



Goth: Undead Subculture

Lauren M. E. Goodlad (Editor) , Michael Bibby (Editor)

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Since it first emerged from Britain's punk-rock scene in the late 1970s, goth subculture has haunted postmodern culture and society, reinventing itself inside and against the mainstream. *Goth: Undead Subculture* is the first collection of scholarly essays devoted to this enduring yet little examined cultural phenomenon. Twenty-three essays from various disciplines explore the music, cinema, television, fashion, literature, aesthetics, and fandoms associated with the subculture. They examine goth's many dimensions—including its melancholy, androgyny, spirituality, and perversity—and take readers inside locations in Los Angeles, Austin, Leeds, London, Buffalo, New York City, and Sydney. A number of the contributors are or have been participants in the subculture, and several draw on their own experiences. The volume's editors provide a rich history of goth, describing its play of resistance and consumerism; its impact on class, race, and gender; and its distinctive features as an "undead" subculture in light of post-subculture studies and other critical approaches. The essays include an interview with the distinguished fashion historian Valerie Steele; analyses of novels by Anne Rice, Poppy Z. Brite, and Nick Cave; discussions of goths on the Internet; and readings of iconic goth texts from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* to James O'Barr's graphic novel *The Crow*. Other essays focus on gothic music, including seminal precursors such as Joy Division and David Bowie, and goth-influenced performers such as the Cure, Nine Inch Nails, and Marilyn Manson. Gothic sexuality is explored in multiple ways, the subjects ranging from the San Francisco queercore scene of the 1980s to the increasing influence of fetishism and fetish play. Together these essays demonstrate that while its participants are often middle-class suburbanites, goth blurs normalizing boundaries even as it appears as an everlasting shadow of late capitalism.

Contributors: Heather Arnet, Michael Bibby, Jessica Burstein, Angel M. Butts, Michael du Plessis, Jason Friedman, Nancy Gagnier, Ken Gelder, Lauren M. E. Goodlad, Joshua Gunn, Trevor Holmes, Paul Hodgkinson, David Lenson, Robert Markley, Mark Nowak, Anna Powell, Kristen Schilt, Rebecca Schraffenberger, David Shumway, Carol Siegel, Catherine Spooner, Lauren Stasiak, Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock

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From Reader Review Goth: Undead Subculture for online ebook

Sarah says

Well, I lent this to a student who never returned it, so I'm putting it on the never-finished list.

Jenn McCollum says

For such a contemporaneous anthology I was surprised to find no mention of zombies.

Cory says

This collection of essays about goth subculture occasionally suffers from a common problem in academic writing about popular culture: too much Foucault, not enough fun. I think sometimes academics feel the need to make their writing style as dry as possible in order to lend a legitimacy to their subject. That said, I am enjoying the exploration of the subject and it is nice to cleanse the palate with a little Lacanian analysis every now and then.

Richard says

I stumbled on this book while reading a couple of articles in the Guardian...anyway, I picked up a copy and for the most part, thoroughly enjoyed it. This is an academic book, a collection of liberal arts essays on a variety of subjects related to the goth subculture. They range from gender studies analyses, to explorations of certain bands influence on the goth scene, to looking at the work of certain 'goth' authors and the increased co-mingling of the goth and fetish scene in the US. The essays all well written, however some are very dry. Overall a good collection of work. This is not a definitive history but a collection of opinions and that's kind of what made it fun to read.

Lynley says

Everything you could possibly want to know about goth subculture from the 1980s onwards.

The essays seem to be arranged from overviews of the subculture getting more and more specific if you're reading sequentially through the book. The first essay is a wonderful overview, so if you only read the first essay you'll already have a good idea of what goth subculture is all about.

Fans of Buffy the Vampire Slayer will be interested in that essay, and there's one for David Bowie fans, and people who love The Cure. I'm not a particular fan of any of these artforms, but the essay on Bowie was interesting anyway, for its insight into Bowie's androgynous presentation, which I'd previously thought of as cross-dressing. If you think you're only going to learn about goths, you'll find yourself inadvertently learning

about sociological concepts along the way.

After reading these essays I now think of goth as a continuum of behaviours and beliefs rather than 'goth or not'. I'm not sure why I didn't already think this -- everything is a continuum. Most of us are probably a little bit goth, especially during the teenage years. Being goth isn't just about the black clothing and white make up; it's a particular world view. If inequalities bother you, you're probably a little bit goth regardless of what clothes you get about in.

Rachel Pollock says

A compendium of academic essays covering a wide range of topics pertaining to the goth subculture. They range from dense sociological/anthropological analyses written from an observational POV, to treatises and manifestos by writers from inside the subculture. Not a fast read, but an intriguing one.

michella says

the main thing I enjoyed about this book was being reminded of some great music and movies I was into in my teen years. otherwise, it was long winded and hard for me to get through. The essays prattled on and on about goth lifestyles and started to blur into saying the same things again and again.

Angela says

For a subject that should be interesting, this book managed to be very dry and scholarly. Oh well!

Bart Everson says

I do occasionally read books outside of my club selections. It took me a few months, chipping away at lunch time, but I finally finished Goth: Undead Subculture which the library purchased on my recommendation. Fascinating stuff. It's the first and only collection of serious academic essays on the subject. I don't usually read much academic writing, and this was heavy going in some places, but overall I think it's pretty accessible. I think what I found most provocative is simply the idea of subcultures themselves as somehow resisting mainstream culture. I don't know if subcultural studies is an organized field of study, but I think I'd like to learn more about it.

Isaac Holloway says

The text has some accessibility issues that at times makes it an annoying read particularly if your not gripped by a particular chapter's subject. However, The some excellent insightful chapters here. The chapters on

Bram stokers Dracula, Edward scissorhands, and joy divisions Ian Curtis among my favorites.

Rebecca Wright says

This is co-written by a professor here at UIUC. An academic look at the gothic subculture.

Caroline Åsgård says

I read a sample of this and it seemed great! Very informative, and especially interesting for me, since I am a goth. I'd love to read the whole thing!
