

Chapter 10. Contemporary Werewolves

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The twenty-first-century werewolf is at its most distinctive in that generic conjunction of horror with romantic fiction that forms paranormal romance. Werewolves (following vampires) have become humanised, even romanticised, alongside the assimilation of the Other as identity politics which became mainstream around the 1980s (Hughes 2013: 246–7). Thus werewolves, formerly existing as monsters at the edges of Gothic narratives, have been brought to the centre and made sympathetic. Young Adult Gothic fiction, which gathered momentum as a genre from the late-twentieth century onwards, is often where the most radical transformations of the werewolf theme occur, inspired by concerns over agency and subjectivity. Ecology, too, has shaped our understanding of creatures which oscillate between nature and culture and there is a new focus on the wolf behind the werewolf myth in response to narratives around extinction and to the growth of Animal Studies. The twenty-first century has seen new werewolf hauntings and sightings, and a revival of folkloric elements from urban myth which posit the twenty-first-century werewolf as the spectre wolf, in place of the absent flesh and blood animal. Thus, while the monstrous werewolf in the tradition of Gothic horror persists in the twenty-first century, a new avatar has become firmly established alongside it. This version is characterised by a new-found sympathy towards the creature, often through representing its subjectivity and autonomy; by an attention to femininity, with female werewolves appearing as protagonists; and by concerns with the environment, often coupled with an increased awareness of the actual wolf as animal.

Gothic texts deal with a variety of themes as pertinent to contemporary culture as they were to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when Gothic novels first achieved popularity. The werewolf is easily situated within themes of monstrosity, liminality and the

divided self, showing it to be a decidedly Gothic creature. The Gothic is a genre profoundly concerned with its own past, self-referentially dependent on traces of other stories, familiar images, narrative structures and intertextual allusions (Spooner 2006: 10). To understand the twenty-first-century werewolf as a Gothic figure, it is necessary to first revisit its incarnations in the past.

In literature, accounts of man-into-wolf transformations can be found in the epic of *Gilgamesh* (approximately 2000 BC); the werewolf tale in Petronius's *Satyricon* (c. AD 1–3) and Ovid's rendition of the Greek myth of Lycaon in *Metamorphoses* (c. AD 8). The werewolf came to life outside of literature due to the existence of werewolf trials. Witchcraft trials are common knowledge but many readers are unaware that people were tried and executed as werewolves. The werewolf became a frightening reality for this reason during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The year 1589, which saw the rise of werewolf trials in France, appears to have been the werewolf's *annus mirabilis* (Douglas 1992: 127–50, 266; Scoduto 2008). Jean Grenier, the 'Werewolf of Chalons', and the Gandillon family, all of whom were executed as werewolves at this time, were murderers who had a taste for human flesh. The werewolf trials confirmed the identity of the werewolf as a monster. It was cannibalistic, anti-Christian and murderous. Of particular importance to the history of the werewolf, however, is the transition of the werewolf from a courtly figure, exemplified in early French poetry, to the cannibalistic peasant of the werewolf trials (Scoduto 2008: 180–200).

The werewolf's association with sorcery, seen in the trials, was challenged by its depiction in the Gothic novel in the early-nineteenth century. It appeared to understand lycanthropy as a mental disorder rather than a magical, supernatural transformation. *The Albigenses* (1824) by Charles Maturin references John Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* (1614) in depicting the werewolf as a product of lunacy and superstition. Such narratives end with a logical explanation (in the manner of Ann Radcliffe's novels) for why credulous peasants have mistakenly identified someone as a werewolf (Bourgault du Coudray 2006: 33). By the

middle of the nineteenth century, the depiction of the werewolf was becoming more sensational through texts such as G. W. M. Reynold's *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf* (1846–7), a serialised penny dreadful. The publication of Sabine Baring-Gould's *The Book of Werewolves* (1865) and Kirby Flower Smith's *An Historical Study of the Werewolf in Literature* (1894) suggests a renewed interest in both the history of the werewolf and its importance as a cultural figure at this time. Surprisingly, Baring-Gould's work is an important source for Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), yet the werewolfish qualities of the Count are often overlooked in histories of Gothic fiction, which only focus on his identity as a vampire. Clemence Housman's *The Were-Wolf* (1890) is notable for being female, anticipating the twenty-first-century manifestations below.

Although nineteenth-century werewolf narratives tended to locate the werewolf in the medieval past, the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) suggests a Victorian origin for the fear of the werewolf. The werewolf marks a threshold, neither animal nor human. Kelly Hurley describes hybrid creatures such as the werewolf as a site where the notion of the human and animal collapse (2007: 139). Thus, like Darwin's theory of evolution, the werewolf dissolves clear notions of human superiority. Stephen Asma further confirms this potential of the werewolf to uncover the precarity of human understanding of the natural world, defying taxonomic categorisation (2009: 26). Important here, too, is the Gothic version of liminality. Werewolves cannot be categorised as either human or wolf; they remain monsters on the boundaries of humanity. This is troubling, suggesting that the human subject is not inviolable. The typical nineteenth-century werewolf embodies the Gothic fear that civilisation is a veneer and that our animal origins may burst from within at any moment. The rise of psychoanalysis consolidated this anxiety in the early-twentieth century, where werewolves can be seen as depicting humanity's latent animalistic violence. Thus lycanthropy came to represent the 'beast within' or everything animal that we have repressed in terms of our human nature. The twenty-first century has seen a shift

from understanding werewolves through Freud's 1914 case study of the individual male psyche ('Wolf-Man') to an interest in the links between the lunar cycle, werewolfism and menstruation.

Wolf children or stories of children raised by wolves have also been influential in shaping contemporary manifestations of the werewolf myth, together with late-twentieth century accounts of the last wolf – fictional, mythical and factual (Morpurgo 2002; Crumley 2010; Weymouth 2014). There are contemporary writers who are reinventing wolf children myths, such as Jill Paton Walsh in her *Knowledge of Angels* (1994). These are often written for young adults, as with Marcus Sedgwick's *The Dark Horse* (2002), Jennifer Lynn Barnes's *Raised by Wolves* (2010) and Manoru Hosadu's anime film, *Wolf Children* (2012). The story of wolf children has endured alongside the fairy tale narratives of Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf. Throughout all these manifestations, sometimes contradictory and ambivalent, two key archetypes have endured: the monstrous and the sympathetic.

Monstrous Werewolves

The new millennium opened with the original and inventive werewolf film *Ginger Snaps* (John Fawcett, 2000). Apparently reacting to the lack of female werewolves, the central monster in the narrative is Ginger (Katharine Isabelle), a teenage girl. Ginger and her sister abhor the vapid world of their adolescent peers, planning to commit suicide before they enter adulthood. Attracted to the scent of blood, Ginger is attacked during her first period, an event that plays on the association between menstruation, werewolves and the lunar cycle. Her transformation into a werewolf coincides with her experience of puberty. In keeping with the traditional monster narrative, the film ends with the death of Ginger. Rather than rejecting her status as a werewolf, she revels in the pleasure of violence, along with the concomitant overtones of sexuality. Despite this, femininity and monstrosity are not aligned. Ginger is not monstrous because she is female; she is monstrous because she is

a werewolf. Whilst this narrative reacts to the woman as 'other' in Gothic texts, it still situates the werewolf in a place of monstrosity. The cult success of the original spawned both a sequel and a prequel, *Ginger Snaps 2: Unleashed* (Brett Sullivan, 2004) and *Ginger Snaps Back: The Beginning* (Grant Harvey, 2004), although neither were as effective as the original in interrogating female lycanthropy.

The *Ginger Snaps* trilogy typifies the varied quality of early-twenty-first-century filmic werewolves. The 1980s is often seen as the golden age of the werewolf film, with key examples such as *An American Werewolf in London* (John Landis, 1981), *The Howling* (Joe Dante, 1981), *The Company of Wolves* (Neil Jordan, 1984) and *Teen Wolf* (Rod Daniel, 1985) premiering in close proximity. Increasingly sophisticated special effects meant that the werewolf's transformation could appear on the cinema screen in gory detail. More recent incarnations of the werewolf film have failed to retain surprise and horror, in part because the death of the werewolf has become less desirable. The repetitive quality of werewolf narratives is characterised by the remakes and reboots of twenty-first-century werewolf cinema. *The Wolf Man* (George Waggner, 1941), starring Lon Chaney Jr, with its iteration of the curse of lycanthropy, is one of the archetypal werewolf narratives, notable too for its faux folklore around wolfbane. It was remade as *The Wolfman* by Joe Johnston in 2010. Despite the appeal of serious actors such as Anthony Hopkins and Benicio del Toro, the film did little to reinvigorate its source material. The 1980s *Howling* film series was rebooted in 2011 with *The Howling: Reborn* (Joe Nimziki). The narrative arc of identifying and hunting down the werewolf has become a staple of the genre (Bourgault du Coudray 2006: 42–3) and one to which many werewolf films still adhere. However, the new sympathetic werewolf has rendered this both unsophisticated and unoriginal. Unproblematic depictions of monstrosity where the monster is killed create a one-dimensional and conservative version of the Gothic.

The death of the monstrous werewolf is central to another key twenty-first century

film, *Dog Soldiers* (Neil Marshall, 2002). It is set in the highlands of Scotland, where a group of soldiers have been sent on a training exercise. Ultimately, the mission is a cover for attempting to capture a werewolf in order to use it to engineer the ultimate soldier. The trope of animal testing and scientific discourse situates the text within the wider genre of medical Gothic and of twenty-first-century werewolf narratives more broadly. This resonates with the ecogothic perspective, which often depicts human protagonists and werewolves as equally monstrous. The Scottish setting itself speaks to this, as Scotland was the final place in the British Isles to have wolves. In this narrative, Scotland is depicted as a wilderness inhabited by preternaturally rapacious creatures. *Dog Soldiers* problematizes this by suggesting that the English soldiers are invaders, displacing the werewolves and manipulating the (super)natural world for their own pernicious aims.

Perhaps the most successful werewolf franchise is the *Underworld* series. The first film, *Underworld* (Len Wiseman, 2003), features an ancient battle between vampires and Lycans (werewolves). Starring Kate Beckinsdale as the werewolf-hunting vampire Selene, the films depict the vampires as undead aristocrats and the Lycans as a violent underclass. Visually, the series appeals to Goth(ic) sensibilities. As in other contemporary werewolf narratives, the idea of a genetic trait causing lycanthropy is central, although the bite is still able to transform humans into either creature. The film was followed by a number of sequels, but the prequel, *Underworld: Rise of the Lycans* (Patrick Tatopoulos, 2009), is more noteworthy for its charting of the history of the Lycans' escape from slavery under their vampire overlords. The series' longer narrative arc allows the Lycans to be rescued in terms of their monstrosity. Selene is misled in her view of werewolves and she comes to understand, along with the viewer, that monsters are not born – they are created.

The monstrous 'other' is depicted in Benjamin Percy's novel *Red Moon* (2013) which imagines an alternate reality in which 'lycans', victims of a blood-borne prion, are a minority group within human society. The Lupine Republic is established, where many lycans, treated

with fear and hatred, choose to live, while others take silver-based medication to prevent aggressive outbursts. Set mainly in the USA, the narrative follows various terrorist skirmishes which lead to an all-out war. Percy's novel is a post-9/11 political dystopia. Ostensibly, then, the lycans, as in *Underworld*, are introduced as monstrous, but the narrative problematises the reader's understanding of monstrosity. In both narratives, werewolves are violent and aggressive but this is a reaction to their treatment by humans.

The hunting and destruction of werewolves is central to the plot of both Toby Barlow's *Sharp Teeth* (2008) and Glen Duncan's *The Last Werewolf* series (2011–14). The former, written in free verse, is about packs of werewolves living in Los Angeles. The storyline depicts infighting between packs and the cruel fate of stray dogs, some of whom are werewolves. Through the plight of the homeless, it engages with the flaws of the human world. Isolated from other humans, and constantly threatened with extermination, the werewolves find comfort in creating packs, despite the machinations involved in maintaining a stable hierarchy. Human society is depicted as cruel and violent, no better than the pack dynamics of the werewolves. The treatment of the werewolves at the hands of various hunters and scientists working for the World Organisation for the Control of Occult Phenomenon (WOCOP) highlights issues regarding both animal and human rights. It also exemplifies the new focus on the wolf behind the werewolf in response to prevalent debates around the extinction and re-wilding of wolves.

Central to the effectiveness of Duncan's novel is the first-person narrative. The novels are told from the point of view of the monstrous werewolf. It is a tale told by a werewolf, rather than a tale told about a werewolf, an important shift. The reader experiences both Duncan and Talulla's (his lover) delight in killing humans and the extremity of their pain at the hands of sadistic scientists. By allowing the reader to inhabit the position of the monstrous Other, at once human and animal, the werewolf moves from liminality to hybridity. The werewolf is no longer at the boundary of subjectivity but the subject of the

narrative. The most brutal scene of violence against Talulla can be read as an allegory for animal testing and human torture without diminishing either. Rather, it shows that the hierarchal structures of power used against both human and animal 'others' parallel one another.

Similarly, the Gothic horror series *Penny Dreadful* (2014–16) draws on human/wolf relations and racialized violence in Western society. Set mainly in Victorian London, the werewolf Ethan Chandler / Ethan Lawrence Talbot (Josh Hartnett) is an American, hiding from his bloody past. His transformations at the full moon lead to many deaths. However, the narrative is sympathetic to Chandler, portraying him as a hunted animal. The series engages intertextually with previous depictions of the werewolf, as evidenced by Chandler's true name, which pays homage to Larry Talbot, the werewolf in *The Wolf Man*. In doing so, it highlights historical representations of the werewolf as a creature which must be killed. But despite his violent nature, the audience is encouraged to react sympathetically to the werewolf. Chandler is haunted by his own persecution of Native Americans; even before he was a werewolf, he already was a killer. Humanity, it appears, is as monstrous as the monsters it fears.

The monstrous werewolf has not entirely disappeared from twenty-first-century Gothic narratives. Rather, the understanding of what is monstrous and what makes an individual monstrous has changed. Contemporary werewolves can threaten humanity, feeding on us, transforming us, invading our cities and towns, yet this does not mean that their death is necessarily desired. Instead, the presumed monstrosity of the werewolf is problematised through narratives that make explicit the role of humanity in the creation of monsters, holding a mirror up to ourselves.

Sympathetic Werewolves

The landscape of twenty-first-century lycanthropic literature and the rise of the sympathetic

werewolf have, in large part, been shaped by the success of young adult (YA) fiction and paranormal romance. As with the sympathetic vampire, this werewolf is less a fighter than a lover, or at least shows significant remorse about its more violent actions (Crawford 2014: 46–57). This shift began towards the end of the twentieth-century (Frost 2003: 215–17), becoming the defining trend of the early-twenty-first century. To facilitate this transformation, many authors allow werewolves to retain their humanity and sense of self; they are increasingly able to transform at will. In an interview about her werewolf series, *The Wolf Gift Chronicles* (2012–13), Anne Rice declared, ‘I could make the werewolf theme acceptable [. . .] by dealing with a conscious “man wolf,” a man that doesn’t lose his self-awareness when he becomes a werewolf’ (Riddle 2013). The monstrous loss of identity is replaced with a hybrid experience of being the animal Other in which human and wolf are balanced.

Stephenie Meyer’s YA paranormal romance *Twilight* series (2005–8) has played a major part in the redemption of the werewolf. Despite the central male protagonist, Edward Cullen, being a vampire, readers became immersed in the love triangle between Edward, Bella Swan and Jacob Black, a werewolf. Commentators were quick to note that due to issues of race and class – Jacob is a blue-collar Native American in comparison to the starkly white doctor’s son Edward – Bella Swan, the female protagonist, was almost predestined to choose Edward (Leggatt and Burnett 2010: 26–46). Jacob’s physical transformation from adolescence into adulthood coincides with his burgeoning lycanthropy. This parallel between adolescence and the werewolf state is a common theme; shape-shifters are peculiarly suited to dramatise the transition to adulthood because of their own indeterminate status.

The Gothic has always had a strong link to adolescence. The heroines of early Gothic novels were invariably young girls on the verge of adulthood. Contemporary YA Gothic continues this relationship. For example, Annette Curtis Klause’s *Blood & Chocolate* (1997)

features a love affair between a werewolf and a teenage human girl (see Franck 2018). Following the release of Meyer's *Twilight* in 2005 and its commercial success, there was an explosion in the publication of YA Gothic (Crawford 2014: 229). Within this field, romances between teenage humans and werewolves are common. In using lycanthropy as a way of exploring the experience of adolescence, these novels foreground the teenager as a liminal entity and always 'other' to the mature phase of adulthood. The adolescent's disgust with changes in his or her own emerging body, from acne to menstruation, is easily mapped onto the shapeshifting werewolf.

Martin Millar's *Kalix MacRinnalch* (2007–13) and Maggie Stiefvater's *Wolves of Mercy Falls* (2009–14) series offer more multifaceted narratives of the teenage werewolf. Millar's novels follow the experience of Kalix, an adopted female werewolf who suffers from anxiety, depression, anorexia and an addiction to laudanum. She moves to London where she is 'adopted' by two humans. Her lycanthropy is not depicted as a simple allegory of puberty; rather, it is used to draw attention to the difficulties and pressures that shape individual identity in general. In comparison, Stiefvater's *Wolves of Mercy Falls* uses a more conventional trajectory of paranormal romance in order to explore the notion of choice in adolescent identity. Grace Brisbane is a human who falls in love with Sam Roth, a werewolf. Together, they find a way for Sam to remain human allowing them to be together. As Bill Hughes suggests, it is possible to read these novels as a celebration of 'the distinctively human powers of language, of individual identity, and goal-oriented agency as her [Stiefvater's] characters find their voice and define their projects' (2017: 244–5).

As with Stiefvater, many contemporary YA werewolf novels fall within the genre of paranormal romance. Paranormal romances typically have female protagonists, and these may be werewolves, countering the traditional depiction of werewolves as masculine monsters (Priest 2015: 1–23). The newly sympathetic monster also means that female werewolves continue the shift away from the threatening incarnations of female sexuality

that Bourgault du Coudray charts (2006: 112–29). Leigh McLennon’s analysis of urban fantasy argues that paranormal romances ‘challenge the boundaries between self and the monstrous Other when a romantic attraction causes two potential lovers to re-evaluate their identities and philosophies’ (2014). Similarly, Roz Kaveney describes this genre as ‘to some degree revisionist fantasy’ (2012: 220), humanising the monstrous Other.

However, despite the way many of these YA novels attempt to redeem the monstrous Other, criticism has been levelled at their normative aspects. They typically centre on white, middle-class, cisgendered, able-bodied, heterosexual characters. Moreover, the romance elements of paranormal romance have been critiqued for their biological essentialism and sexist ideologies of gender difference. The symbolism of ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ and its latent sexuality recur in many YA werewolf narratives, potentially reaffirming an idea of masculinity as rapacious and lustful in contrast to the perceived passivity of femininity. Thus in Jackson Pearce’s *Sisters Red* (2010), Scarlett, wearing a red cloak, hunts the Fenris, aggressive werewolves who prey on young women and are always male.

Following the success of the *Twilight* franchise, *Blood & Chocolate* (Katja von Garnier, 2007), an adaptation of Curtis Klause’s 1997 novel of the same name, and *Red Riding Hood* (Catherine Hardwicke, 2011) were aimed at a teenage audience and depicted the werewolf as a romantic interest. *Blood & Chocolate* made the male protagonist human and the female protagonist a werewolf. The film moves away from the original narrative, in which the female werewolf is rejected by her human lover, by ending with the promise of a successful relationship. This change acknowledges the influence of twenty-first-century YA and paranormal romance werewolf narratives. A re-telling of ‘Little Red Riding Hood’, Hardwicke’s film ends with a male werewolf and female human falling in love. Aesthetically, the film draws on Gothic conventions: it is set in medieval France, in the manner of early-nineteenth-century narratives, taking place in a community surrounded by forests. The werewolf emerges from the wooded wilderness but is also one of the human inhabitants,

and thus threatens from both the outside (as a wild animal) and the inside (as a member of society). The romance elements of the film compromise the horror, and the love between human and werewolf overcomes species difference.

In the twenty-first century, the televisual werewolf offers empathetic explorations of lycanthropy. Reimagining the werewolf as the protagonist rather than the antagonist reiterates the power of fictional narratives to give subjectivity to the Other. As an embodiment of the animal Other, the repositioning of werewolf characters in twenty-first-century Gothic draws attention to the voiceless animal.

The literary werewolves of YA and paranormal romance have their televisual equivalents; the most successful teenage werewolf show has been *Teen Wolf* (2011–17). Adapting the premise of the film (Rod Daniel, 1985), the TV series follows Scott McCall (Tyler Posey), a teenager who is bitten by a werewolf in the first episode and must come to terms with his new identity with the help of his non-werewolf best friend, Stiles Stilinski (Dylan O'Brien). Scott navigates pack issues, other supernatural characters, werewolf hunters and various romantic entanglements. Central to Scott's characterisation is his lack of violence. He is referred to as a 'true Alpha', an Alpha wolf who is able to become the leader of his pack without shedding blood. Moreover, werewolves are able to learn how to control their transformations so that they are not a threat to humans. Anastasiya Andrianova suggests that the series is more celebratory of the wolf and 'human animality' than previous werewolf narratives (2016: 65–84); it also responds well to the homophobic elements of the original film (Koetsier and Forceville 2014: 50–1).

Paranormal romances for older readers also make much of the sympathetic werewolf. These are often superimposed onto a *noir* detective plotline. In texts such as Kelley Armstrong's *Bitten* (2001) and Patricia Brigg's *Mercy Thompson* series (2006–), the werewolf or shapeshifter narrates in the first person, further enhancing the sympathy with the monster. However, the inclusion of the werewolf in paranormal romances can be read

as biologically essentialist. Paranormal romance featuring werewolves typically concentrates on the importance of pack politics and the primal nature of werewolf sexuality (Hughes 2017: 229–30). Werewolf packs in these novels tend to adhere to strict hierarchies in which the male Alpha is the leader and his mate is second in command, and fights for dominance between male and female werewolves are a recurring theme. Thus the depiction of gender politics in many of these novels often observes both heteronormative and patriarchal models, explaining these behaviours as ‘natural’ to the werewolf and reinforcing the idea that gender difference is biologically determined.

The changing role of the werewolf has dictated that the term ‘shapeshifter’ is now more frequently used. This can also connote the transformation into animals other than the wolf. Patricia Brigg’s *Mercy Thompson* is a ‘skinwalker’ who transforms into a coyote. She has inherited this trait from her Native American ancestors. During the series she becomes involved with her local werewolf pack, and the differences between the two kinds are demarcated accordingly. This differentiation is also used by Charlaine Harris in her *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* book series (2001–13), where ‘shapeshifters’ can transform into any animal of their choosing, but ‘weres’ are only able to become one specific animal. Similarly, in the *Twilight* novels, Stephenie Meyer differentiates between shapeshifters and werewolves. In the final novel, *Breaking Dawn* (2008), Aro, the vampire leader of the Volturi, explains that Jacob cannot be a werewolf because he is able to transform at will. This differentiates him from the ‘Children of the Moon’, and it is implied that Jacob’s Quileute Pack are less monstrous. In Leitch Smith’s YA novels, there are different types of were-animals who have traits which reflect their real-world animal counterparts. In *Feral Nights* (2013), Clyde the werepossum becomes a werelion under extreme stress. This allows him to step more easily into the role of protagonist, in part due to the more active connotations of lion over possum.

This lexical distinction between werewolves and shapeshifters enables a number of

effects. First, renaming the werewolf replaces previous negative depictions of the creature with something more affirmative. Secondly, the influx of other were-animals allows further exploration of ideas of biological essentialism and hierarchy which appear in werewolf fiction. The change in terminology suggests that the rules of lycanthropy have been reimagined, including how one becomes a werewolf. It was not until the twentieth century that the bite became the catalyst. But now, in a number of texts, werewolves can be born as well as created by infection. This change, drawing on evolutionary biology, emphasises the materialist element of contemporary werewolf narratives. It allows werewolves to be natural creatures, knowable by science, rather than mysterious supernatural monsters. It demystifies the werewolf, eliminating, to a certain extent, the unknowable quality of the Other. Similar shifts can be found in the portrayal of werewolves in other media, to which we now turn.

The role of science in demystifying, and sometimes controlling the werewolf, is important in the BBC's *Being Human* (2008–13). The series follows the lives of a vampire, a ghost and a werewolf sharing a flat in Bristol. George Sands (Russell Tovey) must transform into a monstrous werewolf every full moon. George does not adhere to the typical hypermasculine traits of this monster (Bourgault du Coudray 2006: 71–2), however, as he is intelligent, thoughtful and, when in human form, gentle. He attempts to manage his transformation so that he can neither attack nor infect other people. In the first series, his character is contrasted with Tully (Dean Lennox Kelly), a werewolf who delights in his animal nature and portrays himself as an Alpha male. The contrast between George and Tully suggests that werewolves' identities are not fixed; they have free choice over their behaviour. Medical intervention is central to the narrative arc. Werewolves are subjected to torturous tests at the hands of scientists as they attempt to control the moon's influence over their transformations. Despite the threatening nature of the werewolf, the viewer is invited to feel sympathy and empathy with their pain as the series is focalised through the

monstrous Other.

The BBC series *Wolfblood* (2012–17) added another dimension to the werewolf. Aimed at a younger audience than *Teen Wolf*, the narrative follows a family of ‘wolfbloods’, a species who can transform into wolves at will, although they must transform at full moon. The episodes concentrate on the youngest members of the pack as they learn how to secrete themselves and control their behaviour. The wolfbloods are no more dangerous or violent than their human counterparts. Accompanied by online and spin-off information that focuses on the wolf itself, *Wolfblood* reimagines the figure of the werewolf through an ecogothic lens. The inclusion of such positive traits of the wolf as loyalty and altruism revises pre-twenty-first-century depictions of the werewolf as monster.

The diversity of forms the werewolf adopts speaks to its continued relevance in the twenty-first century. A creature defined by its ability to transform, the newly-humanised werewolf has adapted by presenting new challenges to the threshold between human and animal. This is shown in ecogothic concerns and in the reappraisal of our relationship with the animal Other. The werewolf is still a Gothic creature but romance has cleaned up its darker counterpart, transforming or ennobling its violent Gothic energies. In its quest for love, the werewolf has found itself increasingly humanised.

Present-day werewolfism is also inextricably bound up with humankind’s treatment of wolves. The contemporary myth of Old Stinker, the Werewolf of Hull, illustrates our complex relationship to werewolves in the present, originating as it does, in the Yorkshire Wolds, a landscape which saw some of the last wolves in England (George 2019). It coincides with a phase of severe environmental damage. This has not taken the form of sudden catastrophe, but rather of a slow grinding away of species, particularly the native wolf. The result is a landscape constituted more actively by what is missing than by what is present. This is the climate in which the spectre of the twenty-first century werewolf has re-emerged (rising from the grave of the flesh and blood wolf).

Wolves have long been represented as the archetypal enemy of human company, preying on the unguarded boundaries of civilisation, threatening the pastoral of ideal sociality and figuring as sexual predators. Yet, in their way, with their complex pack interactions, they have also served as a model for society. Lately, this ancient enemy has been rehabilitated and reappraised, and re-wilding projects have attempted to admit wolves more closely into our lives. Their reintroduction has been seen as a symbolic process of atonement for the sins of the destruction of wild environments and the eradication of species due to human wrongdoing. In the twenty-first century, an era of late capitalism, new werewolf myths have emerged from our cultural memory around humans and wolves. Thus, to cite Kathryn Hughes, 'in our dog-eat-dog world, it's time for werewolves' (2015).

Film and Television

Being Human (BBC Three/BBC HD, 2008–13)

Blood & Chocolate (Katja von Garnier, USA/Germany/Romania/UK, 2007)

Dog Soldiers (Neil Marshall, UK/USA/Luxembourg and 2002)

Ginger Snaps (John Fawcett, Canada, 2000)

Penny Dreadful (Showtime/Sky, 2014–16)

Red Riding Hood (Catherine Hardwicke, Canada, 2011)

Underworld (Len Wiseman, UK/Germany/Hungary, USA, 2003)

Underworld: Rise of the Lycans (Patrick Tatopoulos, USA, 2009)

Wolfblood (CBBC, 2012–17)

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