

The background of the cover is a dark, atmospheric painting. Two dark birds, possibly ravens or crows, are perched on a dark, textured rock formation. The birds are rendered in deep shadows, with some highlights on their feathers. The background is a mix of dark blues, greys, and hints of orange and yellow, suggesting a sunset or a stormy sky. The overall mood is mysterious and somber.

Embracing The Darkness

Understanding Dark Subcultures

CORVIS NOCTURNUM

Goth Fashion

All forms of media today, including film, music, and print media, have been highly influential on Goth style. Vampire classics, such as *Nosferatu*, and modern films, such as Anne Rice's *Interview with a Vampire*, have been strong contributors. The fashions and décor of dark culture are showcased and greatly influenced by several publications, such as *Blueblood*, *Bite Me*, *Gothic Beauty* and *Dark Realms*.

The aspects of Goth in fashion, the coverings by which most of us are judged, have only slightly changed over the ages. It just so happens that those of us immersed in this type of lifestyle can clearly see “good” and “bad” aspects of life simply as normal life. Individuals who walk this less traveled path may appear unable to fit into mainstream society, but it has been said, “never judge a book by its cover.”

The look most commonly associated with Goth style can be broken into two classifications, antiquity or modern. The antiquity, or Edwardian style as it is also known, borrows much of its influence from the pre-Renaissance period. For such style, one needs look no further than clothing from *Eternal Love*, *Siren*, or *KAMBRIEL*, which is one of the newest and most luxurious.

Corvis: “Tell my readers a bit about your company.”

Kambriel: “Ever since the release of our Premiere Collection in 1994, we have striven to create finely handmade designs with a classically timeless feel, from the most luxurious fabrics and trimmings available. Our clothing is designed for those darkly romantic souls who dream of an existence in another place and time. We want you to have the freedom to be true to your innermost natures rather than having them suppressed by the present world and the desires of others. Being true to yourself is more of an internal quest, but everything that is buried deep inside rises to the surface eventually. This is where we come in... the reflection of your inner-self onto your outer-self. Clothing that brings you a little closer to your dreams.”

Corvis: “There are a great many different looks today that all fall under the heading of Goth fashion. What is it about certain classic

styles (those that seem to be continually revived throughout history) that stand the test of time so well?”

Kambriel: “The term ‘Goth’ or ‘Gothic’ has indeed become very diverse—so diverse that it almost bares no resemblance from one extreme to another. Currently, someone can describe a design that’s ‘pink and fluffy’ as being gothic, when at the root of the style that would be the complete antithesis of the gothic aesthetic. The original focus of gothic fashion was one of tattered opulence and very dark, often with a romantic twist. In

recent years, styles like cyber-goth have come about which express a futuristic feeling, immediately recognizable by their glowing neon graphic accents on a stark backdrop of severe shapes, stemming from our entrance into the 21st century. I believe there will always be a place for Romantic Gothic designs made from dark, jewel-like colours and sumptuous fabrics. They continue to stand the test of time because as long as we live in a world where there is pain and injustice, pollution and abuse, prejudice and war, there will always be a deep need, fascination, and comfort in finding beauty and personally cherishing it. These classic pieces surround you in a comfort and luxury found in the softness of shadows.”

Corvis: “Some older goths may recall that your company was once called ‘Atrocities.’ Obviously the use of your own name offers a more personal touch and becomes, like other fashion designers, immediately recognizable. Did you get much resistance before (and



Kambriel, photo by Nadya Lev

after) the name change? What prompted the name change; the public's reactions, etc.?"

Kambriel: "In 1994, the name "Atrocities" was more abstract, and not so often used. I had been thinking of changing the name for a while, since it grew tiring hearing about 'the atrocities of Serbia,' 'Japanese war atrocities,' etc... As time went on, I wanted to bring an aura of beauty that can come out of the darkness to a name that had always conveyed tragedy. When September 11, 2001 happened, and those events were also described as 'atrocities,' I realized the time had finally come, and decided that changing the business name to Kambriel would be best. I think the new name better expresses the inherent beauty of the designs, and the aesthetic I'm aiming for—an atmosphere of opulence and timelessness, with a sense of the fantastical. It ended up being a fairly smooth transition, and the new name has been very well received."

Corvis: "Where do you want to take the company in the future?"

Kambriel: "I would like to branch into doing costuming for some fantastically-themed movies, working with talented models and photographers to create stunning art, and one of my great joys that I continue to find much inspiration in is outfitting vocalists and musicians for their photoshoots, videos and live shows. Overall, I envision creating something of dignity and quality, with a continuous aesthetic integrity where you will always be able to tell that the people behind it genuinely love what they do and are constantly growing."

The wide range of Goth types, from antiquity to punk and cybergoth, provide an example of how people submersed in this culture feel displaced and alienated from current times. The nostalgia of bygone eras or future possibilities expressed in a dark way provide a form of escapism for both factions of the same group. Most Goths and nearly everyone in the vampire subculture reflect a personal style of dress, whether mild or extreme, that crosses the boundaries of one or the other group. Some mix the old and new styles together with great results.