University of Siegen

Faculty I

Master's Thesis

The 'Gothical'

On the Emergence of a Hybrid Genre

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1 The Overture – An Introduction

Once I had told friends about the topic of my Master's thesis I felt their skepticism and confusion about my choice. Therefore, I explained my theory of the genre 'Gothical,' a convergence of Gothic films and Musicals, and soon enough faced questions like 'does that even exist?', 'what is that?' and 'how do Gothic films and Musicals fit together?'. When I mentioned the films I had chosen, the initial skepticism changed into interest though they were still a bit unsure about what to expect. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), regarded as a 'film classic' and well-known due to its famous actors such as Susan Sarandon and musician Meat Loaf is probably the most iconic selected film example. Alongside this classic, *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007) also features spectator magnets like Johnny Depp and Helena Bonham Carter in rather unusual roles as they both sing and dance in addition to their acting. My third example of a 'Gothical' is the recently produced film *REPO! The Genetic Opera* (2008) by Darren Lynn Bousman who is also the director of the horror films *Saw II*, *Saw III*, and *Saw IV*. At first sight my three film examples appear to include contrasting film genres. However, the combination of these components can provoke impressive effects. Why is it so hard for many spectators to acknowledge the union of these unlikely siblings, Gothic and Musical? The assumptions which numerous people have – including myself before conducting this research – that Gothic films are always dark and uncanny, taking place in castles and that especially the Musical film is a happy-go-lucky genre are not completely valid. Therefore, I decided to take a closer look at the Gothic and the Musical genre with regard to the medium of film and examine in how far a new hybrid genre, what hereafter I will call the 'Gothical',[1] is emerging – the genre title itself being a hybrid, a neologism. Particularly, the 'friction' of two rather differing genres is what has kept my interest ever since I became aware of the existence of the Gothical.

In this thesis, I will argue that the hybrid genre Gothical emerges and needs to be considered a crucial contemporary phenomenon. Therefore, I will demonstrate how the Gothical mingles characteristics from the Gothic film as well as the Musical and combines their parameters by using irony as its main tool of criticism. This specific form of irony aims directly at the heart of social problems in subject areas such as gender, race, and/or

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[1] The term 'Gothical' has been used by Scott Freer in his article "The Victorican Criminal Underworld and the Musical Carnivalesuqe." An explanation on how this study understands the term 'Gothical' is going to follow in Chapter 2.2. and 2.2.1.

class – the classic triad in cultural theory.[2] Although Gothic films as well as Musicals often include social criticism, the new hybrid genre Gothical converges the main characteristics of both genres and thereby reinforces a critical reading of social problems. The Gothic film and the Musical may at first appear to be contradictory genres but their amalgamation leads to a progressive concept of irony and thus increases criticism regarding social evils since the Gothical's combined means go further than in the original genres. Irony frequently operates as tool for criticism and as Linda Hutcheon suggests "the often 'cutting' edge of irony . . . is always a social and political edge."[3]

Indeed, the idea of 'hybridity' is not new as well-known theorists like Homi K. Bhabha (*The Location of Culture*, 1994) and W.E.B. Du Bois (*The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903) shaped this concept in cultural theory.[4] The Russian formalist Mikhail Bakhtin has also applied this term to literary theory. Moreover, in literary and film theory, genre mixes have been important for a long time, for instance Horror-Thrillers, Sci-fi Thrillers, or Romantic Comedies. Therefore, some of the already developed theoretical approaches from other research areas will serve as framework for my thesis. Methodically situated in cultural and film studies, this study will draw upon these concepts. During my research, I found that theoretical approaches which explicitly examine 'genre hybridity' in films, except for general superficial categorizations, are rare and that being the case, this thesis is advancing into unexplored areas. One book, however, which clearly deals with this phenomenon, is Ira Jaffe's *Hollywood Hybrids: Mixing Genres in Contemporary Films* from 2008. His work has been of particular importance for the theory part of my thesis. Yet, Jaffe has primarily been concerned with other genres and their mixes – amongst others, Action, Western, Melodrama, Thriller – though parallels to the Gothical can be observed. Social criticism can be found in many film genres but it certainly is a crucial effect of the Gothical. Although there are countless genre mixes in the history of film and these have also been dealt with in theory, I could only find one single work that has already touched upon the idea of the Gothical. Despite the fact that Scott Freer (University of Leicester, England, UK) has already utilized the term Gothical, his insight primarily focuses on the aesthetic value of this genre mix as he merely understands the Gothical as a sub-genre of the Musical. Therefore, this study offers a new and more extensive approach by not only

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[2] Works to consult for further information:
   Ott, Brian L., and Robert L. Mack. *Critical Media Studies: An Introduction*. Malden, Oxford, West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2010. Print.
   Ackermann, Robert John. *Heterogeneities: Race, Gender, Class, Nation, and State*. Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996. Print.
[3] Hutcheon *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* i.
[4] W.E.B. Du Bois is often named in reference to 'hybridity' – as for instance in Jeremy Hawthorn's definition "Hybrid/hybridization" in *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory* and Peter Brooker's *A Glossary of Cultural Theory* – because Du Bois described the concept of 'twoness' and 'double consciousness' which seems similar to that of 'hybridity.'

declaring the existence of a sub-genre but considering the Gothical a new independent hybrid genre. In this thesis, I want to enhance Freer's first proposal by showing that the Gothical provides the socio-cultural function of social criticism.

On top of that, this study is concerned with theories of Postmodernism and Romance. Postmodernist ideas show similarities to the mechanics of the Gothical as, for example, general structures and truths are questioned, borders between original and reproduction diminish, and edges of high and low or popular art are queried. In terms of a postmodernist approach to the Gothical, this thesis will unveil the ways how criticism is applied and combined with intertextual devices and the aforementioned concept of irony. Considering that "before 1860 the term *romance* in America connoted characteristics [such as the supernatural that is] now associated with the gothic"[5] it is relevant for this study to include the development of the Gothic.

This thesis can be divided into two major parts: A theoretical and an analytical part. Within the theory section, the focus is placed on scrutinizing the terms genre and hybrid genre in order to develop a base on which I will carve out crucial characteristics of the Gothic film and the Musical film. On that basis, I will extrapolate the features of the Gothical. A first step is to discuss questions such as: What is a genre? What can we consider a hybrid genre? How will these terms be applied in this thesis? What are the effects of mixing genres? The examination of the Gothic and Musical genres will mainly take the medium film into consideration as an elaborate exploration of the literary and cultural background would go beyond the scope of my thesis and will only be referred to when particularly necessary for the development of my concept of the Gothical. In this study, the focus lies primarily on the classic features of the Gothic and the Musical. For that reason, I have chosen specimens from both American and the British film. The theoretical part concludes by providing parameters on how to define the new hybrid genre Gothical. The second part of my thesis is concerned with three crucial examples of the Gothical: Jim Sharman's classic *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) which describes the journey of the newly engaged couple who gets lost in a forest when a storm arises and finds 'shelter' in a mansion filled with society's outcasts; Tim Burton's *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007), which tells the story of a deceived father and husband who returns after a long time back to London with the wish to take revenge; and finally, *REPO! The Genetic Opera* (2008) by Darren Lynn Bousman that presents a future vision of the world which by 2056 has to deal with wide-spread deaths due to organ failure and an organ-replacement company whose only interest is financial profit. In an elaborate film analysis, these three main films will be examined in order to show parallels,

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[5] Goddu 6.

differences and/or alterations to the Gothical's source genres. The analyses will focus on three examination characteristics (1. the setting and aura; 2. the choice of characters; 3. the narrative and plot) that are pivotal in defining the new hybrid genre. Throughout, further exempla of Gothic films, Musical films, and Gothicals will also be included to place the selected film examples in a context.

This thesis strives to present a new approach to the cross-fertilization of film genres and explores the Gothical as a significant phenomenon of the contemporary cinema which has not yet been identified as such. Although the Gothical – as the title of my Master's thesis suggests – is on the emergence, the phenomenon of the Gothical is more common than one might assume. I deliberately chose *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* as an iconic film production of the past and *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* and *REPO! The Genetic Opera* as two contemporary films to emphasize that Gothicals increasingly appear in modern cinema. Hence, this hybrid genre is actually not new but former features have just not been defined as such and this is why there is no theory on this issue. Another reason for choosing these three examples is that they share a number of features but still tackle dissimilar social problems which makes it possible to present an extensive picture of the Gothical. Moreover, these films communicate the irony more strongly than many other Gothicals such as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Moulin Rouge* (2001), *Dancer in the Dark* (2002), or *The Phantom of the Opera* (adaptation from 2004).

Although my three selected films may differ in their overall appearance, the facettes selected to analyze are exceptionally striking in these cases and can be well-extracted in order to define the Gothical. Within the film analysis, my aim is to demonstrate how visual style, audio, narrative, and socio-cultural features of the Gothic and the Musical converge into the Gothical and elucidate its effects. This will be further illustrated through the inclusion of pictures from the chosen scenes and cross-referencing will be made easier as an index can be found at the end of my study.

2 'Genre Omnivores'[6]: Challenging Genre(s) and Hybridity

The discourse on genres has always been challenging for theorists. Since the beginning of the 20th century and with the emergence of the film medium new genres and sub-genres have developed. Nowadays, we are confronted with an overwhelming number of genre choices, a phenomenon the chapter entitled 'Genre Omnivores'[7] refers to. Established literary genres have been broadened and were adapted to the medium of film which added the visual component to the discourse and thereby a new factor to define genres. Nevertheless, the question of how we can frame this term and how it is applied can vary significantly, from stark categorizations to definitions that allow spaces in-between or are even based on genre mixes. Due to the number of newly or re-emerging genres, the differences they have and the similarities they share, the term 'sub-genre' has been used more and more to categorize media works in more detail – may it be for scholars, marketing purposes or sale reasons.

Before exploring the Gothic film and Musical in particular, the first part of this chapter examines theoretical approaches to genre in order to provide a profound background and offer guidelines for the following film analyses in chapters 3, 4, and 5. My aim in this chapter is firstly to state how the term genre will be applied within my thesis. Secondly, on this basis I define the Gothic and Musical genre by sifting out their major criteria focusing on the three selected parameters (1. the setting and aura; 2. the choice of characters; 3. the narrative and plot). In a third step, the focus is placed on the concept of the hybrid genre and the Gothical itself. It offers answers to questions such as these: What is a hybrid genre? When can a film be considered a Gothical? What are the Gothical's special functions and effects? Why is and has the Gothical been a pivotal socio-cultural phenomenon?

2.1 'Genrefication': Useful Aid or Restraining Tool?

We stumble over a broad variety of categorizations in almost every area of cultural products, whether it is in art, literature, music, fashion, or film. This helps us to find products in stores and marketing departments use it to place a new product and sell it to a certain target group as if to say 'if the customer likes this item, he might also buy that one.' In this sense, categorizations can be seen as useful tools. This goes along with the

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[6] Cf. Jaffe 5.
[7] Ibid.

definition by Steve Blandford, Barry Keith Grant, and Jim Hillier who explain that the term 'genre' being a kind of categorization can be approached in three different ways. Firstly, it has been considered to be "an industrial approach"[8] for production companies and marketing reasons, "especially during the STUDIO SYSTEM era."[9] Secondly, it can serve as "a consumer index"[10] which makes it easier for audiences to know what to expect of a certain film (or other media). Thirdly, a genre can work as "a critical concept, a tool for theorizing relations between films"[11] which is significant for this thesis, especially when it comes to examining the emergence of the new hybrid genre Gothical.

On the one hand, categorizations like genres can be advantageous to place a work into a context as they can, for instance, be organized "by star, by period (Silent Movies), occasionally by director (Alfred Hitchcock), by place of origin (Foreign Films)"[12] and further features. On the other hand, we can speak of a form of 'over-categorization' or in the case of genres, 'over-genrefication' which can also lead to a disadvantageous effect. An extreme genrefication can evolve into confusion for customers, cinema lovers, theorists, and so forth, and may even impose a restriction on some works. Some directors, for instance, might feel obliged to obey these genre categories. However, this 'confusion' can also be interpreted as a positive attention grabber. Is it therefore necessary to produce new genres, sub-genres, and further divisions? When is a definition of a new genre useful? In order to discover new mixes and their tools, as in the Gothical, this research will contribute some propositions.

The viewpoints on the indispensability of genres range significantly. In genre theory, criticism can be observed which opposes and challenges very strict ways of placing a work into either one or the other genre. As sometimes an either-or-decision cannot be made, innumerable sub-genres evolve. To illustrate, apart from the classic Horror films a variety of closer descriptions can be found, such as Horror Thriller, Science-Fiction Horror, or even Horror Comedy. This closer description can also be the place of origin, for example, American Gothic and British Gothic. Therefore, this chapter explores different approaches to the discourse on genres salient for defining the Gothic, the Musical, and naturally, the Gothical.

Beginning with a definition given in *The Film Studies Dictionary* (2001), Blandford, Grant, and Hillier state that a genre is "a category, kind or type of art or cultural artefact

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8 Blandford, Grant, Hillier 112.
9 Ibid. Any use of capitalized, italicized or bold faced words in quotations is kept as in the original. Any emphasis added by myself will be indicated individually.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Bordwell, Thompson 107.

with certain elements in common."[13] A similarly broad idea can be found in *The Glossary of Literary Terms* (2009) by M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. Their assumptions primarily refer to definitions for literary genres but these can also be translated to the medium of film. Genre is

> a term, French in origin, that denotes types or classes of *literature* [or other media]. The genres into which literary works have been grouped at different times are very numerous, and the criteria on which the classifications have been based are highly variable.[14]

In historical terms, these 'variable classifications' also have limits. Abrams and Harpham suggest that

> through the Renaissance and much of the eighteenth century, the recognized genres – or poetic **kinds** as they were then called – were widely thought to be fixed literary types, somewhat like species in the biological order of nature.[15]

This points out that for a long time the discourse on genres did not allow any mingling at all. A rule of purity in genres was and sometimes still is seen as a necessity: "Many *neoclassic* critics insisted that each kind must remain 'pure'"[16] and they further "proposed *rules* which specified the subject matter, structure, style, and emotional effect proper to each kind."[17]

The idea of purity is accompanied by so-called 'formula films' as Blandford, Grant and Hillier declare:

> Some genre movies are FORMULA FILMS [e.g. James Bond films], merely deploying the appropriate generic elements with little creativity, while others are made by AUTEURS who use elements in innovative and expressive ways.[18]

The purity in terms of 'auteurs' is slightly different to that of formula films because 'auteurs' (e.g. Pedro Almodóvar; Quentin Tarantino; Alejandro González Iñárritu in *Babel*, *21 Grams*, *Amores Perros*; Alfred Hitchcock) certainly apply and reuse elements by placing their 'handwriting' onto each of their works and it is not the film genre which defines the 'formula' but the director. Thus, in any case a kind of desire for purity is apparent. This leads to two approaches towards categorizations in film which can either be the 'auteurist criticism' which concentrates on individual directors (auteur), or, the 'structuralist' approach which identifies "common features across a range of films by different directors"[19] (genre). In short, genres are generally seen as 'types, classes, categories, or

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[13] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 112.
[14] Abrams, Harpham 134.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 113.
[19] Ibid.

kinds' and each genre follows a certain set of 'criteria' or 'rules' that are specific for that particular genre which should be kept 'pure.'

What, however, happens if one or more genres partially share the same criteria and hence, absolute purity is no longer guaranteed? It goes without saying that the addressed 'rules' are still crucial for identifying and defining every genre. However, the necessity for a 'pure kind' or a genre with exact, strict borders tends to diminish also because nowadays the desire and need to create something innovative has increased to a great extent. To do so, at least slight alterations become inevitable. This, too, is why sub-genres have come into being. As mentioned above, by dividing an already established genre into sub-genres we are able to better describe them. Spectators who have enjoyed a particular genre might also be interested in further variations of it – its sub-genres.[20]

For the most part, this thesis understands genres according to Ludwig Wittgenstein's basic idea of 'family resemblances' which allows impurity and variety within a certain genre. Wittgenstein declares that he

> can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than 'family resemblances'; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way.[21]

This analogy stands in stark contrast to genre purity. Abrams and Harpham take up Wittgenstein's concept and state that 'family resemblances'

> propose that, in the loosely grouped family of works that make up a genre, there are no essential defining features, but only a set of family resemblances; each member shares some of these resemblances with some, but not all, of the other members of the genre.[22]

As claimed by Wittgenstein, the proposed 'resemblances' or, here, 'parameters' provide the framework to define and identify a genre. Yet, not necessarily every single characteristic is prominent in every genre the same way and to the same degree.

So what exactly are these parameters? *The Film Studies Dictionary* proposes that "in film, common generic elements include subject matter, theme, narrative and stylistic CONVENTIONS, motifs, CHARACTER types, PLOTS, and ICONOGRAPHY"[23] and further ones can be added, such as the effect and the setting, or in other words the mise-en-scène. Taking up Wittgenstein's metaphor of the family tree, Blandford, Grant and Hillier declare that

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[20] Accordingly, this already hints at the distinction and definition between a sub-genre and a hybrid genre which will be taken up again when talking about hybrid genres in more detail and a clear differentiation will be made.
[21] Wittgenstein 64.
[22] Abrams, Harpham 136.
[23] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 112.

> the major genres are defined inconsistently, by rather different criteria: for example, the HORROR FILM and COMEDY by their intended affect, SCIENCE FICTION by the nature of its narrative premise, [and] WESTERNS by their setting.[24]

What can be observed is that each genre has its criteria to be defined by. Nevertheless, these parameters vary from genre to genre and may alter from film to film, too. Therefore, genres need to be considered as a guideline, not as a fixed system. The genre theorists David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson announce that "apparently no strictly logical distinctions can capture the variety of factors that create the genres we have."[25]

The numbered criteria can also be looked at from either the director's and producer's view or the spectator's perspective and these do not automatically need to be equivalent because

> genres are not simply bodies of work or groups of films, however classified, labeled, and defined. Genres do not consist only of films: they consist also, and equally, of specific systems of expectation and hypothesis that spectators bring with them to the cinema and that interact with the films themselves during the course of the viewing process. These systems provide spectators with a means of recognition and understanding.[26]

According to Steve Neale, the term 'verisimilitude' describes the expectations towards a genre and, hence, what is demanded of a certain film genre. These expectations vary with each genre and can also be seen as rather general rules. However, if the 'verisimilitude' is not fulfilled, disappointment may follow.[27] Further, this term is often connected to 'reality' and/or 'authenticity' which Neale highly opposes. Agreeing with Neale, the term 'verisimilitude' is only directly connected to reality and authenticity if the genre that is addressed has this as a specific parameter. As Neale adds, the "generically verisimilitudinous ingredients of a film . . . constitute its pleasure and thus, attract audiences to the film in the first place."[28] This is interesting for the two aforementioned points of view, the director's or producer's standpoint and that of the audience. Here, the concept of the "consumer index"[29] is crucial as "genre films activate expectations in spectators based on the experience of previous similar movies."[30] Expectations towards a new film obviously evolve from previous films of the same or similar genre, the same director, or the same setting, for instance. They are inseparably connected to each genre's parameters and therefore, are requisite in order to define a genre.

As discussed so far, "it may at first sight seem as though repetition and sameness are the primary hallmarks of genres, as though, therefore, genres are above all inherently

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[24] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 113.
[25] Bordwell, Thompson 109.
[26] Neale "Questions of Genre" 158.
[27] Cf. Ibid. "Questions of Genre" 158.
[28] Neale "Questions of Genre" 160.
[29] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 112.
[30] Ibid. 113.

static."[31] Neale hints at this assumption but continues to agree with Hans Robert Jauß (Reception Theory) and Ralph Cohen (New Literary History) who have argued that genres are "best understood as *processes.*"[32] Neale explains that "these processes may, for sure, be dominated by repetition, but they are also marked fundamentally by difference, variation, and change."[33] Although these statements may sound rather general as the concept of genres, it is exactly how the term genre needs to be understood within this thesis: a concept with a stable base that allows modifications, a frame that is defined through similarities though shows variations. There are characteristics that can be considered specific for a certain genre but which can change and be adapted to contexts or other genres. What is crucial for the idea of genre is that every genre has a framework of reappearing parameters, however, some may at times be left out and others added or be altered. It is the crux, the general idea, the atmosphere, the effect of a genre which defines it.

Taking the idea of the term genre and the parameters which help to define a genre into account, the next two points are going to focus on the Gothic and the Musical genre. An extensive overview of historical facts regarding both genres would go beyond the scope of this thesis and, furthermore, is not essential for the proceeding analyses. That is why the following parts should be understood as an introduction to both the Gothic and the Musical. Aside from a broad 'lead-in,' three parameters will be selected.

2.1.1 The Gothic: The Joy of Horror

To begin with, the Gothic genre has a long established history in both American as well as British literature and film, and also in other nations. Although a differentiation between American and British Gothic is not of utmost importance regarding the emergence of the Gothical, it is nevertheless necessary to hint at the distinction that theorists of the Gothic have established when it comes to the question of defining this genre. The Gothic is said to have its roots in British literature and to be shaped by popular authors such as Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, and Mary Shelley. Its starting point is mostly considered to be Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*[34] from 1764 and the Gothic period is said to proceed through the 1820s.[35] However, when talking about the Gothic we need to include American works, too, since authors like Edgar Allan Poe are usually added to the list above.

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[31] Neale "Questions of Genre" 165.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] A classic setting is already included in the title: the castle.
[35] Cf. Goddu 3.

An elucidation worthwhile to be mentioned is Teresa A. Goddu's position in this discourse because it is not the differentiation of the British and the American Gothic which feeds into this thesis but the combination of both. Goddu states that the American Gothic in comparison to the British Gothic cannot be connected to a certain time period but instead is rather associated "as a regional form"[36] and that "before 1860 the term *romance* in America connoted characteristics [e.g. the supernatural] now associated with the gothic."[37] Indeed, Goddu takes up Frederick Frank's concise definition of this distinction as her line of argument: "While the English Gothic had dealt with physical terror and social horror, the American Gothic would concentrate on mental terror and moral horror."[38] Hence, the British Gothic places its focus differently to the American Gothic. The British version is based on historical and social plots whereas the American Gothic – "its literature [said to] *have* no history"[39] – pays more attention to mental situations as, for instance, madness, or as Goddu puts it: "If the British gothic is read in social terms, the American gothic is viewed within psychological and theological rubrics."[40]

Moreover, the tendency that the American Gothic also embraces historical movements has been observed by Karen Halttunen who addressed the "cult of horror."[41] According to Halttunen, the "historicizing of the American gothic also reflects a movement toward reading the American gothic in social, not psychological, terms."[42] Coming back to the question's importance regarding this study, it is not functional to make a clear either-or-distinction between British and American Gothic but instead, to keep in mind that 20th and 21st century films considered to belong to the Gothic include historical as well as psychological, social as well as theological topics. Surely, there are features that can be traced back to 'only' or mainly one nation but are imported into the overall idea of the Gothic film (or other media). For this work, classic Gothic features of both are more important to examine with regard to their effects than to make a differentiation based on national borders.

Nonetheless, as Halttunen alluded to the 'historicizing of the Gothic,' it ought to be read in a particular context. Goddu gives a vivid illustration for this in her book *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation*:

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[36] Goddu 3.
[37] Goddu 6.
[38] Ibid. 8. The original quote by Frederick Frank can be found in the introduction to *Through the Pale Door*.
[39] Ibid. 9.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid. 10.

This episode in *Black Boy* [43] tells us much about readings of gothic literature – those thrilling tales of horror that seemingly have no relationships to reality. Instead of being gateways to other, distant worlds of fantasy, the example of Wright suggests, gothic stories are intimately connected to the culture that produces them. Actually, folded within the pages of the newspaper, the gothic tales of Wright's magazine insert should not be read separately from their historical, and specifically, their racial contexts.[44]

What Goddu explains, looking at the example from Wright's autobiography, is that Gothic texts need to be seen in a certain context – the context of the time in which they are published and in which they play. Thus, this context does not necessarily need to be a historic one but can also be of social nature. Although the text itself can have a specific message, this exact message might change if placed in another frame of reference and hence this plays a crucial role for the effect on the readership, the actual as well as the intended one.[45] Therefore, it is of utmost importance for this thesis to be mindful of the fact that Gothic media is closely linked to events, situations, and developments in reality.

At this point, the term 'Neo-Gothicism' or 'Neo-Gothic' needs to be introduced. Since the term includes 'neo' meaning 'new,' it obviously implies the new Gothic, the Gothic in contemporary times.[46] The Gothic was first used to describe 18th century works and discussions about when it actually began and when it ended vary – some think the end to be around the middle of the 19th century, some see it as later revived again with, for example, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) or Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) and David Punter (*The Literature of Terror*) also goes beyond the 19th and into the 20th century with seeing Gothic tendencies.[47] What is clear though is that society, its problems and interests have changed over the course of history and definitely have shaped the Gothic. "[T]he gothic, like all discourses, needs to be historicized; to read it out of cultural context is to misread it,"[48] Goddu reminds us. What is essential is the 'historicization' or rather the 'contextualization' of Gothic, the need to read it within a certain context. The context of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818; filmed in 1910), a Gothic classic, was a different one from contemporary worries of our society. Further, with the invention of the medium of film, literature classics were adapted

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[43] Goddu introduces the book with an anecdote by Richard Wright: One of Wright's first jobs was to sell newspapers but he only read the magazine part of it so he had no idea what beliefs the newspaper was based on. Hence, he missed that it publicized the ideas of the Ku Klux Klan. The magazine, however, told gothic stories which fascinated him. After Wright was told about the racist newspaper part, he quit hawking the newspaper. Here, it is important that the magazine and the newspaper cannot be separated from each other and must be seen as connected.

[44] Goddu 2.

[45] An author or director, for instance, may have an 'intended readership' while he produces a work and markets it. However, the 'actual spectatorship' can vary and stands for the real consumers.

[46] Cf. Landsteiner 3.

[47] Landsteiner 3.

[48] Goddu 2.

and thereby experienced a revival. The Gothic genre also had to react to the changes in society, to new events, social fears and has been altered conclusively.

The scholars David Punter and Rüdiger Imhof have explored the Neo-Gothic. What is interesting for this study are elements they see as representative for Neo-Gothic fiction: "1. the exploration of evil, 2. an exposing of taboos, 3. forms of social criticism, and 4. the portrayal of psychopathic protagonists."[49] The first point is crucial when considering the choice of characters in the Gothic. The 'exposing of taboos' and 'forms of social criticism' are shown through the protagonists as well as the topic the narrative deals with. The fourth point, the 'portrayal of psychopathic protagonists' is taken up by the choice of characters and the setting because the Neo-Gothic plot is more often than not set in a hospital or mental asylum.[50] In addition, contemporary artists make use of this fascination with the hospital and mental asylum or even more with people having mental disorders such as the performance artist Emilie Autumn.[51] Nevertheless, the four points that Punter and Imhof refer to are not exclusively Neo-Gothic as these elements are representative for the Gothic in general. Therefore, this thesis regards the term Neo-Gothic as just one possible frame of interpretation to place the Gothic into context and adapt it to contemporary times.

It is remarkable that regardless from which viewpoint, whether it is a literary scholar or someone who does not deal with the media professionally, the expectations with regard to the Gothic are similar. Elements like "haunted houses, evil villains, ghosts, gloomy landscapes, madness, terror, suspense, [and] horror"[52] are patterns that are mentioned the most and are crucial in order to classify the Gothic. Going a step further than Wittgenstein, Goddu suggests a number of reappearing elements that are strongly connected to the Gothic in order to identify this genre. Hence, there is a stock of key elements in the Gothic as it places emphasis on a dark atmosphere of unease and the general tone is that of anxiety and desolation. The Gothic world is

> characterized by a chronic sense of apprehension and the premonition of impending but unidentified disaster. In this world, appearances frequently, though

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[49] Landsteiner 15. Original quote by Rüdiger Imhof "Neo-Gotische Tendenzen im zeitgenössischen Roman" 77.

[50] The interest in mentally disordered patients and therefore, also the setting of the hospital or asylum has been used in Victorian and Neo-Victorian fiction as well. Neo-Victorianism is a term that I will not go into detail on as this would move beyond the scope of my thesis. A very brief clarification: It is similar to the Neo-Gothic explanation because it, in essence, deals with the reusage of Victorian characteristics in literature and film. What is crucial is that the Neo-Victorian media also offers a nostalgic (see Linda Hutcheon for further information) view of Victorian times and provides a critical reading of the contemporary society showing that today's society with its views is not as progressive as we like to think.

[51] Emilie Autumn addresses mental disorders in her stage performances through its scenery and within her song's lyrics. Her performances are a combination of various characteristics, contemporary, Victorian, and Gothic.

[52] Goddu 5.

> not consistently, deceive, the mind and the senses falter and fail, and the passions overwhelm. Tempers, natural and supernatural, assault in impenetrable disguises, precipitating ruin and damnation. Nobody is really safe; nothing is secure. The Gothic world is quintessentially the fallen world, the vision of fallen man, living in fear and alienation, haunted by images of his mythic expulsion, by its repercussions, and by an awareness of his unavoidable wretchedness.[53]

Accordingly, the elementary point is that the Gothic portrays the dark and evil side of the human mind.

Recalling the earlier numbered parameters, it is now necessary to take a closer look at the Gothic film's characteristics. In this part and for the analysis, I focus on three major parameters of the Gothic genre and these will also be utilized when defining the Musical and naturally, the Gothical. The most prominent and therefore, also most important elements to be looked at are the setting and aura, the choice of characters, and the narrative and plot.

The Setting and Aura

What is a traditional, a classic setting for a Gothic film? And, what atmosphere does this choice of setting evoke? Typical answers are castles, mansions, haunted houses, gloomy landscapes, cellars, ruins, abbeys, side streets, towers, as well as hospitals and mental institutions.[54] These settings are usually accompanied by adjectives such as 'dark' or 'gloomy,' and 'ominous,' which strengthen the atmosphere as "the setting of the Gothic . . . is used to stir the reader's emotions"[55] and evokes fear and suspense. Therefore, the element of the setting is closely linked to its aura. It sets the tone of the text or film which needs to be looked at in connection with the Horror genre.[56]

As mentioned before, the Gothic cannot be looked at as an isolated and autarkic pure genre because it features cross-overs, for example to the Horror genre. In this heterogeneity also lies a certain attractiveness of the Gothic: "Cobbled together of many different forms and obsessed with transgressing boundaries, it represents itself not as stable but as generically impure."[57] The crossing of boundaries should be seen as creating space for progress, space that allows change in order to adapt to the prevailing time period and the media the Gothic appears in. Horror as stated in *The Film Studies Dictionary* by Blandford, Grant, and Hillier commonly includes "the supernatural, the mysterious . . . graphic violence, aiming to frighten or horrify its audience"[58] which the

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[53] Tracy 3.
[54] Cf. Goddu 5.
[55] Landsteiner 37.
[56] Cf. Ibid. 22.
[57] Goddu 5.
[58] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 124.

Gothic deals with as well. Through placing the action in an old castle with thick stone walls, far away from any other dwellings in a rural area, for instance, fear and horror can arise. The suspense which makes the readers or viewers anticipate that something bad or cruel might happen any second and there is no real chance of help and relief, is classic for the Gothic and the Horror genre. Thus, the remoteness of such historical buildings is significant. Castles, abbeys, and ruins are perfect isolated places that "provide authors with plenty of opportunities to install innumerable hidden terrors."[59] The audience never knows where someone or something may hide, which door will open again and which not. The protagonists have to survive "on their own, stumbling alone, sometimes in foreign countries, through appalling complexities of decision and action, obliged to find their own solutions or go under."[60] The spectator can experience this adventurous horrific tremor without actually being left alone and threatened. Consequently, the spectatorship is constantly confronted with a thrill.

In particular, castles and similar buildings play an important role because they "presumably once offered warmth, revelry, or at least security"[61] but now they "stand empty and ruined, providing instead baffling passageways, unspeakable mysteries, and menacing or pathetic apparitions."[62] The castle once was in high bloom and a token for majestic power but then, it largely fell into decay. This is why the castle can be seen as the paradigm of the fallen world. The settings' history does not necessarily need to be mentioned or explained because the feelings that are provoked when the spectator is confronted with such places are a mixture of curiosity, nervousness, adventurousness, and fear. That the viewers may assume or invent a history for the presented Gothic settings themselves provides a space for the mind to play tricks and this can also be enjoyable.

However, not only isolated buildings serve as settings for the Gothic film because remoteness is not the only feature that evokes horrific thrills and suspense. Mansions, cellars, or (side) alleys in the middle of the town (urban spaces) certainly provide an appropriate place for the Gothic plot, too. The possibility that something cruel could be happening just next door or in the cellar across the street, or in an alley you walk through each day feeds the emotional response of horror and fear.

In addition, it is not only the place where the Gothic building finds itself but also the structure of the building itself. A sense of claustrophobia, the fright of not being able to find

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[59] Landsteiner 23.
[60] Tracy 5.
[61] Ibid. 4.
[62] Ibid.

a way out and be trapped forever or confronted with a murderer certainly is terrifying.[63] The labyrinthine inside of Gothic buildings thereby supports the horror.

With respect to the buildings, the Gothic in architecture needs to be alluded to as well. The classic Gothic building has high pillars, pointed arches and windows, which has been described repeatedly in Gothic literature and has been applied in film as well. This way, the architecture underlines the atmosphere created in the Gothic media. As stated in the introduction to the Gothic, hospitals and mental asylums and their connection to mentally sick patients can often be found as settings, too. What is more, inhabitants of hospitals are usually sick and sometimes even close to death. The transformation a patient goes through while being seriously sick or moving towards the end of his or her life confronts the audience with the end of human life instead of the beginning which is also interesting for the narrative and plot.[64] Accordingly, the readers or viewers are confronted with varying moods, emotions, and sudden changes in the patients' mental state. On top of that, graveyards no matter whether in the center of the plot or appearing in the background (e.g. beside a church) also lead to the confrontation with the end of one's life. As in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and its film adaptations laboratories can play a crucial role since Dr. Frankenstein creates a human-like monster out of human remains stolen from the graveyard – again, a Gothic setting.

Aside from buildings, landscapes can as well supply the Gothic setting. The aforementioned 'gloomy landscapes' or forests produce similar effects like the buildings explained above. Here, the weather plays a significant role as the Gothic is commonly connected to dark, shadowy, and uninviting weather. Thunder and lightning, rain and storm are classic occurrences. Directors often make use of shadows and light – not necessarily connected to the weather – that deliberately cover or highlight certain parts of the body (e.g. the knife in the hand of the murderer; in *Frankenstein*, the hand of the Monster reaches out to strangle someone), a setting (e.g. a graveyard; a tower of a castle) or an object (e.g. a knife as in *Psycho*). Plus, the weather can be used as a reaction to the occurrences in the film in order to underline the threatening atmosphere or also to distract the viewer.

The Choice of Characters

Who is the Gothic film audience confronted with, and why? A general title for characters in the Gothic media is 'the Other.' Whether it is the Monster or Creature in *Frankenstein* (both book and film), vampires (e.g. again referring to a state similar to death) in *Dracula* (also both book and film), or the Phantom in *The Phantom of the Opera* with his deformed

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[63] Cf. Landsteiner 28.
[64] Cf. Landsteiner 29.

face, we are confronted with imagined and reality-based outcasts of society. Moreover, one can find mad scientists and physicians, a rather shy heroine who nonetheless overcomes numerous obstacles, the madwoman living in the attic (e.g. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*), or evil alter egos as in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) which triggers the *Doppelgänger* motif with usually a heroic and a villainous side.[65]

To begin with, the 'mad scientist'[66] whose wish it is to create life, like the Monster in *Frankenstein*, is a recurring ingredient of the Gothic. The scientist is commonly read as symbol for the power over nature, bringing life into a new creature or a dead person. Quite often, the creature turns against the person who created it for which *Frankenstein* also is a popular example – "the mad scientist has turned from obsessive creator into the victim of his creation."[67] One interpretation is that oppressed people (creature) can always turn against their oppressor (creator). According to Robin Wood, the "STRUCTURAL model of horror featuring a fundamental BINARY OPPOSITION of normal and monstrous"[68] leads to the interpretation that the "reversed . . . normal/monstrous opposition [assists] to critique different aspects of contemporary society such as patriarchy, capitalism, the family and the military."[69] The scientific element of creating something new, bringing someone back to life or significantly altering the life of people certainly is crucial for the Gothic. This point will also be significant when discussing the three selected film examples of the Gothical because the creation of life has a major function in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. The prolonging of life despite organ failure, for instance, is present in *REPO! The Genetic Opera*. In addition, the scientist, the monsters, creatures, ghosts, and the walking dead appear because these kinds of characters offer "an expansive field of the imagination in which anything may happen."[70]

Aside from the scientist who even might have positive intentions with his creations, there is the character of the hero or heroine. The hero usually has to save an innocent woman, a 'damsel in distress.' No matter whether we are confronted with a hero or heroine, both have to approach evil for the first time in their innocent lives.[71] The hero and/or heroine has to face the villain but sometimes is accompanied by a sidekick, as it is the case with Professor Albronius and Alfred when they fight the vampires in the Gothic film *Dance of the Vampires* (1967).

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[65] Landsteiner 46.
[66] Cf. Ibid. 51.
[67] Landsteiner 53.
[68] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 126. Original statement by Robin Wood.
[69] Ibid. 127.
[70] Tracy 8.
[71] Cf. Landsteiner 53.

In contrast to hero and heroine stands the villain. "Good and evil, represented in human form, are placed in opposition"[72] however, the villains may not be exclusively evil but they can also be seen as "victims of the society in which they live"[73] and we might also observe a transformation. Further, Gothic heroes and heroines have to face a multitude of "agents of temptation"[74] as for example demons, ghosts, and villains. These 'agents' try to lead the good astray and tempt them to indulge in desires, commonly lust, which eventually leads to disaster. To a large extent, lust is seen as "the principal passion that undoes Gothic heroes and heroines . . . though there are instances of anger, avarice, occult curiosities, and even gluttony, as well as more general sensuality."[75]

The next classic character needs to be regarded more as a generic term: the social outcast, or 'the Other'. Society has always contained both people who fit in, suit the norm, and those who appear different, who stick out. Minorities, no matter whether we look at the 18th century or at the contemporary world, are more likely confronted with obstacles, prejudices, exclusions, or even physical harm. These minorities are personified through the characters in the Gothic fiction. To illustrate, the phantom in Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1910; and its numerous adaptations, e.g. Joel Schumacher's version from 2004) can stand for people who are judged falsely due to their outer appearance. The Hunchback from Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831; and its numerous adaptations) can be similarly interpreted, as well as the Monster from *Frankenstein*, as he only turned into the 'villain' when attacked.

In more recent productions, as we will also observe regarding my selected film examples, further 'outcasts' are addressed. In *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* for instance, characters represent the oppressed groups of transvestites or homosexual people that today's society often enough is still unable to accept. Interestingly, it can be assumed that the choice of outcasts also changes according to the time it refers to and criticizes – as we will see in *REPO! The Genetic Opera* in which the topic of organ failure and replacement as well as medical corruption is addressed. The choice of characters, the decision which kind of outcasts has been chosen for a certain film, can teach the audience about the society they live in and through playing with stereotypes and exaggerations the spectators can read a film from a different angle. Barbara Landsteiner emphasizes the function of the Gothic as

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[72] Landsteiner 61.
[73] Ibid. 63.
[74] Tracy 7.
[75] Ibid. 8.

an instrument for social criticism. All areas of human life come under scrutiny, and taboos are mercilessly exposed. Taboos are often of a sexual nature, or they are in some ways linked with death or violence.[76]

Thereby, the audience is challenged through a mirror which shows an exaggerated image of them and/or their social environment.

The Gothic approaches social taboos either directly or through metaphors and symbols which can also be the characters of a story. Interpretations are numerous and can deal with criticism of society's structures (e.g. discrepancy between poor and rich, influential and non-influential), religion (e.g. the questioning of God, the creation of the world and its beings), social minorities (e.g. outcasts that are kept away from society) and so further. The criticism challenges established structures and can be seen as 'abjection':

> In the *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva defines *abjection* as 'what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules.' [[77]] Abjection arises from the crossing of cultural boundaries and the pollution/defilement of social categories.[78]

The means the Gothic works with (e.g. the choice of characters, the setting, and the subject) aim to test and question 'borders, positions, and rules' made by 'systems,' here for example, social hierarchies, politics, or gender expectations. What is significant for the Gothic is that the "pleasure of abjection lies within its very transgressions, which captivate as well as revolt, attract as well as repel, fascinate as well as disgust."[79] This can be evoked through the inclusion of characters that the society is not (yet) accustomed to or which are invented as the supernatural for instance; and these are placed into the focus of the Gothic.

The criticism towards significant socio-cultural problems and the means through which it is presented in the Gothic plays a pivotal role when exploring the Gothical, too, as it is one of its major features:

> Some critics have argued that horror [and Gothic] films are particularly enjoyed by adolescents because in their awkwardness they can easily empathize with the monsters, who are social outcasts, and because they express in metaphoric form the physical changes that occur with the onset of puberty (Evans in Grant, 1984).[80]

Hence, the degree of identification and therefore, also the challenge and 'educational' value of Gothic films is decisive.

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[76] Landsteiner 192. Barbara Landsteiner tends to assume that the idea of criticism is more apparent in the Neo-Gothic as she connects this feature mainly to the Neo-Gothic. However, this thesis sees the Neo-Gothic rather as a term to describe the Gothic in and adapted (e.g. in subject matters) to contemporary times.

[77] Here was a footnote to the original quote by Julia Kristeva: Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection.* Translation by L.S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982. 4. Print.

[78] Ott, Mack 247.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 126.

Another answer to the question why these characters are used and why the audience enjoys watching stories with them so much is that the Gothic just like

> Horror films address both universal and culturally specific fears, dwelling on both timeless themes (death, our own beastly natures) as well as on more topical fears (for example, atomic radiation, environmental pollution). Horror addresses that which is universally taboo or abject (Creed, 1993).[81]

As indicated above, through the use of settings such as hospitals, churches, graveyards and characters such as sick patients, the spectators are confronted with their own mortality. Besides, 'our own beastly natures' (e.g. *Doppelgänger* motif; Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde)* can evoke disgust and attraction at the same time. We are afraid of it but simultaneously we are eager to discover it. The fear that everyone could have a darker side in himself and the resulting tension catches the viewers' interest.

The Narrative and Plot

Why did I choose the narrative and plot as one of three main characteristics that will classify the Gothic? My interest in this element stems from the fact that aside from the choice of characters, the narrative serves as major tool for social criticism and is, therefore, of great importance not only for the Gothic but also for identifying the Musical and hence, the Gothical. When discussing the narrative of a work, one can look at its structure and plot, the words themselves, and how the 'text' is presented. The structure of the Gothic narrative certainly should not be dismissed. Thus, its discussion will be kept very briefly at this point because regarding the emergence of the new hybrid genre Gothical, the 'what' and 'how'[82] are even more significant.

The importance of structure is closely linked to the choice of characters as

> the typical [Gothic] story focused on the sufferings imposed on an innocent heroine by a cruel and lustful villain, and made bountiful use of ghosts, mysterious disappearances, and other sensational and supernatural occurrences (which in a number of novels turned out to have natural explanations).[83]

However, the clear focus on the heroine can also move to the creation of a monster, the chase of monsters or vampires and so forth. The "plot itself mirrors the ruined world in its dealings"[84] similarly to the imagery of the castle. Thereby, it underlines the criticism.

It is less the 'line-up' of the plot that provides the essential structures than it is the social structures that are dealt with, hence, the topic of the film. As already hinted at, social structures that portray a discrepancy between rich and poor, influential and non-

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[81] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 125.
[82] Cf. Abrams, Harpham 349.
[83] Abrams, Harpham 137.
[84] De Vore *The Gothic Novel*. Web.

influential are commonly used. To illustrate, the scientist and its creation present such a relation. The scientist invents: He creates new life or brings the dead alive. The creature can be seen as dependent on its creator. However, as *Frankenstein* shows, the creature can also turn against its 'master' and this revolt suggests the reverse of the proposed social structure. Further, the relation between a hierarchically higher positioned character and one that has no influence at all can be dealt with. This is also the case in *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* in which the influential Judge Turpin plays tricks on Sweeney Todd alias Benjamin Barker who, as a result, is innocently being accused of a crime and cannot defend himself. On top of this, social structures regarding minorities may be questioned by putting them in opposition. In particular, socially marginalized groups due to their religion, sexuality, gender, or race can be either introduced as minority or as just mentioned, they can be placed in the more influential, hierarchical higher position – thus, as majority. This reversal assuredly demonstrates criticism towards the exclusion of minorities.

The 'what,' meaning the words themselves, and the 'how' of course are essential. Are the subjects directly addressed, or are they spoken about metaphorically, in 'figurative language?'[85] Who do the characters talk to? Do they speak with each other, themselves, or do they directly address the audience? What kind of language is used, colloquial phrases or rather poetic speech? All these and many further questions mold and add to the atmosphere and set the tone of each film. To demonstrate, in *Dance of the Vampires*, the professor and also further characters speak in dialects. Also in *Van Helsing* (2004), a rather recent production, a dialect is used to underline the background of Anna Valerious and other vampires who all speak a similar dialect which connects them to the place, Transylvania. In the film *Frankenstein* for instance, the spectator is 'prepared' by a presenter or storyteller for what might threaten the 'weak hearts'. The audience is directly addressed and spoken to. This scene even reminds the viewer of a theater performance because the narrator stands in front of a curtain which leads to the question of 'how' the text or plot is presented to the spectatorship.

The performative component needs to be taken into account as well. Is the plot explained through speech or through the action of the characters? Do the actors use intended intonation like whispering to intensify the suspense? The Gothic narratives aim "to evoke chilling terror by exploiting mystery and a variety of horrors"[86] which can be aroused though the choice of words, how words are spoken or also by the absence of text. These possibilities of how to apply speech can be found in the Gothic film. However, one characteristic certainly appears in the majority of Gothic (and Horror) films with which

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[85] Cf. Abrams, Harpham 349.
[86] Abrams, Harpham 137.

the heroine is mainly connected: the scream. This sort of 'voicing the horror or terror' reappears in numerous Gothic films, then and today.

The three genre parameters, the setting and aura, the choice of characters, and the narrative and plot, have now been introduced with reference to the Gothic genre and the same elements will be scrutinized regarding the Musical, preceded by a succinct introduction to the Musical and differentiation to related genres and sub-genres.

2.1.2 The Musical: Just a Light-Hearted Entertainment Genre?

The Musical has two components that are as essential as horses in a Western: the singing and the dancing. Therefore, the Musical sometimes tends to be dismissed as pure entertainment without any deeper function which is going to be refuted in the following. Before taking a closer look at the three characteristics, a few terms and similar (sub-) genres will be explored.

The prejudice of Musicals being light-hearted films needs to be addressed and altered:

> Both in common sense and in more theoretical ways of thinking, entertainment is usually associated with simple, uncomplicated pleasure – hence the phrase, for example, 'mere entertainment'. This is to evade the obligation to investigate which mechanisms lie at the basis of that pleasure, how that pleasure is produced and how it works – as though that pleasure were something natural and automatic. Nothing is less true, however. Any form of pleasure is constructed and functions in a specific social and historical context.[87]

Hence, although the overall tone and atmosphere of a Musical may seem happy, carefree, and unconcerned, this, too, is a means of this genre and can function as critical approach towards a problematic topic.

Musicals were also important for the stabilization of society. The free and easy spirit could as well work as escapist retreat during times of war or socially difficult periods as in the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Post World War II era, the Korean War (1950-1953) and the Cold War period. Actually, it was the time of the Great Depression when Musical films arose and both plot and cinematography supported the distraction from the depressing and frustrating reality. The power "of music and dance as means of escaping, transcending or changing the everyday world"[88] prepared the way for "aesthetically 'utopian' solutions to real social needs and contradictions."[89] Thereby, this could evoke the light-hearted overall tone. The Musicals also skyrocketed again in the 1950s and musical stars like Judy Garland and Gene Kelly were made popular by Metro-

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[87] Ang 19. Also quoted in Ott, Mack 241.
[88] Neale 110f.
[89] Ibid.

Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), for instance. However, the stories presented in the Musicals of the 1950s tended to include less utopian images. These times, "the period 1930-1960, despite some severe dips, marked the great era of the Hollywood musical."[90]

Although the popularity of Musicals decreased after the 1960s, contemporary TV shows such as *Glee* (2010-still running) and films (e.g. *Grease*, 1978; *Fame*, 1980) keep on taking up the Musical genre. Without meaning to anticipate, the Musical as a film genre is experiencing a revival in the 21st century – maybe not as strongly as in the 1950s – through amongst others, the Gothical.

As also Dorothee Ott acknowledges, the Musical as well as the Dance film are easier to define than other genres. Certain "narrative criteria and formal aspects"[91] can help to provide a broad definition of this genre. Ott states that a first hint surely is the focus of the film. Does the film mainly use music and singing whereas dancing plays a rather minor role, or is it the other way around? Which is the main means of expression of the characters? The answer already leads the way to the question of which genre we are confronted with. *The Film Studies Dictionary* offers a rougher approach in order to define the Musical gerne. According to it the Musical is actually a "film GENRE that includes any film with singing and/or dancing as an important element"[92] which may be a very broad definition but it focuses on the most important characteristics of the Musical. Here the hierarchy of sound and events is inverted in comparison to other genres. The music takes on a greater role and strongly influences the action.

Moreover, Ott even differentiates the terms 'Musical film' and 'film Musical': 'Musical films' have a stage performance as origin (e.g. a Broadway Musical that has been filmed later on) whereas 'film Musicals' have a script without a preceding theater play.[93] Within this thesis, these two terms will be used synonymously signifying a Musical 'on the screen' and I am only going to use the term 'Musical' whereas if a staged performance is meant, it will be explicitly referred to.

One strong characteristic of both Musical as well as Opera or Operetta is the 'narrative voice' or 'narrative song,' sometimes also called 'recitative' songs, which projects the emotions of the characters as well as it is the medium for dialogues between characters.[94] The ways in which the narrative voice is applied can of course vary: The entire dialogues and monologues can be performed through songs; the dialogues and monologues can float into a song; or sometimes already existing songs (not particularly produced for the film) can be interwoven into the plot, underlining emotions or

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[90] Hayward, Susan 239.
[91] Ott 24.
[92] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 158.
[93] Cf. Ott 24.
[94] Ibid. 25.

embellishing situations. Here, the distinction is made between 'diegetic' and 'non-diegetic' music and songs. The music that is not obviously linked to the action is called non-diegetic music; whereas diegetic songs or music are sung by the actors.[95] Often, these two options are both applied and non-diegetic music might indicate and lead to a diegetic song or an off-screen can be a diegetic band playing (e.g. at a dance, in church, on the radio).[96]

Interestingly, Ott draws a border between 'film Musicals' and 'Revue films' – presenting famous singers and dancers (e.g. *Paramount on Parade*, 1930) – as, according to her point of view, the films of the 1920s and 1930s are often enough falsely named 'film Musical' since they 'just' include song performances that pause the plot ('showstoppers') instead of evolving out of them or into those.[97] She suggests that 'Revue films' would suit better to Hollywood's Busby Berkeley or Lemuel Ayers.[98] This study certainly acknowledges the various possibilities of how music passages and songs can be interwoven into the plot but as hinted at earlier, it is helpful to acknowledge the term 'genre' as unstable, changing, and fluid. Therefore, whether we are confronted with 'narrative songs' or 'showstoppers'[99] does not play a crucial role for my definition of the genre itself, rather on the effect this feature has on the audience and will be further scrutinized under the point "The Narrative and Plot" and throughout the analyses.

The Setting and Aura

The setting of the Musical really is diverse: In *Grease*, Danny Zuko (John Travolta), Sandy Olsen (Olivia Newton-John) and their friends break into a song and performance at a funfair; in *The Sound of Music*, the novice Maria often croons outside on the meadows on Austrian mountains; in *Hairspray*, the action takes place inside a TV studio and the characters' homes; in *Hair*, it is the singing and dancing in the city or in parks; in *Singin' in the Rain*, the probably most iconic Musical scene shows Gene Kelly as Don Lockwood dancing and singing outside in the streets while it rains – as the song and film title already gives away. One classic setting stands in connection with the narrative and plot: the 'Backstage Musical.' As the term already implies, this Musical type plays in "the dressing rooms and wings of a theater, the flats and backdrops of the stage . . . the nightclub with orchestra and dance floor."[100] Some reappear in more contemporary Musicals as well, in particular the 'wings of a theater' or the stage itself is represented.

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[95] Cf. Graham Wood in Everett, Laird 316f.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Cf. Ott 25.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid. This is how Ott terms songs which pause the ongoing of a narrative.
[100] Bordwell, Thompson 125.

Therefore, there is not 'the one' setting in Musicals. The Backstage Musical, for example, is accompanied by a number of certain spaces as mentioned before and these tend to be picked up in contemporary Musicals, too. One question is necessary to be asked regarding the setting and aura of a Musical: Is the chosen space a natural place for people to sing and dance? The answer is strongly connected to narrative means of the Musical (e.g. the bursting out into songs may be difficult for the audience) as here the question of authenticity and realistic depiction comes in. The stage and its related space surely have the appearance of being normal surroundings for people to be singing and dancing, rehearsing and performing. Streets in the middle of the city, meadows in the mountains or other public spaces mostly strike the viewers as more uncommon places for a Musical performance and thereby, may be challenging for the spectatorship. It is important to acknowledge that the Musical purposely plays with the exaggeration and embellishments and utilizes these as means for criticism or support to convey a message.

<u>The Choice of Characters</u>

Throughout numerous Musicals, romantic couples and characters like singers and dancers reoccur. This is mostly due to the genre's history on stage and one of its classic plot formations and settings, the Backstage Musical. Examples for Musicals including romantic couples are for instance *Grease*, *West Side Story*,[101] or *Saturday Night Fever*. Often the lovers in focus are kept from each other, have to overcome obstacles and must fight for their love.

Backstage Musicals which focus on the people who in any way work in the entertainment business of Musicals provide a number of characters: actors, singers, dancers, producers, and members of the 'backstage crew.' Frequently, one or more of the performing characters, actors, dancers, and of course singers, are in focus. A heroine often has to struggle and work hard for her success in the entertainment industry and receives help from the hero – who may also be already working in this area – as in *Singing in the Rain* or *Hairspray*. These, the group of characters like in the Backstage Musicals and the romantic couple provide the two major choices of characters in Musicals.

A similarity to the Gothic film can be detected as Musicals include social minorities as well. In *Hairspray* for instance, the main character Tracy Turnblad is over-weight and wants to star in a popular TV show. The other show participants are slimmer and, as the producer thinks, also prettier than Tracy. She therefore can be regarded as a 'social outcast' due to her looks. Nevertheless, she is supported by her friends and this also puts across a moral message: 'Don't judge people by their outer appearance!' Hence, the

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[101] It needs to be mentioned that in *West Side Story* the romantic plot ends with the death of the hero. Cf. Bordwell, Thompson 124.

choice of characters is closely connected to criticism and the message the Musical wants to communicate.

Nevertheless, the choice of characters in Musicals appears to be less diverse than in the earlier explained Gothic genre, an aspect which will also be interesting with regard to the Gothical, in which the characters are mingled.

The Narrative and Plot

When exploring the narrative and plot of a film, we usually think about the structure and what the text deals with. In Musicals, however, one is confronted with a further component because the narrative is not exclusively presented through spoken language but also through the songs which are accompanied by music and often also by dancing.

As already indicated, the song sequences can be applied differently. The songs can be interwoven and characters may float into songs that portray the dialogues and monologues ('narrative' or 'recitative' songs) or the song sequence is placed into the action without a transition ('showstoppers').

Here, also the sort of language plays a role since very poetic language can lead to estrangement of the audience from the film, whereas a song that applies language as it is naturally spoken is more accessible for the spectatorship. Ott also mentions that non-diegetic songs can be seen as especially 'unnatural and abstract' as she states:

> One cannot assume that people at the time of the first Musicals did not see the 'spontaneous' emotional outbursts as disconcerting. Today, however, many spectators perceive the dancing and singing in contemporary fiction features as rather unnatural and abstract which I learned from my own cinema experiences and from conversations with enthusiastic cinema-goers.[102]

During the heyday of the Musical in the 1930s, one can say that the audience was rather used to seeing actors dancing and singing and by doing so narrating a story and expressing emotions because before the sound film era began, on-stage Musicals as well as theater plays and later also silent films were accompanied by music, songs, and dancing.[103] Hence, the 'outlandishness' of a narration through songs and their lyrics was not felt (as much) up to the mid-20th century. After the two World Wars, the tendency was to produce films that were more realistic and stood in relation to everyday life.[104] The aim was to 'naturalize' the transition from speech to song as well as the storyline itself and

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[102] Ott 18. I translated this quote myself: "Man kann davon ausgehen, dass die damaligen Kinozuschauer diese 'spontanen' Gefühlsausbrüche nicht als befremdlich empfanden. Heute jedoch nehmen viele Zuschauer Tanz und Gesang in zeitgenössischen fiktionalen Filmen als recht unnatürliche oder abstrakte Erzählmittel wahr, das lehrte mich meine eigene Kinoerfahrung und das Gespräch mit vielen eifrigen Kinogängern."

[103] Cf. Ibid.

[104] Cf. Ibid.

therefore tragic stories were included.[105] The question of 'bewilderment' and 'outlandishness' of the Musical's characteristics will be taken up several times within this thesis as it is interesting to look at with regard to the Gothical as well.

Crucial for the plot are two classic patterns, again the Backstage Musical – and its remains – and the 'Straight Musical' as explained by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson and other scholars.[106] Firstly, the Backstage Musical's plot focuses on a play itself and shows the actors who play actors in their working space and personal life. Thereby, it is a complex example of intermediality: Backstage Musicals deal with Musicals themselves. They are not only entertainment themselves but also about entertainment.[107] Specimens for this kind of Musical "tak[ing] place in a show-business situation"[108] are *42nd Street* (1933), *Singing in the Rain* (1952), or also *Hairspray* (film adaptation from 2007).[109] Secondly, Straight Musicals like *Grease* (1978) and uncountable other Musicals use plots "where people may sing and dance in situations of everyday life."[110] Nevertheless, also remains of the Backstage Musical and the Musical's historically preceding Stage Musicals feed into contemporary musicals on-screen. To demonstrate, sometimes a presenter or show host introduces the story or even guides through the plot (e.g. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*) which is similar to the Gothic film *Frankenstein*. Furthermore, characters may address the audience directly as happens in Stage Musicals or curtains, like in a theater, are applied and refer back to the (film) Musical's historical origin.

The plot itself, no matter whether one looks at a Backstage or a Straight Musical, commonly centers on romance[111] or is "most often structured around a romantic PLOT or several romances."[112] In addition, the "hero and heroine realize that they form the perfect romantic couple because they perform beautifully together"[113] and this ingredient has, according to Bordwell and Thompson, stayed a "staple of the genre."[114] These romances normally also have a happy ending which feeds into the prejudice that Musicals are a happy-go-lucky genre but certainly does not declare it as completely valid because the topic dealt with still includes social problems. Due to the happy ending, the music and

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[105] Cf. Hayward, Susan 238.
[106] Cf. Bordwell, Thompson 123.
[107] Cf. Jane Feuer in Altman *Genre: The Musical* 159.
[108] Bordwell, Thompson 124.
[109] If a Musical film deals with the production and filming of a Musical film itself, it would even be considered intramedial.
[110] Bordwell, Thompson 124.
[111] Cf. Ibid.
[112] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 158.
[113] Bordwell, Thompson 124.
[114] Ibid.

dancing, "musicals depict a utopian world"[115] as Dyer criticizes. Although the topics may involve social problems, the Musical's features lighten the atmosphere of the film. Nonetheless, the subjects in general are diverse. On top of the focus on romances, children's stories have also been connected with Musicals, for example *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and Walt Disney's cartoon productions such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *The Lion King* (1994), and *The Beauty and the Beast* (1991).

The Gothic and the Musical genres have hitherto been scrutinized with regard to three selected parameters: 1. the setting and aura; 2. the choice of characters; and 3. the narrative and plot. The setting in particular shows differences as the Gothic is mostly set in remote traditional buildings, gloomy threatening side-ways, or in scientific spaces (e.g. laboratories). In comparison, the Musical frequently includes spaces connected to the theater or opera, such as the stage or backstage rooms. In terms of characters, the variety is even broader: The Gothic primarily portrays mad scientists and monsters, heroes and heroines, murderers or mysterious creatures, whereas the Musical again depicts characters related to the theater or opera like singers, actors, or presenters. The third explored parameter of the narrative and plot leads to one predominant dissimilarity which is that the Gothic's ending in contrast to the Musical's one often includes murder and death and the Musicals more often have happy endings.

To conclude, the Gothic and the Musical genre embody differing and sometimes even opposing features and therefore it appears to be complicated for many viewers to grant their convergence.

2.2 Hybrids: The New Genres?

After defining this study's notion of the term genre and applying it to both the Gothic and the Musical, this thesis now turns its attention to the question of hybrid genres, their definition, unique effects, and of course, the emerging hybrid genre: the Gothical. Similarly to the previous points, my aim is to firstly offer a definition of the expression 'hybrid genre' and secondly, develop expectations specifically towards the Gothical with regard to the same parameters as in the preceding sub-chapters. However, while defining the term hybrid genre, illustrations explicitly referring to the Gothical will already be interwoven.

Just as it is useful to always refer back to traditional characteristics of a special genre and look at it in its pure form, it can also be helpful to break established rules apart and question these. This can happen through changing just one or two elements that

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[115] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 158. Original idea by Richard Dyer in Altman, Rick, ed. *Genre: The Musical.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981. 177. Print.

define the genre while still keeping the 'nucleus' of the genre the same, or by mixing genres to more or less the same degree.

If the nucleus of a genre can be considered unique to one particular genre, how do 'hybrid genres' work? How can the term 'hybrid' be defined and where does it stem from? To begin with, the term 'hybridity' or 'hybrid' broadly derives from biology and describes mixes in breeding processes for instance. It has also been adapted to other fields, such as cultural theory. As mentioned in the introduction, these terms have been shaped by literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin and cultural theorists Homi K. Bhabha and Ana María Manzanas. In connection with genre studies the term hybridity usually refers to the films' subjects, especially the search for a (mixed) cultural identity. In the discourse of ethnicity, the term hybridity "is used to describe the newly composed, mixed or contradictory identities."[116] This still belongs to Bhabha's and Manzana's ideas of hybridity, yet also shows similarities to hybrid genres. When researching the term hybridity in cultural and literary theory, one usually, too, stumbles upon the well-known W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) who scrutinized the 'double-consciousness' or 'twoness' with regard to African American identity.[117] A further theorist in the field of hybridity to be named is Paul Gilroy (*The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, 1993), who sees identities as 'always unfinished' and instable.[118] In *A Glossary of Cultural Theory* Peter Brooker supports this path of origin as he states that

> in Cultural Theory these meanings [cross-breeding in botanical/animal life; cross-fertilization of different languages] have been extended to refer to the mixed or hyphenated identities of persons or ethnic communities, or of texts that express and explore this condition, sometimes themselves employing mixed written and visual discourses.[119]

Yet, within this thesis, the term hybrid or hybridity is not connected to the establishment of identity. What is similar though, is the idea of mixing and newly composing contradictory elements and alterations but with regard to the development of genres. The earlier listed and explained genre parameters can all be scrutinized and need to be considered in order to define a genre as hybrid. Consequently, the narrative and plot pattern, the manner of presentation and stylistic conventions, the (emotional) effects, the iconography and signs, the choice of characters, the setting, plus the subject and motifs serve as parameters to define a certain genre, whether it can be considered pure and rather traditional or hybrid.[120]

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[116] Brooker 127.
[117] Cf. Ibid.
[118] Cf. Ibid.
[119] Brooker 126.
[120] Cf. Bordwell, Thompson 109, and Blandford, Grant, Hillier 112f.

Mikhail Bakhtin's view on hybridity also offers a parallel to the concept of the hybrid genre:

> Following Bakhtin, a *hybrid text* can be one formed by cutting two other TEXTS together – in either a planned or a random manner. The term hybrid text can also be used to describe a text in which two separate, and often opposed, elements can be detected, on a thematic or an IDEOLOGICAL level.[121]

Taking Bakhtin's statement into account, hybrid genres may evolve accidentally ('random') or intentionally ('planned'). In addition, the converging genres do not need to match since they can be 'opposed elements' as well. As already pointed out in the introduction, the Gothical suits and follows Bakhtin's idea of a 'cutting together' of opposing elements within one genre.

Ira Jaffe's heading "Unity and Diversity"[122] leads to the issue whether genre mixes become homogenous.[123] Do two genres exist parallel or do they mingle to a great extent? Are we even able to tell two genres exactly apart in a hybrid film? Famous directors such as Pedro Almodóvar and David Lynch make use of sudden switches between genres in one film as

> the prominence of any one genre [in their hybrid films] may vary from one moment to the next in a particular film. Now comedy may rule, then melodrama, farce, tragedy, horror, sci-fi, kung fu, film noir, or the Western; now realism, then surrealism or expressionism.[124]

Also Pavlus reminds us that Tarantino

> wanted each chapter of the script [of his films; e.g. *Kill Bill* making use of Manga-Comic style, Western characteristics and Kung-Fu/Martial-Arts] to feel like a reel from a different film. He wanted to move in and out of the various signature styles of all these genres – Western, melodrama, thriller, horror.[125]

This could lead to the assumption that hybrid films or hybrid genres need to be understood as films applying two or more genres aside each other, actually without any convergence. This, however, is not how hybrid genres should be comprehended within this thesis. What makes hybrid genres so special is that the source genres literally merge. They blend into each other like colored fluids. While their original coloring can still be detected new shades are simultaneously created (that produce different impressions). Hence, one cannot find a scene that is exclusively Gothic or entirely belongs to the Musical film genre. In fact, the characteristics of both original genres appear in each scene of the film. Sometimes one genre may be more predominant, then again the other.

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[121] Hawthorn 159.
[122] This is a sub-chapter within the introduction (1-32) of Jaffe's work *Hollywood Hybrids*. The passage referred to can be found on pages 7-8 if further information is required.
[123] Cf. Jaffe 7.
[124] Jaffe 6.
[125] Pavlus 36. Also quoted in Jaffe 5.

Therefore, Tarantino's idea of 'moving in and out' and having 'each chapter from a different film style' is not what the term hybrid genre includes.

Here, Jaffe underpins that the merging of dissimilar genres does not automatically end in an unharmonious clash but "diverse stylistic and generic impulses [can be] converging in films of surprising unity."[126] Exactly this idea is applicable to Gothicals as well as "perhaps judging that . . . hybrid form auspiciously broadened rather than violated . . . norms."[127] Hence, the convergence of genres should be seen as a way of expanding the world of genres and therefore the earlier addressed 'impurity' is advantageous.

At this stage it is helpful to return to the question of what constitutes a sub-genre in comparison to a hybrid genre. The hybrid genre, as this thesis understands it, really needs two differing, opposing original genres. Therefore, within this thesis Gothic Horror is not considered as hybrid but rather a sub-genre. It should be named a sub-genre because this describes more closely its original or most prominent genre. Obviously, such sub-genres could also be understood as a mixture of two genres (e.g. Gothic and Horror; Horror and Crime). However, these genres still share many similar characteristics which do not necessarily provoke the special effects which need to be seen as major characteristic of the hybrid film. Thereby, hybrid films can be considered genres of their own. The hybrid genre undeniably lives through its effects, as for instance the aforementioned irony, that can only be evoked through the convergence of two (sometimes more) dissimilar, very individual genres.

This is also where my thesis advances Scott Freer's article "The Victorian Criminal Underworld and the Musical Carnivalesque" (2008/2009) in which he places the focus on social hierarchies and class divides. Freer uses his primary films, *Oliver!* (Lionel Bart 1960) and *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, in order to explain the either utopian or dystopian carnivalesque with regard to the neo-Victorian discourse. In connection with this, Freer introduced the term 'Gothical' to describe our mutual film example *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. However, Freer regards the Gothical, which he describes as mixture of "the sensory exuberance of a musical carnivalesque with the physical horrors of an urban gothic tradition,"[128] as a sub-genre of the Musical which I mostly oppose because as it was just defined, the Gothical goes further than just increasing its one genre's character. The Gothical plays with the dissimilar elements of its original genres, Gothic and Musical. Although, he admits the "surreal and nauseating juxtaposition"[129] resulting in "horrific jouissance"[130] in *Sweeney*

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[126]   Jaffe 7.
[127]   Ibid. 51.
[128]   Freer 53.
[129]   Ibid.
[130]   Ibid. 71, 74.

Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street, Freer omits a clear definition of the Gothical and its particular functions. Still, his presentation of a carnivalesque dystopia of the criminal underworld in *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* surely underpins the significance of the emerging Gothical. However, my work greatly advances Freer's idea: Firstly, I consider the Gothical an independent genre; secondly, through the examination of further Gothicals, this study expands the Gothical's means and on top of that, my thesis concentrates on the Gothical's effect, the reinforcement of social criticism.

So what is so enthralling about 'cutting together,' merging two pieces? "What is interesting is always interconnection, not the primacy of this over that."[131] As Peter Brooker suggests referring to Michel Foucault, it is the space in-between, the border itself, the hybrid space and not the either-or which makes any hybrid form special although it may be helpful trying to tell both parties apart. Further, Brooker even underlines that the hybrid character of a work lives on the dissimilarity of both parts. According to him, "a hybrid combines unlike parts."[132] This is also necessary to notice in terms of the effect of the hybrid genre. As two 'unlike' parts are combined and already established genres go beyond their traditional borders but still some of their characteristics are utilized within the new genre, there might be a clash, an exaggeration, a unique tension which only can be observed once two dissimilar parts are joined instead of a genre that has developed into a slightly different direction. To illustrate, in the case of Horror Comedies the cruelty and tension of the Horror genre can seem easier to access and less 'real' if comic elements are added. This also happens in the Gothical as the gloomy, dark atmosphere with brutal throat slashings, and suspense moments can be broken up by Musical elements which are rather colorful, using happy sounds (e.g. waltz rhythms that are quick, energetic), and with a light-hearted overall tone. That being the case, the cruelty appears unreal and is easier to watch because the horrific elements are softened through the Musical components. Thus, it can either work as just described or the horror and suspense can also be intensified as the jumping from one rather soft and colorful scene into a shadowy and threatening sequence may be shocking for the audience as well. Therefore, both the stark contrast that can be evoked as well as the softening can be seen as typical for the hybrid genre of the Gothical.

In his work *Hollywood Hybrids: Mixing Genres in Contemporary Films* (2008), Ira Jaffe's application of the term 'hybrid cinema'[133] shows parallels to what this thesis labels hybrid genre and therefore, these expressions will be used synonymously. Jaffe declares

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[131] Brooker V. Original idea by Michel Foucault.
[132] Brooker 126.
[133] Cf. Jaffe 6.

that although "hybrid form is nothing new in film history or in the history of art and culture generally"[134] it has become more and more significant in contemporary cinema.

The postmodern discourse has dealt with genrefication as

> GENRE is a key concept for postmodern film-making. It is mainly through genre that important patterns of recognition take place and that a film can relate to its audience's prior understanding of the medium.[135]

Here again, reoccurring but variable parameters, the "patterns of recognition,"[136] define a genre. Not only can the genre also be considered a postmodern idea but "some theorists have argued that in the POSTMODERN era genre mixing has become common"[137] and this certainly supports the concept of hybrid genres.

As the postmodern era is addressed here and plays a crucial role in defining hybrid genres, it is important to take a look at its means. The postmodern is usually thought of as a reaction to modernism. Moreover, the postmodern includes 'qualities' particular to its works.

> Th[e] loss of faith in over-arching belief systems is related to an equivalent loss of individual identity and any striving for new means of expression that can encompass it, resulting in postmodernism's most accessible qualities of PASTICHE, PARODY, and INTERTEXTUAL references in all art forms.[138]

These 'qualities' become even more apparent in hybrid films through the combination of two (or more) dissimilar genres. This is another effect that hybrid films can evoke. Especially irony, as explained in the following paragraph, and intertextuality are key areas to be scrutinized in the film analyses of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *REPO! The Genetic Opera*, and *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. Although already implied with the terms parody and irony, the exaggeration of such devices can be seen as particular for hybrid films. Again, this can be provoked through opposing two scenes of, in the case of the Gothical, horror and happy-go-lucky songs or the amalgamation of elements of both original genres. As can be seen in more detail in the film analyses, the irony also derives from the simultaneous application of Gothic features and Musical elements. To illustrate, it is mostly considered ironic seeing people singing rather cheerfully while deciding on the next murder victim, or chanting while slashing though someone's flesh in order to take out organs. Hence, the irony is a crucial instrument of the Gothical.

Using irony as one of its main tools, the Gothical aims to criticize social evils but what do we consider irony and what parody? Ott and Mack think of irony as an 'attitude or

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[134] Jaffe 7.
[135] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 183.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid. 113.
[138] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 183.

sensibility' but also refer to the common idea that "the author means the opposite of what is explicitly said."[139] Interestingly, Linda Hutcheon also puts this definition into a question:

> [W]hy should anyone want to use this strange mode of discourse where you say something you don't actually mean and expect people to understand not only what you actually do mean but also your attitude toward it?[140]

This enquiry already hints at its answer because through the application of irony the readership or spectatorship is challenged and thereby the audience really needs to possess knowledge and to detect the aforementioned 'attitude or sensibility.'[141] Therefore, irony, although often thought to be only a literary device, can also be considered "a way of seeing the world."[142]

According to Hutcheon, irony needs to be employed cautiously because it requires the sensibility to recognize it:

> [I]rony appears to have become a problematic mode of expression at the end of the twentieth century. It has never been without problems, of course, but lately the various media seem to be reporting an increasing number of cases of the more or less disastrous misfiring of ironies.[143]

Nowadays, the discussions of whether irony or parody has been applied constructively or if it has been misused often come up with regard to diverse media, be it series such as *Family Guy*, late night shows like David Letterman's *Late Show*, magazines, for instance "Titanic." Sometimes misunderstandings of irony or its ambiguous usage can lead to severe consequences.[144] For that reason, it is essential to apply irony consciously and intentionally, already thinking about possible consequences or results. Still, irony is perceived subjectively and therefore only assumptions of outcomes can be made by authors, directors, or screenplay writers.[145] "The pleasure of irony comes from recognition that no view is precisely right or wrong; lacking a definitive position or perspective, the ironist is never fully interpellated by ideology."[146] Hence, the Gothical addresses problems, social evils, deplorable states of affairs in order to (re-) direct one's attention to the discourse on these issues.

Moreover, "[i]rony and parody become the major means of creating new levels of meaning"[147] as Ott and Mack claim. Both see irony as one tool of parody which "informs both the structure and the thematic content."[148] However, this study understands parody

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[139] Ott, Mack 248.
[140] Hutcheon *Irony's Edge* 2.
[141] Cf. Ott, Mack 248.
[142] Hutcheon *Irony's Edge* 1.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Cf. Ibid.
[145] Cf. Ibid. 56.
[146] Ott, Mack 248.
[147] Hutcheon *A Theory of Parody* 30.
[148] Ibid.

more as a continuation or intensification of irony. Parody can be defined as "one text [which] is set against another with the intent of mocking it or making it ludicrous"[149] whereas irony does not necessarily need to make something appear 'ludicrous' by 'mocking' it. "Parody is founded on the imitation of another object or text. This means that, unlike related modes such as satire and burlesque, it incorporates part of the object or text into itself."[150] Thus, irony can use the means of imitation as well but without the ingredient of 'mocking' the work. Further, in the opinion of Margaret Rose, works considered as parody are ambivalent regarding their targets.[151] One text usually mentioned in this discourse is Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605-1615) as it "parodies contemporary romance"[152] and has had a great influence on the development of the novel. In postmodernism, parody is altered into pastiche which is considered a "blank parody,"[153] being "one of the major forms of modern self-reflexivity; it is a form of inter-art discourse."[154]

Despite everything, irony as well as parody can only work as progressive tools if the spectatorship recognizes their existence since

> the pleasure of parody's irony comes not from humor in particular but from the degree of engagement of the reader in the intertextual 'bouncing' (to use E. M. Forster's famous term) between complicity and distance.[155]

To clarify, the 'addresser' of a message in the Gothical and other art forms may think of a certain meaning and the 'addressee' is able to read it; however, the 'addressee' and the actual receiver may differ.[156] Hence, the "addressee, the person for whom the message is intended (an 'implied' or 'ideal reader,' consumer or voter)"[157] is what this study focuses on when examining irony, parody and other major features of the Gothical but "a symmetry of some kind between a given content and an audience response"[158] can be assumed. In the context of the Gothical, irony undeniably is one of the major means of criticism and tends to be utilized more often than the more specific idea of parody.

Aside from irony and parody, intertextual and intermedial references can be seen as classic means of the hybrid genre. As "[i]*ntertextuality* is the idea that texts refer to other texts"[159] it turns out to be difficult to fully comprehend the text or film without knowing

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[149] Hutcheon *A Theory of Parody* 30.
[150] Brooker 186.
[151] Cf. Brooker 186. Original idea by Margaret Rose.
[152] Brooker 186.
[153] Ibid. 187.
[154] Hutcheon *A Theory of Parody* 2.
[155] Ibid. 32.
[156] Cf. Brooker 2.
[157] Brooker 2. Here the problem of the intended and the actual receiver of a message is taken up again.
[158] Ibid. 13.
[159] Ott, Mack 247.

the original texts the hybrid work refers to. In the Chapter "Erotic Analysis" in *Critical Media Studies: An Introduction* by Ott and Mack, they distinguish 'strategic' intertextuality which can be considered the 'intentional reference' made by the author and 'tactical' intertextuality meaning the associations that are made by the reader and hence, cannot be calculated by the author as they derive subjectively.[160] Therefore, viewers of the hybrid cinema, if not exclusively watching it for aesthetic pleasure, need to bring knowledge of at least both original genres and their classics along as also Blandford, Grant, and Hillier affirm:

> Postmodernism has been seen as a phase in which art forms have largely ceased to have a relationship with any external reality (whose existence is doubted) but instead relate only to each other. It is argued that most art has begun to relate only to other art and is entirely reliant on knowledge of it for it to mean anything to AUDIENCES.[161]

This can be seen as a definition of intertextuality and underlines the significance of knowledge within a certain discourse. "But postmodern film does not depend solely on other cinema for its intertextual references"[162] state Blandford, Grant and Hillier, further references can be paintings, photos, textures, words or phrases, books, stories, and can therefore be of intermedial nature, too.

> Such a phenomenon [intertextuality and the necessity to understand the references] is made increasingly possible in an age of rapidly proliferating mass media that recycle IMAGES at such a rate that even the very young have available a limitless range of textual referents. One result of this is what many critics describe as the predominant playfulness of modern art forms.[163]

Hence, the Gothical does request certain knowledge but certainly, in the 21st century with its uncountable media devices it is also easier than 10 or 20 years ago to fill the gaps in order to completely understand the references. The vast availability of information, too, cries for newly arranged and altered art.

Furthermore, it is of great importance that

> hybrid films are inherently subversive, since mingling genres and styles instead of keeping them separate, these films choose heterogeneity over homogeneity, contamination over purity.[164]

The addressed subversiveness of hybrid genres is of great interest as hybrid genres break the earlier mentioned wish for genre purity and thereby also question the traditional idea of genres. However, it also can be considered a creative way of approaching subjects that are hard to deal with.

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[160] Cf. Ott, Mack 247.
[161] Blandford, Grant, Hillier 183.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Jaffe 6.

> Such subversion typically involves juxtaposing diverse generic elements in odd or surprising ways, as well as inserting incongruous and disorienting events that are not explained or resolved in the logical manner of classical narrative.[165]

By utilizing opposing elements, numerous features can be subverted. This can happen on a narrative level (e.g. spoken text and songs), on a stylistic level (e.g. the traditional presentation of either genre is altered), or on the level of character choice (e.g. typical characters of the Gothic film are incorporated into the Musical film). In addition, this subversion can of course also be utilized on the subject level throuugh which criticism can be applied.

Criticism has also come up towards hybrid genres – and as such the Gothical – as

> [t]hey may be regarded as not just disorienting, but as destructive and nihilistic, which may support the notion that genre quotation, mimicry, mingling, and parody signal an exhaustion of creative energy – an inability to conceive much that is new or original, to think or feel deeply, to break through genre discourses to life itself.[166]

Indeed, the Gothical does apply parameters that have already existed for a long time in film and some even longer in literature and other arts. Nonetheless, its combination is a rather new approach. The resulting effects and means by which the Gothical works, converging two opposing genres, are rather making use of already existing 'creative energy' and, through hybridization of genres, they intensify it. Whether this is a 'sign of exhaustion' or not can only be answered subjectively. What is more riveting is that the Gothical adjusts itself to the prevailing social evils and 'tackles' these.

> Perhaps like art and human personality, the physical world over the last century also has taken on increasingly hybrid dimensions, as it has come to appear less pure, simple, constant, and knowable than before[167]

which can be seen as the reason why hybrid forms have came up during the 20th and especially the 21st centuries. That art in general often comments on contemporary events is no surprise, of course, though, what is interesting is the methods.

Not only the film as medium or the genre itself can be questioned by means of the hybrid genre Gothical but also social problems. Authorities, social structures or hierarchies, social outcasts and discrimination, the progress of society and the way 'we like to think of ourselves' are classic topics addressed in the Gothical. Stylistic means support a form of criticism that is veiled and strong at the same time. By employing irony and parody, intertextuality, metaphors, and symbolism, social evils can be addressed innovatively and indirectly. Hence, it certainly needs to be seen as a challenge for the readership: Hybrid films like the Gothical require their spectators to bring along a critical or at least open-minded way of reading such films – if not, the criticism may not be

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[165] Jaffe 5f.
[166] Ibid. 6.
[167] Ibid. 23.

discovered and naturally the effect is not as intended. These veiled means of applying criticism, in addition to the dissimilarity of the Gothic film and the Musical film which may lead to a rather unreal depiction, make it easier for the spectatorship to engage with the films' subjects. Directly portrayed criticism certainly can also be successful; however, the creative handling can lead to less resistance by the addressee. The happy-go-lucky feeling that Musicals evoke is a way of expressing criticism, too. Through songs and performances, metaphoric and poetic language criticism towards politics and society could and still can be transmuted and softened in their depiction without decreasing the importance of the message.

The hybrid genre and hence, the Gothical, can be seen as a vehicle for social criticism. Salman Rushdie, for example, uses terms like "hybridity, impurity, intermingling"[168] and states "it [Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*] rejoices in mongrelisation and fears the absolutism of the Pure. Melange, hotch-potch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world."[169] The 'entrance of newness' through hybrid genres excites a broader audience. Gothicals most probably do not exclusively reach the Musical's spectatorship but may also gain Gothic film fans as audience. In addition, the Gothical can be considered an art film, too, with its intertextual and intermedial references as "diversity of style often has accompanied the undisguised use of diverse materials."[170] To illustrate, Gothicals make use of comic elements, paintings, and various references to other art forms through the aforementioned intertextual and intermedial devices.

According to Jaffe, hybrid genres

get established precisely because they speak to major human concerns and do make contact with life. But along with the times they must change, or undergo revision, for that contact to remain vibrant, which is where the recombinant meddling and foolery of hybrid cinema come in.[171]

Also, "[t]he fact that every genre has fluctuated in popularity reminds us that genres are tightly bound to cultural factors"[172] and therefore can be read as a comment on events, movements or situations. Nevertheless, films do not only work as mirrors for society but can serve too as escapism to flee from current social evils. Actually, the Gothical does both: It provides an entertainment factor which can be cheerful, funny, absurd and, at the same time, it embraces numerous means of confrontation. This does not automatically mean that the Gothical is a genre close to reality or can be considered as authentic and this is also not of interest for the Gothical. Instead, the Gothical's commenting on social

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[168] Appiah "The Case for Contamination." Web. Original statement by Salman Rushdie.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Jaffe 8.
[171] Ibid. 6f.
[172] Bordwell, Thompson 116.

evils is significant. The Gothical, "creating puzzling montages intend[s] to provoke spectators to see, think, and feel in new ways about religion, politics, and virtually every other major aspect of their experience."[173] The aim is to challenge the audience and awaken new perceptions. These can be activated – naturally only if the viewers are willing and open to do so – and that way, a mirror is placed in front of contemporary society. Through the aforementioned means such as intertrextuality or irony the audience is even able to participate. The 'mélange of styles,'[174] the conflict of dissimlar elements at first can be disruptive or disturbing but at second sight can also lead to new attention by the viewers.

2.2.1 The Gothical: When Gothic Meets Musical

Drawing upon the introductions of the Gothic and the Musical genre and their accounts of the three major elements, this chapter will offer a frame for the new hybrid genre Gothical. These expectations on the combined Gothic film's and Musical's characteristics are going to be illustrated and interpreted within the film analyses and evaluated subsequently. As the question of the hybrid genre has already been explored in theory, this chapter now focuses on the three parameters: the setting and aura; the choice of characters; and the narrative and plot.

<u>The Setting and Aura</u>

Since the Gothic setting, whether it is of urban or rural nature, is dark, uncanny, and disturbing and the Musical's mainly focuses on the entertainment space, what can the audience expect as a classic setting in the Gothical? The typical setting for a Gothical film surely combines Gothic *and* Musical places. To illustrate, the spectatorship can be confronted with scenes including graveyards and a theater stage, a Gothic building in which the classic stage can be found as well, or a theater with Gothic architecture. In the most recent film production of *The Phantom of the Opera* for instance, the action takes place in an old theater building with thick walls and a beautiful stage room. The Phantom, however, lives in an underground space, beneath the theater, which certainly can be considered a Gothical setting. Here, the amalgamation within one single building can be seen as a model example for the Gothical's setting.

Therefore, the Gothical's setting is a combination of the Gothic's and Musical's spaces which can either converge or exist side by side. In other words, one can either find characteristics of the Gothic and Musical setting merged into one single building for

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[173] Jaffe 8f.
[174] Cf. Ibid.

example, or settings of both appear in the film without any direct intersection. In that case, another parameter will pick up the other genre's characteristic (e.g. in singing at a graveyard, the narrative means are used from the Musical genre and the setting is taken from the Gothic). Of course the degree of convergence or which original genre is more present can vary from film to film and alterations can be made.

Regarding the aura, cinematic devices of the Gothic film (e.g. tone, color, sound, cuts, blank frames) can underscore the horror and suspense of a scene.[175] Thus, by adding Musical components (e.g. light-hearted rhythms, highly colorful settings and outfits) the cinematic means can also turn into a comical or even ridiculed scene and thereby soften the horror. This 'de-naturalization'[176] evokes the comic relief in the audience or as Scott Freer explained, this combination can be described as "horrific jouissance."[177] In Gothic films the spectator, on the one hand, fears the confrontation with something horrible and cruel; on the other hand, the audience enjoys being confronted with situations and pictures they usually do not (have to) face and prefer to encounter with the security of the screen in-between.

The overall atmosphere of the Gothical further melds the horrific nature, the suspense and tension of the Gothic film and the happy-go-lucky appearance of the Musical. The tone may switch from one scene to the other, from celebration to a 'bloody' hunt. If the tones of both original genres are joined in one scene, the effect can be ironic because the features are very dissimilar. The direct combination of cruelty and happiness, horror and joy, can lead to the effect of irony as explained before.

The Choice of Characters

Who will the audience meet in Gothicals and why? This question can be answered rather easily and quickly as the cast of characters from the Musical (e.g. romantic couple, social outcast) is completed by classic Gothic characters: monsters, creatures, social outcasts (due to diverse reasons), scientists, and madmen/women.

The Gothical mainly takes up the Gothic film's characters, with particular minorities and social outcasts reappearing. Further, the Musical's protagonists like the romantic couple definitely are interwoven, too. There can be a romance between characters considered social outcasts or 'the Other,' or the plot may evolve around a romance. In *The Phantom of the Opera* for example, Christine, a young and beautiful artist, meets her childhood love Raoul but is also fascinated by the musical genius of the Phantom. Although Christine, the heroine, is in love with Raoul, she has feelings for the Phantom as

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[175] Cf. Jaffe 50.
[176] Ibid. 48ff.
[177] Freer 71, also 74.

well. She is torn. Interestingly, the good heroine develops sympathy for the 'bad' Phantom which provides a new constellation. Here, as the Phantom has a scarred face and was oppressed by his own family, the criticism towards social outcasts due to the outer appearance and disabilities can be read. Because of expelling the Phantom from society, the wish for revenge was able to develop. Hence, the character of the singer (e.g. Christine) which is classic for the Musical and the character of the social outcast (e.g. the Phantom) being traditional for the Gothic play major roles in the Gothical.

Similarly to the Gothic film's and Musical's characters, the persona in the Gothical act as vehicles for criticism – as already explained with regard to *The Phantom of the Opera*. The inclusion of such characters and the fact that their depiction is often exaggerated intensifies the criticism.

The Narrative and Plot

The narrative of the Gothical applies spoken speech (used in the Gothic and Musical) as well as singing (only used in Musicals), non-diegetic (used in both original genres) as well as diegetic music (used in the Musical) which is the first very striking convergence. Spoken speech and songs can be utilized specifically. To state facts spoken language tends to be used, whereas emotions are frequently portrayed through music sequences. Spoken text underlines and may strengthen the horror and terror in a scene while the same text performed in a song can ridicule the same scene and evoke irony. Therefore, it is significant whether spoken or sung texts are chosen.

The use of both non-diegetic and diegetic music can be observed in the Gothical and often, similarly to the Musical, non-diegetic music is employed as a bridge from spoken text to diegetic music. This makes it easier for the audience to 'float' into a song and dance sequence as if the spectators were confronted with sudden breakouts into songs and dances from spoken language. Hence, the Gothical also opens up to a broader audience and cinema-goers (especially those who are not familiar with the Musical) may see this as an easier approach to the Gothical. Therefore, it can be assumed that the mingling of the Gothic film and the Musical either stresses the aforementioned 'outlandishness' (of singing and dancing in everyday situations) or even reduces it by only rarely taking up songs and dances.

The question of which kind of music is utilized also needs to be taken into account in the analyses. Is popular or rock music applied? Is the general audience used to that kind of music or may this be surprising? Why was that particular sort of music selected for that scene? These are questions to be answered individually in the analyses. To illustrate, the music and rhythm may appear light-hearted through a waltz for example whereas the subject of the text is concerned with something horrible like murder. This amalgamation of

contrasting features (light-hearted waltz vs. horror of murder) further leads to a possible ironic impression for the audience which again 'denaturalizes' the horror in that scene and softens it.

Turning to the importance of the plot and its structure, the ending is especially significant. Since the Musical often has a happy ending it is interesting that the Gothical's ending often is less happy. However, similar to the Gothic films, the mystery is solved and at least some characters are relieved from the horror they had to face. Nevertheless, deaths are also included in the course of the Gothical and in the ending which can again be seen as a parallel to the Gothic films.

A motif which plays a crucial role in Gothicals is revenge. Comparable to the Gothic example *Frankenstein*, the creature (Frankenstein's Monster) can revolt or even develop the wish to take revenge against its creator (society; Dr. Frankenstein). The revenge motif however is not necessarily connected to creator and creature but also to oppressor and oppressed as in *The Phantom of the Opera*, and will become particularly apparent in the analysis and interpretation of *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.

2.2.2 The Interlude – From Theory to Analyses

So far, this thesis has scrutinized the terminology regarding the application of the genre and the hybrid genre. Here, genre is seen as a means of categorizing films without restraining them to a strict formula but instead recognizing the term 'genre' as variable and always in progress. Each genre is considered to include a number of parameters which are crucial for the particular genre and hence serve as a framework and flexible guideline. On this basis and through the closer look at three major characteristics, the Gothic film and the Musical have been introduced. On top of that, the term hybrid genre has been scrutinized and opposed to the often used sub-genre. Whereas a sub-genre is considered to be a closer description of an original genre, this thesis adopts the concept of hybrid genres based on dissimilar original genres which converge into a hybrid one. The means and effects, like intertextuality, irony, and social criticism, are crucial in order to define the hybrid genre. Thus, expectations towards a definition of the Gothical have been made and will now be further explored within the analyses of three representative cases of the Gothical genre.

3   *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*: A Happy-Go-Lucky Freak Show?

The stage Musical by Richard O'Brien was originally titled *The Rocky Horror Show* and had its premiere in 1973 in London. Unfortunately the piece was not considered a great success, especially not in the States.[178] However, once it was adapted to the screen in 1975, it became a 'cult classic' under the title *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Up to today, showings in cinemas or in the form of plays, this Musical fills rooms with "costumed, singing spectators" which is considered "the only real *Rocky Horror* experience."[179]

The film adaptation *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, produced by Twentieth Century Fox, is told by the Criminologist[180] (Charles Gray) who presents the story from his 'office' where he keeps numerous maps, photographs, police reports, yearbooks, and further reference material as proof for the happenings. He narrates the plot of the newly engaged Brad Majors (Barry Bostwick) and Janet Weiss (Susan Sarandon) who are on their way to visit their former university professor and scientist Dr. Everett van Scott (Jonathan Adams). On their way through a dark, gloomy forest their car breaks down and the young couple has to go through the rainy weather to search for a place to call for help. They eventually arrive at a fenced property with a huge Gothic castle named 'the Frankenstein place.' There, they are welcomed by the grim servants called Riff Raff (Richard O'Brian) and Magenta (Patricia Quinn). As they enter the castle, they meet a mixed crowd of people, the Visitors,[181] among whom we find Columbia (Nell Campbell) who is introduced as 'the Groupie'. She is in love with Eddie (Meat Loaf) who later appears in the film and is said to be the 'Ex Delivery Boy' of the master – and apparently his 'first experiment'. Soon Brad and Janet encounter the eccentric scientist and master of the house Frank'N'Furter (Tim Curry) whose aim it is to create the perfect man – for himself. His creature is a blond man with a bodybuilder-like figure called Rocky Horror (Peter Hinwood). Inside the castle, Brad and Janet are confronted with various taboos and surreal events they have never experienced before and hence, their relationship and attitudes to morality are challenged.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show provides many scenes which vividly illustrate the earlier scrutinized parameters and effects of the Gothical. However, within my thesis I can

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[178] Cf. Hischak 635.
[179] Hischak 636.
[180] This character is only referred to as the 'Criminologist' and therefore it will be capitalized in this study.
[181] In this case, I decided to capitalize 'Visitors' because this crowd also stands for certain elements just like other characters do.

only focus on one suitable scene in order to achieve a detailed analysis. My decision fell on the awakening of Frank'N'Furter's creature Rocky Horror and the included song "Sword of Damocles" because this sequence combines a highly representative setting for the Gothical and an especially broad variety of characters. It can also be regarded as one of the plot's climaxes. The intertextual/-medial references are numerous and the means of irony and the effect of social criticism come across impressively.[182] A great part of this film analysis is going to focus on the choice of characters since in this Gothical work this element provides the greatest social criticism.

The upcoming scene analysis will be structured differently to the explanation of the parameters in the theory part because the setting and aura, the choice of characters, and the narrative and plot mutually depend on each other. These keywords are highlighted through **bold letters** to make the orientation and any possible cross-references easier. After a detailed scene description and analysis, I will turn my attention to further scrutinizing the hybrid character of this film and providing references to other sequences in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

3.1 The Creature's Awakening: A Musical Reminiscence of *Frankenstein*

Brad and Janet have already entered the Frankenstein place and encountered the majority of characters. Frank'N'Furter has 'invited' his visitors to the celebration of his creature's awakening which is to take place in the laboratory situated inside the castle. In the laboratory, the frightened but fascinated couple and a group of people only referred to as the Visitors await the 'birth' of Rocky Horror.

The viewers are introduced to the **setting** by a slow pan shot around the laboratory which includes the floor as well as the ceiling and shows everyone present. The laboratory – a Gothic characteristic – is a large room with tiles all over the walls and the entire floor. As the tiles are all colored in rose this **setting** resembles a huge bathroom more than a science laboratory. This set is highly stylized: White Roman or Greek pillars and statues decorate the room. The laboratory's ground-plan is nearly shaped like a circle. Alongside the rounded walls, a way like a ramp leads up to a kind of balcony or lookout platform which is also painted a light pink. This staging is a reminiscence of an amphitheater – which also alludes to balconies in a classic opera house – or atrium.

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[182] The selected scene runs from approximately 00:31:47 until 00:37:05 and therefore may appear long for an in-depth analysis. However, there are several repetitions in the song's lyrics which of course will be discussed only once. This sequence includes parts that purposely appear long in order to increase the tension. To shorten this sequence, not every single shot will be described in detail and the focus lies on the most crucial ones. Therefore, the given time frame is justified and appropriate.

Therefore, it refers to the Musical genre. From up there, the Visitors are able to perfectly observe the happenings below. On the walls, one can also find some apparatus in glistening blood-red. Further, in a few places, big items stand covered in a full red blanket which later turn out to be bodybuilding equipment for Rocky Horror and the basin in which Rocky was created and awaits to be awoken.

The ceiling is mostly in a pink tone, too, but above the basin one can observe a dome colored in blue and embellished with golden stars, like an artificial night sky. In its center, another shiny red machine stands out with a glowing light. The lighting is only of an artificial nature. One place inside the laboratory looks like a stage that can be reached through three steps. The impression of a stage is supported by a light pink curtain, loudspeakers that are installed rather amateurishly and in a makeshift fashion under the arms of the statues, and a microphone stand in the middle of the stage that is highlighted through a round spotlight circle. This again is undeniably a reference to the Musical genre.

The overall design and appearance of this space reminds the viewers of a beauty bath made grandiose with Roman and Greek architecture and statues – some of the statues' toe nails are even colored with nail polish. However, it does not look like a 'typical' laboratory as it does not seem sterile and no tools except for the apparatus on the walls can be found. Hence, this **setting** immediately appears bizarre which denaturalizes the horror in this scene; a scene in which an inanimate body will be awoken to life. Moreover, one can only enter this room via an elevator and thereby a claustophobic atmosphere is evoked. The elevator is not completely closed but each side is made of black and red iron grating. In this room, features of the Gothic and Musical **settings** are mingled. The laboratory elements such as the basin and the apparatus coming from above are strongly reminiscent of the laboratory in *Frankenstein* whereas the atrium-like structure of the laboratory and the additional stage plus the intense colors call the Musical genre to mind. Through the **setting**'s architecture both genres are built right 'into' each other.

Furthermore, the general **setting** of the castle in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and the tower in *Frankenstein* are both isolated buildings, far away from any city or civilization. The 'Frankenstein place' itself, as Frank'N'Furter's castle is named, is a Gothic building but with a connection to modern architecture as it has a glass dome which provides the roof of the described laboratory. This architectural convergence can be seen as a postmodern element which is characteristic for the Gothical. The Gothic architecture in addition to the dome is also a reference to religion or religious buildings. As mentioned earlier, Gothic buildings use pointed arches to lead towards the sky, more specifically to heaven. In some churches for instance, the spire of their tower is left free to provide a way for the spirit to fly up.

The crucial sequence really begins a few minutes after Brad and Janet enter the laboratory. Inside, nearly all major **characters** are presented: Brad and Janet, Frank'N'Furter, Riff Raff, Magenta, Columbia, and Rocky Horror – except for the Criminologist and Dr. Everett van Scott.[183] Further, the Visitors are assembled at the atrium anxiously awaiting the great spectacle of Rocky Horror's awakening which is underlined by a rattling sound. Before, the Visitors were addressed as "unconventional conventionists"[184] by Frank'N'Furter which already describes them very well. All of them wear black suits, bright colorful shirts, large sunglasses, have a flamboyant hairstyle, large bow ties, and among them one can find people with beard and without, with hat or without. One person wears a headscarf, some are small, some tall, a few skinny, a couple of them corpulent, and all of them have rattles in their hands. The Visitors represent the great masses of people who appear 'conventional' and seemingly fit in through their similar style of dressing but are still 'unconventional' because of certain physical features that tend to be exaggerated here. They have recognition value. Moreover, the Visitors came from outside the castle (we know this from one of the first scenes) where they as well as the other **characters** are not allowed to show their extraordinary features because of social conventions. However, inside the castle, they are freed from those restrictions and turn more and more into themselves. This development is highlighted through the fact that the film plays with their recognition value, as for instance opposing these to standardized suits. Therefore, social criticism of excluding people due to their, among others, outer appearance comes across.[185]

The camera is in the place of one of the Visitors, focusing on Frank'N'Furter who stands next to the basin (which is still covered with a red sheet). Frank'N'Furter is looked at from a high angle and an over-the-shoulder shot (Fig. 1) when he requests full attention

Figure 1

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[183] The name Dr. Everett van Scott is an allusion to Bram Stoker's **character** Van Helsing in *Dracula* – certainly also to the related film adaptations.

[184] From now on, the quotations taken directly from the film will not be accompanied by footnotes throughout all film analyses as it is clear to which film they belong.

[185] The criticism that social minorities have to face will be scrutinized in more detail later in this chapter and then, placed into relation with further characters.

by shouting out: "You see…you are fortunate! For tonight is the night that my beautiful creature is destined to be born." This statement reveals that Frank'N'Furter wants to present himself as a god-like scientist, the creator of new life. Besides, in one of the last scenes of this film, Frank'N'Furter swims in a pool which has "The Creation of Adam" (circa 1511) by Michelangelo painted on the bottom. Here, the connection to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* also becomes quite clear as God is the creator of Adam, the first man, and Frank'N'Furter is the creator of Rocky Horror also a man or as Frank'N'Furter puts it: the first perfect creature.

After a clear cut which is used mostly in the entire scene, the camera shortly focuses on Brad and Janet with a medium shot at waist height and a slight tilt upwards. Both turn away from the camera towards Frank'N'Furter. Brad and Janet are the loving couple, the hero and heroine who appear in the Gothic as well as the Musical. Both had to take off their own clothes as they were wet from the rain and therefore they are only dressed in their underwear, white socks, regular brown shoes, and white shirts they received from the servants. Here, the couple stands for innocence, immaculateness, and naïvity which is supported by the color of their clothes: white. The color of Janet's and Brad's clothes further reveals that both still feel a sense of belonging to the conventions of the outside world and are now torn between what they have been taught by society and what they wish for, what they desire.

Quickly, the camera turns to Frank'N'Furter standing in front of the basin. He is shown with a medium full shot on eye level (Fig. 2). Magenta, on the left hand side, and

Figure 2

Columbia, on the right hand side, stand beside the basin ready to assist their master who in these shots is in the center of attention. Frank'N'Furter wears black glittering high-heels, long grey gloves with bare fingertips above which he partially puts on rose synthetic gloves. Apart from a white pearl necklace, he also has exaggerated make-up on that extravagantly highlights his eyes and mouth. His hair is untamed and over black lingerie including garters and a corsage, he is dressed in a green doctor's coat with a light red triangle on the left side of his chest. It is striking that Frank'N'Furter cross-dresses during

the entire film. Despite his masculinity, he is confidently wearing women's clothing which he only covers with protective garments in the laboratory. In addition to his usual costume, Frank'N'Furter is open to hetero- as well as homosexual experiences without any hesitation. A red triangle facing downwards used to be a symbol of homosexual people in concentration camps and a red triangle facing upwards, as it is shown in this film, has often been used as a symbol for gay pride.

Apart from the master, the style of his two assistants is also distinctive. Columbia is portrayed wearing black shoes, garish blue socks, and a white apron that looks like a cooking apron rather than one belonging into a laboratory. She has short red hair and has put on a white protective mask. Beneath the apron, shiny colorful shorts which are striped in gold, red, and black, as well as a golden glittering shoulder-free top shine through. Her outfit is completed by a tight-fitting glistening necklace and black transparent pantyhose. Due to her girly and excessively joyful behavior, she is introduced as the 'Groupie' which is further explained later on by her love for Eddie, the singer and 'Delivery Boy'. The other assistant, Magenta, has long, wild red (magenta) colored hair with a small white cap or bonnet on top of her head. She sports black high-heels and a black dress with a white shirt beneath it. Like Columbia, she wears a white apron and a white protective mask. Similar to Frank'N'Furter, both assistants (and also other **characters**) are not dressed in primarily medical clothes. The masks and aprons, especially those of Columbia and Magenta, rather function as further accessories than protective gear. Hence, the clothing supports the surreal depiction of the laboratory since medical spaces are usually connected with sterility and neutral, clear colors.

Returning to the scene, the camera again shows from a low angle perspective how the Visitors cheer, rattling and using other noisemakers. It pans along the atrium's handrail and turns back with a high angle on Frank'N'Furter, Magenta and the basin. Still from the same perspective and accompanied by drum-roll, cheering, and clapping, Frank'N'Furter is shown turning towards the basin. The applause which is used many times in the film further underlines the Musical characteristics as this is common in the classic stage Musical as well as in the Backstage Musical. When only the drum-roll continues, the camera switches back again to the previous shot on eye-level with the master, Magenta on the left-hand side and Columbia on the right-hand one. The composition of this shot increases the tension towards what will happen next: the revelation of the creature. Magenta and Columbia pick up the red cloth on the basin, lift it and after a cut, the camera films from behind the basin, looking at Frank'N'Furter in the center and Brad's and Janet's faces in the background. Quickly, the view shifts back again to the front of the basin. Escorted by sounds of amazement from everyone present, the red cloth is taken away and the glass basin with its content is revealed.

This is the first glance the audience gains of Rocky. In the basin, he is completely wrapped in bandages like a mummy. A mummy is commonly connected to death and the ancient times which often include mysterious events. The uncanny, peculiar connotation is related to the Gothic. The next shot is taken from the back of the basin again and has a slight high angle on Rocky floating inside the basin and the shocked couple. Another shot moves closer to the basin, with a medium shot presenting Rocky still entirely bandaged inside the basin while Magenta and Columbia prepare the awakening. Interestingly, the camera then is positioned as if lying inside the basin, next to Rocky's feet and then, tilts up quickly and is again above and outside. As soon as it is on eye-level (slightly high angle) with Frank'N'Furter, Columbia and Magenta, the tilt ends.

Frank'N'Furter demands his servant Riff Raff to "Throw open the switches on the sonic oscillator." Riff Raff follows his master's request and is filmed with a medium shot that includes him on the left-hand side and the sonic oscillator on the right. Riff Raff wears an old black suit, a white but spattered shirt, and has long yellow hair on the sides of his head but on top he is bald. What is significant is that Riff Raff's distinguishing feature is a hunchback which refers to the Gothic novel by Victor Hugo *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*. While operating the apparatus, the music is added to the drum-roll which greatly intensifies the thrill of the creature's revelation. The awakening procedure continues with a stark low-angle close shot of Frank'N'Furter, who seemingly points his finger at something that appears to be behind the camera – the reactor power input. Once Riff Raff has turned up the reactor, the light starts flashing in the entire room as if there was constant lightning. The camera moves from Riff Raff to Frank'N'Furter and back again. Riff Raff kneels down and through some glass tiles a bright blue light shines into the room. The music continues and with a sigh of hard work from Riff Raff, the camera is placed under the earlier mentioned apparatus that is installed on the ceiling of the dome. The artificial night sky flashes and the apparatus moves towards the camera. While the light flashes consistently, the spectator sees Brad and Janet hugging each other through a medium shot. Here, the hero Brad calms his heroine Janet as the action continues. The shots change between Riff Raff operating the machines and the earlier view of the basin, Frank'N'Furter, Magenta, and Columbia.

As the music intensifies and the master laughs, the camera perspective is a bird's eye full shot of the basin, Rocky inside, and Columbia, Magenta, and Frank'N'Furter surrounding it. The camera moves towards the basin. Next, the shots vary from views of the couple to the Visitors, back to the basin, until the ceiling's apparatus nearly hits the lense of the camera. Portrayed with a low angle close shot, Frank'N'Furter raises his arms when the apparatus is in the right position, and a full close-up of Columbia's face is filmed to increase the thrill. Now the viewer observes from differing perspectives and angles how

Frank'N'Furter opens colored stopcocks letting liquid pour freely into the basin. It fills up in rainbow colors and soon a skeleton becomes visible through Rocky's bandage in a slightly low angle full shot of the basin (Fig. 3). The skeleton stands in connection with death as well as birth since it is the last piece of the body that develops and the only one that remains of the human body after death. Hence, the **character** of Rocky Horror appears to be – like the Monster in *Frankenstein* – reanimated from death. The skeleton is a symbol

Figure 3

for death and transience and that again is a Gothic characteristic. The basin in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* is depicted differently in comparison to the *Frankenstein* film (1931) but it certainly is a reference. Another difference regarding this juxtaposition is that in the available film, the laboratory is filled with spectators who witness Rocky Horror's birth, whereas in *Frankenstein*, Dr. Frankenstein does not allow any people into his laboratory.

The music, mainly drum beats and guitar sounds, grows faster and the sound (tone) higher and higher. The screen is completely white and the next shot is a cut-in of Rocky's hand and forearm (Fig. 4, 5). Alluding to the awakening of Frankenstein's

Figure 4

Figure 5

Monster, Rocky lifts both arms which is accompanied by an artificial sound of lightning and thunder. Then again the shots vary and show the reactions of all people in the laboratory through mostly medium shots. The camera follows Rocky's hands again in an extreme close-up on his right hand, depicting how it grips onto the basin's frame and the entirely bandaged body of Rocky lifts himself up, standing inside the basin. A full shot of

the basin with Rocky is given from a slight low angle. The creature is alive. The next shot is medium to full close-up revealing Rocky's face for the first time as Riff Raff unwraps the head bandages. The light still flashing on and off, the camera switches to a full close-up with a slight tilt upwards to Frank'N'Furter. This portrayal underlines his experiment's success.

As the non-diegetic music increases in volume, Rocky raises his hands, grabbing onto the apparatus. Next, there is a transition from non-diegetic sound to the rock song "Sword of Damocles" (diegetic music). The camera presents a low angle full shot of Rocky clinging and hanging onto the rising apparatus which moves towards the dome. When Rocky starts singing, a close shot from a slightly low angle centers on Rocky's face. His first words, "The sword of Damocles is hanging over my head," foreshadow the upcoming difficulties Rocky – and the other **characters** – will have to face. The idiom 'sword of Damocles' is an intertextual reference to the courtier praising the luck of Dionysius I (leader of Syracuse). In order to underline the luck, Dionysius placed Damocles beneath a sword that was only held by a single hair. Hence, the song title firstly explains Rocky's luck to be alive, and in addition, it tells the spectator that obstacles and quarrels may arise which is supported by the next line: "I've got the feeling someone is gonna be cutting the thread." Hence, Rocky fears for his life. Metaphorically speaking, if the thread is cut, the sword will kill him. As explained in the theory part of this thesis, this reminiscence cannot be understood without basic knowledge of Greek culture.

As Riff Raff has not stopped operating the apparatus which lifts Rocky into the air, Frank'N'Furter kicking him is shown from a low angle medium to full shot. This underlines the hierarchies: Riff Raff is Frank'N'Furter's servant. Still clinging onto the apparatus, Rocky sings about his life being a torture ("Oh woe is me, my life is a misery. Oh can't you see that I'm at the start of a pretty big downer"). With switches between full shots from a moderate low angle, shots of the Visitors cheering and functioning as background singers, and the surprised Brad and Janet, Rocky is stripped free of his bandages. A shiny and glistening golden slip and boxer's shoes in the same color are revealed on his muscular body. What is significant is that Rocky turns away to strip off the left-over bandages which looks as if he were dancing as he moves according to the beat. Rocky explains that he "woke up this morning with a start when [he] fell out of bed" and the Visitors answer choir-like "That ain't no crime!" (refrain) to which Rocky chants "and left from my dreaming was a feeling of unnameable dread." Rocky realizes that he has nowhere to go and is not really dressed to leave the place. The phrase "That ain't no crime!" is also used when Rocky sings about the sword of Damocles hanging over his head. This indicates that the Visitors do not regard the threat of a possible death (the sword killing Rocky although metaphorically) as a crime.

Frank'N'Furter somewhat interrupts the song crying out "Oh, my baby" towards Rocky and tries to catch him. Before Frank'N'Furter can get hold of his creature, Rocky runs up the atrium which is shown by a low angle full shot that follows Rocky who appears disorientated. Once he reaches the atrium's top, Frank'N'Furter is looked at from a high angle medium shot[186] as he crawls on the floor, trying to reach out for Rocky. The perspective and shots are significant in this combination because this time it is Rocky who, through the high angle shot, is positioned as more powerful than his master who is looked down on. At this point, the hierarchy between creator and its creature is challenged as it is not the usually powerful Frank'N'Furter who leads the situation but his creature, Rocky Horror. Frank'N'Furter's obsession with creating the perfect man – for himself – and finally the success after his first try Eddie turned him into a mad scientist who wants to possess Rocky, but his creature revolts.

The close-up and wide close-up follow shots continue focusing on Rocky who slightly changes the song text as he sings that "my life is a mystery" which refers to how he gained life. The fact that he is born already being a grown-up man seems unnatural and mysterious. Frank'N'Furter interfered with the biological chain of how human beings gain life. The characteristic of mysterious events definitely derives from the Gothic. When he sings up on the atrium, Rocky directly looks at the Visitors whose faces change into astonishment, some taking off their sunglasses or touch him. Meanwhile, Frank'N'Furter still creeps on all fours behind Rocky and kisses his feet. He suddenly kneels and via a medium shot from moderately above, he is shown screaming and waving his right arm before falls back onto the ground. This disturbs Rocky who runs down from the atrium with a disorientated facial expression. He still is filmed from low angle medium to medium full shot and the same goes for Frank'N'Furter. Both are alternately in focus and the camera pans and thereby follows their movements.

A low angled medium full shot of Magenta, Columbia, and Riff Raff dancing in front of the basin is incorporated shortly (Fig. 6). The dancing in this scene appears staged as all three of them perform the same moves. In other words, it seems choreographed like in traditional Musicals such as those of Busby Berkeley. The dancing is in focus until Rocky followed by Frank'N'Furter are shown from nearly a bird's eye perspective chasing around the room, up the atrium and down again. Frank'N'Furter cannot really keep up with Rocky as the Visitors accidentally step in his way. After a full follow shot on the master, the camera switches back to the three dancing servants. Behind the basin, the spectator can still follow the chase. Quickly, the camera films as if it was lying on the ground. It seems as if Rocky runs directly over the camera when suddenly, Frank'N'Furter falls towards the

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[186] Here, the kind of shot is harder to define as we see the entire person crawling on the floor.

Figure 6

camera. His face is shown in a full close-up and he apparently stares at the viewers but he lifts himself up again shown by a full shot or full wide shot from a high angle perspective.

The selected scene[187] ends with a full shot of the basin, filmed slightly below eye-level, and presents creator, creature and the three servants. Rocky is sitting on the basin's side clinging onto its ladder while Frank'N'Furter collects his thoughts and with a teacher-like attitude that provokes a laugh he rebukes his 'child': "Well, really! That's no way to behave on your first day out!" With this, the music completely stops. Rocky is forgiven as the master admits hugging Rocky's knee: "But since you're such an exceptional beauty, I'm prepared to forgive you." To this, Rocky and the entire present audience applauds and a less tense atmosphere is re-established.

The 'awakening scene' combines classic Gothic **settings** with Musical ones: The laboratory (Gothic) includes a sort of atrium (Musical), a small stage with a microphone, loudspeakers and a curtain (Musical), a basin that serves as a 'bed' for Rocky Horror (Gothic), a dome with a night sky design (Gothic)[188], and some apparatus (Gothic and Musical)[189] and these features converge in that one single room. The **aura** of this scene shifts between Gothic and Musical. It begins with a theater-like cheerful assembly (Musical), then moves to the tense awakening (Gothic), followed by the exciting chase through the atrium (Gothic and Musical), and ends next to the basin (Gothic) calming the atmosphere down. Thus, these changes cannot be separated easily since the **aura** also includes comic features, for instance when Frank'N'Furter collides with his Visitors or Riff Raff mistakenly pulls Rocky up to the ceiling and leaves him hanging there. Also,

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[187] If one is very strict, the selected scene can be said to begin earlier and end later. However, as this scene is already rather long and the most crucial part certainly is the creation sequence, the preceding and proceeding shots can be neglected without loss in this context.

[188] This can be considered Gothic due to the religious meaning and reference to Gothic architecture such as churches and it also may refer to the Frankenstein tower of the film.

[189] The instruments that assist in the awakening of Rocky Horror can be labeled Gothic, and Musical because they recall items that could be found backstage (e.g. to lift a curtain or parts of the stage).

intertextual references[190] can be found throughout the story as for instance Bram Stoker's *Dracula* takes place in Transylvania which is also the galaxy's name where Riff Raff and Magenta come from as in the end they turn out to be from another planet. The region of the same title in today's Romania has become the land of mystery and magic, first and foremost due to *Dracula*'s success. Therefore, the **setting** and the **aura** in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* are representative parameters for the hybrid Gothical.

Furthermore, the portrayed **characters** underline the hybrid nature of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* in numerous ways: To start with, each **character** does not only have a single name but an additional description as Dr. Frank'N'Furter is introduced as a 'Scientist,' Janet Weiss as a 'Heroine,' Brad Majors as a 'Hero,' Rocky Horror as a 'Creature,' Riff Raff as a 'Handyman,' Magenta as a 'Domestic,' Columbia as a 'Groupie,' Dr. Everett van Scott as a 'Rival Scientist,' Eddie as 'Ex Delivery Boy,' and the Criminologist as an 'Expert.' The descriptive clauses mostly call attention to the choice of **characters** in the Gothic genre as it becomes obvious through Brad and Janet as hero and heroine, Frank'N'Furter as the scientist or Rocky Horror as the creature – and its name being an obvious reference to the Horror genre. As Sudha Shastri further explains: "Quite like titles, names too function as markers. They link texts with each other or with historical figures belonging to a particular period."[191] This can be applied to, for example, Frank'N'Furter whose name has great similarities with the word 'Frankenstein,' Dr. Everett Van Scott recalls a protagonist's name in Bram Soker's *Dracula* (1897), Abraham van Helsing, and the other **characters** are connected to an occupation which relates them not only to the job but also presents their hierarchical status within the castle. Hence, each **character** does not only represent a certain personality but also stands for a profession and thus, their function within the film is explained.

Moreover, most artists appear twice in the film but as different **characters** (*Doppelgänger* motif). To illustrate, the first scene of the film shows Brad and Janet's friends' wedding in which Frank'N'Furter appears as priest and Riff Raff as well as Magenta are presented as farmers or servants of the church. This is also a reference to the painting "American Gothic" (1930) by Grant Wood, which is referenced even twice in the film: Once, the painting is imitated by Riff Raff and Magenta in the wedding scene when both stand in front of the church's entrance and then the 'original' painting is placed on a wall inside the entrance hall of the castle. This application of "American Gothic" leads to the supposition that through this presentation the picture is ridiculed (parody).

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[190] To offer a further illustration on the number of intertextual/intermedial references in the entire film, the intro of the film, the song "Science Fiction/Double Feature", is a perfect example. This song takes 4:30 minutes and includes about 40 references to persons, films, books, and genres.

[191] Shastri 102f.

The **characters** also function as vehicles of criticism since this group of social outcasts or minorities (e.g. transvestites, cross-dressers, discriminated or ostracized people due to their bodily features) is only free inside the castle. Traditional morals and norms are represented by the conservative couple Brad and Janet right from the start. Both function as upholders of a rigid mainstream normalcy and traditional gender roles. This becomes particularly apparent in the marriage scene in the beginning. After their friends' wedding ceremony, Brad tells Janet "everyone knows Betty is a wonderful little cook" which Janet affirms. Brad continues by stating "Ralph himself he'll be in line for a promotion in a year or two" to which Janet agrees, too. As it becomes obvious in this short dialogue, Brad and Janet share their opinion on clearly defined gender roles where the woman is expected to be a housewife and mother (cook) and the man is supposed to have a decent job in order to earn enough money to support his family (job). This brief extract emphasizes parallels to traditionally distinguished gender roles. However, through this presentation they are subverted which is even more emphasized once Brad and Janet are inside the castle. There, they are no longer the norm. Now, they seem to be the outcasts instead of the minorities. Social structures existing in the 'outside world' are thereby reversed within the walls of the Frankenstein place. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* also ends with a moral statement through one of the final songs "Don't dream it, be it" telling everyone to stand up for their beliefs and to be who you are. These reversals of creator and creature, oppressor and oppressed, the hierarchies are here read as a Gothic feature and the fact that the loving couple survives in the end, although it is not clear how they will proceed, can be seen as a mixture of the Musical's happy ending and the Gothic's often deadly **plot** finish.

The **narrative** means in this film additionally underline the Gothical **character**. The story is told by the Criminologist who functions as narrator or presenter which is similar to the *Frankenstein* film as already mentioned in the theory part. He leads the audience through the **plot** and explains the protagonists' actions if necessary. Besides, the music and songs vary from '**narrative**'/'recitative' songs to songs that may express emotions but also moderately appear to be cut in. Non-diegetic as well as diegetic music is used within the entire film as explained in the analysis earlier. However, as the entire appearance is intentionally highly staged, even the songs that are cut in do not interrupt the storyline and can only partially be seen as 'showstoppers' (e.g. "Sweet Transvestite").

There are several romances or at least sexual encounters of hetero- and homosexual nature throughout the **plot** as well. The first ones the spectators are introduced to are Brad and Janet as a couple and their friends who just got married. Once inside the Frankenstein place, the audience learns about Columbia's love for Eddie which soon is ended as Frank'N'Furter kills Eddie. On top of that, Frank'N'Furter created Rocky

to marry him.[192] He also seduces Brad and Janet. Rocky is approached by Janet who after losing her virginity[193] to Frank'N'Furter, "has tasted blood and [wants] more" as she sings. This scene is particularly ironic since Janet actually wanted to save herself for Brad but within just one night her whole life and beliefs are questioned and at least partially broken. Therefore, it can be said that Brad and Janet are confronted with several taboos and surreal events while they are inside the Frankenstein place which they have not experienced before. The world outside functions as a sphere for strict social conventions and moral concepts in which for instance, marriage, a monogamous way of living, and heterosexuality are seen as the absolute desire. This world stands in stark contrast to the space inside the castle. The Frankenstein place can be regarded as a place of sin. There, the norms of the outside world and its restrictions are no longer taboos which can be observed in the hetero- and homosexual relations, the promiscuous acts, affairs, cross-dressing, and the travesty. Hence, the **setting** provides a space for 'experiments' that are repressed by society and this juxtaposition criticizes the exclusion and tabooing of social minorities.

To conclude, the three selected and explored parameters can be found in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and present great convergences of Gothic and Musical features which in their combination and through intermedial and intertextual references leads to the ironic challenging of social hierarchies and norms. Therefore, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* is a perfect exemplum of the hybrid genre Gothical.

4 *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*: A Nightmare on Fleet Street

Originally, *Sweeney Todd* is a stage Musical by Stephen Sondheim (music and lyrics) and Hugh Wheeler that was first staged in 1979. In 2007, Tim Burton adapted this Musical to the screen, adding the subtitle *The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, and as we will see, turned it into a Gothical. Burton himself hints at the film's special aura: "It makes this horror movie a musical. Humor, emotion, light, dark, puts them all in there."[194]

Sweeney Todd[195] tells the revenge story of the barber Benjamin Barker (Johnny Depp) who was banished, apparently to prison or Australia, by Judge Turpin (Alan

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[192] This becomes clear as the song "I Can Make You a Man" ends in wedding tunes and Frank'N'Furter leads Rocky to their 'wedding suite.'

[193] Virginity also is a religious norm that is challenged here.

[194] *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* "Specials" 2007.

[195] From here on, also the film will only be referred to as *Sweeney Todd* for the entire title is too long for several repetitions.

Rickman) for a crime he never committed. From then on, Barker's wife Lucy (Laura Michelle Kelly) and his daughter Joanna (Jayne Wisener) have to live with Judge Turpin who had fallen in love with Lucy before and initiated the devious plot against Barker. Coming back to late 19th century London after numerous years, Barker decides to change his name to the title-giving 'Sweeney Todd' as he does not want to be recognized. When he returns to his former home and barber shop, he meets the pie shop owner Mrs. Lovett. It does not take long for her to identify him and remember his story. She informs Sweeney Todd that Lucy could not cope with the situation and therefore, committed suicide. Sweeney Todd's daughter Joanna had to stay with Judge Turpin who has imprisoned her in his house. Sweeney Todd decides to take revenge as he cannot forget what has happened. With the help of Mrs. Lovett, he reopens his barber shop. They join forces and, after Todd killed another barber because he had found out about Todd's past, they develop a murderous plan: Todd and Mrs. Lovett select victims from his customers whose throats he cuts unhesitatingly. Through machinery that connects the barber and pie shop, they throw the dead bodies into the bakery's cellar. There, Mrs. Lovett processes them into meat for her pies. It is Todd's goal to save Joanna. He receives help from his fellow sailor Anthony Hope (Jamie Campbell Bower) who has fallen in love with Joanna at first sight, and takes revenge on Judge Turpin on Turpin's next visit. When Todd finally greets Judge Turpin as his customer, he reveals his true identity as Benjamin Barker and slits Turpin's throat just as he did with numerous previous customers. Todd and Mrs. Lovett have to find her kitchen aid boy Toby (Ed Sanders) whom she cared about like her own son. He ran away and hid after he found out about their bloodthirsty practices. Todd discovers that the supposedly dead Lucy is amongst his victims – she lived in the streets as a beggar. Accusing Mrs. Lovett of treachery, he pushes her into the baking oven and burns her alive. Finally, Toby reappears and avenges Mrs. Lovett by slitting Todd's throat. Anthony and Joanna are able to flee and Sweeney Todd and Lucy are reunited in death.

This second scene analysis is arranged the same way as the preceding one and the setting and aura, the choice of characters, and the narrative and plot are highlighted through **bold letters** as well. This chapter first pays attention to an extensive scene description and analysis and then closes by explaining the Gothical elements that can be observed in *Sweeny Todd* with relation to other scenes of this film.

4.1 "Try a Little Priest": A Waltzing Flesh Hunt

The selected scene[196] takes place after Sweeney has killed his fellow barber Pirelli (Sacha Baron Cohen) in his former and current barber shop because Pirelli discovered that he really is Benjamin Barker. Pirelli's helping hand Toby waits downstairs for his boss but suddenly comes in search for him. Sweeney sends him back downstairs as he wants to cover up his tracks. Suddenly Judge Turpin also arrives at the barber shop but does not recognize Benjamin Barker as Sweeney. Sweeney gives his former tormentor a shave but before he can take revenge by killing Turpin, Anthony bursts in yelling that he wants to elope with Joanna. Nevertheless, Turpin cannot see any connection to Sweeney and furiously leaves. Due to the noise in the barber shop Mrs. Lovett comes to check on Sweeney. When she finds out about the murder of Pirelli, she takes Sweeney down to her shop. Both think about how they can get rid of the dead body but Mrs. Lovett already has an idea.

The spectator has already been introduced to the **setting** of Mrs. Lovett's pie shop where the entire scene is situated. The shop has a rather square format and two walls that border on one another have large windows from waist height upwards. Half of the windows are covered by white, transparent net curtains, and thus the room does not feel like a closed space. Parallel to one stone wall runs a counter on which Mrs. Lovett produces her pies and which is opposite the shop's entrance door. Closer to the two walls with windows are a few chairs with tables. The room of the shop is connected to a small living area where Sweeney used to live and now Mrs. Lovett resides.

The entire **aura** of this room is dark, uncanny, dilapidated, and chaotic and there are no customers at all. Only sparse daylight comes in through the shop's windows which creates a rather natural lighting of the scene. The store with the barber shop above is located on Fleet Street which the subtitle of this film picks up. The shop's room cannot be detected as a fully closed space due to the huge windows on two sides. However, the feeling of being trapped inside or at least of a certain claustrophobic atmosphere is evoked through the dark tone, the many struts that criss-cross the windows, and the monotonous choice of colors. Therefore, objectively the room shares features of a closed as well as open space but the feeling and **aura** certainly provokes that of a closed one – also because the passers-by do not seem to recognize the shop and the action inside. The impression the spectator receives of London is portrayed only in black and grey shades. The city and its streets are dismal, dreary but not deserted as there are people

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[196] The scene runs from 01:02:52 until 01:08:04. Here again not each single shot will be described as the song lengthens the scene. Of course, the significant shots and shifts will be paid attention to.

working and traffic. The overall tone can also be described as monotonous and very run-down. Hence, we are presented with a Gothic atmosphere.

This sequence begins with a medium full shot on Sweeney sitting at a table with a window in the background. Mrs. Lovett stands at the left-hand side pouring gin into a glass in front of Sweeney. Both **characters** are dressed in dark, pale clothes. Sweeney wears black trousers and shoes. Over a white, long-sleeved shirt, he has put on a grey vest with a collar and a dark scarf. As he has just murdered Pirelli, he had to cover the strains and hence now wears a jacket in light grey. His chin-long hair is black with a white streak running from the forehead to the back of his head. Mrs. Lovett wears a long, broad dress that flutters as she moves. It is colored in dark grey and brown and has a corsage which leads up to her chest in similar colors. Her shoulders are covered and the sleeves are pushed up to her elbows. The dress' plunging neckline is embellished with pearls, ribbons, and a little bit of dark red tulle. Fitting to the dress, she wears gloves with bare fingertips. Mrs. Lovett's dark, brown hair is loosely put together on the back of her head and curly streaks wildly fall out of the ponytail. Both **characters**' faces are pale, their dark eyes underlined by dark circles that make them appear fatigued. However, in every scene, their eyes are actually a striking feature as they always seem to be alert and clear.

As Mrs. Lovett sits down on a bench beneath the window and opposite Sweeney, the camera zooms closer to both of them. The focus is on their conversation about how to dispose of Pirelli's dead body. The tension of this conversation is supported through several full and wide close-ups[197] that alternate between Mrs. Lovett and Sweeney. He suggests taking the body away and burying it as soon as it turns night. Mrs. Lovett, however, pursues another idea. Starting with a stationary wide close-up, the camera then slightly tilts up in order to follow Mrs. Lovett as she erects herself again. With a clear cut the camera provides a wide shot of the room which situates the protagonists inside the shop. Mrs. Lovett walks to one window and a wide close-up on eye-level presents her from aside, watching out of the window. Quickly the camera films her from outside the shop which can be seen as the windows' struts frame her face because she pushed away the curtain. She observes the passers-by walking in the streets who are generally shown in a wide shot as there is not one special person outside that the audience needs to be introduced to. While she does so, she tells Sweeney how no one will probably miss Pirelli.

The camera turns back to the previous full close-up from outside the shop and as Mrs. Lovett slightly tilts head and furrows her brow, string music begins. Only some seconds later, her earlier normally spoken **narration** develops into a song. With it, the text changes from normal speech to often rhyming lyrics. However, the song is built like a

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[197] A great number of shots in the chosen scene includes wide or full close-ups as the focus in this scene is on facial expressions and the text.

conversation in which Mrs. Lovett and Sweeney alternately speak or sing. Here, mainly wide close-ups of each are shown in turns which, again, supports the conversational nature and is only interrupted by wide shots which show where each of the protagonists stands. Mrs. Lovett supposed that it would be a "downright shame" even an "aweful waste" to dispose of the body without making any profit out of it. Although the music starts shortly before the protagonists begin to sing, this is diegetic music and the lyrics are 'narrative songs' as they continue along with the action and are not really presented as unnatural.

When she slowly walks from the window to the counter on the opposite side of the room, it seems as if the camera on eye-level and full close-up falls back before her. Mrs. Lovett explains that there are not going to be any traces left of the dead body. Sweeney, at that time, has not realized her plan yet. Mrs. Lovett wants to increase her business success through processing Pirelli's flesh into her meat pies and thus sings "Think of it [Pirelli's dead body] as thrift, as a gift" and throws her head back continuing "if you get my drift?" To which Sweeney does not react but keeps staring at his empty glass. Throughout, not every word is sung but spoken lines are interwoven, which somewhat naturalizes the Musical features for audiences that are not accustomed to the Musical genre and adds realism as an effect.

Mrs. Lovett is then filmed in a close shot on eye-level and stands on the left-hand side in the frame whereas Sweeney still sits in the background at the table holding onto his glass. In the foreground the viewer can recognize some cooking items which Mrs. Lovett begins to fiddle with. She continues singing while a waltz rhythm is added to the plain string music: "I mean, with the price of meat, what it is, when you get it, if you get it." To which Sweeney makes a comprehending sound and his mood instantly lifts which is presented with a wide close-up. As Sweeney now really takes part in the conversation and fully understands what Mrs. Lovett is after, she quickly proceeds while walking back and forth between table (where Sweeney still sits) and the counter. Now, the cannibalistic plan starts to develop. Mrs. Lovett tells "And I'm sure they can't compare as far as taste." Sweeney chants "Mrs. Lovett, what a charming notion…" while at the same time she continues singing ("well, it does seem a waste") and hence, both voices overlap "…eminently practical and yet appropriate as always" Sweeney still continues. The music turns faster into a Viennese waltz which also lightens the atmosphere.

At this point, the plot changes from predominantly depressed and dark, to cheerful, from Gothic to Musical, because both really become conspirators. Sweeney moves towards Mrs. Lovett and the camera accompanies him. He takes her hands and passionately leads her into the Viennese waltz while singing "Mrs. Lovett, how I've lived without you, all these years, I'll never know." The dance itself is not filmed as stable but

the camera does also not tilt around the **characters**. It moves more slowly than the couple dances and follows them only partially. There are three quick cuts during this appearance of a dance in the film and with each cut, the camera steps a little closer toward the couple's faces: from medium shot to wide close-up. During this cinematic development, the meat procurement plan goes into more detail.[198] Here, the **narrative** clearly includes irony that comes as the horror of the plan is combined with light-hearted music and a quick, happy dance. "The idea of using the waltz idiom to accompany dark and menacing lyrics was of course nothing new . . . but in *Sweeney Todd* the style took on an even more demonic character"[199] confirms Jim Lovensheimer and supports the idea of the dualism and hence a hybrid genre.

Next, both stop at a window and are filmed from outside the shop through the glass. Now it is not only Mrs. Lovett who thinks about the dreadful plan but Sweeney as well and thus appropriately both faces are framed by square struts on eye-level with close shots. They observe the happenings outside: "For what's the sound of the world out there?" (both sing as a chorus) As the camera moves closer to their faces up to a wide close-up of Sweeney and a full close-up on Mrs. Lovett in order to reveal even more facial expressions and with this, emotions, the voices switch between singing and speaking: "What, Mr. Todd, what, Mr. Todd? What is that sound?" – "Those crunching noises pervading the air." – "Yes, Mr. Todd, yes, Mr. Todd, yes, all around." – "It's man devouring man, my dear." Then, they sing jointly "And who are we to deny it in here?" and repeat it. Meanwhile, the camera switches between wide shots of the street outside, full close-ups of either of their faces, and wide or full close-ups of both faces together again framed by the window's struts (Fig. 7). Hence, the attention definitely lies on the emotions portrayed by their faces.

Figure 7

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[198] Sweeney: "Lots of other gentlemen'll soon be coming for a shave." – Lovett: "Think of all them pies." – Sweeney: "How choice, how rare."
[199] Lovensheimer in Everett, Laird 211.

Mrs. Lovett turns away from the window and the music moderately decreases in volume but not fully. It is still in the background of the scene, although both speak more than they sing for a moment. They provide each other with more and more reasons and excuses why their plan is justified: "These are desperate times, Mrs. Lovett…and desperate measures are called for." One after the other they go to the counter and Mrs. Lovett takes out a fresh bun while standing behind the counter, Sweeney in front of it. This bun is filmed with a medium to extreme close-up that includes Mrs. Lovett's hand. The bun really seems to be the only fresh food in the entire shop as everything else looks old and disgusting. When Sweeney asks what the bun is, Mrs. Lovett is shown with an over-the-shoulder shot with a slight high angle medium shot as she leans with her elbows onto the counter and innocently answers: "It's priest, have a little priest." The camera follows Sweeney's view through the window. Just opposite the pie shop, there is a church where the priest is welcoming people to his church at that very moment.

The **plot** has already taken the cannibalistic turn which proceeds. The song continues to provide various possible victims as both **characters** walk up to the window again. Sweeney questions if the priest really is good and Mrs. Lovett explains: "Sir, it's too good, at least. Then again they don't commit sins of the flesh, so it's pretty fresh." In this part, the shots vary from mostly wide close-ups of the protagonists' faces to the future victims outside who mostly are presented through full shots. As this conversational song sequence offers a vivid depiction of the horrific lyrics, the conversation is listed as follows:

Sweeney [About priests]: "Awful lot of fat."

Mrs. Lovett: "Only where it sat."

Sweeney: "Haven't you got poet or something like that?"

Mrs. Lovett: "No, you see the trouble with poet is how do you know it's deceased?
Try the priest... Lawyer is rather nice."

Sweeney: "If it's for a price."

Mrs. Lovett: "Order something else, though, to follow since no one should swallow
it twice."

Sweeney: "Anything that's lean?"

Mrs. Lovett: "Well, then, if you're British or loyal, you might enjoy Royal Marine.
Anyway it's clean. Though, of course it tastes of wherever it's been."

Then the music turns louder and stronger again:

Sweeney: "Is that squire on the fire?"

Mrs. Lovett: "Mercy, no, sir, look closer, you'll notice, it's grocer."

Sweeney: "Looks thicker, more like vicar."

> Mrs. Lovett: "No, it has to be grocer, it's green."

After searching for imaginable victims outside, both turn away from one window and walk towards the other one while they alternately throw in reasons supporting their murderous idea: "The history of the world, my love." – "Save a lot of graves, do a lot of relatives favors." – "Is those below us serving those up above." – "Everybody shaves, so there should be plenty of flavours." When they reach the other window, they turn to each other and with over-the-shoulder close shots in turns, they declare the deadly plan as service for the poor, oppressed "How gratifying for once to know, that those above will serve those down below." The music reaches a peak when the two protagonists look out of the window again, pulling the curtain aside and shown in full and wide close-ups. The music softens but carries on more quietly as they pick up their search again. The last part of the song criticizes social structures to a great extent. In their sung conversation, they reverse higher and lower social status by turning around who serves whom.

In the following shot the camera stands on the counter, still providing a view of outside the shop with passers-by. Mrs. Lovett is at the right, Sweeney at the left-hand side. The counter is disorderly, covered with several ingredients for pies with which Mrs. Lovett plays when Sweeney joins her at the counter. She describes her 'offer': "we have some shepherd's pie, peppered with actual shepherd on top, and I've just begun. Here's the politician, so oily, it's served with a doily, have one."[200] As Sweeney grabs the bun, sauce or something similar drops out of it and he suggests: "Put it on a bun, well, you never know if it's going to run." Furthermore, criticism regarding politics comes through by describing the politician as 'oily' and cowardly. In addition, the position of an actor is ridiculed (parody) as he is said to 'always arrive overdone.'

Lastly, Sweeney advances toward Mrs. Lovett around the counter, takes a large knife and holds it up to her throat. This is filmed in a slightly high angled wide close-up over Sweeney's shoulder (Fig. 8) and humorously accompanied by Sweeney singing: "I'll come again when you have judge on the menu." This obviously refers to his main goal of taking revenge on Judge Turpin. Sweeney badly wants to see his rival and torturer punished.

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[200] To clarify, Mrs. Lovett has not yet processed human meat into her pies but it is the plan she is singing about. She describes the possible future list of her pie menu.

Figure 8

In a full shot of the shop, both glide into a Viennese waltz again while Mrs. Lovett holds onto a rolling pin behind Sweeney back and he still holds the large knife. They stop singing for a moment and just dance through the room, turning and turning. The camera changes to a wide close-up again and both are in focus as they keep on dancing. The dancing couple is further shown in medium and medium full shots (Fig. 9) as Sweeney continues with the song: "Have charity towards the world, my pet." She joins him replying "yes, yes, I know, my love."

Figure 9

Finally, they reach a decision: "We'll take the customers that we can get." – "Highborn and low, my love." – "We'll not discriminate great from small." With a dance move both release the dance position and pause in front of the window again, observing the passers-by. They end in a musical and lyrical climax: "No, we'll serve anyone, we'll serve anyone, meaning anyone, and to anyone at all." During the last song lines, the camera focuses on both standing inside the shop, looking outside. Sweeney on the left side still holds the knife up and Mrs. Lovett on the right has the rolling pin in her hand. The shot begins as a close shot and the camera moves backwards (Fig. 10, 11, 12) away from the shop but stays on eye-level with Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett. What is significant is that the spectators now see passers-by in the foreground and the couple in the background behind the glass windows of the shop's front (Fig. 11, 12). Here, the threat is illustrated since they have sung about prospective victims the entire time and any of the people in

the street could be one of them: The threat, suspense, fear, and horror are permanently prevalent. Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett clearly point out that anyone can be targeted without any sort of preference due to social hierarchies, outer appearances, title, or anything else. To the knife, everyone is the same.

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

The **setting** the spectator is confronted with in this scene certainly belongs to the Gothic genre due to its dark, uncanny **aura**. Above Mrs. Lovett's pie shop, one can find Sweeney's former and current barber shop. In the cellar of this house, there is the bakery's oven and a link to London's sewerage system. The three floors are connected and once Sweeney has slit another customer's throat in his barber shop, he operates the special barber chair and by doing so, he throws the dead bodies downstairs into the cellar. There Mrs. Lovett processes the fresh meat and uses the good parts for her pies. This cannibalistic turn in addition to the **setting** (cellar, old house) also feeds into the Gothic atmosphere of the film.

The **aura** of *Sweeney Todd* is greatly coined by the colors as these are kept dark with shades of grey. What is striking is that only the color of fire (e.g. in scenes including an oven) and blood (e.g. the dead bodies, blood stains on shirts) are intensely colored in red or other warm colors. The so-called 'color key' style is used throughout the entire film except for 3 scenes: A memory in which Sweeney recalls happy days with his family; Mrs. Lovett's memory of a ball; and a dream scene in which Mrs. Lovett fantasizes about a

possible future with Sweeney. Especially in the dream scene the colors are the opposite of the rest of the film as they appear exaggerated and this underlines the dreamlike atmosphere of both fantasies and memories. As the film mostly employs dark colors and only highlights one color (here, red), the style bears resemblance to the Neo-Noir and shows similarities to the comic adaptation *Sin City* (2005) by Frank Miller and Robert Rodriguez.[201] The reference to comics and similarity to films such as *Sin City* becomes particularly apparent in the introductory scene of *Sweeney Todd*. There, London's streets, corners, alleys, gutters and so forth are filmed as blood runs through them, finding its way. Here, the contrast between the monotonously colored city-scape and the full red of the blood is high; hence, the disparity in the choice of colors underlines the **setting's aura**. The depiction of London's streets and the barber shop's **setting** just opposite a church can be read as a reference to Jack the Ripper[202] and Fleet Street as 'Sweeney Todd's Whitechapel.'

Apart from the house in Fleet Street, there are further **settings** which include features of the Musical in addition to the aforementioned Gothic characteristics. To demonstrate, there is a market which Mrs. Lovett and Sweeney visit where they stop in front of a wagon built into a stage (Musical). This wagon provides the space for Pirelli and Toby to sell a 'special elixir' that allegedly brings back the hair to bald-headed people. This elixir is presented by Toby who sings the slogans and uses his stage to reach more and more people. Although the inclusion of a stage can be seen as a Musical characteristic, the **setting** is predominantly Gothic.

Another crucial **setting** – despite the fact that it is not utilized in many scenes – is a mental asylum to which Joanna was sent by Judge Turpin after refusing to marry him. Turpin wanted to own Joanna and grew more and more scared when he observed the connection between his beloved Joanna and Anthony, Sweeney's fellow sailor. As explained in the theory part, madness and mental institutions are common in the Gothic and tend to be portrayed even more often in rather recent productions where lunatics represent 'the Other.'

The Gothic appearance of this film is broken up by song and dance sequences throughout the entire film. The Horror features in the Gothic of *Sweeney Todd* are denaturalized and the idea of "horrific jouissance"[203] is added through Musical elements or as Jim Lovensheimer states:

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[201] Cf. Salisbury 88.
[202] A suitable adaptation and reference in this case is the film *From Hell*, 2001.
[203] Freer 71, also 74.

> The cannibalistic fantasy, with its grotesque lyrics that describe how members of various professions would taste, appears as a light-hearted waltz. The counterpoint between lyrics and the music accentuates the macabre nature of the duet.[204]

The 'macabre nature' which evolves through the combination of horrific Gothic lyrics and cheerful rhythms of the Musical provides this scene with a highly ironic **narrative**. The absurdity in this sequence somewhat tones the cruelty down because Mrs. Lovett and Sweeney's conversational song "Try a Little Priest" comes across as humorous. The viewer can observe the same combination in the film's final scene in which Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett dance a waltz and he pushes her into the bakery's oven burning her alive. The reason for this action is that he just found out he killed his own wife without knowing because Mrs. Lovett did not tell the truth about Lucy.

Besides, throughout and because of the analyzed scene and song "Try a Little Priest" the viewer is able to observe and realize the development of the **character** of Sweeney turning more and more into a madman – a fanatic avenger. In *Sweeney Todd*, it is less the mad scientist as in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* or *Frankenstein* who supports the Gothic **aura** but the madman hatching a horrific, blood-thirsty plan.

When talking about **characters**, it is also crucial to mention Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett's victims. The last lines of the song show that both are not going to make any differentiation in their choice of victims: "We'll serve anyone and to anyone at all." In the song, numerous groups of professions and people are addressed and – we are confronted with a sense of dark humor here – they conclude by stating that they are not going to discriminate between the customers *and* victims.

Furthermore, the waltz does not only lighten the atmosphere and add Musical components to the film's Gothic **aura**, but it certainly has also been considered a dance often enjoyed in high-class society. The **characters** the spectators are confronted with represent social hierarchies and the organization of power – at the end of the 19th century and general parallels to today's social structures can be drawn as well. Sweeney Todd, when he was still called Benjamin Barker, used to be a normal, hard-working barber who enjoyed life with his young family. As the influential Judge Turpin develops feelings for Sweeney's wife, he hatches a plot against Sweeney and without any chance of solving the case, the barber is sent away. Although no crime or injustice provoked by Sweeney happened, the Judge is able to decide over other people's lives. The fact that Sweeney comes back and tricks Judge Turpin represents a reversal of social structures between rich and poor, influential and powerless. Notwithstanding that Sweeney's act of revenge is only partially successful – after all, he unknowingly kills his own wife and is murdered in the end as well – he eventually gains power. Thus, Sweeney is able to trick Judge Turpin

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[204] Lovensheimer in Everett, Laird 211.

into coming back to his barber shop where he takes his razors which he has previously referred to as his 'friends' and slits Turpin's throat. Although this reversal and thereby also criticism of power structures does not last long, the viewer can read this ending as 'justice' – even if it is vigilantism. This "moral opposition between Todd and Turpin which prevails in working memory after Todd switches from victim to victimiser"[205] challenges prevailing moral values. Can vigilantism be comprehended or even justified? How do we deal with injustice and the wish for revenge? In *Sweeney Todd*, the vigilante takes revenge on the deviant who deviates from social norms but by taking revenge, the vigilante actually becomes a deviant himself.

In "The Cognitive Turn: Narrative Comprehension and Character Identification,"[206] Richard Rushton and Gary Bettinson suggest that "Sweeney Todd generates a complex play with the spectator's allegiance"[207] which is set on the "**primacy effect** – the set of first impressions erected by the film."[208] Here, question of sympathy and partially also identification comes in. Why does the audience sympathize with a throat-slitting avenger? Certainly, the spectator learns about Sweeney's past right at the beginning of the film which triggers sympathy for his desire to take revenge. According to Rushton and Bettinson, "these initial judgments tacticly guide our expectations about the character as the drama unfolds, and we constantly cross-reference durable first impressions against developing plot actions."[209] Hence, the viewers are less horrified by Sweeney's brutal actions because their first impression of this **character** evoked sympathy. These scholars go a step further by assuming that the expectations towards a **character** are also dependent on the actual actors because Johnny Depp as well as Helena Bonham Carter have already portrayed several 'sympathetic misfits.'[210] The fact that *Sweeney Todd* includes and hints at social outcasts or misfits (e.g. Sweeney Todd, Mrs. Lovett, Beadle Bamford)[211] is a major feature of the Gothical. On top of that, the ways in which the outcasts are depicted include criticism towards this kind of exclusion.

A **plot** feature that is representative for the Gothic and the Musical is that of romance going along with a Musical happy ending. *Sweeney Todd* offers three major romances: that between Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett, the young love of Anthony and Joanna and the one between Sweeney and his wife Lucy. However, the love – or should it rather be called dependence? – between Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett turns out deadly; whereas

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[205] Rushton, Bettinson 172.
[206] See Rushton, Bettinson. Chapter 8 in *What is Film Theory? An Introduction to Contemporary Debates* 156-176.
[207] Ibid. 168.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Cf. Ibid. 169.
[211] Beadle Bamford is Judge Turpin's helping hand and depicted as small, ugly, and unpleasant.

Joanna and Anthony are able to flee and hence, it is a happy ending for the couple. The other romantic relationship to be mentioned is that between Sweeney and his wife, Lucy. Sweeney was cut away from his wife and child to whom he wants to return. Instead, he has found out that his wife has apparently committed suicide and his daughter is imprisoned in Turpin's mansion. The love for his wife and daughter is the main reason for Sweeney to take revenge "but there follows a tragic *anagnorisis*. Todd's wife has not met the fate claimed by Mrs. Lovett."[212] The 'anagnorisis' means the abrupt awareness and recognition that his wife did not commit suicide but rather that he killed Lucy unwittingly. The fact that both Sweeney and Lucy are dead in the end leaves room for the – admittedly slightly spiritual and romantic – interpretation that both are united again after death.

Finally, it can be summarized that *Sweeney Todd* combines several parameters of both original genres in a horrific Gothical that challenges social hierarchies. By merging Gothic and Musical characteristics, such as developing a murderous plan (Gothic) while dancing the Viennese waltz and singing (Musical), the convergence leads to pointed irony – the major means of the Gothical. Similarly to the previous example of the Gothical, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Sweeney Todd* focuses on criticizing social structures (e.g. Sweeney and Judge Turpin) and provides a space to sympathize with social misfits (e.g. Sweeney, Mrs. Lovett).

5 *REPO! The Genetic Opera*: From Life-Saving Operations to Money Madness

In the third analysis the focus is placed on the most recent production from 2008 that will be explored in this study: *REPO! The Genetic Opera.* The producer of three *SAW* sequels, Darren Lynn Bousman, presents a complex[213] dystopian future vision of the world and alludes to prospective social and political situations that can already be detected in today's world.

In *REPO! The Genetic Opera*[214] we are introduced to the world in 2056 in which humanity is threatened to become extinct because of a fast-spreading epidemic that provokes organ failure. The biotech company GeneCo produces expensive transplants which can replace the infected organs and hence the recipient stays alive. Though GeneCo presents itself as the 'savior,' the founder and head of the company, Rotti Largo

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[212] Rushton, Bettinson 168.
[213] The summary of *REPO! The Genetic Opera* needs to be slightly more detailed as the narrative has numerous flashbacks and is highly complex. Therefore, an extensive synopsis of most events and the protagonists' pasts is important.
[214] Within the film analysis, I use the abbreviation *REPO!* instead of *REPO! The Genetic Opera*.

(Paul Sorvino), actually takes advantage of the situation as he only acts to make financial profit and to seize power. GeneCo also accepts recipients who cannot afford to pay in advance and allows them to pay off their depths within a fixed time. However, there is a catch as GeneCo follows a murderous plan to get their 'products' back in case the financial conditions are not fulfilled within the deadline: The company's Repo Men are ordered to return the implanted organs to GeneCo by all means, a procedure that has been legalized and gives Largo unrestricted power over his clients. Additionally, GeneCo builds up a new market: "Surgery as a fashion statement."[215] Largo's company has a great variety of offers amongst which one can find skin transplants for a smoother or differently colored skin, new faces, or Zydrates – according to GeneCo "an expensive and addictive painkiller" that supports the post-operative time. Ironically, Rotti Largo finds out that he actually has a deadly disease he cannot cure and thus at some point one of his children, Luigi (Bill Moseley), Pavi (Nivek Ogre), and Amber Sweet (Paris Hilton), will inherit GeneCo. They quarrel over his legacy which will make one of them the most powerful person in the world.

GeneCo's head Repo Man is Nathan Wallace (Anthony Head), a former surgeon. Nathan was once married to Marni (Sarah Power) and has a 17-year-old daughter, Shilo Wallace (Alexa Vega). Shilo believes that she suffers from the same rare blood disease that already killed her mother. In fact, Marni was secretly killed by her 'ex-lover' Largo whom she left for Nathan. Largo blamed Nathan for her death who, driven by guilt, believes himself to be responsible. Therefore, Largo offered his former rival to keep the secret and hide the truth from Shilo if he works for his company as the Repo Man. Nathan accepts but fears that he would lose the trust of his daughter if she ever finds out and so he lives a double life.

When Shilo once visits her mother's tomb she accidentally meets the Graverobber (Terrance Zdunich) while he is digging bodies up. The Graverobber produces a cheaper version of Zydrate out of dead bodies and sells it. The two are interrupted by GeneCops, the GeneCo police, and flee into a building that is filled with dead bodies – the 'left-overs' of the recipients who were not able to pay back the debts. Shilo is caught by the GeneCop and faints. As Nathan is among the GeneCops he is able to bring her back home safe.

Once a year at the 'Sanitarian Square,' the 'Post-Plague Italian Renaissance' takes place, a market with a funfair atmosphere. The highlight of the fair is GeneCo's Genetic Opera where famous singer Mag (Sarah Brightman) who is mostly referred to as 'Blind Mag' is about to give her final performance. Largo who is increasingly interested in

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[215] The following quotes that are not accomanied by a footnote are either taken direktly from spoken language of the film (as in the previous analyses) or from the comic pictures that are included in *REPO!* throughout the film.

Shilo invites her to the event and commands two henchgirls to watch her. When Shilo arrives at the fair she is introduced to Mag who is a former friend of Marni and was left under the illusion that Shilo died during birth. Mag also has to work for Largo since he cured her from blindness but the contract was "written with blood" and so he forces Mag to forever serve Largo – or her eyes will be taken back as they are a kind of 'security deposit.' In an unattended moment the Graverobber appears and leads Shilo away from the fair. He reveals the cruel contract between Mag and Largo and advises her to go back home. When Largo notices Shilo's disappearance he sends Mag accompanied by the henchgirls back to the Wallace house to convince her to accept the invitation to the opera. Meanwhile, he calls for Nathan and orders him to kill Blind Mag after the show as she refuses to work for Largo any longer. Nathan declines this order and returns home where he finds Mag warning his daughter about GeneCo. An argument starts between the adults. After Nathan has kicked out Mag, Shilo explains to her father that the Repo Man is after Mag, without realizing her father's second identity. At that point, Largo has already given the order to kill Nathan, the Repo Man, as he turned his back on GeneCo.

The story finally peaks at GeneCo's Genetic Opera where all story lines are brought together. Largo tricks Shilo and uses her as a lure to catch the Repo Man. Largo wants Shilo to decide: Either she lets herself be trapped or she uses the situation to trap the Repo Man. In the meantime, Mag's last performance takes place during which she rips her eyes out herself in front of the audience. Largo finishes her 'act' by cutting the ropes that hold her in the air so that she falls and her body is stabbed by the scenery's fence. Largo presents it as if it were all part of the show and the audience believes the illusion. Shilo decides not to be trapped and knocks the Repo Man down who reveals his true self. Shilo is confronted with her father's second life and moreover, with the fact that she is not ill but was poisoned by Nathan over the years so he could keep her safe in the house.

Finally, Largo hands Shilo a gun to revenge herself. As a reward he offers her to inherit GeneCo after his death. When suddenly the light turns off, Largo takes the gun and shoots Nathan himself. Coughing due to his disease Largo dies on stage and reminds the world to think of him as a savior. Shilo and her father forgive each other and Nathan dies. The film ends with Shilo leaving the stage and an epilogue given by the Graverobber.

The chosen scene, which portrays a repossession act in detail, presents the probably cruelest deed and a key act of *REPO!* because this is the means by which GeneCo operates. GeneCo is the exclusive provider of transplants and leads its customers into addictive beauty operations.

The following analysis will be structured just like the two previous ones. The three chosen parameters (the setting and aura, the choice of characters, and the narrative and

plot) will be in focus and emphasized by **bold letters** throughout the text. The analysis concentrates on a detailed scene description and interpretation and will be concluded by addressing further points that are significant with regard to the Gothical.

5.1 'Organ-Ization': The Repo Man in Action

To situate the chosen scene,[216] Shilo has just received the message from Rotti Largo to meet him at her mother's tomb. There, she is taken by two of Largo's 'henchwomen' and forced into his sedan where she talks to Largo and is driven to the Italian Renaissance fair. Meanwhile, Nathan dressed up as Repo Man has another victim in his cellar where the selected sequence takes place. As this scene includes rapid movements and switches from one shot to the other, the montage underlines the horror that nothing can be done to save the victim and the Repo Man cannot be stopped.

The scene begins with a slightly high-angled close-up of an old record player and the needle just settles itself to start the song and hence diegetic music is used. This first shot already prepares the spectator for the upcoming song sequence. Next, an over-the-shoulder shot on eye-level shows Nathan taking his Repo Man mask from a stand with his gloved hands and the mask is shown in focus with a full close-up. The mask just as the rest of the outfit is dark grey to black and covers the entire face. It has a forehead lamp, an area where one can look through in the shape of glasses, and the mouth area is covered with bars and resembles a surgical mask but made of metal or iron. The light is artificial and shines from – apparently a lamp – above. Simultaneously to a cut to the next shot, the music begins to play and a choir sings "Repo Man." The music is a very quiet rhythm of drums and strings and cannot be detected clearly. The camera places a close shot on Nathan at the right-hand side and the stand of the mask on the left. He is shown from aside lifting the mask and holds it up high as if he was performing a ceremony. Staying on eye-level and close shot framing, the camera pans to the right accompanying Nathan's movement as he walks backwards. This way, he comes into the foreground and the rustling sound by the record player continues as well as we still hear voices singing "Repo Man."

Here, the spectator can get a first glimpse of the **setting** which is a secret room, a kind of operating room, in the Wallace's house. We have already been introduced to this **setting** during the preparatory work of Nathan as well as in flashbacks. The choice of a secret room that only a few protagonists (Nathan, Rotti Largo and some of his 'stooges') know about makes it highly threatening. There, assumably numerous people have lost their lives and hence the spectatorship is not only confronted with the upcoming victim but

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[216] This sequence runs from 00:28:43 until 00:30:18.

can imagine previous tortures, too. The room is hidden behind a fireplace that is connected to the wall. The wall can be moved in order to gain access. However, it is clear due to Nathan's previous acting that Shilo does not know about its existence. This room should be understood as closed space because it appears as if it were in the cellar or at least partially under the earth's surface due to fanlights and has only two ways out: through the secret fireplace door and a wall that has a large window and a door – which is slightly similar to the **setting** in *Sweeney Todd* as large windows are also included. However, we do not exactly know what is behind that door and where it leads to as it is only opened once in order to bring in the next victim. It is not clear whether the door leads to a side-room in which Nathan 'stores' the victims or if the operating room has a direct connection to the outside. The viewer never gains knowledge about how the victims are transported into the operating room. Therefore, a claustrophobic atmosphere is evoked, the victim seemingly can never escape, and in consequence, we are confronted with a closed room tension.

The **aura** is entirely threatening – not only because of the claustrophobic atmosphere. The operating room is filled with so much medical furniture that we cannot detect every single piece of it. Posters showing the muscular structure of the human body, x-ray pictures, numerous lamps hanging from the ceiling or standing in the room (artificial light again), dissecting tables and equipment, and further medical devices abound – apparently left-overs from Nathan's time as surgeon. The 'masterpiece' in this room however, is an object that serves as dissecting table which is erected from the ground up to approximately 60 degrees. Chains and further fixation gadgets are secured onto the front. Thereby, the head, arms, feet, and chest can be fastened to the table which is illuminated brightly and colored in mint green. The apparatus and other supplies provoke the feeling of unease and terror about what has happened and is going to happen soon.

Next, the viewers see some apparatus and x-ray in the foreground and with a close shot since only parts of these can be seen. In the background we can detect a person who is strapped to the aforementioned table which is even better described as 'rack.' He is shown through a medium shot and at first everything is blurred but quickly focuses on the victim who breathes in panic and is opening his eyes wide with fear. In his face is the pure look of terror. This **character**, the victim, has not been connected to any previous event in this film and he apparently is just another organ recipient who was not able to pay his debts. He wears a black shoulder-free vest with black and brown, vertically striped long trousers.

The following shot is back on Nathan who still holds the mask in his hands in front of him. It is a close-shot on eye-level. He moves towards the camera and turns around in semicircles and back again as if dancing with the mask. While doing so, the logo of GeneCo which is on both of Nathan's arms comes into the shot. There is a short cut that nearly cannot be recognized during these movements and the second shot is a medium close shot and pans to the right in order to follow Nathan on his way. As he bows to the mask which he holds down with his left arm in front of him, the camera tilts down moderately (Fig. 13) and back up again until it faces Nathan from the front with a close shot. The **character** of Nathan appears to be much harder and colder than in some scenes before which tells the spectator that he has already taken on the role of the Repo Man – although he is not yet wearing his entire outfit. The Repo Man 'costume' is made out of black leather and is a combination of black trousers, a black jacket, black shoes, and long overalls that are black as well. The outfit – except for the overalls – reminds strongly of bikers' clothes, especially as he also wears a kind of kidney belt. This combination of shots includes Musical and Gothic features. The dance-like movements resemble a dance scene in a Musical but they still appear to be natural since they develope out of the situation. The choice of colors and the omnipresence of the threatening mask rather allude to the Gothic. Therefore, the mixture of a Gothic costume and **setting** and the **narrative** means of the song and performative act of dancing shows classic features of the Gothical.

Figure 13

The camera then presents Nathan on the right in a medium shot from behind and on the left, we can watch the victim shiver on the rack in a medium full shot. During the previous shot as well as this one, the music grows slightly louder and a soft waltz rhythm comes through. Similarly to the analyzed scene in *Sweeney Todd*, the waltz accompanies bad messages and cruel acts. Hence, the waltz obviously is a recurring element of the Gothical.

Quickly there is a cut and Nathan is depicted from the front with a medium full shot when he bows in front of the victim – the mask is still in his hands. As he straightens up

the camera tilts up as well. The act of bowing in front of someone or an audience further refers to a theater play or stage Musical. One can hear the victim sigh and sob dramatically and with horror. As Nathan straightens, he also looks up to his victim and begins to speak slowly in a deep, rough voice: "It's a thankless job." Except for a very short interruption, the camera follows Nathan and pans to the left, now portraying him in a wide close-up and still on eye-level. The camera switches to a full close-up on the victim's face from the side which highlights his fear as his body shakes, his upper teeth are pressed onto his lower ones, and he cannot hold back spit.

Another fast switch back to Nathan shows him from his left side on eye-level and through a wide close-up. His facial expressions stand in stark contrast to his usual appearance when Shilo is around and he is a caring and loving father. Now, as the Repo Man, he has a stern face and his eyes mostly focus on the victim. He continues commenting about the job that "somebody has got to do it" as if it were just another job that is rather unpleasant. Next, he is filmed picking out a knife for the upcoming procedure. In a full close-up we observe Nathan on the left-hand side of the picture and on the right side, we see the knives' blades in the foreground and the victim blurred in the background in a medium shot. This shot's arrangement clearly foreshadows what is going to happen soon and confirms the previous expectations. In a swift move Nathan chooses the knife, pulls it out with a threatening sound, and vanishes out of the camera's view as if he kneels down. Significantly, the victim cannot bend his head down as he is fixed in only one position through a strong collar. He can only try to follow what his torturer is doing by moving his eyes which is filmed in a full close-up from aside. Unexpectedly, Nathan pops up on the other side of the victim. First the mask on Nathan's hand, like a hand puppet, appears followed by Nathan's head and he continues speaking rhythmically "peeling off the tissue inch by inch" while he lays down the mask and the camera follows with a cut-in of the mask. Within seconds, only the victim's torso (not showing the head) is filmed by an over-the-shoulder shot. The focus is on Nathan's action as he rips the victim's shirt apart. The presentation of the mask as a hand puppet, Nathan's movements, and the way he pronounces the words, are combined in away that provokes irony. The playfulness of the mask portrayed like an innocent puppet in connection to the victim's horror appears surreal.

After a fast cut we see a full shot of the victim on the rack and Nathan in front of it with his back towards the camera but turning his head and hence facing the camera directly. For a moment it seems as if the viewers were in the room as well and he continues: "Skinning off the muscles, too." Another wide close-up on the victim's face is filmed, which again reveals the panic and fear in his eyes, and the camera is back in the previous position with a full shot on both. Nathan turns around and swings to the left and

the right towards the camera which again implies dancing. Here, the Gothic and Musical elements also merge in terms of movement: Nathan dances (Musical) and cuts a person open which will kill the victim (Gothic). Therefore, this amalgamation of performance is of Gothical nature. There is a cut and the camera follows Nathan filming from behind through a medium close shot as he moves to get more equipment. A full shot and wide close-up of the victim are shown – and these shots reappear throughout this scene – as Nathan adds "harvesting the kidneys for the fall." He returns with equipment depicted with a pan from medium full shot to a close shot. He laughs evil-mindedly, nearly smiling and says "saving up the livers in the fridge. No one ever thanks me when I'm done." Then an over-the-shoulder wide close-up of Nathan selecting further torturing objects is shown.

Eventually steam arises from the floor portrayed in a full shot of the victim located on the left and Nathan on the right side of the frame. The appearance and use of steam further emphasizes the surrealistic **aura** of this scene. While staring at a knife in his hands, Nathan quickly dances in circles towards the rack singing "how self-absorbed people can be." With a medium full shot from behind, we observe Nathan taking a knife and then, in a slightly low-angled medium shot, still from behind, the spectator is confronted with the first cut into the still alive victim. Nathan places the cut below the rips without any hesitation which shows that he is already very used to this action and he sings: "With a slice or a snip."

Various cuts either showing the victim's face, Nathan or the wound in wide close-ups or cut-ins follow as Nathan continues with "eeny-meeny-miny-moe." This counting rhyme most commonly used by children refers to Nathan's situation: It is either him who dies or he has to do the bloody job. This is underlined as GeneCo's emblem reappears in several shots on Nathan's jacket. Additionally, the rhyme also adds an ironic component as it is not expected in such a brutal situation to include a children's rhyme. While the victim is still fully conscious, Nathan pulls out organs such as the small intestine and sings "with a cut and a stitch, returning organs good as new." Significantly, this deadly procedure has been legalized as the viewer already learns in the introduction of the film and therefore, the terror gains a touch of 'reality' since politics allow it. In this system, the most powerful and influential part decides – and that is GeneCo. Hence, the citizens (in this case symbolized through Mag for instance) and victims are powerless in the face of GeneCo.

A close shot observes Nathan putting on the mask and roaring in a deep, evil voice. Laughing, he switches on a blue light that highlights the area of the eyes of the mask (Fig. 14). Now, the victim does not scream any longer as life runs out of his veins. Nathan, now fully the Repo Man, continues his job. The camera alternates between cut-ins of the wound and organs, medium shots of the victim's body, and Nathan in close

shots which often also include medical equipment somewhere in the picture's frame. The rhythm and downturned music are still on and when the Nathan rips out organs, these actions are accompanied by disgusting sounds which still appear diegetic because it is clear that they come from the organs.
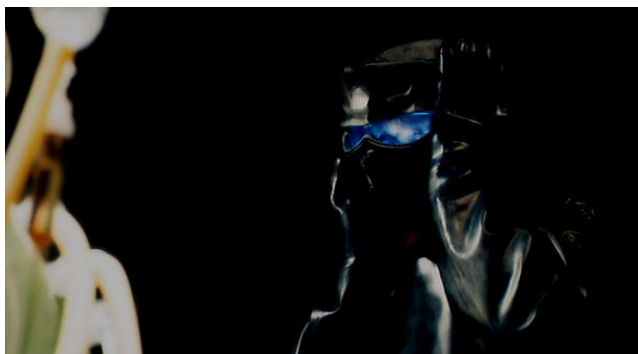

Figure 14

Nathan puts the organs away and then returns to his victim without the mask again as he repeats: "It's a thankless job but somebody has got to do it." Then, suddenly, he grips deeper into the victim's body and makes the victim's face move according to a phrase that Nathan sings in a high-pitched voice, like a puppet. This is filmed in a close to medium close shot slightly from behind Nathan (Fig. 15). The 'human hand puppet' adds "got to do it" and Nathan sings "like a mop" which the dead body repeats and the same happens with the addition "and a broom." In alternating full close-ups these final lines are sung, climaxing as both voices chant: "No one wants a thankless job." Especially the last sentence is supported by Nathan's outer appearance. He shows his teeth and moves his hand inside the dead body to imitate the victim's singing movements. In these shots, the Gothical's means become apparent as the protagonist is first of all singing, secondly, chants about brutal acts, and further, he includes the comic element of the hand puppet. This combination certainly leads to a surreal depiction of the repossession act and appears highly ironic.

Figure 15

The last shot of the selected scene is a full close-up on Nathan's face which turns from an energetic, strong look into a rather uncertain, shocked expression and he soon looks down to the floor. This usually is a classic reaction when someone realizes what he has done and feels ashamed. Although the Repo Man has done this murderous deed innumerable times before, the second **character** comes through: Nathan. He wants to refuse this job but he is forced to continue doing it in order to keep his daughter Shilo safe. Similar to Sweeney Todd, Nathan alias the Repo Man also provides a *Doppelgänger* motif. After this cruel, deadly peak, Nathan cleans up the blood-soaked room which is somewhat relieving and provides a transition to the following scenes.

The entire **aura** and **setting** the spectator is confronted with is kept in dark colors. *REPO!* begins with an intermedial introduction as the first pictures one sees are comic pages. Here, also the background and space between the pictures, the 'gutters,' are colored black. Furthermore, we are introduced to the general **setting** of *REPO!* right at the start: An island-like city is shown and apparently has only one run-down bridge that could be a way to escape. Therefore, the place is isolated and remote. The first image of the cityscape also looks more like a huge castle and less like a skyline. On top of that, the comic image of the city soon appears filmed and thereby seems more realistic although it still keeps a surreal trace. The cityscape further includes some sort of spaceships which all fly around with huge screens and advertisements. The city is surrounded by comparably large graveyards that frame the island. The remoteness in addition to the graveyards certainly resembles a Gothic **setting**. At first sight, the viewers may have associations with some popular cities (due to the bridge e.g. London); the **setting** of the island and the multitude of signs in various languages results in the assumption that this could happen anywhere in the world.

Graveyards and tombs are also reoccurring **settings** within *REPO!* and have been commonly included in Gothic fiction. Since graveyards and tombs are shown numerous times, the spectator is persistently confronted with death – in addition to the murders of organ recipients.

Furthermore, the **aura** or tone suits the Neo-Noir style due to the choice of colors. Generally, grey, black, and dark brown are the most dominant colors; whereas red or other colors that stick out are only utilized in a few advertisements or to highlight blood. In some scenes, the color key style is used similarly to the application in *Sweeney Todd*. The gloomy, Gothic atmosphere is further emphasized through the moon which is often present and surrounded by clouds.

As already illustrated, several **settings** throughout *REPO!* include graveyards and tombs. The inclusion of these locations also defines this film as Gothic. Besides, Gothic

architecture can be found as well. The windows and doorframes of Shilo's mother's tomb have pointed arches. In addition to the architecture and the cityscape, operating rooms and the streets can be found as Gothic **settings**. The operating rooms as just described in detail throughout the scene analysis are not depicted as sterile. The Repo Man either murders his victim in the operating room or even in the streets. These side streets are threatening to anyone who has not paid his debts because there is no place to hide from the Repo Man. Thus, the threat and tension is omnipresent. A fairly disgusting **setting** is also the GeneCo Warehouse. There, the organs are sorted out and stored to be further processed. In one scene, the warehouse is depicted as colorful inside and dark, uncanny outside. In that sequence, Luigi, Pavi, Amber Sweet, and other GeneCo employees even play with the organs, throwing them around or letting them drop to the floor.

Further spaces provide a unique **aura**, most importantly the Italian Renaissance fair, the Genetic Opera, and some stages. Firstly, the Italian Renaissance fair shows people dressed in all kinds of clothes (including the Gothic obsession with corsages, etc.). It also includes fetishes, young and old people, persons wearing (medical) masks. Tents where one can have a make-over are portrayed. Hence, it is not a funfair in the original sense, but rather a GeneCo fair which promotes beauty operations and tells that everyone who does not look perfect does not fit in. The message is conveyed that beauty operations are cool and normal because everyone is doing it. Secondly, the rather traditional-looking opera house called the 'Genetic Opera' is included. This **setting** refers to Backstage Musicals as the life on stage, behind the curtain, and the backstage rooms are included as well. The performances are a mixture of a rock concert merged with a night club where uncountable allusions to sexual performances are made and therefore the previously traditional appearance of the opera house is greatly altered. In addition to the Renaissance fair and the Genetic Opera, the location of the stage reappears several times. For instance, Mag advertises her final performance from a stage that is at the Renaissance fair. A stage also emerges in Shilo's room when she has a discussion with her father. Her room turns into a stage-like space during the songs "What Chance Has a 17 Year-Old Girl" and "Seventeen." Steam is all over the floor. There is a light-show, a microphone, a skeleton that appears to be one of her 'band members,' an audience, and Joan Jett[217] as Shilo's bassist. However, the scene turns back to 'normal' with a clear and sudden cut as if it was just a dream. The inclusion of diverse sorts of stages is a Musical characteristic. The **settings** at first seem to exist beside each other. However, the opera house, for instance, includes scenery that is of Gothic nature which again shows that the

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[217] Joan Marie Jett was a successful American musician and songwriter and performed in the bands The Runaways, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts or as solo artist. She also played Columbia in a Broadway revival of *The Rocky Horror Show*.

original characteristics are depicted in combination as well and for that reason we can detect Gothical features.

Moreover, the **characters**' movements sometimes seem to be dances. They usually are led into by normal walking. Hence, the dance scenes – if they even can be called that – give the impression of being everyday moves. Yet, there are also scenes, for example in the streets or in the GeneCo warehouse, that appear rather choreographed. However, both, whether unnatural or natural, are not cut into the action but mingled with it.

Other Gothic and Musical elements can be found for instance in the **characters**. Shilo serves as the naïve heroine who in the end of the **narrative** leaves with her head raised. Her father and only confidant has two sides: Nathan, the over-protective father figure and Repo Man, the monster. Nathan can be read as the hero since in the end he protects and saves Shilo, whereas Repo which derives from '*repo*session' is the monster in this story. However, there is another **character** who personifies the monster but at the same time is the creator: Rotti Largo. His last name presumably refers to his power which is 'large' and influential. He is the founder of GeneCo and also the initiator of the plot against the Wallace family and thus is the creator of all evil in this **narrative**. Although he also kills with his own hands, the monster or murderer really stays the Repo Man as he is the exercising person. Similarly to the **character** of Sweeney Todd, this **character** can be sympathized with as he is forced into those murderous acts and he has a friendlier side too, which is Nathan. Within the relation between Nathan and Largo, two revenge stories are interwoven: Firstly, it is Largo who takes revenge on Nathan as Marni chose to marry and live with Nathan. As a result, Largo tricked Nathan into believing he killed his own wife and thereby Largo can hold this secret over Nathan's head. Secondly, Nathan learns that Largo tries to take his daughter Shilo away and orders him to kill Mag which Nathan refuses to do and wants to fight. Hence, a second revenge **plot** develops. Interestingly, the connection of creator and creature is picked up differently in *REPO!*. Of course, the organs that are reproduced depict a certain process of creation. Yet, there also is a reversal: Instead of creating entirely new life, the focus is placed on murderously stripping humans apart.

One of the greatest ironies in *REPO!* lies in the **character** of Rotti Largo: He founded GeneCo; he owns high amounts of money; he is in power; he trades with organ transplants; but, Rotti Largo has a terminal disease. The Gothical means of irony is within the **plot** itself because the one person who has the financial background and the influence to receive transplants is the same person who cannot prevent his own death.

Aside from these main **characters**, there are also Largo's children: Luigi, Pavi, and Amber Sweet. All three wish to inherit their father's company and thereby his money and power. Because of skin changes in his face, Pavi is usually wearing a white mask that

almost covers his entire face. This mask recalls the mask in *The Phantom of the Opera* since it is mostly white. It is clipped onto the real skin and as it is also painted with make-up, it further provokes the association of a clown's mask. He as well as Luigi and their sister are comic **characters**. Amber Sweet provides another reference to the opera and thereby a 'relative' of the Musical as she wears a traditional Italian opera dress. She is an example of dependence on beauty surgery and the possible resulting addiction or obsession. Amber Sweet is a symbol or rather reminder that operations can lead to addiction and also provoke problems: In the final opera scene, the skin of Amber's face drops off.

Besides, the Graverobber incorporates two **characters**: The Graverobber functions just as the name describes, and he also serves as narrator or storyteller. He explains past events and thereby is of utmost importance to the viewer. Without him, the complex narrative could not be understood. Sometimes, he directly turns toward the camera and addresses the audience with sentences like "Stay tuned." He also calls the Genetic Opera a 'Gothic Opera,' supporting the Gothic appearance of *REPO!*.

Especially in the final sequences taking place in the Genetic Opera, the audience present functions as a symbol for today's society and implies social criticism. To illustrate, the audience watches with shock and simultaneously with excitement as people are killed on stage and this act is covered as 'performance' (e.g. when Nathan dies and Shilo cries). Here, one can assume that the audience represents a society that simply watches the obvious crime without attempting to act or prevent the happenings.

The clothing in *REPO!* in general is a mixture of Goth fashion (contemporary times), science-fiction (e.g. Repo Man costume), fetish (e.g. bondage like the henchmen and henchwomen), and opera dresses (e.g. Amber Sweet). Here, links to other genres than the Gothic and Musical are interwoven and can be detected.

The **narrative** combines intertextual and intermedial references such as the comic parts which reappear throughout the film. The comic sequences are mainly utilized to explain the history of happenings or people. Do those sequences imply accuracy and reality or does the comic element add to the surreal appearance of the story? This is left to the viewer to decide. Often – not always as we have seen in the analysis – these passages are underlined by a waltz rhythm which is a traditional dance, whereas current actions are accompanied by rock music. Overall, the music is a mixture of rock music, opera-like songs, and spoken language. Nevertheless, even the spoken passages seem like a song performance because mostly music accompanies them and the protagonists switch between speaking and singing from scene to scene as well as within a single song.

Through the **characters**, the **setting** as well as the introduction of *REPO!*, certain significant hierarchies become apparent. GeneCo which basically equals the person of

Rotti Largo does not solely earn large amounts of money but also points towards the power and influence connected to wealth. This power is also of political nature since it is mentioned in the introductory scene of *REPO!* that the repossession acts have been legalized. What comes to the surface is that highly influential people can and are often even allowed to gain financial profit while accepting other people's loss – and here, even death. As in many countries health insurance is not mandatory, and people cannot afford imperative operations. Hence, they need to borrow money from their families or banks. Thereby, they risk deteriorating their financial situation and becoming dependent. Out of this misery, in *REPO!*, the hierarchies become even stricter and Rotti Largo has absolute (political) power. He probably could even be interpreted as a sort of dictator since he has his own police force (GeneCops) and he organizes events that propagate how social and helpful his company is while hiding the criminal actions from the public. Consequently, political and social power relies exclusively on money. In this regard, an intertextual reference underlines this fact: In Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* (1972), Sally Bowles (Liza Minelli) and the Master of Ceremonies (Joel Grey) sing "money makes the world go around." In *REPO!*, Rotti Largo adapts this song phrase and slightly alters it into: "Gold, it makes the World go around." The meaning however stays: 'It is the rich person that rules the world.' The monopolistic position Largo has reached through GeneCo makes him into an autocrat in his city.

The topic of surgeries as fashion statements is highly current and in the 21st century, due to recent inaccuracies in the medical transplant market (lately in particular in Germany), the abuse in the area of medical transplants has increased. This subject provides the main **plot** of *REPO!* and combines **settings**, **characters**, and **narrative** means from both Gothic and Musical. As shown in the scene analysis, parameters of both converge as in this case, the Repo Man murders a victim while singing and short breaks are used to dance. Also the **settings** which provide a space for song and dance sequences derive from the Gothic. On top of that, it is their combination which leads to ironic effects that confront the spectatorship with criticism – criticism which is used metaphorically for actual and authentic social problems and situations. Accordingly, also *REPO! The Genetic Opera* is exemplary for the hybrid genre Gothical.

6 The Finale – A Conclusion

Within the introduction of my Master's thesis, I proposed a number of questions such as how the term 'hybrid genre' can be defined, what its effects are, and which films can be considered 'Gothicals.' Throughout the theoretical and the analytical part of my study, it has become evident that the term 'genre' has developed into an unstable concept which must be looked at as in progress. Nevertheless, various parameters help to define each genre, still leaving space for alterations and adaptations.

Concerning the Gothical, I took a closer look at the elements of the setting and aura, the choice of characters, and the narrative and plot which lead to the conclusion that these features provide a profound basis for defining the Gothic, the Musical, and hence, the emerging hybrid genre Gothical.

Further, the distinction between 'sub-genres' and 'hybrid genres' with regard to the Gothical has been addressed and I have deduced that sub-genres should be seen as divisions of one major genre which combine rather similar features (e.g. Gothic Horror), whereas the hybrid genre converges two dissimilar or even opposing genres as is the case with Gothicals (or for instance, Horror Comedies). What is striking about hybrid genres is the effect that is provoked through the amalgamation of two differing genres and that is predominantly the effect of irony.

The irony that is aroused through the combination of the Gothic and the Musical characteristics is a tool for social criticism in diverse contexts. As illustrated in the film analyses of the three selected examples, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, and *REPO! The Genetic Opera*, the Gothical serves as vehicle for social criticism by placing a mirror in front of society. Through the 'cutting edge' of irony, as Linda Hutcheon fittingly remarks, the present irony progressively approaches current social evils. In my analyses it becomes clear that *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* predominantly provides criticism of the discrimination against social outcasts or misfits. This is vividly elucidated by the choice of characters because each protagonist represents a minority and thereby they are given a voice and able to speak up. Further, the setting of the Frankenstein Place provides a space for social minorities to live freed from restrictions, marginalization, and the oppression they experienced in the opposing outside world. Moreover, in *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* we are confronted with the outcome of the misuse of political and social power which is challenged through a cannibalistic reversal of hierarchies. Through the 'sympathetic

misfits'[218] Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett we are able to somewhat identify with their deadly acts, which challenges the viewers, and hierarchical systems are critically approached. The third Gothical *REPO! The Genetic Opera* raises questions about the highly topical subjects of the abuse of organ reproduction and transplantations, surgeries as fashion statements, and the connected financial profits some people gain out of it. The characters in *REPO! The Genetic Opera* offer dissimilar viewpoints on the aforementioned themes such as Shilo who just wishes to find a cure for her disease, Amber who has become addicted to cosmetic surgery like her brother Pavi, and Rotti Largo who solely desires to become richer and richer. The Gothicals *Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* and *REPO! The Genetic Opera* further utilize waltz rhythms while the lyrics and/or acts are horrific and nauseating, creating a 'horrific jouissance.'[219] Similar to the waltz, the merging of the Gothic and Musical genre in the three explored parameters evokes the denaturalization of horror and thereby opens a space for irony to come through.

Accordingly, the topics in Gothicals may vary whereas the means of irony and the resulting criticism towards social problems form the crux of the Gothical. Additionally, through the mélange of the Gothic and Musical which already provide means of criticism themselves (e.g. exaggeration, symbolism), the new hybrid genre Gothical reinforces a critical reading of social problems. Through the coalescence of two well-established and popular genres, the Gothical also opens up to a broad audience and supports the revival of traditional genres.

Having demonstrated that the Gothical is a progressive hybrid genre and a significant phenomenon in genre discourse, this thesis hopes to contribute to ongoing discussions in film theory and fill a crucial gap in genre studies.

Besides, the very title of my Master's thesis "The 'Gothical' – On the Emergence of a Hybrid Genre" proposes that the Gothical is a state-of-the-art phenomenon and although *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* was adapted to the screen nearly 40 years ago, the convergence of the Gothic and the Musical genre has been utilized increasingly and has certainly become a crucial phenomenon of contemporary cinema. The Gothical is a hybrid genre on the emergence and we can expect to find more and more Gothicals developing. As hinted at in the introduction, new possible Gothicals[220] are being released this year, such as Darren Lynn Bousman's *The Devil's Carnival*, Tom Hooper's adaptation of *Les Misérables* which also stars Helena Bonham Carter amongst other spectator magnets like Hugh Jackman and Russell Crowe, and there have been rumors about a probable filming

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[218] Cf. Rushton, Bettinson 169.
[219] Cf. Freer 71, also 74.
[220] I would consider these as Gothicals judging from the trailers that have already been released. However, a detailed scrutiny as to whether these are Gothicals or not would need to follow.

of Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, which, judging from its plot and inclusion of intertextual references could be a Gothical as well.

To conclude, the Gothical is socially critical and challenging. It is an advanced and dynamic hybrid genre which significantly contributes to the cinema of the 21st century. This phenomenon also ties in with other research areas than genre studies and can be explored in more detail in the discourse of gender studies or performances studies, for instance. I would like to finish my thesis by proposing questions that arise when I ponder over future Gothicals and their development: Which topics will be addressed and are these increasingly connected to current social problems? Will the waltz as a rhythm further function as a crucial ingredient to portray particularly horrific actions? Will the Gothical establish itself as a hybrid genre in popular cinema?

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7.2 Filmography – Films Cited and Consulted

The Bride of Frankenstein. Produced by Carl Laemmle, Jr.; directed by James Whale; screenplay by William Hurlbut. Cast: Boris Karloff (*The Monster*), Colin Clive (*Henry Frankenstein*), Elsa Lanchester (*Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley/ The Monster's Bride*), Ernest Thesiger (*Doctor Pretorius*). Universal Studios, 1935. DVD.

Broadway: The Golden Way. By the Legends Who Were There. Produced by Albert M. Tapper and Rick McKay; directed by Rick McKay; documentary written by Rick McKay. Dada Films, Albert M. Tapper, and Georgia Frontiere, 2004. DVD.

Cabaret. Produced by Cy Feuer; directed by Bob Fosse; screenplay by Jay Presson Allen, based on the book by Christopher Isherwood and Joe Masteroff. Cast: Liza Minnelli (*Sally Bowles*), Michael York (*Brian Roberts*), Joel Grey (*The Emcee*), Helmut Griem (*Maximilian von Heune*). Allied Artists and ABC Pictures Corporation, 1972. DVD.

Chicago. Produced by Martin Richards; directed by Rob Marshall; screenplay by Bill Condon, based on the stage musical by Bob Fosse and Fred Ebb. Cast: Renée Zellweger (*Roxanne Hart*), Catherine Zeta-Jones (*Velma Kelly*), Richard Gere (*Billy Flynn*), Queen Latifah (*Matron Morton*). Miramax Films, 2002. DVD.

Dance of the Vampires. Produced by Gene Gutowski; directed by Roman Polanski; screenplay by Roman Polanski and Gérard Brach. Cast: Jack MacGowran (*Professor Abronsius*), Roman Polanski (*Alfred*), Alfie Bass (*Shagal, the Inn-Keeper*), Jessie Robins (*Rebecca Shagal*). Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1967. DVD.

Dancer in the Dark. Produced by Vibeke Windeløv; directed by Lars van Trier; screenplay by Lars van Trier. Cast: Björk (*Selma Jezkova*), Catherine Deneuve (*Kathy*), David Morse (*Bill Houston*), Peter Stormare (*Jeff*). Zentropa Entertainments4 Trust Film Svenska Film I Väst Liberator, 2000. DVD.

Dracula. Produced by Carl Laemmle, Jr. and Tod Browning; directed by Tod Browning; screenplay by Garrett Fort, based on the novel by Bram Stoker. Cast: Bela Lugosi (*Count Dracula*), David Manners (*John Harker*), Helen Chandler (*Mina*), Dwight Frye (*Renfield*), Edward Van Sloan (*Van Helsing*). Universal Pictures, 1931. DVD.

Fame. Produced by Richard Wright, Mark Canton, Tom Rosenberg, and Gary Lucchesi; directed by Kevin Tancharoen; screenplay by Allison Burnett, based on the motion picture by Christopher Gore. Cast: Kay Panabaker (*Jenny Garrison*), Collins Pennie (*Malik Washburn*), Asher Book (*Marco*), Paul Iacono (*Neil Baczynsky*). Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, Lakeshore Entertainment, and United Artists, 2009. DVD.

Frankenstein. Produced by Carl Laemmle, Jr.; directed by James Whale; screenplay by Garrett Fort and Francis Edwards Faragoh, based the story by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. Cast: Boris Karloff (*The Monster*), Colin Clive (*Henry Frankenstein*), Mae Clarke (*Elizabeth*), John Boles (*Victor Moritz*). Universal Studios, 1931. DVD.

From Hell. Produced by Don Murphy and Jane Hamsher; directed by Hughes Brothers; screenplay by Terry Hayes and Rafael Yglesias, based on the graphic novel by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell. Cast: Johnny Depp (*Inspector Frederick Abberline*), Heather Graham (*Mary Kelly*), Ian Holm (*Sir William Gull*), Robbie Coltrane (*Sergeant Peter Godley*). Twentieth Century Fox, 2001. DVD.

Hair. Produced by Lester Persky and Michael Butler; directed by Miloš Forman; screenplay by Michael Weller, based on the stage musical by Gerome Ragni and James Rado. Cast: John Savage (*Claude Hooper Bukowski*), Treat Williams (*George Berger*), Beverly D'Angelo (*Sheile Franklin*), Don Dacus (*Woof Daschund*). Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, Twentieth Century Fox, 1979. DVD.

Hairspray. Produced by Craig Zadan and Neil Meron; directed by Adam Shankman; screenplay by Leslie Dixon, Thomas Meehan, and Mark O'Donnell, based on the comedy film by John Waters and the stage musical by Thomas Meehan and Mark O'Donnell. Cast: Nikki Blonsky (*Tracy Edna Turnblad*), John Travolta (*Edna Turnblad*), Michelle Pfeiffer (*Velma Von Tussle*), Christopher Walken (*Wilbur Turnblad*). New Line Cinema, 2007. DVD.

Jesus Christ Superstar. Produced by Norman Jewison; directed by Norman Jewison; screenplay by Melvyn Bragg, based on the rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. Cast: Ted Neeley (*Jesus*), Carl Anderson (*Judas Iscariot*), Yvonne Elliman (*Mary Magdalene*), Barry Dennen (*Pontius Pilate*). Universal Pictures and Robert Stigwood, 1973. DVD.

The Man Who Knew Too Much. Produced by Alfred Hitchcock; directed by Alfred Hitchcock; screenplay by John Michael Hayes. Cast: James Steward (*Dr. Benjamin McKenna*), Doris Day (*Josephine Conway McKenna*), Brenda De Banzie (*Lucy Drayton*), Bernard Miles (*Edward Drayton*). Filwite Productions,1955. DVD.

The Phantom of the Opera. Produced by Robert Halmi; directed by Robert Markowitz; screenplay by Sherman Yellen, based on the novel by Gaston Leroux. Cast: Maximilian Schell (*Sándor Korvin/ The Phantom of the Opera*), Jane Seymour (*Maria Gianelli/ Elena Korvin*), Michael York (*Michael Hartnell*). Robert Halmi, 1983. DVD.

The Phantom of the Opera. Produced by Ross Milloy; directed by Tony Richardson; screenplay by Arthur Kopit, based on the novel by Gaston Leroux. Cast: Burt Lancester (*Gerard Carriere*), Charles Dance (*Erik The Phantom of the Opera*), Teri

Polo (*Christine Daee*), Adam Stroke (*Count Philippe*). NBC (original airing), 1990, and Kinowelt Home Entertainment, 2005. DVD.

The Phantom of the Opera. Produced by Andrew Lloyd Webber; directed by Joel Schumacher; screenplay by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Joel Schumacher, based on the stage performance by Cameron Mackintosh and The Really Useful Group. Cast: Gerard Butler (*The Phantom*), Emmy Rossum (*Christine*), Patrick Wilson (*Raoul*), Miranda Richardson (*Madame Giry*). Odyssey Entertainment in collaboration with Warner Bros. Entertainment, 2004. DVD.

Psycho. Produced by Alfred Hitchcock; directed by Alfred Hitchcock; screenplay by Joseph Stefano, based on *Psycho* by Robert Block. Cast: Anthony Perkins (*Norman Bates*), Vera Miles (*Lila Crane*), Janet Leigh (*Marion Crane*), John Gavin (*Sam Loomis*). Shamley Productions, 1960. DVD.

Rebecca. Produced by David O. Selznick; directed by Alfred Hitchcock; screenplay by Philip MacDonald and Michael Hogan. Cast: Laurence Olivier (*George Fortescu Maximillian 'Maxim' de Winter*), Joan Fontaine (*The Second Mrs. de Winter*), George Sanders (*Jack Favell*), Judith Anderson (*Mrs. Danvers*). Selznick International Pictures, 1940. DVD.

Rear Window. Produced by Alfred Hitchcock; directed by Alfred Hitchcock, screenplay by John Michael Hayes. Cast: James Steward (*L.B. Jeffries*), Grace Kelly (*Lisa Carol Fremont*), Wendell Corey (*NYPD Det. Lt. Thomas J. Doyle*), Thelma Ritter (*Stella*). Universal Pictures and Patron, 1954. DVD.

REPO! The Genetic Opera. Produced by Daniel Jason Heffner, Carl Mazzocone, Oren Koules, and Mark Burg; directed by Darren Lynn Bousman; screenplay and original stage play by Darren Smith and Terrance Zunich. Cast: Alexa Vega (*Shilo Wallace*), Anthony Paul Sorvino (*Rotti Largo*), Anthony Head (*Nathan/ Repo Man*), Sarah Brightman (*Blind Mag*), Paris Hilton (*Amber Sweet*). Lionsgate, 2008. DVD.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Produced by Michael White; directed by Jim Sharman; screenplay by Jim Sharman, based on the musical by Richard O'Brien. Cast: Tim Curry (*Dr. Frank-N-Furter – A Scientist*), Susan Sarandon (*Janet Weiss – A Heroine*), Barry Bostwick (*Brad Mahors – A Hero*). Twentieth Century Fox, 1975. DVD.

Rope. Produced by Alfred Hitchcock; Directed by Alfred Hitchcock; screenplay by Arthur Laurents. Cast: James Steward (*Rupert Cadell*), John Dall (*Brandon Shaw*), Farley Granger (*Phillip Morgan*), Douglas Dick (*Kenneth Lawrence*). Transatlantic Picture Corp. and United Artists Television, 1948. DVD.

Saboteur. Produced by Frank Lloyd and Jack H. Skirball; directed by Alfred Hitchcock; screenplay by Peter Viertel, Joan Harrison, and Dorothy Parker. Cast: Priscilla

Lane (*Pat*), Robert Cummings (*Barry*), Otto Kruger (*Tobin*), Alan Baxter (*Freeman*). Universal Pictures, 192. DVD.

Shadow of a Doubt. Produced by Jack H. Skirball; directed by Alfred Hitchcock; screenplay by Thornton Wilder, Sally Benson, and Alma Reville. Cast: Teresa Wright (*Charlotte Newton*), Joseph Cotton (*Charlie Oakley*), Patricia Collinge (*Emma Newton*), Henry Travers (*Joseph Newton*). Universal Pictures, 1943. DVD.

Singin' in the Rain. Produced by Arthur Freed; directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen; screenplay by Adolph Green and Betty Comden. Cast: Gene Kelly (*Don Lockwood*), Donald O'Connor (*Cosmo Brown*), Debbie Reynolds (*Kathy Selden*), Jean Hagen (*Lina Lamont*). Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer,1952. DVD.

Sound of Music. Produced by Robert Wise; directed by Robert Wise; screenplay by Ernest Lehman, based on the stage musical by Rachard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein II. Cast: Julie Andrews (*Maria von Trapp*), Christopher Plummer (*Captain Georg von Trapp*), Richard Haydn (*Max Detweiler*), Eleanor Parker (*Baroness Elsa Schroeder*). Twentieth Century Fox, 1965. DVD.

Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street. Produced by Richard D. Zanuck, Talter Parkes, Laurie MacDonald, and John Logan; directed by Tim Burton; screenplay by John Logan, based on the musical by Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler; originally stages by Harold Prince, from an adaptation by Christopher Bond. Cast: Johnny Depp (*Sweeney Todd/ Benjamin Baker*), Helena Bonham Carter (*Mrs. Lovett*), Alan Rickman (*Judge Turpin*). Warner Bros. Pictures and Dreamworks Pictures, 2007. DVD.

The Trouble With Harry. Produced by Alfred Hitchcock; directed by Alfred Hitchcock; screenplay by John Michael Hayes, based on the novel by Jack Trevor Story. Cast: Edmund Gwenn (*Captain Alber Wiles*), John Forsythe (*Sam Marlowe*), Mildred Natwick (*Miss Ivy Gravely*), Mildred Dunnock (*Mrs. Wiggs*). Alfred Hitchcock Productions, 1955. DVD.

The Wizard of Oz. Produced by Mervin LeRoy; directed by Victor Fleming; screenplay by Noel Langley, Florence Ryerson, and Edgar Allan Woolf, based on the novel by L. Frank Baum. Cast: Judy Garland (*Dorothy Gale*), Frank Morgan (*Professor Marvel/ Doorman/ Cabbie/ Guard/ The Wizard*), Ray Bolger (*Hunk/ Scarecrow*), Jack Haley (*Hickory/ Tin Man*). Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, 1939. DVD.

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