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Chapter 7

Elements of the Gothic in Heavy Metal: A Match Made in Hell

Bryan A. Bardine

Since the first heavy metal album, *Black Sabbath* (1970) by Black Sabbath, elements of the Gothic have pervaded the genre, whether in the lyrics, the dress of both the bands and the fans, the album covers, the sound or the culture itself. Bands during the period 1970–83 (roughly), including Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Saxon and Motörhead, to name a few, incorporated various aspects of the Gothic into their lyrics, dress, stage shows and albums, and in doing so helped to give heavy metal a stronger, more powerful image with fans and media alike. More important than the image is the power and feeling that the music generates with the audience, be they in a packed concert hall or headbanging with an iPod in their room. As a crucial source of this power, the Gothic influence permeates all aspects of heavy metal culture, and this influence has helped keep the genre a vibrant form of expression in the music world.

This article is broken into five sections, each examining a particular aspect of heavy metal or its background necessary for a better understanding of heavy metal. The analyses of the lyrics, album covers, music and style of metal are preceded by a brief look at the group of people who, without knowing it, have had an influence on various types of literature, film and, most especially for this chapter, music.

Background on the Goths and the Gothic Literature

The Goths were a large group of Northern European tribes who inhabited much of Europe during the first eight centuries after the death of Christ. Herwig Wolfram, in his book *History of the Goths*, remarked: ‘Anyone in the field of Gothic history must expect to be misunderstood, rejected, even stigmatized. This is hardly surprising, for the subject is burdened with the ideological weight of a readiness throughout the centuries ... to reject the Goths as an embodiment of everything wicked and evil’ (1). This statement, although about Gothic history, in many ways is parallel to the public and media’s perceptions of heavy metal music, in part because of the darker elements within the music. Because they had no ‘literature or art of their own the Goths came to be seen merely as the corrupters and destroyers of the culture of the Romans’ (Sowerby 16). Unfortunately, it seems the Goths have received the moniker from the Romans that many Germanic and

Northern European peoples of the time were given – that they were barbaric and primitive. As time progressed the meaning of the word moved from referring to a group of people to a broader conception, particularly later in the twentieth century. According to Fred Botting, the word Gothic ‘condenses a variety of historical elements and meanings opposed to the categories valued in the eighteenth century Used derogatively about art, architecture and writing that failed to conform to the standards of the neoclassical taste, “Gothic” signified the lack of reason, morality, and beauty of feudal beliefs, customs and works’ (3). In essence, the term was meant to condemn those aspects of Gothic culture – like the intellect, morality and beauty – that were different from the more popular and respectable aspects of the culture of the Enlightenment. It is easy to see a connection between the way the term Gothic was perceived in the eighteenth century and how much of rock ‘n’ roll, particularly heavy metal, has been analysed and condemned for its perceived subversiveness in the twentieth century. Metal music is often called loud, raunchy, dark, crude, even evil: the reference seems to stick even today.

Gothic literature was a name originally given to a collection of novels ‘written between the 1760s and the 1820s’ (Punter, *Terror* 1). The term Gothic in regard to literature became popular in 1764 with the publication of Horace Walpole’s novel *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*. Soon, *Otranto* became synonymous with the genre, and many of the characteristics in other early Gothic works were evident in this text. Other notable authors of the period were Matthew Lewis, Ann Radcliffe, William Beckford and many young writers who would become more famous as English Romantic poets of the early nineteenth century, such as Percy Bysshe Shelley, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Lord Byron. Over the centuries the term Gothic has continued to be applied to many genres of literature and film, and it has persistently remained popular because the public keeps demanding to see more of it.

So, what aspects of this literature make it Gothic? Typically, Gothic stories from the period took place in medieval settings, which were often archaic, like castles, abbeys, convents, or just dark cave-like structures. Also, the literature contained supernatural elements, the occult, suspense, violence, vice, religion – in particular the demonization of the Catholic Church, abandonment of female characters and an overall darkness, both in tone and in the settings in which the stories took place. Furthermore, ‘the Gothic novel demonstrated uninhibited libido, even outright perversion with incest, rape and sadomasochism of all varieties’ (Hinds 153).

Much of the early Gothic writing took place during the Enlightenment era in Europe, more specifically in England. Roy Porter lists a few of the characteristics when he writes that there was ‘a general commitment to criticizing the injustices and exposing the inefficiencies of the *ancien régime*; to emancipating man . . . from the chains of ignorance and error, superstition, theological dogma, and the dead hand of the clergy’ (5). Several beliefs of the Enlightenment philosophers made their way into the writings of Gothic novelists like Radcliffe and Lewis. Both authors consistently criticized the power of the Catholic Church and its control over its followers. Typically, both writers would use Catholic clergy as the villains

in their works. Also, several Gothic writers, including Radcliffe, Lewis, Charlotte Smith and Horace Walpole, exploited the lack of control which women had over their lives. In many cases, female characters were locked away in a castle or abbey until the male hero of the story could rescue them, if the woman was lucky. In other stories the heroine was murdered or became a nun.

The notion of the supernatural was a common characteristic of Gothic literature, although it was approached differently by various authors. For instance, Ann Radcliffe would often include a supernatural element in a story, but soon after it appeared she would explain it away. In *The Italian*, the two protagonists are disturbed by a 'hollow sigh, that rose near them' (140); less than a page later Radcliffe lets the reader know that the sigh came from an aged monk praying in another cell. By contrast, Horace Walpole, in *The Castle of Otranto*, writes of a giant helmet 'an hundred times more large than any casque ever made for human being' falling from the sky and killing his young son (19). The helmet is never explained and the reader is left to ask questions regarding where it came from and why it killed the young man. While the genre is often condemned as the 'pulp fiction' of its era, there is certainly evidence to show that Gothic literature was at the same time a serious response to the social and philosophical changes introduced by the Enlightenment.

Heavy Metal Lyrics and 'The Gothic'

Deena Weinstein, in her book *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*, discusses some themes in heavy metal lyrics similar to Gothic elements: 'Heavy metal brings its images to the forefront, empowering them with its vitalizing sound. It stands against the pleasing illusions of normality, conjuring with the powers of the underworld and making them submit to the order of the music and nothing else' (38). Weinstein is establishing a connection between the dark tone of the lyrics, the images they portray and the power the music exudes. She continues her analysis by examining metal lyrics in terms of 'disorder, conflict, opposition, and contradiction. It incorporates images of monsters, the grotesque, mayhem, and disaster. It speaks of injustice and of resistance, rebellion, and death' (39). While the Gothic elements grew out of the notion of the primitive and chaotic aspects of culture, as the Goths themselves were seen by most of society, so too are heavy metal music and its lyrics seen as primitive and chaotic to much of mainstream society. It is hardly surprising, then, to find that many heavy metal bands incorporate these Gothic elements into their lyrics.

The song 'Black Sabbath' by the band Black Sabbath is one of the first examples of incorporating Gothic lyrics into a song. The Gothic element Sabbath is using is the occult, particularly Satan. From the band's self-titled debut album, the song begins with a thunderstorm pounding as a church bell chimes in the background, before lead vocalist Ozzy Osbourne begins to sing. In the second verse the lyrics

discuss Satan's role in everyone's lives. Osbourne's distressed voice adds to the haunting effect of the 'Big black shape' of Satan that is described as 'smiling'.

The occult imagery and the notion of Satan in these lyrics can also be seen in Gothic literature. The works often contain demons or demonic figures. For instance, Helen Stoddart, in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*, notes that 'Satan is the most common and singular example of a demonic presence, though others would be evil spirits, devils, ghosts and supernatural disturbances' (43). While the Devil shows up in some Gothic works, such as Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), though he is disguised, more often than not the authors would give Satanic characteristics to humans. For example, characters such as Ambrosio in *The Monk*, Schedoni in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797) and Falkland in William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) each 'bear, sometimes literally, an identifiably demonic stamp' (44).

Following Black Sabbath, bands of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM) incorporated Gothic lyrics into their songs. Through its lyrics, Iron Maiden, one of the world's foremost metal bands, has long had an association with Gothic themes. On its third album, *The Number of the Beast* (1982), Iron Maiden refers to the occult – just as Black Sabbath did, in the form of the Devil – in the title track 'The Number of the Beast'. However, rather than have the Devil watching, even smiling at the destruction he brings, Iron Maiden lets the listener see a sacrifice taking place amidst 'sacred chants', with 'fires burning bright' around a 'ritual' that celebrates 'Satan's work'.

The lyrics certainly help listeners visualize a chaotic, frenzied scene associated with visions of Satanic worship and human sacrifice. The Gothic aspect of this visualization lies in the frenzy the band creates with the first three lines of the lyric. Listeners can see worshippers crying in pain and raising their hands to their demon lord, all the while hoping not to be chosen for sacrifice. Iron Maiden's use of the occult imagery here is Gothic in its simplest form, regardless of the band's intent.

The occult is not the only way that NWOBHM bands have incorporated Gothic themes. Other groups incorporate themes of violence and abuse into their lyrics. For instance, Saxon, in its song 'Warrior', sings about a primitive village being attacked by a group of barbarians 'from over the sea' who 'rape and ... slaughter' and 'pillage the wealth'. Unlike Black Sabbath and Iron Maiden, Saxon have incorporated one of the original meanings of Gothic – the notion of the barbarian – into their music. Moreover, the acts of rape and pillage have a greater connection with the Gothic than the notion of violence against a tribe or group of people because of their relation to the primitive aspect of human nature. Robin Sowerby notes that the Goths themselves were known as 'thoroughgoing pillagers, ravagers, looters, and spoilers' (17). The terms that Sowerby uses to describe the Goths certainly mirror the language used to explain characteristics associated with characters and events in Gothic fiction. As mentioned earlier, one of the many themes inherent in Gothic literature is that of chaos. The lyrics and music in this Saxon song let the listener hear the chaos generated by the attacking hordes. Other NWOBHM bands have incorporated this invasion and chaos theme into their music. Iron Maiden, on

its album *The Number of the Beast*, has a song titled 'Invaders', which details a Viking invasion of a Saxon village. The chaotic imagery is enhanced by the battle scene and its 'wounded fighters', whose 'severed limbs' and 'bloody corpses' cause a 'smell of death and burning flesh'. The local Saxons are described as 'overpowered victims' at the mercy of the Viking warriors. Furthermore, within the refrain the lyrics relate what the invaders are doing to the Saxons, not only to the men but also to the women and children: 'pillaging', 'looting', 'fighting', 'marauding', 'raping' and 'plundering'.

Another form of chaos often referred to in Gothic fiction appears within a character's mind. American author Edgar Allan Poe was a master at showing his readers the gradual breakdown of a character's psyche. For example, in 'The Tell-Tale Heart' Poe deftly takes his audience through the narrator's mental collapse. As the story begins, the narrator tries to convince the audience that he is not insane:

TRUE! – nervous – very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses – not destroyed – not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the Heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! And observe how healthily – how calmly I can tell you the whole story. (303)

Poe uses punctuation and emphasis to great effect throughout this short passage. He incorporates many abrupt sentences and phrases, with several starts and stops so that the man's speech sounds choppy and nervous – as he says he was and is throughout his ordeal. While certainly a different type of chaos than that which Saxon and Iron Maiden are singing about, the internal chaos that the narrator goes through during the story concludes with him admitting his murder and dismemberment of the man he claimed to love and care for.

There is a connection between the structure of the short story and the two songs mentioned above. Poe has incorporated many short sentences or fragments set apart by different types of punctuation. In doing so, he gives his text a very choppy sound, which places emphasis at various important parts. For instance, toward the end of the story the narrator believes that the police who have come to the house to check on the old man know that the narrator has buried his body under the floor boards of the room in which they stand. He says: 'They heard! – They suspected! – They *knew!* – They were making a mockery of my horror' (306). Similarly, both the Saxon song and the Iron Maiden song incorporate the musical equivalent of what Poe is doing in this short story – by using short lyrics and a short refrain, the sense of chaos is increased. In the Iron Maiden song, the refrain simply describes the invaders with two words – 'pillaging' and 'looting' – but the message inherent in those words is one of violence and certainly chaos. In the Saxon song, part of the refrain is 'warrior came, warrior saw, warrior conquered', which, like in the Iron Maiden and Poe examples, is brief and gives the listener a sense of foreboding and a vision of the chaos that just occurred.

Judas Priest takes a slightly different approach when it looks at the brutality that Saxon and Iron Maiden sing about. In the band's song 'Tyrant', from the 1976 album *Sad Wings of Destiny*, it is examined from the perspectives of both the aggressor and the oppressed. The song opens with the tyrant letting those under his control know exactly the rules of the game: as 'the commander' and 'hideous destructor', the voice tells his listeners to 'surrender'.

In this song the power comes in two forms. First, lyrically, in the utter control that the tyrant is showing to the oppressed, and second, musically, in the speed and intensity in lead vocalist Rob Halford's voice and in the twin guitars of K.K. Downing and Glenn Tipton. During the parts of the song when Halford is singing as the tyrant, the music is much faster and more intense, compared to when he takes on the role of the oppressed who are 'chained and shackled' and have lived 'in dread' ever since their tyrant has been 'enthroned'. Halford's voice is also noticeably different when he sings these lines. His phrasing is slower and he puts more emphasis on the words 'oppressed', 'shackled', 'choked' and 'enthroned' to show the desperation and pain evident in a people who have lost not only their freedom but also hope. With a song like 'Tyrant', Judas Priest explores the Gothic notions of violence and subjugation in new ways.

In much of the early Gothic fiction, the Catholic Church played the role of the tyrant that Judas Priest sings about. In *The Italian*, Ann Radcliffe criticizes the Church through her portrayal of the evil monk Father Schedoni and also by using the Holy Inquisition. Schedoni is portrayed as a ruthless kidnapper and conniver by the way he attempts to control the lives of the protagonists Ellena and Vivaldi. He kidnaps Ellena so she will not marry Vivaldi, and he has Vivaldi falsely accused of a crime and imprisoned by members of the Inquisition. Schedoni manipulates others – such as Vivaldi's mother, the Lady Marchesa – through threats, violence and cunning, all in the name of self-promotion. The Inquisition acts as the enforcer within the story. As Vivaldi waits in his cell wondering what will happen next, he hears terrifying screams of pain and torture. Radcliffe's comments are not only on the impending threat to Vivaldi, but also on the evil the Catholic Church forced upon thousands of people during the time of the Inquisition. Though different in scope to Judas Priest's 'Tyrant', *The Italian's* Schedoni and the Holy Inquisition do essentially the same things.

After Ozzy Osbourne left Black Sabbath in 1979 the band found a new vocalist in former Rainbow and Elf front man Ronnie James Dio. Dio was known for his fantasy lyrics, such as 'the parable "Stargazer" – about a wizard who cripples civilization by attempting to build a stone tower to the stars' (Christe 68). While Dio's lyrics with Sabbath continued to incorporate fantasy themes, he also wrote some darker, more Gothic lyrics. In the song 'Lady Evil', on the album *Heaven and Hell* (1980), his first with Black Sabbath, he moved away from the traditional Gothic theme of the weak, subjugated woman to a powerful temptress who kills those that she meets, a somewhat similar theme to that explored by Black Sabbath in the song 'Evil Woman' on their self-titled debut album.

Many bands took Gothic themes and played with them as Dio and Sabbath did in this song. Placing the action in 'Witches' Valley' adds an occult dimension to the song. As the song progresses Dio sings 'Thunder cracks the sky, it makes it bleed'. The blood imagery adds to the Gothic aspect because in this verse blood is substituted for rain, a clear sign of impending doom or death. The themes of violence and evil are also addressed. Notably, another dimension of the Gothic can be construed from this song as Lady Evil is quite possibly a vampire. Later in the song, Dio's lyrics state that the lady cannot 'face the light' but will find her victim 'for the night'. These references to darkness and Lady Evil's need to come out only at night could imply that she is a vampire, or at the very least something associated with darkness – a demon or monster of some kind.

While 'Lady Evil' may well be examining a demonic figure or a vampire, an interesting contrast exists between this song and Led Zeppelin's classic 'Stairway to Heaven' from the album *Led Zeppelin IV*. The main character in both 'Lady Evil' and 'Stairway to Heaven' is female, but the comparison ends there. The most intriguing contrast between the two songs is that while they both incorporate images of nature, they use those images to achieve quite different purposes. In 'Lady Evil' the action occurs in 'a place just south of Witches' Valley', certainly a place of foreboding. Witches' Valley is a place where 'they say the wind won't blow' and 'the rain won't fall'. Such negative images leave the listener with a feeling of dread, which of course is one of the purposes of much Gothic fiction. By contrast, the first natural image in 'Stairway to Heaven' is much more peaceful and serene – 'in a tree by the brook there's a songbird who sings'. This image, along with the slow tempo and acoustic guitar played by Jimmy Page relaxes and calms the listener; on the other hand the tempo of 'Lady Evil' remains consistently fast throughout the song. Another natural image in the Black Sabbath song is the above-mentioned 'thunder cracks the sky and makes it bleed', another reference to impending doom or danger. Further, there is no light in 'Lady Evil'. At various times in the song she cannot face the light, moreover she 'feeds the darkness' and is described as 'the queen of the night'. Each of these dark images makes Lady Evil a strong female character, even if she is a negative force. Black Sabbath seems to have reversed the image of the female in Gothic texts – making her strong, individualistic and even deadly. By contrast, there is no dark imagery whatsoever in 'Stairway to Heaven'. The images of a new day dawning, wind blowing and of the 'lady we all know who shines white light', while not Gothic, do show a powerful character, but it is good, not evil. Both bands have used natural imagery to achieve their own purposes; Black Sabbath to show a powerful, deadly woman, and Led Zeppelin to show a more positive, optimistic female. Black Sabbath makes their Lady quite Gothic in terms of the dark imagery and the control she has over those who visit Witches' Valley, while Led Zeppelin creates a more traditional, feminine woman who is never seen outside of the light.

Another Gothic theme used by NWOBHM bands was madness. Iron Maiden, on their album *Piece of Mind*, address insanity in the song 'Still Life'. The notion of insanity occurs often in Gothic fiction and the 'fear of insanity is a fundamental

source of terror in Gothic Literature' (Small 152). As Helen Small writes, 'for the early practitioners of the genre [Gothic literature] it was first and foremost a powerful shock tactic' (152). Furthermore, madness itself is a form of mental chaos, or the opposition to the rational world. Iron Maiden uses a character's steady progress toward insanity as a way to show his movement away from rational thought and toward his own death and the death of his partner. According to Steve Harris, Iron Maiden's bass player and principle songwriter, the song is 'the story of a guy who is drawn like a magnet to a pool of water. He sees faces in the lake. He has nightmares about it and in the end he jumps in and takes his lady with him' (qtd. in Stenning 91). At the beginning of the song, as the narrator stares into a pool and its 'dark depths', he feels like he is being drawn in by the faces he sees in the water. As his nightmares increase, so too does his madness. He no longer wants to hurt just himself, but has decided he must also take his companion 'down there' into the water with him so that they will 'drown together'.

The only way the narrator can end his suffering is to end his life. The music in Iron Maiden's 'Still Life' adds to the Gothic 'feel' of the song. The song begins in an uncharacteristic way for Iron Maiden: very slowly. Bruce Dickinson is not singing at the beginning of the song: the lyrics are spoken to match the slow, haunting guitar. The man in the song is telling his companion that he is being called to by faces within the pool. Because the music is slow and Dickinson is just speaking, not singing, there is no urgency in the song yet. Once the next stanza begins, the tempo increases, and Dickinson begins to sing the lyrics. The man realizes his companion does not believe him and he begins to get frustrated; Dickinson's voice places more emphasis on this line, further displaying the man's frustration. From here, the music continues to increase in speed and the man becomes more desperate in the final line of the second stanza when he feels drawn to the pool and no longer knows 'what to do'. At this stage, the man's mind has begun to lose touch with reality – he believes he sees faces in a pool who call to him. Though the refrain is just one word, 'Nightmares', it is emphasized and the music is more intense. The tempo of the song remains fast, and the man seems to give in to his fate when he talks about his approaching death, the moment when he will join the faces 'at the bottom of the pool'. Again, Dickinson puts more emphasis on this last line of the stanza, further exemplifying the man's stress and increasing removal from rational thought. The complete break from reality occurs when the man decides he needs to take his companion to see the faces as well. The only respite the man gets from his terrible nightmares is through his own death and that of his lover. The song ends abruptly with Dickinson singing 'Now we rest in peace'. Not only does Iron Maiden give the listener a stirring musical composition with this song, they also make the lyrics easy to visualize, so the images they present are even more horrific. Through their evocation of non-rational fears, the lyrics follow in the Gothic tradition of questioning the Enlightenment belief in the power of the human mind to explain reality.

The metal bands examined above drew on elements like the occult, Satanic imagery, brutality against the weak, chaos, darkness and madness to help more

clearly create visual images of their songs in their listeners' minds and because of their obvious connection to the power of the music. Another connection between heavy metal and the Gothic, in particular Gothic fiction, is subversiveness. Both forms of expression are subgenres of larger genres: rock 'n' roll and literature, respectively (Hinds 156–7). Locating this subversiveness, Hinds announces that 'Gothic fiction and Heavy metal epitomize this subgeneric behaviour because they manifest the "sub" in several conceptions: subversive, substandard, subliminal ... these two "Satanic" offspring go to great lengths to define and illustrate "difference," and further, a difference "beneath," hidden under the socially acceptable' (157). NWOBHM bands, like Gothic fiction writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, wanted to be different, to express themselves differently to those that came before them. One of the ways the bands felt they could do that was by writing lyrics that addressed issues that were opposed to the accepted behaviour of the day in England, where most of the early heavy metal bands were from. The result was loud, fast music that dealt with issues that the average pop music listener would not want to talk about. The power of the music was brought about in other ways: 'The loudness and intensity of heavy metal music visibly empower fans', and the experience 'energizes the body, transforming space and social relations' (Walser 2).

Gothic Elements in the Album Covers

Representations of power exist beyond the lyrics and the music itself. Album covers are another way that bands show their power and passion for the music and the fans. Album covers serve more than one purpose, as Deena Weinstein argues: first, the buyer should be able to acquire an idea about the band's 'desired image, attitude, and emotion' (28); second, it is an obvious way for the fans to recognize their favourite groups (28). Colours are very important on heavy metal album covers. It is rare to see covers that are not steeped in black and/or red. These are chosen primarily because neither colour is relaxing or portrays a gentle feeling. In most cases, they are used because they are 'intense, exciting, or ominous' when combined with the other images on the covers (29). Typically, the imagery found on heavy metal album covers is meant to be 'unsettling, suggesting chaos and bordering on the grotesque' (29). Some of the ways that the album covers display this chaos is by incorporating Gothic elements, particularly darkened scenes, violent images and supernatural or occult settings. Furthermore, according to Weinstein, 'the visual imagery contextualizes the music or at least provides a clue to its meaning' (29). Basically, it is easy to pick out the heavy albums just by the covers.

One of the bands with the most recognizable album covers is Iron Maiden, who has used Eddie, a ghoulish heavy metal mascot, on each of their album covers since 1980. He has taken various incarnations, from a puppet master for the devil on *The Number of the Beast* (1982) to an Egyptian pharaoh on *Powerslave* (1984) to the

grim reaper on *Dance of Death* (2003). In each case Eddie remains recognizable and he is virtually always placed in a position of power. For instance, on Iron Maiden's second album, *Killers* (1981), he is seen holding a hatchet dripping in blood as the two hands of his victim are sliding down his shirt. The only light on the darkened street is shining on Eddie and we see a menacing smile as he seems to stare at the record buyer. The name of the album is written in dripping blood and the band's name is written in red in its own distinctive font at the top of the cover. The message is clear: this album evokes power, passion and music that present darker themes and images.

In another of his personas, Eddie has his power taken away, when he is placed inside a rubber room in an insane asylum on the album *Piece of Mind* (1983). Although not in control as he usually is, we get the same sense of power from the images. Eddie has been placed in a straight jacket and chained to the walls, although it is clear he is trying to break free and lunge at the buyer of the album. His eyes are nothing but black sockets with yellow points of light where the eyeballs should be and his body is straining to break away from the chains. He is surrounded by black, except for a yellow light that allows us to see the rubber room in which he is chained. Further, by looking closely we see that the top half of his head has been cut open and his brain has been operated on – both halves of his skull are bolted together and blood trickles down his forehead. The name of the band appears in large red letters at the top of the cover and the title of the album is written in small, yellow script just above Eddie's head. The chaos and anger in Eddie's face tells everyone that this will not be an easy-listening record. In fact, by the look on his face, it is easy to imagine Eddie breaking out of the asylum and coming after his next victim. The Gothic elements of insanity, violence, certainly chaos – whether in his mind or by his outward expression – let us see the power the band intends to unleash on its listeners. Other bands have incorporated similar Gothic elements into their album covers as well.

The first true heavy metal band, Black Sabbath, while not as grotesque in their album cover design, certainly included Gothic elements that gave the listener an idea of what their music would be about. The cover of the band's debut album, *Black Sabbath* (1970), 'depicted a dilapidated English cottage overgrown with barren brush, partially obscuring the image of a pale green enchantress. The interior of the album's gatefold sleeve contained few details beyond a grim gothic poem inscribed in a giant inverted crucifix' (Christe 4). The enchantress seems to be walking toward the record buyer, a look of numbness or nothingness in her eyes. The brush and trees around her are tinted a reddish colour, leaving the impression of death and decay. The poem, 'Still Falls the Rain', uses Gothic images like 'rain', 'darkness', 'blackened trees', 'unseen violence', 'poppies bleed' and 'young rabbits, born dead in traps'. The poem is reminiscent of the graveyard poetry that preceded much of the Gothic fiction of the eighteenth century. As David Punter argues in *The Literature of Terror*, graveyard poetry is important to Gothic fiction and, by extension, heavy metal music for many reasons:

because its involvement with death and suffering prefigures the Gothic novel; because it marks an early stage of the renewed desire for literary 'novelty' which characterised the later part of the century; because it challenges rationalism and vaunts extremity of feeling; and because its actual influence on Gothic fiction was considerable ... (30)

Clearly, graveyard poetry influenced the Gothic writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Consider the often ominous plots and preponderance of death which takes place in Gothic fiction. More importantly, the graveyard poets' influence on the Gothic authors empowered them to move away from rationalism toward feelings of emotion and passion and even chaos in their writing. Their focus was meant to bring about a variety of emotions from their readers: fear, terror, horror, excitement and passion, to name a few.

Just as graveyard poetry was an appropriate introduction for the Gothic fiction on the horizon, so too were 'Still Falls the Rain' and the cover of Black Sabbath's first album introductions to this new kind of music. The combination of the visual image of the cover and the implied images in the poem leaves the record buyer with a shuddering sense of doom. As the opening song, 'Black Sabbath', begins, we hear rain falling as a church bell chimes, a clear connection to the poem and to the remainder of the songs on the album.

Four years later, on *Sabbath Bloody Sabbath* (1974), Black Sabbath's cover art is much more graphic and overt. It shows a 'graphically satanic ritual in full swing' (Popoff 46). Predominantly red and black, the cover shows six naked or semi-naked people attacking a prone woman on a bed. The headboard is a skull with arms reaching toward the woman as she is being mauled by the other six figures. Written in the headboard is the number '666' – the Devil's number. The cover also contains images of several rats and a snake coiled around the sacrificial woman. Each of the other figures have long finger nails and cloven feet, giving more clear evidence that a Satanic sacrifice is about to occur. All of the people and the images on the bed are tinged in red, while the background is black and yellow. Red and yellow stand out against the black background, and the red picture leads the viewer to think of blood, death and pain, especially when examining the frightening scene in concert with the colours. The album title appears at the top of the cover, again tinged in red with the letter 'S' in the title written like lightning bolts. The band's name appears in very small white letters at the bottom of the cover. The band seemed to be going for something a little different here: they want to emphasize the title, and by reproducing it mostly in red they are showing a closer connection between the name of the album and the image on the cover, not the name of the band. By including '666' on the cover a further connection to Satan and the occult is added to the mix.

The Gothic Elements in the Style of Heavy Metal Musicians and Fans

The look of heavy metal musicians is just as important as the other aspects that have been discussed so far in this chapter. The look of the musicians of the NWOBHM period is similar to that of metal musicians today, although today because there are so many genres of metal there is more variety in dress. For the NWOBHM period there was a bit of a shift from the early days (late 1960s and early 1970s), when groups tended to wear 'the "authentic" look of the time, wearing the street clothes – jeans and t-shirts – and long hair that served as the everyday uniform of the male members of the youth counterculture of the West' (Weinstein 29–30). Interestingly, the early dress of the metal bands, while not their own creation, still set themselves apart because of their association with the counterculture of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This was very much like the Gothic literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the clothes and hair styles worn by the bands made them look different from most people in society. In essence, the early metal musicians borrowed from an existing group.

As time progressed and heavy metal became more cemented in the music culture, the dress changed as well. The band Judas Priest introduced a biker look in the mid-1970s, which was emphasized by 'the metal-studded leather fashion ... reminiscent of an earlier British youth culture, the rockers' (Weinstein 30): black leather jackets, pants, biker boots and studs which were often on their jackets and on black forearm guards as well. Sometimes studded cod pieces were worn. Further, as Weinstein points out, '[s]imilar to the biker style and derived from it is the style associated with the S&M subculture' (30). The biker-wear associated with Judas Priest and other bands of the time connects to the Gothic because of the taboo nature of the clothes themselves. The S&M subculture that Weinstein discusses reflects, at least to mainstream society, a subversive element of the culture, much like many of the themes Gothic authors were writing about in their books. As Weinstein explains, the early 'uniforms' of jeans and t-shirts connected the performers to the fans, while the biker look that followed combined the 'system of rebellion, masculinity, and outsider status that fit in with the other elements of the heavy metal culture' (30).

As far as the fans are concerned, they dress in many ways similar to their idols, and their style is also meant to pay homage to them. For instance, many metalheads wear a 'black t-shirt, worn with denim jeans (often with tears or holes in them) and a leather or denim jacket' (Arnett 424). Often, metalheads will have band logos sewn on their jackets (Weinstein 128). Furthermore, the t-shirts often have band name logos or other visual representations of the band on them (Weinstein 127). The Gothic connection is clear – the shirts are black and most often the images on the t-shirts depict violent, aggressive scenes that might be on the album covers or sung about in the songs. These images mirror the kind of Gothic images or taboos that early Gothic authors were writing about. Often the t-shirts are from concert tours the bands have completed, and those 'are more highly valued than those bought in stores, and shirts from long-ago tours are the

most highly respected of all' (Weinstein 127). Metalheads often wear a variety of pins and rings depicting 'icons associated with heavy metal in general, rather than specific bands ... skulls, skeletons, snakes, dragons, and daggers, maces, and other instruments of pre-gun mayhem' (Weinstein 128). These icons connect to the Gothic because of their connections to the pre-industrial past. Many of the icons are copies of weapons used in medieval times; the monsters (dragons, snakes and so on) are often associated with medieval or fantasy stories and texts. Finally, the most important and most necessary fashion statement a (male) metalhead can make is to have long hair. It is the most obvious way to include oneself in the group, and it is also an easy way to differentiate oneself from most of society. Wearing long hair references one of the primary credos of the 'Gothic' discussed earlier – resistance and rebellion.

Conclusion

Heavy metal music has flourished for nearly 40 years, and some of the most important and influential bands came from the NWOBHM. These groups set the stage for much of the metal that is played today, and part of that influence came from not only the music they played, but also the lyrics they wrote, the album covers they used and their style of dress. Incorporated into each of these areas was a Gothic influence – whether the darkened, violent images inherent in the album covers, the occult or barbaric references in the lyrics, the notions of the rebellious outsider in the dress, or the powerful, bombastic music. In each case, the 'Gothic' influenced the NWOBHM, and without that influence, heavy metal would be a completely different form of music.

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