

FINNISH GOTHIC SUBCULTURE

Gothic subculture is: “(...) *to enjoy the beauty of the moonlight instead of the beauty of the sun*” (Mia)

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>This master's thesis is an ethnographic research into the Gothic subculture in Finland. Data was collected on the one hand by qualitative interview methods with open-ended questions, and on the other hand by participant observation. Also the internet and the Media were useful sources for collecting data. All data was analysed according to the guiding principles of symbolic anthropology.</p> <p>This work is interested in examining the history of Finnish Gothic subculture. Further, research questions focus on the eye-catching Gothic fashion style, which is regarded as a meaningful symbol of Gothic subculture. By exploring and interpreting the variety of Gothic fashion style and by paying special attention to its details that make it differ from mainstream fashion, this work aims at uncovering the meaning Finnish Gothic subculture has for insiders as well as outsiders. Particular attention is paid to the interpretation of the colour black, which is one of the meaningful details of Finnish Gothic subculture's fashion style.</p> <p>The intention of this work is to explore and present the complexity of Finnish Gothic subculture and to contrast it to existing stereotypes, which have been related to it. As this work's research results emphasize, Goths are normal Finnish people living a normal life. Only that their life is coloured in Gothic black.</p>	
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Introduction

...Kultur wird nicht als abgerundetes, homogenes verstanden und als solches soll und will ich es auch nicht darstellen, vielmehr geht es mir darum die Vielfalt und die einfallsreiche Interpretation des Individuums der jeweiligen Kultur darzustellen, herauszuarbeiten...und dadurch dem Alltags-Urteil belebt im Stereotyp zu widersprechen im Glauben daran, dadurch eine Reflektion zu betreiben, die durch den Diskurs, den Stereotyp Begriff beeinflussen, und verrichtigen (berichtigen zu absolut) könnte.... (Author unknown)

Origin of Research

When I moved to Finland in 2004, I started mingling with local life on the streets and soon got attracted by some extraordinarily dressed people, who passed me by. Their hair was almost always coloured in black, which together with the colour white, and in some cases combined with a speck of pink, constituted these people's over-all appearance as far as I could conclude from the quick glance my curiosity forced me to take. I was not able to screen any more detailed distinctions within their appearances and basically they all looked the same to me: quite black coloured overall. But this style of dressing, which differed greatly from popular mainstream fashions, was their strikingly visible and distinctive element. Of course, also present-day fashions such as Hip Hop, Hippie and H&M-fashion have their own distinctive element of style. But they are not nearly as dramatic and eye-catching in action as the fashion of those people dressed and rouged in dark colours of whom I knew that they were called "Goths" and belonged to the Gothic¹ subculture. And while passing them, I started to wonder, what I actually knew about Goths and their lifestyles. That all Goths are dressed in black? That they are melancholic and depressed people? That they like vampires? ...These were some of the association I had

¹ (Note: Out of clarity's reason, this work uses the term 'Gothic' as an adjective that describes the subculture under study as a whole, and 'Goth' to refer to the individual member of the scene.)

and that matched the answers I obtained from a questionnaire (APPENDIX 1) that I gave 51 non-Gothic students, aged between 19 and 34, with the starting question “What does come into your mind when you hear the term “Goth”?”. The idea of this questionnaire was to gather in advance some outsiders’ associations, related to the Gothic subculture in Finland. Most of the questioned persons were students of the University of Jyväskylä and others I chose on an arbitrary basis. In the questionnaire they were allowed to put down three of their associations, which they made with the term ‘Goth’. 45% of them related the term ‘Goth’ to a special style of music, often explicitly referring to ‘Metal’. Another 51% linked the colour black directly to ‘Goth’, thus confirming not only my first association, but also one of the most common stereotypes which exist regarding the Gothic subculture. ‘Gothic means dark cloth, (...), pale face’ (2005:33) as the “*Iltalehti*” journalist Lehtola puts it in his article that deals with an author called Sofi Oksanen, who belongs to the Gothic scene in Finland. But that black is not the only thing, which outsiders notice when looking at the appearance of a Goth, was also proved by my questionnaire. Indeed, it revealed an astonishing variety of associations that people had in relation to Gothic fashion. Amongst others they named ‘corsets, lace, fancy boots, jewellery, leather cloth, PVC, long skirts, fake hair, and heavy make up’. And to describe Gothic fashion as such, they used adjectives such as ‘stylish, aesthetic, sexy, visual, romantic, glorious, S/M-reminding, special, mediaeval, old fashioned’. By summing up this sort of associations under the heading ‘fashion style-related associations’, we will end up with a percentage of 63% people, who associated Goth to a certain kind of fashion style. From that we may conclude that Gothic appearance does actually draw special attention to it.

But somehow this result still did not satisfy me. It did not give me an answer to why Gothic people dress up the way they do, and what they actually want to express by their fashion style that is so strikingly indicating them as a unique and from the mainstream deviating cultural group. Out of these reasons, I decided to do my master thesis on the Gothic subculture as it exists in Finland today.

Agreeing with the statement: 'Anthropological researchers should utilize the results of their work in an appropriate fashion, and whenever possible disseminate their findings to the scientific and scholarly community.' (www 1), I chose to write my work in English instead of Finnish, because I believe that English is a language which is comprehensible to a wider audience, and consequently enables more people to read my work and use it for further research. So although much of my material for this work has been originally either written or spoken in Finnish, such as my interviews or some of the newspapers' and magazines' articles, I translated it all into English. I am aware of the fact that each translation process contains a possible danger of losing valuable information, as translation means in a way a transformation of the original (one language is transformed into another). But even if I had used the original language of each quotation, this would not have freed the quotation from the necessity of translation, since not only I, but also part of my readership (all, whose mother tongue is not Finnish) would still have had to translate what they read into their mother tongue. But since this work is built up on my process of thinking, which includes a translation of those phrases said or written in another language than German (my mother tongue), I thought it necessary and useful to do the translation myself.

Research Questions

For my research on the Finnish Gothic subculture, the point of origin was in the beginning not more than a strong interest in the Gothic people and their extraordinary and dramatic visual appearance. I was driven by my, and as I believe, societal lack of knowledge concerning Goths and their culture. Thus, the initial purpose of this work was to bring light into the mystical darkness surrounding the Finnish Gothic subculture in order to enlighten myself as well as society. By giving a detailed and comprehensive picture of the Finnish Gothic subculture, this work tries to generate an understanding of Finnish Goths and their culture and to 'expose their normalness without reducing their particularity' (Geertz 1973:14). By doing this, I hoped to contribute to a process which would help to prevent ignorance and intolerance within society.

I decided to begin my research by first working out whether there existed a connection between the Gothic subculture in general and other cultural movements that are attached to the term "Gothic". This way, I hoped to clarify where the subculture's name originates from. Next, I was interested in showing the Finnish Gothic subculture's history and its development and decided to take first a look on when and how Gothic subculture emerged on an international level and deducing from that when and how Gothic subculture stranded in Finland. I was also eager to find out how people generally get interested in the Finnish Gothic subculture and for what reasons they finally join it. Is it the Gothic music that attracts them? Or is it Gothic fashion which captivates them? And if it was Gothic fashion, that attracts them? Is it then because of Gothic fashion's beauty, or because of its silently communicated meaning? And if there is something as a silently communicated meaning that would be ingrained in Gothic fashion, then what does it say? It turned out that finding an answer to this mystery surrounding Gothic subculture and its fashion became the most important research question of my work. However, I was also eager to find out more about Finnish Goths' specific lifestyle and therefore listened carefully to what each of my informants had to tell me about his or her everyday life as a Goth.

Together, all research questions helped me to construct an in depth portrait of the Finnish Gothic subculture as it exists at the time of my research in 2005/ 06 Finland.

Previous research

On International Gothic Subculture

Most of the previous research as well as general literature on the Gothic subculture have been published either in Great Britain or in Germany, which both are well known for an active Gothic scene. Gavin Baddeley's book called "Goth Chic: a connoisseur's guide to dark culture" was published in 2002 in Great Britain, and deals with all the various aspects that are associated with the Gothic subculture. The book offers its reader a broad and in-depth overview on the subject. The author himself is an ordained Reverend in the Church of Satan and works as a music journalist. Besides "Goth Chic", he has published three other books dealing with Satanism, the phenomenon of the American singer Marilyn Manson and Black Metal. Academic research that has been done on the Gothic subculture is Paul Hodkinson's dissertation, called "Goth. Identity, Style and Subculture", published 2002. Hodkinson concentrates his research on the Gothic subculture in Great Britain. He mainly focuses on the norms, meanings, motivations and social patterns of people who are involved in the Gothic scene. Hodkinson is particularly interested in voluntary and commercial events as well as the media and consumables, which in his point of view enable the Gothic subculture to exist and survive on such a small scale as it does. His ambition is to prove and explore the substance of Gothic subculture as it existed in Britain during the mid-to-late 1990s. The book offers a rare insider-perspective on Gothic subculture, as Hodkinson himself considers himself to be a Goth. Thus, his dissertation passes on valuable information about the Gothic scene to the reader of the outside world.

One example of literature that is related to the Gothic scene in Germany is a book called "Gothic. Die Szene in Deutschland aus der Sicht ihrer Macher", which has been edited by Peter Matzke and Tobias Seeliger, and published in 2000. The book gives a very brief introduction to the history of the German Gothic subculture and its present situation. Further, it offers some thoughts on the future development of the scene. But the main purpose of this book is to

give voice to several 'protagonists' of the scene in order to create a puzzle which put together correctly is going to give 'an overview of the scene' (Matzke and Seeliger 2000:8). Further, the book is essentially dominated by pictures of the scene, which the authors believe to be important to give a complete picture of Gothic subculture. Another book dealing with the Gothic scene in Germany has been published 2001 by the 'Archiv für Jugendkulturen', edited by Klaus Farin and Kirsten Wallraff. It is simply called "Die Gothics" and divided into two parts, of which the first, edited by Klaus Farin, offers an introduction to the Gothic scene in Germany, followed by Interviews with several Goths. The second part has been written by Kirsten Wallraff and presents the Gothic subculture in its total complexity. Especially the chapters on fashion and the colours of the Gothic scene were written very detailed and were of great help for this research.

On Finnish Gothic Subculture

When it comes to literature and researches that have been published in Finland and that are related to the Gothic subculture, the harvest turns out to be very meagre. The result of my investigations was one master's thesis called "Pimeyden Romantiikka", written by Liisa Lipas at the Institute for Art Research, Musicology, Helsinki. But although the master's thesis should have been available at the Institute's library, the student had failed to leave a copy of it and therefore I could only read an outline of her thesis which she had published as an article of the student's magazine *Synkooppi* 1999 under the title "Goottilaisuus ja pimeyden romantiikka - underground tarkastelua Helsingissä". Besides a general overview on the history and the music of the Gothic subculture, the article offers some insights to the Gothic subculture in Finland, such as a listing of important Finnish Gothic bands and the names of some Finnish Gothic clubs.

I found another master-thesis written on this topic by accident while looking for people on the internet who would be willing to answer my questionnaire for insiders (APPENDIX 2). The authors name is Sanna Vanhala who wrote her final work at the Seinäjoki Polytechnic at the department of Culture and Design.

The title of her work is “Genus Corvus Corone – Keikkavaatemallisto Suomalaisille metallibändeille”. According to her own description she wrote

about different parts of heavy metal and Gothic subculture and designed stage wear for three Finnish heavy metal bands

getting her inspiration amongst others from the movie “The Crow”.

The last research, which I found in the Finnish speaking region, is the final paper of a student of the Kymenlääkso Polytechnic, Textile- and Clothing Design, published in 2004. The students name is Jutta-Maria Valtonen and besides designing a ‘Gothic styled clothing collection’ (Valtonen: 2004) as part of her final paper, she also wrote a theoretical part called “Goth couture – goottivaatemallisto”. As a former member of the Gothic subculture she has great connections to the Finnish Gothic scene and thus her work offers a great inside look to the Gothic subculture as it exists in Finland. Especially her diligent investigation of the different Gothic fashion styles was of great help for my research.

The only book on this subject which has been published in Finnish is the afore mentioned “Goth Chic: a connoisseur’s guide to dark culture” by Baddeley, translated into Finnish by Ilkka Salmenpohja and published by LIKE in 2005 under the title “Goth Chic – johdatus pimeän puolen estetiikkaan”. According to the publisher, the Finnish translation of the book has been sold five months after its publishing in a relatively good number, taking into consideration that it is a non-fictional book that is being sold in a country of only five Million people. LIKE’s guess, when I called them up, was a sales figure of more or less 1000 copies, not having available a more exact number. And obviously this sales figure is the reason why there has not been published more Finnish literature that deals with this topic. As emerging out of an online discussion about Baddeley’s book at the online discussion group Schatten (www 2), there are obviously people who have been thinking about writing a book on the Gothic scene in Finland. As the person with the nickname Jtw states:

I had been already quite far with writing a book about the Finnish [Gothic] scene (amongst others I had already done many interviews, compiled a big pile of pictures, a discography and already had been writing the book for months), until all publishers one by one withdraw

since they feared that such a book would sell so badly that it was not worth publishing (www 3)

But maybe the sales figures of Baddeley's Finnish translation will grow some more and encourage publishers in Finland to believe in the success of a book written about the Finnish Gothic subculture. Until then, this work will have to stand its ground.

On Subculture

The beginnings of subcultural theory can be stated back to the early part of the twentieth century and is mainly associated with what today is known as the Chicago School. The theory of the Chicago School is based on a 'conception of subcultures as deviant groups' (Hodkinson 2002:9). In other words, subcultures are regarded to consist of young individuals, who have difficulties to meet the expectations set on them by the dominant society they are part of and therefore they decide to join together as a group, which collectively tries to resolve societal status problems by the development of new norms and values. By doing this, the young deviants find a way to solve the problems they face as an individual in society they did not fit in.

Other famous theories on subculture were developed by the Birmingham School, which originating at the Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). They had clearly a neo-Marxist perspective, which regarded subculture as a reflection of working-class youth in relation to the particular societal conditions of 1960s and 1970s Britain. The theory on subculture as developed by the Birmingham School argues that youth cultures of that time tried to solve the contrast that arose between the traditional values of their parent culture and the modern hegemonic culture of mass consumption, which was dominated by the media and commerce. Here, subculture is seen as a 'symbolic structural resistance' (Hodkinson 2002:11) to solve the problems of a group, and not of an individual.

But in post-modern theory the term 'subculture' is not the only one used to describe societal youth minorities and their life-styles. Maffesoli, for example, named groups existing of consumer-orientated individuals 'neo-tribes' (Maffesoli

1996). These neo-tribes, he argues, uphold group identity by ritual (1996: 17) and are marked by elective consumption practices. Their borders are unstable though, 'since the persons of which these tribes are constituted are free to move from one to the other' tribe. Also Bauman and May agree on the fluidity of neo-tribes, when saying that '(...), it seems, that one can wander freely from one neo-tribe to another by changing one's dress, refurbishing one's flat and spending one's free time at different places' (2001:156). As this definition of neo-tribe is not fitting the picture that arises of my data of the Finnish Gothic culture, I decided to stick to name their culture 'subculture'.

Methods of Data Collection

Interviews

For the collection of my data on the Finnish Gothic subculture, I applied varying methods. Amongst others, I conducted several interviews with outsiders as well as insiders of the Finnish Gothic scene. The scene insiders I decided to interview according to qualitative interview principles. A qualitative interview is structured by open-ended questions, which may vary from interview to interview. The purpose of applying this kind of method is to keep up the possibility of adapting the interview according to the varying demands of the interviewed persons, but at the same time to be able to guide the interview's course 'to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee'. (www 4)

To eventually find suitable insider informants was - as I had expected it - a quite long lasting process for an outsider and demanded a lot of creativity. I found one of my informants by running into her at my university, while two others I spotted at the Jyväskylä city library. I had noticed all three of them because of their visually attracting outfits, which I decided to belong to the realm of Gothic fashion. I asked all three of them politely to give me a minute and explained them quickly the subject and idea of my master's thesis, asking them in the end for an interview. And whilst other people I had stopped at the street in the same manner had either denied being a Goth or were not willing to respond to my pleas, those three got very interested and agreed immediately. Two other informants I found by the help of the pyramid scheme. This means that I told a friend the subject of my master's thesis and mentioned my urgent need for informants, whereupon she gave me the contacts of another person, who then again knew another girl that knew two Goths in Helsinki. I managed to arrange a meeting at one of the conference rooms of the Helsinki University and interviewed both of them at the same time. The last person I interviewed in a face-to-face interview by the help of open-ended questions was a Goth I had contacted via the internet, by looking at a Gothic online discussion page for people, who were residents of Jyväskylä. As the informant in question told me

afterwards, she was not going to answer my e-mail at first, as she thought it to be some sort of a joke. But after having attended by chance a lecture, where a professor mentioned my thesis, she luckily replied after all. At the end of the interviews, I asked each of the informants for the permission to take a picture. My last informant, I got in contact with by visiting the Café “Valo” in Tampere. I knew that there was a photographic exhibition called “Shades of Black” as part of the Lumous Festival (Finnish Gothic festival) 2005. I was just curious to find out more about the photographer of the exhibition and asked the waitress, if she was able to give me more detailed information on this matter. Thus she handed me a number, which in the end turned out to be the number of one of the Lumous Festival’s organizers. When I called him up and asked him for his willingness to answer some of my questions concerning the history of the Goth scene in Finland, he was very eager to share his knowledge with me. All in all, I interviewed seven people by using the method of an open-end interview, five women and two men, between the age of 19 and 40.

In addition to the open-end interviews, I gathered some of my data by the help of standardized, open-ended questionnaires, which I distributed to insiders and outsiders of the Finnish Gothic subculture, having designed them differently for Goths and non-Goths. I sent the questionnaires, which were meant for Goths (APPENDIX 2), to all 68 e-mail addresses that I had found on a Finnish web-page called Fin.Goth (www 5). In the end, I got four thought-through and detailed replies. One of these four people happened to be a fashion designer for Gothic fashion (www 6) and another one the creator of the Fin.Goth web-page (www 5).

Besides those four insider informants, I contacted one Goth via E-mail. Since I knew that he was one of the founders of a well-known Finnish Goth band called “Two Witches” (www 7), I had prepared a special set of questions for him (APPENDIX 3), which he kindly answered to me, thus giving me a lot of valuable information about the Finnish Gothic music scene.

The questionnaire which I designed for outsiders (APPENDIX 1) contained both open-end and close, fixed response types of questions. I distributed it to 51 non-Goths, aged between 19 and 34. The idea of this procedure was to get a

first impression of an outsider's perspective on the Finnish Gothic subculture and to find out the most common stereotypes that exist concerning the Gothic subculture. And even though I am aware that the results of quantitative questionnaires are of quite superficial nature, I still consider it a useful and interesting tool to enter a subject.

Fieldwork/ Participant Observation

Another method that I applied in order to collect data for my work is the humanistic and emphatic method called 'fieldwork', also known as 'participant observation', which since Malinowski has been a central method in social anthropology for the collection of data. The initial idea of this method is to live for a longer period with the people under study in order to experience and understand their culture from an almost insider's perspective, while paying special attention to all kind of different details, such as behavior, dressing, choice of time and location. However, it is important that the researcher does not fall into the 'romantic trap' (Hal & Jefferson 1977:246) and loses his objective perspective, which is urgent for a scientific analysis. But other as it is in the case of a tribe or a people, the Finnish Gothic subculture does not have any particular location where social life would take place twenty-four hours non-stop. Out of this reason I had to content myself with a participant observation in a social situation. A social situation is composed by a location, actors and an activity (Spradley 1980:39-52). Concerning the Gothic subculture such a social situation can be found for instance in Goth-specific clubs, festivals, shops and online discussion forums. Out of these options, I decided to conduct my fieldwork at a picnic which took place in Tampere 2005 within the framework of a Goth-specific festival called 'Lumous' ([www 8](http://www.lumous.fi)). Mostly, I stayed in the role of a non-participant observer who made pictures of the event. I also had some informal conversations with a few Goths, which I did not tape but wrote down afterwards together with my observation report (APPENDICES 4). The idea of this fieldwork was more to grasp the feeling of such a Gothic event, whilst the collection of insider information was only of secondary importance to me. The

following extract of my field-diary will give you an impression of how I as an outsider experienced the Gothic event:

All of them start walking towards the park, where the Gothnic is going to take place. I take the same direction and on my way I spot a noticeable number of other Goths, who also aim towards the Gothnic. They walk in groups of not more than five people and all of them are dressed predominantly in black. The park is coming closer and I get scarily excited but decide to be brave and continue walking. I have to walk up a hill but as soon as I reach the top of it, my heart stops beating and I quickly run to hide behind the first tree available. The reason is a black sea of Goths in front of me, who squat in smaller and bigger groups on the meadow. Pretending to check out my camera and cursing the fact that I have stopped smoking, I try to look intelligent and busy enough and not too lost nor stupid. But I am, terribly lost and not having the faintest clue how to approach the field in front of me. Time passes by and I realize that nothing else will help than taking my guts together, set one foot in front of the other and once close enough, to open my mouth and ask "May I take a picture of you? I would need it for my master thesis on the Gothic subculture in Finland." And so I proceed, try to forget my suspect evoking outfit and concentrate on the techniques of my camera - which is quite tricky actually as I tragically realize when using it. Two male Goths come walking in my direction, I approach them and ask them for a picture. One of them is dressed in a long black skirt, and both of them have colourful stripes in their hairs. Instead of agreeing immediately to my plea, one of them asks: "Why us? Haven't you realized that there are plenty other Goths just right behind us?", Yes, I answer, but somewhere I have to start, and so they let me take the picture. Afterwards it turns out that when taking some of the pictures, I pushed a button of the camera, which starts recording a short video tape. On one of this video clips one can clearly see how I try to adjust the camera on a group of five Goths and how I talk to them. Finally the clip ends by the picture darkening as the camera gets stuffed back into my bag. Ahhhhh,,,,more classical my stupidity with this camera and its consequent mistakes couldn't be!

Still I am happy, after I got at least some pictures of my desired and admired and longed for Goths in real action. I also got the chance to talk to some of them, while trying to grasp the general atmosphere of this event, which I would describe as Sunday hangover calm.

Jigging back into town, I come across another Goth who is obviously on his way to the Gothnic. Encouraged, I also ask him for a picture and he sort of reluctantly agrees. Kind of pissed he wonders loudly, what kind of a life this is when one gets on a Sunday morning caught on the street for a picture, having a big hangover from yesterdays partying. I try to cheer him up buy saying something nice (while once more fighting with this damn so complicated camera!!) So I tell him: "No, mä haluisin otta sinusta kuvan kun sinä näytät niin 'stylish'", using the English word as the Finnish equivalent honestly has dropped out of my mind at that moment. But oh, oh, oh: Big mistake! It is as I would have given him an aspirin or caffeine injection and out of the sudden he is all alive. 'What this then was supposed to mean, he?, 'stylish', what a bullshit, what would I know and all the f boring people in this world, who care so f* much about their outlook. 'stylish', pah, that's the least thing he is interested in looking like. Hell,', and I could see that he probably thought: 'What a stupid,*

superficial biatch, no idea about anything...’ ...weakly trying to explain myself, I try to become all invisible grey and disappear unsighted into some whole only the theory of Fieldwork could offer me. Because: theory and practise, that ‘ain’t the same’, I think when I am sitting in the bus back home. (Fieldwork-diary, 3.7.2005)

All in all, I stayed in Tampere for a whole day, and observed the appearance of Goths in town as well as on their picnic. I attended the picnic for about two hours, taking pictures of different Goths and talking to some of them. An interesting aspect for me was to experience in this context the feeling of being different from the perspective of a minority, since usually I am the one who is part of the majority whilst Goths are in minority.

Further Material

Besides obtaining my information through fieldwork and by interviewing people, I also gathered a lot of information as well as informants via the media and the internet. For example, I contacted a Finnish talk show called “Tuomas & Juuso Experience” via E-mail since I knew that they had coming up Sofi Oksanen as a studio-guest. She is an author who published two books in Finland and who is known in public to be a Goth. Out of this reason I send some of my questions to the show, explaining the production secretary the idea of my master’s thesis and asking her to pose some of my questions to S. Oksanen. The makers of “Tuomas & Juuso Experience” got interested in the whole idea and kindly agreed to ask my questions. The show was broadcasted on 13.10.2005 at the TV channel “Nelonen”. The interview sequence with Sofi Oksanen, in which they asked all of my questions, is available at the shows website ([www 9](http://www.9.fi)) and also attached as a VHS tape to this work (Appendices 8).

Besides the interview with S. Oksanen, I could also make usage of a documentary that had been produced by the TV-channel YLE, broadcasted in September 2004 and called “Posse porukka jengi - eli me”. This documentary presented the life of four Goth girls living in Helsinki and was due to its unprejudiced character rich of useful insider information.

By the help of the internet and its search engines such as Google ([www 10](http://www)), I came across various pages of Goths in Finland. Especially the web pages and

the online discussion forum of 'Schatten' (www 2 and 11) provided me with a lot of useful information on the Finnish Gothic scene.

I could gather other information through articles in magazines and newspapers, which deal with the Gothic subculture in one way or the other. In addition, I used two different comics which are starring characters influenced by the Gothic lifestyle. One comic is written by the Norwegian Lisa Myhre and is called "Nemi". The author of the other comic, called "The Sandman", is Neil Gaiman. Both comics play in a humorous way with common stereotypes concerning Goths and are quite popular amongst Goths. The idea of including television, internet, magazines, books as well as newspapers into my data collection was to grasp the picture of Gothic subculture as it is presented in the media.

Ethics of this Work

As it lies in the nature of cultural anthropological research to step into an unfamiliar and strange world, the questions of a proper ethical conduct within the host-field as well as of an ethical usage and treatment of the research results extracted from it are of crucial importance for every anthropological researcher. Following the Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association (www 1), this work was conducted under the premise to avoid any harm or damage to the people and culture under study. This implies the protection of my informants by guaranteeing them absolute anonymity by not using their real names but invented ones. Concerning the photographs that have been used in this work, either the person photographed or the photographer of the picture have been asked for permission to use their pictures, thus respecting their right to privacy as well as the author's rights.

Approach to Analysis

Symbolic Anthropology

Believing with Max Weber that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs and the analysis of it therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.' (Geertz 1973:5)

The method I chose for approaching my subject of study is based on the paradigm of symbolic anthropology, which aims to discover the indigenous meaning of a culture under study. The method is based on the conception of 'culture as a symbolic system of shared, identifiable, public symbols and meanings' (Lett 1987:56). To find these meanings ingrained in culture, C. Geertz (1973: 6) proposes a method called "thick description". The notion, which he borrowed from Gilbert Ryle, stands for an 'ethnographic writing in which, through a careful attention to detail and context, there is an integration of description with interpretation' (Barfield 1997:466). As already exposed earlier, the data for my description of the Finnish Gothic subculture has been collected from a great number of varying sources. By using all those different sources of information for my description, I hoped to gain a holistic perspective on the subject and to collect 'very densely textured facts' (Geertz 1973:28). The aim was to pay attention to the complexity immanent to each culture and to avoid the risk of taking a one-sided perspective. As an outsider of the Gothic scene in Finland, and taking into consideration the original interest that motivated my research, I was especially driven to understand and present in this work the emic perspective of the Gothic subculture. If this emic perspective is derived from 'interpretations offered by specialists and laymen', it constitutes according to Turner (1967:20) together with the 'external form and observable characteristics (and the) significant contexts largely worked out by the anthropologists', the three relevant sources of information that are needed to make an interpretation. The interpretation process, which I applied in order to decipher the meanings of my research material, originates in an inductive 'semiotic approach to culture' (Geertz 1973:24). This semiotic approach is

based on the idea that specific codes of any culture are always represented in carrying and transferring meaningful signs. And due to the fact that 'culture (...) is public' (Geertz 1973:10) also the signs, which might be 'visible, audible, tactile, olfactory objects or even events like lights of different colour, element of dress, inscriptions, oral statements, tones of voice, gestures, facial expressions, scents and so on,' (Bauman and May 1990:129) are observable in public. As Geertz puts it, culture is an 'interworked system of construable signs' (1973:14), which, ignoring provincial usages, he would call symbols. I found such a culturally encoded symbol, which should help me 'gaining access to the conceptual world' (Geertz 1973:24) of the Finnish Gothic subculture in the eye-catching Gothic fashion. Consciously, I left out other aspects of subcultural style, such as 'music and argot' (Hal & Jefferson 1977:54), and concentrated only on Gothic fashion style. Agreeing with Bauman and May, who say that 'the shape of the body, the way it is dressed up (...) are messages to others' (1990: 103), I concluded that the symbol of a Goth's outfit would be the most helpful tool in the process of deciphering the meaning of the Gothic subculture. So first I had to interpret their fashion and therefore I used the advices given by Geertz (1973: 24-28) concerning the theory of cultural interpretation. In his point of view, due to their nature, studies of culture are never able to produce a proven and final result, but rather they 'do build on other studies, not in the sense that they take up where the others leave off, but in the sense that, better informed and better conceptualized, they plunge more deeply into the same things.' (1973:25). Based on this method, which functions according to the principles of the hermeneutic circle, I compared my own interpretations to that of previous studies made in this field and evaluated my work with other studies according to the logic of uncertainty and probability. But when looking for more detailed instructions of how to do an interpretation according to the theory of symbolic anthropology, one will notice that general theoretical formulations are hard to be made within this theory. Each essay written under the premises of symbolic anthropology entails an own theory of interpretation, and it is impossible, as Geertz says, to 'abstract from such a study' (1973:25) in order to integrate it into a general theory. It is only possible to generalize within the cases but not across them (Geertz 1973:26). What one is left to do is to work according to the few generally applicable guidelines that have been given concerning the

interpretation methods of symbolic anthropology. As already mentioned before, those guidelines expect a researcher to compare new studies to former research that has been made in the field of his study. A further guideline says to guess at the meanings of symbols, 'assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses' (Geertz 1973: 20). Those explanatory conclusions should then lay open the meaning that symbols bear for the members of its culture. Based on this knowledge, a researcher should search for etic universals, which will explain 'cross-cultural commonalities' (Lett 1987: 118) in order to achieve a mutual understanding of different cultures. Many have criticized symbolic anthropology for its lack of theoretical and methodological guidelines, which result in the problem of replicability. As J. Lett puts it, 'if one lacks the imaginative insight of Clifford Geertz, how is one to pursue research under the paradigm of symbolic anthropology?' (1987: 117). Although agreeing with this critic formulated by J. Lett, I believe that there are more researchers in this world who are gifted with the talent of skillful interpretation and each try is going to add a further sentence to the discourse of the theory of symbolic anthropology. It is most important for every work that has been conducted under the general premises of hermeneutics, that the author of this work in question does not only present his results that are based on his personal interpretation method, but that at the same time he also lays open his way of approaching the subject under study. Being able to trace back the author's process of thinking and his way of analysis, which both finally lead to his subjective interpretation of culturally specific symbols, will make a proper validation of his interpretation possible. Following this advice, I tried to describe as clearly as possible each of my steps of procedure in this work.

‘Goth’/ ‘Gothic’

Definition of ‘Goth’/ ‘Gothic’

When telling my mother that I was doing my master’s thesis about the Gothic subculture, she got excited and offered to help me by collecting all articles related to ‘Gothic architecture’ that she would find in the newspapers. It took me some time to explain her that I neither did a research on Gothic architecture, nor Gothic literature, nor on the ancient tribe known as the Goths, but that the subject of my master’s thesis was a modern subcultural movement in Finland, named ‘Gothic subculture’. However, I can not blame my mother for getting confused by the ‘Gothic’ term and its meanings, since indeed ‘Gothic’ is used in a variety of different contexts. To give an impression of these different contexts, we now may take a look at the various definitions that I found of ‘Gothic’ and ‘Goths’. The definitions that follow have been set in a chronological order according to the time they appeared in history.

‘The original **Goths** were a Germanic tribe , who swept into western Europe in the fourth century to carve a kingdom from the decaying remnants of the Roman Empire. As a result, the word “Gothic” became synonymous with barbarism (a post human fate shared by the Vandals, another tribe who troubled Romans), and the collapse of the Empire, which signalled the advent of the Dark Ages, a turbulent period of war and savagery that eventually settled into bleak stagnation of the Middle Age.’ (Baddeley 2002: 10)

Gotiikka 1 Ranskassa 150 syntynyt ja sieltä muualle Eurooppaan levinnyt rakennus- a kuvataiteen tyyli, joka romaan. tyylin pohjalta kehittyi voimakkaan ekspressiiviseksi, kiihkeätunteiseksi »suippokaarityyliksi«; rakennuksissa erityisesti suurissa kirkoissa, korostui nousu kohti taivasta **2** alk. 1700-luvun Britanniassa kehittynyt ns. → **goottilainen** romaani, joka suosi kauhuromantiikkaa. (...)’ (Valpola 2000)

Goth is a modern subculture that first became popular during the early 1980s within the Gothic rock scene, a sub-genre of post punk. It is associated with characteristically "Gothic" tastes in music and clothing. Styles of dress range from Gothic horror, punk, victorian, fetish, cybergoth, androgyny and/or lots of black. There is no dress code per se for Goths; rather a set of accepted standards which vary according to localities and taste.’ (www 12)

In summary it can be said that the terms 'Goth' and 'Gothic' are related to an ancient tribe, a certain style of architecture and art, a particular genre of literature and a subcultural movement. Now the question arises whether all these different contexts do have something in common or not? And if they have something in common, what would it be? In order to find an answer to this question, I consider it useful to step back in history to examine the history of the Goth tribe, the Gothic architecture and art and the Gothic literature in more detail.

Goth Tribe

As already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the first time that the term 'Goth' appeared in history was in connection to an East Germanic tribe called 'Goths'. They originated in Scandinavia, from where they set off to conquer the Roman Empire in the 4th century. Due to their brutal methods of sacrificing their captives to their God of War 'Tyz', their enemies considered them to be of wild and barbarian character. For this reason, history remembers the Goths as the ones who replaced 'the classical glories of Rome' (Baddeley 2002:11) by the Dark Ages that mark the beginning of the Middle Age in A.D. 476.

Gothic Architecture

The second time that the term 'Gothic' appeared in history was in relation to an architectural and art style, which occurred in Europe from the 12th century onwards and which is known today as Gothic architecture. Gothic architecture is mostly associated with cathedrals and churches, whose 'style emphasizes verticality and features almost skeletal stone structures with great expanses of glass, sharply pointed spires, cluster columns, flying buttresses, ribbed vaults, pointed arches using the gable shape, and inventive sculptural detail. These features are all the consequence of a focus on large stained glass windows that allowed more light to enter than was possible with older styles. In order to

achieve this, flying buttresses were used to enable higher ceilings and slender columns.’ (www 12) The reason why the Gothic architecture had been named ‘Gothic’ architecture is that in the subsequent Renaissance era this term was still equated with barbarism. So when the people of the Renaissance period later named this type of architecture as the Gothic architecture, it was meant as a pure insult of the Gothic architecture’s style they did not like or appreciate. Although Gothic architecture kept silent for the time it had been replaced by Renaissance architecture in the early fifteenth century, it did not die out completely and finally experienced a revival in mid-eighteenth century England. One building that is famous for the Gothic revival in architecture is the villa Strawberry Hill (see PICTURE 1) close to London. It is a little Gothic castle build by Horace Walpole (1717-1797), a Gothic author who wrote “The Castle of Otranto”. The rediscovered style of Gothic architecture was considered by its time as a ‘rebellion against the good taste and good sense of the age’ (Baddeley 2002:11).

PICTURE 1 Strawberry

Hill http://www.historytoday.com/digimaker/pictures/Strawberry_Hill_Library_2_A5lfpZ_2111.jpg

Gothic Literature

Dealing with those kinds of emotions and being inspired by the buildings of ‘Gothic architecture’ as a perfect setting place for their stories, it was only logical to name the emerging literature genre in England at that time ‘Gothic literature’. ‘Gothic literature’ is characterized by accounts of experiences made on graveyards and in ancient castles, with flickering lamps and screams and moans and bloody hands all over the place. Further, ‘Gothic literature’ designates ‘the macabre, mysterious, fantastic, supernatural, and (...) the terrifying, especially the pleasurably terrifying’ (www 13). Most famous for their Gothic novels are Horace Walpole and his novel „The Castle of Otranto“(1764),

Ann Radcliffe, who is also called 'the "Queen of Terror,"' (www 13), and Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein* (1818).

Associations with 'Goth' and 'Gothic'

The initial task was to find out whether or not the Goth tribe, the Gothic architecture, the Gothic literature and the Gothic subculture do have something in common or not. And when going through this brief historical outline of all the different contexts in which 'Goth' and 'Gothic' have been used, it gets obvious that what connects the Goth tribe, the Gothic architecture and the Gothic literature is the historically acquired associations, which are attached to the terms 'Goth' and 'Gothic'. As we can see, with the emergence of the Goth tribe in the 4th century, the term 'Goth' as well as its adjective 'Gothic' became associated with 'barbaric', a 'threat to society'. And when later on Renaissance used the 'Gothic' term for giving the preceding style of architecture what they thought to be a proper name, it happened with the deliberate intention to insult this style of architecture, as it was considered 'barbaric' and 'in contradiction to aesthetical standards of that time'. With the emergence of Gothic literature in the 18th century, a few more associations were added to the terms 'Goth'/'Gothic', such as 'macabre and mystical', for example. So at the time when the 'Gothic subculture' emerged in the capital of Great Britain, the terms 'Goth' and 'Gothic' were already accompanied by an inevitable chain of associations that they had acquired in the course of history. And when the time has come and someone had to find a proper name for this new subcultural movement, which was characterized by its sinister-looking members, this someone had a reason, why he chose to describe them as the 'Gothic subculture'. The reason was that already in its very early days this subculture seemed to dress 'in contradiction to aesthetical standards of that time' and was felt as a 'threat to society' with its members' obvious interest for the 'macabre and mystical'. It is hard to say though, in how far the fact of being designated to be a 'Gothic' subculture has influenced the way in which the subculture eventually developed its characteristic style. In other words, if it would have been called simply the 'Black subculture', then would it have developed its style into a different direction? But

as this is a question impossible to answer, we now start concentrating on how the 'Gothic' subculture emerged as a subculture, first on an international and then on the Finnish level.

Gothic Subculture

International History of the Gothic Subculture

In the late 70s and early 80s, a new musical style emerged in Great Britain that soon would turn into a whole subcultural movement described by the term 'Gothic'. As it was musically as well as stylistically greatly influenced by its subcultural ancestors glam rock, punk and New Romantics, I consider it useful to take a closer look at these different movements first. Since this work is mainly interested in Gothic subculture's fashionable rather than its musical form of expression, the following contemplations lay greater emphasise on highlighting the influence each subculture had on the Gothic fashion.

Glam Rock

Glam rock arose in the early seventies in Great Britain and its most prominent figure is, without doubt, the legendary David Bowie. Glam rock distinguished itself not so much by a certain style of music but more through a strikingly different and highly visual stage performance. As Brake puts it, their 'image (was) composed of a Berlin 30s and New York gay' (1985: 76), which included amongst others a lot of glitter, gold and silver colours, leopard printed outfits, jewellery and platform shoes. (Takamura 1997: 137/ Valtonen 2004: 18). The message of this movement was 'escape – from class, from sex, from personality, from obvious commitment – into a fantasy past...or a science fiction future' (Hebdige 1979:61). This is a slogan that would also fit to describe many Goths and their outfits: It would fit those, who dress up according to a Victorian inspired fashion and thus 'choose a darkly mythologized version of the Victorian era for their flights of imagination' or it would fit those who 'are exploring a similarly gloomy, threatening version of the future and styling themselves 'cybergoths'' (Baddeley 2002:12). Speaking of cybergoths' fashion, Valtonen detects a direct influence of glam rock's fashion on Gothic fashion, saying that glam rock's 'space style is alive in the imaginary dressing of the present cyber-

and industrial Goths' (Valtonen 2004:18). In summary, it can be said that a love for impressive and notable fashion and the fact that also men are allowed to use make up (See PICTURE 2) are both leftovers which Gothic fashion inherited from glam rock's fashion.

Punk

In 1976, a new subculture called punk emerged, which actually 'originated in New York, connecting (...) with artists such as Patti Smith and Richard Hell' (Brake 1985: 78), and which took over the subcultural scene in Great Britain. Punk was aggressive, provocative, hard and rebellious against everything and anything and nothing at the same time. The couple Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren were two people who had a great impact on the fashion of this particular subculture by opening up one of the first punk shops at King's Road (Polhemus 1994/ Valtonen 2004:19). McLaren also became the manager of a very well-known punk band, the Sex Pistols. 'The members of the band functioned as models for Westwood's designs and for attracting customers' (Polhemus 1994:93) and turned quickly into style-idols for many members of the punk scene. Aspects of fashion and style in general became a very powerful tool for the punk scene, as it enabled them to express overtly their attitude. As Hebdige puts it, 'the punks wore clothes which were the sartorial equivalents of swear words, and they swore as they dressed (...). Clothed in chaos, they produced noise in the calmly orchestrated crisis of everyday life in the late 1970s.' (Hebdige 1979:114). The hair of a typical punk was coloured in bright, sensational and unnatural colours such as red or green. Often it was styled to a Mohican or left on purpose extra messy, in order to underline 'their refusal to conform' (Brake 1985:77). Ears were pierced and safety pins spotted all over the dress, which might have consisted of a leather jacket adorned with spikes and written messages on it, tight trouser and Doc Martens' boots. Also common items of their fashion repertoire were ripped fisher nets and bondage pants. The use of fisher net or of 'bondage strings, that are hanging and crossing on shirts and trouser' (Valtonen 2004:20) as well as the use of garish hair colours and

blackish lipstick are all elements of punk fashion that have influenced the Gothic fashion. (See PICTURE 2)

PICTURE 2 Male Goth wearing make up and dressed in a fisher net shirt
http://malakai.hidoi.org/schatten04_1/

New Romantic

Punk was dying out in its original version and a number of music and style movements were trying to take over the free position on the market of subcultures. It was out of this struggle that a new subcultural style was born in the clubs of London, entitled by the media New Romantic. This subculture's fashion style was elegant and fine-looking and having a unisex spirit dominating the scene, it resembled the era of glam rock a lot. The difference can be found in their musical form of expression, since whilst glam rock was based on guitar rock music, the music of New Romantic was mainly based on synthesizers making the final product sound as some sort of electro pop. Today, the most famous band known for this particular style of music is probably Duran Duran. Also, Adam and the Ants belonged to this subcultural wave, another band Vivienne Westwood designed outfits for. She dressed them into 'her romantic ideas with adaptations of dandified Regency designs, which later she developed into a pirate look' (www 14). It was mainly the androgyny and the use of imaginative outfits as well as 'a tendency to wear frilly shirts, military jackets of various kinds, morning coats and other items associated with bands such as Adam and the Ants' (Hodkinson 2002:57), that had the greatest influential impact on the subsequent Gothic fashion.

Birth of the Gothic Subculture

Using the words of Baddeley, it was by the end of the 1970s, that 'the term 'Gothic' was applied to describe a new musical subculture, born from the ashes of the dying punk scene' (2002: 15). And since New Romantic had become too commercial and market orientated to be an alternative option to punk, an urge

for a new subcultural movement emerged. It was the urge for a way of life that would stand apart from the commercial and the popular and that would turn towards the deeper and maybe darker side of life.

One of the first bands that went searching this deeper side of life and managed to express with the help of their music a 'sombre, depressing angst' (Hodkinson 2002:35) was Joy Division. Another famous Gothic band that took music as well as subcultural post-punk style into 'the 'darker' direction' (Hodkinson 2002: 35) was Siouxsie and the Banshees. The female lead singer of this band, Susan Dallon alias Siouxsie Sioux, was already playing 'in 1976 with black hemmed eyes and a pale face' (Farin 2001:7) in the clubs of London and it was her look, which consisted of 'black back combed hair and distinctively styled heavy dark make up accentuating the eyes, cheekbones and lips' (Hodkinson 2002: 36) (see PICTURE 3) that was going to inspire and influence female as well as male Goths from then on and turned Siouxsie Sioux into what Baddeley calls 'the alternative scene's divine diva to this day' (2002:214).

PICTURE 3 Lead singer of Siouxsie and the Banshees
<http://www.futuropasado.com/?p=178>

Another band that pushed the rise and creation of the Gothic subculture and its music as well as its fashion style was the band Bauhaus from Great Britain. Especially their single called "Bela Lugosi's Dead", which was released in 1979, captured the mood of the emerging Gothic subculture and is by 'most Goth aficionados' regarded as '(...) the first true Goth rock recorded' (Baddeley 2002: 195). The song 'contained most of the distinctive themes which still pervade in the scene, from the macabre funeral music tone and tempo, to lyrical references to the undead, to deep-voiced eerie vocals' (Hodkinson 2002:36). The name of the song refers to the famous actor Bela Lugosi of Gothic movies, who enacted amongst others the role of Dracula in one of the first vampire movies (Baddeley 2002:49). The lyrics of this song contain an atmosphere, which is very familiar to the mysterious and castle inspired air that is inhaled in Gothic literature, as one realizes when reading the lyrics:

Bela Lugosi's Dead

White on white translucent black capes
Back on the rack
Bela Lugosi's dead
The bats have left the bell tower
The victims have been bled
Red velvet lines the black box
Bela Lugosi's dead
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
The count
Bela Lugosi's dead
Undead undead undead
(www 15)

Besides Joy Division, Siouxsie and the Banshees and Bauhaus, there were many other bands, such as 'Southern Death Cult (later known as Death Cult and finally as The Cult), Play Dead, The Birthday Party, Alien Sex Fiend, U.K. Decay, Dex Gang Children, Virgin Prunes and Specimen', which all emerged around that time and were labelled by music press 'post- or sometimes positive-punk and, eventually, Goth.' (Hodkinson 2002:36).

One of the Clubs that functioned as a melting pot for these bands and their admirers was The Batcave, which started its business 1981, in London. According to Polhemus, 'the Batcave gathered (...) an enormous mass of black velvet, laces, fishnet and leather' (Polhemus 1994:97), offering a description of Gothic fashion, which would still fit in an appropriate portrayal of the main features of modern Gothic fashion.

Trying to pin down the first time when the term 'Gothic' had been applied to describe this new subcultural movement is a subject of debate within the scene. However, what different information sources seem to agree on, is that the term 'Gothic' did only 'enter common usage gradually' (Baddeley 2002:199) and that 'it was publicized and made to stick as a label for the new scene by music journalists.' (Hodkinson 2002:36). For example, the music journalist Mary Hannon said in 1979 that the bands Siouxsies and the Banshees and Joy Division would belong to a post-punk movement, which he described as '20th

century Gothic' (Baddeley 2002:191). Also Anthony (or Tony) Wilson, the producer of Joy Division, described the band on 'a BBC TV programme in 1978 (...) as Gothic compared with the pop mainstream.' (www 16).

Due to the interest and support of the media, the Gothic music and style started quickly to spread 'across and beyond Britain' (Hodkinson 2002:37) and attracted great numbers of people to accompany it. One band that added greatly to the Gothic scene's popularity in the mid-1980s was The Sisters of Mercy. Their music, which Hodkinson describes as a composition of 'catchy jangly guitar riffs, powerful base-lines and deep-voiced vocals, together with the crispness of beat provided by an electronic drum machine' (2002:37), provided the ideal of 'Gothic rock'. The Sisters of Mercy's sound together with their visual appearance provided the musical as well as the fashion style standards for generations of Goths to come.

By the mid-1990s, the big hype of Gothic subculture seemed to be over. The media lost interest and so did many Goths themselves. But unlike what happened to many subcultures before, which had been first taken over by the media and then by commerce and the market, the Gothic subculture did not die out completely. Enough people were left, who were feeling an intense attachment to the scene and who continued to nourish a Gothic inspired subcultural life. New bands emerged, which were not interested in 'breaking into the public and making significant money' (Hodkinson 2002:37), and thus ensured a small-scale survival of the Gothic scene until today.

History of the Gothic Subculture in Finland

The Early Days

Finland was not left uninfluenced by the Gothic movement which originated in Britain. As my informant, and long-time member of the scene, Jyrki Witch puts it, he:

(...) became interested about this subject [the Gothic subculture] in the early 80s (1980 or 1981, if I remember right), because of the first bands like Bauhaus, Siouxsie & The Banshees, UK Decay, Joy Division... And because of the first photos from the clubs of London."

And not long after that, the first Finnish Gothic band was already founded in Helsinki. According to several sources, this band was called 'Musta Paraati'. It 'was a short-lived Goth-rock band in the early/mid-80s who managed to release just two albums, *Peilitalossa* ("In The House Of Mirrors") and *Käärmeet* ("The Snakes") before splitting up around 1984.' (www 17). Soon other bands such as: "*Syyskuu* ("*September*"), *Shadowplay* and *Liikkuvat Lapset* ("*Moving Children*")" (Jyrki Witch) followed.

Taking a closer look at the lyrics of Musta Paarati, one can clearly spot typical Gothic themes, including romanticism (= blood and roses), melancholy (= thoughts) and dramatic suffering (=wounds that will never heal). Lyrics:

Ajatus

Verta ja ruusuja
Ajatus
Piikit silmissä
Ajatus
Haavat jotka ei parane koskaan
Ajatus
Verta ja ruusuja
Ajatus
Piikit silmissä
Ajatus
Haavat jotka ei parane koskaan
Ajatus

Thoughts

Blood and roses
Thoughts
Thorns in the eyes
Thoughts
Wounds that will never heal
Thoughts
Blood and roses
Thoughts
Thorns in the eyes
Thoughts
Wounds that will never heal
Thoughts

(www 18)

Also, the cover of the band's first album see PICTURE 4, which still bears some hints of punk influence, e.g. hairstyle and tight trousers, already exposes an influence of the international Gothic subculture, revealed by the dominance of black coloured cloth.

PICTURE 4 'Musta Paraati' cover

http://rateyourmusic.com/release/album/musta_paraati/peilitalossa__remastered_and_expanded_/

Around the same time as Musta Paraati released its album, the first Gothic club

(...)'Bela Lugosi' was founded in Helsinki. And the first Goth shop was founded in Helsinki called 'Decadence', I think, also located in Helsinki. (Kimmo)

However, this early movement did not consider itself as Gothic yet. As Katariina Parhi writes in her article on the Gothic subculture in Oulu, a city in Finland, the Finnish Gothic scene and its music were in their early days known as 'depressing music or black-lips-punk' (www 19). But even though the early movement lacked the Gothic label, its character already corresponded to that of present Finnish Gothic subculture. Therefore, it can be said that Helsinki, in 1982, was the place and date of Finnish Gothic subculture's birth.

But according to my key informants of this chapter, Jyrki Witch and Kimmo, this:

wave lasted only 2-3 years (Jyrki Witch)

and was followed by a short period during which Gothic subculture's activities in Finland fell silent.

Revival and Development of the Finnish Gothic Subculture

However, already in 1987 the scene was animated to life again, with the foundation of a club:

called 'Black Celebration', run by Jana of Advanced Art, Jyrki Witch of Two Witches and Anne Nurmi, back then of Two Witches, nowadays known from Lacrimosa [Gothic band, see www 20]. (Jyrki Witch)

This club was located in Tampere, the city which can be said to function nowadays as the vivid capital of the Finnish Gothic scene. At the same time, new Finnish Gothic bands were arising, such as

"Advanced Art", "Russian Love" and "Two Witches." (Jyrki Witch)

Two Witches is still performing today and is one of the rare Finnish Gothic bands with international success. In November 2005, for instance, the band toured in Great Britain together with the British Gothic band "Midnight Configuration". (www 21).

The diversification of the Gothic music genre, which started in the 1990s, was one of the factors that supported the revival of Gothic subculture in Finland. The types of music, which enriched the play list of Gothic DJs, were amongst others 'Death Rock', 'Neofolk', 'Industrial' and 'Electronic Body Music' (called 'EBM') as well as 'Goth Metal', which is represented by bands such as "Paradise Lost" and "Type O Negative". All these music styles that have been added little by little to the Gothic music genre can be generally 'described by using one or more of the adjectives 'dark', 'sinister', 'deep' and 'sombre' (Hodkinson 2002:47), thus fitting accurately into the classical canon of adjectives applicable on the original Gothic music style. As a consequence of Gothic music genre's repertoire's expansion, the number of people interested in Gothic music and its subculture increased. This was a development of great importance in regard to the preservation and continuity of the Finnish Gothic, considering the fact that within a country inhabited by only five million people, a minority actually is a very small group of people. Further, the maintenance of such a small minority depends not only on the passionate work and full time dedication of some individuals, but also depends on having enough people, who are interested in its subcultural life and willing to develop it. Only then, a subculture can survive.

Presently, there is no threat that Gothic subculture in Finland would die out, neither now nor in the near future. When taking a look at the development of Finnish Gothic subculture, one notices that it was only five years ago, in 2000, that some members of the scene founded a Gothic club called “Schatten” in Tampere. And like the London club called Batcave, also Schatten functions since its foundation as a unifying factor within the Finnish Gothic scene. Besides organizing monthly club events with up to 300 visitors (www 22), “Schatten” also keeps up a discussion forum for Goths (www 23), and in 2005 it also started to publish a Gothic magazine called “Schatten”. Further, some of the people behind “Schatten” have started organizing together with the clubs “Ground Zero” and “Dusk” in 2001 a Gothic festival called “Lumous” which is held during three days each summer in Tampere. The main purpose of the festival is ‘to provide equal enjoyment for all members of the dark underground’ (www 24). According to the festival’s web pages, in 2003 they had a number of 1300 visitors (www 24) from all over Finland. But besides Tampere, there are also a great number of Gothic events that for instance take place in Helsinki (also called “*Hell-Sinki*”), Turku and Oulu. But as my informant Satu says,

quite a lot happens on the Tampere and Helsinki axis.

And Jyrki Witch is of the opinion that:

(...) the scene is still in Tampere!

Media-Sexy Goth

Another reason that might have helped to support the survival of the Gothic subculture in Finland was the rise of Finnish bands “69 Eyes” and “HIM” and “The Rasmus” in 2000, which lead to a renewed interested in Gothic subculture by the media. This media interest then again resulted in an increased teenagers’ interest in the Gothic scene. Demandren’s confession on the “Schatten forum” confirms this thesis:

Speaking the truth, I did not even know that the whole Goth thing was a style before I got interested in it. And interested in it I got, of course, by listening to the 69 Eyes CD

The media puts “HIM”, “The Rasmus” and “69 Eyes” into the category of Gothic bands. For example, in his column about “The Rasmus”, S. Knuuti claims that “The Rasmus” as well as “HIM” have both ‘found a new way to circumvent the traditions of ‘Goth rock’’(IMAGO 07/2005:102), thus associating both bands indirectly with the contents of Gothic subculture. But in fact, the band “HIM” considers itself to be a ‘Love-metal’ band and not a Gothic band, which also most Goths would agree to. In the same way, the band “69 Eyes” is not considered as an actual Gothic band by most Goths, as Jyrki Witch confirms by saying:

I have nothing against HIM or 69 Eyes, both bands are good, but are they Gothic? No, they are not.

But other than the band “HIM”, the band “69 Eyes” uses consciously the adjective ‘Gothic’ and its evoked associations for describing their band’s style. On the band’s official website their style of music is described as a ‘unique concept of Gothic melancholy mixed with hi-energy Rock n’ roll roots’, and of their album “Wasting the Dawn”, the webpage says that it ‘not only brought some long-awaited fresh blood into the Gothic scene but also launched a new term to the media: GOTH'N'ROLL’ (www 25). The reasons why the band “69 Eyes” uses the term ‘Gothic’ in relation to their own music, might be found in J. Ahiroth’s last sentence of an article about the band, where he writes that: ‘They only take advantage of the dark manners of rock and the naïve clichés loved by popular culture and sell it to a teenaged audience’. (Helsingin Sanomat/ Viikoliite Nyt 2004:48). That the audience of “69 Eyes” mostly consists of teenagers is also confirmed in an interview with Jussi69, a member of the band. The interviewer asks him: ‘(...) you are the object of teenager-girls’ daydreams. Is that visible in the amount of fan-presents you get?’, and Jussi69 answers: ‘(...) I get cuddly vampires, black teddies and a hell lot of candies’ (City Jyväskylä 11/ 2004). What we can conclude from this is that the “69 Eyes” have discovered the ‘media-sexiness’ of Gothic subculture and its potential to boost sales numbers.

That Goths are 'media-sexy' is also a fact that has been discovered by I. Huovinen in her article titled "What are real Goths made of?" (Trendy:2005). She writes that 'Goths may not be quite in fashion, but at least they are media-sexy' (Trendy 2004:52). The article itself deals in a very traditional and un-reflected way with the topic and my informant Emma commented it as follows:

I think it is a very narrow-minded way to approach this [topic]. The attitude they went there with, asking: Who are you and tell us who Goths really, really are

This article reflects very well the media's interest in the Finnish Gothic subculture and proves that Gothic subculture is indeed 'media-sexy'. Also my informant Kimmo, who is part of the "Schatten"-crew, confirms this by saying:

In the last years, the media's inquiries at "Schatten" regarding the scene have increased quite a lot.

In former subculture studies, media-sexiness was seen to attract capitalistic interests of the consumer industry, as the consumer industry did sense in the youth subcultures a new group of potential consumers. Industry would take over the subculture's cultural goods, which were imbedded in style and would start to create the style from above instead of that it would be spontaneously created from within (Hebdige / Hall & Jefferson 1977: 94). This way, former subcultures were doomed to death since the invasion of industry repelled their members. But until today, the Gothic subculture has managed to escape this fate. Instead, the increased interest of the media, that had - intentionally or not - been caused by bands such as "HIM", "The Rasmus" and "69 Eyes", seduced as already mentioned a growing number of teenagers to get interested in the Finnish Gothic scene. This sequence of cause and consequence as such is neither new nor surprising. But what seems exceptional in this case is the fact that through the increased interest of the media and the accompanying interest of teenagers in the Gothic scene, the authentic quality of Gothic subcultural style does not seem to have suffered. A possible explanation for this may lie in the fact that Gothic style, in all its variety and complexity, succeeded in 'the search for new, more subtle, and perhaps, harder to purloin symbols of group differentiation' (Davis 1992: 167). Their style as a complex whole was simply too difficult to market to a great majority of teenagers, and consequently only a few joined the

Gothic subculture. Because as Clarke points out '(...) styles exist as a potential exchange value in the youth market only if they can be sufficiently generalized to meet similar needs' of their consumers on a broader scale' (Hall & Jefferson / Clarke 1977: 187). But the Gothic style, symbolically constructed through a distinctive kind of music, literature, fashion and life-style, was and is too demanding, too extravagant, too extreme, and too hard to copy as that it would sell on a larger scale. As Polhemus puts it, 'Goth is by its very nature off-putting and therefore it has avoided the fate of being drawn into the mainstream' (Polhemus 1994:97). Further, the widespread stereotype formulated by Emma:

People think we never smile and can't laugh at anything

This is a stereotype that would be hard to promote to a hedonistic western youth-culture, irrespective of the fact, that this is actually one of the stereotypes, which I quickly realized to be an untenable prejudice concerning Goths. Those Goths I had been in contact with were full of self-ironic humour and many never-ending smiles. Nevertheless, this stereotype, that Goths would never smile, might have prevented Gothic subculture from a capitalistic invasion. And until today the market has not been able to make Gothic subculture a mainstream fashion, and Finnish Gothic subculture is still alive. Gothic subculture has even benefited from the increased interest in its scene.

Summarizing, one can say that the Finnish Gothic scene is very vivid and alive, especially in the cities Tampere and Helsinki, while being far away from experiencing an attenuation of its Gothic spirit. This means that in 2005 the Gothic subculture has existed already for over 20 years in Finland, starting from 1983 until 2006, including a short break of two to three years in between. And besides having a lot of newcomers, including those who have been part of the scene since three to ten years as well as the relatively young teenagers that have been attracted by such bands as "69 Eyes" and "HIM", there are also a lot of long-time members in the Gothic subculture, who have been there since the very beginning.

The Goth

Becoming a Goth

After having examined the emergence and the historical development process of the Gothic subculture, it is now time to take a closer look at the people who enliven it, since without them every culture would stay an empty, changeless, and silent social structure without any function and meaning in this world. Therefore, if we want to discover and articulate the meaning of a culture, we have to turn towards its human members. Out of their human need to overcome chaos and meaninglessness, culture emerged in order to form a 'condition for human existence' and give meaning to otherwise 'pointless acts' (Geertz 1973: 45). For this reason, it is necessary to start investigating the Goth as a person and try to see the world through his eyes in order to lay open the meaning ingrained in Gothic subculture and its proposed conditions for human existence. The introduction to the Goth as an individual is going to start by diving into his personal history, and the reason that led to his involvement in the Finnish Gothic subculture. By asking the following two questions:

- 1) How did you get involved in the Gothic scene?
- 2) What fascinated you the most? (APPENDIX 2)

I hoped to detect possible reasons that would explain why and how someone gets involved in the Gothic subculture. All in all I asked these two questions twelve informants, out of whom I interviewed seven face-to-face and contacted five via e-mail. In CHART A I first listed the name of each informant. Next, I recorded the time since when they had been involved in the Finnish Gothic scene. In column three, I listed how they got initially interested in the Gothic scene and in the last column, the adequate keywords. These keywords are meant to simplify the task of analyzing the differing answers given by my informants. At the first glance, all answers that I received seemed to differ from each other. But taking a closer look, I realized that there was some likeness within the answers' diversity. In order to reveal those resemblances, the given

answers were analyzed according to what Barthes calls the 'signifier' and the 'signified' (Barthes 1983), taking the given answer as the signifier which represents a signified. For example, both signifiers 'TV' and 'magazine', found in the answers given by Tero and Tuomas, are understood to signify the media and are thus categorized to belong to the signified group summed up by the keyword 'media'. This process of analyzing helps to reduce each answer's complexity to its essentials, leaving a finite number of signifieds behind.

CHART A

Who (Age)	Since When?	How? (Signifier)	Keyword (Signified)
Tero (35)	late 80s	'I saw "The Damned" on TV, (that is) when I first fell in love with the whole concept: music, image, the overall feeling' 'a friend of mine introduced bands like "The Cure" and "Depeche Mode" to me'	media music people
Mia (21)	15-years old	'tendencies to Gothic side of life all my life', 'eventually through style, music and people'	life-long vocation fashion music people
Maria (24)	between age of 16 or 17	'metal music and step by step (...)I liked the Gothic style more and more'	music fashion
Leevi (31)	23	'starting from these 80s bands' 'I've always thought that I am a bit different' 'searching the internet' 'I think it started from literature.'	music life-long vocation internet literature/ movie
Emma (21)	since the times of 'LUKIO'	'I found all kind of music and dared to dress up more in those cloth' 'horror literature and horror movies' 'aesthetic aspect attracted me the most always'	music literature/ movie fashion
Jyrki Witch (39)	early 80's	'first bands like "Bauhaus", "Siouxsie & The Banshees", "UK Decay",	music pictures fashion

		“Joy Division” ‘because of the first photos from the clubs of London. Those people were so beautiful and mystic’	
Sini (23)	2001	‘already before that I was looking for my own style and how to be able to express it and then when we moved here (Helsinki), me and my friend started finding it, that maybe this could be our thing and we got a name for the whole thing’	life-long vocation fashion
Satu (23)	2001	‘from the clothes it started little by little and then later I got interested in music, too’	fashion music
Tuomas (29)	2000	‘it was the music for me’ ‘you maybe meet some people’ ‘For instance, one may read foreign magazines and think that ‘hey, this is how they look, that is cool’	music people media fashion
Antti (22)	2002	‘In the beginning we got Gothic pictures from a friend’ ‘well, in the IRC is a lot around all kind of stuff...’ ‘in the beginning it was just pictures and then the music and from there it started’	people internet picture music
Helena (19)	?	‘first I was a teengoth and listened to “The 69 Eyes” and stuff like that but now I am really interested in the Japanese style’	teen-Goth music fashion
Eeva	‘difficult to say’	‘fashion and he romantic way’ ‘the extremes: depressiveness and sadness are in my nature’	fashion life-long vocation

These signifieds, which have been extracted from the given answers, are listed alphabetical as follows: fashion, internet, life-long dedication, literature/ movies,

media, music, pictures, people, teengoth. 'Life-long dedication' refers to those sort of answers in which the informant is explaining his interest in the Gothic subculture as an always felt *'tendency'* (Mia) to the *'different'* (Tuomas), and something which is part of their *'nature'* (Eeva) and what finally revealed itself to her/ him in the shape of the Gothic subculture. Sofi Oksanen mentioned in an interview the term "mental Goth" (www 26), that might have an equal meaning as life-long dedication. She says:

(...) of course, I was mentally a Goth also as a child.

Evaluating the given answers listed in CHART A, it becomes obvious that each answer consists of a combination of various Signifieds. 33% of the informants regarded other 'people' as well as what I comprised by the keyword 'life-long dedication' as reasons for their current involvement in the Goth scene.

'Literature/ movies', 'media', 'pictures' and 'teengoth' were sporadically included in the received answers. But the two signifieds, which stood out the most, were 'music' and 'fashion'. Ten out of twelve Goths referred to 'music' as an explanatory reason for getting involved with the Gothic subculture in the first place. And nine of them included 'fashion' in their explanation of how they got interested in Finnish Gothic subculture.

Summing up, we can say that no answer is like the other. Nevertheless, each answer consists of an identifiable and assessable number of different reasons for why people initially get interest in the Gothic subculture. As the analysis reveals, each of the given answers includes either the signified 'music' or 'fashion' and sometimes both as an explanatory reason. Thus, it can be said that the signifieds 'music' and 'fashion' are the two strongest reasons why people get interested in Finnish Gothic subculture. Taking a look at the statements made by the four male interviewees Tero, Leevi, Jyrki Witch and Tuomas and comparing them to those made by the female interviewees Emma, Sini, Satu and Eeva, it even seems possible to claim that males get attracted to Gothic subculture mostly by 'music' and females by 'fashion'. But as already mentioned above neither 'music' nor 'fashion' are the sole explanatory reasons for why people initially get interested in the Gothic subculture. All in all there are nine different signifieds, which the interviewees variously combined with each other in order to explain their reasons for why getting interested in Finnish

Gothic subculture. Consequently, each of the given answers turned out to be unique, thus exposing the individual nature of all informants and their answers. But at the same time, the results of this analysis reveal what mostly attracts people to Finnish Gothic subculture, namely music and fashion.

Gothic Fashion

Idealtypen of Gothic Fashion

The next step is to immerse into a closer examination of Gothic music and Gothic fashion in order to find an explanation for their power to attract people. But as already mentioned before, I decided to concentrate this study rather on the aspect of Gothic fashion than of music, as I believe in fashion's ability to communicate meaning. As Mia says about Gothic fashion:

Through our clothing we express our inner world as well.

Although Tuomas argues that:

(...) the fashion is just a thing that is quite a lot only about a feeling and not so much that one wants to communicate something.

Still, I think that it is exactly this 'feeling' he mentions, which is the message, or the code sent by fashion and which is of interest for this work. As for example Leevi puts it:

To me, it [the Gothic subculture] means more the inner scenery of my heart. It means a certain attitude. I reflect this by wearing dark clothes.

As Davis says, 'clothing styles (...) constitute something approximating a code' (Davis 1992:5). The content of this code, which is ingrained in Gothic fashion style's symbols, is what attracts people to get involved with Gothic subculture. This work is interested in deciphering the code in order to understand the meaning that it has for insiders as well as for outsiders of the Gothic subculture. Therefore, it is now time to turn towards Gothic fashion with its 'material objects – goods and possessions', which have been adopted and adapted by Goths in order to 'express the collectivity of their being-as-a-group' (Hall & Jefferson 1977:47) and used for the creation of 'distinctive identity symbols' (Hebdige/ Hall & Jefferson 1977:87) that 'objectify [the] group's self-image' (Hall & Jefferson/ Clark 1977:180) and at the same time demarcate them from non-scene members (Farin and Wallraff 2001:9).

But when looking for one particular Gothic fashion and its attached symbols, one soon has to realize that there exists not only one Gothic fashion style but a great number of varying Gothic fashion styles, which moreover are often mixed with each other. In order to be able to analyse the meaning of Gothic fashion and its symbols, it is thus necessary to reduce the great variety of existing Gothic fashion styles to a manageable number of fashion styles. The idea is to find and formulate suitable “Idealtypen” of Gothic fashion styles by taking certain elements of the ‘historical reality’ (Korte 2001:74) of Gothic fashion and amplify them mentally to a concept called “Idealtyp”. When set against reality, the concept of an “Idealtyp” is not trying to reflect reality but rather functions as a measuring meter, which helps to evaluate reality. It is important to keep in mind that “Idealtypen”, other than “Realtypen”, ‘do not occur as such in reality’ (www 27) and are only an artificial measure created by science to simplify an analysis of reality. Therefore, I hope that my categorization of Gothic fashion styles into different “Idealtypen” is not taken by any Goth:

(...) as deadly serious and as a big insult. (Emma)

Since this categorization of Gothic fashions style is not meant as a reflection of reality. It is only an abstract categorization of Gothic fashion styles, which is mostly based on my interviews, observations, literature and to a great extend on the valuable information I was provided with by my key informant Emma. The idea is not to dig into little details of each and every single Gothic fashion style, but rather to give an overview of the most general of the Finnish Gothic fashion styles by describing their most common style elements. I examined each of the following Gothic fashion style “Idealtypen” for its symbols by concentrating on the fashion styles’ distinctive colour usage, their particular objects and their characteristic dressing styles. The results of this analysis have been listed in the end of each “Idealtyp’s” description. This way, I hoped to reduce the complexity of Gothic fashion to its essential and most meaningful symbols.

Velvet Goth

The fashion style of the Idealtyp named “Velvet Goth” is characterized by a strong influence of the medieval way of dressing.

Long dresses and gowns that resemble the appearance of a young lady of the castle (...). (Emma)

Those dresses are usually made out of black and ruby-coloured velvet cloth, are one of the most typical features of the female Velvet Goth outfit. Also long capes and coats for both female and male Goths are very popular in this category of fashion style, as you can see on PICTURE 6. Like Tuomas says:

I like this medieval era and that is also reflected in my clothes. For example, I have a black long brocade old-fashioned coat.

Also, shirts with trumpet sleeves belong to this kind of style, which Eeva calls:

(...) this castle-style.



PICTURE 6 Girl with coat

Symbols:	Distinctive colour usage:	black or ruby-colour
	Particular object:	velvet cloth
	Characteristic dressing style:	dressing style of the past

Victorian Goth

As already implied in its name the style which I decided to summarize under the Idealtyp named “Victorian Goth”, is greatly inspired by a fashion that dominated the Victorian era. Especially the Victorian tight-lacing corset, which accentuates the bosom and minimizes the waist, thus producing a curved hour-glass shape (www 28), is one of the popular items of this fashion style, as you can see on PICTURE 6. But in order to complete the outfit of a female Victorian Goth, the corset has to be combined with:

(...) long skirts and dresses equipped with petticoats.
(Emma)



PICTURE 6

Feminine accessories are borrowed from the era of baroque fashion, such as long gloves, fancy fans, ‘neckbands, ornate jewellery’ (Farin and Wallraff 2001:14), sacks, handbags and parasols. Especially parasols (see PICTURE 7) have been very much in fashion lately.

As Emma reports about parasols:

They are very trendy now, it is such a new fashion thing, everybody asks ‘where did you get them from, how did you make them’?



PICTURE 7 Couple with parasol

The outfit of a male Victorian Goth Idealtyp includes amongst others hats, ‘frilly shirts and velvet jackets’ (Hodkinson 2002: 49) and the materials, which

dominate both outfits, male as well as female, are tulle, satin, 'silk, chiffon and lace' (Farin and Wallraff 2001:17), often of black or purple colour, which in some cases might be combined with white.



The hairstyle of a female Victorian Goth is often dominated by 'long dark hair' (Hodkinson 2002:43) that is either left open or in case of a woman sometimes styled in curls and pinned up as it can be seen on PICTURE 8.

PICTURE 8

The Victorian Goth style of today has been inspired to a great extent by the outfit of the vampire protagonists of the early 1990s' 'Hollywood films such as *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (American Zoetrope/ Columbia Pictures/ Osris Film 1992) and *Interview with the Vampire* (see PICTURE 9) (Geffen Pictures/Warner Brothers 1994, see PICTURE 10 &11)' (Hodkinson 2002:45). All films have been very popular in the Gothic scene. As Hodkinson says, 'the wearing of dark-coloured corsets, bodices and lacy or velvet tops and dresses was undoubtedly encouraged though the development of a more direct link between Goth participants and vampire fiction (2002:46).

Picture 9 <http://www.publispain.com/super-posters/HorrorThriller-TomCruiseBradPittInterviewwiththeVampire.htm>



Picture 10



Picture 11

Symbols: Distinctive colour usage:	black, purple combined with white
Particular object:	corset, ornamented cloth and jewelry
Characteristic dressing style:	dressing style of the past

Death Rock Goth

And then there is this death rock style which is quite a lot like punk.
(Tuomas)

As Tuomas describes it, the Idealtyp called “death rock Goth” is a style that is greatly influenced by the punk style. This means that the hair is often styled to stand in spikes or cut into a Mohawk and sometimes coloured in bright colours (see PICTURE 12 & 13 & 14). It also includes bondage trousers, ripped fishernets, studded or spiked jewelry (see PICTURE 13 & 14). The clothes are dominated by the colour black. As Emma defines it:

The representatives of this kind of style look quite masculine when being compared to other Goth styles, for example trousers seem to be more popular than skirts.

Also Wallraff, who defines in her book this type of Gothic fashion style simply as “Gothic”, says that it is a ‘tougher style of clothing, which is emphasized through the footgear’ (2001:19), which consists of “Rangers” or “Doc Martens-boots” (see Picture 12).



Picture 12



Picture 13



Picture 14

Symbols: Distinctive colour usage:	black combined with bright colours
Particular object:	fishernet clothes, studded or spiked jewellery
Characteristic dressing style:	rebellious dressing style

Cybergoth

As Tuomas says, the latest Gothic style that

(...) has been very fashionable in the 21st century is this cybergoth style.

The most distinctive characteristic of the “cybergoth“ style is its protruding usage of bright colours in addition to the traditional black of Gothic fashion. This can be seen at its best in cybergoths’ colourful hair extensions, which are woven into black hair and which are very popular amongst women as well as men (see PICTURE 15). Also the clothes of cybergoths are a combination of black and some other, bright colour (see PICTURE 15). According to my data, it seems that the most popular colours, which are used by cybergoths, are blue, purple and pink. Especially the latter one seems to be very much in fashion, as Emma says:

Well, pink is almost the other black in Gothic subculture, it is very popular nowadays.

The reason for that, Emma says, is that:

It looks good, black and pink together.



PICTURE 15 Female cybergoths

Further, the cybergoth style is often marked by the usage of PVC material, huge platform boots and ‘fluorescent make up’ (Hodkinson 2002:58). Also piercings

and 'goggles' (www 29, see PICTURE 16) are common characteristics of the cybergoth style.



PICTURE 16 Cybergoth couple

The music that is mostly associated with this particular Gothic fashion style is explained by Sini:

I am more a cybergoth and then we talk about EBM and industrial as music (...).

And also Tuomas confirms that cybergoths' music:

(...) is quite a lot electronic and "KONE" and EBM and Industrial.

But as emphasized before, these classifications are not absolute and only picturing the "Idealtyp" of a cybergoth. As Emma proves in her comment, it is also possible to listen to the music associated with the cybergoth "Idealtyp" and still dress differently:

I like electro music a lot, so that would be more the cybergoth thing, but from the perspective of fashion I am more the romantic, long skirts type.

Summarizing, it can be said that the "Idealtyp" cybergoth style is produced by a combination of music and different fashion elements, which are taken from the Rave scene and 'of the 1990s fetish scene and (...) the sex industry' (Hodkinson 2002:51). The result is a very futuristic outfit. As Tuomas describes it, the cybergoth is a:

(...) machine and man hybrid.

Symbols: Distinctive colour usage:	black and bright colours (pink, blue, purple)
Particular objects:	PVC cloth, hair extensions

Elegant Gothic Lolita

The “Elegant Gothic Lolita (EGL)” style originated around 1997 out of a youth culture in Japan. This ‘French maid meets Alice in Wonderland style’ (www 30), which emphasizes girl's clothing and often aims to imitate the look of Victorian porcelain dolls’ (see PICTURE 18), is characterized by baby doll costumes, which are often decorated with ribbons and as Helena says:

(...) with a lot of lace.

‘Skirts are knee length and may have a crinoline or petticoat to add volume. As in mainstream Japanese fashion, over-knee socks or stockings (...) and frilly, ruffled or lace-trimmed Victorian blouses are also popular.’ (www 12). The style is a combination of Lolita fashion and certain style elements taken from the Gothic fashion, such as using the contrast of black and white, and using Goth-related symbols such as coffins and crucifixes in the shape of jewelry or a bag. “

The man, who has invented that style is Mana (see PICTURE 17)”
(Antti).

He is the leader and guitarist of the influential Visual Kei band Malice Mizer. Visual Kei is a movement in Japanese Rock, which is characterized by bands using dramatic costumes and visual imagery to grab the attention of their audience (see PICTURE 19). Mana also owns a fashion label called „Moi-même-Moitié“, which is specialized on the EGL fashion style (www 31).

PICTURE 17

http://miss_mana.tripod.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderpictures/mana9.jpg



Picture 18



Picture 19

As a whole it seems that the EGL fashion rather makes up a subculture on its own. They have their own music (J-rock), their own Idols (Mana), their own magazine (Gothic & Lolita Bible) and their own distinctive fashion style (EGL) and as Kyshah Hell says, the Japanese Elegant Gothic Lolitas 'want nothing to do with our Western Gothic ways. They do not listen to our music and they are not Gothic in the American and European sense' (www 30). The only connection between the Gothic subculture and the EGL subculture is their mutual influence regarding fashion. Like Gothic fashion is influencing the fashion of Elegant Gothic Lolitas, the Elegant Gothic Lolitas are influencing Gothic fashion style in Finland. As Emma says:

This style is not that common amongst people of full age, but some like to take some impulse from it. Bows, black cloth with white lace decoration, collar shirt and ties, cute uniforms (...) are nowadays common clothing in the scene.

Symbols:	Distinctive colour usage:	black and white
	Particular objects:	lace, ribbons, parasol
	Characteristic dressing style:	dressing style of the past/ of the future



Mix of Styles

Whilst each of the above mentioned Idealtypen of Gothic fashion styles make up an independent and distinctive category of Gothic fashion style recognizable by specific

symbols (e.g. corset, hair extensions, velvet), the Idealtyp that I have named “mix of styles” does not have any distinctive style elements of its own. It rather refers to a style, which has been created by a free combination of different style symbols, which are taken from other “Idealtypen”. What distinguishes this style from others, is the way it is created. The “Mix of styles” is created by taking a symbol out of one of the Gothic fashion style categories and to combine it with other symbols taken of other Gothic fashion style categories.

PICTURE 20

The result of this will be a mixture of different and distinctive style elements, which are composed to a new whole. Maria’s style for example, is:

(...) a mix of Elegant Gothic Lolita-style and historical Victorian woman clothing. (Maria) (see PICTURE 20)

The long skirt and the corset-type top are both symbols of the Idealtyp Victorian Goth, and the ribbons on her shoes as well as in her hair are symbols of the Idealtyp Elegant Gothic Lolita fashion style. Also Emma can be said to prefer the “mix of styles”, when saying:

Maybe I am some sort of a mixed species, I don’t like to put myself straight into some category like velvet, romantic, cybergoth; rather I am something in between.

Another way of how to create an outfit of the “mix of styles” is to change daily between different Gothic fashion styles. In other words, what kind of an outfit a Goth prefers to wear might change from day to day, as Tuomas confirms, when saying that:

Many have different styles which they sometimes change. I have for example a black cord blazer and a white shirt with these trumpet sleeves, and then I have a PVC shirt that I sometimes use (...)

Thus she refers with the “black cord blazer” and the “trumpet sleeve shirt” to symbols of the Victorian Goth style and with “PVC shirt” to a symbol of the cybergoth style.

By changing one’s Gothic style from day to day, different Gothic fashion styles get mixed with each other, but the original Gothic fashion style is preserved as an intact whole. And when taking a look at the reality of Finnish Gothic fashion

styles, I would argue that due to its flexible nature and its endless opportunities of new and individual creations, the “Idealtyp” that I have named mix of styles seems to match present Gothic fashion reality the best.

Symbols: Distinctive colour usage:	black combined either with velvet or ruby-colour, with white, or with bright colours
Particular objects:	elements from other distinctive styles
Characteristic dressing style:	dressing style of past or future

Meaning of Gothic Fashion

Goth-Specific Symbols

As already said before, the above created Idealtypen are only abstract models of reality, which are achieved through accentuation and exaggeration of certain elements of reality with the intention to articulate a measurement for an easier analysis of the complex whole. And indeed, when looking now at the different Idealtypen of Gothic fashion style as defined above, it becomes much easier to spot the most essential and meaningful symbols of different Gothic fashion styles. In order to discover and articulate the covered meaning of these different symbols and to understand the Gothic subculture a little better, the symbols have to be analysed now.

The first meaningful symbol, which is going to be examined in this chapter is the colour black, as it is the colour that is overwhelmingly dominating all of the above mentioned Idealtypen. According to my observations it is also the colour that most often dominates a Goth's overall appearance. Out of this reason, I decided to treat the colour black as a specific symbol of Gothic fashion. After having examined the colour black, I am going to continue to study the different characteristic dressing styles, which I understand to be embodied in objects such as the corset, the parasol, or the hair extensions.

The Colour Black

As already said in the introduction of this work, black is a colour that is strongly associated with Gothic subculture. And unlike other associations, this is one association that is not groundless, as actually all of the Goths I interviewed wore something black and many of them had also black coloured hair. As Sini laughingly said about the black coloured hair in relation to Goths, it:

(...) is a trade mark.

But why is it black that is popular amongst all Goths and their fashion styles? Why are Goths not dressed predominantly in blue or pink, for example? According to Sini and Satu one reason for why black is dominating the general wardrobe of a Goth is that:

Black is such a multifunctional colour. (Sini)

And:

It is easy to combine. (Satu)

Such a basic colour. (Sini)

As Baddeley puts it, 'many Goths wear black simply because it looks good (...)' (2002:221). And as Mia's comment adds:

Black is a very neutral colour, but at the same time very elegant and powerful. My eyes rest in black.

Indeed, the colour black has been since Coco Chanel's presentation of the 'semi-formal "little black dress"' (www 32) to the world of fashion in 1926 a colour en vogue, which has since then been 'associated with *formal wear*' (Barthes 1983:173) and considered to be a very elegant and 'serious, modest colour' (Davis 1992:64). Until today many artists and especially fashion designers use to dress in black. But before Chanel's little black dress, the colour black had been 'a colour only reserved for mourning wear' (www 33) and thus generally associated with sorrow, death, loss and darkness. This interpretation of the colour black seems to dominate still over others and also many Goths, like Leevi for example, say that they associate black to:

(...) sadness and something mysterious. It is the colour of night.

But unlike outsiders, Goths do not experience the associations of black with sorrow, mysticism and night as a necessarily awing thought. Rather sorrow, mysticism and night are experienced as something natural, like Leevi's comment proves:

Before a day there must be a night. Before a night there must be a day.

Concerning the meaning which black has for Goths, it could be summarized that black is for Goths a highly aesthetic colour, that reminds one of the existing night and responds visually to an inner mood.

But whether the colour black is interpreted by outsiders in its positive connotation of a formal and appropriate colour, or rather taken as a negative and somehow awing colour, depends a lot on the shape as well as the material of the Gothic outfit. Further, the age of the person who wears black seems to have an impact on how the colour black is interpreted. Because like K. Wallraff formulates it, the choice to wear black cloths is ranked 'in many regions as a prerogative, but also as a duty of the advanced age' (Farin and Wallraff 2001: 42) and if black is worn by younger people, as it is the case in the Finnish Gothic subculture, it often provokes a feeling of irritation amongst outsiders. The reason for this irritation is a violation of a dress code (Davis 1992), which says that black is a colour reserved for either mourning people or the elegant older ones, whilst the young are ought to dress in daily life in fresh and joyful colours. Thus, when younger people dress in black, it is experienced by part of their environment as a code violation that irritates, provokes and finally scares people as they are unacquainted with what they see. It is the problem of understanding the unfamiliar, which arises when two different social worlds and world perspectives bang together. And 'if the congruence between those two perspectives breaks down, interpretation sets in. This can be regarded at least as temporary completed if a trans-sectoral view on things has been developed, which makes the strange experience understandable within the framework of ones own terms and meanings' (Ziegler/ Fröhlich and Mörth 1998). This need for putting things in understandable terms and meanings, explains why outsiders, who do not understand the appearance of young people dressed in black and feel threatened by it, invent a story that explains the contradiction away (McCracken 1988: 66). This story might lead to interpreting the combination of black cloth and young people as a symbol for Satan worshipping. As Sini says:

Easily, people classify one as a Satan worshipper when one is dressed in black, which is sad, a lack of imagination.

And also Helena reports that:

What others think is that Goths dress in black and when I dressed like that many came and suspected me of Satanism, also when I was sitting here in town, then many came and asked why I am 'like this' and made comments as 'God gets scared' or something like that.

Concluding from this, it can be said that in the same way as the ancient Goth tribe had been regarded by outsiders as the ones who had destroyed the 'classical glories of Rome with barbarity' (Baddeley 2002:11), the modern Goths of today are graded by many outsiders as Satan worshippers, who symbolize a menace to society, which is striving to replace the light of God by the darkness of Satan. Fact is that none of my informants identified himself as a Satan worshipper and they find it:

(...) very bewildering that people, like older people who look friendly and just normal, might out of a sudden when they see somebody in black suddenly start yelling and call them a Satan worshipper (Tuomas)

True is that many of the Goths, whom I interviewed, consider themselves either as identified atheists or as non-Christians, like Sini for example, who says:

I don't really like using the crosses, they look kind of nice but I am an atheist so I don't use them (...).

Or Emma:

I separated some time ago from the church. I am not an atheist, since some define atheist as those who think that nothing supernatural is possible and who only believe in the scientific (..) but I don't confess to any religion and don't believe that there is some higher force who determines me, but I still think that something higher might exist.

Thus the association of Goths and Satan worshippers is, according to my data, nothing else than a widespread prejudice, which is upheld by some scared and suspicious people who do not know any better.

But it is not only the age of the person wearing black cloth that determines how black as a colour is going to be interpreted by outsiders. It is also the material and the cut of a black outfit, which decides how the symbol "black" is going to be interpreted by outsiders. As Tuomas says:

Even if one uses only one colour, you can still dress in many different ways. Like what kind of cloth and what kind of material you use, with that you can do an enormous amount of different stylings. For example, black velvet, black leather, black damask, PVC and satin, are materials so different one from the other that you will get very different types and feelings only from the usage of a single colour.

For instance, materials and cuts such as 'PVC and rubber trousers, leggings, tops and dog collars' (Hodkinson 2002: 51), which have been taken from the 1990s fetish scene, and that are very popular amongst cybergoths, might be experienced by outsiders as sexually provocative and out of place when worn in public. Again, it is experienced as a violation of an unwritten social code, which says that sex and especially extraordinary sexual preferences, such as S/M for example, are meant to stay in the privacy of a bedroom.

Another example is the colour black in combination with the shape of a long dress made out of velvet, as often worn by female Victorian Goths. This kind of outfit seems to remind older people, especially women, of past times, when in female dressing long skirts still dominated over jeans. For this reason, older people perceive this kind of black Gothic outfit positively, as Eeva tells:

There are older women who praise my cloth, like "oh, how nice" and that is very nice and happens on very unexpected places like in a shop. Then they even would touch me on my sleeve and say "so pretty" (...) and ask if I designed the dress myself.

Also children seem to be impressed by long, black velvet dresses, as they associate it in their imagination to how they think a princess might look like. Emma got this sort of comment for her outfit:

well, little children often are very sweet, either they are scared or then they shout: wonderful skirt, pretty hair (...)! Kids may say to their fathers, how nice, look, a princess (...).

But whether a Goth, who is using accessories borrowed from the fetish fashion scene or the Victorian age, intends to send a message about his sexual preferences or wants to reflect the image of a princess, or whether both just use these accessories out of aesthetic reasons, is irrelevant for 'how clothing is "decoded" or interpreted by the observer' (McCracken 1988:63), who does not belong to the scene. An outsider interprets tight black PVC trousers and long velvet dresses worn by a Goth on the basis of his own 'interpretative resources'

(McCracken 1988:65). As Davis puts it, the 'audience is segmented along numerous age, class, gender, ethnic, and life-style lines, each of which brings somewhat different interpretative capacities to the cultural product at hand' (1992:95-96). What might happen is the emergence of 'a gap between what is meant (the body directed from the inside) and what is read (the body interpreted from the outside)' (Frith 1996: 206). In other words, even if a Goth is not intending to give the message to be a Satan worshipper, to proclaim any particular sexual orientation with his clothes, his outfit might still be interpreted this way.

In conclusion we can agree with Russo, who says that the colour black's 'spectrum of meaning is far reaching: from the colour of death and sorrow, of nothingness, of secret and of magic, to a bourgeois formality and to destructiveness' (Russo/ Fröhlich and Mörth 1998:173). And which meaning is finally given to the colour black, depends on the person who makes the interpretation. As this analysis of the colour black in connection with Gothic fashion style has shown, the various interpretations made on one dress might not be congruent with each other, and often expose a gap between the dress' intended meaning and its meaning as constructed by an outsider's interpretation. In the case of Goths wearing black coloured cloth, the interpretation made by the outside world might end up in a stigmatization of Goths as Satan worshippers. For this reason it can be agreed on the fact that 'the evolution of a style has consequences (...) for how the group will be seen, defined and reacted to by others' and 'aspects of dress, style and appearance therefore play a crucial role in group stigmatisation.' (Clarke/ Hall Jefferson 1977: 184)

Gothic Dressing Style

As my analysis of the different Idealtypen of Gothic fashion styles reveals, there are three types of characteristic Gothic dressing style, which have to be differentiated. The first type I called the "dressing style of the past", as its overall image resembles those styles, which have been fashionable in earlier periods, such as the Victorian or the mediaeval age for example. The second type of Gothic dressing style creates by its selection of colours and cuts a very futuristic

image and thus has been entitled by me as “dressing style of the future”. And the third type, which applies only to the “Idealtyp” Death Rock Goth, is a style that I called the “rebellious dressing style” due to the influence of punk fashion on it.

Taking a closer look now at these three different types of dressing styles, which together with the colour black seem to be characterizing Gothic fashion as a whole, it becomes apparent that despite their specificity, all three dressing styles have something in common. This commonality appears when crossing the negation, which is each of the dressing styles. All three of them negate, what I have called, a “dressing style of the present”. According to my simple definition, this type of dressing style corresponds, very generally spoken, to the most widespread and/ or trendy dressing styles which dominate present Western culture. It is reflected in such symbols as cowboy boots (fashion trend in Finland 2005/ 06) or a pair of blue jeans combined with a simple t-shirt for instance. Taking up the symbol of the blue jeans, worn together with a t-shirt, Helena confirms that she, as a Goth:

(...) couldn't dress in jeans or a normal t-shirt.

And Sini puts it even more drastically, when being asked what would happen if she got forced to put on a pair of jeans:

I would die!!!

Also, many other of my informants suggest by their statements that what I have defined as the dressing style of the present is not a type of style popular in Finnish Gothic fashion circles. Though, if a pair of jeans and a t-shirt are of black colour, they change from a symbol of the “dressing style of the present” to the symbol “colour black” and thus become a symbol of Gothic subculture in general. As Tero for example explains, when being asked to describe his style:

Well, no-brand black jeans and black t-shirts (...). Most of the time I'm a jeans and t-shirt Goth, plus quite a lot of leather. (...) My style (...) is quite plain, by no means anything extreme.

Nevertheless, it can be said that the dressing style of the present, with its symbols of trendy and mainstream character, is not fashionable within the Finnish Gothic subculture and does only appear within the Gothic scene in form

of a negation, which functions as a connecting link between the dressing styles of the past, the dressing style of the future and the rebellious dressing style. The connection between these three different Gothic dressing styles becomes relevant when finally analysing them in the search for their inherent meaning. If taking up Baddeley's suggestion, a cybergoth's styling could be interpreted as the exploration of a 'gloomy, threatening version of the future' that intends to be an 'escape of the society of the day' (2002: 12). In the same as the dressing of many Finnish Goths in their own 'version of the Victorian era' (Baddeley 2002: 12) could be interpreted as an escape from modern society and its prevailing code of aesthetics. Also, Death Rock Goths' rebellious dressing style can be seen as an attempt of rebellion against modern society. Thus, it can be argued that the meaning, which is inherent to all three Gothic dressing styles, is a symbolic revolt against modern society and its aesthetics, by creating an aesthetic concept of their own through their fashion. This is an interpretation that is also backed up by Tuomas, who says:

It seems that for all who are part of this Gothic subculture the aesthetics are very important, the creating of an own aesthetic, which might be dressing up, doing your hair, or the interior designing, stuff like that is very important

Thus he proves that the prevailing aesthetics are not corresponding to the aesthetic concept of Goths. And if taking for example the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto as a symbol of the present concept of aesthetics, we may turn towards the answers given by two of my informants, when being asked whether they like the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto or not. Eeva said:

No, not in particular. (laughs)

And Emma:

No, not so much, I have to say. I appreciate him though, but his and my taste, they just don't match. (laughs)

So these statements may be taken as another indicator, which suggests that Gothic aesthetics are deviating from the prevailing aesthetical norm. And like the Gothic revival in architecture in the 18th century, that had been understood by people of that time as a 'rebellion against good taste and good sense of the age' (Baddeley 2002:11), also Gothic fashion with its dressing style can be

interpreted as a rebellion against contemporary taste. Also, male Goths, who use make-up (see PICTURE 2) and dress up according to a style 'which would normally be associated with femininity' (Hodkinson 2002:48), can be said to rebel against contemporary taste and its 'social prohibition', which disallows 'the feminization of men' (Barthes 1983:257). According to the social norm of aesthetical appropriateness today 'a man may not wear a skirt, while a women may wear pants' (1983:257), as Barthes argues in his study of the fashion system of 'written clothing' (Barthes 1983:3). And Tuomas says that:

Those who make up their faces with white powder and black lipstick and with black eyeliner might in some people's point of view look frightening and like some sort of a freak and might get more negative comments. Also, that men make up, is for many people a red sign.

But within the Gothic subculture, 'many of the articles of clothing are not gender-specific' and also the 'make-up of the scene is continuously similar for both genders' (Wallraff 2001:40), and allows men to dress and look more feminine than it would be acceptable in mainstream culture and its aesthetics. But this does not mean that all male Goths would permanently use make-up, like my informant Antti says:

In between sometimes, for some gigs and happenings, I make up.

Neither, it means that all male Goths would constantly wear a skirt or any other clothing item, which according to the perception of prevailing mainstream fashion would seem too feminine as to be worn by ordinary men. As my informant Tuomas says about using make up:

I do it only rarely, because I just can't be bothered.

Nevertheless, it can be stated that an 'emphasize on femininity' (Hodkinson 2002:49), which disregards the social 'taboo of the other sex' (Barthes 1983:257), dominates within Finnish Gothic subculture. I would interpret the male Goth's act of occasionally making up and sporadically wearing feminine cloth as a symbolic statement, which aims at dramatizing Goth's disapproval of constricting social norms. Social norms, which on the one hand manifest themselves in the afore mentioned gender division that is routed in dominating mainstream fashion, and on the other hand are reflect in a more universal

concept of modern aesthetics and good taste. Like Baddeley argues, 'modern Goths who dress in impractical but elegant Victorian garb are not demonstrating approval of oppressive Victorian values, but contempt for brash modern aesthetics' (2002:11), a statement that gets confirmed by what my informant Eeva said, when being asked whether she would prefer to live in the romantic period the dressing style of her Gothic fashion originates from:

Well, women's position was not well at those times. (...) Today we have the opportunity to take the elegance of these times and combine them with the good living standards of today. (...) To live at some court would be quite an insecure life, I believe.

And concerning 'good taste', Tuomas says that:

For other people in general there are limits, about what for example is appropriate to make fun of or what is appropriate to show in media and actually it feels that Goths just don't care about such limits

Thus he gives a great summary of what I believe the analysis of Gothic dressing styles and Gothic fashion in general reveals. Namely, that Gothic dressing styles, which rebel against the modern concept of aesthetics, and Gothic fashion, with its emphasise on female clothing, are symbols which reflect the creation of an Gothic aesthetic concept that is ignorant to any constrictions made up by social norms. Further, it can be argued that Gothic subculture is not only rebelling against existing social aesthetical norms, but also performs an 'important task on behalf of the system by pioneering and experimenting with new social forms (...)' (Clarke/ Hall Jefferson 1977:66).

Gothic Lifestyle

Stereotypes

After having already worked out how people get initially attracted to the Gothic subculture and after having examined the meaning of Gothic fashion, it is now time to immerse into a closer examination of Gothic subculture's lifestyle. This is important, since it seems that such stereotypes as formulated by Emma:

(...) that Goths drink red wine and smoke chain and sleep all day long are prevailing and dominating the overall picture, which outsiders have of Goths and their subcultural lifestyle. And although some of the existing stereotypes correspond to the truth, as Emma admits herself:

I like to spend an evening watching some horror movie or drink some red wine.

they miss to reflect the more detailed picture of the Finnish Gothic subcultural whole. As Satu says:

It is not that we would sit in a corner at home in a very civilized way with a glass of red wine all the time. We also have a really normal life.

Existing stereotypes concerning Goths would deny a normal lifestyle to be connected with the Gothic subculture. Nevertheless, this normality of lifestyle was eagerly stressed by many of the Goths I interviewed. As Tero emphasizes:

I have a good professional career. I can still go hiking to Lapland or to skiing.

And also Emma stresses this point by saying that:

(...) also, I go to work and study (...) and do sports.

This was a fact that surprised me in particular, as this had been one of my naive prejudices: Also Goths are interested in doing sports. But Emma laughingly instructed me:

Yes, also Goths take care of their condition. I go to the gym and jogging and stuff like that.

Clubbing

But besides the stressed normality and the fact of working out, the subcultural lifestyle of Finnish Goths does also include an active participation in specialist subcultural events, such as clubbing in Gothic clubs. Also the Gothic 'pre-club get-together', where Goths meet at a friend's house to prepare together their outfits for going out, is part of a Goth-specific lifestyle. Like Satu says:

Yes, (...), we meet at a friend's place, warm up with drinks, do the make-up, and make each others hair.

Hodkinson describes this ritual as the action of 'getting Gothed-up with friends' (Hodkinson 2002: 93). But if not done in a group, I would use the term 'Goth-up' in general to describe a person's outward process of turning himself into a Goth by the help of cloth and make-up. (See PICTURE 21)



Picture 21 Girl getting 'Gothed-up'

Amongst Goths, clubs which have been organized by the aforementioned Schatten are especially popular for going out. Also, the annually held Goth festival called Lumous in Tampere is very favoured. Sini, for example, says:

I have been there (Lumous) three years in a row now.

And Tuomas says that for clubbing, he mostly goes to:

Tampere. Most of the Gothic stuff happens there at the moment. The biggest Finnish Gothic club called Schatten is there.

Being asked for the reason why he visits such 'specialist Goth events'

(Hodkinson 2002: 91) like Schatten, Tuomas answered:

It is the music and the people and also the feeling, that in a way all are in this thing together and that there are only a few wonderers and few of such who don't understand the whole thing.

Thus it could be argued that what motivates a Goth to take part in such 'specialist Goth events' (Hodkinson 2002: 91) is the feeling of belonging to a community. At the same time, the event of clubbing brings together 'the highly specific and distinctive identities of Goths' (Hodkinson 2002:91) and thus affirms and strengthens the Finnish Gothic community in a way it would not be possible in any other, none-Goth specialist club. It is at the specialist Gothic events that Goths 'most fully experience their sense of belonging' (Hodkinson 2002: 92) to a certain community. Exactly this sense of belonging is what Emma, for example, misses in Jyväskylä, where there are no such specialist Gothic bars or clubs. She says:

It would be nice to know people who share the same sort of opinions. They don't have to look the same but that they have the same aesthetic tastes as I have, then one actually could be very free oneself.

When next asked, where she would think she could meet that kind of people, Emma answered:

It functions through "Schatten" and surely this would happen when going to the Gothic parties, which they organize; then you would find some friends there.

But not all of my informants said to like clubbing. Eeva for example, who states:

I have never been there (Lumous) myself, because I kind of hate these big masses of people. I feel crushed by these kinds of places.

In the same way, both Helena and Antti explain:

Well, no, we don't really go to those clubs, we are not really keeping any contact to other people of the same type, like some who have to go from one club to another, we are not into that.

This statement made by Antti formulates an interesting point, which I discovered during the analysis of my data. According to my results, there seems to exist a coherence between the extend a person takes part in subcultural events and the degree he feels committed to the Finnish Gothic community. The less they are interested in taking part in Finnish Gothic events, the less they feel committed towards the Finnish Gothic community, as not only the statement of Helena and Antti but also a statement articulated by Eeva confirms:

I get the feeling from the Goth-thing that they put norms on others in a way that who is a Goth and who is not and that gives me the feeling of being constricted.

In reverse, Goths like Tuomas, Satu, Sini and Emma, who all four admit to like going out to Gothic clubs every now and then, simultaneously show an interest in the Gothic community. Like Tuomas for example, who says that:

(...) it is meaningful to me that there exists something as a group [of Goths]. But what kind of meaning it has, that is more difficult to say.

As a result it can be said that there seem to exist two groups of Goths within the Finnish Gothic subculture. As depicted in CHART B below, Goths of group I are active participants, who go regularly to Gothic events and are interested in other people of the scene. Goths of group II are more the type of loners and neither interested in any constant active participation in the Finnish Gothic clubs nor in any contact to other members of the Gothic subculture. Tuomas, Satu, Sini and Emma would due to their statements belong to group I, and Antti, Helena and Eeva to group II.

CHART B

	Goth I	Goth II
Go regularly to Goth events	yes	no
Interested in/ contact to other Goths	yes	no
	active group member	loner

Internet

Besides clubbing, also the internet is also part of a Finnish Gothic lifestyle. As Hodkinson claims in his book “Goth. Identity, Style and Subculture”, it is the Internet that ‘might have enhanced the autonomy and substance of the Goth scene’ (2002:175) due to its ability to bring millions of diversely located people together at one place, where they can gather information and communicate with people, who have the same interests as they do. Especially in a country with such a low population density as Finland, the internet plays a crucial role in enabling people, who are located in more remote areas to gain access to such a minority group as the Finnish Gothic subculture it is. Emma, for example, said that the reason why she found out so late about the Finnish Gothic subculture was a lack of information caused by the absence of the internet at the time of her being a teenager:

(...) then I did not really know about anything properly since the internet was not that common yet, especially not in Lapland.

Today, the internet is responsible for distributing a lot of information concerning the Finnish Gothic subculture and Gothic subculture in general on many different web-pages and ensures equal access for all those, who are interested in it. But it is not only information which the internet offers to Goths, it is also a virtual community feeling offered to those who lack the real Gothic community in reach. This is the case of Emma and Tuomas, who both earlier already complained the lack of Goths in Jyväskylä. Emma says:

Yes, it [the “Schatten” online discussion forum] interests me quite a lot and there seem to be people like me, so it is a good substitute for the real people.

But as we are going to see, the internet is not only an opportunity to gather further information about the scene and to meet and communicate with like-minded others, it also offers Finnish Goths a chance to shop Gothic fashion.

Making the Gothic Outfit

As it has become obvious, fashion plays a crucial role in the life of many Goths and thus the process of creating an outfit belongs to a covering description of Gothic lifestyle. In order to be able to create a Gothic outfit, the right clothes are needed, of course. One way to acquire the right garment is to buy it in Goth-specific shops. But Goth-specific shops are usually relatively expensive. Further, they are quite rare in Finland and thus the possibility of choice stays limited. For this reason, many Finnish Goths discovered the internet as a virtual shopping place that offers a greater variety of choice for male and female cloths. Sini, for example, says:

In Finland there is not such a big offer besides some small Gothic shops, very small, like 'Morticia' (a Gothic shop in Helsinki).

Therefore she and her friend order many of their clothes:

(...) via the net, mostly from Germany and Britain.

Helena answers when being asked where she gets her Gothic Lolita outfits from:

I order most of my cloth via the internet from Japan [since] I like them so much and I feel that I can not get these cloths from anywhere in Finland.

However, the internet is not the only place which offers Goths an alternative option for shopping. Eeva, for example, buys some of her Goth clothes:

From the flea market.

In comparison to the internet or the special Gothic shops, this is a much more reasonable option. Others sew their clothes themselves, as Satu, Sini, Emma, Eeva and Maria. And if they do not sew their clothes themselves, then they might have, as in Emma's case:

(...) a wonderful mother who is making my cloth. I myself can't really sew very well but my mum is very skilled and whenever I give her adventurous instructions, she can do things for me.

The advantage for Goths who buy their cloth from the flea market or sew them themselves is not only that they can save some money, but also, that it offers them the possibility of dressing group-conform and at the same time quite individual. As Emma puts it:

(...) you get the kind of cloth you want, and nobody else comes across who has the same cloth as you.

In summary it can be said that the process of making a Gothic outfit (deviating from the black t-shirt and jeans style) is an undertaking that requires an extraordinary amount of creativity and a lot of effort.

The Insider's Perspective

Meaning of the Gothic Subculture for a Goth

In order to complete the picture of the Finnish Gothic subculture, it is now time to turn towards the Goth and start listening to what he, as an insider, thinks of the Gothic subculture and its meaning. During the course of this work, we already read several Goths' statements concerning different aspects of Finnish Gothic subculture. Those statements already provide us with an impression of the relationship between a Goth and his culture. However, since the initial intention of this work was to give a detailed and comprehensive picture of the Finnish Gothic subculture, I consider it finally the right moment to listen to how Goths themselves define Finnish Gothic subculture. I want to remind yet that the purpose of this is not to formulate any final definition of the Finnish Gothic subculture, as this is impossible. Like Nauku and Toby correctly point out in their column in the Gothic magazine Schatten: 'There are as many perceptions of what is Goth, as there are Gothic people' (Schatten 2005/1: 34). Also Emma as well answered when being asked what the Gothic subculture is all about:

Doesn't that always depend on the person you ask what his opinion is on that?

Sini on the other hand answered the same question as following:

(...) it is the cloth; it is the music and then a certain aesthetic that is related to it. (...) the depressive stormy autumn evening, that feeling that relates to it, the small and beautiful things and so on (...).

Her statement thus refers rather to a Gothic lifestyle as well as to the aesthetic concept of the Finnish Gothic subculture. And for Maria:

Goth is some kind of mixture of reality, fantasy, history, personal behavior, music, clothing and its people. It is part of my everyday life.

She alludes with that to Gothic lifestyle, fashion and music and the community of the Gothic subculture. Similarly Tero says:

Basically it is one of the contexts where I feel myself comfortable in. I feel comfortable wearing black (...), I like the music (...) and most of all I love my friends.

And Jyrki Witch, who is a very active member of the Finnish Gothic scene, answers to the question what the Gothic subculture means to him:

It has been a kind of personal mission to me. (...) It is the main thing in my life.

In conclusion to all these statements, one could say that for Finnish Goths the Gothic subculture is not only part of their lives but rather the (black) colour their lives are comprehensively dyed with.

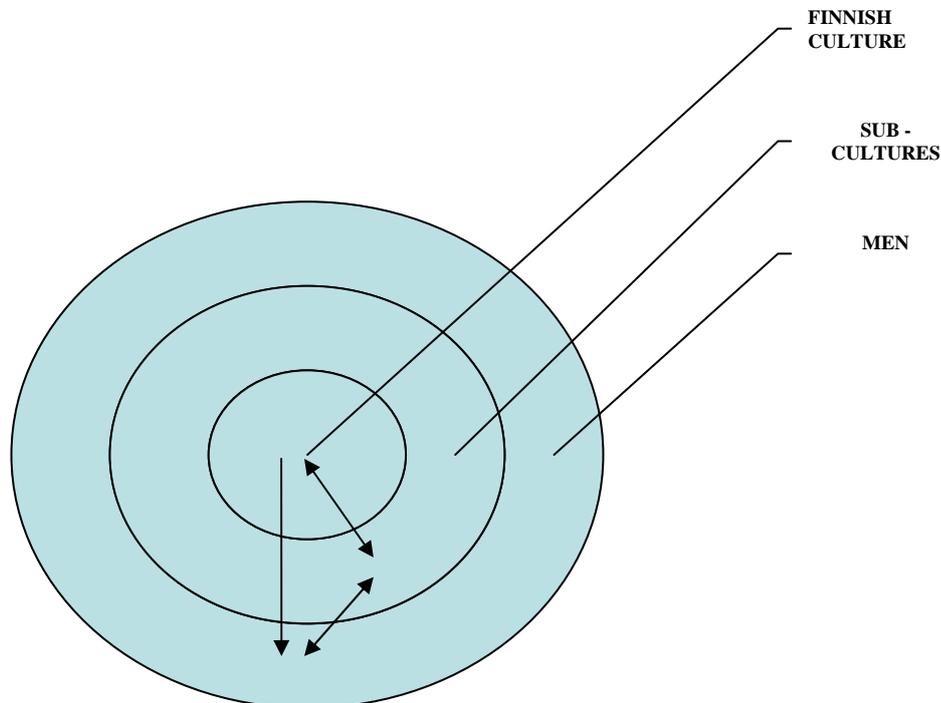
Discussion

As this work has shown, Finnish Gothic subculture is marked by a number of distinctive elements that set it apart from its dominant Finnish culture. Most striking and dramatic is the afore mentioned element of Gothic fashion, which due to its overwhelming dominance of the colour black and its usage of uncommon materials differs greatly from normal Finnish dressing culture and has thus turned itself into a recognizable symbol of Finnish Gothic subculture. Also included in Gothic fashion style is the appearance of male Goths, who dress in skirts and use make-up, and thus express their repellent attitude towards restricting mainstream ideas of how men have to dress. In the same way also Gothic women, who wear bright coloured hair extensions and tight corsets, opposition to how Finnish culture would like its women to dress. Summarized, these kinds of actions can be interpreted as Finnish Goths' search for an alternative fashion. But at the same time, Gothic fashion can be regarded as a symbol that stands for Goths' search for an alternative lifestyle. A lifestyle, which is characterized by the coexistence of past and future, black and neon colours, mediaeval music and electronic EBM sounds, velvet cloth and PVC, moonlight in the night and shadow during the day. Compared to Finnish standard, which thinks in presence, prefers beige, listens to moderate music, likes to dress in cotton, and adores the sun, the characteristics of Gothic subculture might seem extreme.

Doing my research and writing this work, I used the term subculture in connection with Gothic culture. The more I used this term, the more I started thinking about the role subculture plays in interaction with its dominant culture. Subculture is a term which can be interpreted in different ways. In connection to youth, subculture is often taken as term that describes a culture with opinions and values that are in direct opposition to its dominant culture. For this reason, it seems adequate to call these kinds of subcultures also "countercultures". However, the Latin prefix "sub" does not only imply the meaning "against", it also means "under" or "beneath". Thus we have two terms which both justify the usage of subculture as a term to describe cultures of groups which exist "under"

the dominant culture. Goths, for instance, make up a subgroup that has its own subculture. But also exchange students, lawyers, ice-hockey players, mothers, singles, bartenders etc. create subgroups with subcultures that exist beneath the superiorly levelled dominant Finnish culture. Both, subcultures as well as the dominant Finnish culture are permanently influencing each other. But I would argue that whilst subcultures would also exist without its dominant Finnish culture, Finnish culture would not exist without its subcultures. My explanation for this is that men first create subcultures and only through them add to the process of building their dominant culture. As you can see on CHART C, various subcultures influence Finnish culture as well as men living in Finland, and Finnish culture influences men and subcultures. But men only influences directly subculture and through its influence on subculture he indirectly also influences Finnish culture. I propose that all influence men has on Finnish culture goes through one or the other subcultural channels.

CHART C



Speaking metaphorically, one could say that subcultures are the bones and men the cells, out of which the body of Finnish culture is made of.

Regarding future research on the Finnish Gothic culture, it would be interesting to find out in how far Finnish Gothic subculture is similar to any other Gothic subculture, the Mexican Gothic subculture for instance. What do both subcultures have in common? And in how far have they been influenced by their cultural environment?

In this work, I had decided to give a comprehensive picture of the modern Finnish Gothic subculture, by dealing with different aspects related to it. However, I would recommend future researchers of the Finnish Gothic subculture to concentrate on only one of the complex aspects that are related to Finnish Gothic subculture. For instance, it would be interesting to indulge deeper into the study of Gothic subculture's underlying aesthetic concept and in how far it deviates from the aesthetic concept that dominates in Finnish culture.

Besides drawing a colourful portrait of Finnish Gothic subculture, this work hopefully also has been able to show of what symbolic anthropology is capable of. By spotting the symbol Black, and by examining it from different perspectives, we were able to detect the reason for a wide-spread prejudice concerning Finnish Gothic subculture, namely that all Goths would belong to the church of Satan. The reason for this misconception is hidden in the fact that the symbol of black is by some outsiders strongly associated to sorrow and death, whilst Goths regard it simply as a nice and easy colour to wear. But as this work also emphasized, Gothic black is not just black as it might seem on the first glance. Rather, Gothic black is made up by many different 'Shades of Black'², which this work has tried to elaborate as its best.

² „Shades of Black“ is the title of Kimmo Koivunen's exhibition on Goths, held in 2005 at the cafe Valo, Tampere

To prove this fact also to a wider audience is the intention of an exhibition that I planned together with the photographer Kimmo Koivunen. He has made a number of great portraits of Goths from the Finnish scene, and together with the information of this work, we hope to arrange an exhibition at The Centre For Creative Photography (www 34), Jyväskylä in spring 2007. We applied for a grant at the Art Council of Finland and for the permission to use the premises of The Centre For Creative Art (APPENDICES 4 & 5). I agree that 'Anthropological researchers should utilize the results of their work in an appropriate fashion, and whenever possible disseminate their findings to the scientific and scholarly community.' (www 1) But I regard it as just as necessary and as part of Cultural Anthropology's responsibility, to distribute anthropological research results to a non-scientific and non-scholarly community. This way, anthropological research may truly function as a mediator between two different cultures, which otherwise would not get in touch with each other. For this reason I was also glad to get the opportunity to hold a public lecture at "The Adult Education Centre Of Jyväskylä" (www 35) in November 2006. I was even more happy, when a journalist of the local paper "Keskisuomalainen" got interested in my work and after having interviewed me and one of my informants, wrote a long article for her paper (APPENDICES 6 & 7) of which part was also published in "Savon Sanomat", another Finnish newspaper (APPENDICES 6). The newspaper article, the lecture and the planned exhibition, should contribute to making the Gothic subculture more familiar to Finnish society and support tolerance towards them.

Referring to the introductory quotation, I hope that on a general level this work has been able to highlight one of the great varieties of how human beings inventively create culture. By drawing a comprehensive portrait of Finnish Gothic culture with the help of selected number of Finnish Goths, I wanted to introduce and not explain their culture to my readership. This way, I hoped to create an understanding of Gothic subculture and its various facets of Black.

Sources

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Name (Date of Interview)	Sex	Age	Way of Interviewing
Eeva (11.03.05)	Female	Ca. 23	Face to face
Sini (12.05.05)	Female	23	Face to face
Satu (12.05.05)	Female	23	Face to face
Helena (09.09.05)	Female	19	Face to face
Antti(09.09.05)	Male	22	Face to face
Maria (14.09.05)	Female	24	E-mail
Mia (16.09.05)	Female	21	E-mail
Jyrki Witch (16.09.05)	Male	39	E-mail
Emma (29.09.05)	Female	21	Face to face
Tero (05.10.05)	Male	35	E-mail
Leevi (21.10.05)	Male	31	E-mail
Tuomas (01.12.05)	Male	29	Face to face

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www 5: Fingoth

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<http://lyrical.nl/song/57812> 14.11.2006

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www 20: Lacrimosa
<http://www.lacrimosa.de/e/index.htm> 19.05.2006

www 21: Tourdates
<http://www.clubschatten.net/keskustelu/viewtopic.php?t=2896> 26.01.2006

www 22: Schatten news
<http://www.clubschatten.net/uutiset.php>

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PICTURE 1: "Strawberry Hill"

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PICTURE 2: "Man and make up"

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PICTURE 3: "Leadsinger of Siouxsie and the Banshees"

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PICTURE 6: "Victorian Goth"
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PICTURE 7: "Couple with parasol":
Anna Ruonala

PICTURE 8: "Curly hair"
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PICTURE 9: "Interview with a Vampire"
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PICTURE 10 & 11: "Men with glass"
Kimmo Koivunen

PICTURE 12: "Death Rock style"
Laura Schwöbel

PICTURE 13: "Spiked jewelry"
Kimmo Koivunen

PICTURE 14: "Schatten5v_kaitsu.jpg"
Kimmo Koivunen

PICTURE 15: "Female Cybergoths"
Laura Schwöbel

PICTURE 16: "Cybergoth couple"
Kimmo Koivunen

PICTURE 17: "Mana"
http://miss_mana.tripod.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderpictures/mana9.jpg

PICTURE 18: "Elegant Gothic Lolita"
Laura Schwöbel

PICTURE 19: "[Visual Kei](#)"
Sini-Maria & Vesa

PICTURE 20: "Mix of styles"
Mirja Koivisto

PICTURE 21: "Girl getting 'Gothed-up'"
Anna Ruonala

PICTURE as a background of contents
Anna Ruonala

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES 1: Questionnaire Outsiders

The intention of this interview is to gather data form my master thesis concerning the Gothic subculture in Finland.

1. What does come into your mind when you hear “Goth”? (First three associations)

1.

2.

3.

2. Do you know any Gothic people?

Yes No

3. Where you ever involved in the Gothic subculture?

Yes No

4: Are you interested in the Gothic scene at all?

Yes No

5. What do you think about the appearance of the Goths?

1. *Interesting*

6. *Fake*

2. *Provocative*

7. *Brave*

3. *Ugly*

8. *Aesthetic*

4. *Ridiculous*

9. *Depressive*

5. *Fascinating*

10. *Nothing*

6. Gender Female Male

7. Age

8. City of residence

THANK YOU!

APPENDICES 2: Questionnaire Insiders

- 1) How did you get involved with the Gothic subculture? What age?
- 2) What did fascinate you the most about the Gothic subculture?
- 3) What does Gothic subculture mean to you? How does it influence your life?
- 4) What is the importance of Gothic fashion style for you and where do you get your cloth from?
- 5) Do you always dress up in the Gothic fashion? How would you call your Gothic fashion style?
- 6) What would you say you are trying to express with your cloths?
- 7) Do you get looks or comments for your outfit? Does it bother you?
- 8) What would you say Gothic subculture is trying to express?
- 9) What does the colour black mean for you?
- 10) What do you think outsiders say about the Gothic subculture?

Age:

Profession:

City of residence:

APPENDICES 3: Interview with Jyrki Witch

1) In one of your interviews you said that you started being a Goth in the 80ies, when the scene did basically not exist yet. How did you get to know about the Goth culture and what was it, that fascinated you in the beginning the most? Where there many of you (Goth interested people?) at this time?

2) Being a "real" Gothic band, I wonder what your opinion about HIM, 69 Eyes, Marilyn Manson might be? Does it bother you that they take Goth as part of their image?

3) What does it mean to you to be a "Goth"? Would you use the "Goth"- term at all? Why, why not?

4) If I'd ask you to what group you rather feel to belong to, the Finnish or the Goth, what would be your answer?

APPENDICES 4: Exhibition application

Näyttelyhakemus

27.9.2006

Applicants: Working group of “Shades of black”

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Valokuvauksen

Keskus

APPLICATION FOR EXHIBITION

Dear administration of The Centre For Creative Photography,

With this letter the working group of “Shades of black”, which consists of Kimmo Koivunen (photographer) and Laura Schwöbel (researcher), would like to apply for the permission to arrange their exhibition “**Shades of Black**” at Gallery Harmonia, Jyväskylä, in 2007.

“Shades of Black” is an exhibition, which deals with the **Gothic subculture in Finland** by combining Kimmo Koivunen’s artistic photos of Finnish Goths and Laura Schwöbel’s anthropological research on Finnish Goths and their subculture.

The idea is to present by the help of Koivunen’s photos the highly visual element of Gothic subculture, which is reflected in Goths’ extraordinary style of fashion: Dressed in black, wearing tight, sexually charged corsets, and having their hairs decorated with colorful hair extensions, Goths express visibly a quite extraordinary concept of fashion. It is a concept of fashion, which undoubtedly diverges from prevailing norms concerning fashion. For this reason, Gothic fashion often irritates and sometime even provokes other Finnish people. But due to its otherness and its strangeness, Gothic fashion, also attracts outsiders and makes them curious to find out more about this style and its people. So they come and visit “Shades of Black” to see authentic Goths captured in portraits from Finnish goth clubs by Kimmo Koivunen, and to gain further knowledge about Gothic subculture by reading information provided by Laura Schwöbel’s research. Amongst others, visitors will see what a “Cyber Goth” or a “Victorian Goth” look like, and they will find out how Gothic subculture originally stranded and then developed in Finland.

The idea of “Shades of Black” is to give people an idea of Gothic fashion and its aesthetical concept. At the same time, this exhibition wants to introduce its visitors to a more comprehensive picture of Gothic subculture as it exists in Finland. The brushes

which are going to paint this picture are Koivunen's photos and Schwöbel's research. Part of the project's portraits has been displayed at Tampere in July 2005, but Koivunen has produced many new pictures for this exhibition that is hopefully going to take place in Jyväskylä soon. Also the combination with Schwöbel's scientific work will open a new perspective for the public and will give them a comprehensive view on Gothic subculture. Summarizing, the aim of this exhibition is to show people that Black is only the surface of Gothic subculture, but beneath shimmer many "Shades of black".

In order to be able to finance the exhibition "Shades of Black", the working group has send its application to the Art Council Of Finland, and is hoping for their positive reply.

Kimmo Koivunen
Photographer

Laura Schwöbel
Researcher

Attachments:

Attachment 1. Kimmo Koivunen's CV

Attachment 2. Example of Kimmo's photos

Attachment 3. Laura Schwöbel's CV

Attachment 4. Cd containing Laura's Research on Gothic Subculture in Finland

APPENDICES 5:
Shades of Black

Project budget

27.9.2006

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Expenses for finishing works	
Prints	300
Framing	300
Pressing of info boards	200
Transportation charges of works	
Koivunen: Helsinki-Jyväskylä-Helsinki	270
Exhibition's decoration	
Black velvet cloth, 12 m	60
CD's (music)	60
Expenses for Artists in Jyväskylä	
Accommodation (1 artist, 3 nights, 80e/night)	240
Daily allowances (2 artists, 4 days, á 30e/day)	240
Lectures	
Materials	80
Marketing materials	
Printed products (invitations, flyers and posters)	300
Expenses for the Vernissage	
Vernissage's catering	150
	TOTAL
	2200
Funding	
Applied funding	1800
Artists' own funding	500
	TOTAL
	2200

APPENDICES 6: Newspaper article

Keskisuomalainen (22.11.2006) & Savon Sanomat (23.11.2006)

Tekijä: Reetta Salminen

Julkaisupvm: 20061122

Musta, mustempi, gootti?

Goottien maailma on värikkäämpi kuin luullaan. Laura Schwöbel ravisteli stereotypioita tutkiessaan pro gradu -työssään goottien alakulttuuria.

JYVÄSKYLÄ

Reetta Salminen

He eivät ole synkkiä, ennemminkin dramaattisia. He eivät pukeudu näyttävästi provosoidakseen, vaan siksi, että pitävät tietynlaisesta tyylistä. He eivät ole saatananpalvoja, rikollisia eivätkä edes häiriköitä. Omanlaisiaan ihmisiä vain. Eikä goottius ole välttämättä ohimenevä kausi. Suomen ensimmäiset gootit olivat gootteja 1980-luvulla - ja osa heistä on edelleen. Toki etenkin teini-iässä nuoret saattavat etsiä itseään gootikulttuurin elementtien kautta.

Juuri erottuvuutensa takia gootteihin liitetään nippu stereotypioita, usein perättömiäkin. Pukeutumisellaan he rikkovat yhteiskunnan valtavirtaa ja ihanteita. Mustaan pukeutunut erikoinen ilmestys saattaa saada ohikulkijan tuntemaan itsensä uhatuksi. Toisaalta näyttäviä asuja on myös ääneen ihasteltu.

-On normaalia, että ihminen etsii selityksiä kohtaamilleen asioille oman tietämyksensä perusteella. Mustan asun yhdistäminen vaikkapa juuri saatananpalvontaan on yleistä, toteaa Jyväskylän yliopiston kulttuuriantropologian opiskelija Laura Schwöbel. Hän halusi omalta osaltaan tarjota tietoa stereotyyppien - myös omiensa - voittamiseksi.

Schwöbel teki pro gradu -työnsä goottien alakulttuurista suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa. Hän kiinnostui aiheesta muutettuaan Saksasta Suomeen ja huomattuaan katukuvassa erottuvia ihmisiä. Juuri goottien visuaalisuus kiinnosti häntä, ja sen hän myös valitsi tutkimuksensa näkökulmaksi.

Alunperin modernissa gootikulttuurissa kyse on musiikista, synkästä sellaisesta. Sieltä on saatu vaikutteita myös pukeutumiseen. Gootikulttuurissa yhdistyy piirteitä muun muassa glam rockista, punkista ja new romantic -tyylistä.

Goottisävyä
elämässä

Aivan tavallisia pulliaisia nykygootit eivät ole. He eivät pukeudu farkkuihin ja collegeen tai kuuntele anttituiskua. Moni gootti on luova ja taiteellinen. Suuri osa tunnustautuu ajattelijoiksi. Nietzsche'n filosofiaa luetaan goottien keskuudessa huolellisesti, mistä syystä goottien ajatellaan vastustavan kristinuskoa.

-On totta, että suurin osa gooteista ei ole kristittyjä. Varsinaisesti he eivät ole uskoa vastaan. Uskonnollisuutta ja elämän ja kuoleman kysymyksiä pohdiskellaan paljon, Schwöbel toteaa ja huomauttaa goottien kyllä arvostavan kanssaihimiään. Tietty tabujen rikkominen liittyy gootikulttuuriin. Esimerkiksi kuolema ja seksuaalisuus ovat goottien keskuudessa puheenaiheita ja niitä ilmennetään muun muassa pukeutumisessa. Kahu, runous ja science fiction kiinnostavat – mutteivät kaikkia.

Gootit vastustavat sitä, mitä yhteiskunnassa pidetään luonnollisena - siksi, että se on kaukana luonnollisesta. He eivät pyri luonnollisuuteen, vaan siihen, mikä on heidän silmissään kaunista ja kiehtovaa.

-Heillä on goottisävyä elämässään, ja se on ennemminkin dramaattinen kuin synkkä tai vihamielinen. Muutoin elämän sisältö on samanlainen kuin muillakin. Goottius on maku ja mieltymys sekä viesti yhteiskunnan normaalin ihannetta vastaan, hän kiteyttää.

Goottisävy ei ole täysin musta. Musta on kyllä gooteille tärkeä väri, symboli. Valtaosa gooteista värjää hiuksensakin mustaksi. Laura Schwöbel huomauttaa, että todellisuudessa goottien maailma on värejä täynnä - ja välillä näkee asuja, joissa ei ole mustaa laisinkaan. Eivätkä kaikki gootit ole mustatukkaisia. Tutkimuksessaan hän toteaa, että gootit yksinkertaisesti pitävät mustasta väristä.

-Se on aina hyvännäköinen ja helppo yhdistää muihin väreihin, Schwöbel toteaa. Jossain määrin - kulttuurisella tasolla - mustan värin käyttäminen on valtavirran vastustamista. Perinteisesti suruun yhdistettävä väri on otettu keskeiseksi itsen ilmaisun välineeksi.

VÄRIKÄS ALAKULTTUURI: GOOTTIEN TYYLIT

Laura Schwöbel jaotteli pro gradu -tutkimuksessaan suomalaisia gootteja ulkoisen olemuksen perusteella viiteen eri tyyliä kuvaavaan ryhmään. Todellisuudessa ryhmien piirteet sekoittuvat ja niitä tietoisesti yhdistellään toisiinsa.

VELVET: Velvet- eli samettigooteille tyypillistä on keskiaikainen tyyli. Yllä on usein pitkät, "linnanneito tai -herra -tyyppiset" vaatteet: esimerkiksi mekko, takki tai hupullinen viitta. Väreistä yleisiä ovat musta ja punaisen intensiiviset sävyt.

VIKTORIAN: Viktoriaanisit gootit pukeutuvat runsaasti ja romanttisesti.

Vaatekaapista löytyy röyhelöpaitoja, korsetteja ja pitkiä käsineitä, asusteiden joukosta munu muassa päivänvarjoja. Materiaaleina tylli, satiini, silkki, sifonki.

CYBER: Tämä elektro-vaikutteinen tyyli on syntynyt viime vuosina. Tyypillistä on mustan yhdistäminen kirkkaisiin ja neonväreihin. Värikkäät hiuslisäkkeet ja materiaaleista PVC kuvaavat cybereitä.

DEATHROCK: Tätä tyyppiä voisi kuvata synkäksi punkkariksi. Tummaa pukeutumista värittää metalliset yksityiskohdat. Hiukset deathrockeilla on usein korkeana keesinä, pään sivut ajeltuina.

ELEGANT LOLITA: Goottipiireissä esiintyy nukkemaista pukeutumista ja ehostamista, mutta varsinainen oma tyyliinsä se ei Suomessa ole - ainakaan vielä.

GOOTIT: 300-LUVULTA NYKYPÄIVÄÄN

Gootit olivat germaaninen heimo 300-luvulla. Heidän hyökkäyksestään Rooman valtakuntaa vastaan alkoi pimeä aika. Sen jälkeen goottilaisuus on ollut rakennus- ja kuvataiteen tyyliä.

Ensimmäisen kerran gootit modernina alakulttuurina irrottautuivat punkkareista 1970-luvun Lontoossa. Siellä avattiin muun muassa Bat Cave -klubi.

Suomessa ensimmäinen goottikausi elettiin 1980-luvulla. Syntyi ensimmäinen suomalainen goottibändi Musta Paraati. Helsingissä avattiin Bela Lugosi -klubi, joka myöhemmin muuttui Lepakoksi.

1980-luvun loppupuolella alakulttuuri vahvistui. Syntyivät Tampereen Black Celebration -klubi ja muun muassa edelleen vahvassa vedossa oleva bändi Two Witches ja Advanced Art.

Lopulta 2000-luvulla alkoi eräänlainen goottibuumi. Syntyi goottien oma aktiivisesti toimiva Schatten-yhteisö, -lehti ja -klubi sekä Lumous-goottifestari. Gootit ovat muotia. Gootti-kulttuurin elementtejä näkyy nykyään muun muassa pukeutumisessa ja sisustuksessa myös ei-goottien keskuudessa. Musiikissa esimerkiksi suositussa love rock -tyylissä on paljon goottimusiikin piirteitä.

Laura Schwöbel (vas.) tutki gradussaan nykygootteja. Jyväskyläläinen Anna Ruonala on hänelle tärkeä linkki alakulttuuriin.



PICTURE 22

APPENDICES 7: Newspaper article

Keskisuomalainen (22.11.2006)

Tekijä: Reetta Salminen
Julkaisupvm: 20061122

Ihan tavallinen goottityttö
JYVÄSKYLÄ

Reetta Salminen

Jyväskylän yliopistossa opiskeleva Anna Ruonala, 22, ikään kuin valui gootiksi. Goottimusiikki oli miellyttänyt häntä jo pitkään, ja pikkuhiljaa levyjä vain kertyi hyllyyn. Vähän kerrallaan vaatekaappiinkin alkoi kertyä goottivaatteita, yksinkertaisesti siksi, että ne näyttivät Annan mielestä hyviltä. Esteettiset asiat ja alavireiset mollisoinnut häntä olivat kiehtoneet aina.

-Jossain vaiheessa sitä huomasin, että ai mä olen tällainen, kai mä olen sitten gootti, hän naurahtaa.

Tietoa goottikulttuurista hän hankki internetistä. Se oli nuoren naisen pelastus. Kotipaikkakunnallaan Kemissä hän erottui muista ikäisistään melko lailla, ja goottien nettiyhteisöstä hän löysi sielunkumppaneitaan.

-Netti on pelastanut tämän alakulttuurin, vahvistanut identiteettiä. Siellä sen huomaa, että meitä on monta. Ei tarvi olla yksin, vaikka omalla paikkakunnalla ei muita gootteja tuntisikaan, Anna sanoo ja toteaa Jyväskylässä lähinnä tietävänsä gootteja ulkonäöltä. Paljon heitä ei ole, ja kukin liikkuu oman kaveripiirinsä kanssa.

Goottien alakulttuuri on Suomessa pieni, mutta vireä. Siihen kuuluu tuhansia ihmisiä, aina teineistä aikuisiin ihmisiin. Tampere on Suomen goottipääkaupunki. Siellä toimii suosittu Schatten-klubi, ja sieltä käsin pidetään yllä nettiyhteisöä sekä toimitetaan goottien omaa Schatten-lehteä. Myös Lumous-goottifestari järjestetään goottikapitalissa.

Bileisiin

Tampereelle

Schattenilla pidetään alakulttuurin omia bileitä. Niissä gootit ovat näyttävimmillään. Pukukoodi varmistaa, että paikalle saapuu vain goottihenkisiä ihmisiä. Turisteja ja asujen ihmettelijöitä ei joukkoon kaivata.

-Bileissä tutustutaan ihmisiin. Esimerkiksi naisten vessajono on siihen aika hyvä paikka, ihan niinkuin muillakin klubeilla. No, ehkä punaviiniä kuluu vähän normaalia enemmän.

-Goottien bileissä ihmiset tanssii tosi paljon, ja kuuntelee musiikkia. Usein dj:n takia bileisiin tulee lähdeytyäkin, Anna kuvailee.

Hän painottaa, että goottien keskuudessa naiset saavat olla rauhassa, vaikka monesti pukeutuminen onkin joskus paljastavaa, seksuaalisuutta korostavaa ja provosoivaa. On sitä lyhyintä lyhyttä minihametta, PVC:tä, povea korostavia korsetteja ja verkkosukkia. Ne kuuluvat tähän alakulttuuriin.

Cyberit kuuntelevat
konemusiikkia

Anna on niin kutsuttu cyber-gootti. Heille tyypillistä ovat mustaan yhdistetyt kirkkaat neon-värit, niin vaatetuksessa kuin vaikkapa hiuksissakin. Näyttävät neonväriset hiuslisäkkeet ovat yleisiä etenkin illanvietossa. Cyberit, Anna mukaan lukien, kuuntelevat yleensä konemusiikkia - ja tykkäävät tanssia sitä. Cyberit pukevat mielellään ylleen PVC:tä, verkkokangasta, metallikoristeita ja

remmejä. Koruilla luodaan näyttävyyttä. Lyhyt hame ja pitkät, korkeat kengät voisi kuvata - niin, stereotyyppisellä tavalla - cyber-goottitytön asua. Tosin asuja on yhtä monta kuin tyttöjäkin, ja Anna huomauttaa omistavansa myös pitkiä hameita.

-Monet gootit on tosi luovia. On vaikea löytää toista alakulttuuria, jossa tehtäisiin niin paljon vaatteita itse. Luovuutta ja yksilöllisyyttä arvostetaan, Anna puhuu.

Meikkiä käytetään goottipiireissä sukupuoleen katsomatta. Jotkut gootit eivät astu ulkoilmaan ilman paksua meikkiä - värikästä tai tummanpuhuvaa -, jotkut taas liikkuvat arkisin meikittä ja panostavat bileiltoihin. Lävistyksiset ja tatuoinnit ovat yleisiä.

Varmasti jokainen gootti tietää, että räväkkä ulkonäkö rajoittaa elämää vaikkapa työmahdollisuuksien suhteen. Annan ystäviä on käännytetty työhaastatteluista ja pyydetty vaihtamaan vaatteet.

-Ei tällaisena varmaan sokkarille myyjäksi pääsisi. En mä silti halua tinkiä ulkonäöstäni. Mutta en kyllä toisaalta korsetissa lähtisi työhaastatteluunkaan.

Verkkarit löytyy - mustat tosin

Konemusiikki, PVC ja neonvärit yhdistyvät Annan kohdalla luonnon ja elämän arvostamiseen. Se näkyy arjen valinnoissa. Aurinkoinen, fiksu ja avoin nuori nainen vakuuttaa olemuksellaan olevansa "ihän tavallinen goottityttö".

-Kyllä mä käyn kuntosalilla ja juoksemassa. Mulla on verkkarit, tosin ne on mustat.

Ei meidän tarvi korostaa sitä, että kuulutaan johonkin alakulttuuriin. Ihan samanlaisia ihmisiä ollaan, Anna hymyilee.

-Schattenissa todettiin kerran, että goottien pitäisi syödä vain mustaa ruokaa. Se vois olla vaikka määmiä. Kyllä nää tällaset on ihan vitsejä. Itseasiassa goottien keskuudessa viljellään hirveesti tällasta itseironista huumoria. Me nauretaan paljon.