East Village	12 th August 2009. 8-10pm
Japan					
Aki	Tokyo	Fashion designer and retailer	30-35	Guided walk of Harajuku shopping area	12 th April 2009. 3pm-4.30pm
La Carmina	Tokyo	Author and fashion blogger	20-25	Guided walk of Shinjuku shopping areas and Gothic department store	22 nd April 2009. 2pm-6pm.
Jim	Tokyo	Illustrator and teacher	25-30	Guided walk of Shinjuku horror movies and music stores and cafes.	12 th May 2009. 4pm-7pm.
Nekoi	Tokyo	Musician and manga artist	30-35	Guided walk of doll department stores and manga in Akihabara	3 rd May 2009. 3-6pm.

Table 4: Participant- structured interview participants

Name	Location	Occupation	Age	Research Material	Date
USA					
Cohen	New York	Dental technician	21-25	Interview and guided club visit	15 th August 2009, 6pm-1am
Eric	New York	University technician, DJ and promoter	36-40	In-person interview	4 th September 2009, 7pm-8.30pm
Jet	New York	Architect and owner of <i>Vampire Freaks</i> (VF) website, store and club night	31-35	Email interview	16 th September 2009.
William Welles	New York	Architect of the <i>New Goth City</i> website, restaurant manager	36-40	Email interview and several informal conversations	12 th August 2009.
Japan					
Andro	Tokyo	Musician and IT professional	31-35	In-person interview	Ginza, 1 st May 2009, 5-7pm.
Nekoi	Tokyo	Singer and manga artist	36-40	In-person interview	My apartment, 3 rd May 2009, 5-6pm and 15 th May 7-9pm.
Jamie	Tokyo	Teacher	26-30	Email interview	7 th June 2009.
Nao	Tokyo	Musician	26-30	Email interview	9 th June 2009
Mihoko	Tokyo	Musician	26-30	Email interview	27 th May 2009.

Table 5: Informal conversations

Name	Location	Occupation	Age	Research Material Generated
USA				
Lucy	New York	Retail	21-25	Several informal conversations at the VF store and in clubs.
Leila	New York	University Student	18-20	Conversations at a meet-up, the VF store and over dinner.
Micah	New York	unknown	36-40	Conversations at a meet-up and several club nights.
Ben	New York	Catering	36-40	Informal conversations at various club nights
Claire	New York	Curator of an art gallery	31-35	Informal conversations at <i>Ward 6</i>
Vesta	Los Angeles	Fashion designer	31-36	Informal conversation
Japan				
Mihoko	Tokyo	Retail	21-25	Several informal chats regarding her involvement in Gothic Lolita fashion.
Katrina	Tokyo	Student	21-25	Conversations at Midnight Mess.
Mari	Tokyo	Jewellery designer	26-30	Conversations at Tokyo Dark Castle
Maya	Tokyo	Club promoter	31-35	Conversations at <i>Midnight Mess</i> club
Kenzo	Tokyo	Fashion designer and musician	26-30	Discussions at <i>Tokyo Dark Castle</i> and fashion show.
Takuya	Tokyo	Fashion and accessories designer	31-35	Discussions in the store.
Yuri	Tokyo	Student	18-20	Discussion on Yoyogi Bridge
Elizabeth	Tokyo	Unknown	21-25	Discussion on Yoyogi Bridge

Research Ethics

In this section I outline the rigorous ethical procedures followed throughout the research process and discuss some of the consequences, ethical and otherwise, of conducting research as an 'insider' to the group. After consulting the ESRC's (2005) *Framework for Research Ethics*, an ethics proposal was submitted and approved by the *Central University Research Ethics Committee* before any fieldwork or pilot phase research was conducted. The completion of such a document highlighted that ethical attention was necessary in the stages before, during and after the generation of materials.

Before participants embarked on the research methodologies, I emailed information packs detailing the requirements of participation and emphasized their right to withdraw at any time without penalty (see appendix 5). I provided my telephone and email contact details and stressed that questions could be asked at any stage. The information pack also included consent forms which when signed, acknowledged informed consent and transferred the copyright of photographs to me for use relating to the research project.

Ethical considerations during the research process, such as while conducting photo-elicitation interviewing, were more complex. For example, the interview was ended if there were signs of fatigue and permission was sought to record the interviews using a digital dictaphone. However, as Thrift (2004b) argues, ethical considerations are not restricted to pre-written codes, but are also performative and creative. Techniques such as interviewing and guided walks are examples of "ethics in practice" and in light of conducting such processes, I support McDowell's (2001: 98) statement that: "even the best code is no substitute for respect for and empathy with the participants of any social research project". It was thus also necessary to be mindful of the power relations involved in the interview, and make efforts to ensure that individuals felt comfortable

talking to an academic (Valentine 1997). This was attempted by conducting most interviews and guided walks in locations chosen by the participant, being friendly and appreciative of the time and effort invested by participants, as well as utilizing my position as an insider to the group to stress that the interaction was a conversation between two individuals sharing similar cultural references and histories, something discussed in more detail below.

Finally, ethical integrity following the generation of materials was equally important. The confidentiality of participants was insured by creating pseudonyms and omitting details that might identify an individual. This technique was not employed in four cases however, as Nekoi, Carmina, William Welles and Jet consented to their identities being made known. This was necessary as it would have been impossible to maintain their confidentiality due to their position as key gatekeepers. Furthermore, research material including photographs, audio recordings and diaries were transferred from a laptop with password protection into storage on an external hard-drive requiring further password access.

The ethical considerations I encountered within the conduct of research processes were thus a blend of pre-established codes of good practice and also a more “active” or “performative” approach, involving improvisation and continual mindfulness of power relations, body language and other cues. Thrift (2004b: 120) concludes that ethics are thus ultimately a matter of exercising “good judgment”. He argues that researchers can learn to “set up good encounters by training bodies and minds to react in open and constructive ways, taking a stance of...vulnerable optimism towards the world”. Thrift recommends dance, yoga or performing encounters to “extend the range of thoughtfulness beyond cognition and into intuition” (*ibid*). Taking such advice, my regular Latin ballroom and Salsa dancing classes, dancing both as the follower and the lead, have allowed my body to become more attuned to the cues and signals from other bodies, while the pilot phase of the research was useful in practicing interview encounters and learning from less productive

encounters. However, the focus on an open mind and stance of “vulnerable optimism” was complicated by my position as an active Goth, something which I will now explore.

Conducting Insider Research

As the section in the *Introduction* chapter has detailed, I am a long-term participant in Goth cultural practices. This involves adopting Goth fashions, attending Goth clubs and gigs, consuming Goth music of a variety of sub-genres and socializing with others of similar tastes. I have also of course, decided to study Goth. I completed my undergraduate dissertation in 2006, focusing on globalization and Goth cultural practices, which included conducting multi-site participant observation and interviewing in London, Paris, Tokyo, Kyoto, Melbourne, San Francisco, New Orleans and New York City. While this DPhil project is less geographically ambitious, it has allowed me to engage in a wider variety of theoretical concepts and make use of the methodologies detailed in this chapter.

I was relatively confident in gaining participants to carry out the photo-studies as I felt that my status as a fellow Goth would put people at ease through a sense of shared experience, and I believed I could effectively communicate with such individuals who, like myself, can be timid. Indeed, while the concept of an insider might be theoretically problematic in light of the discussions in the previous chapter, Hodkinson argues that whether or not a post-subcultural approach is taken, “it would seem that the participants of such groups continue actively to differentiate themselves from those deemed not to share the characteristics or perspectives so important to them” (see also Thornton 1995, Locher 1998, Pilkington 2004). Indeed, as a member of and contributor to several on-line communities and message boards, I had witnessed the ‘flaming’ some researchers presenting themselves as overtly ‘non-Goth’ had received when posting calls for participants or other help. The box below contains an example of such a response on the *Gothic.net* forum, the

member *Reject_Bunnies*, objecting to being treated as a “rat” to be studied by this non-Goth student:

Box 4: Example of a non-Goth research being “flamed” on the Gothic.net forum

13-03-2006, 01:45 AM

Member: Goff. Join Date: Mar 2006. Posts: 2

Hello, i'm a student at college in the UK. Im currently doing media coursework, a magazine on goth culture. I am wondering what goths think of the way media portrays goths in the soap "Coronation street". If anyone has an opinon on this i would be grateful for feedback.

Thanks.x

13-03-2006, 07:04 AM

Member: Reject_Bunnies. Join Date: Oct 2005. Posts: 404

(Oh God, it's another one of THOSE people)

Do I want to be cut open and analyzed?

In a word: **NO**.

Find yourself another rat to study.

Source: <http://www.gothic.net/boards/showthread.php?t=2066>, accessed March 2011 (original emphasis)

However, I was also aware that my position as an insider was far from unproblematic. Peter Jackson (1989: 73-74) discusses the dangers for geographers studying subcultures in becoming either “cheerleaders”, uncritically romanticising subcultural practices and resistance, or “ombudsmen” seeking to present an objective account of time spent “going slumming” with these “exotic” groups. To overcome such tensions, Paul Hodkinson (2005: 145), himself an active Goth, argues that “critical distance” must be established by such insider researchers. Hodkinson argues that, while there are many benefits to cultural similarities between the researcher and participant, especially in the practical recruitment of participants, basic knowledge and access to spaces such as clubs which may

have a dress-code, there are also limitations in terms of the researcher uncritically acting as “subcultural spokesperson” rather than “critical analyst” (*ibid*). He argues that “an ability to adopt a more distanced, analytical perspective... may be crucial both in respect of the research agenda and the interpretation of data”, and calls for a “stepping back” through “a period of deliberate separation from the field prior to or during the course of writing up” (p146).

However, while the stance of “subcultural spokesperson” or “cheerleader” is to be avoided, in light of the theoretical stances I have chosen to work through, I suggest that “critical distance” in the sense of “stepping back” is not only impossible to achieve but also undesirable. The arguments that will be worked up in the following chapters are certainly not solely based on my subjective experiences of Goth, and measures have been taken to engage in encounters beyond my immediate experience by recruiting participants outside my circle of friends. However, as feminist scholarship has acknowledged (e.g. Rose 1997b, Valentine 1997, McDowell 2001), academic work and encounters are inevitably influenced by the experiences and position of the researcher.

Furthermore, as Thrift (2000: 217) emphasises, non-representational geographies adopt an ontology focusing on the “*eventfulness* of a moment-ary world...which must be acted into, and not a contemplative world that should be held at a reverential or critical distance”. Here, instead of trying to reduce the potential “biases” of the researcher through “critical distance”, those engaging non-representational theories must be prepared to become involved and immersed in an eventful world. Indeed, theorists such as Jane Bennett (2010: xv) stress that such messy involvement is crucial when investigating the concepts outlined in the previous chapter: “the capacity to detect the presence of impersonal affect requires that one is caught up in it”.

However, Bennett also cautions: “one needs, at least for a while, to suspend suspicion and adopt a more open-ended comportment. If we think we already know what is out there, we will almost

surely miss much of it" (*ibid*). Despite the positive aspects of being an insider, there was thus the danger of not allowing myself to be open towards or dazzled by research encounters due to relative familiarity with the subject. Despite such concerns, I argue that while I may be an insider within my local club and perhaps within the wider UK Goth scene, my field research in USA and Japan led me into situations where such status had to be worked up and gained anew. For example, as I was entering a club scene as a relative stranger, perhaps only having shared an email conversation with a couple of people, I had to generate subcultural capital and become an insider to these local scenes. This process in itself was crucial in understanding Goth cultural practices and allowed for some surprising insight. For example, in New York my dark brown hair was initially treated with suspicion and I was questioned about it. As I had never dyed by hair black, the dominant choice for Goths, it was something I no longer thought about, but a practice and aesthetic standard which was clearly a significant indicator of authenticity or commitment to many in this context.

Furthermore, while I had made every attempt to approach my field locations with an open mind, the sense of "already knowing what's out there" cautioned against by Bennett, had to be negotiated carefully within the interview setting. In the pilot stage, I noticed the tendency for participants to stop mid-way through describing certain experiences by saying: "but you know what I mean, that must have happened to you". They assumed that I would have also experienced the same thing and, to avoid appearing patronising, they halted what was often a very interesting description. Upon reflection, my body language may have encouraged such an assumption as I noticed that I nodded my head in enthusiastic recognition and sometimes interjected with: "yes! Exactly!", especially in one instance when describing the atmosphere of a gig that I had also happened to attend. In further interviews, this habit was checked and I learned to encourage participants overtly to complete their descriptions. Again such issues were less common in Japan and the USA, where my position as, although 'Goth', also 'British', meant there was a slightly lesser degree of assumed shared-experience to halt a dialogue.

Thus, while Hodkinson's call for critical distance may not be appropriate as 'distance' is not a desirable option within non-representational techniques, this does not mean that I considered myself a cheerleader or treated my insider status uncritically. As noted, while this status was useful in accessing research locations as I was able to fulfil certain performances competently (e.g. dressing, dancing and behaving appropriately in clubs), and in generating trust to encourage participants to contribute, I was conscious of the disadvantages and times when such benefits had to be worked up anew. Specific attention was paid to encouraging participants to complete their explanations and the engagement with theoretical ideas discussed in the previous chapter, stresses the critical dimension essential in conducting such research. Indeed, such critical thought was essential when working with the research materials generated. The theoretical tools employed within the thesis require attention to the techniques of managing and analyzing material, as well as within the writing techniques employed, as will be detailed in the final section.

Working with Research Materials: Managing, Analyzing and Writing

Once data had been generated ethically, a further consideration is how such data should be managed and analysed appropriately. An initial significant decision I made was not to use computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), such as *NVivo*, *Atlas.ti* or *NUDIST*. After attending a two day course on *NVivo 8* at *Oxford University Computing Services*, researching debates regarding the use of software (e.g. Coffey *et al.* 1996, "versus" Lee and Fielding 1996) and considering the theoretical approaches adopted in the thesis, I deemed such software potentially restrictive, limiting and ultimately, unnecessary. As Coffey, Holbrook and Atkinson (1996) stress, the "computer-based code-and-retrieve strategy" forming the basis of such software can be limiting, and lead to a "taken-for-granted" approach whereby such "searches" are relied upon as analysis in themselves, thus distancing the researcher from the material and imposing "categories" or styles of

thought dictated by the program rather than the theoretical requirements of the project. Furthermore, such software was not appropriate for the range of methodologies and research material generated within this venture, especially as much material is not in digital format such as flyers, hand-written participant diaries and field notes written in several notebooks (see Latour 1999). Instead, due to the range of research material generated and the relatively small number of participants in for example, the photo-studies, it was decided to sort manually through data.

Interview material was transcribed using symbols to indicate intonation, pauses, breaks and other actions such as laughing and the inclusion of non-verbal communication such as facial expression or hand gesture, jotted in an accompanying notebook (Silverman 2006). The photographs used to elicit discussion and written descriptions were included in the transcript to collate material. The management and collating of material from the guided walks were structured around maps of the routes (see below), which combined photographs and notes typed up from notebooks. These transcripts and map reports were then printed out to provide material to work with.

Importantly, the next stage of coding and analysis was treated carefully: as Pinney (cited in Rose 2000: 559) argues, such acts of cataloguing can act as a “linguistic grid enmeshing otherwise volatile images”. Instead of such restrictive approaches, the material was brought into tension with theoretical ideas outlined above, as each chapter was thought through (Crang 2003b). Here the theories adopted within the thesis are considered more as techniques for thinking through research material, or as forms of methodology or techniques of analysis in themselves. This process of frequent re-reading also provided the advantage of generating further proximity to the research material.

However, despite the rejection of conventional CAQDAS, other software was utilized within the research process. For example, *F4* was used in the transcription of interviews, with the advantage of

being able to slow playback and control stop, play, pause, forward and rewind from keyboard functions instead of using the mouse. *Google Maps* functions were also useful at several stages. Within the extensive fieldwork planning phase for New York for example, I produced a map of the locations of regular Goth events and other significant locations using the *New Goth City* website, a database of Goth clubs, gigs, shops and other places of interest (see figure 5 below). This was influential in deciding to rent an apartment in the East Village, a location particularly dense with such activities.

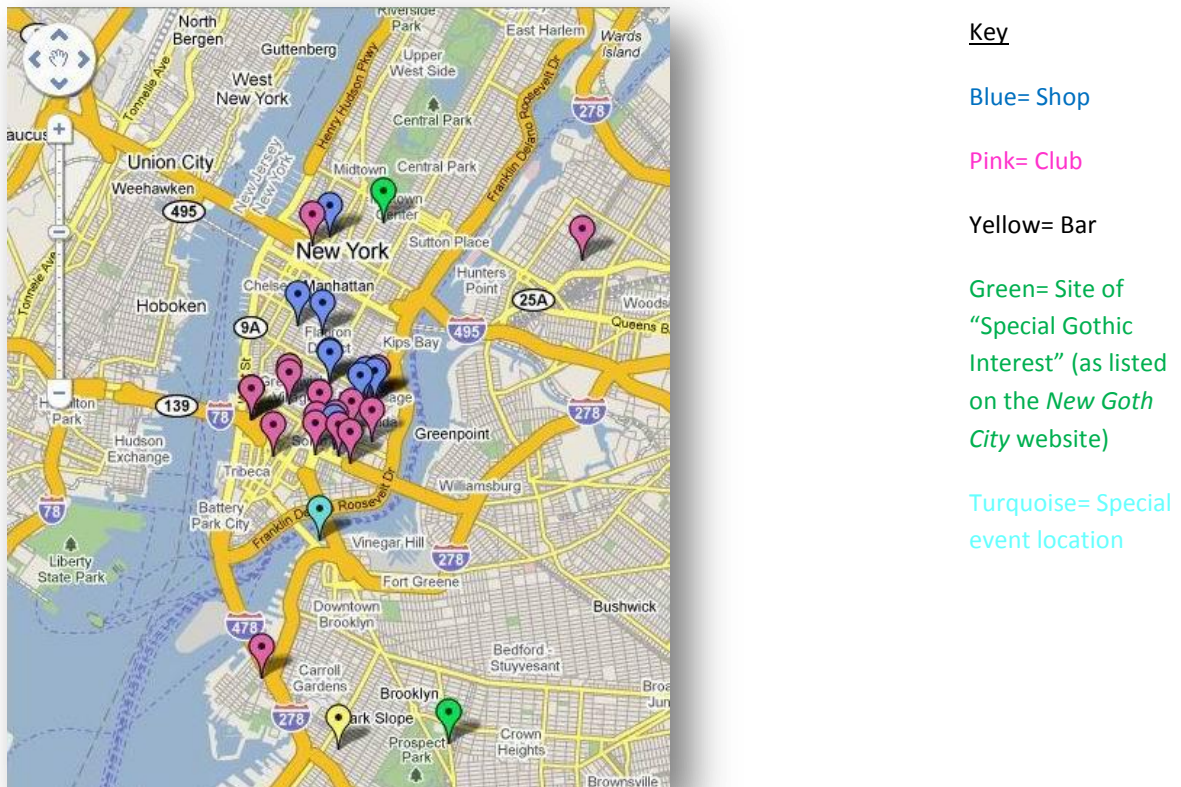


Figure 5: Goth locations in New York City © 2011 Google

Furthermore, *Google Maps* was used as a form of "management" software for the guided walk methodology (figure 6 below). As pictured below, this guided walk of New York's East Village by participant Jason, was mapped, the route indicated using a line and points at which we stopped marked with blue "pins". These pins were also created as hyperlinks to the photos taken and a

description of discussion at each of these key points, which could be brought up to overlay the map by clicking on the “pin”.



Key

Blue Line: Route

Blue pins: Stopping Points

Figure 6: Map of Jason's guided walk © 2011 Google

Aside from the management and sorting of material, I also carefully considered the writing strategies utilized in crafting the thesis. Firstly, as I am a participant within Goth cultural practices and have adopted a philosophy in which I recognize that I co-produce research material rather than going out into the world to ‘discover’ pre-defined truths and ‘bring data back in’ for representation (Thrift 2004b, Whatmore 2004a), I decided to use predominantly a first person narrative style. My position or overt presence within the research encounters is also acknowledged by the inclusion of extracts and adaptations from my field diaries as an introduction to chapter four and in various other places throughout the thesis.

Furthermore, as Macpherson (2010) argues, mobilizing concepts from within non-representational geographies requires that we cannot for example, “simply “hoover up” themes...from personal testimony” and present them as illustrative quotations. The focus on aspects of experience beyond

representation thus requires that writing styles must be adopted that allow unspeakable elements to be targeted and expressed. To achieve such goals, I have experimented with various writing techniques. For example, in chapter five I enrol a performative piece of writing, produced in response to listening to *Bauhaus's* song, "Bela Lugosi's Dead" (1979). This technique is intended as a way in which to engage in the action of becoming Goth through listening, and suggest the embodied and emotional processes involved in experiencing such music.

Finally, chapter six includes segments formed from a combination of mixed sources. These interjections specifically draw on Amin and Thrift's (2002: 10) recommendation of the figure of the "flâneur"; a reflexive walker who, "through sensory, emotional and perceptual immersion in the passages of the city", comes to experience the space-times or "transitivity" of such spaces. The flâneur's accounts appear within the text and are multi-vocal, produced from an amalgam of insight from my own experiences of the festival, participant's photo diaries, interviews, observant participation, and in some places, secondary sources such as news media, websites and forums. Such insights may be direct anecdotes or descriptions based on participants' photographs, but also ideas gleaned from the 'feel' of an account or image. Such emphasis on more ephemeral or approximate notions is consistent with approximating unspeakable elements of experience that simply presenting quotes from informants does not convey adequately (Macpherson 2010: 8).

Conclusions

I have outlined the methodologies used within field sites, provided details of the participants involved in the study and how they were recruited, detailed the ethical considerations necessary within such a project, and discussed how the material generated was managed, analysed and written with to produce this thesis. I have hoped to demonstrate that, while not without challenges, rather than relying on the established array of qualitative methodologies offered within

ethnography, the ontological concerns raised in the previous chapter have been considered and responded to throughout each of these processes.

For example, I have gone some way to respond to concerns regarding a dynamic and emergent world within techniques of “observant participation” (Thrift 2000: 556) which encourage becoming intimately integrated within practices, something enabled by my position as an already active participant. Ethical procedures were also considered performative and the necessity to adapt to the requirements of the situation was acknowledged. I have also attempted to approximate affective intensities and understandings beyond the cognitive register, through the use of mixed-media methodologies that generate a combination of talk, text and images, as well as observant participation within Goth cultural practices and the performative writing techniques mobilized to express such experiences. Finally, I sought to emphasise the role of the nonhuman within the photo-studies which allow participants the freedom to photograph and discuss not only people, but also objects and places that are important to their experiences of Goth.

Having outlined the ontological and epistemological standpoints adopted with the thesis in these two chapters, the following five chapters will begin to answer the key questions by engaging the empirical research material generated, with the theoretical tools of performance, affect, relational-materiality and social anxiety.

Becoming Goth: Mobilising Performance and Performativity

Introduction

As established in the *Theoretical Engagements* chapter, a central aim of the thesis is to investigate what is achieved when collectivities, in this case Goth, are thought through using a geographical imaginary. It was noted that the concepts of fixed and bounded subjectivity and belonging categories and humanistic notions of resistance have been intensely problematised both by post-subcultural approaches and within cultural geographies. However, Paul Hodkinson (2002: 30-32), the most prolific academic author on Goth, has consistently argued against such discourses to insist that Goth can be defined as a subculture due to four factors: the “consistent distinctiveness” of Goth practices, the strong sense of “cultural identity” experienced by participants, the intense “commitment” demonstrated by many, and a highly organised “internal infrastructure”. Within this chapter, instead of envisioning Goth as an end point or representation, I adopt alternative philosophies which shift the focus of analysis prior to a solidification in the form of an identity, subculture or indeed, ‘neo-tribe’ (Maffesoli 1996), ‘scene’ (Irwin 1977) or ‘clubculture’ (Redhead 1997).

One way in which this has been achieved is by evoking the emergent nature of subjectivities as postulated within various theories of *performance* and *performativity*. There are several comprehensions of the broad notion that subjectivities are ‘performed’, all of which adopt a specific focus on actions or practices that contribute towards the emergence of social worlds (Goffman 1959, 1963, 1967, Butler 1990, Crouch 1993b, 2003b, Thrift and Dewsbury 2000, Dewsbury and Harrison 2002) In this chapter, I begin the interrogation of alternative theorisations of subjectivity, belonging

and resistance by mobilising the “lively” (Thrift 2004a) concepts of performance and performativity and engaging them in conversation with my empirical research materials.

I use the theoretical work of feminist scholar Judith Butler (1990, 1993a, 1997) as a starting point and tool to think critically through such concepts. Butler’s central argument is to deconstruct gender and sexual identities and uncouple them from prescribed notions of desire, with the aim of presenting such categories as produced through social discourses and thus open to contestation. Within *Gender Trouble* (1990: 94) for example, she argues that “what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body”. Gender is thus not an internal characteristic expressed externally through performances such as clothing, but is brought into being through such “stylisations”.

While the term ‘performance’ may immediately bring to mind a notion of theatricality; of individuals ‘acting’ out their identities for an audience to ‘read’ and interpret, as theorists such as Erving Goffman (1959, 1963, 1967) insist, Butler contends that identities are not consciously chosen and performed for an audience who, in turn, consciously interpret such acts. Instead, she argues that individuals are subconsciously conditioned to behave in certain gender-specific ways from the determination of their gender identities at birth. This is further emphasised in Derrida’s reading of Kafka’s *Before the Law* which Butler invokes to stress that it is not authority figures such as judges or doctors that have the power in such labelling situations, but instead, the discourses that lie behind them. These discourses create the subjects of the ‘judge’, ‘prisoner’, ‘doctor’ or ‘female child’. Individual subject positions are thus created by discourse which subconsciously determines the nature of gender performances: “there is no ‘I’ who stands *behind* discourse and executes its volition or will *through* discourse”, as the ‘I’ is only called into being after being named or “interpellated” (1993: 225 original emphasis). For Butler then, “performative acts are forms of authoritative speech:

most performativities, for instance, are statements that, in the uttering, also perform a certain action and exert a binding power" (*ibid*).

Finally, as a consequence of Butler's assertion that identities have no biological or inherent grounding and are produced through performance, they must therefore, be constantly performed to be maintained. Herein lies the political potential of her arguments: such performances cannot be repeated exactly and therefore, opportunities for change or "subversion" of norms are created (Butler 1990, 1993). Butler (1990: 108-9) finds subversive potential in the "hyperbolic" practices of drag and the confusing physicality of pre-operative, post-operative and transitioning transsexuals as examples of how gender identities are revealed as constructions open to challenge.

In this chapter I consider three points of argument offered by Butler: firstly, that assertion that subjectivities do not correlate to an internal essence, but are produced through the continual repetition of acts; secondly, that the dual concept of 'performativity' works to stress how such performances are subconsciously determined; and thirdly, that the perceived naturalness of such performances can be 'subverted' through displays such as drag which work to disrupt categories. I also offer a critique by holding such ideas in tension with non-representational mobilisations of performance, subcultural theory approaches and my empirical research material produced in engagement with 'Goth' practices.

Performance and performativity have been adopted within some subcultural accounts through a focus on what subculturalists 'do', and within non-representational geographies within studies focussing on 'doing' and 'encounter' (Lorimer 2005). Crouch's (2003a) study of allotments for example, illustrates the importance of process and relationality in enacting subjectivities, rather than analysing a fixed end-point in the form of a representation. The assertion that identity categories such as gender do not relate to any inherent or 'real' qualities of individuals but are brought into

being through practices, has also productively emphasised the framing of the world as processually “becoming” or “acted into” (Thrift 2007: 114). However, several points of conflict arise between these theoretical concepts and when thinking through Goth.

When considering the focus of such accounts, Crouch’s study and those looking beyond representations and the cognitive register, have not focussed on discourse and speech but on embodied actions such as dance (e.g. Thrift 2000, 2003, McCormack 2002, 2005, 2008b). Dewsbury (2000: 475) theorises the “performative” as “the gap, the rupture, the spacing that unfolds the next moment allowing change to happen”. Performance here is characterised as the “irretrievable”, “sketching out of the present moment” (p474); “indeterminate” in nature with no intentionality behind it; and “excessive” as “it expends unaccountable energies and is affective rather than purely effective” (p475). These theorists insist that such irretrievable, indeterminate and excessive qualities cannot be taken into account in analyses of fixed representations. I will therefore, explore what happens when we follow insights from non-representational theories which look beyond the textual and representational to think through how subjectivities are embodied and emerge through the moving body.

A second concern is that, contrasting to Goffman’s concept of performance as consciously performed and prepared, Butler does not credit subjects with agency in their performances, something considered problematic with some subcultural accounts (e.g. Leblanc 1999, Brill 2008). Regarding subculture, something that can be considered ‘chosen’ rather than not conditioned from an early age like sex and gender, to what extent are Butler’s theories appropriate in thinking through the experiences involved in becoming Goth? Furthermore, when taking into account Butler’s stance on the “subversion” of categories and the critiques associated with this term isolated in the *Theoretical Engagements* chapter, to what extent can Butler’s concept of “subversion” be considered useful or valid when considering Goth gender performances?

My central aim of the chapter is thus to explore how the metaphor of performance mobilised by Judith Butler and non-representational geographers can be utilised to think through subjectivities as distributed “maps of concern” (Thrift 2008a: 88), and in turn what limitations, adaptations or commentary can be offered towards such theoretical standpoints. I investigate such debates utilising three aspects of gender, everyday clothing styles and Goth dance practices. These aspects have been chosen as they highlight pertinent debates relevant to this thesis as a whole and point to how Goth can offer a critique of these theoretical concepts. The first section will introduce such aspects by asking: what evidence is there that Goth is determined by a set of discursive practices? The second asks: to what extent do Goths subconsciously engage in such practices? Finally, I ask how can Butler’s conception of performance contribute towards understanding cultures of anxiety surrounding Goth? I begin however, with a consideration of the first point of contention offered by Butler; that subjectivities do not represent an inherent quality, but are produced through a reiteration of acts. The following section opens with some observations from my field diary produced in New York to introduce the centrality of practice.

Becoming Goth

I arrived at ‘Cybertron’, the first Goth club I visited in New York City, to discover that I was unfashionably early. Fortunately, I was not alone. A young male with shoulder-length black hair was leaning against the wall outside with his head down, also waiting for the doors to open at midnight. I approached and introduced myself as a newcomer to the city. This initially rather nervous young man was called Lev, a university student originally from Tajikistan. The night marked a significant milestone for him also: this was his very first visit to a Goth club. Once inside, I bought him a drink to celebrate the occasion. He confessed to having spent hours painting his nails black and deciding which shirt to pair with his tight jeans; uncertain as to whether his outfit was “Goth enough” for a club. Still feeling a little

self-conscious, he borrowed my mirror to check the eyeliner he had applied on the subway ride to avoid his mother's disapproval.

"What do we do now?" he asked, once we had chatted by the bar for while. I wasn't sure how to answer. I tentatively suggested we go over to the dance floor, an idea which met with approval: "yes- I want to learn how to move like that". Our conversations led me to the realisation that having attended Goth clubs for nine years, I no longer had to consciously think whether my outfit was "Goth enough", what to "do" in a club or how to move "like a Goth". Upon leaving the club, Lev thanked me: "it was nice that you were there or I wouldn't have known exactly what to do".

This encounter with Lev on his first night at a club highlights that 'Goth' cannot be considered a taken for granted, pre-determined, or fixed category that one simply 'is'. Instead, such *becomings* involve work via processes such as nail painting, selective dressing practices, applying makeup, and dancing and socializing in certain ways. As I introduced in the *Theoretical Engagements* chapter, subcultural studies work has tended to analyse such cultural practices in order to define fixed boundaries of 'subcultures' and to interrogate their potential for 'resistance'. For Butler however, "identities act in order to exist" (Gregson and Rose, 2000:). As "the "doer" is variably constructed in and through the deed" (Butler 1990: 195), Goth can thus be conceived of as constructed or "interpellated" through actions. This section will investigate to what extent Goth can be considered determined by a set of discursive norms of practice.

As highlighted in the *Introduction* chapter, Goth as a contemporary cultural collectivity developed from the music and style inspired by and evolving from Punk, Glam Rock, Indie and New Romantic in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Practices, including making or consuming Gothic Rock music at live

gigs and in clubs and dressing in predominantly black clothing with distinctive hair and makeup, became labelled as 'Goth' by several actors: initially music journalists, music industry professionals and later by some bands and participants themselves. While there is no exact date or moment from which 'Goth' can be said to have come into being, some commentators have highlighted pivotal turning points in its development. These include: the release of *Iggy Pop's* "The Idiot" in 1976; *Bauhaus's* "Bela Lugosi's Dead" in 1979; descriptions of *Joy Division's* music as "dancing music with Gothic overtones" by producer, Martin Hannett; early live appearances by Siouxsie Sioux displaying her iconic makeup style; the vampiric dress of Dave Vanian, lead singer of *The Damned*; and the opening of the *Batcave* night club in London, at which many early 'Goth' bands played and fans coalesced (Voltaire 2004, Baddeley 2002).

The practices featured above, including the consumption of music and participation in specific forms of dressing practices that worked to produce the descriptive term 'Goth', remain remarkably similar today. Some of the same bands continue to produce music and tour (e.g. *The Cure*, *Specimen*, *The Damned*, *The Sisters of Mercy*) and their songs feature on the set lists of Goth DJs throughout the world (see *The International Gothic Club Listing* 2009). Similar dressing practices are also carried out, including the norms of adopting a pale complexion, heavy black eyeliner, black hair and predominantly black clothing. Furthermore, some of the same individuals continue their involvement within Goth. For example, participant Carolyn and her husband identify as what they term "first generation Goths", and have remained active participants beyond their adolescence and into their mid-40s.

From such consideration we can see how participation within and labelling as 'Goth' thus involves relative conformity to a set of practices that have been well-defined over a thirty year period, and continue to exist into the late 2000s in forms recognisably comparable to those of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Such insights work to support Hodkinson's (2002) conclusion that Goth demonstrates a

high level of “consistent distinctiveness”, which he goes on to argue also operates trans-locally between cities within the UK (2004a) to present a relatively consistent set of, what Butler would term Gothic ‘performances’, across the UK.

However, the focus on practices thus far has been abstract and distanced from the empirical materials generated in my research encounters. As discussed in the *Methodological Orientations* chapter, I adopted methodologies within my fieldwork which would allow for a consideration of everyday practices and adopted the stance of modest inquiry to avoid the potential intricacy-erasing action of, for example, declaring Goth cultural practice as consistent across the UK. I will now introduce two areas of discussion within my empirical work with the intent to open up a consideration of performance and respond to critiques of Butler’s focus on “monolithic” (Brill 2008) discourses dictating norms of practice.

Firstly, alongside the consistency of practices over space and time, Goth has also demonstrated a high level of adaptation and evolution. As noted in the thesis *Introduction*, the music played in ‘Goth’ clubs and the clothing styles adopted by attendees has expanded from Gothic Rock, Punk, and New Romantic inspired, to more recently developed sub-genres including Industrial, Cybergoth, Gothabilly and Steampunk. Within the clubs visited in all four study locations, music ranged from the guitar-based, atmospheric compositions of *Joy Division* and *The Cure*, to the rapid electronic beats of EBM (‘Electro Body Music’) acts, the harsh vocals and distorted layering of Industrial music and the up-beat Rock and Roll with doom-filled lyrics of Gothabilly bands such as *Devilish Presley*. Equally, I observed those with ripped fishnets, tight jeans and Mohawks populate these spaces alongside those in Victorian period costume, Cybergoths with reflective neon accessories and plastic hair extensions and those adopting a burlesque, dark cabaret style.

When taking just two examples of practice; the consumption of clothing and music, it is clear that a significant degree of internal diversity exists surrounding the practices that produce 'Goth', something which Butler's arguments relating to gender, do not necessarily initially allow for. Such diversity is also acknowledged by Hodkinson (2002, 2004a, 2007), but ultimately sidelined in favour of consistency and a return to 'subculture'. However, I suggest that such diversity of practice does not have to be overlooked when making the more modest knowledge claims favoured within non-representational accounts and mobilisations of the concepts of performance and performativity.

Furthermore, in addition to the avoidance of making generalising statements, some non-representational approaches have also changed the scale of analysis towards everyday, mundane practices. This leads to a second area of discussion inspired by an engagement between performance and my research materials: how Goth clothing practices are negotiated within everyday work situations. This discussion of a style known as *Corporate Goth*, is initiated by the two photographs below:

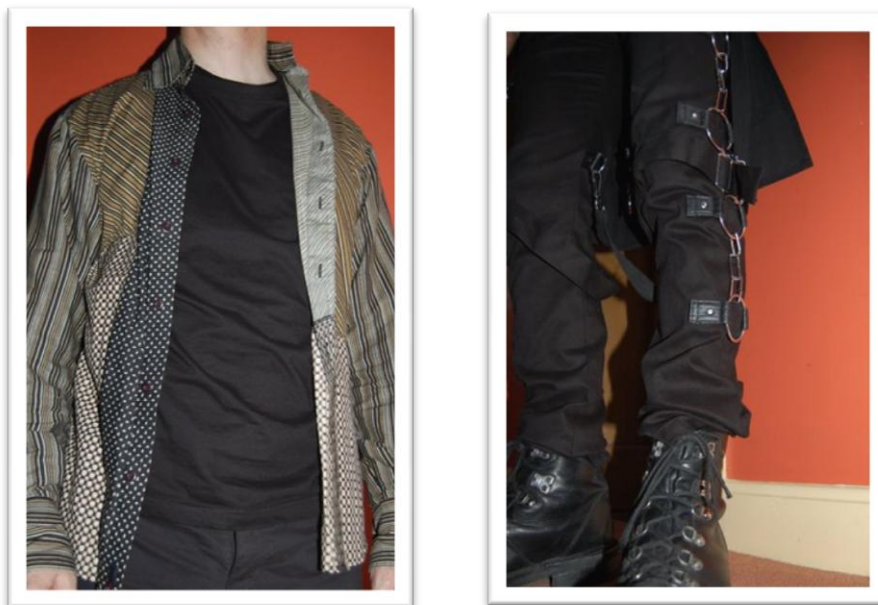


Figure 7: Participant Victor at "work" (left) and at "play" (right). Source: Victor's photo study.

The two photographs were submitted by participant Victor. During the photo elicitation interview, instead of going through the images chronologically, Victor picked up these two photographs, one of his clothing worn to work (left) and the other of an outfit worn to a club (right), and placed them next to each other on the coffee table for comparison. He discussed his love for “military” styles such as army boots and metal trims for club wear, but noted how his choice of dress was restricted within his job as a teacher in a sixth form college. However, despite what he described as the more “restrained” style of his work-wear, Victor felt that it was important to retain some ‘Goth’ aspects through his clothing within this context. He talked in detail about his favourite shirt (pictured above left) which is of an unusual cut and unique fabric design. He described the appeal of the shirt as the unusual “Frankenstein’s Monster” effect of the patchwork fabric, making it appear as if the shirt is “made from lots of different shirts stitched together”.

Beyond Victor’s images, the usual impossibility of wearing popular Goth club fashions within the workplace has been widely acknowledged and has led to the formation of a stylistic sub-genre of Goth style known as *Corporate Goth* to negotiate such issues. These styles take on elements of business-wear such as tailored cuts and fabrics such as pinstripe, but with the addition of subtle Gothic elements in the form of unusual cuts, trims and accessories. Gothic fashion labels have catered to such tastes. A line entitled “Corporate Vampire” from the Fall 2008 collection of US Goth brand, *Lip Service*, exemplifies such office-friendly styles. It features ‘classic’ items, including dress pants, a jacket and shirt for men and a high waist pencil skirt, pleated mini skirt, waistcoat, shirt and tie and jacket for women. The line was available in black and grey or burgundy and black stripe fabric, and featured subtle ‘Goth’ elements such as small skull studs, buckles and the use of faux leather as a trim fabric:

The images originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The images can be seen at:

<http://www.lip-service.com/Holiday2008/corporatevampire.php>

Figure 8: Corporate Vampire line from the Lip Service Fall 2009 collection. *Source:* <http://www.lip-service.com/Holiday2008/corporatevampire.php>, accessed May 2010.

A website entitled *Corporate Goth* outlines the aims and function of such style developments for maintaining “individuality” within a corporate context:

“Delving into the corporate world does not necessarily mean we cannot learn to express ourselves in more subtle, yet often quite impressive, ways. This site is dedicated to those who strive to maintain a balance between their individuality and the corporate world. Here we can share fashion ideas and survival tips” (Corporate Goth 2007).

Some therefore may strive to retain forms of ‘Goth’ expression via their everyday clothing and work-wear practices. Similar to Thornton’s (1995) Rave goers who wear neon wrist bands as reminders of weekend activities and act as subtle forms of recognition between club attendees outside of this context, some of my participants employ discrete markings to enact and perform their ‘Goth’ subjectivities in everyday life. These signs may be extremely restrained in the form of a skull stud or may be invisible via a concealed piercing: as the *Corporate Goth* website suggests, “Can’t wear earrings? Well they can’t see much below the neck, eh???” (WaningMoon 2010).

Returning once more to participant Victor, his Corporate Goth shirt is not dominantly black and was purchased from high street store *TopMan*, rather than a specialist retailer. Despite these not particularly 'Goth' qualities, Victor liked the shirt and considered it Corporate Goth because it was "something a bit different" and a way to express his "creativity and individuality"; qualities he believes constitute "what Goth is all about" for him. This element of 'difference' was also noted at his school by pupils, parents and fellow teachers. He detailed how the Head Teacher had commented on his style, describing it as "zany", and believed Victor's stylistic expression helped him to "connect better" with the "more creative students" as they could relate to him more effectively as an "individual". Victor also discussed how he wears the shirt for formal school events as it is representative of the ethos of the school:

"Deliberately I wear it to parent's evenings because I'm dressing up so I should wear this, just to show where I'm coming from. We deal with individuals in my college so why can't I be an individual? If we all went around in suits,[that] gives the wrong impression."

Victor therefore, feels that he maintains a degree of what he describes as "individuality", something he associates with Goth dressing practices, through the subtleties of the cut of a shirt. Even though the overall appearance might not declare him as a 'Goth' in any overt sense, the subtle details of this shirt are subtly "different", something which he believes allows him to express his "individuality" despite thinking of his practices as conforming to Goth sensibilities to some extent.

Such reflections suggest that while Butler's view of discourses dictating the actions bringing subjectivities into being may be, as Brill critiques, "monolithic", Goth does not operate in quite the same way. The focus on individuality and expression at the everyday level and the degree of internal diversity and evolution of practices that produce 'Goth', complicates Butler's first assumption. Crucially, I have demonstrated that while the focus on practice and discourse within

Butler's theorisation of performance has been useful in accounting for some level of consistency in how Goth is enacted through the consumption of certain styles and music, it risks eclipsing the level of diversity also present.

Tactics from non-representational geographies have thus been useful to consider alongside Butler's concept of performance; namely a focus on the smaller, everyday scale and the aspiration to more modest knowledge claims, which have allowed for points of contradiction and contention to be retained within this account. Such focuses will be engaged further for the second set of questions mobilised by concepts of performance and performativity. Such conclusions lead to the second point of concern adopted from Butler's work: in light of this consideration of variation, adaptation and flexibility, can Butler's assertion that subjects subconsciously perform these 'Goth' practices be retained?

Debating Subconscious Determination: *Performance or Choreography?*

The previous section has opened up discussion of Butler's deployment of performance by bringing this into contention with my research materials and insight from non-representational accounts focussing on everyday practice and modest knowledge claims. I argued that while performance is a useful concept for thinking through 'Goth' before fixing into such representative naming categories, the performative acts producing Goth are flexible and evolving, unlike Butler's stance concerning gender. Following from such dynamic fluidity, this section will now ask the question: to what extent are the performances producing Goth subconsciously determined?

A key facet in Butler's argument is that subjectivities such as gender are not actively or consciously taken up through the will of the individual, but such performances are inherently conditioned from an early age and performed unthinkingly. Butler specifically argues that performances are

subconsciously determined through her discussion of *performativity*. In *Bodies That Matter* (1993a: 24 original emphasis), “performance” is described as a “bounded act” whereas “performativity” is conceived of as “citationality”, representing the “*reiteration of norms which precede, constrain and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer’s ‘will’ or ‘choice’*”. She contends that performances produce the subject they name through continual, differing iterations. These performances are not the result of the performer’s “will” to express an internal essence, as the subconscious aspect of the mind means that individuals are never fully consciously aware of themselves or any potential “essence” (*ibid*). Equally, the effect or ‘reading’ by others of any performance cannot be predicted (Walker 1995, Lloyd 1999, Lloyd 2007). Conceiving of this performativity as an ‘excess’ which cannot be explained by conscious thought but something that influences performances, implies, as introduced above, that individuals do not consciously choose the nature of their ‘Goth’ performances.

However, a significant insight I have taken from the evening spent with Lev introduced above, is that such processes require a degree of conscious effort, work and learning. Lev, who had not attended a Goth club before, was uncertain how to behave, what to wear and simply what to ‘do’. He sought advice from me and expressed a desire to learn skills, including for example, how to dance in an appropriate way. This emphasis on conscious learning, as supported by Thornton’s (1995) concept of “subcultural capital” whereby such status has to be worked up, indicates that some degree of conscious awareness is in operation when considering collectivities such as Goth. Furthermore, Brill (2008: 18) favours accounts that “view human beings as active and critical subjects who construct their own meanings” and rejects Butler’s approach as it “poses...discourse as all-encompassing and monolithic”. Alternately, van Zoonen (1994: 33) contests that gender discourse is “a set of overlapping and often contradictory cultural descriptions and prescriptions referring to sexual difference”, which is preferential for Brill as “discourses are not seen as univocal or total, but as

ambiguous and continually contested” (*ibid*). The concept that subjects lack agency regarding their performances is thus problematised both through my empirical work and that of others.

One area in which this debate is effectively played out is within non-representational studies considering dance and embodied movement. Gesture, movement and dance have been the focus of alternate interpretations of performance, including ideas explored within non-representational accounts. Thrift (2007a) and McCormack (2002, 2005, 2008b) in particular, see potential in dance as it can be used to think through the idea of the embodied and subconscious nature of performance by focussing on the performative.

While Butler (1990: 94) has explored the “gendered stylisation of the body” through clothing, she also briefly hints at “gesture” as a performative act: “bodily gestures, movement and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an absolutely gendered self” (p108). However, dance theorist Susan Leigh-Forster (1998) criticises Butler’s work for failing to elaborate on this point. She argues that in Butler’s consideration of the only non-textual source: a film featuring drag parties (*Paris is Burning*), while Butler interrogates the “character types” and costumes present, she ignores “the eclectic movement vocabularies and the sequencing of those vocabularies through which social commentary is generated” (p4). Catherine Nash (2000) takes such critiques further to argue that when looking at embodied practices such as dance, these actions cannot be considered to operate subconsciously: they must be consciously learned and contain many codes and conventions in the form of “choreography”.

I will now follow such debates through a consideration of Goth dance practices, with the aim of moving away from Butler’s focus on discourse and to counter her lack of consideration of embodied forms of practice. I will emphasise that a consideration of embodied movement is a more appropriate way in which to retain an emphasis on ways of thinking and aspects of experience

beyond the cognitive register without discounting the conscious processes of learning. This section will explore Gothic movement style, firstly outlining what such dancing entails, and then considering debates surrounding conscious *choreography* and unconscious *performance* in the context of Goth.

“Dance the Ghost with me...”²: Goth Movement

Gothic dancing has been described by dance theorist Tricia Henry-Young (1999: 82) as “constituting a sort of *danse macabre*, it is flamboyant and theatrical, generally presenting a deadpan-serious figure who resembles the tormented or dying”. Young describes a “signature Gothic move” as: “executed with the dancer bent forward from the waist with hands held behind the back in an expression of bondage” (*ibid*), while other bodies become: “alternately limp and rigidly erect, they jerk their torsos and limbs as if convulsed with high voltage” (*ibid*). Mick Mercer (1991) notes how the “Gothically correct taffy-pulling dance”, involving a fluid and hyperbolic reaching and swooping with the arms to evoke an attitude of elegance and ‘angst’, was developed as an early Gothic dance style taken from a film version of Edgar Allen Poe’s *The Masque of the Red Death* (1964). Voltaire (2004: 40-49) photographs the various stages of such dancing styles in his exaggerated and light-hearted, but nonetheless accurate, depiction of Goth movement. The “cobwebs in the attic” dance is said to be a “variation on the taffy-pulling dance” (p40):

² Song lyric from “Lucretia My Reflection” by *The Sisters of Mercy* (*Floodland*, 1988).

The images originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The images were sourced from: "What is Goth?", Voltaire (2004: 44, 46).

Figure 9: Voltaire's guide to Goth dancing styles, source: Voltaire, 2004: 44, 46.

As the notation or representation of such movements in the images above indicate, such dance practices operate at some level on the conscious register in terms of recognising the various "character types" involved and in developing such styles. As Voltaire (2004: 40) advises: "if you are going to dance the dance of darkness, you will need to do it just right", and Venters (2009: 214) devotes an entire chapter of her 'guide book' of Goth culture, to dancing procedure and "etiquette". Such skills are also acknowledged within other studies centring on club cultures and practices. In Malbon's (1999: 100) study of dance clubs for example, he asserts that it is necessary to build: "levels of confidence and competence to achieve the collective codes of clubbing", while Pini (2001) argues that a great deal of conscious effort and 'work' is required in order to negotiate and achieve the sought-after "peak" clubbing state crucial to Rave.

Working specifically on dance, theorists such as Foster (1998), Nash (2000) and Revill (2004) find it equally problematic to conceive of such movements as wholly pre-linguistic or subconsciously determined. Nash (2000: 658) for example, insists that the concept of “choreography”, which: “re-emphasises codes and traditions, the constraints and rules of performed identities”, is a more appropriate term than performance when thinking through such practices. When using this debate to think through my empirical material, as seen in the opening field diary extract, Lev expressed a desire to ‘learn’ how to move like those on the dance floor. Furthermore, examples of literal choreography within Goth dance practices were discussed by participants.



Figure 10: Goths performing "the Dragula dance", Source: Elena's photo-study.

Participant Elena submitted the photograph above depicting her friends taking part in a ‘set’ dance to the Industrial Metal song “Dragula” by *Rob Zombie*. This dance was taken from the song’s music video and made into what Elena calls “Gothic line dancing”. It was taught to members of her University *Rock Music Society* and has become a recurrent practice within their club nights and an essential ‘skill’ which is taught to freshers at the start of the year. Aside from this directly choreographed “line dance”, some participants noted other conscious reflections on dancing styles. Participant Rachael for example, discussed location-specific dancing styles, asserting: “you can

always spot the German Goths, the Italians, the Brits, at festivals by the way they dance...they have a set style and it's definitely different from each other". Furthermore, a participant in Tokyo detailed how one of their friends had lived in Germany for a year and upon his return, conducted a lecture and demonstration of "German Industrial style dancing" on stage at a Tokyo Goth club. This individual is also featured in several *YouTube* videos (YAMikohaku 2010), including one picturing him dancing on a club podium, subtitled "[Name] dancing at Tokyo Decadance in Berlin Industrial Style" (librasgirl08 2008). Goth dancing thus appears to be 'learned' and adapted within specific contexts.

However, despite the importance of sometimes collective conscious reflection and direct choreography in some instances, there is also evidence of dance being mobilised as an unthinking, spontaneous activity. When Victor was asked to elaborate on what dancing practices at a club involved for him, he responded:

"Umm, well I don't know how to describe it really... I just dance...I've never really thought about what I actually do... I suppose it depends on the music".

For Victor, a long-term participant in his late 30s, such movement is *habitual* and conscious thought is not utilised within its enactment: *"I just dance"*.

This focus on habitual or unthinking movement reflects descriptions of the 'function' or 'role' of dancing. Similar to Pini's (2001: 191) conclusions surrounding the motivations involved in Rave, "no longer is the heterosexual 'pick up' such a central point". Her Raving women, like my male and female participants, were not dancing primarily to attract the opposite sex, but for their own enjoyment and gratification. Within my empirical work, participant Eric commented that: "I love seeing people really getting into their dancing....when you see a people really going for it to some Industrial track, it's amazing!", while during an informal conversation in London, Claire exclaimed:

“it’s great- you can relax, just let yourself go and not think about it”. What is thus valued by such individuals is exhibiting passion and the personal benefits of enacting unconscious self expression on the dance floor.

Furthermore, Pini’s Raving individuals contrasted their experiences at non-Rave clubs as being like “meat markets” in which everyone was out to “pull” and dancing involved “grinding” in a highly sexualised manner. Some Goth participants particularly stressed that dancing in Goth clubs is a personal and individual activity and framed this as an important point of difference between Goth and wider cultural practices. Anwil notes that “if someone is dancing by themselves, it’s fine”, while Victor elaborates further:

“You go to a normal club, other than the fact I hate the music and I don’t appreciate some of the people there, but you go out and try and dance by yourself and they think you’re weird, but you go to a Goth club and that’s OK....At [my local Goth club] there’s a guy, Paul I think he name is, and we danced for about a year and a half before we knew each other’s name! We just happened to be the first people up dancing because, we have a pint, there early, got to go to work the next day so let’s get dancing...I like that tolerance and the way you just dance.”

For Victor, a passionate dancer, his negative experience of being judged as “weird” for dancing on his own at “normal clubs” contrasts to Goth norms: at the Goth club he does not feel obliged to socialise through dancing, illustrated by the fact that he did not know the name of a fellow dance floor participant despite dancing in the same space for over a year. This suggests that the physical space of the dance floor may be shared but the personal embodied space is reserved for individual Gothic performances, wherein Victor can “just dance”. Indeed, none of the dance practices pictures

above involves dancing with a partner in a 'hold' of any kind, but instead each styles works alongside each other:

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The image was sourced from: "What is Goth?", Voltaire (2004: 48).

Figure 11: "The Gothic Dance Floor" Source: Voltaire, 2004: 48.

This brings us back to the question of subconscious or conscious action: to what extent do Goths "just dance"? There appears to be a tension between conceiving of embodied movement producing 'Goth' as consciously choreographed and subconsciously enacted. Butler's focus on the subconscious determination of performances by dominant discourses is seen in the importance of dancing for Goths as an activity to 'let go', but is confounded by observations of instances of choreography and the need to work up competence at such performances. I therefore bring this section to a close by concurring with George Revill's (2004) conclusions gleaned from participating in French folk dancing.

In his participation within a folk dancing group, Revill notes how the most accomplished dancers perform the moves as if they were "second nature" (p206). He argues, along with other scholars noted above, that "to be able to move beyond a reflexive state in which actions are mediated consciously by signs is a major cultural achievement" (*ibid*). However, it is not one that should be considered to represent 'authenticity' or superiority, as this quality requires a great deal of practice and engagement with the traditions of such a dance through its history. As noted in Victor's observations and in my field diary extract, such participants no longer have to think about how to

behave or how to move in a 'Goth way' due to experience within such club environments. It is likely however, that newcomers to the scene will have to spend time consciously thinking about how to move and engaging with such discursive histories: as Lev noted in his interview following our meeting at his first club experience, *"it was nice that you were there or I wouldn't have known exactly what to do"*.

There are thus times in which conscious reflection is utilised within Goth dancing practices, for example in the performance of 'set' dances such as Elena's "Dragula dance" and when observing the dancing styles within different communities of practice. However, Goths valued the individual nature of Goth dance practices, finding that they could dance on their own without the stigma experienced within non-goth clubs. The primary function of such embodied practices was also not to attract others, but was significantly valued as a way in which to "let go" and "just dance" as a form of enjoyment and release. This can perhaps be broken down by the life-stage of participants; with newcomers likely to have to 'learn' consciously and work up the necessary skills, while more experienced participants may act subconsciously through the body. Ultimately, such reflections suggest that it is more useful to avoid seeking a rigid divide between the conscious and the unconscious within such practices. A focus on this unconscious register will be picked up again in later chapters, but firstly, it is necessary to move on to the final area of consideration: what Butler terms the "subversive" potential of performances.

Gothic "Subversion"

As introduced above, Butler's central point of analysis is to deconstruct gender and sexual identities and uncouple them from prescribed notions of desire, with the aim of presenting such categories as produced through social discourses and thus open to contestation. Such contestation is the focus of this final section. The third key point stressed by Butler considered here is that performances demonstrating the constructed nature of gender performances such as "drag", hold potential to

“subvert” such gendered assumptions. By challenging the assumed status of gender as an inherent quality, the “notion of the possible and the real” (1990: 100) are confronted and brought into question. Furthermore, the “violence performed by gender norms” (p107) are deconstructed, “norms” that cannot encapsulate all experiences or identities of being a “woman”, as seen in struggles to form a unified global feminist movement.

As I have argued above, a degree of diversity and change has occurred within the development of Goth practices since the 1970s. It is therefore clear that adaptations or alterations of ‘Goth’ practices do not lead to the “subversion” or break down of what is considered ‘Goth’. I will thus utilise Butler’s ideas slightly differently in this final section. I will follow Butler’s specific focus on gender to investigate the extent to which Goth gender performances challenge gender ‘norms’, by looking at the qualities they share in common with Butler’s illustrative example of “drag” as, what she terms, a “subversive” performance. Firstly, however, it is necessary to investigate Butler’s discussion of the operation of drag in more detail and acknowledge the problematic notion of “subversion”, a concept that implies the same fixity as “resistance” discussed in the *Theoretical Engagements* chapter.

Firstly, Butler (1990: 109) defines three facets to drag: anatomical sex, gender identity and gender performance. Within this practice, the viewer sees a ‘man’ dressed as a ‘woman’ or vice versa and it is assumed that the first category of anatomical sex is aligned with the ‘authentic’ gender identity, and the latter gender performance is merely “artifice, play, falsehood and illusion” (1990: xxiii). However, Butler points out that it can be extremely difficult to define gender from the anatomical or hormonal physicality of a person, exemplified when attempting to categorise transsexuals who may be pre-operative, transitional or post-operative (1990: 108). As noted above, individuals understand the world through categories defined by dominant discourses, which lead to assumptions being made about ‘true’ gender identity; in this case the anatomy of another via their performances. Drag

works to highlight that “reality”, “is not as fixed as we generally assume it to be” (2001: xxv), and demonstrates how gender identity has “no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality” (1990: 106). This also disrupts the logic that ‘men’ should desire ‘women’ and vice versa, as these categories are already shown to be inadequate to account for all eventualities. Drag thus emphasises that the containers of ‘male’ and ‘female’ do not account for all possible gender and sexual identities, and is ultimately “subversive” due to the “exposure of the failure of heterosexual regimes ever to fully legislate or contain their own ideals” (1993: 237).

Such a discussion leads to questioning of what drag performances can class as “subversive”. Butler’s stance on this issue changes between *Gender Trouble, Bodies that Matter* and beyond. Within *Gender Trouble* (1990), performances with subversive potential must, like drag, come from within the existing power matrix by “rearticulating” dominant discourses. She introduces insight from psychoanalysis to argue that: “it is not that drag opposes heterosexuality, or that the proliferation of drag will bring down heterosexuality; on the contrary, drag tends to be the allegorization of heterosexuality and its constitutive melancholia” (*ibid*). While the parody of the “idea of an original” or inherently “natural” gender identity within drag was seen as “subversive” here, by *Bodies that Matter* (1993), Butler questions the nature of this effectiveness. She points out that “there is no guarantee that exposing the naturalized status of heterosexuality will lead to its subversion” (1993: 231), and insists that rearticulation holds greatest potential when hyperbolic in nature.

Building on arguments in her earlier publication and drawing further on psychoanalytical theories, Butler insists within *Bodies that Matter* (1993) that gender identity is constructed in part through the subconscious denial of the opposite identity that is left unmourned and therefore unresolved in the form of unidentified “melancholia” as opposed to targeted “grief”. Butler concludes that: “the resignification of norms is thus a function of their *inefficiency*, and so the question of subversion, of *working the weakness in the norm*, becomes a matter of inhabiting the practices of its rearticulation”

(p237 original emphasis). As drag is an allegory of gender melancholia, a hyperbolic drag performance in particular, thus “brings into relief” its opposite as equally constructed: “the understated, taken-for-granted quality of heterosexual performativity” (*ibid*).

A ‘hyperbolic’ or ‘theatrical’ performance is therefore required in order to highlight the constructed nature of norms and ultimately, enact change. She points to the effectiveness and long history of street parades for gay awareness and events such as “Kiss-ins” outside the US Supreme Court when “gay statues were being discussed” in the 1970s (Butler quoted in Osborne, Segal 1994: 38). Such acts combine “theatrical work with theatrical activism” to enact a hyperbolic display which overwhelms, revealing the ineffectiveness of homophobia as a containing mechanism (Butler, 1993: 233). Ultimately, the re-claiming of the term “queer” by the gay community discussed in “Critically Queer” (Butler 1993b) is effective as: “this kind of citation will emerge as theatrical to the extent that it *mimes and renders hyperbolic* the discursive convention that it also *reverses*” (p232, original emphasis).

This raises the question: how can a performance qualify as “hyperbolic”? Lloyd (1999: 203) questions what practices can be considered “excessive enough”: “a specific walk? Particular clothes? A voice pitched too high or too low?” She also points out that drag is not always excessive or dramatic, but may still represent the transgressive crossing of gender categories. Butler responds to such concerns within an interview with Osborne and Segal (1994). She suggests that, when speaking of political actions, “it’s precisely when they get predictable, or when you know how to read them in advance, or you know what’s coming, that they just don’t work anymore” (p38). Here, she shifts the focus away from the hyperbolic *per se* to argue that: “I think we need to pursue the moments of degrounding, when we’re sanding in two different places at once; or we don’t know exactly where we’re standing; or when we’ve produced an aesthetic practice that shakes the ground” (Osborne, Segal 1994: 38).

“Subversive” acts for Butler (1993: 29, original emphasis) are thus those that produce an “effect that *resists* calculation”. This therefore, opens up the potential of the term “subversion” and moves it away from the problematised humanistic assumptions associated with the related term of “resistance” discussed in chapter one. I suggest that having established that Butler’s concept of “subversion” is deployed to destabilise a series of categories perceived as ‘fixed’, and can be interpreted as acts that create a destabilising effect rather than directly presenting a fixed ‘opposition’ to a second fixed population or category, such ideas can be used to think through Goth genders.

Goth Gender(s)

The distinctive gender performances within Goth have been discussed by several authors for a liberatory and “subversive” potential (Goodlad and Bibby 2007a, Brill 2007, Gunn 2007, Holmes 2007). Several, including Joshua Gunn (2007), highlight the widespread trends towards androgyny for male Goths within club fashions. This trend was also confirmed by several participants encountered within my empirical work, two identifying as trans-gender (Morgan and Alexis) and four others (Robert, Andro, Yukiro and William), experimenting with different degrees of ‘feminine’ elements (see figure 12 below).



Figure 12: Three male Goths embracing degrees of femininity and androgyny. Participant Yukiro (left) adopts a fantasy look incorporating a velvet dress and intricate makeup; while Robert (right, left) adopts an androgynous look, and Ken (right, right) adopts full cross-dressing. Source: Yukiro's and Robert's photo study.

The participants pictured above demonstrate a range of 'feminine' and androgynous elements; from full cross-dressing to more subtle incorporation of makeup and clothing cuts. Brill (2008) argues that this adoption of 'feminine' styling by male Goths, functions as a uniquely male strategy for gaining internal status, or "subcultural capital" (Thornton 1995). Such capital is gained through the power of male androgyny to create "gender confusion" (Goodlad and Bibby 2007b: 20) or to "make strange" and "throw into flux traditional modes of masculinity through a recasting of male appearance as playful erotic spectacle" (Brill 2008: 180). The cross-dressing or androgynous male Goth is respected and accorded status as he openly contradicts conventional gender representations and demonstrates bravery and machismo by risking triggering social anxieties, anxieties that were actualised for many of Brill's participants in the form of verbal and physical abuse (p51). At an initial reading, male Goths therefore, are thought to challenge 'realities' in a similar way to Butler's drag performances.

However, Brill notes that female Goth clothing styles tend towards the hyper-feminine and reinforce gender stereotyping. Embracing an idealised image of femininity, a popular female clothing choice are garments that emphasise the idealised sexual feminine figure, including an exaggerated hourglass silhouette provided by a corset, hooped skirt and the use of extreme makeup:



Figure 13: "Hyper-feminine" Goths. Source: researcher's own

This does not take on Butler's challenge of gender norms, as such performances conform to ideals of the sexualised female form. Brill along with Gunn (2007, 2008) thus conclude that despite Goth's self-presentation as "genderless", the underlying reality is far from this "utopian" ideal. Female Goths cannot gain subcultural capital by adopting androgynous male dress as this is perceived of as "lazy" and "lacking the effort" expected of 'female' Gothic performances which are therefore, performed as hyper-feminine (p40-41). Male Goth performances work to reinforce gender stereotypes within the scene, compounded by their achievement of status through 'masculine' traits of braving a potentially violent response.

While certain female Goth styles do perhaps not destabilise gender norms, Brill does however, isolate some potential within other practices. For example, she observes a feminine trend to 'pose' as bisexual, which can either be read as a practice that troubles the heterosexual matrix, or as conforming to "male-defined desire" by imitating heterosexual male fantasies (p144). Either way, as I have introduced in previous chapters, this highlights the potential of investigating embodied practices. A final question I pose in this chapter is thus: can Goth dance practices be thought of as destabilising or challenging?

Gender on the Goth Dance Floor

In this final sub-section, I argue that the dancing Gothic body presents potential for the disruption of gender norms in several ways. Firstly, the dancing styles pictured in Voltaire's (2004) book featured on page 101, despite using male and female models, are not gender-specific. Within all field sites, men wearing outfits inspired by Victorian clothing like the "cobweb" dancer, move in the same elegant way, whilst female Goths favouring an Industrial image, take part in the aggressive "hobbit dance" alongside male Goths. The images also show similarities between the "cobwebs in the attic" (top left) and "grab the bat" (top right) dances, despite their framing in stereotypical terms as reflecting cleaning for female and aggression for male Goths in the accompanying text. Equally, the "Gothic Tai Chi Dance" and "Punch the Hobbit!" both reflect aggressive styles based on fighting, references being made to martial arts and boxing, thus depicting similar dancing styles for both men and women.

This is particularly significant for female Goths whose hyper-feminine clothing style was framed as lacking subversive potential by Brill (2008). As participant Claire quoted above argues, "you can dance however you like and get out your aggression...you don't have to be lady-like or sexy like girls in normal clubs". Female Industrial Goths, including Claire, may adopt hyper-feminised aspects of clothing such as corsets and elaborate makeup (figure 14), but they can dance aggressively within

the club and thus confound gender stereotypes through their embodied movement. Discourses regarding the assumed delicate nature of female bodies and stereotypes depicting women as carers not aggressors as particularly challenged by such movement styles (Grosz 1994, Wolff 1995).



Figure 14: Female 'Industrial Goth'. Source: researcher's own.

Equally, male Goths are allowed a space in which to experiment with varying expressions. Anwil notes how: "people don't think you must be gay or effeminate if you dance elegantly and wear Victorian frock coats... you can be elegant and that's just part of Goth and who you are". Such "elegance" is thus not seen as "effeminate" or an indicator of sexuality, but an extension through movement of the adoption of historical styles produced as an "elegant" and 'Goth' expression by some. This contrasts to Brill's (2008) conclusions that male Goths gain subcultural capital through risking abuse from the non-Goth community by cross-dressing and females cannot adopt androgyny for the same means. Away from the view of such non-Goths, male Goths retain such gender identities, moving in stereotypically 'feminine' ways while female Goths adopt 'masculine' positions.

Goth is therefore more internally 'genderless' or destabilising when perceived through the lens of embodied movement.

Within this section I have acknowledged Butler's use of the concept of "subversion" as the desire to highlight the false nature of the assumed fixity and naturalness of gender categories. Initially, she argued that hyperbolic or theatrical acts were necessary to challenge such assumptions but within later work, such arguments developed towards the necessity of generating an effect that "*resists* calculation", or creates the feeling of "standing in two places at once" (Butler 1993: 29 original emphasis). While "subversion" can be positioned alongside "resistance" as a problematic concept within the theoretical vocabularies I have adopted within this thesis, implying a fixed category or population working against another, Butler's focus on "destabilising" has proven insightful when used to think through Goth practices. While theorists including Brill have concluded that when seen critically, Goth style performances work to reinforce gender positions, I have mobilised non-representational concerns with embodied performances to demonstrate how Goth dance practices may work to confuse and destabilise apparently fixed gender categories, themes which will be taken up in further chapters.

Conclusions

The meeting with Lev on his first experience of a Goth club emphasised an imperative need to shift the focus of accounts prior to the formation or fixing of categories such as 'Goth', towards the practices necessary to *become* 'Goth'. Drawing on Judith Butler's concepts of performance and performativity, I have explored three of her central ideas in order to assess what such perspectives offer and to tease out some of the weaknesses when used to think through collectivities such as Goth. Some of these weaknesses have been highlighted in relation to the ways in which non-representational geographies have mobilised performance and performativity, taking specific focus on subtle, everyday practices and embodied movement.

As a result of holding such debates in tension with my empirical material, several conclusions have been reached. The first theoretical contention regarding Butler's argument that performances are determined by discourses surrounding norms of practice, was found to be useful to account for evidence of relative consistency of practices involved in Goth since its emergence in the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, such conclusions are troubled when two insights developed within non-representational theories are mobilised alongside such concepts. Firstly, despite what Hodkinson (2002, 2004a, 2007) terms "consistent distinctiveness" over time and space, when adopting the modest approaches to epistemology advocated within non-representational geographies, a degree of diversity and change is also present within Goth. For example, the diverse array of stylistic practices in evidence in the 2000s, ranging from neon Cybergoth fashions to period Victorian clothing and more 'traditional' Punk-inspired modes. Secondly, and following such insight, reducing the scale of focus away from 'spectacular' club performances, the often innovative Corporate Goth fashions adapted for the workplace have revealed a high level of individual creativity and adaptation. The example of participant Victor's brown striped shirt photographed as something he considered a way in which to negotiate his performances as 'Goth' through qualities of "difference" and "individuality", confirms that while a certain degree of consistency exists, viewing Goth as determined by a fixed set of monolithic discourses of practice, works to eclipse contradictory and more flexible becomings.

In light of this consideration of variation, adaptation and flexibility, the second section questioned whether Butler's assertion that subjects subconsciously perform practices can be retained. Such assumptions have been immediately complicated when considering the encounter with Lev, in which I was surprised by his desire and need to 'learn' how to perform in a 'Goth' way, something which was not a matter of conscious reflection for me. I utilised non-representational concerns with embodied movement to explore this second tension. Such a consideration led me to conclude that

there are times in which conscious reflection is utilised within Goth dancing practices, for example in the performance of 'set' dances such as Elena's "Dragula dance" and when observing the dancing styles within different communities of practice.

However, my participants also valued the individual nature of dance practices, finding that they could dance on their own without the stigma experienced within non-Goth clubs. Furthermore, the primary function of such embodied practices was not to attract others, but significantly valued as a way in which to "let go", "just dance" and fall into *habitual*, unthinking movement as a form of enjoyment and release. In light of such tensions, I therefore concluded along with Revill (2004) in asserting that dance involves both subconscious and conscious elements. In practices producing 'Goth', I further suggested that the life-stage of participants can be a significant factor, with newcomers likely to have to consciously 'learn' and work up the necessary skills to move in a similar way to the styles featured in Voltaire's (2004) images, while more experienced participants may subconsciously enact 'Goth' practices through the body.

Finally, by recognising that identities are constructed and do not correspond to any inherent quality, Butler seeks to destabilise assumptions of the "heterosexual matrix": that gender follows from sex and sexuality from gender. She argues that by problematising such relationships and assumptions through performances such as drag, the potential for enacting gender differently and overcoming negative gender stereotyping is realised. As variation from consistent 'Goth' practices was seen to contribute to internal diversity as opposed to 'overcoming' or destabilising, in the third section, I utilised Butler's theories in a different and more direct way: to investigate the "subversive" potential of Goth gender performances. Initially, I interrogated Butler's use of the term "subversive", reminiscent of the critiques of "resistance" noted in previous chapters. It was noted how Butler's characterisation of a "subversive" act has evolved throughout her work, ranging from insisting on a "hyperbolic" drag performance, but developing in sophistication to excavate the actions such

performances produce. Butler later elaborates that “subversion” can be thought of as “moments of degrounding” via an “aesthetic practice that shakes the ground” (Butler in Osborne and Segal 1994: 38), and generates the effect of “standing in two places at once”.

Once a productive focus on destabilising as opposed to the humanistic implications of “subversion” had been established, I then thought through Gothic gender performances, firstly using Brill’s analysis and secondly, by returning to the focus on embodied action. While Brill argues that the male trend towards androgyny and the prevalence of female hyper-femininity works to reinforce stereotypical gender positions, my investigation of Goth dance practices offered a different interpretation. It was noted how expressions of gender through embodied movement were closer to the “genderless utopia” imagined by Goths, and I concluded that the openness of adopting the various styles irrespective of gender is a more effective way in which Goth can be seen to destabilise.

A key strength of performance as an approach is thus its focus on *becoming* and processes that occur prior to fixing in the form of categories such as ‘Goth’ or ‘male’ and ‘female’, which works to open up consideration beyond the static and representational into the kinaesthetic and excessive. The addition of non-representational epistemological and ontological stances to Butler’s approach has productively shifted scales of analysis to the everyday, to the embodied register of experience and towards more modest knowledge claims which allow for contradiction and complexity to be retained. Engagements with notions of performance and performativity from Butler and non-representational theory with my empirical material have also highlighted that the conscious and subconscious registers both operate within practices such as dance. Such an approach has facilitated a recognition of the importance of such practices in the lives of individuals as Hodkinson (2002) stresses, but by investigating such actions in more detail and in different contexts, such as the within the workplace and on the dance floor, I have acknowledged a greater degree of diversity. Through a thorough interrogation of Butler’s ideas of “subversion”, I have also introduced one

consideration of how Goths consistently generate cultures of anxiety, suggesting the notion of Goth as “degrounding” or destabilising as an area of further study in forthcoming chapters.

Firstly however, with the recognition that we live in a “more-than-human” world (Whatmore 2002, Whatmore 2006) outlined in the Theoretical Engagements chapter, a discussion is required to move away from the sole consideration of the clothed or even dancing human subject. While working at similar times and within overlapping fields, Donna Haraway’s (1991, 1997, 2003) views of subjectivity focus less on human intentionality or subconscious discipline, but on the material and nonhuman agents that interact to produce subjectivities. Haraway not only questions whether the categories of ‘man’ and ‘women’ are socially constructed, but also queries the extent to which the ‘human’ can account for all elements of social life.

Encounters with the Nonhuman: Cybergoth, Steampunk and Gothic Lolita

Introduction

I met Nekoi at Akihabara subway station at 1.20pm on a Saturday. She was uncharacteristically late but just as I was about to telephone, a figure wearing a black PVC dress, platform boots and shiny black plastic coils ('Cyberlox') braided in her hair, came rushing through the crowds, flustered and apologising profusely. Having expected her to wish to conduct a guided walk in Harajuku, Tokyo's centre for street-style and Goth shopping, I asked her why she had chosen the district synonymous with the post-Second World War electronics industry:

"technology is important to Cybergoths, and Akihabara is like being in a Science Fiction story-you'll see!"

The tour would take us through stores selling computer games and consoles, electronics shops offering the latest gadgets from phones to hair styling products, a manga (comic book) outlet and a doll department store. Our first stop however, was a four-storey 'adult' store. Nekoi advised we skip past the pornography to the third floor which sold the fetish clothing she sometimes purchased to wear for her band's live shows. Nekoi is the lead singer of



Figure 15: Participant Nekoi in Akihabara. Source: researcher's own

Cyberpunk band 'Psydoll'. Psydoll have carefully constructed an intricate persona and back-story which is reflected in lyrics, musical style, costume and live stage performance. According to the band's website, Psydolls or "Psycho-DOLLS" are "illegal robots manufactured and remodelled without proper licenses and with enhanced abilities unlike other "DOLLS" (Psydoll 2009). Similar to the plot of Ridley Scott's 'Blade Runner' (1982), the band is comprised of three such rogue robots who have modified their own artificial intelligence systems and seek self-determination. The world created by the band's back-story is a dangerous one in which "30% of fatalities in Japan" have been caused by rebellious robots which are hunted down and destroyed by the authorities (ibid).

We discussed the band's clothing and musical style in more detail as we browsed the fetish clothing. Psydoll incorporate cybernetic additions to their bodies; including red and green contact lenses, plastic hair extensions and a faux breathing apparatus. The 'Cyberpunk' music output of the band is produced using synthesisers, electric guitar, keyboard, a Theremin and an electronic drum machine. According to their MySpace page, they are not influenced by existing bands but, "from the sound of PSYDOLL's cogwheels" and the "sound of fuel alcohol [that] flows in their blood vessels" (Myspace 2010).

In the previous chapter I introduced the concept that aspects of material culture such as clothing and music are important contributors to participants' Gothic becomings, and have been framed as potential actors within the generation of anxieties towards this group. Drawn from my Tokyo field diary, this opening discussion of Nekoi and *Psydoll*, who not only utilize the material via clothing and music but present themselves as physical cyborgian hybrids of human and machine in both their fictional back-story and the reality of their stylistic presentation, illustrate how these insights may be taken further. *Psydoll* reflect philosophies which attempt to disrupt Cartesian dualisms separating mind and body, human and animal, the organic and technological, the physical and non-physical,

and ultimately, concepts of an opposition between nature and human society (Pepperell 1995, Badmington 2000, Grosz 1994, Wolfe 2010). These ideas have been evoked particularly enthusiastically within feminist critique: the influence of which has been seen in Judith Butler's (1991, 1993a) work in the previous chapter, establishing that apparently 'natural' definitions of gender are in fact socially constructed and thus open to contestation. Literature within posthumanism and the science and technology studies field however, has engaged more directly with the role of the nonhuman within such debates.

Nekoi and *Psydoll* echo the cyborg figure featured in the work of feminist scholar Donna Haraway (1985, 1991, 1997), which I will utilise to form the basis of this chapter. The *cyborg*, an amalgamation of human and machine, complicates Judith Butler's arguments explored in the previous chapter by foregrounding the notion that we live in a 'more-than-human' world (Whatmore 2002, 2006). Within her *Manifesto for Cyborgs*, Haraway (1985) insists that the world is no longer organised via "natural categories" but via "the informatics of domination", whereby many apparently disparate entities can be reduced to digital coding; for example genes via sequencing software and defence technologies organised as informational networks. This therefore highlights: "the kinship of the chip, gene, seed, bomb, lineage, ecosystem and the database" (1997: 2) in contemporary society, and thus the disruption of the categorical divides of Humanist philosophies. Haraway (1991: 150) uses examples of developments within biotechnology and communications technology alongside analogies from science fiction writing to illustrate how a "border war" is being fought between binary distinctions, both philosophically and literally as a "social reality".

Her illustrative example of a border crossing figure is the cyborg, defined as: "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (p149). Haraway sites *FemaleMan@*, a post-gender, posthuman character in science fiction writing and the transgenic *OncoMouse*[™] as a literal cyborg, the first organism to be patented by *DuPont* in 1988

(1997: 47). This mouse was genetically produced in a lab to carry human breast cancer, transformed into coding via computer software, sold globally as a commodity and constituted a significant participant in the production and circulation of medical and scientific knowledges. By following such chains, Haraway (1997: 165) demonstrates how “the difference between machine and organism is thoroughly blurred”.

Haraway (1997: 166) envisions great potential in such an approach: “a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints”. By engaging with the notion of the constructed nature of subjectivities from those such as Butler, and recognising the role of the nonhuman in contributing to these performances, Haraway’s ideas distribute agency to include the material world, previously considered as an ‘add-on’ or simple ‘tool’ in accounts of the social world.

Haraway’s ideas are echoed within approaches towards materiality and the nonhuman within geography. As introduced in the *Theoretical Engagements* chapter, there are many interpretations of how “matter” is viewed within the field, and thus definitions of what “matters” (Whatmore 2002, Anderson and Tolia-Kelly 2004, Panelli 2009). Accounts have for example, considered the human relations with nonhumans within indigenous knowledges (Ginn 2008) and in processes such as ecotourism (Besio *et al.* 2008) gardening (Longhurst 2006), and surfing (Waitt 2008). The posthumanist approach adopted by Haraway however, promotes a relational approach to materiality in which theorists do not only: “conceive of social life simply in terms of relations between people, but instead can revision it in terms of relations between people and things, recognising that it is always coproduced” (Wilson 2009: 487).

Sarah Whatmore (2002, 2006) for example, theorises a hybrid world in which humans, animals and objects are intimately entwined, while Jane Bennett (2001, 2004, 2007, 2010) further distributes agency between various actors to suggest an equalising “ontological ethics” (Thrift 2007: 169). Bennett (2007: 449) in particular, calls for: “the relations between humans, biota and abiota” to be “horizontalised”, with the effect of “presenting all of them as actors vying for efficacy”. She argues that the human power to ‘effect’ is not solely a result of the human subject itself but, “the productive power behind effects is always a collectivity” (2005: 463). As a result, she concludes that nonhuman ‘things’ are crucial for understanding the social, as: “not only is human agency always already distributed in tools, microbes, minerals, and sounds, it only emerges as agentic *by way of* a distribution into the ‘foreign’ materialities its bearers are eager to exclude” (*ibid* original emphasis).

These varying conceptions reflect several bifurcations in thought within the broad and contested field of posthumanism. Jonathan Murdoch (2004: 1357 original emphasis) argues that approaches can be divided into two broad imperatives: firstly, a “*posthuman condition*”, described as “a world made up of hybrid objects, heterogeneous networks, and fluid identities”; and secondly, as a “*form of theorising*”, with the aim “to deliver new critical insights into contemporary social conditions so that new (‘distributed’) forms of subjectivity might be established”. I suggest that Haraway’s approach straddles these two perspectives by recognising that the cyborg represents physical realities of the “*technobiopower*” age, such as prostheses and mood altering drugs, and in so doing, aims to disrupt philosophical Cartesian dualisms by focussing on the hybrid nature of the social. Haraway’s posthuman vision therefore, represents “a means of going on rather than a cerebral, ivory tower pastime” (Whatmore 2004b: 1360). Highlighted within Badmington’s (2004: 1352) consideration of both *Posthuman Records*, a record label briefly established by *Marilyn Manson* from 2000 to 2002, alongside Francis Fukuyama’s (2003) reactionary and apocalyptic account of technology eclipsing the human, this academic field explicitly engages with, and is reflected in,

popular culture and negotiates tensions between utopian and technophobic imagined outcomes of the information age (Whatmore 2004b: 1360).

However, some criticise the posthuman condition approach within Haraway's cyborg materiality for its weakness in presenting the posthuman as a post-Second World War historical condition (e.g. McCormack 1999, Whatmore 2004b). Cyborg figures are also presented in dominantly negative ways within popular culture. For example, the *Borg* of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* seek to assimilate all life into their collective, and the *Terminator* series of movies is set in a world in which a grid of control is established by machines, originally intended as human tools within a defence network (Porush 1985, Kavanagh 1990, Featherstone and Burrows 1995, Cavallaro 2000). These apocalyptic visions realise Fukuyama's (2003) fears and call into question the ability of the cyborg to elicit change (Cohen-Shabot 2006). Furthermore, such ideas are seen to promote a "transhuman" approach whereby bodily transcendence is sought via improvements to the body to overcome physical limits, and thus lacking the ability to disrupt Humanistic divides (Wolfe 2010). In contrast, Panelli (2009: 82) advocates an approach that sees posthumanism as "a range of analytical-philosophical positions that ontologically question or deconstruct the human subject", and Wolfe (2010) sees greater potential in this "posthumanist" way of theorising, by working to undermine dualisms effectively.

Such debates inspire certain questions for the consideration of Goth. The opening vignette introduces how Cybergoths like Nekoi, embrace biotechnological developments. I will thus ask: do Goths present a contemporary cultural grouping that reflect a "posthuman moment" (Whatmore 2004b: 1360)? To approach such questions, I will introduce two further subgenres of Goth clothing style that incorporating specific relations with the material: *Steampunks* who integrate home-made, Victorian-inspired, imagined technologies into their visual practices, and the *Gothic Lolita* imitating the image of a porcelain doll. I will use such research material to ask: to what extent do cyborgs and

Goths operate via transhuman thinking, through which the body is “improved” and anxieties potentially generated? Alternately, I will question whether the cultural practices of Goth can be theorised as posthumanist, collapsing “the ontological distinction between categories such as subject/object, nature/culture” (McCormack 1999: 168). Finally, I will explore whether the weaknesses of the cyborg as a transhuman figure and its representation in popular culture can be overcome, or whether there more potential for an alternative, more appropriate figuration. Haraway (1997: 215) uses the vampire alongside the cyborg as boundary-crossing form which thoroughly “pollutes lineages”. I will thus question whether Goths can be thought of as “vampires”, towards which “it is impossible to have a settled judgment” as they are “defined by their categorical ambiguity and troubling mobility” (*ibid*).

These questions contribute to understanding of two key nodes of inquiry of the theses regarding how Goth subjectivities are enacted and introduces a focus on the generation of cultures of anxiety. Butler’s (1990, 1993a, 1997) notion that subjectivities are enacted through discourses determining performance, is expanded to become more broadly “social” by considering how Goth emerges as an assemblage of actors, including the nonhuman. Equally, the circulation of anxieties surrounding Goth is thought through by interrogating the disruptive potential of its border crossing practices.

I thus follow two theoretical aims in this chapter: firstly, the extent to which the Cybergoth and Steampunk subgenres within Goth can be used to explore interpretations of posthumanism as transhuman or posthumanist will be interrogated by thinking through engagements with the nonhuman in my research materials. I will argue that, while Cybergoth style such as Nekoi’s emphasises cybernetic additions to embody an ‘improved’ state as imagined in Cyberpunk and Science Fiction literature, Steampunk’s DIY ethos may hold greater potential to introduce a distributed notion of agency. Secondly, I will assess certain weaknesses of the cyborg and explore the potential of Haraway’s vampire as an alternate figuration. These theoretical points also offer

insight into Goth cultural practices brought to light by thinking of materials as active agents in social lives, and offers reflections upon the mobilisation of anxieties. I open the discussion however, by detailing the Cybergoth and Steampunk as subgenres of 'Goth' practice.

Cybergoth and Steampunk Bodies: Transhuman or Posthumanist?



Figure 16: Cybergoth, Nekoi (left) and Steampunk, Thomas (right). Source: Nekoi's photo-study, researcher's own.

As I introduced above, the Cybergoth subgenre of Goth embraces the technological within music and clothing styles, and reflects Haraway's cyborg figure as a contemporary social reality. Cybergoth music is electronically produced, contrasting to the guitar-based Gothic Rock of the 1980s, with lyrical themes and clothing trends similarly, reflecting ideas of technological progress and drawing on the image of the cyborg within science fiction rather than a Victorian or horror movie aesthetic. Many Cybergoths have an interest in technology including Nekoi who chose to conduct a guided walk in Tokyo's electronics hub of Akihabara. The novel *Frankenstein* (1819) featuring a 'Monster'

created in a lab from human limbs, animated by scientific techniques and the 'spark' of electricity, reflects the conflation of Gothic and Science Fiction themes within Cybergoth most effectively: it explores the effects of the mixing of technology and the human body, and like cyborgs from contemporary science fiction, it is unclear as to whether they are human or machine.

Steampunks share a similar interest in science fiction and fashions incorporating technology, but with a very different source of inspiration and outcome. Steampunk originated as an independent genre of literature, film and gaming in the 1980s and 1990s, and a culture centred on retro-technology, an associated fashion and a limited music scene emerged in the 2000s (Zala 2008: 32). The central inspiration can be defined as "a subgenre of science fiction, which set Victorian characters amid today's technology or in a parallel future universe, where analogue triumphed over digital and the airship prevailed over the aeroplane" (*ibid*). Taking inspiration from Jules Verne and imagined Victorian technology powered by steam instead of electricity, and machinery constructed from brass rather than plastic (Catling 2009), do-it-yourself (DIY) projects such as those detailed on the *Steampunk Workshop* blog have become iconic and reflect the 'punk' affix (von Slatt 2010). Thomas pictured above (right) for example, is a "Steampunk inventor" and craftsman, who created the pneumatic arm piece and brass goggle monocle.

These two subgenres actively embrace technologies and, I suggest, immediately undermine the notion of the human as bounded subject, separate from technology and the nonhuman. A closer investigation of the style practices of these two case studies reveals a negotiation between approaches to posthumanism as transhuman and posthumanist contained within Haraway's writing. As introduced above, posthumanism is a contested term with varying interpretations (Castree *et al.* 2004). Some such as Wolfe (2010: xiii) are critical of "cyborg" posthumanism that promotes "transhumanism": a focus on "ideals of human perfectibility, rationality, and agency inherited from Renaissance humanism and the Enlightenment". He argues that such approaches reflected in the

work of Hayles (1999) and Badmington (2000) for example, undesirably “associated the posthuman with a kind of triumphant disembodiment” and is therefore “seen as an *intensification* of humanism”, rather than presenting a radical alternative (Wolfe 2010: xv original emphasis). Alternately, posthumanist approaches oppose “the fantasies of disembodiment and autonomy, inherited from humanism itself” (pxv) and consider the material in a way which works to undermine Cartesian dualisms. This stance moves away from conceiving of the posthuman as an “historically specific phenomenon” (pxvi), and into a philosophical debate or epistemology (See also Wilson 2009).

However, Haraway’s cyborg posthumanism retains both the acknowledgement of the social realities of the profound interaction between nature and society, as illustrated in various contemporary food scares (e.g. Whatmore 2002, 2006) and advances in medical technology and computing (e.g. Vogel 2002, Warwick *et al.* 2003, Smith and Mora 2006), while simultaneously seeking to undermine dualistic thinking philosophically. In the following sections, I will thus trace both lines of Haraway’s argument via interaction with my research materials, and discuss advantages and weaknesses of her dual approach. I will explore bodily additions and transformations within Cybergoth and the processes of creativity involved within Steampunk DIY projects. Through such considerations I will work up the arguments that transhuman views of materiality as additive to the body can work alongside posthumanist recognitions that bodily additions act to transform the bodies themselves, and stress that the objects for creative modification are active contributors to such processes. Firstly, I will use Cybergoth fashions to explore transhumanist critiques of Haraway’s cyborg posthumanism.

Cybergoth: Bodily Additions or Bodily Transformations?

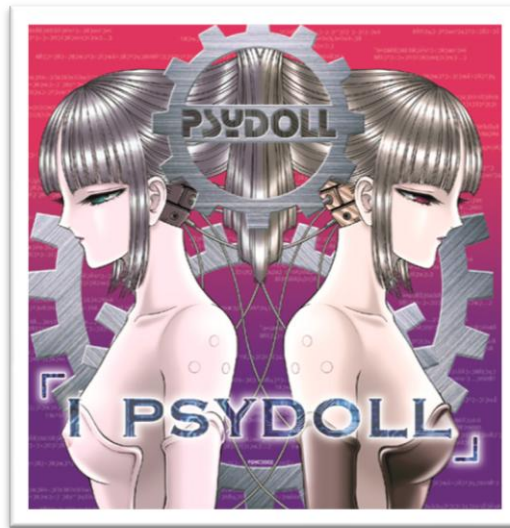


Figure 17: “I Psydoll”, *Psydoll* album cover. Source: Nekoi’s photo-study (the copyright holder).

Fashions within Cybergoth incorporate synthetic fabrics such as PVC; accents such as metal spikes, studs and sections of circuit boards; contact lenses of various colours and shapes; accessories including *Borg*-like eye pieces (See: Cyberdog 2010); and unusual cuts inspired by the sleek lines of imagined futuristic technologies. Nekoi and her band *Psydoll* adopt such stylistic elements. Indeed, I suggest that the illustration on the ‘I Psydoll’ album cover above and the image of Nekoi on page 127 share similar features. The illustration of two “Psycho-DOLLS” above reveals their nonhuman qualities via eye colour and mechanical wiring to the brain, while the photograph presents Nekoi coupled with her keyboard wearing green and purple contact lenses, wrist pieces and synthetic tubing in her hair to mirror the wired brains of her illustration. She also wears a PVC corseted top similar to their shell-like protective clothing of her illustrations.

During her guided walk Nekoi explained why this cyborg style and ideology appealed to her. Since childhood she has suffered with eczema and asthma and felt that her body, as she put it, “did not work so well”. She wished to have mechanical elements incorporated believing: “it would work better with robot parts”, and while these hopes for mechanical additions were not realised, she takes medications daily to control her persistent illnesses. Such desires and qualities thus chime

with criticisms of a posthumanism that focuses on the transcendence of weaknesses of the human body (Wolfe 2010, Wilson 2009, Shabot 2006)

However, I also argue that there is potential for posthumanist thinking within the back-story of Nekoi's "Doll" persona. Following an early childhood interest in science fiction and cyborg characters in film, anime (Japanese animation) and manga (Japanese comics), such as *The Matrix* (1991), *Ghost in the Shell* and *Full Metal Alchemist*, she carried this interest into her adult employment as a manga artist, her use of erotic, doll-like illustrations as *Psydoll* album covers and the persona she has created. When considering this persona, I suggest that Nekoi's 'character' within *Psydoll* calls into question Haraway's three crucial dualisms of the Cartesian humanistic tradition: that between human and animal, organism and machine and the physical and the non-physical (pp152-153).

Nekoi is fusion of human and machine, combining the physical appearance and artificial intelligence system modelled on the human thought processes of her "maker's deceased 10 year old daughter", while being constructed from "iron, plastic and PVC" and describing herself as a "Cyberdoll", favouring PVC clothing to echo her character's synthetic origins (Myspace 2010). Nekoi's rebellious DOLL persona also includes animalistic traits: her maker incorporated "brain and optic nerves of his daughter's cat", something which is used to explain the highly "emotional" expression of her "feelings" via music (*Psydoll* 2009). Such an imagined embodiment is far from transcendent of physicality, and is "challenging" as it incorporates the animalistic, organic and technological into a highly emotional and "lively" (Thrift 2004) being. This begins to tease out the greater potential of the nonhuman beyond bodily addition in the form of a PVC dress or contact lens.

Such arguments can also be made when considering 'Goth' practices more broadly. I contend that Goth bodies are modified directly (and sometimes permanently) by a range of technologies and

materials, with such modifications leading to considerable impacts for the individual. Participants Anton and Eric in New York for example, had both previously experimented with synthetic hair extensions, common within Cybergoth style. Eric had blue and green dreadlocks made from synthetic hair braided into and covering his 'natural' hair, while Anton had opted for a more extreme look incorporating green plastic tubing braided and styled into a Mohawk. These styles require special maintenance and upkeep, including determining possible sleeping positions; Anton detailing how he had to "sleep on one side...with my hair pulled up on the pillow because of its weight". The hair style also limited Anton's employment opportunities, especially when emigrating to the US to work as a psychiatric nurse. This however, was something he was willing to tolerate due to the importance of the hair to him: "it just became a part of me, a bit-part of my identity".

More subtle perhaps, is Lev's styling of his finger nails into the shape of "claws". Lev's Gothic expression through style was limited due to his status as a student on low income. Instead, he used his unusual finger nails as a way of creatively expressing something 'Goth' by directly modifying his body through the technology of a file and varnish.

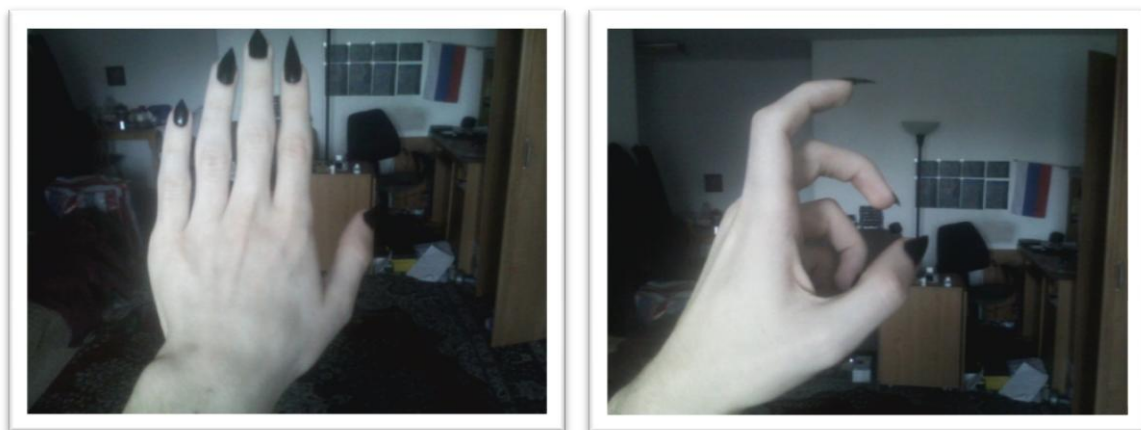


Figure 18: Participant Lev's "claw" fingernails. Source: Lev's photo-study.

He described these nails as "very important" to him, illustrated by the fact that they featured in three of the twelve images he contributed. Lev discovered instructions on how to create the look

while browsing a Goth style internet site and decided it was an affordable way to achieve a Goth look, but one with significant consequences to his habitual behaviours and his degree in Information Technology: he cannot type on a laptop and must use a desktop computer for all assignments. Again, he is however, willing to make this adjustment in order to embody his Goth sense of subjectivity in a cost-effective way.

As my consideration of Lev and Anton has introduced, materials are thus not only ‘additions’ but work to transform the individual into a ‘Goth’ subject with consequences of limiting and adapting physical actions. However, when thinking through such intimate engagements with the material world within Goth cultural practices, I suggest that a specific garment, the corset, holds particular potential in theorising the role of the nonhuman in the co-emergence of subjectivities. Corsets are popular garments amongst Goths of all subgenres and were featured in two very similar images by participants. Isabel includes a photograph of her own corset about to be tied by her sister (left), while Taylor includes an image of a friend’s corset that he has just laced (right):



Figure 19: Participant Isabel’s corset being laced (left); and a corset laced by Taylor. Source: participants’ photo-studies.

The “logic” (Tarlo 2007) of the corset embodies a specific and complex cultural history: from its introduction in the 16th Century, it has embodied ideals of feminine beauty, female gender submission and has evolved into an object of sexual fetishism and a contemporary fashion garment,

utilised by designers such as Vivienne Westwood as signature styles (Steele 1996, 2003). It performs an idealised femininity or “hyper-femininity” (Brill 2008) as introduced in the previous chapter, by altering the physical dimensions of the body to increase the hip-to-waist ratio through its construction of metal boning and heavy, layered fabric. This was expressed by Morgan, who found that as a male-to-female transgendered individual, wearing women’s Victorian clothing including corsetry, significantly altered or “folded” her body in different ways:

“There’s obviously things you can’t do like sit down... a guy would sit down with his legs wide open and with [a] dress...you can’t do that, otherwise you’d be showing the world everything...You walk probably more effeminately as well because the dress and corset kind of folds you into that as well.”

Similarly, participant Isabel felt that her activities were constrained while at a Goth festival in Whitby due to the interaction of her corset and the challenging local geography:

*“it’s not practical...walking around in corsets and things- It takes me three attempts to get up to the Abbey! *laugh* I have to stop [pant], like that! In fact I didn’t bother this October.”*

Such insights emphasise the active role of materials in generating gendered Goth bodies. This goes beyond Butler’s discursive determinism by foregrounding how objects and materialities contribute to a “gender-in-the-making” via material engagements (Haraway 1997: 35). I argue that the materialities of Goth clothing items like corsets, thus operate in a similar way to the clothing adopted within Mike Crang’s (1996) study of historical reenactments. For his participants reenacting life on a Tudor estate, including a great attention to the detail of period clothing and undergarments such as corsets, “the reenactors focused on the way clothes did not just reflect

conceptions of gendered activities but played an active role in ensuring compliance with these conceptions” (p420). Some female participants felt that the restrictive nature of the corsets led to a greater understanding of women’s limited roles in Tudor society due to their physically constraining effect. Isabel and Morgan’s discussions of how they ‘feel’ during the process of dressing and while moving in these garments demonstrate both how a feeling of ‘femininity’ is generated by the interaction with such garments, but like Crang’s Tudors, they also complicate the assumption that the garment inherently signifies female submission.

Both participants ‘feel feminine’ in their outfits, especially via corsets which may seem to confirm Brill’s (2009) assertion that Goth women value a “hyperfeminine” aesthetic and thus stereotypical female gender roles are advanced within Goth. However, I suggest that such a simplistic conclusion is problematised by the employment of irony and reflexivity in the discussions of my participants. Isabel described how her limited movements reinforced “old fashioned” ideas about the role of Victorian women, joking that females were expected to: “be dainty and take tea, not climb up cliffs!” However, she overtly recognised that the adoption of the garment was for temporary fantasy and escapism from her role of responsibility as a teacher, into the character of: “a Gothic Scarlett O’Hara for the afternoon”. Morgan was also fully aware of the historical and stereotypical implications of the corset, but valued this “hyperfemininity” to create the physical curves she didn’t have.

Equally, Crang concludes that those involved in historical reenactment were reflexively aware that they do not present an ‘authentic’ presentation of the past, but an interpretation of possible experiences. While Goths do not seek a direct reenactment, the reflexivity of such gender “in-the-making” and the recognition of the play involved, is vital to Gothic presentation. Such insights are not possible from a vantage point that does not value the agency of the material in enacting subjectivities, or a disembodied transhuman approach that considers the nonhuman as solely additive elements. The Cybergoth has thus brought into focus how materialities like the corset,

actively construct identities by “folding” bodies in certain ways, and more permanent modifications such as synthetic hair styles become “bit-parts” of an individual’s distributed and embodied subjectivities.

Despite this acknowledgment and exploration of intimate relations with active ‘things’ through the corset, I will now ask: how can the agency of materials be taken further beyond theorising the nonhuman as active participants in the emergence and transformation of embodied subjectivities? Crouch (2003a, 2003b) for example, investigates the role of direct interaction with materiality through the body in his study of allotment keeping. He argues that “process” is significant to such individuals rather than a fixed end-point as: “individuals suggest the transformative possibilities of the simple uneventful things they do, in terms of feeling rather than outcome” (2003b: 1952). He concludes that the repetitive and habitual physical interaction with the land involved in allotment keeping, is: “affirmative of, and can impel, a powerful sense of being, or ‘practical ontology’” (2003a: 18). Furthermore, in relation to a sense of collective “identity”, Gregson and Rose’s (2000) study of *Community Arts Workers* in Scotland, concludes that the practices of creating art were more highly valued and served to define the group more effectively than the art actually produced. This next section will thus question what such a Goth “practical ontology” might entail. I will consider the second sub-genre within Goth: *Steampunk*, focussing on what an engagement between such practices and cyborg philosophies can achieve.

Steampunk: Creativity and “Sticky” Materialities

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The image can be seen on the designer’s website:

<http://www.bruteforceleather.com/store/scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=380>

Epod

This is the perfect accessory for any Steampunk enthusiast!

Press on the screen to activate the light and open the secret back compartment to store your valuables!

Note: Epod designs vary widely, depending on what parts we have in stock. Please indicate general colour and theme (steam, electric, etc). These are individual pieces of art and no two are exactly the same.

Figure 20: "Epod" accessory/handbag designed by Participant Thomas Source: <http://www.bruteforceleather.com/store/scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=380>, accessed 2010.

Steampunk fashions and imagery are based on a Victorian aesthetic of exploration, favouring terrain-suitable earth tones such as brown, cream, green and gold, and incorporating accessories such as binoculars, watches and goggles, alongside imagined technologies such as the *Epod*, a piston arm piece pictured in figure 16, or a “Galvanic Matter Transpositor” watch and an “Haemostatic Capillary Pump Earring” produced by English jewellery company *Alchemy Gothic* (2010). These elements combine to produce an overall look resembling a sepia photograph, but with imagined technologies that do not fit within any specific time-period.

Creative endeavours such as the *Epod* pictured above, are significant Steampunk practices. Projects including modifying a computer keyboard using marble, brass and antique typewriter keys have been widely publicised and triggered the first exhibition of Steampunk invention art at the *Oxford Museum of the History of Science* in 2009 (*Museum of the History of Science* 2009). Fashion is also a

key site of this creativity, reflected in details such as accessories: the epitome of Steampunk style is a pair of brass and leather goggles worn on the hair line, which can be customised further with items such as decorative clockwork mechanisms or magnifying lenses (See: *Brute Force Studios* 2010)

Broadening out the discussion to other Goth style practices, participant Rachael stresses the importance of modifying and making clothing. She includes images in her photo-study of an evening with a friend sewing garments and searching for clothing on internet forums, and a photograph of items purchased at various second hand sales being aired in her back garden.



Figure 21: Rachael's second hand clothing airing on the line. Source: Rachael's photo-study.

While she does buy brand-name products and enjoys the satisfaction of a “finished” outfit, she more frequently emphasised the process of “finding” and modifying items as vital aspects of her dressing practices:

“it's just finding things and finding the perfect thing to go with one outfit...it's like putting an outfit together and then something that absolutely finishes it and makes it absolutely

perfect rather than just going out and putting on loads of stuff just because it has the right brand name, and then just not doing anything with it."

She stresses fashionable creativity as crucial to her involvement in Goth, and she is critical of those who simply purchase 'off-the rack' outfits bought in popular alternative shopping areas such as Camden, which do not demand the same degree of ingenuity. She argues that individuals should: "wear the stuff from Camden but make it your own... that's what really annoys me with people- they don't make it their own outfit". Her creative practices help to ensure her overall clubbing look will be 'individual': "if I turn up and I'm wearing the same outfit as someone else, at least I know that mine will look different because I've done something different with it", crucial for her as: "if I turn up and they are wearing exactly the same thing as me I'm gutted!". Rachael's style practices thus suggest that a sense of shared practice is significant for the emergence of Goth subjectivities and sense of belonging.

The opening image and description of the *Epod* also introduces a second point: such creative practices demonstrate that far from seeing the material as innate objects to be appropriated and crafted by human ingenuity, the active role of engaging with the material is emphasised. When speaking of the *Epod* pictured above, the self-declared "Inventor", Thomas, describes his creative process:

"I do what the objects tell me- some things speak to me: "make me into THIS!" and so I do it and there you go- an Epod... This one was made from a transmission box from an old Model-T [Ford car]."

Similarly, in a discussion triggered by the second-hand clothing on the washing line, Rachael enthusiastically recounted her ideas for modifying one of the skirts pictured, arguing that: "it's got potential....that's the thing- I see potential in things". She plans to modify the "Victorian shaped

skirt with a petticoat underneath” to fit her personal style, which she describes as “post-apocalyptic Victorian punk”. The garment has “potential” because of its unusual materiality:

“it’s made out of parachute material and it’s like tiny blue checks so it’s really futuristic looking material but a Victorian style skirt...Because it’s that thin parachute material it’s got lots of rips in it so I think I’m going to Frankenstitch it [the method of using large cross stitching on the outside of a garment in a contrasting colour] with big chord or use leather thong and stitch it all together and make a feature out of the rips and then sort of hook it up at the front and bustle it or something, and make it into a big punk skirt.”

Such “potential” can be seen to inhabit the garment itself rather than solely residing in the human mind or eye. This “thing-power” (Bennett 2004, 2005, 2007) of the material is reinforced by Rachael in descriptions of unsuccessful projects. She admits to “not being the best at sewing”, sometimes losing interest or lacking time to complete an idea and simply not knowing what to do with certain items, for example a PVC cat suit she shows pictured on her sister “before it goes to the charity shop”. This item had initially inspired Rachael to adapt it into a ‘Goth’ piece by making alterations and styling with accessories. However, the materiality of the item as PVC, resisted modification and transformation as such fabrics are very difficult to machine sew as they stick to the foot and will not flow past the needle fluidly. This consideration of the limits to creativity by the qualities of certain materials presents the power of agency as “horizontalised” (Bennett 2007: 449), as opposed to uniquely residing in the human subject. The surface of the fabric dictated the possibilities for “Gothicising” (Steele 2008: 10) the item and eventually refused such a process, and, bought at a second hand clothing market; it was again discarded and taken to a charity shop.

Participants’ experiences thus indicate that the material is an active part in the emergence of Goth subjectivities. It does so by transforming the body in direct ways through, for example, the corset,

while the practice of engaging creatively with materials forms a defining “practical ontology” (Crouch 2003a, 2003b) of Goth. Significantly, these materials are credited with agency or “thing-power” of their own within such processes: it is equally more important for Rachael to find “potential” in a garment rather than forming a completed, ‘Goth’ item. These “garments-in-process”, are referred to as “projects”, and the qualities of their materialities determine such “potential”: some projects will be successful and the potential for an item to become ‘Goth’ or ‘Steampunk’ will be actualised, while others resist this process due to their challenging and literally, ‘sticky’ materialities. Steampunk and Goth more broadly, can therefore be theorised as a series of creative practices which emerge through engagements with the nonhuman, but in ways in which agency is distributed, thus assigning materials with equal influence in the creative processes that come to define participation.

I thus conclude this first half of the chapter by arguing that the exploration of debates between posthuman philosophies put into tension with my Cybergoth and Steampunk, have complicated the status of the material as mere additions to the body. Materials have been seen to transform bodies and participate in creative practices; actions that significantly influence participants’ ‘Goth’ experiences and participate in the emergence of subjectivities. Haraway’s cyborg philosophies can thus be considered to hold potential when thinking through such collectivities. However, within the second half of the chapter, I will investigate potential limitations of her specific use of the cyborg and consider alternative figurations and their attendant ontologies.

Troubling the Cyborg

I have thus far considered the potential of the Cybergoth and Steampunk when theorised as cyborgs in both transhuman and posthumanist interpretations of posthumanism. Several criticisms of the first approach have been highlighted; namely a return to humanist dualisms by theorising man/machine hybridity as a way to 'improve' the body and transcend its weaknesses (Castree *et al.* 2004, Castree and Nash 2006, Shabot 2006, Wolfe 2010). However, as McCormack (1999: 173) asserts: "It is not enough to explore, in an almost celebratory manner, the fact of human-machinic hybridity". This echoes criticisms of accounts that fail to offer critical insight beyond a coupling of man and machine. A posthumanist vision in contrast, seeks to destabilise dualisms thoroughly, something which has been partly achieved above through an investigation of the agency of materials as partners to human creativity with the power to transform bodies, rather than transcending such "fleshy" considerations.

However, I will now explore several further debates regarding the appropriateness of the cyborg as posthuman figuration. Firstly, and relating to criticisms of bodily transcendence, Haraway's (1997) cyborg is theorised as occupying a specific time: post-Second World War "technobiopower". Her use of examples from technoscience all occur after 1945, beginning with the first cyborg: a mouse regulated by an osmotic pump, produced in 1960. Braun (2004: 1354 original emphasis) argues that "one finds in much posthumanist literature an almost breathless excitement about having entered a *new age*, about having emerged into a time, or a condition, where the body has become no longer entirely or fully human". This logic suggests that prior to such an 'age', the human was easily divided from the natural, and that "at an earlier moment the boundaries really did not exist and that humans was purely, simply, 'itself'" (*ibid*). This works to confirm the humanist assumption of a discrete human figure and can easily be seen to provoke reactionary responses such as Fukuyama's (2003) technological pollution. In this sense, such ideas function to move emphasis back to the human by implying that such figures existed in isolation prior to technological developments which

“eclipsed”, or “transcended” (Braun 2004: 1353) such purity. Equally, as McCormack (1999: 174) asserts, “while not denying the importance of socio-technical transformations that have taken place in the second half of the twentieth century, it is surely a mistake to grant the figure of the cyborg such a novelty”, arguing instead that “its lineage is much older, perhaps as old as the lineage of ‘human’ life”.

Secondly, Cohen-Shabot (2006) shares similar concerns regarding the disruptive potential of the cyborg in relation to its adoption within popular culture. As Haraway’s arguments and posthumanism in general, are framed as both academic discourse and a social reality, it is significant that Cohen-Shabot (2006: 223) criticises Haraway’s cyborg, noting that it is: “not representative of the ways in which the cyborg developed within popular culture”. Aside from the predominantly negative and apocalyptic portrayal of cyborgs in cinema and literature (see e.g. Kavanagh 1990, Featherstone and Burrows 1995, Cavallaro 2000), Cohen-Shabot highlights trend towards and “escape from the body” (p227) as discussed above, and the quality of “hyper-sexuality” (p225) as weaknesses which signal a return to dualistic thinking.

She argues that iconic cyborg characters such as the *Terminator* (Cameron 1984), the Borg queen of *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996) and the “Replicants” of *Blade Runner* (1982), are presented as exaggerations of the female and male form (see also: Doane 1999, Wolmark 1999a), leading to the glorification of: “the supreme expression of the normative body and sexual identity” (Cohen-Shabot 2006: 225,). Such films thus and act as a “*reinforcement and an exacerbation of the classic, binary divisions of sexual bodies and identities*” (*ibid* original emphasis). An abandonment of the body in this sense, thus leads to the possibility of separating the mind from the inferior body and effectively, allowing the body to be abandoned (p227-228). This counters lived experiences or a “way-of-being in the world” as grounded “in the world” in which: “our limits are blurred, our bodies are open” (p228).

These critiques suggest the necessity to consider alternate figurations which incorporate the concepts of a more consistent engagement between humans and nonhumans over time, and a stance of greater openness to such nonhuman actors. I thus suggest along with Cohen-Shabot (2006: 227-231) that there is potential in the concept of the “grotesque body”, characterised as profoundly “unfinished”, “fleshy” and therefore, open to a more philosophically robust concept of hybridity. She argues that such bodies, as amalgams of human, animal and object, evoke: “monstrosity, irrational confusion, absurdity, and a deformed heterogeneity” (p229). Grotesque bodies are therefore, “excessive” as they are “not clean, closed, well-defined, clear-cut, beautiful bodies striving for symmetry and order” (p229). Such “beautiful bodies” include that of the cyborg, whereas a grotesque figure is instead, more profoundly “social” due to the excesses it implies: “the excessive body cannot be absolutely contained, that is, it cannot be disconnected from the rest of the world or from its others” (*ibid*).

In the remainder of the chapter I will investigate this potential by considering the materiality of a final Goth sub-genre: *Gothic Lolita*. This genre forms one of the key style practice adopted by those populating Goth clubs in Japan, where the style originated. While Gothic Lolita takes its name from the novel *Lolita* (1955) by Vladimir Nabokov, such individuals adopt the qualities of a porcelain doll rather than a 1950s school girl by incorporating abundant layers of frill, lace and bows (Macias and Evers 2007, Winge 2008). As demonstrated in the images below, while there are several variations of Lolita style including *Sweet Lolita* with an emphasis on pastel colours (left), the Gothic variation is dominated by the colour black and Victorian mourning imagery (right).



Figure 22: Sweet Lolita (left) and Gothic Lolita style (right). Source: researcher's own.

In the following section I draw on concepts within Japanese popular culture to suggest that the Gothic Lolita simultaneously embodies a disruptive or “grotesque” mix of qualities of the cute, pretty and scary, via the engagements entered into with the nonhuman. However, while the grotesque body is useful in considering such theoretical positions, I suggest that it is too abstract to retain the strengths and popular cultural relevance of Haraway’s more relatable, cyborg. I therefore conclude the chapter by questioning the potential of Haraway’s less well-developed figuration of the vampire as a more successful hybrid or grotesque body.

Gothic Lolita: Kawaii (Cute), Kirei (Pretty) and Kowai (Scary)

I argue that the Gothic Lolita (pictured above) evokes three qualities significant within the histories Japanese popular culture. Firstly, the Gothic Lolita and Lolita style more broadly, most obviously draw upon the quality of *kawaii*, or ‘cute’. *Kawaii* can be defined as “cute, pretty and lovely” and also implies “something precious: something that we are drawn towards and which stimulates one’s

feeling of wanting to protect something that is pure and innocent” (Hasegawa 2002). Some theorists suggest that the trend towards *kawaii* is especially significant as it has come to represent the ideal of femininity within Japan. Johnson (2007: 8) for example, argues that such an idea originates in Confucian philosophies which dictate that children must respect their fathers, wives their husbands and elderly women, their children.

In more recent history, Hasegawa (2002) has theorised that *kawaii* stems from a lack of confidence and loss of male identity following the defeat of Japan in the Second World War and subsequent reliance on the USA. She asserts that as a result of this feeling of vulnerability, “instead of a mature male seeking a mature female, the dependent Japanese male, needing protection, seeks a mother figure as well as a girl whose sexuality is yet to emerge and who responds passively to his overtures” (p128). Within this imagining, women should therefore be submissive and caring, embodying purity (Johnson 2007: 8), qualities particularly contained within the term ‘*kawaii*’. Winge (2008: 58) asserts that *kawaii* has therefore, “dominated almost every aspect of consumer culture”, as seen in brands like *Hello Kitty* and street fashions of the late 1990s and 2000s due to this presentation of women as a non-threatening ideal (See also Macias and Everts 2007)

Johnson (2007: 10 original emphasis) in particular, contends that the effects of this idealisation have been significant: “*kawaii* shapes ideologies about the way a woman's body should appear both in reality and in animation”. Within the aesthetic field of anime and manga, she goes on to detail how, “*kawaii* shows a preference for animated characters that have round, flat, simple features, big eyes, and qualities of smoothness and roundness” (10), while these ideals have been reflected in other cultural practices, for example *Cosplay* (‘costume play’) and the Lolita style. Indeed, the Lolita style is thought to appeal to individuals due to the emphasis on childlike image and the notion of escape to an innocent state prior to the responsibilities of adulthood (Kinsella 1995, Hasegawa 2002, Aoyama and Cahill 2003).

Despite the perhaps extreme appearance of the Lolita and the black-clad Gothic Lolita, within a Japanese context, such presentations can be normalised to some extent by thinking through this image as embodying the widely attractive *kawaii* ideal. Indeed, Tiffany Godoy (2009: 45) writing on the Gothic within Japanese visual arts and culture, argues that such an “outré silhouette” is, in contrast, “not shocking to a Japanese public accustomed to elaborate dress”. Similarly, Joy Hendry (1993) notes how a tradition of layering and “wrapping” is reflected throughout Japanese culture, including the many levels of formality found within speech and the traditional dress of the kimono. As Godoy (2009: 45) concludes, “when considered alongside the Japanese tradition of wearing kimono, the hyperbolically cute and matronly attire seems no more garish in its presentation”.

The attraction towards such an image is further enhanced in the Lolita’s namesake character Nabokov’s novel: she also incorporates elements of sexuality, especially I suggest, when coupled with the influence of the Gothic. The *kawaii* trend has been noted for its sexual connotations, especially due to the “Lolita complex”, a trend towards sexual attraction to young girls (Winge 2008). Macias and Evers (2007: 49-51) detail how this was reflected within popular culture in the mid-1990s by the *Kogal* (*ko*, “girl” and *gal*, “sexy”); a group of teenage school-girls who triggered media scandal by attracting businessmen to pay for dating (*enjo kyosai*) and allegedly, sex. This is perhaps a relic of Japanese cultural history, as the national age of consent in Japan is 13 years regardless of sexual orientation and gender (as specified by the *Japanese Penal Code*, Article 177), although some prefectures have overriding laws, Tokyo’s age of consent is 18 for example (Japan Legal FAQ 2005). While Lolita culture itself does not focus on sexual themes or participate in these behaviours, the dress style perhaps evokes similar connotations and moves the Lolita towards the second concept of *kirei* (“pretty”).

To elaborate, Johnson (2007: 30) argues that within animation, a more 'edgy' interpretation of female characters is reflected in the kirei characters which are associated with sexuality, power and sometimes even presented as 'evil'. Drawn with more shading and angles to their facial features, they have: "sexualized or more mature looking bodies, provocative outfits, voluptuous breasts, facial expressions that lack the innocence of *kawaii*" (*ibid* original emphasis). She also argues that such a character "posses a self-assured body language unlike that of typical *kawaii* heroines". This is similar to Winge's (2008: 55) distinction of the Gothic Lolita from other varieties of Lolita: "Gothic Lolitas pose like Classic or Sweet Lolitas, with a slightly broader stance". Furthermore, such individuals may incorporate provocative and 'sexualised' fabrics such as PVC, including Nekoi pictured as a *Cyber Doll* on the opening page. Miller (2005) argues that, for these girls who are not seeking overt sexual attention like the kogal, their look enables a more "empowered sexuality" to be expressed behind the image of childhood immaturity.

However, returning once more to Nabokov's character, I further suggest that the Gothic Lolita embodies the contradictory qualities evident in her framing as a "nymphet": "the beastly and the beautiful merged at one point" (Nabokov 1991: 135). Despite the appealing qualities detailed above, the Lolita and its Gothic modulation, also embody *kowai* (scary) via relations with the thing-world. The most overt exemplification is the status of the Lolita as an automata or 'living doll', navigating the tensions between inanimate object and living being. Bush (2001: 39) argues that "dolls are a universal subject of occult lore and literature", as reflected in the many horror films featuring living dolls, including: *Devil Doll* (1936); *Trilogy of Terror* (1975); *Magic* (1978); *Poltergeist* (1982), *Dolls* (1987), the most prolific villain being the possessed doll, *Chucky* in the five *Child's Play* movies from 1988 to 2005. Such concepts also feature within a Japanese context, wherein superstitions of misfortune being brought to those who mistreat dolls proliferate, as reflected in early horror novels such as Edogawa Rampo's "Inhuman Love" (1926) and a 1940 horror film

Adauchi Koi Ningyo ("Revenge of the Ghost Doll"), which predate the influx of American horror and science fiction in the 1950s (Bush 2001, Nakamura 2002: 634).

In addition to what Bush (2001: 39) describes as the "universal" (Bush 2001: 39) unsettling effect of automata, a Gothic Lolita and may also include "Goth" objects. Winge (2008: 55) details how, instead of the teddy bears adopted by the Sweet Lolita, a Gothic Lolita may employ a "coffin purse, injured teddy bear, and/or black parasol". This incorporation of objects considered 'Goth', coupled with the sexual empowerment of kirei, projects an image that is also perhaps kawai. Winge (2008: 55) asserts that the Gothic Lolita adoption of predominantly black with an emphasis on Victorian Mourning and horror themes, "helps convey a darker, moribund, and gloomy image". The Gothic Lolita is therefore, also perhaps intimidating as well as embodying a traditionally "non-threatening", childish style (Johnson 2007: 10).

To take an overt example from my fieldwork within a Tokyo Goth club, the two individuals pictured below in Gothic Lolita style, experimented with horror themes and created their outfits featuring bandages and blood splattered clothing. Their pose for the photograph, expressing a mock-innocence through childlike hand gestures, and the beauty of the lace detail to the garments, contrasts starkly with the horrific acts of violence the blood-splattered clothing conjures in the imagination.



Figure 23: Blood-splattered Gothic Lolita style. Source: researcher's own.

Concluding along with Godoy (2009: 64) that, “it is this continual and delicate balance between beauty and destruction that is the hallmark of Japanese Goth”, Haraway’s cyborg is thus inadequate for thinking through the Gothic Lolita. As introduced above, the cyborg is not “unfinished” and does not allow for the oscillation of states evident when using the Gothic Lolita to think through relational materialities. In this final section then, I will thus expand on such insight and argue that potential is to be found within Haraway’s less developed figuration of the vampire. I discuss the ways in which this figure presents a more profoundly hybrid entity and way of thinking in relation to the three genres of Goth styles introduced here.

Reanimating Haraway’s Vampire

“Vampires are narrative figures with specific category-crossing work to do”.

Haraway (1997: 80)

The vampire functions as a disruptive and hybrid device in several ways. Firstly, the notion of 'purity' is destabilised in Haraway's (1997) discussion of *OncoMouse™* and the construction of race. The vampire is used alongside the cyborg to refer to her "modest witness", *OncoMouse™*. This mouse is a 'vampire' due its status as an "undead", living but lab manufactured creature; its existence as a metaphor and material fact; and its genetic structure blending mouse with human, thus causing: "the pollution of natural kinds" (pp79-80). Likewise, in her arguments surrounding race, she suggests that due to their discursive histories, "the existence of vampires trope the purity of lineage, certainty of kind, boundary of community, order of sex, closure of race, inertness of objects, liveliness of subjects, and clarity of gender" (1997: 80). Originating in Slavic folklore as Jews and gypsies who were accused of "polluting" European lineage: "the vampires are the immigrants, the dislocated ones, accused of sucking the blood of the rightful possessors of the land and of raping the virgin who must embody the purity of race and culture" (1997: 215).

Secondly, I suggest that their status as "undead" disrupts conceptions of linear time and presents a way in which to look beyond the problematic prefix of *-post* in posthumanism. Such a trait can be illustrated in relation to Steampunk styles and ethos discussed above. The specific form of creativity emphasised within Steampunk incorporates a mixing of space-times: Rachael's skirt for example, represents a blending of nineteenth century cuts such as the bustle, 1970s punk aesthetics via the foregrounding of rips and ragged stitching, and the look is realised in a 'futuristic', synthetic fabric. Whereas the cyborg is thought of as distinctly of the future, the Steampunk is a confusion of the past, present and potential futures. Haraway's vampire, as the undead, represents a limitless concept of time and an evocation or reanimation of the past in the present, as reflected in Steampunk. Such a move works to demonstrate as Whatmore (2004b: 1361) notes, that "one never arrives at a time/place where the human was not a work in progress", but have always been involved in intimate relationships with plants, animals and technologies via tool use and the daily practices of consuming food (Bennett 2007).

Finally, Whatmore (2004b: 1361) concludes that posthumanism should therefore be viewed as: “what *exceeds* rather than what comes *after* the human”. I propose that such ‘excess’ is reflected in the vampire when Haraway (1997: 215) notes, “it is impossible to have a settled judgment about vampires”. For Haraway, vampires are profoundly defined by their “categorical ambiguity and troubling mobility” and therefore, “do not rest easy (or easily) in the boxes labelled good and bad” (*ibid*). This is evident within their discursive histories: “from the points of view crafted in early Christian narrative sources from at least the end of the eighteenth century, vampires are ambiguous-like capital, genes, viruses, transsexuals, Jews, gypsies, prostitutes, or anybody else who can figure corporate maxing in a rapidly changing culture that remains obsessed with purity” (p80). Haraway (1997: 80) uses the vampire as a motif to theorize the contradictory appeal and repulsion of such nonhuman entities as they act to disrupt lineages and repel through attacking innocents such as “virgins” on their “wedding night”, while also inciting curiosity and desire through their status as immortal, hybrid beings. Similar to the vampire as re-animated corpse, the figure of the Gothic Lolita as living doll, reflects unease inspired by the automaton, and agitates related fears surrounding the animation of the apparently static and nonhuman.

Such ambiguity is also reflected in Cohen-Shabot’s (2006) focus on figurations within contemporary popular culture. While vampires in folk law were grotesque figures of fear, their characterisation in Victorian Gothic literatures such as *Dracula* (1819,) included the ability to appear aristocratic and seductive to lure victims (Botting 2009, Bloom 2010). The sexual undertones of vampiric practice of blood drinking have been also been embraced by authors such as Anne Rice in her *Vampire Chronicles* which include thinly veiled metaphors of homosexual eroticism (Botting 2009, Bloom 2010). Furthermore, the vampire is particularly relevant in the late 2000s due to the large number of television series (*The Vampire Diaries, True Blood, Being Human*) and films (*Twilight: New Moon, Twilight: Eclipse, Daybreakers, Let The Right One In, Cirque Du Freak: The Vampire’s Assistant*) to

feature such characters. These depictions again reflect ambiguity: the immensely popular *Twilight Saga*, features vegetarian vampires refusing to have sex before marriage in contrast to *True Blood's* emphasis on sex, blood consumption and violence. As Haraway (1997: 80) concludes: "desire and fear are the appropriate reactions to vampires".

I therefore, argue that vampires thoroughly "pollute lineages" while also disrupting notions of linear time and incorporate the complex interrelations of desire and repulsion. As demonstrated above, the Cybergoth is enmeshed with the nonhuman in terms of the emergence of such subjectivities within everyday practice, and the Steampunk disrupts linear time by combining the past, present and future within creative endeavours. While those such as Nekoi, view the cyborg as attractive in terms of ascending the weaknesses of the flesh, reaction to such a figure in popular culture has proven largely negative. It is thus conceivable that those who embody such figurations may likely trigger similar anxieties as they enter into the same category-crossing practices. However, the vampire is seen to emphasise this ambiguity of reaction more effectively than the cyborg, through their portrayal as both attractive and repulsive within popular culture.

The vampire and the Gothic Lolita do not escape fleshy embodied realities as the cyborg has been accused of, and such a figure embodies the potential of a "grotesque", unfinished state. The Lolita crosses many boundaries, and like the vampire, there is uncertainty as to its status as animate or inanimate, dead or alive. Further ambiguity is reflected in the unsettling effect of the living doll as evoking desire and also fear. Such a combination of the cute, pretty and scary presents a figure that is "open" and "unfinished" (Shabot 2006), combining directly with other actors for its existence: just as the vampire requires the blood of others to survive, the Gothic Lolita draw on the doll and nonhuman for their emergence. Taking a step away from a focus on technobiopower and the cyborg as a post-Second World War figuration, and using the Gothic Lolita as a tool through which to consider such posthuman ontologies, I have demonstrated that the vampire holds greater potential

as a more effective way of stressing the ambiguity and profound sociality of subjectivities and hybridity of 'culture'.

Conclusions

The opening encounter with participant Nekoi emphasised how Goths enter into intimate relations with the thing-world. As a *Cybergoth*, Nekoi embraced imagined technological developments and incorporated them into her persona as a musician, her manga art and embodied style practices. These practices led me to explore debates within posthuman philosophies, Haraway's cyborg materiality in particular, in order to question the role of materials in the working up of distributed and embodied Goth subjectivities and introduce a tentative rationale for the generation of cultures of anxiety.

Within this chapter I have used my empirical research material to explore two theoretical ideas: the debates within posthuman thought regarding a transhuman stance and a posthumanist perspective were interrogated in relation to Cybergoth style practices (Wolfe 2010). While Cybergoth style such as Nekoi's, emphasises cybernetic additions to embody an 'improved' state, as imagined in Cyberpunk and science fiction literature, the relationship with materials also revealed how such additions can become permanent and co-constituent aspects of 'Goth' subjectivities. Furthermore, the DIY ethos of Steampunk emphasised a distributed notion of agency. The "thing-power" (Bennett 2004, 2007, 2005) of items such as the base materials used in Thomas' *Epod* and Rachael's skirt, dictated the "potential" for transformation into something 'Goth', while the literally, "sticky", materiality of Rachael's PVC cat-suit forcibly resisted such modification attempts.

Secondly, I assessed certain weaknesses of the cyborg and explored the potential of alternative figurations based on a consideration of the Gothic Lolita as simultaneously embodying the cute,

pretty and scary through their relation with materials. Cyborg ontologies were found to be insufficient to account for such hybrid, unfinished or 'grotesque' qualities of the living doll as simultaneously unsettling, repulsive but also sexy and embodying the innocence of kawaii. I thus called for a reanimation of Haraway's vampire as an alternate figuration, but one less abstract than Cohen-Shabbot's (2006) "grotesque body", which effectively incorporates the simultaneous positive and negative qualities embodied within the profoundly liminal Gothic Lolita.

These theoretical points have also offered insight into Goth cultural practices brought to light by thinking of materials as active agents in social lives. Materials were seen to become significant "bit-parts" within the formation of distributed, embodied subjectivities. Materials worked to "fold" bodies in different ways, dictating actions and habits and even facilitating alternate experiences of gender. Furthermore, I suggested that a definitive practice involved in generating 'Goth' becomings is via entering into intimate relations with the thing-world. The discussion of Steampunk functioned to highlight the importance of creative practices in becoming Goth, practices that were valued more than a "perfect" end result achieved by purchasing brand-name clothing. In such an analysis, 'Goth' can be conceived of as produced via boundary-crossing practices which actively embrace the nonhuman, both figuratively and literally, like Haraway's cyborg and vampire.

Developing the vampire figuration in relation to the three case studies has also offered introductory reflections upon the mobilisation of anxieties. Enrolling a relational material ontology, has demonstrated that many Goths reflect the "border wars" being waged by posthumanist philosophy and the social movements that paralleled such thinking, whether they are aware of this potential or not (Haraway 1991: 150). I thus conclude that 'Goth' can be viewed as populated by vampires, cyborgs and spectres that, to invoke another Gothic figure, act as ghosts, haunting and producing traditional categories as ambiguous (Van Elferen 2009, Powell 2009). In this chapter, I have demonstrated that such ambiguity is vital in producing 'Goth'; which I here define as a set of

practices that disrupt the animal/human, organic/machine, physical/non-physical, dead/alive and past/present/future binary distinctions.

However, these tensions are not resolved. Indeed, opposing Fukuyama's (2003) technophobic conclusions, Cybergoths like Nekoi do not rally against the technological for its potential to eclipse human values, yet at the same time, they do not present the nonhuman in wholly positive ways; as seen in *Psydoll's* back-story reflecting the dystopic plot of *Blade Runner* (1982). The Gothic Lolita may be sexualised doll figures, but conversely, some are splattered with blood and carry injured teddy bears akin to a possessed doll, reminding others of the destructive potential enmeshed within the innocent image of Nabokov's "nymphet". Equally, the technology of Steampunk situates these individuals far from the standard Victorian 'Lady' or 'Gentleman', while they are similarly out of place in the twenty first century. They are effectively 'homeless' in time, and, in their denial of the Information Age via retention of brass, steam power and a Victorian aesthetic of exploration, they effectively eclipse and deny the progress and developments of recent histories. They thus haunt the present as if suspended in a time that is impossible to define. I contend that such disruptive category crossing, reliant on 'ambiguity' and 'disruption', while accepted in the academy for its philosophical potential, such ideals are largely lacking within popular cultural depictions of the cyborg as a largely terrifying aggressor (Doane 1999, Wolmark 1999a).

Finally though, I suggest that this proposed 'anxiety' is also called into question as a totalising category in itself. Wolfe (2010: xiii) notes that Haraway rejects both "utopian and dystopian visions of a cyborg future", thus reflecting the recognition that posthumanism is not an overturning of humanism but a "working through of tradition" (Badmington 2004: 1348). While the cyborg is depicted negatively, the vampire is presented more ambiguously, especially in the current rise in popularity of such figures in television, film and literature. In her later work, Haraway (2003) considered "companion species" such as domestic dogs in order to make her case using more

“friendly” examples. Perhaps the embrace of the vampire within popular culture indicates similar potential, as seen in the immense popularity of the *Twilight Saga* featuring vegetarian vampires refusing to have sex before marriage, and the CBBC cartoon *Mona the Vampire* aimed at children under 10. However, tensions still remain within the discursive histories of the vampire and other contemporary interpretations, notably *True Blood* which emphasises graphic violence and sex, thus reflecting the origins of such figures in Gothic horror writing (Botting 2009, Bloom 2010).

Such an ambiguous response opens up potential for further questioning: is there any way in which Goth may elicit anxiety aside from a spectator being consciously reminded of representations such as a cyborg *Terminator*, a *Chucky* doll or the vampire *Lestat*? Indeed, while this discussion has attempted to convey Bennett’s (2007: 449) assertion that “agency is distributed along an ontological continuum of beings, entities, and forces”, the latter “forces” have been somewhat neglected. Some studies within cultural geographies regard materiality beyond the representational, to focus on emotional and affective aspects of experience. Harman (2002: 20) for example, argues that “things”, “are capable of an effect, of inflicting some kind of blow on reality”. Such an impact not only arises via the use of materials by humans, but via the co-generation of pre-cognitive, pre-personal *affect*. The following chapter will thus place a greater emphasis on engagement with the nonhuman based on what this *does* rather than on what this *means*. Building from the discussion of “excess”, an exploration of affect will investigate the non-cognitive power of Goth border crossings and the production and circulation of anxieties regarding Goth culture.

Sensing and Sense-Making: Affective Intensities and the Gothic

Introduction

“Not all black clothes are Gothic, nor is Gothic fashion always black. For a fashion to be Gothitized means that either the clothing itself or its representation in a fashion photograph or catwalk show alludes in some way to the vast pool of Gothic associations.”

Valerie Steele (2008: 10)

Fashion theorist, Valerie Steele quoted above, insists that “Gothic” fashions are produced as such by referencing a series of discursive conventions. These what she terms, “Gothic associations”, include the themes of death, decay, the supernatural and sexual taboo explored within other incarnations of the term ‘Goth’; namely novels of the eighteenth century and later representations within early twentieth century cinema. However, within this thesis I am attempting to look beyond such cognitive “associations” in order to think through how ‘Goth’ emerges.

I have thus far considered the performative coming into being of Goth subjectivities and the role of the nonhuman in such enactments. Within these discussions something that works beyond or exceeds discursive explanation was introduced: for example, the investigation of how dancing in club spaces enacts distributed subjectivities, the transformations involved in corset-wearing and the qualities of the Japanese *Gothic Lolita* as simultaneously ‘cute’ (*kawaii*), ‘pretty’ (*kirei*) and ‘scary’ (*kowai*). Such notions of excess suggest that cognitive reasoning and signifying representations are not the only way in which the world, and therefore Goth, is enacted and experienced.

Within this chapter I use the concept affect as developed in non-representational geographies, to argue that it is not just allusion to representational associations classed as 'Gothic', for example taking up the image of a skull, bat or spider; that the emergence of Goth or such "Gothicizing", as Steel (2008: 10) terms it, relies upon. Instead, I shall explore how sensing and sense-making take place on a pre-cognitive, embodied level. As outlined in the *Theoretical Engagements* chapter, affect is defined differently to emotion and feeling as pre-cognitive "*form of thinking*" (Thrift 2008: 175 original emphasis), occurring before or in excess of the cognitive formation of a definition, or freezing via a representation, of what is experienced. Relating to the overall aims of my thesis, I will employ affect to investigate the sensing and sense-making of 'sameness' and 'difference': something that produces individuals as 'Goths' and distinguishes them as 'Others'.

Such concepts have been employed within social theory to some extent. Maffesoli (1996 original emphasis) for example, characterises his "neo-tribes" as held together loosely via a certain "*puissance*" or vitality, thought of as a pre-conscious quality. Malbon (1999) and Pini (2001) adopt this concept; Pini concluding that "peak experiences" become a definitive mode that can be said to characterise participation in Rave. A first question I will therefore undertake is how affect can be used to think through Goth belongings via the shared sense of affective affinity.

While I have problematised Hodkinson's (2002) notion of "consistent distinctiveness" through stressing the centrality of variety and creativity within chapters three and four, the question remains: what then, can account for 'Goth' fashions, clubs, festivals and bands present all over the world? This chapter will consider what might produce a degree of consistency beyond the conscious decision to take part in similar practices. Without uncritically reporting on participant's statements asserting that they feel a part of a defined 'Goth' culture, I will consider how affect can be used to think through the significance of belongings in a way that does not rely on a narrow characterisation of experience. Similarly, I have thus far suggested that alignment with Haraway's vampire figure

through engagements with materials and Bennett's "degrounding" effect generated through the embodied gender performances producing 'Goth', may account for the generation of anxieties. However, through what mechanisms are such responses generated: through conscious reflection or other registers of experience?

This chapter incorporates research materials differently to other chapters, by instead drawing on the discursive histories of the terms 'Goth' and 'Gothic' as analytical categories and points of inspiration. I take Gothic aesthetics as an initial starting point and suggest that a distinctive visual field and specific deployment of 'beauty' is mobilised to produce 'Goth'. I will stress however, that such beauty is not only experienced visually and cognitively, but as an affective 'force'. I then move on to utilise two concepts developed within non-representational interpretations of affect to investigate this force. Firstly, Thrift's (2008b) use of "glamour" to think through consumer marketing practices and generate allure, will be investigated. However, I contend that Goth practices do not only mobilise allure but also repel through the working up of anxieties. I thus introduce Jane Bennett's (2001) theorisation of "enchantment" to think through Goth aesthetics, focussing on the predominance of the colour black.

Finally, I will move beyond theorising 'beauty' as restricted to dress and the visual, by reproducing a listening diary, completed in response to the embodied experience of the song, "Bela Lugosi's Dead" by *Bauhaus*. Throughout the chapter I will problematise glamour and enchantment while exploring the complex tensions of the Gothic as simultaneously alluring and repulsive. Firstly however, Goth aesthetics and their relation to or affective inheritance from Gothic discursive conventions will be introduced, beginning with precursors found within Japanese cultural histories.

“A Thing of Unusual Beauty”

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. While the image was submitted by a research participant, this individual is not the copyright holder. The image can be seen on the Wikipedia entry for “Kabukimono”:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabukimono>

Figure 24: Image of a kabuki mono from participant Neko's photo study

Participant Neko's photo study included the image reproduced left: a woodblock print figure of a *kabuki mono* from 17th Century Japan, something she identified as an important inspiration to her engagement with contemporary Goth practices. Hiroshi Narumi (1995, 2009) argues that these individuals can be considered an example of an early “subculture” within Japan. They are significant in early modern Japanese histories as a group who disrupted traditional behaviour and dress codes and whose name would later be used to describe a type of avant-garde theatre, *Kabuki* (Wilkerson 1994).

Yoko Takakuwa (1996: 214) highlights the history of the etymology, *mono* translating as ‘person’ and *kabuki* coming from the verb *kobuku*, to “to slant” or “to tilt”, thus indicating something “unusual”. Portuguese missionaries produced a Japanese dictionary in 1603 which defined *kabuki* (*cabuqi*) as a mode of behaviour: “to conduct out of rule”, and defined the *kabuki mono* as an “eccentric person who acts more freely than one is allowed to” (*ibid*). Benito Ortolani (1995: 164) argues that by the start of the Takogawa era (1603-1818) the term “had acquired a slang usage for any anti-establishment action that defied the proper rules of behaviour”. He details how both Kabuki theatre and the *kabuki mono* emerged as a reaction against strict social and behavioural controls. This era followed a period of political unrest with rivalries between regional and familial factions until the Tokugawa shogunate centralized power (Hendry 2003: 16). This regime would also enter Japan into a period of isolationism (*sakoku*) from 1640 to 1853, initialized to prevent the spread and influence of Christianity (Sergeant 2005: 311). During this era, the government promoted the notion of an

homogenous Japanese society, united by a Confucian philosophy of respect for family and class structures. There were restrictions to gender and sexual behaviour in order to maintain these social hierarchies, and each person compulsorily conformed to conventions of dress and registered at a Buddhist shrine (Hendry 2003: 16).

Ortolani (1995: 163) describes the kabuki mono as largely master-less samurai who, “very much like the British ‘punk’ phenomenon of the seventies and early eighties”, were “people who expressed their anti-conformism through a series of protests against the established order, which ranged from highly unusual ways of dressing to shocking hairdos and extravagantly decorated, enormous swords and up to four foot long tobacco pipes”. Their actions were extreme: Ortolani details how they adopted female kimono and participated in “acts of violence and riots, flaunting their revolt against all conventions of decency by performing such acts as playing the flute with one’s anus” (p164). Equally, an initial usage of the term was to apply to a group of male court nobles who, in 1607, dressed in women’s clothing, entered the sacred and prohibited private female chambers of the Imperial Palace and were subsequently executed for their blasphemy. As a result of such rebellious actions against an unpopular regime and the aesthetic qualities they promoted, Ortolani concludes that several kabuki mono “became the stuff of legend which was celebrated in songs, tales and on the stages of the very first kabuki shows, while their eccentric fashions became popular all over Japan” (*ibid*).

A Japanese variation on Goth music, *Visual-kei* (‘visual style’), adopts performance elements from Kabuki theatre, Godoy describing stage performances as “a frieze of intricately wrought design that integrates costume, set and players into one visual field” (p164). Gender roles are commonly confused within such presentations, with intricate male to female cross-dressing as aesthetic standard, a practice noted above as a common transgression of the kabuki mono. Of such bands, Godoy concludes: “the visual component is so advanced as to become a mode of expression for

these musicians separate from their music. These players create a mood or a world through their costumes and makeup” (p164). I suggest that the “mood” they create combines the intensities of a sense of ‘uniqueness’ and ‘extremity’, as inherited from the affective intensities surrounding Goth, or an early Japanese equivalent, kabuki.

Over time and space, such intensities have endured, developed and have been recaptured and transformed via other media. An early use of the term ‘Goth’ derived from the Germanic tribe who sacked Rome in 410, and was subsequently used as a term of abuse, indicating something barbarous or non-classical (Wolfram 1990, Sowerby 2001). Such usage was carried through into the ‘Gothic’ architectural style developing in the twelfth century, which rejected the rounded arches of classical Roman and Greek design in favour of pointed profiles employed in churches and cathedrals of the era (Sowerby 2001, Botting 2001).

Furthermore, when asked about the significance of the necklace included in her photo-study featured right, participant Carolyn replied:

“no ordinary person would wear it... it sets me apart from them... It’s the black shredded ribbons that also make it Goth; it is a thing of unusual beauty.”

She describes its appeal as the resemblance to a “mourning necklace worn in the eighteenth century”, a time in which the term ‘Gothic’ would re-emerge once more to describe a style of horror-romance literature, beginning with Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1716), subtitled *A Gothik*



Figure 25: A Gothic Necklace Source: Participant Carolyn's photo-study

Story. This literary genre and the deployment of the Gothic in the eighteenth century has been particularly influential to contemporary Goth practices, from the thematic content of such novels centred around mystery, death, the supernatural and romance, to the decadent aesthetics of mourning. Such an “unusual” articulation of beauty is thought to be something that marks participant Carolyn as “different”, as “no ordinary person” would adopt such dressing practices. Participant Elena finds this strange articulation of beauty a practice she shares in common with others she labels ‘Goths’:

“It’s not like you make a point to be different, it’s just kind of the image...it’s just something that happens in a way... You kinda feel like you’re a part of something because there’s a similar kind of beauty...weird how it happens really.”

Following from this opening discussion, I contend that the consistent emphasis on “unusual beauty” is carried through the history and geographies of the term ‘Gothic’ into contemporary ‘Goth’ cultural practices. The kabuki mono in Japan established aesthetic practices that worked to “tilt” (Takakuwa 1996: 214) conventions of beauty, while the Goth tribe in Europe established the use of this term for the ‘non-classical’ and ‘barbarous’, something carried through into eighteenth century literatures which introduced concepts widely referenced within contemporary ‘Goth’ cultural practices. This ideal of beauty works as a way of sensing ‘sameness’ or an idea of ‘belonging’, defined as participation within such “unusual” Gothic aesthetic practices. In the same way, it functions as a marker of difference for others, but one that I will argue operates beyond a simple visual reading of such symbols; instead experienced as an embodied affective force of the dual qualities of ‘beauty’ and the ‘unusual’.

In the following sections I will therefore ask how this sensing of beauty and the unusual can be thought through, and how such sensing and sense-making might be understood through pre-

conscious and pre-personal affect. A central question is raised: how can the tensions between the dual intensities of “beauty”, thought of as generating the attraction of ‘allure’, and the “unusual” thought of as the push of ‘repulsion’, be thought through? As introduced above, two approaches adopting affect as a theoretical tool will be considered: Nigel Thrift’s deployment of glamour and Jane Bennett’s concept of enchantment. In the following section, I will thus begin by considering how the allure of these qualities might be accounted for through the deployment of glamorous surfaces.

Gothic Allure: Surfaces of Glamour

The notion of ‘glamour’ is increasingly important in the twenty first century. Within an economic context, Nigel Thrift (2008b) argues that as products and style choices available to consumers are now incredibly diverse, companies and celebrities must appeal to what Gabriel Tarde terms the “passionate interests” of consumers in order to sell products, Naomi Klein (2002) also noting that brands attempt to sell a “lifestyle” not simply a product. To achieve this, advertising frequently aims for an emotional and affective response or, as Thrift argues, “must involve producing various mechanisms of fascination” (Thrift 2008b: 10). For example, Bennett (2001: 111) details a GAP advert, “Khaki’s Swing”, in which pairs of Khaki pants are enchanted and made fascinating through editing techniques, the use of music and movement. Affect is therefore, is “a key to aesthetic design” (Thrift 2008b: 10, 12).

Such advertising techniques relate to what Thrift calls the “technologies of allure”, something that must be activated in order to sell products (p9). Such technologies include appeals to “practical aesthetic imagination” and the idea of “public intimacy” in order to create “worlds” in which objects and subjects combine and all surfaces work together to communicate glamour non-discursively to a potential consumer (*ibid*). Importantly, Thrift acknowledges the power of aesthetic elements such

as style, asserting that “aesthetic pleasure has quality and substance. It is an affective force that is active, intelligible and has genuine efficacy” (p10).

In her promisingly titled *Gothic: Dark Glamour*, quoted at the opening of this chapter, fashion theorist Valerie Steel (2008) asserts that the qualities and technologies of glamour are present within the Gothic. She details how Goth fashions reflect various Gothic themes which she considered “glamorous”. However, she does not elaborate on the concepts that drive the notion of glamour: the “secular spell” that is the affective allure of the style (Thrift, 2008: 9). How can such allure be investigated? Thrift looks at colour and the manipulation of surfaces in order to investigate how such intensities are generated. He notes how “the ability to link certain colourful materials with the aesthetics of glamour in an unconscious poetry of substance” (p16), has been seen with certain colours and materials, including mauve dye in nineteenth century and brown Bakelite emerging as the first plastic in the 1920s.

Certain sub-groups of Goth style are associated with specific colours: for example brown is dominant within Victorian-influenced Steampunk fashion and neon and UV-reactive colours are synonymous with futuristic Cybergoth. In general however, Goth style is known for what some theorists consider a complete lack of colour, or alternately, an overabundance of colour: *black*. This colour has an interesting history via its process of manufacture and the varied symbolism it has carried. In his *Black: The History of a Colour*, Michel Pastoureau (2001) argues that this colour is largely considered negatively from early histories; blackness indicative of “darkness” was the colour of hell in early Christianity and is framed in Genesis as the antithesis to life: “and God said let there be light”. However, such views vary between cultures and have oscillated within Europe over time. For the ancient Egyptians, black was the colour of the productive alluvial soils of the River Nile and was thus symbolic of fertility and rebirth (p20). There was also a split in early modern Europe when some monastic orders began to adopt black robes as opposed to the white or grey of other traditions such

as the Cistercians (p65). A further level of complexity is introduced as black was also divided between matt and gloss tones. Matte black (*ater*) took on negative connotations becoming “bad black, ugly, dirty, sad” (p28), and glossy black (*niger*) was more positive, the term being adopted for all blacks in medieval Latin.

Relating directly to clothing, Pastoureau (2001) notes that the use of black dye for garments carries a significance that has varied over time: progressing from a sign of wealth and authority in the fifteenth century due to the expense and complexity of black dyes; an expression of aristocratic mourning from the late-Middle Ages; the chosen colour of the eighteenth century Romantics; a common colour filtering throughout society in the nineteenth century following the development of chemical technologies to mass produce such colours artificially; the epitome of chic in Coco Chanel’s “little black dress” from the 1920s; associations with fascist uniform of the early twentieth century; a popular colour of dress for glamorous characters in early cinema, notably including Tod Browning’s (1921) *Count Dracula*; and the integrity and sophistication of the business suit from the 1980s. Black thus has a complex history of associations, ranging from desirable sophistication and a sign of wealth to links with death, mourning and more ephemeral qualities such as “evil”: as Steele (2008: 23) argues, “throughout world history, black has been associated with night and darkness and, by extension, with death, danger, and evil”.

However, having detailed the associations of ‘black’, colours and a body clothed in colour are not only experienced via a cognitive, symbolic reading. Through his anthropological investigation into colonial histories and colour, Michael Taussig (2009: 7) insists that colour is not simply a sign but acts as a “force” or “presence” (p6), or within the contexts of this chapter, an *affect*. He argues that: “colour is a whole lot more than hue,... colour is not secondary to form, ...it is not an overlay draped like a skin over a shape”. Instead, he argues that colour is excessive and cannot be contained or restricted to categories or symbols: “the idea of a colour code is inappropriate, a brutal gesture

towards containment. Far from being symbols, distinct from their referents, the colours *are* those referents" (p6). Instead of viewing colour solely with the visual senses, "colour vision becomes less a retinal and more a total bodily activity to the fairytale extent that in looking at something, we may even pass into the image".

Engaging such theories with a consideration of Goth style practices, I firstly suggest that, unlike the use of black in the business suit, the "little black dress" or uniforms, the deployment of black is all-encompassing: from hair, makeup to clothing, shoes and accessories. Furthermore, the qualities of this blackness are emphasised in stark contrast to white foundation and powder covering the skin, and the neon pink adopted by Cybergoths alongside black, works to contrast and highlight this quality (Pastoureau 2001). The consequences for the deployment of black as a dominant aesthetic practice characterising Goth, are thus potentially significant.

By thinking of colour not simply as a symbolic surface quality, but as a force made sense of through the body as one passes into the image, black becomes not only a symbol of death for example, but as something experienced *as* a form of death. Taussig (2008: 1) notes in relation to indigo experienced as: "the intense deep blue of the ocean in stormy weather". This is not meant as a simile but as the experience of the force of this colour which incorporates its histories. Using affect to think through black, it can therefore be theorised as the experience of a diminishing force as well as adopted as an expression of unusual beauty by Goths. The complex range of forces enrolled within black thus includes an array of affective qualities; from the allure of glamour to the disturbing or diminishing forces of darkness and death.

Additional to the recognition that black is experienced beyond the visual, cognitive register, I also suggest that glamour is insufficient to think through the intensities mobilised to produce 'Goth' style via a feel of unusual beauty. I will therefore, move on to engage these ideas with a second

theoretical deployment of affect which incorporates a force of glamorous allure, but allows further exploration of the repulsive intensities introduced within a consideration of the colour black: Jane Bennett's notion of "enchantment".

Complicating Allure: Gothic Enchantment

Jane Bennett's (2001) concept of "enchantment" provides further theoretical emphasis to the complexity of Gothic affects. Bennett (2001) employs the idea of enchantment to describe an embracing or "state of wonder". She argues that "to be enchanted...is to participate in a momentarily immobilizing encounter; it is to be transfixed, spellbound" (p5), and thus more open to the "disturbing-captivating elements in everyday experience", and attuned to the "virtual secreted within the actual" (p131). Enchantment, as a post-Enlightenment concept emerging as a reaction to the hyper-secularisation of social and intellectual life, has been aligned with religion and spirituality as modes of 'excessive' experience (Holloway 2003, 2006).

Bennett (2001: 5) describes the "overall effect of enchantment" as "a mood of fullness, plenitude, or liveliness, a sense of having has one's nerves or circulation or concentration powers turned up or recharged", but stresses that such affects can be generated by pleasurable as well as less conventionally appealing encounters. Indeed, she finds greatest potential for the working up of enchantment within hybrid and boundary crossing entities such as Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and Deleuze's "Body without Organs"; entities that confuse and confound definition. As a result, Bennett (2001: 5) notes that enchantment incorporates two aspects simultaneously: a "pleasurable feeling of being charmed by the novel", and a "feeling of being disrupted or torn out of one's default sensory-psychic-intellectual disposition".

Engaging this concept of wonderment with Thrift's notion of the allure of Gothic glamour may thus hold theoretical potential when considering the dual deployment of "beauty" and the "unusual".

This potential will now be thought through in relation to an individual considered a Goth 'celebrity': Emilie Autumn.

Emilie Autumn is a Gothic singer, author, poet, classically trained violinist and, following a suicide attempt, a former psychiatric patient (Autumn 2010b). Inspired by negative life experiences and a fascination with Victorian sanatoriums, Autumn evokes themes of manic depression, self-mutilation, sexual abuse and suicide in her work. These highly emotive lyrics are set to music described on her website as "Victoriaindustrial": the incorporation of intricately layered, driving industrial rhythms alongside harpsichords and electric violin solos. Live stage performances are collaborations with backing group and burlesque troupe, "The Bloody Crumpets", and include Vaudeville-inspired dancing, fire breathing, costuming and elaborate sets (Autumn 2010a).

Her appearance is striking: she incorporates bright red hair, distinctive makeup including a heart below the eye and geisha-like lipstick, along with striped stockings, extreme corsetry, and blood stained bandages. This unique signature look, coupled with her hugely popular music, avant-garde performances and prolific presence within the media, has made her a twenty first century 'Goth' icon, as well as one of the most successful artists working in the genre today. Fans await her arrival at gigs in the USA and throughout Europe for many hours, and performances are met with enthusiastic participation by audiences: as Autumn (DeathWish 2008) notes in an interview, "we had people fainting during the last tour, but I'm aiming for people to actually drop dead at this one".

This performer partly reflects what Thrift (2008:18-21) details in his discussion of glamour: she is a celebrity who plays with a strong stylistic aesthetic; she creates a 'world' through the elaborate

relations she has with technologies and objects; and she makes herself available to popular imagination, while simultaneously making this appeal seem effortless and unattainable for the average individual. However, it is not only the alluring deployment of makeup, clothing and elegant violin music, but also the 'unusual' incorporated within notion of enchantment: grotesque bloody bandages, disturbing lyrical themes, a disrupting mix of Industrial sounds, and extreme performance styles incorporating sexy, burlesque elements with grotesque visual fields. I argue here that it is this reworking or complicating of glamour that generates allure for a 'Gothic' consumer, while also potentially working to repel others. To elaborate further, I will now return to a consideration of black surfaces.

I propose that dualisms highlighted within the manipulation of surfaces by the concept of enchantment, particularly surrounding the colour black, are central to the simultaneous generation of attraction and repulsion as definitive of a uniquely 'Goth' reworking of the affective field of glamour. Brill (2009) argues that the image of the *femme fatale* for example, incorporates these ideas and is a common inspirational style for the female Goth. She claims that by adopting the aggressive sexuality and dominantly black look of the *femme fatale*, she can effectively intimidate non-goth men and avoid unwanted sexual advances (p52). This Goth is thus creating the veneer of "public intimacy" (Thrift 2008: 14) by adopting alluring styles such as those popular with participants in this study: the corset, striking makeup, and fabrics like latex and PVC which are aligned to overtly sexual fetish and BDSM cultures. At the same time she denies access, leaving the image as one of unattainable fantasy or "synthetic experience" (*ibid*). As introduced above, Goths, like glamorous celebrities, create the aura of glamour by the careful manipulation of surfaces (p17). Vinyl and latex items of clothing are produced in figure-hugging cuts to create an alluring second-skin appearance but also act to repel through the highly light-reflective nature of their surfaces. Multi-sensory registers are also engaged (p15): the distinctive scent of latex clothing acts as a pre-cognitive

warning that this female is ‘something different’ and ‘unattainable’ even before being directly approached.

Similarly, for male Goths the image of the aristocratic vampire is a popular reference point and one which also combines the forces mobilised by black. While not all vampire characters are depicted as Stoker’s (1897: 20) Count Dracula, “clad in black from head to foot, without a single speck of colour about him anywhere”, Steele (2008: 23) and Kaye (2001) argue that this image represents the vampire at its peak of popularity, and one that carried into iconic films such as Tod Browning’s (1931) production. The term ‘glamour’ has a further significance here: referring to the vampire’s ability to hypnotise humans to do their bidding, reflecting the 18th century definition of the term linking it with the idea of magic and the enchanted (Thrift, 2008: 13). The spellbinding appearance of a modern day ‘vampire’, for example participant William’s adoption of “Byronic” style (Lord Byron was the inspiration for Polidori’s dandy-esque *Vampyre* (1819)), enthrals by non-verbally communicating danger, mystery and desire. It does this through drawing on popular discourse included in the historical body of literature, film and images, but also directly via the affective intensities of the material and coloured surfaces. While some male Goths wear latex and PVC, the vampire image is more often associated with sumptuous brocades, silks and velvets. These fabrics are dominantly matt, especially velvet, which acts to absorb light and along with the tactile nature of the textured surface, create the sense of being ‘drawn in’ to a dangerous persona or experiencing the diminishment of the affects of black.

Bennett’s notion of enchantment is thus useful in highlighting that wonderment can be generated by a disrupting, border-crossing figure, rather than limiting discussion to desirable celebrities working up the allure of glamour. However, I further suggest that despite such strengths, enchantment does not go far enough when put into conversation with Goth and the Gothic. Bennett concludes that “fear cannot dominate if enchantment is to be, for the latter requires active engagement with

objects of sensuous experience" (*ibid*). Bennett thus distinguishes between "unease" and "fear": the latter she argues functions to dull the senses rather than excite them into positive ethical engagement with the material world. She insists that such an affect induces bodies and minds to action in certain, more limited ways (e.g. the 'fight or flight' response) which impede her ethical goals. Intensities generating 'Goth' however, are thus more extreme than this theorisation can allow for: as the consideration of Emilie Autumn introduces, and drawing on Gothic histories, Goth celebrates the grotesque and generates uncanny and sublime states; qualities which I will now consider.

Gothic Extremes: Re-Working Glamour and Enchantment

Burke's influential publication, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin on our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* of 1757, outlines the sublime as: "the strongest emotion which the mind is capable" (Burke (1757) quoted in Myrone and Frayling 2006: 124). Hugh Blair, a contemporary of Burke, goes on to position the sublime beyond an emotional state to be represented, by emphasising that the sublime: "produces a sort of internal elevation and expansion of the mind above its ordinary state; and fills it with a degree of wonder and astonishment, which it cannot well express" (Blair (1796) quoted in Botting 2001 : 1:53)

Burke's writings were taken up as a key theme of Gothic literature and art and represented a reaction against the classical "taming" of such states (Bloom 2010, Myrone and Frayling 2006, Spooner 2006). European Gothic trends within the arts developed in a context of classical revival within Europe, wherein the values and aesthetic properties of ancient Roman and Greek cultures were celebrated as part of the Enlightenment turn to reason and science (Punter 2001a). This neoclassical critical tradition focussed on reserved, realistic expressions. As Myrone and Frayling (2006: 106) note, "if the horrible was represented, it would be regulated and made acceptable; if the fantastic was an element in a piece of art, it would be made to seem reasonable and realistic; the

eccentric would be made regular, and the ugly was given a makeover". Instead, Gothic literatures rejected neoclassical sensibilities surrounding beauty, wherein mountains, for example, were no longer seen as ugly asymmetric extrusions, but sublime, awe-inspiring features (Botting 2001). Gothic architecture was also venerated, as Blair notes: "a Gothic cathedral raises ideas of grandeur undivided upon the mind, by its size, its height, its awful obscurity, its strength, its antiquity, and its durability" (Blair (1796) quoted in Botting 2001 : 1:59).

Burke described the occurrence of the sublime as seeking "sources of the most powerful experiences", within "the encounter with the immense, overwhelming and terrible" (p122). Here, the emphasis of enchantment on 'wonder' and stepping outside of ordinary experience, are seen to be elicited within extreme states of experience; including that of 'fear' and the 'terrible'. Indeed, sublime states are not only triggered by conventionally positive aspects of experience. Writing in 1712, cultural commentator, Joseph Addison (1672-1719), theorises that accounts of the supernatural including fairies, demons and witches were popular as, "these Descriptions raise a pleasing kind of Horrour in the Mind of the Reader, and amuse his Imagination with the Strangeness and Novelty of the Persons who are represented in them" (Addison in "The Spectator" No. 412 (1712) quoted in Myrone and Frayling 2006: 117 sic).

Such a consideration emphasises that the Gothic was not only concerned beautiful and romantic, but also grotesque and horrific. Gothic literatures, including Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) for example, featured events of murder, sexual deviancy, incest and rape. Despite focus on such horrific themes, these novels were extremely commercially successful: at their peak in the 1790s, 25 Gothic novels were published each year, comprising 35% of all novels published (Myrone and Frayling 2006: 12). Gothic theorists account for this by exploring the concept that pleasure can be found in terror and disgust, framed in the eighteenth century as the desired expanding of the mind via an engagement with the sublime (Myrone and Frayling 2006, Bloom 2010).

One way in which such sublime states can be realised is through a second concept adopted within Gothic literatures and arts: the *uncanny*. Drawing once more on Gothic histories, Williams (1995: 45) stresses the centrality of the uncanny within various Gothic forms. He declares: “the Gothic...literalises Freud's point of departure regarding the uncanny: the *Unheimlich* as a presentation of the utterly familiar as strange”. Within his essay published in 1919, *Das Unheimliche*, Sigmund Freud (Freud 1953: 249) describes the uncanny as a particular affect generated when: “infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed”. The term uncanny is taken from the German *heimlich* meaning “familiar and agreeable” (p224), but this term also encompasses its opposite, *unheimliche*, the “concealed and kept out of sight” (pp224-25). As Lydenberg (1997: 1073) notes, “what is most intimately known and familiar...is always already divided within by something potentially alien and threatening. Such a blurring of boundaries is characteristic of those phenomena that give rise to uncanny fear”. Certain aspects of experience therefore, arouse the uncanny as their states are uncertain; qualities particularly embraced within the Gothic (Punter 2001b).

Such a concept brings to mind lyrics from Emilie Autumn’s song, “Gothic Lolita” (*Opheliac*, 2010):

*How old are you?
I'm older than you'll ever be.
I've been dead a thousand years,
And lived only two or three.*

*I am your sugar,
I am your cream,
I am your worst nightmare,
Now scream!*

As Royal (2003: 2) describes, “the uncanny can be a matter of something gruesome or terrible, above all death and corpses, cannibalism, live burial, the return of the dead”, and more ambiguous

phenomena, as Freud notes: "animism, magic and sorcery, the omnipotence of thoughts, man's attitude to death, in-voluntary repetition and the castration complex" (Freud, 1953: 243). The Gothic Lolita style discussed in the previous chapter has been framed as a liminal 'vampiric' figure, evoking qualities of the cute, pretty and scary. These qualities can be re-framed as unconscious, uncanny affect. In singer Emilie Autumn's imagining, the Lolita is a re-animated being, the epitome of an uncanny subject: suspended between life and death, "sugar" and "cream" and "your worst nightmare", inspiring fascination and questioning and representing the "strangely beautiful" (Royal 2003: 2), but ultimately eliciting screams. Here the "unease" of enchantment is replaced by an arresting affect generated through fear, triggered at the subconscious register and experienced through the body.

In light of engaging dualisms of 'beauty' and the 'unusual', experienced via the intensities associated with the colour black and a Goth 'celebrity', with the affective qualities of enchantment and glamour, I have sought to demonstrate that neither glamour nor enchantment are sufficient to account for these dual affects. Glamour, while going some way towards accounting for the attractive allure of Goth aesthetics, focussed too heavily on 'beauty' and could not accommodate the 'unusual'. Enchantment offered greater potential through Bennett's focus on boundary crossing figures in generating wonder. However, Bennett's rejection of 'fear' as an element in enchantment was found to be a significant weakness when put into conversation with the exploration of sublime states and an embracing of the uncanny fears as crucial affective states within Gothic histories. Enchantment therefore, does not go far enough in recognising that within fear and the grotesque can be found pleasure; a basis of horror fiction and cinema and something familiar to eighteenth century theorists and novelists (Myrone and Frayling 2006, Bloom 2010).

I thus suggest modulations to the terms and concepts mobilised above. 'Sublime enchantment' and 'grotesque glamour' are instead, terms that incorporate the extremes of experience sought within

the Gothic and include the recognition of repulsion found within the alluring. I also argue that this simultaneous complex affective push and pull produces Gothic qualities of ‘unusual beauty’, an experience embraced by those participating in such practices, while going some way towards accounting for anxieties from those who do not participate.

While this repulsion will be considered thoroughly within chapter seven, one question remains to be approached here: how is the affect of “unusual beauty” experienced through the body? I have so far considered Gothic aesthetic practices through clothing and coloured surfaces. However, the discussion of performer, Emilie Autumn, has introduced another aspect in which Gothic forms of beauty are mobilised: music.

Gothic Sounds, Visceral Responses

“The music, it’s not all happy and roses, it’s thought provoking and that’s how I got into it in the first place- it wasn’t Britney Spears, all “happy, happy, happy”. There was deep meaning to it... it’s absolutely gorgeous, it’s perfect songs, shivers down my spine.”

Participant Morgan

It is not only clothing styles that are included within the unusual sense of beauty mobilized within Goth practices. Music is an equally important element within Goth cultural practices, and is a particularly effective medium through which intensities and bodily responses are mobilized (Tacchi 2003, Anderson 2006, Allett 2010b). In this final section, I consolidate my approach towards affect by adopting Allett’s (2010b) listening diary technique to investigate the affective intensities mobilized to produce ‘Goth’ music.

The song I have chosen to experience is “Bela Lugosi’s Dead” by *Bauhaus* released in 1979. The song is considered by some commentators to be amongst the first to be labeled as ‘Goth’ or ‘Gothic Rock’,

and is thought to have marked something of a pivotal turning point within the working up of 'Goth' as a popular cultural genre. The song links directly to Gothic narratives developed in the eighteenth century and imagery from 1920s Gothic cinema: the title refers to the actor who was the first to play Count Dracula in Tod Browning's (1931) feature, and the lyrical narrative centres on the imagining of Bela Lugosi as a real vampire, detailing his rise from the grave and participation in vampire behaviour such as blood drinking and consort with "virginal brides".

While such experiences do not necessarily lend themselves to written description, this piece is an attempt to inhabit the song, to experience its affective ebb and flow. I thus adopt a writing technique which is intended to perform the intensities involved in the visceral experience of listening. It is disjointed at times, coherent at others, thus reflecting the change of pace within the music; the flickering moods and atmospheres it evokes and the waxing and waning intensities. While it is possible to detect distinct discursive references within the song which trigger rich images in the mind recalling Gothic narratives, I stress that there is something beyond words, an emotional and visceral response: Goth music, like other musical genres, is, as participant Morgan notes, not only "thought provoking" but sends "shivers" down the spine.

The song opens with 22 seconds of flickering and stuttering percussion: tic, tic, tic...tic, tic, tic, tic...tic, tic...tic-tic-tic, then fluttering into incoherence as more layers flood and overwhelm the attempts to start the 'song' proper. Such ticks and cracks bring to mind an abstract interpretation of the sound of a creaking door in an old house; the tortured movements of the joints of an old man encountered in a horror film, inevitably later to be revealed as existing only in the imagination of the protagonists; perhaps breaking bones; ominous footsteps crunching over gravel in pursuit; a hybrid being or 'Monster' shuddering to life through Mary Shelly's 'spark' of electricity. Beyond the triggering of literary references and images, there are visceral responses. There is sound here, but also a lack of sound: nothing that can be made sense of as

a “song” or rationalised into coherence or fixity. Silence fills the gaps between the cracks, ticks, creaks and stutters; however slight the gap, it is felt. Senses are sharpened, ready for the next layer or ‘special effect’ percussion element to impact on one’s perception. Tension is felt in the neck, unsettled by the unsteady and complex rhythm, there is expectation as to what will emerge or erupt next.

*Two gloomy and echoing notes from a bass guitar break in. A slightly dizzy feeling as the sound reverberates from speaker to speaker, never quite coming clearly into focus. The first inkling of melody emerges in the slow twang of three further descending notes which fill-out the sound, marking a contrast from the opening section. It repeats and seems to trigger a high-pitched guitar riff of twitching, echoing chords soaring over the drone. These sounds, created using guitar distortion, trigger a memory of the sound of something flat and metallic on a stone floor and its rattle at increasing speed before finally finding equilibrium and laying still. Perhaps the rattle of some fallen object in a haunted castle, disturbed by a spirit as in Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto*, or the evocative call of bats bouncing from the walls of a ruined Abbey shrouded in mist and darkness. The introduction of further guitar notes builds gradually only to fade away again, creating an adrenaline rush of expectation: coherence may suddenly break through, but instead we are still left waiting; still in the dark and mist.*

The song sharpens its focus gradually, a melody in a more conventional sense emerges at around 2.30, and the background echo fades. There is coherence here, but of a sombre and fragile nature: a staccato picking out of the melody, only to be undermined by the occasional legato swerve. A shudder runs through the body as a memory of a feeling of being cold erupts. Vocals begin at 2 minutes and 48 seconds, with a heavy echo on the deep voice of

Peter Murphy. Clearly inspired by the quirky and dark but sexual style of David Bowie, the vocals are foregrounded in the mix and boom in an unhinged and detached manner over the high pitched guitar riffs. A desire to sway slowly from side to side creeps in, with the hypnotic vocals and now relatively soothing rhythm. The lyrics follow in quick succession, with pauses for changing playing styles which act as a form of punctuation within the song:

White on white translucent black capes

Back on the rack

(pause)

Bela Lugosi's dead

The bats have left the bell tower

The victims have been bled

Red velvet lines the black box

(pause)

Bela Lugosi's dead

Staccato guitar strumming releases the listener from the spell of the silky, seductive voice and frames the outcry:

Bela Lugosi's dead

(pause)

Undead, undead, undead

The vocal approaches crescendo in the following section, reaching higher and higher notes, until being stopped by "the Count". Blood pumps faster as notes and intensities climb towards the deadly discovery, tingling as the mystery unfolds consciously via the lyrics and viscerally through pitch, tone and tempo:

Undead, undead, undead

The virginal brides file past his tomb

Strewn with time's dead flowers

Bereft in deathly bloom

Alone in a darkened room

(pause)
The Count

The pitch climbs once more through proclamations of the Count's death, only to fall gradually through the contradiction of repetitions of "undead", urgency followed by acceptance and a hint of devilment, a wry smile is imagined of the face of the vocalist:

Bela Lugosi's dead
(pause)
Bela Lugosi's dead
(pause)
Bela Lugosi's dead
(pause)
Undead, undead, undead
(pause)
Undead, undead, undead
(pause)
Undead, undead, undead
(pause)
Undead

The central lyrical section of the song ceases at 4 minutes and 48 seconds, leaving over 4 minutes of the song remaining, in which the fog of experimental percussion takes over, broken by the wail of guitar distortion. Brief respite for the circulatory system and taxed nerve endings. The screeching builds gradually once more however, and is joined by the concluding vocals:

Oh Bela! Bela's undead,
(pause)
Oh Bela! Bela's undead
(pause)
Bela's undead. Oh Bela!
(pause)
Bela's undead. Oh Bela!

The notes soar higher and higher, the singer more and more desperate, urging and holding the notes for what feels like minutes, calling "Bela"- is it a warning? The cry of a fleeing or expiring victim? A celebration of the siring of one undead creature to another? Hairs on end, shivers

down the spine at the last sublimely lingering “Beeelaaaaaaaa”. The percussion eventually provides relief from this troubling wail, the turbulent storm-like coherence of the lyrical section has passed by and the relative safety of the incoherent fog of percussion has returned. Slightly numbed following the previously heightened emotional state, the percussion gradually bleeds away into silence.

Completing this exercise leads me to propose that, following the central theme of “unusual beauty”, the song resonates around fields of distinctly Gothic affect: it is frightening, disturbing, yet soothing and seductive. The deep echoing vocals mirror the seductive and dangerous tone of a vampire, while the echoes bring to mind a vast landscape, perhaps moorland or a cliff top overlooking the sea to remain faithful to Stoker’s *Dracula*. The ticking percussion noted many times as a key part of the listening experience, works in contrast to the smooth lyrical line. It functions as an unsettling force throughout the song: at once providing the only stability throughout the track via a flick of the high hat, and at the same time, cutting through and across this regular rhythm.

‘Goth’ then, can be thought of as produced via these modulating fields of affective intensity. Significantly, sheet music was not produced as the song was improvised during the one take recording, and thus impossible to repeat exactly. Its repetition is thus unpredictable, but guided by the general ambience that the song (re)animates. Less music than sounds, it cannot be mapped or notated coherently but is experienced through the body as a ‘feel’. Such a feel was encountered as a shuddering, a tingling, a sense of coldness, an increased pulse rate followed by a calming sensation, a sense heightened being, and of a diminishment, indicative of affects mobilised by Gothic discursive histories and active participants in producing ‘Goth’.

Conclusions

Within this chapter I have developed an initial conclusion that Thrift's (2008) notion of glamour and Bennett's (2001) vision of enchantment are too limited when confronted with the affective states sought within Gothic discursive histories; namely a focus on sublime states of experience which incorporate the diminishing as well as the enlivening. Relating to contemporary Goth cultural practices, I suggested that many questions are generated by the manipulation of surfaces: is the *femme fatale* available or unattainable? Is the vampire erotically appealing or dangerous and repulsive?, and as raised in the previous chapter, is the Cybergoth mechanical or human? The Gothic deployment of glamour is thus not as simplistic as for example, eliciting desire for an unobtainable 'celebrity lifestyle'.

I went on to discuss how this emphasises upon how the Gothic enacts a "a crisis of the proper" sensed at the pre-cognitive level, is incorporated within the concept of the uncanny (Royle 2003: 1). Gothic celebrities including Emilie Autumn and Count Dracula, as well as attracting, also incorporate a dangerous element and affective charge that repels via the revelation of the grotesque; sometimes achieving both simultaneously. Glamour thus needs to be reworked for the Gothic, especially within its twenty first century expressions within Goth cultural practices. I thus suggest 'grotesque glamour' as a more appropriate term through which to think through how the Gothic appeals via creating a fascination with the horrific and the boundary-crossing; something that is beautiful but also disturbing via an undeterminable quality held as a virtuality with the actuality of the representation.

Furthermore, while Bennett argues that terror and fear closes the mind and senses, the Gothic seeks to engender the opposite effect through evoking such states. It holds the horrific as a constant virtuality within narratives, exemplified within the technique of suspense: the heroine in *The Castle of Otranto* (1765) for example, reaches to pull a veil from an unknown object within a haunted

castle, and thick description is utilised to emphasise the heightening of the senses enabled by fear and anticipation. A more open definition of enchantment, capable of including extremes of the conventionally 'negative', is needed when considering the affective fields mobilised by the Gothic, perhaps encompassed more effectively within the term 'grotesque enchantment'. Indeed, as McEwan (2008:30) found in her study of the disruptive power of ghosts in South Africa, "to be enchanted...is not always to be delighted or charmed, but to be faced with something both real and simultaneously weird, mysterious, awesome, and perhaps even dreadful". She argues that accounts of enchantment therefore, need to include "darker marvels" such as vampires, zombies, voodoo, witchcraft, sorcery etc., which remain a significant part of twenty first century life for some cultures within South and East Africa for example.

The Gothic directly seeks to explore the fearful and extremes of the grotesque alongside the pleasurable as a technique to trigger a more intense engagement with the world. As Myrone and Frayling (2006: 148) conclude: "the theory of the sublime offered a means of explaining the desire for terror", prominent within the Gothic. Such ideas were known to commentators within this period: the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776), arguing in his *Of Tragedy* (Hume (1757) quoted in Myrone, Frayling 2006: 118),

"It seems an unaccountable pleasure, which the spectators of a well-wrote tragedy receive from sorrow, terror, anxiety, and other passions, which are in themselves disagreeable and uneasy. The more they are touched and affected, the more are they delighted with the spectacle, and as soon as the uneasy passions cease to operate, the piece is at an end".

Within studies incorporating affect, Anderson (2006: 740) similarly argues that "there is a risk... that if we assume that an attunement to affect necessarily discloses a constant 'more to life' then those types of relation that enact forms of suffering, or misery, are erased in favour of an affirmative

account of the social and cultural that forgets how forms of nonlife traverse life". Following from accounts such as Thrift's (2004) detailing of violence in the city and McCormack's (2003) exploration of dance therapy, recognising that creativity is a hesitant process, he argues for the need to "remain open about the excess of affect" by looking at affects that destroy or diminish "life" (Anderson 2006: 740).

I have argued that the Gothic takes such arguments even further: it not only explores 'negative' affects, but those that are simultaneously 'positive' and 'negative'. It embodies such dual affective forces: it is a genre that through history and over space incorporates states of wonder and extremes of pleasure with the horrific, disturbing and terrifying, and it positions each as a virtual presence within the other. The uncertainty as to when each will emerge, accounts for the appeal of such a genre: excitement is to be found within suspense, pleasure within the horrific and eroticism within the grotesque. I have therefore theorised or made sense of 'Goth' as co-defined by the working up of such modulating affective fields.

Theoretically, I have used the concept of affect in this chapter as a way in which to extend my consideration of Goth by incorporating ways of sensing and sense-making beyond the cognitive register. Participation within 'Goth' can thus be thought of as engaging with a series of affective intensities mobilised within encounters with elements of "unusual beauty". Such affects have been seen to operate in a more extreme way than previously considered within the concepts of glamour and enchantment, to work up simultaneous forces of attraction and repulsion. As demonstrated in the closing section through an exploration of Goth music, such affects can be experienced as bodily or visceral sensations rather than just cognitive references to Gothic discursive histories.

While I suggest that such sensations are embraced by those participating with Goth practices, as participant Morgan illustrated, I also contend that it is conceivable to think that others may

experience repulsion as a dominant force in such encounters. The “charged-up feeling often generated in human bodies” that Bennett (2001: 144) notes surrounding enchantment, may also characterise a body primed for violence. Gothic affects therefore, are not always positive and conventionally enlivening (Anderson 2006), ideas which will be explored further chapter seven.

Firstly however, a chapter is necessary to continue the focus on pre-conscious affect and reengage with my empirical research material. This penultimate chapter will investigate a further aspect crucial to the working up of affects: space. The chapter takes place at *Whitby Goth Weekend*, a biannual music festival in the UK, wherein the concepts of group belonging and affect will be further re-worked through posing the question: how can a space be considered and experienced as ‘Goth’?

Sites of Encounter: The *Whitby Goth Weekend*

Introduction



Figure 26: Welcome sign at a local pub.
Source: Researcher's own

Twice annually, around 2,000 people from the UK and beyond, travel across the North Yorkshire moors to the *Whitby Goth Weekend*. This festival hosts an array of events ranging from live music, club nights and a specialist goods market, to a pub quiz, stand up comedy performance and a charity football match. Initially established as a private party for fifty friends at *The Elsinore* pub in 1995, the festival is now held over several large venues in the remote coastal town (TopMumPromotions 2005).

Whitby has particular historical Gothic credentials. The imposing ruins of Whitby Abbey positioned on the cliff top, provides vistas over desolate moorland and the turbulent grey of the North Sea. The quaint architecture of the town is predominantly Victorian, an era from which contemporary Goth practice takes much influence, and has been made infamous in Gothic literatures as key location in the novel *Dracula*. However, festival organiser Jo Hampshire, confesses: “It’s fair to say that I chose Whitby based on its *Dracula* connections, but only because a couple of *Dracula* societies had run events in the town and I was hoping the hoteliers wouldn’t be too freaked!!” (TopMumPromotions 2005). The reception is quite the contrary: local businesses ready themselves for the influx, as pubs position chalk boards outside welcoming “The Goths”, charity shops sift through their donations for

black velvet and lace, and the *Chocolate Falls* shop formulates new recipes; the “Eyeball Screwball” sundae and blackcurrant and liquorish flavour “Whitby Gothic Ice Cream”, proving popular choices.

Such opening observations immediately call into question what it might mean to think of a space or site as ‘Goth’. In this chapter I will contend that spaces such as Whitby are not produced as ‘Goth’ solely through associations to Gothic literatures, narrative themes and architectural qualities, but through more complex relations. Consistent with the refigured notion of the social adopted in the thesis, I consider site as a relational, active agent alongside the nonhuman entities and non-cognitive registers introduced in previous chapters. A starting point for such theorisation is a consideration of how space can be thought through relative to subjects within non-representational geographies. In contrast to trends for interpreting landscape as something to be ‘read’ for symbolic content, non-representational ontologies conceive of these spaces and the subjects who ‘read’ them as co-emergent within interaction (Wylie 2002, Macpherson 2010, 2005, 2009). Neither pre-exist this interaction and a symbolic act of reading does not account for all the possibilities of both site and subject. Consequently, as Duff (2010: 885) notes, place is not conceived of as “points on a map”, but as “conjured in the lived, felt, and relational experience of a thinking, feeling body/subject”.

Affect has a significant role in this sensuous production, while as Thrift notes (2004: 60), place equally “seems to be a vital element in the constitution of affect”. Affect co-constitutes places and sites by influencing the practices made possible in these spaces. Even though affect can be understood as the ephemeral and indeterminate “feeling states of everyday life” (Thrift 2004a: 59) which can only be approximated by emotional vocabulary such as anger, fear etc., bodies are moved by these affects. Drawing on Spinoza’s theorisations of affect, such intensities constitute the power of a body to act (Massumi 2002a). However, such intensities function autonomously as they are worked up in encounters with other bodies, things and spaces, and are not reducible to or fully belong to either. The power of a body to act, or action potential, is thus generated differently

depending on the nature of the encounter in which it emerges. Subjects can thus be thought to affect one another in place but are also necessarily affected by place.

Equally, while businesses welcome “The Goths”, I have stressed elsewhere drawing on non-representational philosophies, how a group of people labelled ‘Goth’ do not pre-exist. In this chapter I will thus question how affective forces generated at festival sites can foster and generate ‘Goth’ as a trans-personal sense of collective subjectivity. Instead of viewing ‘Goth’ as a pre-existing ‘subculture’, I suggest that such collectivities are more usefully thought of as produced within interactions between human and nonhuman elements, including spaces, which co-generate affective atmospheres of ‘Goth’ as a sense of shared experience. Sites are thus participants within the formation of transient subjectivities and temporary emergence of feelings of collective belonging.

Such ideas continue to build on accounts within cultural studies utilising affect to investigate collectivities and site. As noted previously, group ‘belonging’ in relation to affect is explored within some post-subcultures work. Andy Bennett’s (Bennett 1999) account of Rave for example, stresses that this group comes together temporarily within sites of consumption, while those drawing on the idea of *puissance* within Maffesoli’s (Maffesoli 1996) “neo-tribes” theory, engage more directly with concepts of affect. Allett’s (2010a) work for example, concludes that a sense of collective belonging or “affective community” is generated via similar emotional responses to and embodied experiences of Extreme Metal music, while Malbon (1999) explores the complex relations of belonging and individuality within Rave, arguing that moments of collectivity are produced via assemblages of music, other individuals and the effects of drug use. Instead of focussing on music and the narrow contexts of clubbing, I will investigate how various and dispersed spaces of the *Whitby Goth Weekend* function to generate a sense of ‘Goth’ as subjectivity and collectivity.

Equally, moving away from the consideration of sites and spatialities as largely incidental to wider issues of identity, belonging and resistance, I explore what results when site is thought of as an active participant. To do so, I draw upon and bring together two concepts utilised within non-representational geographies. Firstly, Anderson's (2009) concept of "affective atmosphere" will be used to stress how sites and subjectivities co-emerge. Anderson (2009) argues that the interplay of the "feeling states" generated in a site and the practices made possible by a site produces an "affective atmosphere". While there are several understandings of the term "atmosphere", Anderson utilises the term to refer to the affective, pre-personal forces that are generated in relations between the physical surface qualities of a building or object and a subject. Atmospheres are generated by both subjects and by the force of objects or sites, ultimately "exceeding the bodies they emerge from" (p79). Anderson notes how objects such as works of art hold a "singular affective quality" which create a particular space-time or world when in interaction with a subject, but which exceed both.

Anderson draws on phenomenologist Mikkel Dufrenne's discussion of "aesthetic objects", defined as those including art objects which not only represent the world via their content, but articulate a unique set of "spatial-temporal relations" or an "expressed world" (p79). The relations of this expressed world exceed that which is represented, and such excessive qualities or "atmospheres", trigger "feelings" when generated in encounters (*ibid*). Objects thus engender unique space-times via the affective qualities of their atmospheres, for example, music has "rhythm" or a felt "force" that cannot be fully expressed in notation or description via instruments such as a metronome; and architectural features elicit a feeling of "grandeur" beyond their physical height (Dufrenne 1973 quoted in Anderson 2009: 79).

I will thus begin by utilising the concept of atmosphere to interrogate the varying affective geographies of the *Whitby Goth Weekend*. However, while atmosphere is a useful concept, I suggest

that coupling with other theories of the role of site is necessary to stress the contingent and emergent nature of both subjectivity and site more effectively. A second theoretical consideration, that of Edward Casey's (1993, 2001) concept of "thick" and "thin" spaces, will function to enhance the agency of sites while also stressing the variance and vulnerability of atmospheres. "Thick" spaces are defined by Casey (2001: 684) as those triggering an experience of place as one of "concernful absorption" and work to generate "personal enrichment" via the practices sustained by these spaces, and become embedded with affective intensities (Duff 2010: 892). As Duff summarises, thick spaces "leave behind affective traces of lived intensity, awaiting reactivation in practice and interaction" (*ibid*). In contrast "thin" spaces do not enhance a sense of belonging or connection to place as they are "levelled down" and devoid of unique local qualities (Casey 2001: 688).

While Duff (2010: 886) critiques Casey's lack of specificity as to how to identify thick spaces, how they are formed and how to investigate their durability, his study of Vancouver youth and space suggests that "affective engagement" with place is crucial in transforming thin spaces into more meaningful, thick sites. Responding to Duff's (2010) call for further interrogation of this concept and its potential in theorising varying intensities across sites, I will use such ideas alongside affective atmosphere to interrogate more successfully the generation of sites and subjectivities as 'Goth'.

Within this chapter I will also move away from considering Gothic discursive histories and engage with my observant participation and research materials generated at three festival events in October 2008, 2009 and 2010. I also enrol the photo-diaries and follow-up photo elicitation interviews with two male to female transgendered participants, Alexis and Morgan, and participants Isabel and Taylor from North East England, attending the October 2008 festival. When thinking through the role of sites in co-producing affects, I will suggest that while 'Gothic' qualities of sublimines of experience and uncanny fears are mobilised within enchanted moments of arresting experience, I will also argue that people and sites are produced as 'Goth' via other, perhaps unexpected attendant

affects. These include the generation of atmospheres of a sense of ‘home’, as well as the more distributed eruptions of the ‘comic’ at various sites within the town and circulating beyond.

Furthermore, as introduced above, I suggest that atmospheres are vulnerable and contingent: Whitby is not unproblematically a ‘Goth’ space and attendees are not automatically gifted ‘Goth’ subjectivities. I will thus enrol further theoretical vocabularies surrounding the concept of “thick” spaces in order to stress the simultaneous operation of modulating tendencies and moments of relative consistency. This also functions as a companion theory to affective atmosphere which more directly stresses the emergent nature of ‘Goth’. To initiate discussion, I will begin by thinking through how the intensities mobilised by “unusual beauty” theorised in the previous chapter, emerge through interactions with sites of the *Whitby Goth Weekend*.

Atmospheres of “Unusual Beauty”





Figure 27: Moments of enchantment. Source: Isabel's photo-diary (above), Alexis's photo-diary (below).

Participants Isabel and Alexis both experienced a “momentary immobilising encounter” (Bennett 2001: 5) triggered by a flash beauty framed as ‘Goth’. In these moments, they decided to photograph elements that they considered to have contributed a significant part of their experience of the festival. Isabel, who submitted the first image, detailed being caught in a heavy rain shower and being forced to shelter in a bandstand at the entrance to the West Pier. As she describes: “there were huge waves crashing up...so I thought I’m going to take a photo of it...it was a really stunning sight”. Waves also featured in Alexis’ diary in which he pictures the main festival venue, the *Spa Pavilion*, but with most of the focus of the image on what she describes as the “dramatic seas”. Both went on to frame these experiences of beauty in the uniquely ‘Gothic’ terms isolated in the previous chapter: as an extreme or sublime experience, incorporating the virtual presence of grotesque elements or uncanny fear. In discussing the context of the image, Isabel noted that “there were people walking along and I thought ‘oh no, they’re going to get swept away!’”, while Alexis reflected on the erosive power of the waves threatening the Spa Pavilion: “it’s so close to the cliff which is kind of sad as it’s going to fall into the sea... you get that sense of history in decay”.

These participants at *Whitby Goth Weekend* engaged in emotional, “haptic” and affective relations with various festival sites and landscape (Pearson 2006: 11). Within these opening comments, I have isolated moments of sudden disruption when the surprising affects of a ‘Goth’ imagining of beauty were generated, triggering the taking of a photograph, and functioning to influence and halt the rhythm of movement through festival sites (Cloke *et al.* 2008). Here ‘Goth’ subjects are generated within interactions with sites, while these sites are simultaneously produced as ‘Goth’ through the affective forces triggering the emotional and physical responses of sublime extremes and uncanny fears: participants were momentarily immobilised, and uneasy reflections resulted.

Within this section I will further investigate how uniquely ‘Goth’ enchantment can produce what Casey (2001) terms, “thick” moments of affective atmosphere, producing sites and subjectivities as ‘Goth’ through subtle engagements and via haptic interactions. Secondly, I will shift the argument to question the stability of “thick” spaces and introduce elements of vulnerability to problematise such theorisations of site. To begin however, it is necessary to stress that participants detailed more subtle incidents of enchantment than those introduced above, yet these incidents proved arresting moments within festival experiences. Many of these instances came about as the result of traversing festival sites. Morgan for example, spoke of walking through Whitby and being surprised by sudden sightings of landmarks such as Whitby Abbey, glimpsed through narrow streets: a quality of experience that I also noted and photographed for my own collection (see below).

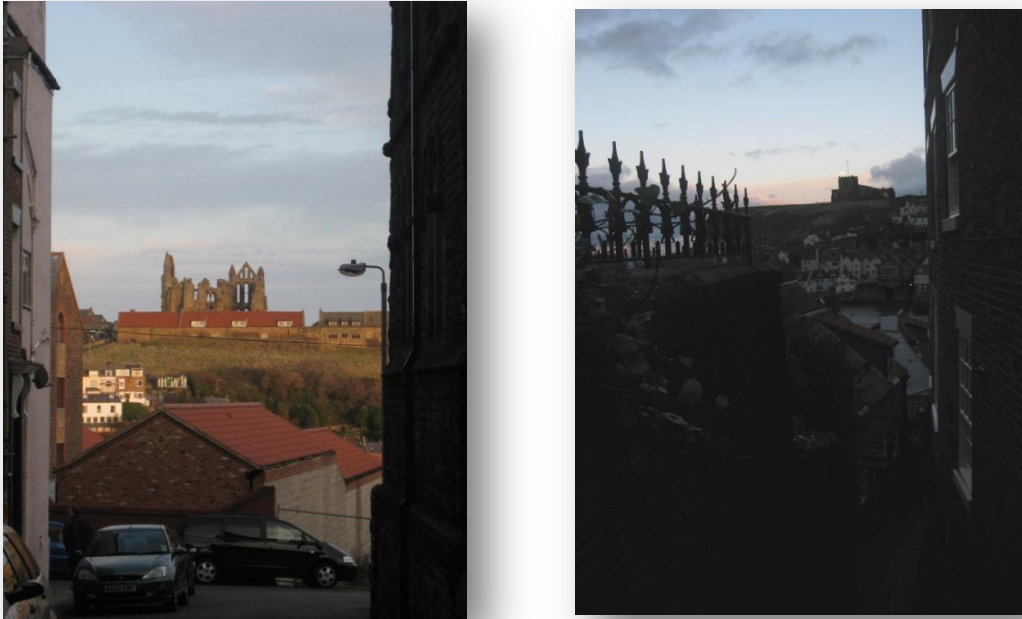


Figure 28: Enchanted Gothic framings- Whitby Abbey viewed down a narrow street (left), and St Mary's Church viewed along a narrow ally way, (right). Source: researcher's own.

Holloway (2010), writing on the generation of enchantment during ghost walks, argues that particular attention should be paid to the “framing” provided by the physical environment. In a similar way, within Whitby, I suggest that the built environment works to “frame” or make possible moments of “thick” experience or enchantment, by generating surprise encounters with a sense of beauty experienced as ‘Goth’. The walker is taken by surprise by an arresting encounter with a previously concealed landmark or vista, especially when, as in the images above, the diminished dusk light works to heighten shadow and generate silhouettes.

Furthermore, moving away from the visual register, the photo-diaries of participants and many informal conversations I engaged in at the festival concerned the weather and the detailing of anecdotes battling with physical qualities of festival landscapes. Such sensuous engagements were sometimes described as a struggle with inappropriate clothing interacting with a challenging landscape and unpredictable weather events. Corsets, as introduced in chapter four, caused particular problems for those attempting to visit Whitby Abbey, accessed via a challenging set of 199

steps. Equally, participants expressed difficulty when traversing across festival sites quickly. Participant Alexis in particular, noted how her clothing interacted unsuccessfully with the landscape; her high heels coupled with cobbled streets and a corset worn for a photo-shoot on the beach, were notable unsuccessful assemblages.

For others however, such haptic engagement worked to reinforce and inspire references to and imaginings of conventions and concepts within Gothic historical discourses. Participant Isabel for example, after struggling to reach the Abbey wearing a Victorian-style hooped skirt and restrictive corset, decided to retire and have “afternoon tea” instead. This worked to trigger Gothic imaginings through the assemblage of elements, as she noted feeling like a “Victorian Gothic lady” through this restriction and resultant activity. For Isabel, this helped to generate a ‘Goth’ subjectivity through imagined and physical interactions with sites, clothing, gendered practices and Gothic discursive histories.

However, despite these spontaneous eruptions of events of intensity producing spaces and subjectivities as ‘Goth’, I also suggest that intensities must also be worked at. ‘Work’ was highlighted in chapter three as significant within embodied performances alongside unthinking action (Reville 2004). Several theorists incorporating varying interpretations of affect to account for a sense of group belonging or group identity, have acknowledged that this affective quality is generated, and recognise that such affects do not come into being consistently. Saldanha (2005, 2007, 2002) and Swanton (2008, 2010a, 2010b) theorising race for example, consider how these categories come into being via material relations and affective qualities within certain spaces.

Theoretical vocabularies surrounding atmosphere are equally theorised as inherently unstable or “unfinished” (Anderson 2009: 79). Atmospheres are unfinished as they are constantly open to being “taken up in experience” (p79), and as a result of their ambiguous qualities as belonging to both the

subject and the object itself. As Anderson argues, atmospheres both belong to the “perceiving subject”, as they come into being through encounters, but also the “aesthetic object” as they emerge from the assemblages forming this object. Equally, McCormack (2008a: 418) asserts that “atmospheres are not therefore just a space through which...bodies move”, but instead can be thought of as “a set of dynamic and kinetic affects, where affect is the pre-individual intensity of relation between bodies”. Atmospheres are thus always emergent and transforming via interactions, expressed differently in different bodies and are described or qualified as differing emotions.

As introduced above, one way in which to think through the varying and dynamic qualities of the atmospheres of the festival is via theories focussing on concepts which account for intensities that vary over space and within encounters. Saldanha (2006b) for example, utilises Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) concept of “viscosity” to investigate the emergence of bodies as raced within Goa’s rave tourism scene. He argues that certain bodies tend toward racial “viscosity”, defined as the “becoming-sticky of bodies relative to each other and certain spaces through certain behaviours and physical and cultural conditions” (Saldanha 2006b: 173-174). The “sticky” quality of such bodies attracts other bodies and such groups “become relatively impenetrable by other bodies”, leading to relative racial segregation within the clubbing scene (p174). Viscosity however, is not a result of phenotype, but forms as various technologies and assemblages, in this case “the configuration of light, space and bodies that comprises the visual economy of rave tourism in Goa” (p190), converge and generate certain bodies as “sticky”.

Within the diverse sites of the *Whitby Goth Weekend*, the distinct space-times of affective atmospheres of unusual beauty may either emerge, fail to emerge or are disrupted and transformed within encounters. Saldanha stresses that “viscosity is an active and ritualised process requiring work of the entire body and containing the possibility of contagion” (*ibid*). Within Goa Rave, the “contagion” is the presence of non-white bodies failing to conform to subcultural standards on many

levels: from their lack of a “tan” made visible in the sunlight of the “morning phase”, to the molecular level of drinking alcohol instead of taking drugs or reacting to such drugs “incorrectly” (Saldanha 2005, 2007). Within the contexts of Whitby, I will close this section with a discussion of how the ‘Goth’ modulation of glamour theorised in the previous chapter, emerges within the festival. This glamour both emerges as a way in which spaces and subjectivities are produced as ‘Goth’, but also introduces how such affective atmospheres may be vulnerable and suggests therefore, that other atmospheres may be in circulation at the festival sites to produce site and subjectivity as ‘Goth’.

As established in the previous chapter, a Goth modulation of glamour is a significant affect that circulates with and co-produces such performances. From my observant participation at the event, I argue that *Whitby Goth Weekend* is populated by those at their most glamorous. All participants included images of either their own outfits or those of others, and noted the impact of many sites within the festival and wider Whitby context as dominated by those in similar ‘Goth’ dressing practices, producing as participant Morgan noted, a “town full of Goths”. This deployment of spectacular dress can be partly interpreted as a desire for “subcultural capital” (Thornton 1995), participant Alexis noting how “keeping up appearances” and an element of “competition” is engaged with via styling skills. This suggests that therefore, some may get it ‘wrong’ and that such affects are contingent and vulnerable.

However, I also observed how glamour works within the festival environment to produce individuals as ‘celebrities’. Despite noting how glamour is modified to include a troubling element of the liminal and disruptive within performances and thus functions to confuse and potentially repel, I argue here that such affects are produced differently within the space-times of the festival. The festival has become a tourist attraction in itself largely as a result of such spectacular dressing practices, drawing non-Goths, many independent professional photographers and national media attention (including

BBC1's *The Culture Show* in 2006, Chanel 4's *The Paul O'Grady Show* in 2008 and a BBC4 documentary on *Britain's Best Drives* hosted by Richard Wilson in 2009). The presence of photographers was noted as significant by participants as indicative of the experiences of many Goths as 'celebrities' during the festival.

Participant Alexis had been contacted via the internet by two photographers to arrange photo-shoots in the unusual environments of the graveyard of St Mary's Church and on the beach, while Morgan and Isabel described the experience of walking around Whitby akin to being "chased by paparazzi", such was the enthusiasm of tourists to photograph them. I also observed these trends and participated in them myself: while taking the second photograph of a female in a green corset sat on a gravestone featured below, I was asked by a photographer to pose behind a gravestone. I was directed very specifically to enact a stereotypical 'Goth stance', including being manoeuvred in front of a pleasing vista, shaping my fingers as claws gripping the gravestone and refraining from smiling. Such practices were in evidence in several evocative sites in the town, the third image below taken on the West Pier:



Figure 29: Glamorous Goths photographed by "paparazzi". Source: researcher's own.

While I found my interaction with this enthusiast initially rather flattering and unusual, I stopped short of complying to his growing demands for what I considered stereotypical posing, and somewhat irritated, I moved on to participate in experiences I valued more within the festival. Such opinions were shared by others. Alongside the positive experience of such practices as 'fun' or actively sought out by participant Alexis working as a model, Morgan and Isabel noted annoyance at being photographed repeatedly, sometimes aggressively, and without permission by tourists. Taylor complained of what he termed, the "freakshow" or "fishbowl" effect that an increase in these tourists and enthusiasts had created, thus potentially threatening the appeal of the festival. He went on to comment that witnessing others being photographed was "spoiling it" for him, this "it" being expressed as the: "sense that the festival is actually for us Goths not the tourists".

It is thus within this embrace of glamour and the accompanying paparazzi-like attentions that a hint of vulnerability and conflict is introduced. Despite the discursively or symbolically "Gothic" qualities of the sites, such as those pictured above, these spaces were unsuccessful in generating a 'Goth' atmosphere when a tourist appreciation of glamorous festival-goers was experienced as intrusive. This suggests that not only are Goth affective atmospheres vulnerable, but that it is not only the working up of the attendant affects of "unusual beauty" discussed in the previous chapter that are significant in producing sites and subjectivities as 'Goth'.

In the remainder of the chapter, I will consider two perhaps more unexpected affective atmospheres generated via interactions with festival crowds, material objects such as clothing and the physical environment. Firstly, mundane activities and an affective atmosphere of 'home' is discussed, followed by consideration of the 'comic' as a more diffuse force circulating over dispersed sites and beyond the physical geographies of the festival environment itself.

The Mundane and Habitual: Feeling “at Home”



Figure 30: Walking the dog. Source: Alexis' photo-diary.

Despite the sudden enchanted moments producing sites and subjectivities as ‘Goth’ via the generation of “unusual beauty”, the festival is also a time of repeating familiar rituals. Those participants who had attended multiple times, were able to summarise the festival ‘schedule’ repeated each year. Scheduling examples from participants include:

on Friday, a new pair of boots is purchased from Mark’s stall at the *Bizarre Bazaar* market and ‘worn-in’ via a walk up to the abbey. Saturday afternoon is spent over pints pulled by Chris at *The Elsinore* pub, followed by the dressing customs necessary before an evening of live bands at the *Spa Pavilion*. The weekend is traditionally concluded with a Sunday lunch of fish and chips with friends, a boat ride captained by Barry on the replica tall-ship, *Endeavour*, and a stroll along the beach with the dog.

These participants are on first name terms with those whom tourists will forget, and each street and site is familiar and known. They discussed how the same locations are visited and photographed: the obligatory group shot under the whale bones and posing on exactly the same part of the ruined abbey; their outfits, hair colour and the weather are the only changing features. Participant Taylor

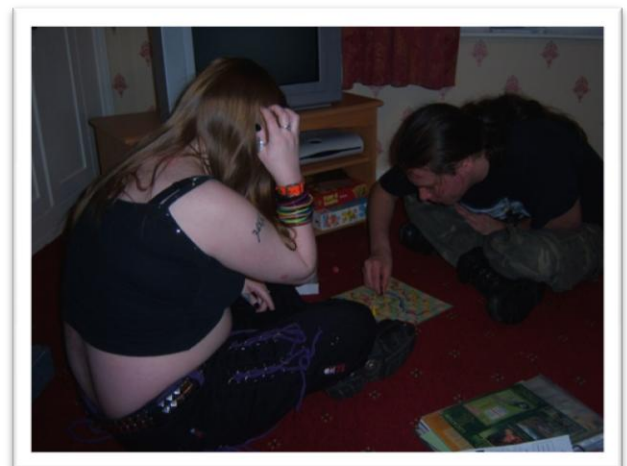


Figure 31: Board games. Source: Taylor's photo-diary.

played board games in his rented cottage on rainy days, and looked forward to the amusing reports of *Real Gothic's* comprehensive loss at the charity football match for yet another year. Familiar

smells and sounds were experienced as participants moved from site to site: the playful music of the seafront arcades, the cry of seagulls, the Goth-appropriate football chants, the distinctive aroma of hairsprayed Mohawks in the crowded pub, and the seductive scent of vinegar wafting from portions of chips, all featured in the photo-diaries.

In this section, I will suggest that such practices produce Whitby as an inhabited space, a space of 'home', not just a visited space valued for the Gothic qualities of the architectures of certain buildings and landmarks, or even the affective atmospheres of unusual beauty evoked above. *Whitby Goth Weekend* is experienced in significant ways beyond the participatory working up of Gothic affects drawn from narrative trends isolated in the previous chapter. The concepts of "acceptance" (participant Morgan) and a feeling of Whitby as "home" (participant Alexis) were more frequently and directly reiterated by participants when speaking about their experiences of the festival and in accounting for its appeal. In this section I will argue that spaces and subjects are produced as 'Goth' via the generation of affective atmospheres attendant to a conception of "home", through the working up of habit and familiarity with landscapes. These processes thus form potential tensions with the idea of a festival as a space of carnivalesque transgression.

Following accounts discussing the rhythms of the city (e.g Amin and Thrift 2002, Cloke *et al.* 2008, Holloway 2010, Jayne *et al.* 2010), an investigation into the pace at which the festival is experienced in the photo-diaries highlights the recurring role of repeated practice as vital to this construction as an inhabited space. The practices involved in taking part in the festival were framed within the photo-diaries as a familiar and comfortable repeat of ritualistic behaviours enacted at previous events. There was a strong sense of the habitual and the feelings of comfort and enjoyment to be found in repeated actions in familiar settings that had become "second nature" (Revilla 2004). The same cafes, restaurants, pubs, and tourist attractions were visited, and participant Taylor and Alexis

spoke of taking photographs from exactly the same location at each festival as a following of “tradition”.

These insights run counter to theorisations of festivals as tourist events and contrary to the logic of festivals as spaces of transgression or ‘carnival’. The photo-diaries of repeat festival attendees described the geographies of Whitby and the festival in familiar terms, more akin to a space inhabited as a “home” rather than a series of sites to be visited by tourists or revellers at a carnival. The concept of “carnival” developed in the contexts of medieval Europe by Bakhtin (1984), positions such events as periods of transgression from social hierarchies and norms of behaviour, while Bataille (1987) notes that festivals mark a time for the exploration of the taboo and forbidden. Similarly, Belk (Belk 1994: 108) writing on contemporary Halloween celebrations in the United States argues that this period: “provides a seam through which fantasies and repressed aspects of personality can emerge”, often through unusual dressing practices.

Participants at *Whitby Goth Weekend* however, stressed the importance of dressing practices in making them feel more “themselves” (participant Morgan) rather than a transformation into a carnivalesque character of transgression. Participant Morgan for example, utilised the festival as a safe space in which to explore her transgender identity via clothing choice; practices that she did not enact in her usual space of “home” due to the religious beliefs of her family with whom she resides. Furthermore, all four participants discussed routine aspects of daily life alongside the more spectacular dressing practices enacted at the festival. Isabel renewed her car tax at the local *Post Office*, Taylor visited the betting shop, Morgan waited in a queue at a cash point, and Alexis participated in the “Goth dog walk” along the beach. Beyond these participants’ experiences, fans join in with the chants to the tune of Gothic rock songs at the charity football match, and many of my casual conversations of the weekend were themed around the weather and discussing the traffic on the often long journeys to Whitby.

However, despite such habitual and mundane activities and engagements with space, I suggest that these practices are to some extent inflected with the carnivalesque via stylistic performance and an element of “transformation” within such spaces or activities. The mundane activities discussed above were often noted as memorable due to the amusing novelty of participating in such activities while dressed in spectacular outfits and amongst others in a similar style. The mundane space of the *Post Office* for example, was transformed into something ‘Goth’ via the performance of clothed bodies (Gregson, Rose 2000), as Isabel specifically mentioned her amusement of carrying out this task “in a corset” and with others: “dressed like Victorians”. Equally, the activities and space of a football match were given a ‘Goth’ transformation: football is “Gothsized” (Steele 2008: 10) via chants to the tune of Gothic Rock songs, the kit of “black shirt, black shorts and black socks”, and the crowd dressed in spectacular outfits rather than casual sports-wear (see below):

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The image was scanned from an original programme. Photos of “Real Gothic FC” and fans can be viewed publically on the Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/RealGothic>

Figure 32: Transformations: Goth football fans pictured on the charity football match programme, October 2008.

This transformation also works to support the generation of Whitby as inhabited space as it is made possible via the generation of attendant affects of “safety” (participant Alexis). Participant Alexis discussed her processes of “adjustment” while at the festival in terms of a transformation of her physical and emotional state. She highlights one of the first aspects or indeed challenges of the weekend as, in her terms, “loosening up” or “casting off the shackles of normality”. She explains that:

“it’s often hard relaxing, coming from a town where those who look out of the ordinary get barraged with insults just walking down the street, and it may take time to realise that in a town like Whitby, on Goth weekend, that’s not the case”

Her photo-diary goes on to detail however, that a brief walk to the supermarket is sufficient to transform feelings about Whitby into “a whole new world where we can be among our own kind”. This adjustment to the affects of “safety” circulating through the festival environment resulted in tangible and physical consequences, including changes in her posture to a more upright and what she describes as a more “confident” stance rather than avoiding unwanted attention by looking at the ground.

I suggest that this sense of “safety” is generated via an interaction of Goth performances and spaces. Aside from the effect of the welcoming signs placed outside pubs and cafes featured at the opening of this chapter, amongst the most striking features of the *Whitby Goth Weekend* is the high concentration of spectacularly dressed individuals present in all locations: as noted above, including mundane contexts of supermarkets, pubs and cash points. This density of presence was noted by participant Isabel who attempted to photograph “an entire street full of Goths”:



Figure 33: Sandgate in Whitby's Old Town area. Source: Participant Isabel's photo-diary.

As noted in chapter three, performances via clothing style, hair, makeup and form of movement work to identify others as “Goths”. These stylistic performances are enhanced within Whitby by the geography of the narrow, winding streets. This functions to funnel crowds and create the illusion of a town populated completely by Goths, despite only around 2,000 in attendance (The Whitby Gazette 2008).

This domination of Goth stylistic performances is significant as it can work to produce a space as ‘Goth’ in spite of the qualities of the physical environment. For example, while some Goth clubs are held in spectacular Gothic locations, such as *Vagabonds* in London utilising a Victorian bar and Manchester’s *Ara* held in a Church, Goth clubs are mostly held in club spaces which are rented weekly or monthly for an evening. While some of these spaces employ technologies such as smoke machines, minimal or blue-toned lighting and Gothic horror films on projection screens, most must solely rely on music policy and dress code to create the space as a “Goth club”. Within Whitby, the presence of others taking part in such dressing practices is thus crucial both within the festival venues and the wider town, to generate a space in which it is “safe” to participate in such practices. As participant Alexis concludes, Whitby is:

“Probably the one place in this country where you can walk around all Gothed-up to the nines, day and night without getting hassled for it... because we outnumber everyone else!”

The concept of carnival is thus worked out in complex ways within *Whitby Goth Weekend*. The festival atmospheres of “home” permit behaviour normally viewed as unsafe or risky in other contexts, while the feeling of inhabiting the town rather than experiencing it fleetingly as a tourist through habitual and mundane interactions and activities, moves emphasis back to concepts of “home”. What has been made clear is that sites of the festival are produced as ‘Goth’ via these familiar practices and interactions. Additionally, the presence of others enacting similar stylistic performances is significant, and further enhances by the funnelling effect exaggerated via the physical geographies of the built environment. Significantly, these habitual atmospheres also had a force; a “push” (Thrift 2008) experienced through the body as a change in posture for Alexis. The sense of inhabiting the sites of Whitby is thus significant for the co-generation of ‘Goth’ subjectivities; an assemblage of collective stylistic performances and the physical environment, forming as an active participant in the generation of such affective atmospheres.

In this section I have featured a range of different sites and mentioned practices of traversing between locations. This introduces the concept of a more diffuse or dispersed interpretation of affective atmosphere. While Anderson (2009: 79) focuses on site-specific examples such as art objects or buildings, he also theorises the spatialities of atmospheres as “diffusion within a sphere”. I will now investigate this spatiality, arguing that diffusion can occur via the deployment of the comic, thus shifting analysis away from the visual register and stylistic performance to focus on other practices and atmospheres that work to generate “thick” (Casey 2001) or “viscous” (Saldanha 2008) spaces. I will also suggest that the ‘comic’ is significant in the generation of a sense of ‘private

space' in tension with the paparazzi-like response of tourists; a function that also circulates beyond festival environments.

The Comic: “How Many Goths Does it Take to Change a Light Bulb?”

Within participants' accounts and in my own experiences of the *Whitby Goth Weekend*, laughter is everywhere. A group of corseted ladies giggle as they purchase kitsch sticks of *Dracula* rock for friends at home. A wry smile is flashed for a split-second from a man in a top hat, PVC trousers and tail coat posing on a gravestone, before swiftly reverting back to the expected vampiric grimace as the tourist's camera flashes. A ridiculous in-joke from the mid-1990s is recalled: Goths from Manchester could be identified by the incongruous yellow rubber ducks displayed about their person. That evening, the pub quiz at *The Elsinore* requires three Goth-themed 'light bulb' jokes in answer to question 18:

How many Goths does it take to change a light bulb?

What's a light bulb?

How many Goths does it take to change a light bulb?

None, but one has to light the candle.

How many Goths does it take to change a light bulb?

Three, one to change it and two to talk about Lord Byron's Grand Tour and creative uses of laudanum in a metaphysical environment.

The following night, the headline act of the festival, Goth comedian and musician *Voltaire*, takes to the stage at the *Spa Pavilion*. He opens with the song “If only I were a Goth”, a parody of many

popular stereotypes: Goths are thin, pale, smoke *Clove* cigarettes, constantly wear black, impersonate vampires, worship pagan deities, obsess over death and most of all, Goths are serious and depressed. Taking up this challenge, his “Zombie Prostitute” is described affectionately as “a rotten kind'a cute”; cannibalism on a desert island is made light of in “Cannibal Buffet”; and “Hell in a Handbasket” details his excited anticipation of going to hell: “If I was so bad, than there's no need to be sad/'Cause everybody else will be there too (including you!)”. Goths it seems, aren't so serious about the Gothic, but as Voltaire suggests: “don't tell anyone- it's more fun that way”.

The comic is a significant atmosphere within the festival, and several points can be made through its consideration. Firstly, the comic is something that erupts both spontaneously as an enchanted momentary encounter, with for example those buying souvenirs or the sharing of a knowing glance with someone posing for a photograph, as well as within contrived or ‘worked at’ moments of a stand-up comedy performance. It thus emphasises, as introduced above, that affective atmospheres can be both spontaneous and manufactured. However, the comic is also one way in which an engagement with atmospheres producing ‘Goth’ can be framed as a form of “delight without delusion” (Saler 2006: 713); a quality that Holloway (2010) insists is indicative of contemporary forms of enchantment.

Holloway (2010) stresses that enchantment in the twenty first century, or “modern enchantment”, operates in specific and distinct ways. Drawing on Michael Saler's (2006) and Simon During's (2002) histories of the concept of enchantment and magic respectively, “modern enchantment” can be defined as “delight without delusion” (Saler 2006: 713) or “the willing suspension of disbelief” (During 2002: 49-50) rather than a complete transport into wonderment. Such observations were highlighted in Holloway's (2010) work on ghost tourism, within which participants must consent to “join in” or be willing to be affected by enchanted atmospheres, despite perhaps believing that ghosts do not exist. Similarly, I therefore suggest that participants at *Whitby Goth Weekend* openly

acknowledge the element of “fantasy” or “imagination” (Saler 2006: 713) involved in the festival and Goth performances more broadly.

Participants were consciously aware of the melodrama and ‘play’ involved in their many performances. ‘Play’, also highlighted by Hodkinson (2002, 2004b), is an equally significant affective atmosphere in the emergence of ‘Goth’ as an appreciation of “unusual beauty” and references to Gothic historical discourses. Various technologies of play were employed at the festival; from alcohol consumption to experimentation with transformative image via the manipulation of makeup and corsets, as well as within the consumption of comedy. While enchantment indicates a deviation from reality, as reinforced through Isabel’s imagined transformation into a “Victorian lady” above, the comedic thus indicates that such individuals are somewhat aware of their hyperbolic practices and perhaps “delight” this hyperbole.

Such insights can be taken further through an investigation of the role of the comic with Gothic literary narratives. Horner and Zlosnik (2005), argue that the deployment of the comic within Gothic literatures is an under-theorised yet significant presence from the outset of this genre. They note that the comic initially derives from the permeability of boundaries explored in such texts: “Gothic writers deliberately exploit the fear of the Other encroaching upon the apparent safety of the post-Enlightenment world” (p1). For example, boundaries between the “good” and “bad” are frequently established early in narratives, tensions are created when boundaries are broken and resolutions occur when they are re-established. Such boundary breaking also extends to the divides between the grotesque and the comic negotiated within the Gothic. Horner and Zlosnik (2005) argue that melodrama and fakery were dominant devices employed within such literatures due to their development within the eighteenth-century cultural contexts of the establishment of exaggerated forms of popular entertainment such as the circus and opera. Such hyperbole can lead to a crossing-

over into the comic: as Punter (2001a: 12) concludes: “the stylized theatricality of the Gothic device,...is always teetering on the edge of self-parody”.

I contend that such “self-parody” was a key comic device employed at the festival: many of *Voltaire’s* songs ridicule Goth stereotypes, participants noted playing-up to such expectations by not smiling when posing for tourist’s photographs, and Gothic ‘light bulb’ in-jokes were so well known as to feature in a quiz. Such knowing self-parody indicates that Goths do not necessarily take such ‘dark’ themes or hyperbolic Gothic references without an element of humour or light-heartedness: they can delight in such discourses and partake in spectacular costuming without delusion by also acknowledging how such performances can verge on the edge of the absurd. Such acknowledgment can be expressed through self-parody as a form of humour.

Furthermore, participants noted that this comic element was not something necessarily open to what they term “non-Goths”, or tourists consuming the festival. As Morgan comments on *Voltaire’s* performance,

“Everybody sees Goth from the outside as all dark and depressive and everything and...this is just laughing and joking all over the place. It’s not what people would assume Goth to be.”

Such self-parody was also deployed to serve practical ends. Participant Alexis for example, noted confirming and exaggerating the stereotype of Goths as ‘aloof’ by adopting an unfriendly and exaggerated scowl in order to scare-off and avoid pursuit by photographers. She recalled her behaviour as a comedic anecdote, stating: “they thought I was actually being serious!”

I further suggest that the comic thus also functions as an affective atmosphere generating “thick” spaces, but in a different way to the operation of glamour: the comic generates sites in which ‘Goth’ is experienced as a diffuse, *private* space. Indeed, subcultural groups have consistently been seen to carve out private urban spaces for themselves via physically occupying and performing their cultural practices, sometimes literally, on the “street corner” (Whyte 1955). However, here I suggest that such ‘privacy’ is not only generated via the physical presence within a space but as an affective trace, produced via the interaction of cultural practices and sites. The generation of privacy is even more necessary at *Whitby Goth Weekend*; a space in which many can consume a Goth aesthetic and attempt to ‘join in’, as seen with the veneration of participants as glamorous, and the threats to the atmospheres of enchantment via a paparazzi-like response. Humour, especially via self-parody, can be conceived of as a collective but private device utilised within these sites, whether overtly (via behaviour such as Alexis’s above) or covertly (by simply ‘getting’ the in-jokes), to generate “thick” spaces and subjects as ‘Goth’.

These considerations therefore, lead to theoretical reflections on the spatiality of atmospheres. Spaces of the comic may not be the specific, localised sites that studies such as Duff’s (2010) on youth in Vancouver highlight as generative of privacy. While there were more “viscous” or “thick” spaces of comedy at the festival via *Voltaire’s* performance and a further comedy fringe event in October 2008, I argue that humour operates as a more diffuse affective atmosphere; one that penetrates the general “feel” of the festival and circulates amongst the various festival sites and travels beyond. On the event’s official website, the organiser, Jo Hampshire (TopMumPromotions 2005) states that:

“The thing that makes me most proud about WGW is how it’s helped to dispel a lot of the old Goth ‘rules’, which include, you aren’t allowed to laugh, you must own a Sisters album, and you must wear black.”

A further website (linked from the official site) detailing the history of the festival notes that an “unpretentious, irreverent style”, came to define the festival, as seen in early e-advertising campaigns describing the festival as a “weekend for those who are only *99%* perfect” (Uncle Nemesis 2002).

The comic and self-parody are also evident beyond festival sites. Participants William and Charlie having performed stand-up comedy and Eric in particular reflects that, “let’s be honest, we’re all a joke- we’re all a bunch of grownups that dye our hair and wear makeup!” I suggest that the comic thus operates as a diffuse atmosphere across broader sites, working to generate ‘Goth’ subjectivities and sites via the shared practices of laughing or participating in such humour. Significantly, these practices are not only visual as the consideration of Goth clothing practices, but instead, represent embodied experiences. The sites of *Whitby Goth Weekend* are one set of locations that have a role in the gathering together of laughing bodies. Furthermore, such physical qualities also assist in framing such practices as hyperbolic and participate in the generation of the comic: as introduced above regarding the photo shoots within a graveyard, such surroundings and physical geographies work to build such atmospheres of hyperbole and self-parody.

I therefore, conclude this section by suggesting that the comic thus operates as a diffuse affective atmosphere circulating throughout the festival. It also functions as an intensity that emerges at more intensive moments within encounters, overall working to generate space-times of privacy or intimacy through the sharing of a glance or via collective laughter at a comedy performance. Such a consideration highlights that the potentially more diffuse concept of atmosphere can function beneficially in partnership with insight regarding “viscosity” or “thickness” to account for differing modulations of intensity experienced across sites.

Conclusions

I have questioned how a site can be thought of as 'Goth' by investigating the generation of affective atmospheres at the *Whitby Gothic Weekend* festival. Following insight developed in the previous chapters, I began from a starting point in which bodies, sites and affects are thought of as co-constituted, and adopted non-representational considerations of site and subjectivity to move beyond a semiotic reading. Instead, through engaging my research materials with the concepts of affect worked up in the previous chapter, Anderson's (2009) "affective atmosphere" and Casey's "thick" spaces, I have sought to demonstrate that subjectivities and spaces are produced as 'Goth' through encounters and processes, and do not pre-exist such events. I contend that even sites considered 'Gothic' within historical discourses, such as Whitby's ruined abbey, Victorian architectures and Gothic narrative connections, do not pre-exist as 'Goth' sites, awaiting the influx of 'Goths' to consume them. Equally, I suggest that those travelling to the town for the festival are not pre-defined as 'Goths', thus leading to the rejection of the concept that festival sites become 'Goth' simply through being inhabited by these individuals. I have therefore, considered several points leading to insights regarding how 'Goth' emerges within interaction with sites, and reflections on the central theoretical concepts.

My account opened with a consideration of the emergence of the affective forces attendant to a sense of "unusual beauty" theorised in the previous chapter. I put such ideas into conversation with ontologies in which sites are experienced through their 'feel' not just via cognitive reflection (Crouch 2001, 2003b, Pearson 2006). My research materials suggest that sensuous engagement with festival sites including the arresting effect of weather events and the landscape, worked to trigger spontaneous moments of enchantment. I contend that these moments produced sites and subjectivities experienced as 'Goth' through such encounters. This demonstrated that, as Cloke *et al.* (2008) stress, an element of spontaneity remains significant in the emergence of affective

atmospheres. However, when moving on to consider glamour as a second affective modulation generated within and co-producing 'Goth', the 'work' required to enact such performances introduced in chapter three, was further reinforced.

My discussion of this contrived atmosphere of glamour further introduced certain weaknesses or challenges to the generation of 'Goth' atmospheres. Such a consideration disrupted the idea that, as Taylor notes, *Whitby Goth Weekend* is "for Goths not tourists". This 'making public' of Goth performances worked ambiguously: while some embraced such positive attention, several other participants complained about the actions of tourists as "paparazzi", threatening the experience of festival sites as 'Goth'. I therefore went on to suggest that while atmosphere is useful, the "unfinished" (Anderson 2009) and vulnerable qualities should be stressed, something which can be achieved by considering vocabularies such as "viscosity" (Saldanha 2005, 2006b, 2007) or "thickness" (Casey 1993, 2001, Duff 2010). Following Casey's (1993, 2001) concept of "thick" spaces, defined as sites experienced as "meaningful" or "enriching" in some way, I then investigated the varying nature of intensities generated with(in) sites.

I contend that such "thick" spaces were not only those experienced as co-producing 'Goth' subjectivities via a sense of "unusual beauty", but also mundane and habitual practices and engagements. In this second section I discussed how familiarity with sites and the habitual repetition of practices at the festival worked to generate an affective atmosphere of "home" (participant Alexis), in which participants felt "themselves" (participant Morgan). In contrast to notions of carnival as spaces of transgression (Bakhtin 1984, Bataille 1987, Belk 1994), participants such as Morgan experienced the festival as a "safe" space in which to enact her transgender practices, something she felt was truly reflective of 'her' rather than escape into an alternate character. In this sense however, while participants felt that these performances were somehow more "authentic", these behaviours were not usually enacted in their daily lives. Furthermore, sites

and practices such as football were transformed into 'Goth' events via and assemblage of factors, further reinforcing the working up of Whitby as an inhabited, 'Goth' space, while also producing 'Goth' subjectivities through the "safe" deployment of practices. The festival thus operates as a form of carnival in a more complex way than a simple transgression of norms: it involves transformative processes and an engagement with highly valued mundane spaces and practices.

These discussions within the first half of the chapter, demonstrated the active role of sites in working up atmospheres producing a sense of site as 'Goth': the funnelling effect of the narrow streets created the illusion that the town was populated by Goths, thus generating atmospheres of "safety". Furthermore, the framing effect noted as significant for Holloway (2010) in generating "modern enchantment", was in evidence, with participants noting being stopped in their tracks by an enchanting vista of "unusual beauty". I therefore, contend that such affective atmospheres are not only necessary in generating *Whitby Goth Weekend* as a series of significant yet vulnerable 'Goth' sites, but that these atmospheres are generated within complex assemblages in which site must be considered an active participant.

Finally, I considered a more unusual and perhaps unexpected affective atmosphere involved in generating the festival as a series of 'Goth' sites: the 'comic'. Exemplified in the stand-up performance of comedian and musician *Voltaire*, I framed such humour as a covert tactic employed to maintain a degree of 'privacy' in spite of the consumption and normalisation of the unique modulation of glamour introduced above. I then went on to utilise this affect to consider the spatiality of the concept of atmosphere. I concluded that a focus on self-parody was a way of producing a 'Goth' atmosphere that worked beyond the visual register, and one which operated diffusely; circulating over festival sites and beyond Whitby itself. I therefore, argued that Anderson's (2009: 79) "diffusion within a sphere" can operate over large scales. Furthermore, this diffuse deployment of self-parody in particular, worked to create spaces and subjectivities as 'Goth'

alongside the more serious or gloomy intensities evoked through “unusual beauty”, incorporating the grotesque and uncanny.

Theoretically, such discussions have highlighted points regarding the spatiality of atmospheres and their potential vulnerability or varying nature, and the processes involved in working up “thick” spaces and their composition and duration. I have suggested that “affective atmosphere” is a useful theoretical analytic when a varying quality is overtly stressed; something which can be accomplished by taking into account the concept of “thick” spaces. “Thick” spaces within the festival were seen to function in complex ways, as they were both worked at and emerged spontaneously via sudden or enchanted encounters. Atmospheres can also be overt and covert. For example, the collective feelings generated at comedy performances were overt, while the wider and more covert deployment of the comic provided a space of “privacy”. I conclude that the spatiality of atmospheres can be considered alongside the geographies of “thick” spaces: the intensities of the comic were seen to emerge simultaneously as diffuse and come to define a general ‘feel’ of the festival, as well as emerging intensively at certain points.

Finally, within this chapter I also noted how interactions between ‘Goth’ stylistic and cultural performances, sites and those experiencing or consuming the festival as a ‘tourist’, can vary. Significantly, within assemblages generated at the festival, ‘Goth’ modulations of glamour were widely appreciated and interpretations of beauty producing ‘Goth’ were greeted extremely positively. However, as discussed from the thesis *Introduction* and as hinted at within the working up of Whitby as a “safe” space in which participants have greater freedom of expression than in the actual spaces they inhabit, such interactions are not always so successful. The final substantive chapter of the thesis will investigate these varying reactions towards Goth cultural practices, utilising various theoretical tools to explore how Goth participates in the generation of social anxieties.

Re-Working Resistance: Affective 'Attraction/Repulsion'

Introduction

In this penultimate chapter, I draw together insight developed throughout the thesis to approach the third key question posed: how and why are anxieties consistently generated and circulate around collectivities such as Goth? The assumption of anxiety is based on studies of other groupings in which youth practices, particularly those surrounding music and style cultures, generate an anxious response. Pearson (1983), in his analysis of the history of British youth in the early nineteenth century, argues that fears arose from the 1930s over the misuse of leisure time and threats to national identity. The music and dancing style of Elvis Presley and his fans were considered lewd in the 1950s (Jones 1991, Korpe *et al.* 2006), and the Mods and the Rockers were framed as “folk devils” triggering a “moral panic” through their organised fighting on the beaches of Brighton in the 1960s (Cohen 2002). The focus of anxieties shifted to the anarchic, class-based resistance expressed through Punk style in the 1970s (Hebdige 1979), while Metal bands such as *Judas Priest* and *Ozzy Osbourne* were taken to court in the 1980s, accused of allegedly hiding Satanic messages within their music, urging fans to kill their parents and renounce Christianity (Kahn-Harris 2007, Haenfler 2010).

More recent anxieties towards youth, through, for example, drug use within Rave culture (Thornton 1995) and violence within Hip Hop, Rap and Chav cultures (Rose 1994, The Times 2005), are coupled with discourses asserting that we now occupy an “age of anxiety” (Beck 1992, Wilkinson 2001, Bauman 2006, Jackson and Everts 2010). Beck’s (1992) *Risk Society* testifies to the fears over microscopic pollutants, while Ungar (2001) confirms an increase in anxieties over environmental and chemical threats. Furthermore, anxieties have arisen regarding food within various farming crises

(Whatmore 2002, Jackson 2010), and more recently regarding threats from avian and swine flu (Jackson and Everts 2010). As a result, anxiety has thus been framed as a predominant “background state” (Bauman 2006).

In approaching the question as to why anxieties continue to emerge in relation to youth, subcultural studies literatures have largely drawn upon the concept of ‘resistance’. As I outlined in the *Theoretical Engagements* chapter, the Chicago School theorists of the 1920s viewed subcultural youth as deviant from wider societal norms: groups of unemployed “delinquent boys” (Cohen A. K 1955) coalescing on the street corners, and “Taxi-dancers” engaging in what was considered by contemporaries as morally controversial employment (Cressey 1932). Later work at the CCCS (e.g. Hall and Jefferson 1976, Mungham and Pearson 1976, Hebdige 1979), shifted the framing of subcultural “delinquency” to one of “heroic resistance”. Drawing on Gramsci’s (1971) notion of hegemony, subcultural involvement was theorised as a coping mechanism for inner city life and a way in which to resist class entrenchment by the powerful in society. Punks for example, employed techniques of “bricolage” by juxtaposing familiar objects in unfamiliar combinations to engage in “semiotic guerrilla warfare” designed to shock and provoke (Hebdige 1979).

However, in this review of the literature, I also stressed several limitations to ‘resistance’. For example, the assumption of a separate ‘subcultural’ youth positioned against a distinct ‘wider society’ has been problematised within post-subcultural accounts (e.g. Thornton 1995), and the Gramscian model of a weaker subcultural minority resisting the powerful majority has been troubled by nonhuman accounts of resistance (Raby 2005). Indeed, Nigel Thrift (1997: 124) asserts that he “has always had a problem with ‘resistance’”, and calls for a stance which moves away from the “David and Goliath romanticism” implied in such an approach, in which “everything has to be forced into the dichotomy of resistance or submission and all of the paradoxical effects which cannot be understood in this way remain hidden”. Furthermore, post-subcultural accounts have stressed that

'difference', expressed through clothing choices for example have now been effectively commodified and thus removed any 'resistant' power (Haenfler 2010), and works have emphasised that youth now largely engage in such practices for 'fun' rather than with the aim of enacting political or social change (Polhemus 1997, Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003, Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004).

Such criticisms can also now be supported through the empirical work I have discussed in previous chapters. Participants in this study, as also noted by Brill (2008) and Hodkinson (2002), were largely middle class and engaged in 'mainstream' capitalism through their employment, sometimes alongside running Goth clubs and DJing. They are not therefore, utilising Goth cultural practices to cope with inner city life as the youth of the Chicago and Birmingham Schools' studies were thought to. Equally, in chapter three I utilised Judith Butler's theoretical perspectives to explore how Goth can potentially be seen as "subversive", in Butler's terms, via gender performances. However, viewing this through the lens of 'resistance', wherein such practices necessarily attempt to work against something to enact change, the question emerges: if such actions are performed in the private of a club, can this still be considered 'resistant', or would this insight be overlooked in such a theoretical approach?

Furthermore, Leblanc (1999) advocates assessing the meanings participants themselves place on their own actions instead of producing a purely theoretical assumption of behaviour as 'resistant'. In the discussion of dance in chapter three and modifying clothing in chapter four in particular, I have demonstrated that participants value self-expression as the central motivation of their style practices, rather than a desire to overturn social institutions and values, or enact class-related change. Unlike cultures such as Straightedge, where Ross Haenfler (2006, 2004) reports that individuals actively seek to promote and spread the central values of abstinence from casual sex,

alcohol and drugs, there is little evidence that participants in this study sought to promote any Goth 'values' to others.

This observation is consistent with those such as Maria Pini (2001) and Ben Malbon (1999) working on Rave, adopt an inward-looking theorisation of resistance. Malbon (1999: 148) for example, concludes that clubbing practices can be considered a form of "self-resistance" as they generate a sense of personal "vitality" and "worth", which work to resist less playful aspects of clubbers lives such as employment. Equally, for Pini (2001), Raving spaces and practices allow for alternative explorations of clubbers' own subjectivities, including their performed gender identities. 'Resistance', if it is present, can thus be subtle and relatively internalised.

Further complexity can also be added when looking at some of my experiences in carrying out this research in which Goth is not always experienced or presented as 'resistant'. While talking with participants in Japan, they could not isolate any significant media events of anxiety surrounding their practices and, aside from restrictions regarding tattoos due to their associations with the Yakuza and organised crime, no participants noted incidents of negative reaction or anxiety, as explored in the discussion of the normalisation of Gothic beauty within such contexts in chapters four and five (Godoy 2009). Furthermore, I attended a conference on "Subcultural Style" at the *Fashion Institute of Technology* in New York in February 2008, run in conjunction with an exhibition and book celebrating the influence of "the Gothic" on high fashion (Steele 2008). Goth style has also been enrolled within high-street fashion with collections for *TopShop* entitled "Horror Girl" and coverage in *British Vogue* announcing "Soft Goth" as a key trend for autumn/winter 2008. 'Goth' therefore, does not only generate anxiety, but at times can be embraced by, and becomes a part of, the popular culture industries. The lived reality of 'resistance', especially in regards to Goth, is thus more complex.

Therefore, faced with a profusion of conflicting reactions and presentations, and when looking at the motivations of participants themselves, I struggled to place Goth within the 'resistant subculture' framework. However, unlike with the case of Malbon's (1999) and Pini's (2001) Ravers, this insight is placed in tension with participants' accounts of moments when their stylistic choices have generated reaction, as well as several significant media events concerning Goth within the UK and USA. Furthermore, despite positive media attention in terms of adopting Goth fashions and characters such as vampires (see chapter four), simultaneous to these trends, media events of anxiety have continued to emerge within the UK and USA, and participants in these contexts were equipped with many anecdotes of negative reaction to their style performances in everyday life.

In this chapter, utilising both media analysis and participant insight, I work up a rejection of humanistic understandings of subcultural resistance and instead utilise the "social anxieties" framework developed by Jackson and Everts (2010) as a tool or methodology through which to theorise the continuing emergence of anxieties towards Goth. I will follow Jackson and Everts' (2010) framework through various stages in the generation of social anxiety: firstly, investigating how anxieties are framed within media events, producing the objects and subjects of anxiety; secondly, how such framings align with what is considered to be the fundamental causes of the anxious state, existential crisis; thirdly, how anxieties filter through and come to influence social practices; and finally, the potential for resolving anxieties.

I begin with a discussion of three salient 'events' within the British and America news media isolated in the thesis *Introduction*: the *Columbine High School* massacre in which two assailants overtly identified as "Goths" in the media, killed 13 people and injured 21 others; health scares following academic research in which participation in Goth culture was linked to high rates of self-harm and suicide; and the violent assault on and subsequent death of Goth, Sophie Lancaster, in 2008. I will argue that Goth has been implicated with fears over 'alienated youth' which operate as large-scale

media events, but I will also move beyond media framing and representation to look at the micro-scale to investigate how Goth emerges as 'eventful' at the level of everyday encounters.

This works towards the central argument of the chapter: the necessity for a re-theorising of subcultural resistance as affective attraction/repulsion, concepts which do not pre-suppose resistance or anxiety but are useful in thinking through how such intensities emerge and the ways in which collectivities such as Goth *make a difference* to the flow of everyday life. Latter sections explore some of the underlying explanations for consistent eruption of anxiety events based on insights from previous chapters which discussed the liminal nature of Goth's affective fields. I close the chapter with a consideration of the potential for resolving anxieties or engineering the attraction/repulsion surrounding Goth, through the potential to mobilise both alternative framings and affective intensities.

Firstly, it is necessary to further introduce Jackson and Everts' (2010) framework. Their account of social anxiety focuses on the social practices by which "anxieties are institutionalised and can become powerful agents of social change" (p1793). Through examples including avian flu and terrorism, they stress how the embodied state of distress or unease termed "anxiety", can become "a shared experience that results in some discernible action by significant numbers of people". They particularly stress that such a state can be produced as a social condition by the "rupturing of established routines and the 'framing' of events by particular communities of practice" (*ibid*). Such ideas will now be utilised to consider how Goth practices sporadically continue to make a difference to the flow of everyday life, beginning in the following section with a discussion of three examples of social anxiety events in which Goth is implicated.

Goth Anxieties

In this section, I begin by isolating the ‘events’ of social anxiety surrounding Goth. Jackson and Everts’ (2010) social anxiety framework embarks with the theorisation of the anxiety ‘event’ in question. They couple Deleuze’s and Badiou’s concepts to theorise an event as Badiou’s present which then transforms into Deleuze’s past-future: put simply, an event thus generates an immediate rupture in the present which may also become “extensive” (something that has happened and is about to happen), to produce an event of anxiety shared by many (p2798). They contend that such “extension” is generated by the way in which anxieties are framed, ordered or understood.

Framing is a crucial process as it determines the scale or reach of a social anxiety event, and defines the objects and subjects of anxiety generated by the rupturing action of the event. This in turn, determines the potential for an anxiety event to be resolved: when both the objects and subjects of anxiety are destroyed. For example, the threat of avian flu developed into an extensive event of social anxiety through media and expert reporting, which isolated the threat as potentially global- all populations had the potential to become the subjects of anxiety. The objects of anxiety were clearly defined as the birds and virus cells. Once these objects were isolated, efforts were made to monitor and eventually annihilate this threat, thus also destroying the subjects of anxiety as populations were no longer at risk. Jackson and Everts’ (2010) argument goes on to stress that such events have impacts on more diffuse social practices, but before discussing this, it is necessary to think through how anxieties in which Goth is implicated become framed in certain ways.

In this section, through a review of news media output surrounding three media events, I contend that Goth is entangled in a complex array of anxieties regarding ‘alienated youth’. These youths are framed as threatening in a variety of different capacities, and the anxieties generated in the media events surrounding them have produced significant consequences. I will now sketch out the three

media events outlined in the thesis *Introduction* once more, with attention to the framing of subjects and objects and the nature of anxieties generated.

Amongst the most apparent and widely reported are anxieties towards Goth as objects of anxiety, generated in events such as the *Columbine High School* massacre in Colorado in 1999. Two students, Erik Harris and Dylan Klebold, fatally shot 13 people, injured 21 others, unsuccessfully attempted to destroy their school using home-manufactured explosives, and finally, committed suicide. The two shooters were framed and overtly labelled as “Goth” in the media due to their adoption of long black leather trench coats, their reported membership of a school clique, “The Trench Coat Mafia”, and ownership of *Marilyn Manson* and German Industrial Metal CDs and posters (Frymer 2009). Benjamin Frymer’s (2009: 2) analysis of the US “media spectacle” that emerged following Columbine reveals that, as an explanation for the events was sought, anxieties did not centre around gun control but around “White, suburban youth alienation”. He argues that “first and foremost, Americans were told that Klebold and Harris were members of a disturbed, nihilistic, cult”, described as a “Gothic subculture” within media accounts (p5). He goes on to argue that the framing of the event generated “the most spectacular signifier of youth alienation in American history” (p6), which, following Jackson and Everts model, worked to create black trench coats, Goths and the music of *Marilyn Manson* as the well-defined objects of anxiety.

As the subjects of anxiety were potentially any non-Goth individual within the US, but especially school children, a legislative response was sought to neutralise the threat: “Goth” style clothing and *Marilyn Manson* T-shirts were banned in schools in several US states in an attempt to annihilate the subjects and objects of anxiety (Griffiths 2010, BBC 2001). Through this event, Goth culture, and in particular its clothing practices, became the objects of a violent and threatening framing of alienated youth, leading to a legislative response within the USA.

Secondly, Goth has been flagged within a cluster of health scares regarding self-harm and suicide through a longitudinal study of Glasgow youth reported in an article in the *British Medical Journal* (Young *et al.* 2006). This article concluded that 53% of those considering themselves “Goths” had self-harmed and 47% had attempted suicide; rates significantly higher than those of non-Goths (p909). The article was reported in the mainstream news media with headlines including: “Goth subculture shows its dark side through self-harm and suicide rate” in *The Times* (Lister 2006), and also fed into concerns regarding *Emo* culture. *Emo*, an abbreviation of ‘Emotional’, is a separate culture with a unique dress style and musical affiliation (see: Luv-emo.com 2011), but one which is used interchangeably with Goth in these media events due to its emphasis on similar makeup, black clothing and morbid themes (e.g. Michaels 2008). For example, media reporting of suicide events, such as that of 13 year-old “EMO/Goth”, Hannah Bond in the *Daily Mail* (Levy 2008), have worked to conflate Goth and other connected groups with concerns regarding a self-destructive and depressive youth (see also Sands 2006).

Within these examples, Goths have become the objects of anxiety in a more complex way; as alienation is conflated with *self-harm* rather than violence against others. However, anxieties in these media framings centre on the apparent profusion and threat of the spread of this behaviour, and the destructive consequences of this for ‘youth’ more broadly. Indeed, such events and journal articles have had a wide-ranging impact: they were explicitly referenced in a bill debated in the Russian Duma in 2008, which proposed “banning” EMO and Goth clothing styles within public buildings in order to protect youth from trends seen as damaging to their mental health (Michaels 2008, Fremuse 2008). Again, Goth clothing practices are isolated as an easily definable object of anxiety to be annihilated to eradicate the anxious subject positions of policy makers, educators and parents.

The final anxiety event adds further complexity to the framings of Goth. A significant media event occurred following the violent attack on two Goths, Robert Maltby and Sophie Lancaster, in Lancashire in 2008 by a group of 15, 16 and 17 year-olds labelled as “Chavs” in the media (Purdy 2008). Media attention once again peaked when Sophie Lancaster died as a result of her injuries ten days following the attack. Court proceedings reported that the attackers had targeted the pair specifically as a result of their “Goth” clothing, and Goths were subsequently framed sympathetically as the passive victims of violence from another youth ‘tribe’ (See Morrison 2008). Such apparent targeting of Goth also links to reporting of organised attacks against Emo youth in Mexico (The Guardian 2008, TIME 2008, The Times 2008) and Russia (The St. Petersburg Times 2007, ИТАР-ТАСС 2009) by members of other youth sub-groups. I argue that such events functioned to generate anxieties towards a youth cohort framed as increasingly isolated from one another and intolerant of the other’s mode of self-expression. In this case, while Goths are not the direct object of anxiety, a youth alienated from each other and divided into factions, remain central as the object of anxiety.

However, within this final case study, Goths also co-form the subjects of anxiety alongside non-Goth subjects including educators, policy makers and parents. The anxieties of Goths as subjects can be seen in a blog titled “Alterophobia”, a term coined to refer to “fear, prejudice and hatred towards members of alternative subcultures” (Alterophobia 2011). Established after Sophie Lancaster’s death to raise awareness, the blog collects news reports of incidents of violence towards what it terms “alterative subcultures”, including a female Goth assaulted at her wedding (The Mirror 2009) and an attack on a group of Goths in Leeds leading to one victim losing an ear (The Yorkshire Post 2009). Within this role as anxious subject, Goths have also sought a legislative response to resolve anxieties by petitioning the UK government to extend the definition of a “hate crime” to include attacks against those “identifying with a subculture” (10 Downing Street 2008), with the hope of deterring such attacks. This final case study thus illustrates how Goths have mobilised themselves as

part-object, part-subject of anxiety in response to violence amongst alienated groups of young people.

I will now consider what insight can be gained from this analysis of three media events in approaching the theorisation of reaction to Goth. In working through these case studies utilising the initial phases of Jackson and Everts' (2010) model, I have further reinforced that 'resistance' lacks the complexity required to theorise the varying framings of Goth as subjects and objects of social anxieties. The social anxieties framework has allowed the intricacy and contradiction of framings across the three examples to present the complexity of living with such collectivities (Thrift 1997). It has led to consideration of Goth beyond its framing as object of anxiety: Goths have also emerged as the joint subjects of anxiety following the killing of Sophie Lancaster. 'Goth' cannot thus be theorised as a distinct, pre-formed group 'resisting' a wider mainstream culture.

Furthermore, Goths are not only framed as objects of anxiety when they present a danger to others, but also through implications with *self*-harm and isolation from other youth collectivities. The section has thus generated insight into the potential causes of social anxieties surrounding such groups, as the figure of 'alienated youth' reoccurs in all three varied case studies. The post-*Columbine* media produced Goths as alienated youths with the potential to enact violence against others (Frymer 2009); health scares framed such youths as destructive dangers to themselves, while youth groups, alienated from the practices of the other, generated anxieties following the killing of Sophie Lancaster. I will now investigate the impact of such framings further. Having outlined the media framing of the anxieties in which Goth is implicated and isolated the concept of "alienated youth" as a significant concept, in the following section I utilise theoretical ideas from social theorists and existential philosophy to interrogate further why an 'alienated youth' might trigger anxieties.

The Potential of 'Alienated Youth'

"Like generations of teen-age misfits and outcasts before them, the post-pubescent gunmen in the Colorado School shootings apparently found comfort in the worlds of the darker bards of their age- in this case the depressive, anarchic, nihilistic and suicidal musings of the disparate strands of fringe rock music genres known as Goth and Industrial."

New York Times (April 22, 1999:28, quoted in Frymer 2009: 10)

In the previous section, I isolated the media framing of Goths as youths alienated from both a 'mainstream' society and from other youth groups, as a significant source of anxiety within media events. This section poses the question: why does the concept of youth alienation have such significance? Frymer (2009: 1) notes that the post-*Columbine* media adopted a narrative of "adolescent estrangement from parents, schools, and the major institutions and dominant culture of American life" within its notions of "alienation". As summarised in the extract above from an article in the *New York Times*, such figures of alienation are thought to pose significant threats due to their tastes for cultural practices that promote "depressive, anarchic, nihilistic and suicidal" behaviours. Such practices of estrangement are framed as inspiring youth to become dangerous to themselves and towards others.

However, within the section I will draw on two further ideas to investigate fears surrounding alienation. Firstly, the notion that such collectivities of alienated individuals generate anxieties as they do not communicate and make themselves understood. Secondly, drawing on Jackson and Everts' (2010) account of the origins of anxiety within the existential philosophy of Kierkegaard and Heidegger, I argue that alienated collectivities such as Goth excite and embody existential troubling surrounding mortality and the instability of meaning.

1. Non-communication

Social theorists have noted how a lack of communication regarding niche cultural practices can be powerful. For example, within his neo-tribes framework, Michel Maffesoli (1996: 91) argues that “silence” as opposed to “frontal assaults” work both as “a way of confirming the group” and a “protective mechanism with respect to the outside world”. Aside from silence functioning to unite and protect the group, he also concludes that “ruse, silence, abstention- the ‘soft underbelly’ of the social- are fearsome weapons that one would be wise to regard with suspicion” (p93). The alienated collective is thus framed as non-participatory and also generates uncertainty regarding what these individuals actually *do*. Within the case of Goth, while scholars including Paul Hodkinson (2002) have stressed the focus on “play”, Raby (2005: 166) argues that due to an emphasis on morbidity within subcultural style and music, it appears as though “teenagers who identify as Goth disrupt or refuse Western discourses of adolescence as becoming or as centred around ‘fun’”. This demonstrates a potential disjuncture between certain wider understandings of Goth and the lived experience of being part of such an “alienated” collective, and I argue that herein, lies one source of potential for anxieties to emerge.

Furthermore, Maffesoli goes on to assert that while the “powerful” and dominant structural forces of society seek “centralization, specialization and the establishment of a universal society and knowledge”, in contrast, “the secret society is always founded on the margins; is secular, decentralized, without the baggage of dogmatic and intangible doctrines” (p92). The alienated group is thus also perceived to lack a united or consistent self-definition and is thus incapable of communication. Gillian Rose (1997a) takes such ideas further by drawing on Jean-Luc Nancy and Lauren Berlant to theorise community art groups in Scotland as “inoperative communities”. She argues that groups of art workers retain self-identity and trouble mainstream assumptions via their indefinable and “excessive” identities that cannot be “translated” into the language and

understandings of the powerful (See also Gregson and Rose 2000). Art workers in her study, while being forced to communicate in some situations in order to receive funding, were not willing to “explain” the art works they produced or the processes contributing to their creation. Thus group instability and uncertainty regarding collective definitions from both inside and outside the group, can be seen as a powerful way in which anxiety can be generated through non-communication.

Goths have also particularly avoided communicating regarding their practices, especially as noted in chapter six with the deployment of the comic functioning as a way in which to produce distributed spaces of ‘privacy’. Here participants noted how the centrality of humour within Goth practices was not common knowledge to non-participants, and explicitly expressed that they did not actively seek to dispel stereotypes of Goth as “serious” and “depressive”. While non-communication is significant in framings of Goth as alienated youth, I also argue that such collectives mobilise more fundamental sources of anxiety explored within existential philosophy.

2. Existential Troubling

A second theme regarding the significance of “alienated youth” is drawn from Jackson and Everts’ (2010: 2795-2799) discussion of existential philosophy of Heidegger, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, which they utilise to interrogate the origins of the anxious state. While anxiety is discussed by each of these theorists, I suggest that Heidegger’s concept of *Angst* is particularly useful in thinking through Goth and Emo as ‘alienated youth’ within anxiety events. *Angst*, according to Heidegger, is a state generated via existential troubling regarding the nature of ones being. Firstly, *Angst* is generated when we are confronted with an event highlighting that meanings are not absolute but self-generated, relative and inherently unstable. Secondly, existential *Angst* is generated within an event in which an individual recognises their own mortality and the inevitability of death as the ultimate end of all meaning (Inwood 1999: 15-18, Jackson and Everts 2010: 2795-2799). An event of

anxiety thus occurs as a rupture when an encounter reminds us of our mortality or challenges the stability of meanings.

Returning to the media event case studies, Goths and other alienated groups trigger existential Angst in direct ways. Abstractly, death is brought to the fore as a pervasive theme within the anxiety events discussed: alienated Goths kill others, harm themselves and are killed by members of other groups. Significantly, as Jackson and Everts (2010: 2798) note with regards to avian flu, Goths generate anxieties as they directly threaten mortality following the *Columbine* shootings. As discussed above, anxiety is thus produced as alienated Goths present a potential threat to the mortality of others, which generates a rupturing event and the division of subjects and objects of anxiety. However, I argue that Goth also works beyond this basic mechanism.

I suggest that within the media event case studies, Goth and Emo are considered 'alienated' and generate anxiety as they explore, or are perceived to explore, the very ideas that produce existential Angst. As noted above, Hodkinson (2002) has stressed that while some Goths may ponder issues surrounding death and mortality and such themes are overtly expressed within clothing and musical style, Goth cultural practices dominantly centre on "play" and "fun". However, a lack of communication and the nature of the media events, as exemplified in the opening quote to this section, has led to a reading, understanding and framing of Goth performances as indicating that Goths are eager to confront questions of their own mortality.

I argue that these troublings can work to generate anxieties within others in several ways. Despite Heidegger's conclusion that a state of Angst is preferable, as the anxious individual is free to live according to their own meanings rather than conforming to societal norms which ignore such issues, he concedes that most do not share this enlightened approach and do not to ask such challenging questions (Inwood 1999: 15-18). It can therefore, be considered relatively unusual for individuals,

especially young people, to explore such issues. Indeed, whether accurate or inaccurate, as Raby (2005) notes in relation to Goth, this assumption can generate anxieties in others by troubling discourses surrounding the function of adolescence as a time for pursuing “fun”. Furthermore, such practices are presented as not only unusual, but also potentially dangerous through reports of the increased likelihood of self-harm and suicide amongst such groups.

Finally, moving beyond a consideration of the media events, I suggest that being confronted with a visual expression of morbidity and the instability of meaning can have a powerful impact. While Goths may not psychologically explore their own mortality, Gothic style practices overtly reflect such themes, incorporating elements such as pale skin juxtaposed with black makeup, and imagery synonymous with dark and macabre themes, such as bats, blood, cobwebs and skulls. I contend that whether these Goths have explored their own mortality or not, they can trigger such reflection in others through their literal embodiment of such themes.

Indeed, I propose that such Angst is not only generated by triggering conscious reflection of death and the instability of meaning, but also through the affective experience of surface properties, introduced in chapter five in relation to the colour black. Here, I drew on Taussig’s (2008) theorisation of the colour indigo, which he argues, is experienced not simply as a symbolic connection to, but *as* the sea, through the process of passing into the image and experiencing colour directly and viscerally prior to cognition. If colour is experienced in this way, I suggest that the black surfaces of a Goth body might generate Angst wherein black is experienced as a kind of death, or what I, drawing on Anderson (2006), termed: an affective ‘diminishment’ or repulsion.

Equally, Goth styles have also embraced the instability of meaning through mixing genders, time periods and materials. As I have stressed consistently throughout the thesis, Goth performances in particular pose challenges to the stability of meanings in several ways: for example, chapter three

stressed the confusion of gender presentations within style and movement; chapter four explored the conflation of the human and nonhuman; and in chapters five and six I argued that Goth emerges through the mobilisation of varying affective forces, including an uncanny and grotesque modulation of enchantment within forms of “unusual beauty”.

I therefore, conclude this section by suggesting that Goth and other alienated groups focussing on the macabre and the liminal, generate anxieties in several ways: through directly challenging the mortality of others through media presentations of alienated youths as directly dangerous; due to a lack of communication, the perception that such youths openly seek to challenge their own mortality and the stability of meaning, thus troubling the meanings of “adolescence”; and also via the visual embrace of such themes which works to trigger this Angst in others.

While such insights hold potential for understanding of how and why anxieties consistently emerge surrounding Goth, it is now necessary to ask what impact such non-communication and existential troubling can generate: how does such troubling come to matter, or as Jackson and Everts (2010: 2796) ask, how do such anxieties “work”? In the following section I return to the next phase in Jackson and Everts’ framework: investigating the impact of anxiety events on social practices. They argue that such impact can be significant, thus positioning social anxieties and those who control them and their framing as commanding a potentially powerful influence on daily life. Jackson and Everts focus on three sets of practices by which social anxieties come about: the practices of framing anxieties discussed above; the practices of annihilating the objects and subjects of anxiety briefly introduced; and thirdly, everyday practices. The next stage of Jackson and Everts’s model is thus the investigation of the ways in which such large-scale anxieties filter down to alter everyday practices. However, the Goth media events discussed above do not operate on the same scale as the avian flu pandemic or the threat of terrorism. The legislative response following *Columbine* remained specific to certain states in the USA, while concerns over self-harm did not travel outside Europe or result in

any policy change within the UK. What happens when this model is utilised to think through smaller scale anxieties?

In the following section, I will thus question the mechanisms through which Goths trigger existential Angst. So far the discussion has centred on the role of media framing in consciously positioning Goths as 'alienated youths'. This section has attempted to excavate further to theorise the significance of the specific framing of 'alienation' surrounding collectivities such as Goth and Emo. While non-communication relied largely upon cognitive understanding, the excitement of existential Angst is less easy to restrict to this register of experience. Continuing the focus on style adopted throughout the thesis, in the following section I ask: aside from conscious anxieties developed from consuming news media reports, what effect might encountering a Goth on the street elicit? In approaching these questions, I will not only further reject humanistic notions of resistance but move beyond the social anxieties framework offered by Jackson and Everts (2010) in order to argue that affective repulsion/attraction is a more successful approach in theorising the 'resistant' qualities associated with collectivities such as Goth.

Anxieties and the Everyday: Goth's "Event-ness"



"One time, I was in the car park at 'Safeway' wearing my eighteenth century frock coat and ruff looking all sorts of Byronic, and this car drove by and shouted "it ain't 1776 faggot!"... I was very impressed they'd actually got the period correct."

Participant William

Within this section I explore the potential impact of the cognitive and affective destabilising properties mobilised by Goth performances. The photograph above triggered the recollection of an incident in a supermarket car park, in which participant William generated a response from the occupants of a passing vehicle. This generation of homophobic abuse in the car park, coupled with a further anecdote in which William revealed having been threatened at gunpoint from a car paused at a traffic light, are striking examples of how such Goth performances enacted within mundane, everyday settings can *make a difference* to the flow of daily life.

Within their examples of avian flu and international terrorism, Jackson and Everts detail how "the whole flow of everyday life becomes reworked in the face of the disruptive event of anxiety" (p2802). The avoidance of air travel and the increased security measures experienced at airports; avoiding certain foods, the adoption of face masks and receiving an annual flu vaccination, are

instances whereby anxiety events work to influence everyday life. How do such events generate this impact, or alternately, why do certain threats fail to produce such effects? They argue that in contrast to avian flu, malaria for example, has not generated social anxiety on a similar scale, despite the significantly higher associated death rate. This is because the disease is largely confined to the Global South and has been a consistent threat rather than a sudden or newly emerging one: for Jackson and Everts, “malaria lacks the same event-ness” (p2083).

Within this understanding, the anxieties and reaction surrounding Goth introduced above, operate on a more modest scale than avian flu or terrorism. Equally, Goth has been a consistent cultural presence since the late 1970s and thus is not ‘eventful’ as a newly emerging entity. However, I have introduced the potential of alienated youth and the media case studies have shown that such anxiety events have had some impact on everyday practices. The persistent emphasis on the black trench coats of the *Columbine* killers for example, led to the banning of such clothing in US schools, thereby influencing the daily clothing choices of young people in these states. Such measures have also been debated within Russia as a result of the fears surrounding self-harm and suicide. However, if at first glance the impact on daily practices is relatively minimal, why do anxieties surrounding Goth and ‘alienated’ groups continue to emerge?

In this section, I will argue that Goth performances, particularly through style choices, make a difference to the flow of everyday life in ways beyond the direct impact of legislative response or political debate. Developing insight regarding existential anxieties within the last section, I argue that by shifting the focus of Jackson and Everts’s “everyday practices” to the micro, pre-personal level, we can see that Goth becomes ‘eventful’ within everyday encounters as a result of the affective force generated. In previous chapters I have discussed work considering how the affective register influences the capacity of bodies to act: it has the power to move thinking and consequent behaviour in certain directions and deter other paths of action, prior to cognitive thought processes

(Massumi 2002a, Shouse 2005, Thrift 2007). Linking with the relational ontology adopted within non-representational geographies, affects are also inherently 'social' as they do not belong to an individual body, but are generated within encounters (Brennan 2004).

I will now utilise two images from participants to begin to think through how such affects might work to create a 'push' in the world, beginning with the Polaroid photograph below, submitted again by participant William:



Figure 34 Source: Participant William's photo-study.

Compared to the image at the outset of the section, inspiring recollection of extreme incidents of reaction, this image elicited discussion of his more everyday experiences of the reaction of others to his various embodied Goth performances. William reflects that "this was pretty much how I looked every day, including my facial expression...and with a long lace skirt and boots". He described how the leather jacket, makeup, spiked hair and scowling posture, functioned as a form of rupturing event by generating shock, unease and fear, and contributed to the production of the visceral responses associated with such states. For example, he recalled incidents of walking around corners or entering shops and catching people by surprise: "they see me and their eyes open a bit wider..."

some people actually 'start' backward, and [their] faces...freeze". Encounters with the 16 year-old William also generated avoidance and an impulse reaction to "move away". William observed that: "I'd get a wide berth on the street dressed like that...I had people glance at me, quickly look away, and then cross the street to the other side". Within these events of encountering William, subjects and objects of anxiety are produced at the pre-conscious level as well as via the rupture created within the event of media 'framing' noted in the previous section.

In the brief discussion triggered by one photograph, the affective 'push' of repulsion generated in encounters with a Goth body in everyday situations is striking. When looking at the workings of the affective register within an everyday context, I suggest that Goth style performances can be considered embodied and affective events which influence the capacity of other bodies to act: eyes opening wider, they take a reflex second glance and people move across the street. I therefore argue that Goth is 'eventful' on the scale of the everyday encounter.

How do encounters with Goths generate such an affective push? The affective push of Goth does not only depend on the conscious recall of news media articles, but what we experience can colour perception at the subconscious level (Connolly 2002). The existential troubling embodied by Goths also functions beyond the cognitive register to generate an affective push when encountered. I suggest that both the media events and the existential troubling of the 'alienated youth' figure, forms part of the assemblage surrounding reaction to Goth; factors that contribute to the forming of background affective states that prime a body for action when engaging in an encounter (Swanton 2008, 2010a, 2010b). Indeed, further weight is given to affective push within the case of Goth due to the smaller scale of anxieties and media coverage when compared to avian flu or terrorism: many may be unaware of the media events regarding Goth but still experience a push within encounters.

Secondly, such actions can be considered a way of resolving anxieties. This leads the discussion into the final phase in Jackson and Everts's (2010: 2798) model: the resolution of anxieties, achieved when the subjects and objects of anxiety are both destroyed. Such annihilation was realised within swine and avian flu anxieties via the culling of birds and pigs, perceived as threats to the spread of the disease, and the development of anti-viral drugs to destroy the virus cells. As these actions eradicated the risk from such viruses, the subjects of anxiety were also destroyed (*ibid*). Without wishing to make a reductionist argument regarding the causes of violence towards Goths, which may have more to do with the psycho-socio-economic position of the assailants rather than Goths themselves, I argue that it is valid to propose that one explanation for such violence and abuse may be a desire to resolve anxieties by literally destroying the object of anxiety. Resolution can also be achieved more subtly by removing oneself from a troubling encounter by crossing the street or looking away, Carolyn noting that people trying to "ignore" has been the dominant response she has received "throughout her Goth life", demonstrated by incidents in which: "some people have been so desperate not to see me that they have not looked where they are going and have walked into lampposts or fallen off the pavement".

However, I contend that this is not the only way in which anxieties surrounding Goth can be resolved. As noted in William's comment above about an individual taking a second glance and then moving away, a push or repulsion but also a "pull" of interest operates. I argue that there is perhaps potential in this glance: Goth does not only elicit anxious responses, but as explored in chapter five, Goth and Gothic discursive histories explore simultaneous attraction and repulsion. Indeed, through reference to horror literature and film, art forms based on the premise of finding pleasure in the grotesque and horrific, I suggested that Goth mobilises and is co-produced by modulating affective fields of attraction/repulsion. While non-representational geographies utilise a vocabulary of "push" and "pull" (Thrift 2007: 147), I therefore, suggest that "attraction/repulsion" is more appropriate to

theorise such liminal practices and societal reaction. To explore this potential further, the image of participant Rachael below triggered the discussion of differing affects and visceral responses:



Figure 35 Source: Participant Rachael's photo-study.

Drawing on insight regarding enchantment developed in chapter five, Goth also inspires the subtle action of taking a reflex second glance or otherwise triggering physical responses associated with an event or rupturing that generates the fascination of enchantment (Bennett 2001). Rachael utilised the image above as a jumping off point to describe several incidents where such actions had occurred, noting children as especially responsive. She described how what can be described as an “uneasy fascination” is generated within many situations:

“I get little kids pointing at me going ‘Mummy look- she’s got blue hair!’ and then the Mum’s trying to drag them away going ‘be quiet, be quiet!’...parents always get really embarrassed if their kids make comments about me, especially if they’re sitting opposite me on the Tube or something...their parents don’t always want them looking at such a ‘bad influence’ I suppose.”

As Rachael noted, while the parent elicited behaviours associated with fear and anxiety such as pulling the child away, the child itself was excited and fascinated by Rachael and her blue hair. Equally, participant Helen noted incidents of positive reaction on public transport; one group of teenagers “shrieking with excitement” as she entered a train and complementing her on her look. She concludes “why spend your life in jeans and t-shirt when you can make people shriek with delight?!”, indicating the positive ‘push’, or indeed the ‘pull’, of such actions.

Within these situations, the affective rupture created a distinct jolt, but one that generated not only anxiety but a more positive response, or the affective pull of attraction. This consideration offers potential for the resolution of anxieties: by thinking through ways in which such responses might be encouraged. The potential of such ideas is explored in the final section in which I ask: how might the impact of an enchanted second glance be retained and mobilised to quell fear or subdue violence as a way of resolving anxieties?

Resolving Anxieties: Shifting Goth Affects?

As introduced above, a final consideration within Jackson and Everts’s framework is the resolution of anxieties. In the previous section, drawing on insight developed in chapter five, I have demonstrated some of the embodied ways in which participants have not only generated an affective ‘push’ of repulsion but also an affective ‘pull’ of attraction. I began to suggest that developing or enhancing such an attraction might work towards the resolution of anxieties in a more positive way beyond banning Goth clothing or potentially resorting to violence. However, when thinking back to the discussion of Goth and existential Angst, and the encounters with Goths producing anxiety on a pre-conscious level, a complete resolution may not be possible in the same way as envisaged within Jackson and Everts’s examples.

Despite this difficulty, I argue that it is necessary to attempt to, if not completely resolve, make *shifts* in social anxieties surrounding Goth. If the unease noted in the previous section may contribute towards violence against such collectivities, it is necessary to reduce such impact to avoid further deaths like that of Sophie Lancaster. The affective responses also detailed above, may have an impact beyond the individual encounter. As Brennan (2004) notes, affects, especially those such as anxiety, are not only experienced by an individual but can be transmitted between bodies. In the examples from the previous section, a child may learn to fear or feel unease towards something they had initially found fascinating through the pull of their parent's hand. Such affects must also become targets for shifting.

Furthermore, I also propose that from a youth policy perspective such anxieties are unhelpful in several ways. While the tragedy of Columbine was significant and the actions of Klebold and Harris reprehensible, the focus on their 'Goth' status has been widely considered a form of scapegoating; distracting the public and policy makers from more significant problems surrounding gun control, anti-bullying policies and service provisions for mental illness (Griffiths 2010, Frymer 2009, Manson, Strauss 1998). Such anxieties have led to resources being wasted: for example, in 2003 the US government gave Blue Springs, Missouri a \$273,000 grant to study "The Goth Problem" in order to prevent violence, half of which was subsequently returned when a "problem" could not be identified (Haenfler 2010: 86).

Equally, the anxieties surrounding Goth and self-harm were largely based on an academic paper which has been critiqued for its limited sample size and questionable inference of causation between cultural practices leading to such actions (Vince 2006). Overall, such anxieties focussed attention on conspicuous targets for such behaviours; in this case those wearing black trench coats or Emo styles. This diverts attention away from those perhaps wearing jeans and T-shirts who may be equally likely to perpetrate a school shooting or self-harm. Other indicators of troubled youth

must therefore be found beyond the adoption of morbid clothing and musical styles, and the shifting of anxieties regarding Goth maybe one way through which this can be realized.

Having outlined the necessity for shifting responses towards Goth, and highlighting some of the potential difficulties in achieving a full resolution of anxieties, I will conclude the chapter by discussing some current attempts to do so by the *Sophie Lancaster Foundation*, a charitable and campaign-based youth work organisation, established following the death of Sophie Lancaster. The aims of the organisation include a focus on “creating respect for and understanding of subcultures in our communities” through conducting “interactive youth workshops”, schemes which have been developed in conjunction with behavioural experts (The Sophie Lancaster Foundation 2011). I propose that the *Foundation* has gone some way towards resolving anxieties and targeting and emphasising the affective attraction of Goth, firstly, by eradicating the problem of non-communication through their focus on education, but also secondly, by shifting both cognitively and affectively how such collectivities are framed away from ‘alienated youth’.

An initial step in such shifting was the deployment of an iconic photograph of Sophie within media reports and on the *Foundation’s* website and their *MySpace*, *YouTube* and *Facebook* profiles. The dominantly red image chosen shows Sophie with piercings, heavy eyeliner, black and red dreadlocked hair and crucially, a smiling and non-threatening facial expression. This initiates a framing but also an affective shift away from Goths as a dangerous, depressive and disturbed ‘alienated’ group, clad in black trench coats and associated with a depressive outlook (as seen in the contrasting two images below).

The images originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The images were sourced from the following websites:

<http://affrodite.net/2009/04/20/remembering-the-columbine-high-school-shootings-10-years-later/>

<http://www.sophielancasterfoundation.com/>

Figure 36: Contrasting images featured in the press: Dan Kledbold and Eric Harris following the Columbine massacre (above) and the primary image of Sophie Lancaster featured in the press and on the *Foundation's* website (below).

Sources: <http://affrodite.net/2009/04/20/remembering-the-columbine-high-school-shootings-10-years-later/>;
<http://www.sophielancasterfoundation.com/>, accessed March 2011.

However, while the image shows a smiling and friendly young woman, her style choices still mark her out as somehow 'different'. I argue that this is explained by positioning or framing Goths as creative/artistic youth as an attempt to normalise the Goth vision of beauty discussed in chapter five. Promotional material and press statements from the *Foundation's* main spokesperson, Sylvia Lancaster (Sophie's mother), repeatedly refer to Sophie, Robert and Goths more broadly as "artistic" (e.g. BBC 2008, Daily Mirror 2008, Yeoman 2008, Lancashire Telegraph 2009, Manchester Evening News 2009, Wainwright 2010, BBC Radio 4 2011, The Sophie Lancaster Foundation 2011).

Such “artistic” qualities are also reflected in methods through which the *Foundation* promotes its aims. For example, the play “Black Roses: The Killing of Sophie Lancaster”, aired on *BBC Radio 4* in March 2011, and incorporated interviews from Sylvia Lancaster and poetry by Simon Armitage (BBC Radio 4 2011). The self-titled poem in the play further emphasises the artistic connection in its concluding lines:

*I read, I wrote,
I painted, I drew.
Where it came from
no one knows
but it flowed. It flowed.*

“Black Roses” by Simon Armitage

Furthermore, the production of a short animated film by director Fursy Teyssier, shown on *MTV UK* and *MTV Europe* is particularly evocative (The Sophie Lancaster Foundation 2011). The film entitled *Dark Angel* depicts a stylised account of the events leading to Sophie’s death using dark water-colours and a trip-hop soundtrack by *Portishead*. The film is in itself “artistic” and creative: rather than producing a gritty, realistic reenactment of the attack, the story of the piece focuses on depicting Sophie as an angel protecting her boyfriend, Robert Maltby, who survived that attack. The cinematography is equally expressive, focussing on the quivering eyes of Sophie for several seconds before the couple are chased through the park, a scene which is painted to reflect dark Gothic aesthetics (see screen captures below).

The images originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The images were sourced from the animated film "Dark Angel", which can be viewed on the homepage of the Sophie Lancaster Foundation website:

<http://www.sophielancasterfoundation.com/>

Figure 37: Screen captures from "Dark Angel". Source: <http://www.sophielancasterfoundation.com/>, accessed April 2011.

I suggest that a working up of Goth as “artistic” can be perceived as a potentially positive move in several ways. Firstly, as introduced above, associations with art may function to normalise Goth expressions of beauty as simply a form of self-expression, rather than being read as a map of an individual’s psychological state. Such an assumption is reinforced by the lack of significant media anxiety regarding Goth or such groups within Japan, a cultural context in which, as described in chapter five, extreme or unusual performances are the norm, and even style practices by precursors to contemporary expressive sub-groups, the *Kabuki Mono*, evolved into a form of mainstream theatre: *Kabuki* (Wilkerson 1994, Godoy 2009, Fowler 2010).

Secondly, as the arts are a domain in which it is acceptable or even expected to explore confronting themes such as death and the instability of meaning, especially within abstract works by those such as Jackson Pollock (Karme and Varnedoe 1999: 19), this alignment potentially means that existential crises generated by Goth do not need to be resolved. A shifting towards Goth as ‘art’ thus means that Goth can go on troubling and embracing the creativity and artistic processes that are valued by some participants (see chapter four), while the greater understanding of such practices may deter inappropriate policy decisions. Finally, such a shift may encourage a more positive response to Goth at the affective level by promoting the enchanted response that art works seek when they challenge perceptions and stop a person in their tracks (Bennett 2001, Anderson 2009). The effects this may have on deterring violence towards such collectivities remains to be seen and presents an area for future research.

Conclusions

In this penultimate chapter approaching the question as to how and why anxieties continue to emerge surrounding Goth, I began by rejecting a narrow, humanistic theorisation of ‘resistance’ which positions a discrete minority against a powerful and distinct majority (Raby 2005). The concept of resistance was complicated by the isolation of three significant media events in which

'Goths' enter into complex relations with 'non-Goths', and evidence within other academic accounts noting how Goth is not an activist culture (Hodkinson 2002, Haenfler 2004, 2010). Equally, as argued in chapters three, four, and five, Goth is produced as materially and affectively liminal, generating both repulsion and attraction; something that 'resistance' cannot account for. This led to the question: if Goth cannot be theorised as 'resistant', how can evidence that such performances *make a difference* to the flow of everyday life, be thought through?

To approach such a question, I turned to geographical literatures regarding "social anxiety" which I argue, offer a broader understanding of the generation of such states beyond 'resistance'. I utilised Jackson and Everts's (2010) framework which focuses on several stages in the generation of social anxieties: firstly, investigating how anxieties are framed within media events which produce the objects and subjects of anxiety; secondly, how such framings align with what they conceive of as the fundamental causes of the anxious state: existential crisis; thirdly, how anxieties come to influence social practices; and finally, the potential for resolving anxieties. Through such discussion, I highlighted some limitations of this framework and ultimately argued that a focus on affective *attraction/repulsion* adds greater complexity to theorisations of why concerns continue to form and how to resolve or shift these anxieties.

Firstly, however, it was necessary to isolate the complex framings of subjects and objects of anxiety within the three media events: the *Columbine High School* massacre, heath scares surrounding self-harm and suicide and the killing of Sophie Lancaster. This further reinforced resistance as limiting and demonstrated how the social anxieties framework can allow for greater complexity and even contradiction when thinking through the impact of collectivities such as Goth (Thrift 2007: 124). For example, following the killing of Goth Sophie Lancaster, 'Goths' were co-produced as the subjects of anxiety alongside 'non-Goth' stakeholders. When Goths were positioned as objects of anxiety following Columbine and self-harm scares, greater complexity was in evidence: firstly, they became

objects of anxiety through the threats they posed to the lives of others, but secondly, through the threat they posed to themselves and the category of youth itself. Uniting all three case studies however, was the stress placed on the framing of collectives such as Goth and Emo as 'alienated youth'.

The following section focussed on the role or significance of this framing within anxiety events. Subcultural studies literatures as well as the existential philosophy discussed by Jackson and Everts (2010), were called upon to think through why alienation might be troubling. Firstly, I noted how non-communication of the nature of niche cultural practices has been theorised as a source of both retaining privacy or exclusivity of such practices, as seen in the discussion of the role of the comic within chapter six, but also anxiety, as uncertainty creates a vacuum for assumptions regarding such practices. For example, in the case of Goth and collectivities such as Emo, such assumptions have been the 'reading' of morbid style choice as a signifier of an internal psychological state, thus conflating anxieties over self-harm.

However, such morbid performances have further significance. The second concern around 'alienated youth' was drawn from Jackson and Everts's (2010) discussion of Heidegger's existential *Angst*. I argued that this is particularly appropriate for the consideration of groups such as Goth, who visually through style practices, if not psychologically (see Hodkinson 2002), embrace and embody questions of mortality and the instability of meaning (as established in chapters four, five and six). I therefore, argued that whether Goths have consciously explored their own mortality and disruption of meaning or not, they might trigger such reflection in others through their literal embodiment of such themes. I concluded the section by questioning the mechanisms through which such *Angst* may be triggered in others: in contrast to non-communication, this excitement of existential *Angst*, was less easy to restrict to the cognitive register of experience.

This consideration, coupled with the questions regarding how such anxieties impact on everyday practices when anxieties around Goth operate on a smaller scale than avian flu or terrorism, created problems for the penultimate phase in Jackson and Evert's framing. In a departure from Jackson and Everts's theorisation, I thus argued that while the anxiety events discussed had a limited impact in terms of policy or legislative response, and, as such groupings emerged in the late 1970s, they cannot claim to pose a new threat, Goths remain 'eventful' in themselves when considering the affective register.

Indeed, I propose that such Angst is not only generated by the triggering conscious reflection of death and the instability of meaning, but also through the experience of surface properties, introduced in chapter five in relation to black surfaces. This discussion, drawing on Taussig's (2008) theorisation of the colour indigo, experienced not simply as a symbolic connection to but, by passing into the image, *as the sea*; the black surfaces of a Goth body generate Angst wherein black is experienced as a kind of death, or what I, drawing on Anderson (2006), termed: a diminishment. In shifting the scale of analysis to interrogate the micro-scale impacts by drawing on research material from participant William, I concluded that the affective push of repulsion generated within encounters with such Goth stylistic performances can be significant, from taking a second glance and moving across the street to enacting violence or abuse, potentially to destroy the object of anxiety.

However, when thinking through encounters with Goths and drawing on insight developed in previous chapters, Goth is not always experienced as entirely diminishing or repellent. Relating back to insight developed in chapters four and five, the complex affective intensities producing 'Goth' include enchantment and the uncanny, qualities that combine the impulses of repulsion and attraction. Drawing on insight from participants Rachael and Carolyn, a second glance can also be triggered by a fascination associated with enchanting properties. In contrast to Jackson and Everts's (2010) focus on annihilating the object and subjects of anxiety, in the final section of the chapter I

discussed the potential for resolving anxieties by enhancing or manipulating this attraction. I suggested that the existential concerns regarding groups of alienated youth, especially those engaging with macabre themes such as Goth and Emo, are unlikely to be unresolved: it is difficult to imagine how Goth can become distanced from the macabre and uncanny.

However, Heidegger theorised Angst as a desirable state as it facilitates greater awareness and a more vital 'being'. I noted what I framed as attempts to engineer affective attraction towards such ends. I suggested that attempts to manipulate an attraction through an alignment with, or framing of, Goth visual practices as "art" within output from the *Sophie Lancaster Foundation*, hold potential: this does not demand the resolution of existential Angst and indeed, may position such challenging in a more positive light as a form of enchantment, something which I argue is more conventionally acknowledged in regards to art (e.g. Karmel and Varnedoe 1999).

I conclude that anxieties towards collectivities such as Goth, exploring sources of existential Angst in a cognitive and affective capacity, are likely to reoccur. However, by framing such groups and practices as 'artistic' or 'creative' as opposed to 'alienated', I argue that potentially, their difference can be retained while avoiding inappropriate social policy decisions. Such insights have resulted from utilising the social anxieties framework of Jackson and Everts (2010) as a tool or methodology through which to explore how Goth *makes a difference*. In this way, I have been able to re-work resistance and suggest instead, that being attendant to the affective attraction/repulsion of collectivities such as Goth, is more useful in thinking through the complexity of their impact and potential for shifting anxious responses.

Conclusions

I opened this thesis by seeking to question the concept of culture. Having worked through five chapters exploring the case study utilising a series of theoretical lenses from within cultural geography, I will now reflect on how Goth and the concept of subculture can be conceptualised. Within his photo-elicitation interview, participant Taylor exclaimed: “if you ask a million Goths “what is Goth?”... you’ll get a million different answers!” As a difficult to define, relatively fluid entity with myriad sub-genres of music and style, Goth appears to be an excellent candidate for non-representational or “more-than-representational” (Lorimer 2005: 84) thinking. However, academic work on Goth has thus far sought to define it as a ‘subculture’; as a way of thinking through a series of stabilising nouns rather than a lively set of verbs or mobile geographical imaginings. Within this thesis I have explored what can be achieved when Goth and cultural practices more generally, are critically assessed through a series of theories that stress the spatiality of cultural practices through concepts of atmosphere, connection, site and encounter, and theories of emergence via terms such as movement, practice and embodiment.

In doing so, I have been able to generate some answers to the questions initially posed in the thesis *Introduction* and have identified some of the contributions that an engagement with my research materials can offer to think through wider issues within cultural geographies. In this concluding chapter, I thus reflect upon the use of theories from within cultural geographies, comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen methodologies and suggest areas for further research. Firstly however, I will outline the central contributions of the thesis and broaden out discussion to the wider question of culture within cultural geographies.

The Material Practices of Goth

When rethinking what is involved in the material practices of Goth, I suggest that performance and performativity comprising the focus of chapter three, have proven productive methods through which to think of Goth as emergent and distributed fields of subjectivity rather than a static, pre-given label or category. Within this chapter I worked through Judith Butler's (1990, 1993) concepts of performance and performativity and incorporated non-representational concerns with embodiment and movement through a consideration of dance. Such engagement sought to approach questions centred on the tensions between Goth and other groups theorised as discrete subcultures and Butler's concepts of the subconscious performance of subjectivities.

In answer to my questions formulated in response to concerns regarding the subconscious enactment of subcultural subjectivities, inspired initially by an encounter with Lev on his first visit to a Goth club in chapter three, I demonstrated how in contrast, practices associated with Goth must initially be learned and consciously 'worked at'. However, I propose that while participation within Goth practices or other sub-groups are chosen as an adult and thus cannot be framed as an identity category subconsciously established from birth as with Butler's central illustrative example of gender, practices such as dancing and dressing can become habitual and subconsciously enacted, especially for those with more experience of such practices. When investigating the dancing Goth body in particular, participants stressed the appeal of Goth clubs enabling them to "just dance" (participant Victor) as a form of what they experienced as free expression.

While I do not want to reinforce Butler's assertion of monolithic, defined discourses as the sole determinant of performance, I do argue that certain conventions established as 'Goth' (for example: black clothing, a morbid aesthetic, heavy eyeliner, bat and skull motifs etc.) account for a relative consistency in this style, imagery and music since its emergence and labelling in the late 1970s and early 1980s. I found therefore, that performance as a concept helped to overcome some of the

critiques of post-subcultural accounts for their hyper-fluidity: performance is a way in which to consider subjectivities as emergent and subject to constant shifting and negotiation, but also acknowledges the existence of discursive convention. In this sense I have been able to retain recognition of the longevity and “substance” as Hodkinson (2002: 30) terms it, of collectivities like Goth, but without reverting to the limitations of the traditional subcultures model or the excessive fluidity of post-subcultural theories, neither of which is appropriate when thinking through Goth.

Furthermore, our encounters with the material practices of Cybergoths, Steampunks and the Gothic Lolita in chapter four have highlighted that Goth and cultural practices more generally, cannot be understood without inclusion of the nonhuman as actors within the complex assemblages making up culture. Engaging various theories of Posthumanism with the style practices adopted by these sub-genres has suggested that the nonhuman can have significant transformative potential and can function as a contributor within the creative processes involved in making items such as clothing. The corset in particular was framed as a way in which transgendered bodies are moulded and shaped to generate a sense of a ‘Goth’ and ‘female’ subjectivity, while the literally ‘sticky’ materiality of a vinyl cat-suit resisted the modification attempts of another participant.

Such an inclusive approach can be achieved by utilising Donna Haraway’s cyborg as an analytical figure. However, as I have demonstrated, the vampire may be a more successful but currently less developed alternative imaginary. I have argued throughout the thesis that many Goth practices are liminal, emerging on the border of established humanistic divides. Indeed, Goth has been seen to attract those who can be positioned as border dwellers: Morgan and Alexis as transgender individuals, negotiate the boundaries between male and female, while Nekoi feels herself a cyborg; an organic entity sustained by medical technologies and her *CyberDOLL* persona, produced via websites, style choices and musical performances. I suggest that a vampiric as opposed to cyborg materiality has a more effective emphasis on this liminality and the simultaneous or ‘uncanny’

experience of engaging with such hybrid entities, and thus more effectively reflects the messy realities of boundary crossings within contemporary social lives.

Finally, by adopting the expanded notion of inclusivity when thinking through culture established by new cultural geographies, my consideration of affect in chapter five has sought to take such insight further by going beyond analyses of symbolic meaning to look at how processes occurring before cognitive reasoning contribute to the experience and co-constitution of culture. Engagement with non-representational theories of affect enabled the rethinking of material practices to include *excessive* elements, for example the qualities of “unusual beauty” (participant Carolyn) and the embodied, visceral experiences of listening to Goth music. This argument functioned to demonstrate that there is more to Goth beyond a pre-defined clothing and musical style; there is something excessive that produces these clothing items and songs as ‘Goth’. The sense of “unusual beauty” which featured as a recurring quality in accounts, incorporates the affective intensity of ‘glamour’ highlighted by Thrift (2008b) through the qualities of surfaces, but simultaneously incorporates an uncanny affect via actively embracing the grotesque to produce a similar experience to that enrolled by Gothic literature and cinema: pleasure in the horrific. I therefore, contend that these excessive affective elements are significant in the lived experiences and co-production of culture.

The Articulation of Goth through Specific Sites

When investigating the second node of questioning exploring how the practice and experience of Goth is articulated through sites, the experience of *Whitby Goth Weekend* I hope to have effectively guided readers through in chapter six, has demonstrated that Goth subjectivities are co-produced within spaces, while spaces are produced as Goth through an interaction of factors, including the working up of affective atmosphere. Instead of conceiving of a group of pre-defined ‘Goth’ individuals arriving in a ‘Goth’ space like Whitby, my research has suggested that both spaces and

subjectivities are co-produced and emergent. Whitby was thus temporarily and partially generated as a Goth space through interaction with groups of people who are also co-produced as Goth within this site.

When thinking through the question: what makes a site Goth?, initial investigation highlighted that discursive convention or narrative reference was insufficient. This was evidenced by the fact that Whitby was chosen as a festival site not only due to its *Dracula* connections but the perceived tolerance of hoteliers and the local population to such themes. Similarly, while the Victorian and Gothic architectures of the town were significant to some participants, others did not find these features important in their experience. Instead, the photo-diaries of participants featured moments of 'enchantment' (Bennett 2001) wherein they were surprised by encounters with a variety of festival landscapes: the sighting of Whitby's ruined abbey glimpsed through a side street; the crashing of waves on the sea wall following a sudden rainstorm; interactions of clothing such as corsets with challenging landscapes. Furthermore, the working up of an affective atmosphere of Whitby as a space of 'home' and the circulation of the 'comic' was also significant, practices that were found to both produce Goth subjectivities and simultaneously generate Whitby as Goth site.

These intensities however, were not stable or qualities to be taken for granted: the unwanted attention of photographers was seen to disrupt a sense of Whitby as home. In spite of such threats, I also argued that the eruption of the comic at various festival sites and circulating beyond the immediate geographies of Whitby itself, functioned as a 'private' affective quality shared by those participating within Goth practices. My research has thus suggested that site and subjectivity are productively viewed as a series of continually co-produced becomings, generated in part through the production of affective atmosphere.

The Production of Cultures of Anxiety

While Whitby is an example of a site wherein Goths felt the safety of home and were pursued by paparazzi-like photographers, participants highlighted how this experience and reaction was not consistent. As I noted at the opening of the thesis *Introduction*, Goth has been involved in significant anxiety events. The examination of how Goth participates in the production of anxieties or cultures of (un)popularity has forced a re-working of the notion of 'resistance', often utilised in reference to the practices of cultural groups. While I rejected resistance as a concept, and despite the artificiality of the humanistic divides mentioned above, my research materials have highlighted that it was important to acknowledge how such divides are made to *feel* as if they exist in certain space-times and encounters within everyday lives.

To negotiate such tensions, instead of resistance I considered the concept of social anxieties as developed within cultural geographies, finding it more appropriate in dealing with the complex realities of contemporary issues surrounding groups such as Goth. It has allowed for investigation of wider factors which, as Thrift (Thrift 1997) notes, are excluded from the concept of resistance which relies on relatively simple dichotomies between groups and stances. For example, within chapter five I theorised the sense of "unusual beauty" embraced by many Goths as generating an uncanny tension between an enchanted or glamorous fascination, pleasure and attraction, but also a simultaneous disgust, fear and evocation of the grotesque. Such affective qualities or forces are reflected in the various framings of Goth within popular media, wherein Goths may be serial killers, victims of abuse viewed with sympathy and/or fashionable icons.

Social anxiety acknowledges that groups such as Rave (Malbon 1999, Pini 2001) and indeed Goth, may not seek to resist in the same ways as perhaps Punks may have, but recognises that visual presentations such as a Goth aesthetic do however, *make a difference* to the flows of daily life. I have sought to apply and develop a social anxieties framework by focussing on the potential of the

affective dimension within such anxiety events, something I isolated as a factor in accounting for the fluctuating status of Goth. I suggest that Jackson and Everts' (2010) highlighting of existential Angst can be taken beyond food controversies and terrorism to anxieties generated by cultures such as Goth. Goth is particularly appropriate for a consideration of Angst, with a sense of meaninglessness and confrontation with death central to the affective visual fields adopted as Goth style practices. However, through this analysis, Goth was isolated as reflecting fears towards "alienated youth" more broadly, and was frequently confused with other groups such as "Emo". It is thus clear that this approach may prove productive beyond the specific case study of Goth, something which I will discuss further below.

Goth 'Subculture'?

I have sought to formulate theoretical and empirical contributions regarding both Goth cultural practices and the concept of 'subculture'. As I have hinted throughout, I suggest that such conclusions have forced a re-conceptualisation of subculture. While much interesting research has been produced within subcultural studies and post-subcultural fields, I have found subculture to be restrictive when interacting with my research materials. Equally, post-subculture perspectives have been critiqued by many, including prolific author on Goth, Paul Hodkinson. If subculture can be theorised as too rigid and post-subcultures perhaps hyper-fluid, I turned to geographical literatures in order to investigate these tensions. Working with ideas developed in cultural geography, I found that terms drawing upon spatial imaginaries such as atmosphere were particularly productive in stressing the emergent qualities of milieu such as Goth, while also acknowledging aspects or space-times experienced as consistent.

Rather than providing a single new term to add to the overabundance of vocabularies developed within post-subcultural studies literatures, I argue that the range of theories used here is more productive than imposing a single word to 'sum up' how Goth and other such cultures can be

thought through or labelled. Instead, I propose several theoretical statements regarding Goth. I suggest that Goth can be understood as a performed, emergent field of subjectivity and territory of belonging. Such fields of subjectivity and belonging emerge in intimate and complex relations with the thing-world. Goth culture can therefore be considered an assemblage, co-produced by a range of actors including objects, sites, bodies, the conscious actions of participants and pre-conscious elements.

Indeed, such subjectivities and objects generate and are co-produced with an 'excess'; something I have accounted for with reference to affect. Drawing on these ideas, I contend that Goth culture can be considered a series of affective atmospheres. Specifically, atmospheres of the uncanny and grotesque are mobilised within Goth assemblages, atmospheres which generate liminal intensities incorporating both attraction and repulsion. Consequently, while I do not frame Goth as a 'resistant subculture', I argue that it sporadically emerges as an (un)popular culture within events of social anxiety as a figuration of 'alienated youth', while sometimes simultaneously attracting curiosity and consumption within popular culture industries.

I have thus embraced a range of vocabularies within each chapter to refer to Goth: it emerges as a performed series of embodied acts; it is co-produced in complex relations with nonhumans; it can be thought of as a series of modulating affective atmospheres; it coalesces as a collectivity and circulates through events such as *Whitby Goth Weekend*, and it is co-produced through such sites and media controversies. None of these dominates over or diminishes the other- rather they are co-constitutive and interdependent.

Empirically, I have also highlighted several perhaps unusual or unexpected points regarding Goth cultural practices. Consideration of the affective register and embodied experiences have emphasised insight regarding the enrolment of the comic within Goth, something which has not

been stressed widely, but featured as an enduring refrain throughout the encounters facilitated by this research project. Even while speaking of negative experiences, some participants utilised humour when recalling such events, while stand-up comedy has now become a regular feature at *Whitby Goth Weekend*. Adopting such theories of emergence has also allowed the recognition of difference and creativity within Goth, rather than ignoring such variation or classing such findings as outliers to be ignored.

I also propose that while I have considered Goth clothing styles extensively, as other theorists working on subculture have, I attempted to approach such practices slightly differently by focussing on how clothing functions as a transformative nonhuman actor within chapter four, and the affective micro-geographies of the colour black in chapter five. I have sought to take note of Hodkinson's (2002) warning and resist symbolically inferring about the psychology of Goth individuals through the choice of this colour and imagery surrounding morbid themes. However, I have found it necessary to stress that visual presentation has a sometimes very real consequence, something which I have ultimately framed as affective attraction/repulsion.

When considering whether the results of the research project would have been different if looking at a different group, I suggest that the specificity of certain Goth practices has allowed emphasis on particular features. Goth gender politics has proven especially interesting. Dunja Brill (2008) has highlighted the adoption of hyper-femininity amongst women and androgyny amongst male Goths, with homosexuality accepted for both sexes and bisexuality amongst females encouraged, even simply as a fashionable posture. While my research has not concurred with all of these statements, for example, engagement with the dancing body appears to present the opportunity for androgynous performances for both male and female Goths, such gender play was insightful in thinking through Goth as generating a liminal affective intensity in chapter five and inspiring a focus on the role of the nonhuman in chapters three and four.

As I identified in the *Introduction*, Goth has also been particularly prominent within the popular cultural imagination. Anxieties surrounding Goth have been generated in reaction to significant events such as mass murder and violent assault, whereas its positive reflection in culture industries has been seen within high fashion, *TopShop* collections and the significant box office earnings of films such as the *Twilight* saga. It has therefore been a suitable case study through which to assess the concept of social anxieties and attempts to resolve such anxieties by NGOs like the *Sophie Lancaster Foundation* to change social perceptions of Goth culture.

Challenges within the Research Process

While such theories, the case study and methodologies chosen have proven insightful, the research project was not without challenges and has allowed me to formulate some evaluative comments. Firstly, I contend that non-representational approaches are perhaps unsuitable if one seeks to make generalising statements or knowledge claims about, for example, the overall character of Goth in Tokyo, New York or London. My motive for conducting a multi-site study was not to aim for such generalising conclusions but to allow surprise into the research process and to also investigate Goth outside 'Western' spaces in particular, wherein Gothic architectures and cultural histories are obvious reference points. Indeed, the lack of spaces such as Gothic cathedrals or the ruined Abbey of Whitby within my Tokyo field visit was influential in the formulation of the concept that spaces are not usefully thought of as 'Goth' in a pre-given sense. This multi-site approach also reflected insight from cultural geography regarding the operation of cultures across national boundaries and the increasingly mobile nature of social lives (Urry 2010).

However, this relative lack of generalising statements contrasts to that of other work. Hodkinson's accounts drawing on cultural studies and positioned within sociology for example, have been picked

up by the popular media, something facilitated by his clear 'conclusions': Goth is a 'subculture' (2002, 2004b), Goths utilise the internet for socialisation (2003, 2006a), Goths continue to participate into middle age (2011). My engagement with NRT has not necessarily provided such epigrammatic conclusions. For some this may raise concerns: is there a danger that geography is becoming "irrelevant" once again as early American cultural geographies have been accused of (Mitchell 2000)? This may seem ironic given the emphasis on daily life and the habitual, but it could be suggested that that the insights generated around these topics are removed from conventional ways of thinking about such features; affect for example, is not a particularly immediately accessible concept to the lay reader or policy maker.

I suggest however, that such observations do not mean to put it bluntly, that NRT is not 'useful'. The affective quality of 'confidence' for example, has been highlighted as a key factor in the political successes of Richard Nixon (Massumi 2002a). Equally, the intangible quality of 'happiness' is now being considered as an alternative measure of a country's wealth, with ratings of nations and cities by this measure featuring alongside socio-economic statistics. Furthermore, while the rioting in Britain in 2011 at first appeared to have originated in protests over fears of institutional racism, and social networking sites were isolated as vectors of organisation, it was perhaps sustained by a less tangible atmosphere of civil disobedience and unease. Within this study I found affect particularly insightful in exploring an excessive element in accounting for the appeal or definition of Goth, and also in exploring why Goths may generate anxieties. Perhaps therefore, similar techniques could be applied to other groupings, for example anxieties surrounding 'chavs' or 'hoodies', or those groups more ambiguously presented such as Hip Hop communities, which are praised for their celebration of black culture and fashion generation, but simultaneously trigger anxieties due to connections with violence, sexism and drug use (Haenfler 2010).

A further challenge I encountered when mobilising such approaches was the adoption of appropriate methodologies. Anderson (2009) argues that affective atmospheres can only be 'approximated' or 'got at' indirectly, while Thrift (2000) cautions that scholars must utilise writing techniques that effectively convey the "life" within accounts. While I found such advice daunting, having only previously approached research using more conventional techniques, it was also exciting to be given the freedom to experiment with potentially risky alternate ways of generating research materials and writing with them.

As my aim was not to move away from representation completely but rather to focus on the "more-than-representational" or "extrarepresentational" (Lorimer 2005: 84, 86), I adopted the photo-studies and event photo-diaries as ways in which to convey intangible aspects of experience. Some photographs taken by participants at *Whitby Goth Weekend* for example, were particularly evocative of atmosphere and triggered discussion surrounding such ephemeral qualities. I hope to have been able to form an account that has not relied upon photographs solely as illustrative examples but considered images as objects in themselves, to be used as tools for generating discussion within interviews. I have also attempted to experiment with performative writing styles in appropriate places in the thesis, and sought to weave conversations between theorists work and my own research materials in ways that retain a sense of lively encounter.

Finally, my role as 'insider' presented certain challenges. At times I found it difficult to negotiate my role, both when generating materials and writing with them. I found a critical stance particularly challenging when working through materials generated within chapter seven, especially relating to the case of Sophie Lancaster, the sentencing and reaction to which was unfolding during the timescale of my research. Having met and discussed my project with Sophie's mother, Sylvia Lancaster, and engaged in many emotional conversations surrounding the topic with research participants, most of whom, whether within the UK, USA and Japan had knowledge of the event, it

was difficult to distance myself from the intense anger and sadness surrounding the issue. Here I found the anxieties framework invaluable in disciplining my thinking and while not aiming for “distance” (Hodkinson 2005), I was able to work through my personal emotional involvement. I believe that conducting this research project has taught me how to attain a balance between “cheerleader” and “ombudsman” for future research projects (Jackson 1989: 73-74).

“Lightning Rods” for Further Research

I have used the methodologies employed within this thesis to generate “ethnographic exposures” that highlight what Dewsbury (Dewsbury 2009: 326-327) terms certain “lightning rods” for investigation taken up within the thesis. While this has allowed me to offer modest reflections on wider questions within cultural geography as well as Goth itself and cultural practice more broadly, there are several areas I suggest that hold potential for further interrogation.

I would like to take work on anxiety generation further by speaking to ‘non-Goths’ regarding their reactions rather than relying on inference from media events as I have done in chapter seven. One way in which to investigate such aspects, which was unfortunately outside the scope of the current project, is to hold a photography exhibition and invite members of the public to attend and comment. Such an exhibition could be realised through a participant in London working as a photographer focussing on a Goth aesthetic; her work featuring Goths for fashion shoots as well as work focussing on landscapes and objects within this broad genre. Encountering the reaction when faced with such work from a non-Goth audience could provide valuable insight into the affective capacities of such presentations. Similarly, focus group sessions using photo-elicitation could also be a more manageable and structured way in which to consult non-Goths regarding their experiences.

Aside from developing the visual and photographic dimensions of the study, I would also like to experiment further with the guided walk methodology and incorporate video, especially in light of recent calls for the development of “videographic geographies” (Garrett 2011). I found such methodologies productive due to the mobile, active dimension and a time-effective way to generate a depth of material, but did not have the resources to develop this further. In future research I would like to explore these techniques in order to contribute to the development of methodologies to approximate affect.

As I also introduced in chapter seven, an additional area for further research is the work carried out by the *Sophie Lancaster Foundation* and its effectiveness in aiming to refashion attitudes regarding expression amongst youth. Does a framing of Goth expression as “art” have the potential to shift perceptions or would perhaps emphasis on other features be more productive? Humour, for example, may be an area of further research, such questions also reflecting current work on laughter and its transformative potential (e.g. Macpherson 2008). Such emphasis may be particularly interesting due to the potential conflict with the enrolment of humour in the generation of ‘private’ spaces.

Engaging with broader aims within cultural geography, it would also be interesting to investigate how Goth travels and circulates over various scales, including globally. While I have identified Goth as operating on a ‘glocal’ scale within previous research, a more sophisticated method of investigation might be to utilise concepts such as Lash and Lury’s (2007) “global culture industry”. I suggest for example, that aspects such as the generation of anxieties could be approached by this technique, which traces the movement and transformation over time and space of significant objects and media. The transmission and transformation of anxieties as they circulate beyond the point of origin via the affective dimension of Goth’s attraction and repulsion and nonhuman materials and spaces, could present an appropriate point for research.

Furthermore, the identity politics of Goth in terms of racial identities is also an under-researched area. While I was conducting fieldwork in New York, it was apparent that the Goth community is much less mono-cultural than in the UK and Japan. Participant Eric referred to specific styling adopted by African American Goths as characterised by combat pants associated with Hip Hop and incorporating black Cybergoth tops and boots; a style leading to the affectionate nickname, “Ghetto Bats”. A further African American participant discussed the pressure and conflict generated while wearing Goth styles in her neighbourhood, having received abuse for her perceived “betrayal” of her racial culture by wearing “white clothes”. Investigation of such negotiation may reflect on the contemporary racial politics operating at a micro level, linked to factors such as music and style consumption amongst youth.

Closing Reflections

Having explored Goth from *before, alongside, across* and *in-between* (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 13), via the concepts of performance, relational materiality, affect and social anxiety mobilised within cultural geographies, I have demonstrated that Goth can be thought through in several ways beyond the relative limitations of subculture or post-subculture: it emerges as a performed series of embodied acts, it is co-produced in complex relations with nonhumans, it can be thought of as a series of modulating affective atmospheres, it coalesces and circulates through events such as *Whitby Goth Weekend*, and it emerges as co-produced through such sites and media controversies.

I have suggested that Goth negotiates several states: at times it is experienced as relatively ‘fixed’ or well bounded through controversies such as the killing of Sophie Lancaster and the *Columbine* shootings, histories and definitions of Goth within academia and the media, the need to work at or learn how to perform in a ‘Goth’ way, the relatively consistent club playlists over the past thirty

years and established festivals. However, at the same time, my research has emphasised an ethos and practice of 'difference' and 'creativity', qualities also in evidence in the history of variation within Goth clothing and musical styles. Such ambiguity was initially a daunting thing to attempt to study, as Latour (2005) has acknowledged, but it can also be framed as exciting ground and a stance that should be left somewhat unresolved.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Calendar of research and recruitment-related activities in Tokyo field visit.

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Appendix 1: Calendar of research and recruitment-related activities in Tokyo field visit

Key:

Red: Club/Shop/Gig

Pink: Meet-up

Orange: Guided Walk

Green: Interview

March 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30 Arrive in Tokyo	31				

April 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Gmail instant messaging chat with Gothic Lolita blogger, La Carmina	2	3 Trip to Harajuku to locate Goth shops and fashion trends	4 "Tokyo Dark Castle" club night; meet with Sebastian, my translator
5	6	7 Visit and flyering: "Closet Child" , Ikebukuro	8	9	10 "Black Glitter Tour" Gig, Shibuya	11 "Club Theatic Show" club night
12 Jingu-bashi (bridge), Harajuku recruitment, informal	13	14	15 Visit to "Marui One" store and "Closet"	16 Email interview with Nao	17	18 "Wizard of the Opera" theme bar meet-up

interviews and guided walk with Aki.			Child" in Shinjuku			with contacts made
19 "cEvin Key DJ Experience" gig and <i>Rituals</i> Fashion show. "Christon Café" dinner.	20	21	22 Guided walk by La Carmina in Shinjuku	23 "Tea Party" at the <i>Milk Crown Café</i> with contacts	24 "Gothic Bar Heaven" club night	25 <i>Despair The Ego Tape</i> gig and "Midnight Mess" club night
26 <i>Psydol'</i> album launch gig, plus support	27	28	29 Japanese National Holiday, <i>Golden Week</i> , Begins "Alternative Summer Party" picnic in Yoyogi Park.	30		

May 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Interview with Andro and visit to Adult Bar, Ginza	2
3 Interview with Neko and guided walk of	4	5	6 Harajuku guided walk by	7 <i>Golden Week</i> ,	8	9

Akihabara			Jamie	Ends Interview with James		
10 Guided walk of Ikebukuro by Jamie and "Alamode" club night	11	12 Guided walk by Jim, Shinjuku	13	14 Interview with Yukiro	15 Further interview with Neko	16 Lunch with contacts in Harajuku and group shopping
17	18 Travel to airport	19 Return to London				

Appendix 2: Calendar of research and recruitment-related activities in New York City field visit

Key

Red: Club/Shop

Pink: Meet-up

Orange: Guided Walk

Green: Interview

July 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
19 Arrive in NYC	20 Scout the East Village for Goth retailers	21 Email contacts and 'Lip Service' clothing case study	22 Contact 'Vampire Freaks' owner	23 Visit to the 'Vampire Freaks' store and left flyers; Post on VFNYC message board; Contact "NewYorkGoths" 'cult' organizer	24 Club: Cybertron	25 'NewYorkGoths' meet-up: Central Park, 4pm
26 Visit to 'Gothic Renaissance' store	27	28 Further internet promotion	29 Create a "banner" to put on the NGC website	30	31 Leave for LA	

August 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Day spent at Lip

						Service HQ
2 Tour of LA and some Goth shops- Hot Topic Hollywood blvd	3	4 Return to NYC	5 Contact participants re. interviews	6 Contact magazines for promotional articles	7	8 Move apartment...
9 New Goth City Meetup: Lilly's Bar	10	11 Contact promoters and key DJs via email in preparation for club attendance	12 Club: Underworld Informal interview with architect and owner of the of NGC website	13	14	15 Club: Ward 6 Interview with Cohen
16 Club: Court of Lazarus	17 Establish blog site	18 Club: Dark Water	19	20 New Goth City Meetup: James Ensor exhibit, MoMA	21 Interview and guided walk: Anwill, East Village	22 Club: Salvation
23 Guided walk: Jason, East Village	24 Email contacts again to request interviews	25	26	27 Research 'advertised' on NGC site using a hyperlink banner	28 Informal interview: Lela	29 Club: Salvation

30

31

September 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Interview: Jet Cancelled: rescheduled via email	2 Interview: Chloe Cancelled (sickness)	3 Interview: Lev	4 Interview: Eric	5
6 Club: The Bank Reunion	7 Email interview: Jet	8	9	10	11 Photo interview: Anton	12
13	14 Leave for London					

Appendix 3: Table of Recruitment pathways mobilised in Tokyo

Group/Location	Date	Message/Format
<p>Contact goths met while in Tokyo in Summer 2008:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Zelda -Grace 	10 th January, 2009	Email message sent via Facebook
Contact founder of 'JPGoth' website, an English language guide to goth events in Tokyo/Osaka and 'Gothers.com' community.	10 th January, 2009	Email
Contact academics speaking at NYC symposium event	14 th January, 2009	Email
Create membership and profile at 'Gothers.com' web community.	12 th January, 2009	Created a Gothers.com profile; promoted research in my personal description. Joined the 'Asian Gothic' sub-group.
Post to 'Asian Gothic' sub-group	12 th January, 2009	Web post via Gothers.com
<p>Emailed the organizers of key goth events in Tokyo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tokyo Dark Castle - Midnight Mess 	10 th March, 2009	Email
Edited the research Facebook group with 'News' post that the research requires participants in Japan.	14 th March	Edit to the Research Facebook group
<p>Post on LiveJournal community groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Lolita'sinJapan' - '_japanfetish' 	<p>Introduction post: 10th March, 2009</p> <p>Call for Participants: April 1st</p> <p>Meet-up post: April 15th</p>	Posted in introduction post on both sites, followed by a specific call for participants. A 'meet-up' was also suggested before the club night 'Midnight Mess'.
<p>Email undergraduate thesis participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clair-noir - Amiyu 	<p>Email: 20th March</p> <p>Personal Contact: 4th April</p>	LiveJournal message and personal contact at 'Tokyo Dark Castle' event
Email to 'La Carmina', the author of a blog on 'Gothic Lolita' fashion and Japanese gothic and fashion designer.	10 th march	Email and Google Mail instant messaging.

Contact potential participants suggested by contact La Carmina.	1 st April	Emails via Facebook.
'Tokyo Dark Castle' club event	4 th April	Flyering, personal introductions and talking with the organizers and bands.
Flyers left at 'Closet Child' goth shop in Harajuku, Shinjuku and Ikebukuro.	6 th April	Flyers left
Post to the Facebook group 'Goth Lolita', an international group dedicated to the clothing and lifestyle.	8 th April	Access request email and a post to the message board and a short post on the 'Wall' area.
Recruitment visit to Yoyogi Bridge in Harajuku	12 th April	Handing out flyers and talking to goths and cosplayers. Accompanied by translator to aid meaningful communication.
Joined 'MySpace' to promote research	15 th April	Created a profile and a short description of the research.
Contact 'Club Theatic Show' organizer/Alamode Magazine Producer ('D's Valentine')	14 th April- translation 15 th April email sent via MySpace	Email sent in Japanese through Myspace.
Post in Japanese on the Japanese social networking site: 'Mixi'	20 th April	Post to a key Japanese social networking site in Japanese language.
Email contacts met at club nights: - Jajyu san (a body artist at the 'cEvin Key Experience' event) - Saonso san (an artist exhibiting at 'Club Theatic Show')	21 st April 24 th April after translation	Email in Japanese.
Interview about the research for the Japanese Gothic lifestyle magazine, 'Alamode'.	3 rd May	Interview which will feature in the July/August, 2009 issue of Alamode.

Appendix 4: Table of recruitment pathways mobilised in New York City

Group/Location	Date	Message/Format
'New Goth City' resource site for NYC goth organizers	9 th January 2009	Email message to author of the site as an introduction and to establish links in the city.
Joined 'Vampire Freaks' social networking site	5 th July 2009	A profile is created to allow unlimited exploration of the site and promote the research via a link to the web site and Facebook group.
Message to 'Lip Service' HQ	20 th July 2009	Email to establish contact with one of the designers: Autumn.
Message to moderator of 'nycgoth' LiveJournal community	21 st July 2009	Email to moderator/administrator requesting permission to post an 'advert' for the research.
Message to owner of 'Vampire Freaks' and moderator of Vampire Freaks NYC message board ('Cult')	21 st July 2009	Email to moderator/administrator requesting permission to post on the message board.
'NYC and Fairfield Goth Meetup Group'	21 st July 2009	Message to administrator as an introduction and to request permission to post on the forum. Posted a personal introduction on the forums also.
Joined 'NewYorkGoths' Cult on 'Vampire Freaks'	23 rd July 2009	Email to administrator; introductory post on the message boards.
Flyers left in the 'Vampire Freaks' and 'Gothic Renaissance' stores, East Village	23 rd July 2009	Flyers left and in-person contact established by shop workers/owners.
Post to 'Vampire Freaks NYC' cult of VF network	23 rd July 2009	Posted an 'advert' on the message boards of the Cult and responded via private message (PM) to those who posted interest.
'NewYorkGoths' meet-up	25 th July 2009	Afternoon meet-up in Central Park and shopping in VF store.
'NYC Darkness' website	27 th July 2009	Email organisers and post of the forum about the research.
Joined the 'Midnight NYC' Meetup group	27 th July 2009	Joined the Group and emailed the organiser. Posted an introductory post on the forum.
'NewGothCity' Meet-up	8 th August 2009	Evening meet-up in an Irish Victorian bar in Midtown West. Set up by the author of the NGC web site.
Email contact established	10 th August 2009	Emails sent to individuals from the meet-up on 8 th August.
'Midnight NYC' Meetup group	11 th August 2009	Posted a direct 'advert' to the forum following a response from the 'owner' of the group.
DJs contact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anabel Evil (employee at the VF store and Cybertron DJ) - Father Jeff (Necromantic and Ward 6 resident DJ) - Cyn (Joe) (resident DJ at Salvation) 	12 th August 2009	Email to DJs in the local area to establish further contact with key 'gatekeepers' of the scene.

- DJ Templar aka Sean O'Connor		
Back up email contact with personal introductions at 'Ward 6' club.	15 th August 2009	In person introductions were made with the Djs contacted (apart from Annabel Evil) at the 'Ward 6' club event.
Blog site established	17 th August	A blog site was established to discuss themes related to the research but present it in an 'entertaining' way in order to create more interest in the research project. Linked to from the web site.
'New Goth City' meet-up	20 th August	Meet-up at the Museum of modern Art with some contacts made at previous events. Further promotion opportunities.
Email contacts gained at club events	25 th August 2009	Email to those given me business cards at 'Ward 6' and other events.
Hyperlink Banner on the NGC website homepage	27 th August 2009	A hyperlinked banner was created and displayed on the homepage of the 'New Goth City' site.

Appendix 5: Information sheets for lifestyle photo-study participants



Information Sheet for Lifestyle Photo-Study Participants (17th October, 2008)

What is the purpose of the research?

This research project broadly aims to investigate the interaction between culture and globalization by tracing the geographies of a specific case study: Goth subculture. Working within Cultural Geography, it aims to highlight the importance of embodiment in understanding identities and seeks to look at the significance of different spaces of involvement for Goths. It will also detail the anxieties generated within the mainstream population by this group.

This study thus aims to answer three central questions:

1. What is involved in the practice of Goth and how does it travel?
2. How are the practices and experiences of Goth articulated through specific sites?
3. How does Goth participate in the production and circulation of cultures of (un)popularity?

The data will contribute towards the researcher's Doctoral degree in Cultural Geography.

Why am I being asked to take part?

You are being asked to take part because you are over 18 years of age, you identify as a Goth and/or participate in the Goth scene.

What does taking part involve?

Taking part involves: the completion of a photo-diary over a 3 week period of your choosing and a follow-up interview lasting approximately 1 hour. The aim of this methodology is to investigate how people negotiate their identities in different situations in life.

This can be divided into three interrelated tasks:

1. Please take a maximum of **20 photographs** of objects/situations/places etc that are important to your identity as a Goth. This may include a photograph at a club, the space in which you get ready to go out, the clothing you wear, a CD/book/DVD collection, artwork etc. There is no 'wrong' way to complete this task- it is down to your personal interpretation. (NB: If you wish to take photos including other people, please ask their permission first);
2. Note down the **time and date** of when the photograph was taken and a description of **why** the shot is important to you. This written aspect of the diary process is open to your own interpretation, so feel free use plain text, narrative, poetry, song lyrics or draw pictures/maps if preferred;
3. Finally, I will print/develop the photographs and during the **follow-up interview**, I will ask you to elaborate and explain the photo-diary in more detail for up to one hour.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Yes. How best to do this will be discussed with you in the interview. Data will be securely stored on an external hard-drive in a locked filing cabinet.

Who is undertaking the research and what if there is a problem/question?

The research is being done by Zoë Enstone, a DPhil student at Oxford University School of Geography. Zoë can be contacted via email at zoe.enstone@gmail.com or by phone on 07966871875.

Who has reviewed the research?

The research has been reviewed and received clearance by the University's ethics committee.

Lifestyle Photo-Study Consent Form

(Participant's copy)

I:

have read the participant information sheet (dated 17th October, 2008)

have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and has received satisfactory answers to questions, and any additional details requested.

understand that I may withdraw from the study without penalty at any time by advising the researcher of this decision.

understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored, and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.

understand how to raise a concern.

agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name

Signature

Date

Researcher's name

Signature

Date

Lifestyle Photo-Study Consent Form
(Researcher's copy)

I:

have read the participant information sheet (dated 17th October, 2008)

have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and has received satisfactory answers to questions, and any additional details requested.

understand that I may withdraw from the study without penalty at any time by advising the researchers of this decision.

understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored, and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.

understand how to raise a concern.

agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name

Signature

Date

Researcher's name

Signature

Date

Appendix 6: Information sheets for event photo-diary participants



Information Sheet for Event Photo-Diary Participants (17th October, 2008)

What is the purpose of the research?

This research project broadly aims to investigate the interaction between culture and globalization by tracing the geographies of a specific case study: Goth subculture. Working within Cultural Geography, it aims to highlight the importance of embodiment in understanding identities and seeks to look at the significance of different spaces of involvement for Goths. It will also detail the anxieties generated within the mainstream population by this group.

This study thus aims to answer three central questions:

1. What is involved in the practice of Goth and how does it travel?
2. How are the practices and experiences of Goth articulated through specific sites?
3. How does Goth participate in the production and circulation of cultures of (un)popularity?

The data will contribute towards the researcher's Doctoral degree in Cultural Geography.

Why am I being asked to take part?

You are being asked to take part because you are over 18 years of age, you identify as a Goth and/or participate in the Goth scene and will be attending *Whitby Goth Weekend* in October 2008.

What does taking part involve?

Taking part involves: the completion of a photo-diary during *Whitby Goth Weekend* and a follow-up interview lasting approximately one hour. The aim of this methodology is to investigate the multi-sensory experience of events.

This can be divided into four interrelated tasks:

1. Please take a maximum of **20 photographs** (using your own digital camera or I can provide a disposable one) of anything that you feel is significant to your experience of the event. This may be the space in which you get ready to go out, the journey to/from Whitby, a picture which captures the atmosphere of the event for you etc. (NB: If you wish to take photos including other people, please ask their permission first);
2. Briefly note down **why** you have taken the photographs;
3. Create a **diary of your activities** and experience of the event. For example, what do you do during the day? This methodology is open to your own interpretation, so feel free to use plain text, narrative, poetry, song lyrics or draw pictures if preferred;
4. During the **follow-up interview**, we will use the photos to structure our discussion and I will ask you to elaborate upon the photographs chosen.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Yes. How best to do this will be discussed with you in the interview. Data will be securely stored on an external hard-drive in a locked filing cabinet.

Who is undertaking the research and what if there is a problem/question?

The research is being done by Zoë Enstone, a DPhil student at Oxford University School of Geography. Zoë can be contacted via email at zoe.enstone@gmail.com or by phone on 07966871875.

Who has reviewed the research?

The research has been reviewed and received clearance by the University's ethics committee.

Event Photo-Diary Consent Form

(Participant's copy)

I:

have read the participant information sheet (dated 17th October, 2008)

have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and has received satisfactory answers to questions, and any additional details requested.

understand that I may withdraw from the study without penalty at any time by advising the researcher of this decision.

understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored, and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.

understand how to raise a concern.

agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name

Signature

Date

Researcher's name

Signature

Date

Event Photo-Diary Consent Form

(Researcher's copy)

I:

have read the participant information sheet (dated 17th October, 2008)

have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and has received satisfactory answers to questions, and any additional details requested.

understand that I may withdraw from the study without penalty at any time by advising the researchers of this decision.

understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored, and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.

understand how to raise a concern.

agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name

Signature

Date

Researcher's name

Signature

Date
