

How do you feel about the term baby bat in the first place?

I don't see anything wrong with the term? Everyone starts out somewhere with anything they do and from what I see, it's usually endearing and not meant to be degrading. As long as it's used in a positive way, I don't see anything wrong with it.

So let's jump right into this, one of the claims made about goth losing it's community focus is growing pains stemming from a generation gap. What have your interactions with older goths been like and is there any tension there?

Most of my subculture friends are quite a bit older than me by at least 5 years (myself being 22) and all of them have been welcoming. The only reason I know anything about the subculture is due to a group of my friends finding me at Club Anything on a night they ~happen~ to be there and welcomed me to join them in Chicago for a gig at the Underground Lounge and Nocturna afterwards. I personally have never had a bad interaction but have seen some complaints from various people on Instagram about their experiences being negative. Most of my interactions are fairly normal, asking about what I do and what I go to school for and where I'm from and how the hell I managed to get to where I am since I am from a very friendly cute small town where no one is diverse or weird and queer. It's never been a pick-a-part of how goth I am.

Do younger goths look up to older goths, or do you see older goths as the ones who are gatekeeping?

I personally feel as if I look up to those older than me/more experienced in the subculture than myself. Such as wanting to have more experiences and accumulate and DIY more clothing.

Does someone who has been goth for along time gain a certain amount of (initial) respect in your eyes?

Only in the way that they have more stories and have more music to share, most likely. It's interesting to hear about the days of Neo, which I missed by mere months due to age and when my friends found me.

Is there any difference in the generation gap today than the last 40 years? Is juvenoia (an exaggerated fear of the effects of social change on youth) more prevalent?

Perhaps? I feel like the goth subculture at least has some key elements, especially in music, that can make it easy for younger and older goths to socialize with one another.

Do you find yourself feeling pressured to present/dress a certain way, or have a certain level of knowledge to fit in, or do you find an excitement in the discovery of it all?

Not totally? Most genuine goths seem to have an understanding that some people can't be goth 24/7 or some people can't quite afford the very fun exciting goth things like Pikes or New Rocks for example. DIY is a fun aspect but it's also not easy for everyone. I'm fine art and design inclined to I'm not sure if DIY is easier for me because of that? As for knowledge, I've never been quizzed on anything really. I'm simply exploring things as I have the time, which isn't terribly much at the moment going into my senior year of college.

Let's talk about the history of goth. Firstly, what's your view on learning about goth history, do you feel it was/is an important step for you to take?

I feel like it's very important to learn the history from multiple sources, especially individuals. Storytelling is a significant source of knowledge that is also dying out, but it's the best way to truly get a feel for things that once were. It's absolutely important, but as anything else it comes as it does and of course you can explore it as much as you can on your own but nothing happens overnight.

Has your interaction with other goths influenced your interest in musical/cultural history one way or another? (pressure to know certain facts, or being quizzed to test how goth you are?)

Not so much, the only influence is more dance/club based goth music due to interest and who I've interacted with in the goth subculture. I more so get club history rather than social history for the same reasons.

Has your knowledge of the history influenced how you dress, what you like or don't like, your music taste, your interactions with others etc(do you feel pressure to dress trad goth, do you avoid people who have lots of knowledge etc)

I would say I'm tradgoth inspired? No two goths are (usually) the same and everyone brings in non-goth interests to the table in how they dress/present/mannerisms etc. I only avoid those who are excessively negative or have too much energy in general. It takes a good amount for me to be turned off from interacting with another person, and I tend to want to interact with people rather than assume things simply from word of mouth. I don't let goth take a hold of my other interests since I have no inclination to be 110% gother than thou. Goth is a part of me, but not the whole. Everyone would be sick and bored of each other if everyone in the subculture were the same. It's very important for everyone to bring something new to the table in goth so it stays diverse and interesting.

On that same train of thought, in the olden days, the only way we could learn about the culture was through interactions with others and micromedia which include zines, flyers, etc. Now that we have books and the internet, social media repositories, websites dedicated to chronicling music journalism, youtube, forums, chatrooms and so on, how did you go about learning about goth? Did you try to seek out older goths to form a bond with or learn from?

Personally, I deeply enjoy YouTube and YouTube culture, I find it very interesting as a platform and as a source of information, but I've mostly explored goth through articles and looking up bands. Again, I'm from a small town where no such thing has graced the area until me from what I know. If there's someone weird or queer in my town, I know of it. I don't really have a father/mother goth to be the end all be all of information or approval. My friends have been helpful for shoes especially, like I was told to purchase New Rocks for the durability alone since there are a lot of platforms that will give out anywhere from a few months to a year (AKA Demonia). Basically being directed in a positive direction for quality and small businesses. They run their own business (Pawstar/Dark Star Fusion) and support others. Instagram has been good for inspiration in terms of fashion, finding artists and shops, and ~sometimes~ music. Inspiration is very important for motivation and ideas, but never to copycat. Huge issue these days across the board of anything creative.

Another big sticking point, at least in some corners of the internet and certain scenes in regards to new members is the scourge of the dreaded elitist. What's your take on or personal experience with elitism and assholes, and do you see a difference between the two?

I haven't had any experience personally, which is good. I also feel like the Chicago goth scene is pretty small and we don't have room for people who turn off newcomers. Personally I've only seen or heard of things on social media, mostly just hear stories. Assholes are everywhere and it gets worse

as you get exposed to more of the world and interact with more and more groups, it simply takes growing a spine and knowing how to handle them.

In regards to fashion, does cultivating a particular look hold specific meaning for you other than just looking good?

Somewhat? Since I am more tradgoth and new wave inclined musically, my fashion remains more traditional and 80's. I also really love black cats so that tends to show in accessories, pins, patches, and oodles of possessions. I also have three black cats. Very spooky. They're painfully cute and all a bunch of sweeties aside from my personal scaredy cat Vaermina.

Do you have any interest in DIY, or do you order everything from shops like rebelsmarket?

I have immense interest in DIY but it has to be during when I have free time and money, which isn't very often. Winter break of last year was when I did 70% of my one vest. And all my shirts have no sleeves for the most part unless they're from a concert or a simple v-neck. I do a lot of thrifting for tops. I haven't heard of rebelsmarket, but I have heard of Angry, Young, and Poor and Killstar, naturally. I personally haven't bought anything from AYP (I know a few people who have), but I do own some Killstar items for the sake of lazy day outfits that I got on "clearance" (still expensive). I own a cloak for winter and have a cat print zipper hoodie for example. I don't like things like Killstar for actual club outfits or what I would consider my best looks, I like the simplicity of it for when I have an 8AM class and just want to look vaguely spooky and not think about my outfit, nor would I wear a full outfit from a retailer? It doesn't appeal to me, I like complexity in my outfits and I seek to have heavy variation.

Some goths argue for those ready made shops and some argue against them, what's your view?

My previous answer bleeds into this, but in my opinion it's okay for simple every day outfits, they're a little more acceptable and I understand you can't always put in the 100% everyday. I personally wouldn't wear such a thing to a club or an event that was from Killstar (I use this for example since I've seen an immense amount of criticism from it and have personally seen a lot of non-goth inclined people wearing their brand). I suppose it ~could~ be a gateway to gothier things? It is more affordable than handmade goods if you shop the clearance which cycles in some of their best stuff pretty often. Also I do feel as if their dresses are very nice in some cases, and see them as unique and affordable. I wouldn't think anything of it if I saw someone wearing it as a part of their outfit for a night out clubbing or an event if it was paired with non-Killstar accessories and shoes. Overall I would say I'm against them if that's all you purchase, but for them if you take them as casual pieces and it's not your entire wardrobe. Like anything else, it should be tastefully used—too much of one thing is a bad thing.

On note of non-goth people from my university wearing their brand, it's just very obnoxious and annoying when people who wear black lipstick and have a generally dark wardrobe with clean cut everything and a few pins claims to be goth and then you ask them about anything about it and they have no understanding of simple things like music. I also find it insulting when the claim to be witchy? That is an actual belief system and should be respected like any other belief.

*"It's great that oldschool goth is attracting new people to the graveyard scene again, but I personally can't help but wonder if **some of the dire need of today's goth youth to be as oldschool as possible comes from the fear of being ridiculed by more experienced goths.** The deathrock revival has definitively caught on in the scene in recent years, but unfortunately there's no wave of popular new dark music for this part of the scene to latch onto. Modern deathrock and trad revival bands are a*

niche market, and unfortunately we all don't know when they'll have the spotlight shone on them again. The current wave of goth youngsters in the revival scene have almost no connection to the darkly inclined, not goth youth who are sampling black clad fashion and adorning themselves in upside down crosses while listening to witch house."

On note of the quote provided—I can see the fear of judgement for not being good enough. I find humor in the idea that those who stand against society would actually poke and prod at those in their circles who are new or may not be as inclined in the ways of DIY. I feel as if people my age in particular have an immense fear of judgement, I would ~like~ to think those who are alternatively inclined understand that judgement is already passed on them by the general public as a whole and it's unfortunate but it comes with looking peculiar and standing out. Should it happen? No. But it does. I've heard that judgement of others is human nature.

Another hot topic around coming into your own, really in any culture, is negotiating those spaces while living with parents. What's your experience with that? Did you have to "come out" to your parents, did you have a fight to express yourself or were they generally accepting? Did they link goth to bad behavior or satanism or drug use or did you have to change clothes after leaving the house?

My mom is a fine artist who now works with data for a large company and my dad is a retired Trump-supporting republican. Together, they're pretty oddly supportive parents for the most part. I'm a queer/lesbian goth with tattoos and four facial piercings, they're doing the best they can with me. The trick to my being the way I am is the fact that I did it slowly. I accumulate things as I go and as I can afford them. When I literally came out in the sense of telling them I was gay, that went over fine and dandy even though I anticipated it to not. My dad really hates how I look but he wants me to be happy, my mom doesn't approve of the piercings but

adores the fact I look so 80's to her all the time. She thinks it's fun. Neither of them like when I have shaved parts of my head but loved the fact I went with a short bleach blonde pixie recently. They don't think anything bad of goth, and they appreciate that my older friends are helpful and welcoming to me. They mostly worry about me driving late at night is all and prefer I have someone to go with to events. Overall, pretty okay about the peculiarity, my mom especially since she was a teen in the 80's. My dad is 23 years older than her so his view of the world is significantly different and honestly I'm just happy he approves as much as he does, he just wants me to be safe. He's a big fan of all our black cats.

I would love to hear from your perspective, how much does goth inform identity, what is your involvement in other subcultural groupings, and do those interact? What's the most important aspect of goth culture to you personally? (music, apperance/diy, lifestyle/mindset, social interaction, academic study, etc)

Although goth dominates my appearance, I like to think it's an equal part to the whole of me otherwise. I truly hate when people peg all of my personality/aspects of me to one thing. I'm not just queer, I'm not just goth, those are parts of what I am. It's only a part of my music taste even. It's a part of my art. It's a part of my lifestyle. But I have so many more things about me that are not considered goth/are not alternative inclined I feel like goth is not the biggest aspect personality wise. Again, it is a big visual point but not the biggest personality point.

Questions about Clubs:

This discussion around the state of goth almost unavoidably conflates the existence of a culture with the attendance of goth clubs, the health of a specific scene or the culture worldwide is often assessed based on the number of events/clubs that are available, and how many people attend. So before we pull all that apart, I want to

hear about how you view your local club scene and the ages of the people who participate in it. Do you feel like the scene is anemic or dying?

I feel like the Chicago scene is in the make or break portion of it's life. It may see a revival in the next few years, but with Neo now closed the torch hasn't been passed and there is no healthy fun go-to alternative bar/club that's reliable for a good time and is safe or as clean as any normal bar. I hear Exit is pretty alternative but no one has said it's good or clean at all, and I've only heard very negative things.

So let's first get into this notion that the health of goth is intrinsically tied to the health of the club scene. Do you think this fair or do you feel the people who would normally be seen at a club, are just going out to non-club events (house parties, starbucks, cemeteries, comic/anime conventions, movies etc.)?

Health Goth is weird? I feel like it's just part of the athletic wear aesthetic and is a term like Pastel Goth that's simply not accurate for what it is and needs another name. I do see actual goth goths joke about being health goth when they go to the gym which is good fun. It's likely a mix of both goths who are at the gym and athletic wear nerds who like all black/mostly black gear.

Are clubs more of an antiquated notion, or perhaps less of a safe space for introverts/goths than the others listed?

It's a little sad that all events for goths are club based, since yes it is intimidating for introverts which I find a good majority of goths to be, or that they prefer to keep within their friend groups which is normal. It does seem like an overall favored setting though due to goth being very music inclined/based.

I wanted to close out with some comments about a video Amy Nekrotique put out, in which she blames millennials for “the downfall of goth/alternative clubs” (<https://youtu.be/STuwR8JvnAI>)

It seems kind of silly? The issue is events not being shared enough on social media. I had no knowing of any sort of Chicago scene until it was literally mentioned to me by word of mouth. Also with the growing cost of things these days, like for myself, \$10 for an entry fee or \$ 5~8 on a drink is kind of a lot to do on a very regular basis for a bar or club to thrive. I have other costs and things that require my attention first at the moment. In a few years though, this could easily do a 180 when I’m in the professional world with a professional job. I don’t think in general clubbing or drinking is affordable for anyone of this age across any generation. I’m lucky enough I can even travel to Chicago on a regular basis for a relationship, \$8-\$12 for transportation and then an entry fee plus even a single drink is too much cost, when I need that simple \$8 just to get down to Chicago via train. The cost of everything these days is just too much and surviving isn’t exactly easy.

What do you think about this “millennials are killing____ industry” bullshit? – (Worth pointing out that, in my area at least, millennials are certainly not the only age rang that go to clubs, or that skip going to clubs and it’s ridiculous to blame that one group alone in either direction, goth is going on 40 years and there are all kinds of people still involved in the scene.)

I feel like no one is to blame, the only thing to blame is really those who shut off newcomers of any and all ages from the subculture and the lack of acceptance of being different in society. Getting a job while being alternatively inclined is not the easiest task.

Most of the other points made in this video we covered already, however one of the themes here, is the “goth/industrial scene”. Do

you make a distinction between the two? Is this just a reference to the two groups sharing club space or are they one in the same for you?

They are separate but have similarities, and at this point we really can't shut out one group or another when all alternative groups almost have to come together at the moment. Nothing is thriving like it used to be and spitting on another similar alternative group isn't going to do anything but hurt the subculture more. I find that a lot of goths are inclined to multiple types of alternative music, not just one. The fashion also tends to cross over decently.