"Hairy Thuggish Women"
Female Werewolves, Gender, and the Hoped-For Monster

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ABSTRACT

The female werewolf embodies a kind of gendered border crossing: a female body expressing characteristics labeled both masculine and male by the dominant culture (power, strength, rage, aggression, violence, and body hair). In this project, I explore how recent film and television narratives of female werewolves deal with gendered fears and expectations of female power and the female body, as well as how the visuality of these texts upholds and/or challenges cultural norms of sex and gender.

The first chapter analyzes specific texts focusing on visual representations of gender and power. In these texts, female werewolves function as a disciplinary/regulatory sign of un/acceptable female bodies and behaviors. At the same time, the spectacle of the masculine-female-grotesque and the ambigendered/ambisexed body is often avoided. In examining these texts, I look for moments and characters that threaten the patriarchal and heterosexist gender binary.
and its roles/expectations. Are any of these characters a representation of a hopeful monster/monster queer that enables promising disruptions of old categories?

The second chapter focuses on audience reception and interpretation of these texts, using online posting boards and review websites. Here, I look for moments of negotiation and resistance within audience readings of these narratives. The third chapter links text, production, and audience in an examination of a recent film adaptation of the young adult novel, *Blood and Chocolate*. My focus throughout this project rests on the un/acceptable female body, and the textual fissures that foster resistance to dominant cultural ideals about gender.
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Introduction: Borders, Gender, Monstrosity

The best-known onscreen werewolf is probably Lon Chaney, Jr. playing doomed Larry Talbot in 1941’s *The Wolf Man*.\(^1\) His portrayal of a tortured and tragic man at war with his baser instincts has proven so enduring that a remake is underway for 2009, and the film’s influence can be seen in subsequent werewolf films.\(^2\) I would like to focus here on the title’s specific gendering of the werewolf subject: in part because of this film, werewolves are generally thought of as wolf *men*. Most people are hard-pressed when asked to name a cinematic female werewolf.\(^3\) Unlike the population of onscreen vampires, female werewolves are much scarcer than their male counterparts; they do exist, however, and in increasing numbers. This work explores recent portrayals of female werewolves in film and television narratives, focusing on issues of gender transgression and containment.

In the following chapters, I explore how these texts’ narratives and conclusions deal with gendered fears and expectations of female power and the female body, as

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\(^1\) George Waggner, "The Wolf Man," (USA: Universal Studios, 1941). The plot centers on Larry Talbot, an American who returns to his ancestral home in Wales, only to be bitten by a werewolf (played by Bela Lugosi) and transformed into a half-man, half-beast at night. In the end, Larry’s father comes upon him in his wolf-man form as he attacks love interest Gwen, and kills him.


\(^3\) Like their link to adolescence, werewolves can be linked to menstrual cycles. As well, many examples of the female/feminine in horror have to do with women losing control of their bodies and becoming chaotic. Part of the horror of the werewolf transformation comes from the spectacle of the white, middle-class, in-control body becoming primitive, dark, violent, and out-of-control. A female body (smaller, weaker, smoother) would provide even more contrast, and therefore more horror. The relative absence of more female werewolves onscreen suggests that some things are still too horrific to visualize.
well as how the visuality of these texts upholds and/or challenges cultural norms of sex and gender. I then move to investigate audience reception and interpretation of these texts, before linking text, production, and audience through an examination of a recent film adaptation of the young adult novel, *Blood and Chocolate*. My focus throughout this project rests on the un/acceptable female body, and the textual fissures that foster resistance to dominant cultural ideals about feminine beauty and desirability.

The female werewolf embodies a kind of gendered border crossing: a female body expressing characteristics labeled both masculine and male by the dominant culture (power, strength, rage, aggression, violence, and body hair). Female werewolf characters in contemporary films and television shows offer the potential for a visual representation of a trans-gender body, and the texts in which they appear must somehow deal with or contain the threat to our gendered cultural order that this body represents. This project, then, is about the body of the female werewolf. How is its

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4 Throughout this project, I use the words “female” and “woman” to describe characters and categories. However, I do not assume an essential identity attached to these terms. I am aware that the state of being female is, like the state of monstrosity, in constant cultural flux as a category. As scientist and feminist Donna Haraway writes, “There is nothing about being ‘female’ that naturally binds women. There is not even such a state as ‘being’ female, itself a highly complex category constructed in contested sexual scientific discourse and other social practices.” (Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 155.)

5 I hyphenate “trans-gender” here to distinguish from the term “transgender,” a word used to describe a wide variety of individuals who diverge from traditional gender roles in behavior, appearance, and/or identity, or who feel that the sex assigned to them at birth inaccurately or inadequately describes them. My use of the hyphenated “trans-gender” specifically in regard to the body of the female werewolf is meant to suggest a body that traverses the boundaries between masculinity and femininity, male and female, but that displays aspects of both. Another word that might be used is “hermaphroditic,” as it
power both unleashed and contained within visual texts? What does its deployment say about current cultural possibilities and the limits of female strength, rage, embodiment, and femininity (as well as female masculinity)? The female werewolf is a cinematic monster that does not belong to the category of the monstrous-feminine, but to what I term the masculine-female-grotesque; its horror lies in a female body becoming grotesque through the taking on of masculine/male traits. An examination of how this body is dealt with in various texts offers insight into the complex landscape of gendered possibilities and expectations in this cultural moment. Before the seemingly-inevitable banishment or destruction of the female werewolf, audiences can be (but are not always) offered up the transgressive image of powerful, masculinized female embodiment. This project also explores, then, how audiences react to the texts analyzed; I hope to investigate if subversive spaces open to new types of gendered bodies, as well as how audiences negotiate with those spaces and bodies.

describes a body that houses both male and female parts; however, both the use of the word as focused on genitalia and reproductive organs and its troublesome history with regards to intersex/DSD bodies leads to me to discard it. Perhaps a new word is called for here: ambigender (that which exhibits traits of both genders) or ambisexed (that which exhibits traits of both sexes). Although I am most definitely not advocating for a two-sex/two-gender system, I am attempting to capture with this wordplay the sense in which the body of the female werewolf expresses characteristics thought to be both male and female; therein lies its supposed horror.

6 The term “monstrous-feminine” is Barbara Creed’s, as I discuss below. (Barbara Creed, The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis (London: Routledge, 1993).)
Cultural Teratology

“Hybrids and monsters are the vehicles through which it is possible to understand the fabricated character of all things, by virtue of the boundaries they cross and the limits they unsettle.”

- Elaine Graham

Monsters are liminal beings; they defy categories and challenge the boundaries we draw between human/animal, human/machine, dead/alive, masculine/feminine, and Self/Other. As monster scholar Jeffrey Cohen writes in Monster Theory, the monster’s body is a cultural one, revealing established limits of the dominant culture by revealing what it rejects and exposing the “fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy” of certain times and places. What Cohen terms the ‘monster of prohibition’ is a figure used “to demarcate the bonds that hold together that system of relations we call culture, to call horrid attention to the borders that cannot - must not - be crossed.” Influential horror film scholar Robin Wood believes that onscreen, the social Other is often embodied as monster: the proletariat, foreign cultures, non-white ethnicities, and deviant

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8 Ruth Waterhouse writes that monstrous Self/Other relationships in Gothic literature can take place between parts of an individual (as in the case of Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde), between society and an Other, or between an individual and a supernatural or non-physical presence. (Ruth Waterhouse, "Beowulf as Palimpsest," in Monster Theory: Reading Culture, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).) The werewolf as monster embodies the first two categories.
10 Ibid., 13.
sexualities. Reviled and rejected, the representation of that-which-should-not-be and that-which-must-be-destroyed, monsters are the scapegoats of the cultural imagination. For onscreen werewolves, this has meant a representation of the middle- or upper-class white male body corrupted by the markers of working-class and non-white ethnicities: “the beast within” as excessive violence and uncontrollable aggression housed in a darker, hairier body that must be controlled.

Monsters as signifiers-of-society’s-rejected can be envisioned in alternative ways, however. In discussing monsters in contemporary fiction, for example, literature scholar Daniel Punday introduces the concept of the “hopeful monster.” Instead of existing as a symbol of the abhorrent abnormal, the hopeful monster is a sign of possibility: a new type of human, “a desirable alternative to the present.” There are many examples from the Second Wave feminist and current LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) movements of reclamations of the category “monster” and of specific monsters from mythology, literature, or film in order to express both pride in being part of a marginalized community and anger at the dominant culture. These

13 Feminist reclamations of historically monstrous figures like Medusa and Lilith are evident in poems like Micheline Wandor’s “Eve Meets Medusa” and in the naming of the feminist magazine Lilith, founded in 1976. Feminist poet Robin Morgan’s 1972 poem “Monster” uses the category itself to speak about her existence as a woman in a patriarchal culture. More recent examples from transgender/transsexual activism are Susan Stryker’s groundbreaking essay and call to action “My
reclamations work not only to suggest the positive and progressive figures of Punday’s essay (monsters as advancements in humanity that will someday be accepted and even celebrated), but also to criticize the cultural climate that marginalizes, oppresses, and labels them monstrous in the first place. As one activist puts it,

It is time to look the monstrous in the eye . . . It is time to say that we are beautiful in our fierceness, and that we are our own . . . We are what we were meant to be . . . We are not mistakes . . . If our monstrousness is frightening, then it is time we bare our teeth and draw that fear close to us and stop being so afraid of our fearsomeness . . . My monstrousness is not a place of shame. It is a strength.14

It is this strength and fearsomeness I hope to locate in onscreen female werewolf portrayals. Female werewolves offer a potential site of one kind of visual representation of the “unruly woman,” the woman who flouts gender expectations by


14 Little Light, ”The Seam of Skin and Scales.”
being loud, aggressive, angry, and powerful. Will these texts offer such a hopeful monster, a female werewolf that can be celebrated for opening up new gendered spaces and ways of being?

In examining female werewolves, it must be remembered that monstrosity can be read in different ways by different audiences, that it can be both rejected and embraced. In the same way, there is a double-edged sword in claiming monstrosity as an identity. As horror film scholar Harry Benshoff writes, “The monster queer may be a sexy, alluring, politically progressive figure to some, while to others, enmeshed in a more traditional model of monsters and normality, s/he is still a social threat which must be eradicated.” Benshoff’s term “monster queer” deserves more attention. In his book, *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film*, he tracks the ways in which deviant sexuality and deviant gender expression have been conflated with the figure of the monster in American and British horror throughout the 20th Century. He uses “queer” not only to describe that which is strange and unusual, but also that which

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15 The phrase “unruly woman” comes from Kathleen Rowe, whose work focuses on the transgressive power of humor. She writes about popular culture’s uneasy and contradictory relationship with women who refuse their sanctioned roles and “[unsettle] . . . the most fundamental of social distinctions – that between male and female.” The unruly woman exceeds boundaries, refuses to bow to expectations, and oversteps her “proper” role. She is a spectacle, and is often condemned for being so. (Kathleen Rowe, *The Unruly Woman: Gender, and the Genres of Laughter* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 31.)

16 This rejection of kinship with the figure of the monster includes many gays and lesbians, as Benshoff goes on to point out: “Outside of the academy or radical activist groups, it has been my observation that the majority of gay and lesbian people do not want to be understood as monsters or outlaws; they want instead to assimilate.” (Harry M. Benshoff, *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film*, ed. Mark Jancovich and Eric Schaefer, Inside Popular Film (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 256.)
“opposes the binary definitions and proscriptions of a patriarchal heterosexism. Queer can be a narrative moment, or a performance or stance which negates the oppressive binarisms of the dominant hegemony.”\(^{17}\) The potential ambisexed/ambigendered embodiment of the female werewolf threatens to disrupt patriarchal gender binaries and hetero/sexist cultural expectations and assumptions about women’s bodies and behavior; it is in this way that it is “queer.” The werewolf girl is queer because she is woman/not-woman, female yet bursting the bounds of what we are told female should be. She is a violent plundering of duality. Following Benshoff, I will be looking for “hopeful” moments in these films, moments that “negate the oppressive binarisms” by disrupting the traditional patriarchal and heterosexist gender binary and its gender roles/expectations through the body of the female werewolf.

Monstrosity, then, holds both danger and potential, embodying multiple possibilities. Monsters are fearsome and fascinating, open to diverse interpretations: one man’s threat is another woman’s role model, and the “deviant body” shunned in one context may be celebrated in another.\(^{18}\) Noel Carroll writes that because monsters

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 4.
\(^{18}\) I borrow the phrase “deviant body” from Judith Halberstam. In her book *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*, she writes that the monster’s body in Gothic literature and in later horror films “condenses various racial and sexual threats to nation, capitalism and the bourgeoisie in one body . . . the Gothic monster represents many answers to the question of who must be removed from the community at large.” (Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 3.)
are beings that are themselves “simultaneously attractive and repulsive,” they inspire conflicting reactions in audiences. Monsters in films are often positioned as a threat to the social order that must be destroyed, but they also beguile and entice. Because they embody what is forbidden, they attract. Monsters like the female werewolf refuse to be contained by cultural constraints and pressures, and this freedom is seductive. Gothic scholar Cyndy Hendershot writes about Gothic horror as that which “disrupts. It takes societal norms and invades them . . . The Gothic fragments stable identity and stable social order. . . The unassimilable and frequently supernatural figures that haunt the Gothic may be read as expressions of dissatisfaction with reality.” Monsters may warn against the transgression of boundaries; however, not only are monsters repulsive/attractive because of the boundaries they cross, their crossing reveals those same boundaries as permeable. Despite the prohibition, monsters demonstrate that forbidden borders are cross-able after all. “Monsters serve both to mark the fault-lines [between human and almost-human] but also, subversively, to signal the fragility of such boundaries.” Here we return to Punday’s hopeful monster and the future possibilities, especially in terms of sex, gender, and sexuality, to which monsters like

the female werewolf guide us. Even when condemned, monsters show us other ways of
being.

Can the trans-gender/ambisexed/ambigendered body be seen for its positive qualities, rather than for its grotesqueness? Is it possible to look at the female werewolf as a libratory body that disrupts and challenges conventional gendered behavior and expectations? Here is the potential for monstrosity to defy boundaries, to challenge categorizations, to “announce impending revelation, saying, in effect, ‘Pay attention; something of profound importance is happening.”’²² One of the tasks of this paper will be to see whether female werewolves are shown to be a kind of hopeful monster in terms of gendered boundaries within the frameworks of their surrounding narratives, as well as to ask how audiences read these texts. The intention is to gain insight into this cultural moment’s norms, limits, and contradictions around gender and bodies.

Methodology and Theory

There are two main scholarly approaches used in the study of monsters and the horror genre. Many scholars use psychoanalytic theory to argue that horror allows for the vicarious release of repressed emotions or the indulgence of forbidden desires; psychoanalytic methods argue that monsters are the uncanny nightmares of our

unconscious fears. Other models examine horror texts within specific socio-historical contexts, “treating them as articulations of the felt social concerns of the time.”\textsuperscript{23} Although I find value in certain aspects of the psychoanalytic approach, like horror scholar Andrew Tudor and others, I also often find it frustrating, “excessively reductive [and] conceptually inclined to neglect the variability of audience responses in the name of spurious generality.”\textsuperscript{24} Psychoanalytic theories feel reductive not only in terms of the audience, but also in terms of what the monster could potentially represent. “In irrevocably linking horror to the unconscious we dismiss, all too hastily, the possibility that horror films have something to say about popular epistemology, about the status of contemporary community” and about contemporary society.\textsuperscript{25} Psychoanalytic theorists read “the audience as an individual psyche” and turn horror films into texts “with no historical relation to the times of people who made and understood them.”\textsuperscript{26} As Judith Halberstam writes, “fear and monstrosity are historically specific forms rather than psychological universals.”\textsuperscript{27} Since there has been a recent increase in visual representations of female werewolves, along with active,

aggressive women of various types onscreen, it feels more productive to look at the cultural context for these texts than to adopt a universal approach.\textsuperscript{28}

For film scholar Linda Badley, the psychoanalytic approach is simply outdated, since what horrifies us is no longer repressed sexuality, but “gender confusion and sexual anarchy . . . In [the current] profusion of alternatives, oppositions, and anxieties, of constantly scrambled (yet always entrapping or dysfunctional) gender codes, sex is not the shadow or ‘dirty secret’ (as it was for the Victorians).”\textsuperscript{29} I see just this panic at gender confusion and changing gender roles in the contradictions and complications that emerge in representations of the female werewolf body onscreen.

However, just because psychoanalysis does not offer a completely satisfactory explanation for the existence and appeal of horror films does not mean that psychoanalytic theorists have not made valuable contributions to the field, and to my own understanding of these texts. For example, Robin Wood’s psychoanalytic thesis that horror films represent the “return of the repressed” shares many similarities with the socio-historical approach in its positioning of monster-as-Other/social-

\textsuperscript{28} In both films and in life, I often find myself more in sympathy with the deviant and queer monsters than with the forces attempting to repress or destroy them.

\textsuperscript{29} Linda Badley, \textit{Film, Horror, and the Body Fantastic}, Contributions to the Study of Popular Culture (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 13, 18.
undesirable/threat-to-dominant-order. I touch on Wood’s theories in the section below on the horror film and gender.\(^{30}\)

Another concept I take from psychoanalytic theory is that of the abject. The abject is French philosopher Julia Kristeva’s term for what is rejected by the subject as not-I. Rooted in psychoanalysis, her writings describe the abject as “something rejected from which one does not part.”\(^{31}\) The abject is the horror of the body without borders, the reminder that one’s body is decay and filth, and the permeable boundaries of inside/outside, human/animal, subject/object. The abject is therefore a useful frame for studying monstrosity and the genre of body horror, particularly the werewolf (a form of monstrosity that comes from within the body).

Barbara Creed’s 1993 work *The Monstrous-Feminine* uses Kristeva’s concepts of abjection and the archaic mother to classify the way women/female monsters have been portrayed in horror films.\(^{32}\) Creed argues that women’s monstrosity is almost always shown to be related to their mothering or reproductive abilities, or to their

\(^{30}\) One attempt to make compatible psychoanalytic (universal) and socio-historical (particular) approaches to studying horror films is Steven Schneider’s article, “Monsters as (Uncanny) Metaphors: Freud, Lakoff, and the Representation of Monstrosity in Cinematic Horror.” Schneider sees cinematic monsters as “the reconfirmation of the surmounted,” rather than a “return of the repressed.” He writes that “What makes horror film monsters at least potentially horrifying (what makes them monsters to begin with) is the fact that they metaphorigically embody surmounted beliefs; to the extent that they actually succeed in horrifying viewers, however, it is because the manner in which they embody surmounted beliefs is invested with cultural relevance.” (Steven Schnieder, " Monsters as (Uncanny) Metaphors: Freud, Lakoff, and the Representation of Monstrosity in Cinematic Horror," *Other Voices* 1, no. 3 (January 1999), http://www.othervoices.org/1.3/sschneider/monsters.html.)


\(^{32}\) Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis.*
sexuality, and her book is groundbreaking in its examination of woman-as-monster in film. Her use of the term ‘monstrous-feminine’ is meant to signal that female monsters horrify us for reasons distinct from male monsters. However, although she mentions that female monsters can be positioned as female/animal or as girl-boy in her introduction, she does not follow up on these ideas. Unlike the monstrous-feminine, the female werewolf is not monstrous in its female-ness, but in its gender/sex hybridity, its “gender confusion,” hence my term “the masculine-female-grotesque.” What must be abjected from its female body are the markers of masculinity, and the horror of the subject’s changing body is two-fold, since bodily boundaries are disturbed as interior becomes exterior, and feminine becomes masculine.

Like the necessity of the Other to define the desired norm for Wood, or necessity of the “abnormal” gay/queer to define “normal” straightness in Benshoff, monsters are both forbidden and needed as spectacle. Cultural theorist Elaine Graham writes that, “Monsters are excluded and demonized, but nonetheless functionally necessary to the systems that engender and classify them.” Graham argues that monstrosity cannot be linked to the abject, since the abject is that which is hidden and repressed, while monsters exist to be made “a spectacle of abnormality.” However, the spectacular aspects of monstrosity do not discount linking it to the abject, since in

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horror films, spectacle often arises from a failed diegetic attempt to hide or repress the abject. Like other texts in the category of ‘body horror,’ the horror of the werewolf narrative is the spectacle of the abject (that which should be repressed) bursting through the boundary of the skin.

In taking a socio-historical approach to the study of recent female werewolf portrayals, I draw on philosopher Michel Foucault’s writings on the historical and continuously changing categories of “normal” and “pathological,” as well as his concepts of regulatory and disciplinary power. How might portrayals of female werewolves onscreen work as a form of Foucauldian power? Feminist scholar Susan Bordo’s work on the mass media and its visual imagery uses a Foucauldian framework to explore how media images of women’s bodies work as part of a regulatory/disciplinary matrix that affects ideas of how the female body should look and act. For Foucault, power not only represses, but produces as well. Regulatory power (biopower) exerts pressures on individual bodies from without and above, while disciplinary power works from within, as individuals internalize cultural norms into a continuous self-discipline (panopticism). Culture has a strong grip on our bodies

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35 Foucault’s discussion of disciplinary power stems from his work Discipline and Punish, while his concept of regulatory/biopower is introduced in The History of Sexuality Vol. 1. (Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage
“through the practices and bodily habits of everyday life. Through routine, habitual activity, our bodies learn what is ‘inner’ and what is ‘outer,’ which gestures are forbidden and which required, how violable or inviolable are the boundaries of our bodies, how much space around the body may be claimed, and so on.”36 For women, this has meant producing smooth, thin, not-too-muscular bodies, taking up little space, and limiting physical activity. Women are taught to avoid at all costs any association with the cultural category of ‘masculinity.’

Applying Foucault’s idea of a continuous and internalized “inspecting gaze” to the way women are taught to police their own bodies in terms of behavior, size, and appearance, Bordo writes, “Through the pursuit of an ever-changing, homogenizing, elusive ideal of femininity – . . . – female bodies become docile bodies – bodies whose forces and energies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, transformation, ‘improvement.’”37 Although Bordo’s focus is on eating disorders, her direct application of Foucault’s notions of disciplinary power to the female body in conjunction with media imagery is illuminating and useful for my own examination of acceptable/unacceptable female bodies and of what portrayals of female werewolves

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36 Bordo, Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body, 16.

37 Ibid., 27, 166.
might teach us in terms of women and body hair, muscle, strength, control, and taking up space.

Gender theorist Judith Butler also draws on Foucault to explain how sex and gender are culturally conceptualized: “‘sex’ is a regulatory ideal whose materialization is compelled, and this materialization takes place (or fails to take place) through certain highly regulated practices . . . it will be one of the norms by which the ‘one’ becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility.”  

Butler describes the regulation of sexed bodies as an exclusionary practice of which non-subjects (a synonym of which could be ‘monsters’) are a necessary element (Benshoff’s argument about the monster queer is an echo of this):

. . . the exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet ‘subjects’ . . . The abject designates here precisely those ‘unlivable’ and ‘uninhabitable’ zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the ‘unlivable’ is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject. 

For Butler, the “girling” of any girl begins as soon as she is named as “girl” (“brought into the domain of language and kinship through the interpellation of gender”) and continues being reiterated by different authorities and at various times. Those who cannot or do not conform to these authorities are deemed “unlivable.” Bordo’s work

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39 Ibid., 3.
40 Ibid., 7.
brings Butler’s ideas about the enforced (re)articulations of gender and sex into the realm of entertainment and advertising: mass consumer culture. Are female werewolf texts part of a matrix of regulation in which audiences (re)learn about female subjecthood through witnessing the spectacle of an unlivable female?

Gender theorist Judith Halberstam would say yes: she directly ties the figure of the monster to Foucault’s theories of regulation and discipline: “The Gothic monster is precisely a disciplinary sign, a warning of what may happen if the body is imprisoned by its desires or if the subject is unable to discipline him- or herself fully and successfully . . . The monster . . . encourages readers to read themselves and their own bodies and scan themselves for signs of devolution.”

Halberstam’s work on Gothic horror and monstrosity draws on Butler’s ideas about the exclusionary workings of gender:

. . . improper gender . . . becomes allied with inhumanity . . . Gender construction and its failures in particular open out onto the category of the human which appears at the limits of proper gender as the ‘inhuman,’ or the ‘less than human.’ In other words, improperly or inadequately gendered bodies represent the limits of the human and they present a monstrous arrangement of skin, flesh, social mores, pleasures, dangers, and wounds.

Using Donna Haraway’s language of the “promise” of monsters, Halberstam sees possibility as well as censure within regulatory/disciplinary monstrosity. She

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41 Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*, 72.
42 Ibid., 141.
43 Ibid., 85.
recognizes the polysemic nature of monsters: they disgust and repulse, but also entice and attract. Their slippery nature is reminiscent of Foucault’s description of power, in which classifications of normal/abnormal are always shifting, in flux, in tension. The possibility for audiences to read pleasure into the imagery of a powerful female monster is always present. If female werewolves in these texts work as disciplinary signs, Halberstam also sees horror films as sites of queer identity formations through the inversions and border crossings of their protagonists and monsters. Although the Gothic monster functions to produce “the deviant subjectivities opposite which the normal, the healthy, and the pure can be known,” they also open up spaces for deviancy to flourish. “The queer tendency of horror film . . . lies in its ability to reconfigure gender not simply through inversion but by literally creating new categories. [italics added]” One of these categories is, I am arguing, that of the masculine-female-grotesque, the female body who sprouts hair and muscles and lashes out in violence and rage.

Halberstam’s reference of Haraway and the promise of monsters calls to mind not only Purday’s hopeful monster, but also the celebrations of hybridity in Haraway’s writing. Her essay, “The Cyborg Manifesto,” has been influential in writings on hybrid bodies and feminism, and I would be remiss to not mention it here. Although the

\[44\] Ibid., 3.
\[45\] Ibid., 139.
female werewolf is a hybrid body (of human/animal and masculine/feminine), I am resistant to using cyborg theory as a guiding framework. In many ways a perfect fit (as she writes, “my cyborg myth is about transgressed boundaries, potent fusion, and dangerous possibilities which progressive people might explore as one part of needed political work”), Haraway’s cyborg is also “a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self.”⁴⁶ Although I do not necessarily see the werewolf as a kind of pre-technological figure of ‘nature,’ I do see it as an emerging-from-within rather than a splicing-onto of the body. The werewolf abject attempts to mark boundaries that are false: the female werewolf is less of a hybrid body than it is labeled one: women have body hair, after all, and strength and aggression, although our culture tells them they should not. The werewolf, then, is an unleashing of one’s pre-existing inner beast, while the cyborg is an amalgamation of organic and inorganic parts. Although I understand Haraway to be arguing against the idea of such an amalgamation being less-than-a-whole in and of itself, I believe that the ‘monster’ is a strong enough metaphor of liminality/hybridity, and the ‘cyborg’ an imperfect fit. For all that Haraway’s notion of the feminist cyborg figure in science fiction as a

potentially politically liberating tool resonates with my own desire for a hopeful female werewolf, the cyborg does not need to stand in for the monster in this analysis.47

Following the Foucauldian labeling of subjects as deviant or monstrous, then, Butler reminds us that the exclusionary production of sex/gender works through the drawing of lines, that the naming of ‘girl’ and ‘boy’ is “at once the setting of a boundary, and also the repeated inculcation of a norm.”48 Gendered interpellations within the cultural landscape make up a “field of discourse and power that orchestrates, delimits, and sustains that which qualifies as ‘the human.’ We see this most clearly in the examples of those abjected beings who do not appear properly gendered; it is their very humanness that comes into question.”49 In horror films, the humanness of the monster is a central question, and the female werewolf’s questionable humanness is tied to her gender transgressions: she has ruptured and erupted from the proper bounds of the category ‘girl.’

The study of monsters can offer insight into the types of bodies that are deemed unacceptable, in need of disciplining (to use Foucault’s language), and unlivable (to use Butler’s). In films and narratives dealing with monstrosity, being deemed

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48 Butler, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex, 8.
49 Ibid.
unacceptable is often not just a matter of social shunning, but of physical death. The monster must die; it literally is not livable. It is my argument that these recent portrayals of female werewolves, despite their break in the traditional coding of the werewolf as a male/masculine figure, greatly adhere to hegemonic ideas about acceptable and unacceptable female bodies.

At the same time, however, these portrayals do open spaces for Halberstam’s “new categories.” Halberstam describes the monster as a master of disguise, a kind of cross-dresser: “the grotesque effect of Gothic is achieved through a kind of transvestism, a dressing up that reveals itself as costume.” The feminine exterior of the female werewolf becomes too tight and its bounds burst. The werewolf is performing the woman, a monster dressed up in Grandmother’s clothes and Red Riding Hood’s too. Perhaps, though, the female werewolf is not a girl invaded by a masculine Other. Perhaps, following Butler’s notion of performativity, the girl is the performance of acceptable femininity and female-hood, and the true interior subject is that of the monster, violent and rageful.

We see from Butler’s use of sex as a regulatory ideal and Halberstam’s positioning of the monster as a disciplinary sign how a monster like the female

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50 This is not to deny that injury and death are absolutely threats to those whose gender presentation is seen as unacceptable or deviant by the dominant culture.
51 Halberstam, Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters, 60.
52 This reading does allow some interior subject, something that Butler’s theory of performativity does not subscribe to. Butler is unwilling to admit any interior determinations of gender identity in her work.
werewolf could work in Foucauldian terms (within other matrices of regulation) to exert power over cultural expectations of female bodies. Butler writes that her purpose in *Bodies That Matter* is “to understand how what has been foreclosed or banished from the proper domain of ‘sex’ . . . might at once be produced as a troubling return [and] . . . as an enabling disruption, the occasion for a radical rearticulation of the symbolic horizon in which bodies come to matter at all.” This banishment sounds very much like the scapegoating of monstrosity in the horror film, while her “enabling disruption” echoes Halberstam’s “new categories” and Purday’s “hopeful monster.” Part of this project is to discover what the disciplinary/regulatory ideals about female bodies are (where the lines are drawn to create and “name” monsters), as articulated by these texts, and also to locate cracks where audiences can subvert and resist.

**Werewolf as Monster: Masculinity, Class and Race**

The figure of the werewolf can be seen in many incarnations: onscreen and in fiction, its transformations have been portrayed as voluntary, involuntary, sought after, inflicted, struggled with or embraced, cyclical or linear, controlled or uncontrollable. The “beast within” has been seen as tragic, evil, and a source of unchecked violence or, more positively, as a healthy integration of one’s animal and human natures. Onscreen,

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werewolves often “embody the conflict between instinctual urges and rational behavior,”\(^5^4\) between human/animal, and civilized/primitive. These categories are, of course, heavily weighted with ideological concepts of race, class, and gender.

Patrick Gonder’s work on “the primitive” in 1950s horror films is useful here. Gonder discusses the ‘devolved’ monsters of 50s horror cinema, such as Mr. Hyde and the cavemen-primitives, in terms of race, class, and notions of civilization. He writes that the “hybrid nature of the [devolved monster] asserts white masculinity against and through the fantasy of a primal, animalistic black sexuality.”\(^5^5\) The beast within (excessive, uncontrollable masculinity run amok) that the werewolf represents for (white) men is always coded in terms of a non-white ethnicity and/or the working class. Cinematic werewolves are almost always associated with non-white ethnicities, from the gypsies in *The Wolf Man* (1944) to the Indian mystic/scholar in *Wolf* (1994).\(^5^6\)

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\(^5^6\) Only two recent films featured non-white werewolves in any substantial role. In *Underworld*, Raze, a black man, is larger and more muscular than his white brethren in both human and hybrid forms. Twice we see him transform as he faces off against a smaller white male vampire. His deep voice and the spectacle of his shirtless body highlight the way that black masculinity is shown as more primitive and animalistic than white masculinity. (Len Wiseman, "Underworld," (USA: Screen Gems and Lakeshore International, 2003).)  
*Skinwalkers* features two groups of werewolves in conflict; both groups include a black male. The “good” character, Doak, is a clean-cut postal carrier. The “bad” and more primitive character, Grenier, is a dreadlocked motorcyclist with a discolored eye and a pet hawk. Both die early and in the same scene. (James Isaac, "Skinwalkers," (USA: Lions Gate Films, 2006).)  
Mario Van Peebles also gets wolfy in an earlier film, *Full Eclipse* (1993), although he does not change much beyond his eyes and teeth. (Anthony Hickox, "Full Eclipse," (USA: Home Box Office (HBO), 1993).)
Almost all cinematic werewolves undergo a darkening of the skin during transformation (the only exception of which I am aware is Ginger in *Ginger Snaps*).

Historian Gail Bederman explains how, during the first part of the 20th century, middle-class white men began valuing a mixture of civilized manhood and rough masculinity, believed to be inherent to all men: “true manhood involved a primal virility . . . called the ‘masculine primitive’ . . . which stressed ‘the belief that all males - civilized or not - shared in the same primordial instincts for survival,’ and that ‘civilized men - more than women - were primitives in many important ways.”57 In films today, the “masculine primitive” is still linked to the working class and men of color. Women are excluded altogether, since they are often seen as more civilized than men, no matter what the circumstances.58 (At the same time, women are also seen as less able to control their emotions and their bodies).

Werewolf scholar Chantal Bourgault du Coudray outlines the differences in how werewolves are treated in the fantasy genre as opposed to in horror. In horror narratives, she writes, the werewolf symbolizes the monstrous-grotesque: it is an alien Other threatening the social collective as well as the internalized grotesque (“the beast within”). However, because the figure of the werewolf can also represent the conflict

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58 Julie Craig outlines the ways in which women are portrayed as gentler, more civilized, and less brutal than men in nature-adventure films such as *The Mosquito Coast* and *Alive*. (Julie Craig, "Lord of the Butterflies," *Bitch*, no. 18 (Fall 2002).)
between nature and culture, du Coudray shows that more sympathetic attitudes toward nature in general and wolves in particular (thanks to the work of environmentalists and biologists) have resulted in more sympathetic and integrated werewolf characters in fantasy fiction. In fantasy fiction, especially in works by contemporary women writers, the werewolf is often a positive figure. Fantasy werewolves, both men and women, are more likely to be written against “the prototype of the anguished and tragic Wolf Man torn between his human and lupine urges”; instead they “often [find] love, happiness, stability and spiritual growth.” The contrast can be summed up thusly: “In horror, nature is an alien presence (the wolf within) that destroys the tragic werewolf hero by forcing him to behave like an animal against his conscious will. The fantasy werewolf, on the other hand, develops a far more positive and accepting relationship with the inner wolf . . . [T]hese differences are founded largely in differing valuations of the forces of nature and biology,” and therefore women as well. Du Coudray shows that many 19th century literary representations of werewolves had to do with fears of foreigners or seductive women (or foreign, seductive women). Female werewolves in 19th century fiction did not suffer emotional or moral anguish because of their condition, but reveled in it, unlike their tormented male counterparts. And in pulp

60 Ibid.: 60.
novels throughout the 20th century, female lycanthropy tended to be represented as the fault of the female werewolf, “the consequence of a feminine tendency towards the pleasures of the flesh.” The female werewolf Marsha in *The Howling* (1981), for example, is shown as hypersexual, but not violent like her werewolf brothers. Du Coudray points out that in both cinematic and literary tales, the beast in man is expressed through violence, the beast in women through sexuality.

Hailing the subversive potential of the fantasy werewolf as more revolutionary than the werewolves appearing in Gothic horror (which is obsessed with the duality of the subject), du Coudray connects the werewolf to the idea of the “posthuman,” defined as “any kind of subjectivity resulting from the transgression of boundaries which have traditionally delineated the human.” Another question to ask of female werewolf narratives, then, is: Does the narrative follow the trope of the horror werewolf or the fantasy? Is the narrative sympathetic to the werewolf and her perspective? Do we see a hopeful monster, the integrated fantasy werewolf, or a scapegoated monster, the grotesque body of the horror werewolf? Or does the narrative swing between both?

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62 Ibid., 113.
63 Ibid., 114-15.
When women are werewolves, the traditional coding of horror - monster as male, victim as female – does not fit. They are Little Red Riding Hood, Wolf, and Granny rolled into one: in female werewolf narratives, the roles of victim and monster are collapsed onto one body - the waifish blonde is running from herself. Although female werewolves abound in fantasy fiction, onscreen they have been relegated fairly strictly to horror. There is still an assumption that werewolves in film and television will be male and “coded in terms of excessive masculinity, as the visible extension of the aggressive potential contained within the body of the ordinary human male,” as well as marked with signs of more primitive and animal instincts (the lower classes and non-white races).\(^6^5\) But it is more than just the cultural taboo against women being violent that guides the assumption in pop culture that werewolves will be male. The idea of a female werewolf is transgressive in that it acknowledges aggressive potential in a female body, but also in that it shows the female body as hairy and muscled – in other words, as masculine.\(^6^6\)

\(^6^5\) ———, The Curse of the Werewolf: Fantasy, Horror, and the Beast Within, 80, 85-86.
\(^6^6\) The idea of the werewolf condition as a monthly cycle links it to female-ness. Du Coudray, Linda Badley and Barbara Creed all point out that to be a werewolf is to be like a woman: “cursed to endure an inevitable cycle of monthly transformation.” (Ibid., 121.) Creed writes that the werewolf is feminized through its association with menstruation (its body following the cycle of the moon and becoming uncontrollable once a month). (Barbara Creed, "Dark Desires: Male Masochism in the Horror Film," in Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema, ed. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (New York: Routledge, 1993), 124.) Linda Badley also argues that the male werewolf is feminized: he is an embodied, hysterical man who learns that “biology is destiny,” and who, in the process of becoming hypermasculine, must give painful birth to himself in an eruption from within. (Badley, Film, Horror, and the Body Fantastic, 121.)
The Female Werewolf as Grotesque

The grotesque body is associated with the abject (degradation, filth, death, rebirth, pollution). It “is open, protruding, irregular, secreting, multiple, and changing,” deformed, excessive.67 Women’s bodies are always already closer to grotesque eruption than men’s through the processes of menstruation, lactation, and childbirth. If to be female is to already be perpetually “in error,”68 then to be a masculine female multiplies that error. Judith Halberstam’s book Female Masculinity details the myriad ways that masculinity is discouraged and policed, disciplined and regulated in female bodies: “. . . despite at least two decades of sustained feminist and queer attacks on the notion of natural gender, we still believe that masculinity in girls and women is abhorrent and pathological.”69 Female masculinity (signs of what is culturally labeled masculine in a female body) is never seen as natural or normal, but is “generally received by hetero- and homo-normative cultures as a pathological sign of

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The male werewolf’s gender hybridity, however, is less recognizable than the female’s, if it is recognized at all. Only one of the texts examined in Chapter One makes this feminization of the male body clear: Ginger Snaps’ Jason becomes infected by lycanthropy after a sexual encounter with Ginger. He is shown “menstruating” in a later scene, peeing blood and bleeding onto his pants. His panic results in his friends teasing him in “a subversive and pleasurable spectacle [of] the ‘hysterical’ menstruating woman.” (April Miller, ”’The Hair That Wasn't There Before’: Demystifying Monstrosity and Menstruation in Ginger Snaps and Ginger Snaps Unleashed,” Western Folklore 64, no. 3/4 (2005): 294.)

68 Ibid., 13.
misidentification and maladjustment, as a longing to be and to have a power that is always just out of reach.”

Masculinity is only “natural” within a male body.

Although the female masculinity that Halberstam discusses in her work is different from the female masculinity of the onscreen female werewolf (whose masculine markers are often seen as an invading force rather than a queer gender expression), her concept of the “in-between” echoes my own notion of the transgender/ambisexed/ambigendered/hybrid body. The “in-between” for Halberstam is the subject position of the gender-deviant, but it is not androgynous (which connotes a calm balance of yin and yang, pink and blue). In cinematic tales of female werewolves, the horror for both male and female characters is the crossing and blurring of gender lines, the making of a woman into not-woman, but also not-man. Werewolf-ism works to destroy the feminine within the female body, but it is not androgyny; it is the disruption of the reiterated and naturalized performance of feminine gender and female sex. Female werewolves are queer in that they threaten a naturalized patriarchal heteronormativity and its dual roles of “man” and “woman.” Gender betrayers, they present as women should not, while simultaneously breaking down the categories of “men” and “women” all together.

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70 Ibid., 9.
71 The coding of female werewolves has “masculine” traits, such as body hair, being abjected from the female body, ignoring the reality that women’s bodies naturally have hair. So not only is the “masculine” abjected, so is the “not-feminine.” Femininity is revealed/concealed as a construct, while masculinity remains a “natural” state of being for males.
72 Halberstam, Female Masculinity, 21.
Forms of female masculinity threaten not only the idea of ‘natural’ female-ness, but also the idea of natural, male-bodied masculinity. As Halberstam writes, “The suppression of female masculinities allows for male masculinity to stand unchallenged as the bearer of gender stability and gender deviance.”\(^7\)

The suppression of female masculinities and the presence of the female (ambisexed, unlivable) werewolf in pop culture are part of a Foucauldian regulation of female bodies into femininity and out of unacceptable ways of being/appearing.

The monstrous-feminine, though grotesque, does come with agency, however. The woman-as-monster disrupts the male gaze’s desire for the fetishized female body and refuses to stay under the eye’s control. “[I]n feminist art the female grotesque is not the source of horror, but of wild energy; the horror is the oppression against which she revolts.”\(^4\)

Feminism, like the LGBT activists quoted above, has introduced a rhetoric that has the potential to reclaim the monstrous feminine as a form of “hopeful” female power. What is unique about the female werewolf is that the grotesque body is grotesque precisely because it is crossing lines of gender and sex; it is no longer the monstrous-feminine, but the masculine-female-grotesque, the grotesque that comes from seeing cultural marks of masculinity housed in a female body. “The grotesque

\(^{7}\) Ibid., 41.

body is grotesque because it inverts dominant hierarchies and ruptures dominant values,” it signals transformation and metamorphosis, monstrous, unfinished growth and change.

Like Halberstam’s theory of the political promise of monsters, Yael Sherman connects Bakhtin’s theory of carnival and the grotesque body with the libratory political theorizing of Donna Haraway’s hybrid cyborg body and Gloria Anzaldua’s metaphor of the Borderlands. For all three theorists, Sherman writes, the grotesque body, with its “perpetual troubling of boundaries,” is an important element of liberation from prevailing norms and prescriptions: “Bakhtin’s notion of carnival makes the grotesque body the center about which the political dimensions of space are reconfigured . . . [it is] a transformative liminal space, figured by the contradictory and perpetually incomplete body.” The space of the carnival is where participants and spectators encounter a “temporary liberation from the prevailing truths and from established order . . . mark[ing] the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privilege, norms, and prohibitions.” Sherman uses Haraway and Anzaldua to theorize “how feminism might take up the carnival.” For Bakhtin, the carnival space is outside of

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76 Ibid.: 90, 89.
politics, and the “grotesque body is meant to always be grotesque” without changing the cultural norms that carnival temporarily upends.\(^{79}\) Anzaldua and Haraway, however, use the grotesque “to invite change that will revalue the ‘grotesque’ and provide and model for an ongoing politics of the grotesque.”\(^{80}\) Female werewolves onscreen are also “ongoing,” as part of an ever-shifting pop culture that prescribes regulatory/disciplinary ideals for female bodies.

For Anzaldua, the “creation of community through affinity” is an important part of the political recuperation of the grotesque. In order to survive, Sherman writes, the queer girl “must build a community in which her queerness is acceptable, thus nonsexually reproducing her difference and creating a liminal space of transformation for both herself and others.”\(^{81}\) Sherman’s description of nonsexual reproduction sounds remarkably like some texts’ portrayal of lycanthropic infection. Is a queer community assembled in any of these films, or are female werewolves alone in their struggle? Is there unity between women and other grotesques, and how is female solidarity represented? (Unfortunately, as we will see in Chapter One, if there is more than one “queer” female in these texts, they are often shown in competition or contrasted in terms of good v. evil.) Sherman ultimately binds Bakhtin, Haraway, and Anzaldua together in an attempt to offer “new visions of transformations that challenge

\(^{79}\) Ibid.: 95.
\(^{80}\) Ibid.: 95-96.
\(^{81}\) Ibid.: 97.
conventional notions of gender, sexuality, and race,” in an echo of Halberstam’s “new
categories.” She writes that the grotesque body onscreen “embodies [a] disruption
and invites others – perhaps even the audience – into similar, liberating disruptions.”
Chapter Two is an attempt to see if audiences accept that invitation, and if viewers
celebrate or condemn the libratory, grotesque body.

If the horror film functions as a kind of carnival space where rules are broken
and upended, where a fantasy of imagined violence is enacted, and where monsters
dwell, then their conservative endings make sense as a restoration of order. However,
they also function, drawing on Sherman’s reading of Haraway and Anzaldúa, as
potentially liberating carnival spaces by providing the possibility of audience
identification with the monster, and the possibility that the monster will endure in its
existence, either onscreen or in the mind of audience members.

Unlivable Women: Body Hair, Muscles, and Violence

Perhaps nowhere is the disgust aimed at the masculine-female-grotesque body
more apparent than in our collective cultural attitude toward women’s body hair:
armpit, leg, and facial. The 2004 comedy Without a Paddle used female leg hair as a
gross-out gag, and depilatory company Nair began marketing its products to 10-year-

\[82\] Ibid.: 102.
\[83\] Ibid.
olds in 2007. Female celebrity body hair is policed by both the mainstream entertainment press and bloggers: “Oh no! Drew’s new look is the pits!” and “Soon Britney can start braiding that hair,” and “Ellen Page has some hairy issues” are recent headlines. The visual of female body hair is so taboo that audiences accept the historical anachronism of smooth armpits and shaved legs in films like *The Crucible* and *Shakespeare in Love*, and actresses have to fight studio heads in order to show body hair onscreen that they consider a necessary part of a role’s characterization.

In surveys of working women and college students done in the U.S., the U.K., and Australia, researchers found that the majority of women removed their leg and/or armpit hair; reasons given for doing so were social and normative pressures, and the desire to feel feminine and sexually attractive. Women who did not shave were seen

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by both men and women as less intelligent, sociable, and happy (and as more aggressive, strong, and active).^{88}

A more recent study showed that “body hair on women . . . has become an elicitor of disgust and its removal correspondingly normative.”^{89} In terms of facial and body hair, the overwhelming cultural message is that “a woman’s body is unacceptable if left unaltered.”^{90} Researchers Merran Toerien and Sue Wilkinson argue that this large-scale, compulsory hair removal works not only to help construct the socially-acceptable and -approved feminine woman, but also to more fully draw the lines between men and women, highlighting “appropriate” femininity itself as a production.^{91} Hair on a female body is a challenge to gendered social categories; at the same time such hairlessness should appear natural. Body hair signals masculinity and adulthood, and the constant production and performance that is femininity remains hidden, as regulatory and disciplinary power works on women’s bodies.

If visible body hair on a woman is “a symbolic threat to the gendered social order,”^{92} then facial hair is even more so: like body hair, facial hair is common among

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^{90} Merran Toerien, Sue Wilkinson, and Precilla Y.L. Choi, "Body Hair Removal: The 'Mundane' Production of Normative Femininity," *Sex Roles* 52, no. 5-6 (2005): 405.


^{92} Ibid.: 341.
women, but is taboo culturally. A 1999 survey found that approximately 22 million American women remove unwanted facial hair at least once a week: “women’s removal of their facial hair is just another concession in the militarized zones of masculine and feminine, where women must conform or confront considerable judgment and ridicule.”

Although body and facial hair occur naturally in mature female bodies, in our visual culture these traits are labeled masculine and elicit disgust; all it takes for a woman’s body to be labeled grotesque is the sight of such hair.

Drawing on cultural theorist Linda Williams’ comparison of horror and pornography, horror scholar Linda Badley writes that the horror genre works to evoke a physical reaction in its audiences through “images of the body that evoke the greatest possible physical response.” The question arises, then, if horror is supposed to be the disgusting spectacle of grotesque bodies, why are so many female werewolf characters not shown as hairy, since female body hair is known to be an elicitor of disgust?

Cinematic werewolves are usually depicted as physically powerful and intimidating. The hybrid human/beast form often increases in size from the human; this is another way that female werewolves challenge the cultural gender binary. Like the cultural imperative for women to be hairless, muscular, active women are marked as

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93 Aimée Dowl, "Beyond the Bearded Lady: Outgrowing the Shame of Female Facial Hair," *Bitch*, no. 28 (Spring 2005): 54, 57.
unfeminine, not-woman. Halberstam writes that a muscled female body “makes visible a willful rejection of feminine inactivity” and is therefore implicated in non-heteronormative subjectivity.95 Female athletes are always already suspect to charges of lesbianism,96 since participation in sports has traditionally been a masculine endeavor.97 Sports participation can mean resistance to the million tiny, daily pressures for women to conform to dominant cultural ideology about the passive and condensed female body. Athletic bodies take up space and move with skill and power, resisting the normalizing self-regulation and disciplinary biopower for women that Foucault and Bordo outline, since “athletic endeavors require women to engage their bodies in practices that are typically associated with masculinity.”98 Although recent counterdiscourses that celebrate changed norms for girls in sports have emerged, “female athletes still reside outside the parameters of normative femininity, particularly those who play competitive, ‘male’ sports or who appear to resist compulsory heterosexuality. Mainstream society continues to be troubled by the athletic, muscular, makeup-free, jewelry-free, sweaty female body.”99 Homophobia and enforced

95 Halberstam, Female Masculinity, 58.
96 Shirley Castelnuovo and Sharon R. Guthrie, Feminism and the Female Body: Liberating the Amazon Within, ed. Judith Grant, Gender and Political Theory: New Contexts (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 97.
98 Ibid.: 19.
heteronormativity remain huge regulatory and normalizing forces in women’s and girls’ sports. The spectre of gender deviancy puts pressure on female athletes to balance their athleticism with normative heterosexual femininity; sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, and gender panic in women’s sports persist. Women athletes, along with physically powerful women in general, challenge one of the root beliefs of patriarchy’s oppositional sexism: the natural physical superiority of men over women.

One set of interviews with female athletes found that “the predominant feeling was that they liked being strong and powerful, but were at the same time aware that to fit into society’s ideal, they should not be too muscular.” Another study with female collegiate soccer players uncovered a kind of constant self-surveillance of their muscular bodies for transgressions against femininity and heterosexuality: they continually sought reassurances from coaches, male peers, parents, and teammates about the acceptability of their muscular bodies. This tension between the performance body and the social body show that the female athlete and the gender-appropriate body

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100 One example is the 1999 defeat of first-ranked Lindsey Davenport by French tennis player Amélie Mauresmo. Mauresmo’s muscular body and her openness about her lesbian identity led some online tennis fans to question her sex and/or gender. (Pamela J. Forman and Darcy C. Plymire, "Amélie Mauresmo's Muscles: The Lesbian Heroic in Women's Professional Tennis," Women's Studies Quarterly 33, no. 1/2 (2005).)


are still “contested ideological terrain.” Cultural associations of “sporty” and “active” with “masculinity” is an ideological pairing that encourages reluctance in girls and women to deviate from social standards of femininity by being active and strong. This is the kind of Foucauldian disciplining/self-policing that Bordo writes about.

If there is cultural anxiety about women’s bodies being too muscular and active, then hypermuscularity, such as that found among female bodybuilders, creates a fever pitch. Cultural theorist Anne Balsamo notes in her essay on female bodybuilding that sculpting hyper-muscles transgresses the supposed “natural” order of the female body (which is weakness). Accordingly, media images of muscular female athletes and bodybuilders often play up their femininity and sexuality, policing them from drifting too far into the territory of masculinity. Balsamo concludes that in media

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105 Dawn Heinecken’s chapter on World Wrestling Federation’s Chyna outlines how muscularity and femininity are in constant tension of being unable to coexist in one body. Chyna began her career in the WWF as a woman who fought men, a disrupter of the neat lines drawn between masculine/male and feminine/female bodies on display during WWF matches. She was labeled a “monster” by announcers and described in terms of “something not quite human” (p. 188, 189). Later, however, her breast implants gendered her as “woman,” but her emerging persona as a “feminist” separated her from truly acceptable femininity. Her final incarnation during her WWF career to sex symbol was due to the alteration of her body to enhance her femininity (plastic surgery, changed hair and makeup, and shedding of muscle mass), and her sexualization as fetish object. (Dawn Heinecken, "No Cage Can Hold Her Rage? Gender, Transgression, and the World Wrestling Federation's Chyna," in *Action Chicks: New Images of Tough Women in Popular Culture*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).)
representations, “despite appearing as a form of resistance, these . . . body transgressions rearticulate the power relations of a dominant social order,” especially in terms of race. The bodies of female bodybuilders reveal “how culture processes transgressive bodies in such a way as to keep each body in its place – that is, subjected to its ‘other’ ” (white women to white men, black women to white women).

Women’s bodybuilding leads to a kind of moral panic about the gender-deviancy of these women’s bodies. Unlike men, who are assumed to be performing their natural gender on the bodybuilding stage, women must consciously perform the feminine. “Femininity” became an official judging criterion for women bodybuilders in 2001, as “symmetry” of the body became more highly praised than hypermuscularity. A standard of heterosexual, middle-class femininity is performed through dress, poses, hair and makeup, and like other female athletes, women bodybuilders constantly negotiate how to be big and muscular while remaining feminine (that is, read-able as a woman).

106 Other images, intended to shock, highlight the transgressive nature of their bodies: long hair and breasts paired with ripped muscles create a visual gender-hybrid body much like that of a female werewolf. (Anne Balsamo, Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 54.)

107 Ibid., 55.


109 Ibid.: 135.

110 Ibid.: 138.
The hypermuscular body is often seen as grotesque, but “the difference is that the man is doing more of what a man is supposed to do, and a woman is involved in a revolutionary endeavor that challenges very profound concepts,” not just about what femininity is but also about what masculinity is.¹¹¹ Like body hair, in a culture that codes muscles as masculine, the “hyper-growth of musculature threatens the neat division of binary gender representations/essences.”¹¹² The danger is that women will become too masculine, too grotesque in their similarity to men. This may be one of the reasons why there are fewer portrayals of female werewolves than male: the hypermuscular body is “a much more dangerous ideal for women to embody” than men.¹¹³ Although muscles can be a sign of self-control and discipline, werewolf muscles are not crafted by hours in the gym, but erupt spontaneously, having more to do with the figure of the chaotic “unruly woman” than the controlled dedication of a gym-goer.¹¹⁴

Hypermuscular bodies hold the promise of activity, the spectacle of the transgressive body in motion. For werewolves, such activity exists in the form of aggression and violence; in another threat to the dominant gendered order, werewolves

¹¹³ Ibid.
¹¹⁴ Susan Bordo writes about muscles as a cultural sign of self-control. (Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, 195.)
are violent without being sexual or seductive about it (which, as Creed writes, is a common representation of the monstrous-feminine). Violence is another arena that is often considered inappropriate or unnatural for women. During the 1980s and 90s, however, a growing number of action heroines appeared on large and small screens, at least partly in response to the feminist movement. Sherrie Inness notes that the past fifteen years have seen an increase in the number of images of physically aggressive women, and it seems that a space is opening for more positive portrayals of the same. She writes, “A whole new tough aesthetic is emerging for women, one in which it is praiseworthy for them to be more muscular and aggressive than in the past...These characters not only rebel against traditional gender roles but also call into question the duality of gender.”

It must also be noted, however, that these tough chicks “are predominately white, upper or middle class, attractive, feminine, and heterosexually appealing,” and also never quite as kick-ass as the men they appear alongside. I would also argue that because many of these women exist in realms of the fantastic (fighting vampires as a supernaturally gifted warrior, for example), and because their slight builds are proportionally unrealistic to the violence they dish out, they can be

117 Ibid., 8.
read as doubly unreal. Buffy may be super-strong, but she is not super-muscular, and this allows for a hegemonic sexualization of her body.

The most recent book on violent women onscreen is by media scholar Rikke Schubart. Schubart borrows Halberstam’s notion of the “in-between” to name the liminal gender space occupied by the female action hero (a space between male-female, active-passive, agent-abused). Schubart argues against the cross-dressing and masquerade criticisms aimed at female heroes (that they are not really women at all, but a man, in a man’s role, appearing as a woman, and that their male/masculine behavior is simply an act). I, too, do not accept that strong, aggressive women onscreen are read as men in drag. The sight of power, physical or otherwise, embodied by a woman is different, and often strikes the audience as such. Like Linda Badley’s reading of Clarice Starling in *Silence of the Lambs*, the female incorporation of masculine power can create a new form of power precisely because it is used from a female (or a non-male) perspective.

Film theorist Yvonne Tasker coins the term ‘masculinity’ to describe the masculinization of the action heroine’s body through the display of muscles and other

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119 Ibid., 18.

120 Badley writes that Starling is “a new kind of woman in film” who “refuses to be a victim and steals the tools of male power – the badge, the gun, the gaze – [and] uses her vulnerability and emotions, which become aids rather than obstacles.” (Badley, *Film, Horror, and the Body Fantastic*, 150.)
traditionally masculine traits; “‘musculinity,’ however, does not erase the fact that these traits are embodied in a woman, only signals that “signifiers of strength are not limited to male characters.”¹²¹ The action heroine is both stereotypically feminine (beautiful, sexual) and masculine (aggressive, violent), and she exists in a post-feminist culture full of ambivalence and contradiction. Schubart does not argue that she subverts gender roles or is feminist, only that she offers possibilities. Schubart frames the tension between feminist and postfeminist readings of the female hero as generating both pleasure and unease. Like the monster, the female hero is polysemic and contradictory: subversive yet still limited in terms of its feminist potential. Schubart also reminds us that there is often a disconnect between representation and interpretation on audience’s part. The female hero “represents a cultural field where today’s male and female generations negotiate gender, feminism, patriarchy, and women’s roles in society.”¹²² This is also the work of the female monster.

Cultural theorist Dawn Heinecken writes about television series in the 90s; in attempting to answer the question of what TV series and their representations of female bodies have to say about women’s power and claiming of space in contemporary culture, Heinecken comes to the conclusion that “[w]hat makes these texts interesting is that they are so contradictory . . . Ultimately, it depends on one’s perspective of

¹²¹ Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema*, 149.
whether these series are visions of ‘feminist progress’ or not.” The either/or view is not as useful as the one that asks what kinds of negotiations are taking place and which elements are transgressive and regressive.

Hilary Neroni’s work on violent women in recent films in non-supernatural settings shows that because of cultural associations of violence with masculinity, violent women onscreen are punished or marked as abnormal for their behavior: they rarely end in a romantic pairing, and if they do, the masculine/feminine gender roles are reversed or subverted. The more violent a woman is, the less feminine she is shown to be (and so less able to participate in heterosexual romance). Martha McCaughey and Neal King likewise show in their work that violent women onscreen are often rendered less progressive by their placement in unrealistic settings, being seen as hypersexual or overly emotional, or by playing into patriarchal or racist systems. Many of the same patterns play out in the films and television episodes analyzed in Chapter One.

Halberstam makes an argument that women’s screen violence is part of a larger context of rage and aggression aimed at cultural oppressions, which she terms “queer

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125 Neal King and Martha McCaughey, "What's a Mean Woman Like You Doing in a Movie Like This?," in *Reel Knockouts: Violent Women in the Movies*, ed. Martha McCaughey and Neal King (USA: University of Texas Press, Austin, 2001).
violence,” and that it has potential to destabilize existing power relations, at least in the minds of the viewers: “Imagined violence . . . is the fantasy of unsanctioned eruptions of aggression from the wrong people, of the wrong skin, the wrong sexuality, the wrong gender . . . Imagined violences create a potentiality, a utopic state in which consequences are imminent rather than actual.”

Queer violence, like monsters and unruly women, has the power to potentially disrupt existing power relations onscreen, and it allows audiences to indulge in a fantasy of breaking free of cultural limits and restrictions. Chapters Two and Three investigate what pleasures audience members take from these texts.

All of these characteristics – body hair, muscles, strength, aggression, violence – all are associated with masculinity and male-ness in the dominant cultural framework of binary, oppositional sex characteristics. In arguing for the libratory potential of the masculine-female-grotesque, I do not mean to value female masculinity, or what is culturally labeled masculinity in general, above male or female expressions of femininity. What I am criticizing is the onscreen valuation of one narrow, constructed ideal of feminine female-ness above other gender expressions and gendered bodies. Female werewolves are one body type that challenges this ideal.

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The Horror Film and Gender

Because this project deals with horror films and gender transgressions, it builds on previous scholarly work done on horror and gender. Psychoanalytic scholar James Twitchell argues that horror is a conservative genre: it punishes transgressions in graphic, bloody detail, preparing its audience (adolescents) for socially approved roles. He writes, “modern horror myths prepare the teenager for the anxieties of reproduction. They are fantastic, ludicrous, crude, and important distortions of real life situations, not in the service of repression (although they certainly have that temporary effect), but of instruction.” For Twitchell, horror’s major taboo is deviant sexuality, especially incest. “Essentially, horror has little to do with fright; it has more to do with laying down the rules of socialization and extrapolating a hidden code of sexual behavior. Once we learn these rules, as we do in adolescence, horror dissipates.”

Although this view could be seen as a kind of Foucauldian reading of horror films, horror as a mechanism through which social roles and taboos are upheld and transgressions punished, Twitchell’s argument is based in psychoanalysis, and limits itself by treating horror and the horror audience as universal categories.

Robin Wood, on the other hand, argues for the genre’s progressive possibilities. Wood outlines the three basic elements of the horror film: the monster, the normal, and

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128 Ibid., 93, 66.
the relationship between the two. He argues that horror deals with that which is repressed in a society (for example, female sexuality, other people, women, proletariat, other cultures, ethnicities, deviant sexualities, children, etc.); what is repressed manifests itself onscreen as the Other. Wood stresses the horror genre’s “potential for the subversion of bourgeois patriarchal norms” while at the same time admitting that “this potential is never free from ambiguity.”

For Wood, horror films, depending on their framing and narrative conclusion, can be progressive or reactionary/conservative. How the monster is portrayed allows for a judgment about the film as progressive or reactionary (for example, a reactionary horror film would position the monster as pure evil/nonhuman, Christianity as a positive force, and monstrous sexuality as conflated with sexuality itself).

Wood recognizes that some horror films are ambivalent towards the monster, because of our culture’s ambivalent attitude to normality: “Central to the effect and fascination of horror films is their fulfillment of our nightmare wish to smash the norms that oppress us and which our moral conditioning teaches us to revere.”

Like the figure of Carrie White from Carrie, female werewolves can offer both warning and fantasy about female power to their audiences. As Carroll writes, because monsters are “simultaneously attractive and repellant insofar as they function to enunciate both a

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129 Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film,” 192.
130 Ibid., 177.
wish and its inhibition,” the genre of horror “cannot be construed as completely repelling or completely appealing. Either outlook denies something essential to the form.”\textsuperscript{131} Horror, as a genre, then, leaves an open space for spectators to read horror films and their monsters in a myriad of ways, progressive as well as reactionary.

The type of horror most applicable to the werewolf narrative is body horror (or what horror scholar Mark Jancovich calls “body/horror”) “In these films, the monstrous threat is not external but erupts from within the human body, and so challenges the distinction between self and other, inside and outside.”\textsuperscript{132} Like Jekyll and Hyde, in horror films, the werewolf is a kind of dark double:

. . . two competing sides of an individual – normally, one rational and civilized, the other uncontrolled and irrational, often more primal and atavistic. This duality may also represent a conflict between competing sexualities, gender orientations, repressed desires and their expressions, or may be a more obvious and confrontational antithesis between the powerful and powerless.\textsuperscript{133}

These monsters are metaphors: “a projection of particular threats, fears and contradictions that refuse coexistence with the prevailing paradigms and consensual orthodoxies of everyday life . . . It comes to represent the disintegration or de-stabilisation of any one dominant perception or understanding of what it is to be

\textsuperscript{131} Carroll, "Nightmare and the Horror Film: The Symbolic Biology of Fantastic Beings," 17, 18.


\textsuperscript{133} Paul Wells, \textit{The Horror Genre: From Beelzebub to Blair Witch} (Wallflower Press, 2000), 8-9.
human.” For female werewolves, this is the struggle between masculine and feminine, between what they are and what they are told to be.

Like this project, Sue Short examines recent female characters in horror in order to discover what they say about women’s “potential and position” in society; she draws on Marina Warner’s analysis of oral fairy tales to frame the modern horror film as a rite of passage for the adolescent or adult female protagonist. For Short, horror texts allow for the re-appearance of many elements excised from early fairy tales when they moved from being told by women to written down by men: two such elements are courageous, clever, curious, cunning girl protagonists (who became passive and sweet in storybooks), and suspicion regarding sexual relations (which was replaced by romance). Several recent horror films, including some of the werewolf texts I examine, feature young female protagonists who transgress gender expectations in some way, and the fates of these girls reveal the cultural limits of acceptable abnormality. In the end, according to Short, the girls that survive and are marked by the narrative as positive characters rather than condemned or destroyed are those that display a sense of moral responsibility or “virtue.” She writes, “Although the genre

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134 Ibid., 9.
135 Sue Short, Misfit Sisters: Screen Horror as Female Rites of Passage (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 14. Themes of exercising caution when dealing with predatory males, duplicitous women, and the domestic sphere emerge in both genres, and gender roles/expectations are negotiated in each, as the protagonists must endure challenges and dangers to emerge into independence and adulthood.
136 Ibid., 9.
questions traditional gender roles in presenting women who are active, assertive, and, occasionally, aggressive – even offering sympathy towards such figures at times – it also confirms and concretizes certain ideas” about morality, virtue, empathy, and maternity. Ultimately, Short finds these texts are “invariably undermined by a number of factors – including the various female figures that do not make it to adulthood, who die (or are otherwise disarmed in some way) as a consequence of their transgressions, most of whom are explicitly figured as a threat to patriarchy.”

However, she also believes in the polysemic nature of these texts: just because many of the girls of horror “are invariably quelled for their excesses does not mean that audiences necessarily approve when this occurs, and we may even sneer at these methods of containment as much as applaud them.” As with cinema’s most famous female victim-hero, Carrie White from Carrie, before the inevitable banishment or destruction of the monster in these texts, audiences are offered up a subversive image of female power.

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137 Ibid., 157.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid., 163.
Plan for Remaining Chapters

In the pages that follow, I attempt to answer some of the questions asked in this Introduction. The first chapter analyzes specific texts (including *Wolf*, *An American Werewolf in Paris*, *Dog Soldiers*, the *Ginger Snaps* trilogy, *Cursed*, and specific episodes of television shows *Charmed*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, and *Supernatural*, among others), focusing on their visual representations of gender and power. I search for moments of rage, violence, and bodily change, and examine the endings given the female werewolf characters. What moments of female power does the audience see, and how is that power contained within the narrative? How does the in/visibility of certain bodies challenge or uphold gender boundaries? What inconsistencies are there across the texts? My main aim will be to see if these characters are more aligned with the werewolf of fantasy or the werewolf of horror, as outlined by du Coudray: are these representations of scapegoated monsters or hopeful ones?

The second chapter will focus on the fan responses culled from online spaces. How do fans react to specific characters, scenes, behaviors, and narratives? What are their reported experiences of engaging with these texts? By examining online fan responses to the representations of female werewolves, I hope to gain some insight into cultural negotiations around female power and gendered boundaries, specifically as they occur in visual form.
The third chapter will bring together a textual analysis and fan readings, focusing on the visual possibilities allowed in the film as opposed to print. How important is the visual in terms of what gets put onscreen in the genres of horror and fantasy? An examination of both the book and film versions of *Blood and Chocolate* (1997 and 2007 respectively), as well as the process of the film’s production through available interviews with the film’s screenwriter and director, will offer insight into why certain changes were made and how power circulates between the producers of a text and its consumers/users.

My analytical framework for the following chapters is focused on the masculine-female-grotesque and the ambigendered/ambisexed body: are we granted access to images of female bodies with body hair, muscles, strength, movement, violence, and anger? I use the vocabulary of the hopeful, progressive monster, the integrated fantasy werewolf, against that of the scapegoated, reactionary monster, the monster as regulatory sign (the tragic werewolf of horror). In these texts, is the abject, unruly woman shown as an unlivable being? Can she function as a disciplinary/regulatory figure? I also use the vocabulary of queerness to talk about the potential threat these characters embody for the patriarchal and heterosexist gender binary and its roles/expectations: the monster queer and queer violence are both promising disruptions of old categories. Does the grotesque body offer carnival-esque
political possibilities within these texts? In attempting to answer these questions, I look for moments of subversion, transgression, and resistance both within texts and within audience readings of those texts.
Female Werewolves Onscreen:
Narratives of Transgression and Containment

MTV: Why don’t we see Lycan [werewolf] women [in the Underworld films]?

Kate Beckinsale: Because that could be really horrifying. Hairy, thuggish women.

Len Wiseman: [. . .] I’ve seen furry women.

Beckinsale: [Laughing] Not here!141

This interview segment illustrates how the idea of a female werewolf challenges cultural conceptions about the appropriate female body and acceptable female behavior. For a horror film to show images of large, muscular, hairy, aggressive women would just be too “horrifying,” according to Wiseman and Beckinsale. Despite their protests, however, some films and television shows do choose to include the unlivable character of a female werewolf. This has to do in part with the rise in violent women of all types in films and on television in the last decade and a half; these action stars are part of a series of re-negotiations around the female body and female behavior, as spaces open for onscreen women to be stronger and more aggressive.

Female werewolves, however, go beyond the attractive stars of Charlie’s Angels and Buffy the Vampire Slayer: their bodies are more grotesque, their challenges to the

gender binary more insistent. The question for this chapter then becomes: when female werewolves do appear onscreen, how are they dealt with? Are they shown angry? Hairy? Are they sexualized? What is their fate? Are these representations “hopeful” at all?

I will analyze films from the past 10 years or so (Appendix I), along with specific episodes of recent television shows (Appendix II), examining how the power of the female werewolf and her ambisexed/ambigendered body is both unleashed and contained. These characters have the potential to push cultural, gendered boundaries by representing the monster queer/unruly woman, queer violence, and a hopeful version of the masculine-female-grotesque. It is my contention that although onscreen female werewolves present certain “hopeful” moments that audiences can read in positive ways, in the end, these texts are more concerned with containing the powerful, raging, hungry women therein than with presenting a hopeful vision of monstrosity.

The texts examined in this chapter deal with both transgression and containment: the potential gender offenses of the female werewolf are never allowed to exist in the form of an integrated, healthy, positive figure, as du Coudray describes werewolves from the fantasy genre. Many of the methods used to contain the potential ambisexed/ambigendered body of the female werewolf follow those of the first full-
length film featuring a female werewolf: 1944’s *Cry of the Werewolf.* In the film, Nina Fochs played a gypsy cursed with lycanthropy, but unlike 1941’s *The Wolf Man,* which featured Lon Chaney, Jr. in half-human/half-beast make-up, Fochs shifts from human to an ordinary wolf. Her transformations are only seen by her shadow, or in close-up shots of a hand cross-fading to a paw. This treatment of her transformations sidesteps issues of monstrous embodiment and gendered transgression by refusing the audience any spectacle of a female human/beast hybrid. The same approach is still used in some contemporary texts, thus avoiding the visual image of a “hairy, thuggish” woman (Appendix III). Male cinematic werewolves of the 1930s and 40s were shown “maintaining the general physical characteristics of the person who transforms” because of what was possible with make-up and special effects. Later advancements in special effects meant that werewolves could be bigger and more monstrous than their human incarnations. However, some films choose not to take advantage of these advances in the realm of body horror: the protagonists in 2006’s *Blood and Chocolate*  

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142 Henry Levin, "Cry of the Werewolf," (USA: Columbia Pictures, 1944). There is one earlier onscreen female werewolf; she appeared in the silent film *The Werewolf* (1913). An actual wolf was used in the film, which follows a Navajo woman who turns her daughter into a werewolf in order to attack white settlers. No copy survives, however, so it isn’t known how the transformations were handled. (Brad Steiger, *The Werewolf Book: The Encyclopedia of Shape-Shifting Beings* (Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 1999), 386.)

143 A note here about terminology: many texts use the words werewolf, lycanthrope, lycan, *loup-garou,* and *wendigo/windigo* interchangeably. Although there are differences in these words’ meanings and origins, for simplicity’s sake, I follow the texts’ lead in this. However, by “shapeshifter,” I mean a figure that transforms into an animal shape without becoming grotesque.

and 1996’s *Wilderness* fall into the category of shapeshifters rather than the werewolves of body horror.\(^{145}\) Shapeshifting moves the werewolf out of the realm of body horror and closer to the genre of fantasy, but it is also a method of containing the masculine-female-grotesque.

Nina Fochs’ character is killed at the end of *Cry of the Werewolf*. As we shall see, death is another method used to contain the female werewolf. But death (or more rarely, a cure) is the “conservative answer” to these films’ carnival spaces of broken rules and crossed boundaries. How do these films deal with the “radical questions” of a female werewolf body?

**The Containment of Female Werewolves on Film**

Many of these texts exhibit a tension between the werewolf genre and traditional cinematic views of the female body. On one hand, the body of the werewolf and the transformation from human to monster is an anticipated and pleasurable part of these narratives. On the other, having a grotesque, masculinized female body on display disrupts the fetishized spectacle of the female-body-as-sexual-object (Figures 1-4).\(^{146}\) One way in which these texts deal with this contradiction is to include a female


\(^{146}\) Laura Mulvey’s influential essay argues that women in classic film are positioned as fetishized sexual objects. Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (New York: Routledge, 2003). Photo sources: Figure 1 (The
werewolf character, yet refuse to deal with the threatening ambisexed/ambigendered spectacle of her hybrid (human/animal and masculine/feminine) body by simply not showing it.

For example, the film *Wolf* (1994) signals that Michelle Pfieffer’s character has become a werewolf by dressing her in black with black eyeliner and red lipstick. She exhibits heightened confidence and heightened senses, and her eyes turn yellow as the credits come up. No other physical change is shown to mar the visual of Pfieffer’s radiant beauty, whereas Jack Nicholson and James Spader, the other two werewolf characters in the film, spend the last half-hour of the film made up in extra facial and body hair.¹⁴⁷
Other recent films go a little beyond contact lenses, but not by much. In *Dog Soldiers* (2002), a group of British soldiers on a training exercise in rural Scotland are attacked by werewolves and hole up in an empty farmhouse in the woods to defend themselves. A woman scientist doing research nearby ends up with them, and near the end, it is revealed that she is already infected, but has been holding out for a cure. When it becomes apparent that the soldiers cannot defeat the werewolves, she betrays them by letting the werewolves into the house. The only physical changes we see before she is shot between the eyes by a soldier are yellow eyes and a suddenly-toothy mouth. Her slight, feminine body is contrasted with the massive, hairy bodies of three werewolves flanking her as she dies.¹⁴⁸

Like *Dog Soldiers*, numerous other texts limit their female werewolf characters to minor physical transformations (eyes, teeth, and fingernails) that lessen the ambisexed/ambigendered visual impact of the monstrous body. For some characters, as in the *Supernatural* episode “Heart,” a vampiric look is the full transformation (Figure 5).¹⁴⁹ For other characters, like Ellie in *Cursed* or Heather from *The Dresden Files*, these minor changes are because the character resists transforming completely (Figure

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None of these texts show a truly threatening or abject ambigender/ambisexed physicality. Woman-as-werewolf is horrible enough to be a disciplinary sign, it seems, but is often too horrible to see.

Other texts do not shy away from showing hairy or grotesque bodies, but avoid dwelling on the transformation from woman to masculine monster: quick CGI transformations are common, leaving no time for the audience to linger on the image of a gender hybrid body (although in some cases, production budgets may be a constraint). Once transformed, the character is no longer recognizable; in some ways, this serves the same function as the shapeshifter approach. If the audience cannot recognize the female body beneath the makeup, the visual becomes less threatening in terms of gender categories. *The Dresden Files* gives us the CGI transformation of FBI Agent Kelly Raskin from monster back to human instead of the other way around. *Angel* shows its girl werewolf, Nina, begin to turn grotesque in her face and hand, but cuts away before she gets big and hairy. *Charmed* has one super-fast CGI morph from human to grotesque monster, as well as two slightly longer transformation scenes that include shots of the characters Piper Halliwell and Ashley Fallon bursting out of their clothes. In this, *Charmed* shows more of the grotesque female body than *The Dresden*

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Figure 5. Madison (Emmanuelle Vaugier) turns aggressive in *Supernatural*’s “Heart.”

Figure 6. Heather (Kathleen Munroe) fights the change in *The Dresden Files*’ “Hair of the Dog.”
Files and Angel, not only in the two slightly-longer transformation scenes (of both the “good” and “bad” Wendigos), but also in a scene where Piper, the infected series regular, lifts the bandage on her arm to reveal dark, hairy skin around her bite mark. Buffy the Vampire Slayer also allows a bit more of the female-masculine-grotesque body by briefly showing its female werewolf, Veruca, with some facial fuzz, in an intermediate stage between girl and hirsute beast.\footnote{Marita Grabiak, ”Unleashed,” in Angel (USA: 20th Century Fox, 2003). James L. Conway, ”The Wendigo,” in Charmed (USA: Paramount, 1999). David Grossman, ”Wild at Heart,” in Buffy the Vampire Slayer (USA: 20th Century Fox, 1999).}

The level of ambisexed/ambigendered monstrous hybridity shown depends on at least two aspects of the female werewolf character: whether she is shown as integrated or unintegrated (that is, how much her “human” personality is affected by her lycanthropy), and whether she is cast as a “good” or “bad” character. In The Dresden Files, Cursed, and Skinwalkers, the virtuous, “good” girl’s body is shown as less abject/grotesque than the “bad” girl who revels in her werewolf-iness and the power it gives her. So Heather Bram, the tragic, virtuous werewolf girl in The Dresden Files, never fully transforms, while Kelly Raskin, the FBI agent who is willing to infect and kill innocent women in order to cure herself, does. In Skinwalkers, which revolves around two werewolf packs fighting over the fate of a 12-year-old boy, we never see Katherine, the sunny, blonde, “good” werewolf girl transform into her
Figure 7. *Skinwalkers*. The hybrid body of “bad girl” Sonja (Natassia Malthe).

Figure 8. *Cursed*. Joanie eliminates the competition.
werewolf state, but we do see Sonja, the dark, seductive, “bad” girl werewolf in her hybrid state in several scenes (Figure 7). \footnote{Isaac, "Skinwalkers." Photo source: PopMatters, "Skinwalkers: Review," http://www.popmatters.com/pm/film/reviews/47160/skinwalkers/}

Another pattern is that the more integrated and pleasurable a female character finds the condition of being a werewolf, the more sexual and evil she is shown to be. “Good” girls are not happy to be made werewolves: they resist, cry, and ask to be killed. The “good” female does not let her body become grotesque, but attempts to discipline it. Bad girls, like Charmed’s Ashley Fallon, however, revel in their newfound power, enjoy the violence they inflict, and are hypersexual. The two female werewolf episodes of Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Angel illustrate this bad girl/integrated and good girl/unintegrated split perfectly.

In season 4 of the WB’s Buffy the Vampire Slayer, the werewolf character Veruca revels in her power and sexuality, and has no compassion for any humans she may harm while in her werewolf state. At the start of the episode “Wild at Heart,” Veruca sings onstage with her band, dressed in black and red with red lipstick, enthraling all three male regulars of the show, Xander, Giles, and Oz. Oz is Willow’s boyfriend; both are beloved characters, having been series regulars since seasons 2 and season 1 respectively. Oz is a werewolf: unable to control his actions or remember
what he does in werewolf form, he locks himself in a cage for three nights a month in
order to avoid hurting others. He is an example of an unintegrated werewolf; while not
in wolf state, Oz is laconic and laid-back. As he explains to Willow, “It’s like I’m gone
– and the wolf takes over.” 153

In this episode, werewolf-Oz escapes his cage and encounters another werewolf
(we assume it is a female because it has a ridiculous blonde bob hairdo, even in
monster form). The two fight, and the next morning wake next to each other, naked.
Veruca remembers the night before, but Oz does not, something she attributes to the
relatively short time he has been a werewolf. When Oz wonders how they got out of
their cages, Veruca is incredulous that he cages himself at all (“Someone has
domesticated the hell out of you,” she says scornfully.) She is unaffected by the
possibility that they could have hurt or killed someone the night before; self-satisfied,
she tries to seduce Oz again (although she knows he has a girlfriend). She pushes Oz to
give in to his sexual desire for her, and his instinct to do violence. When Oz tells her,
“I’m only the wolf three nights a month,” Veruca replies, “Or you’re the wolf all the
time and this human face is just your disguise.”

Veruca sees Willow as an impediment to Oz’s acceptance of his inner wolf, and
tries to kill her, reasoning that, “sometimes you have to kill” to get what you want. Oz
arrives before she can, and the two change into their werewolf forms and fight. He kills

153 Grossman, “Wild at Heart.”
Veruca, and is tranquilized before he can attack anyone else. The differing treatment of the male and female werewolf in this episode is telling: Oz, a beloved character, embodies the tragic and tortured Wolf Man figure, who rejects the beast within, seeks to control it, and sees no overlap or integration with his “true” self.154 Veruca, on the other hand, embodies absolute embodied pleasure in her aggressive sexuality and physical power. She is amoral, lacking what horror scholar Sue Short labels “virtue,” and so is destroyed.

In Angel, it is the female werewolf who is unintegrated. Like Piper in Charmed, Ellie in Cursed, and Serafine in An American Werewolf in Paris, Nina experiences lycanthropy solely as a curse, with nothing positive to offer her. For all of these characters, their “beast within” is disconnected to their “true” selves: they rarely, if ever, express anger or rage, aggression, or a desire to be powerful, and they take no pleasure in any of the enhanced traits that being a werewolf brings. This non-integration of the two halves of the werewolf, human and animal, is another way that the potential transgressive nature of the female werewolf is contained. The “masculine” traits of strength, power, anger, and violence are not an admitted part of these characters’ subjectivity, and when they do react with anger or strength, they are ashamed and upset.

154 It is only at this episode’s end that he admits Veruca was right about the wolf always being inside him, and he leaves to find some way to control over it. (This story arc was written to allow the actor, Seth Green, to leave the show.)
In this episode of *Angel*, Nina is bitten by a werewolf while jogging; she appears as a frightened blonde in danger, and is rescued by Angel, the show’s vampire-with-a-soul protagonist. He breaks the news of her new dual nature, and upon learning that she is a werewolf, Nina is horrified. Angel reassures her, and when she describes an earlier urge to attack her niece, he says, “It wasn’t you, it was the thing inside.” She responds, “Oh, like there’s a difference?” But he tells her there is, and that he can teach her to control her urges, that she can live with being a werewolf: “I’m a monster too . . . I’m not evil and neither are you.”

Throughout the episode, Nina appears unsure, frightened, and helpless. She is kidnapped in a later scene, only to be rescued again by Angel and his friends. She does bites the person who led to her kidnapping, but only after she has been rescued and after she has transformed, so this moment of violence is not a choice or under her control. Again, we see the adverse relationship between virtue and the enjoyment of power.

As if to highlight the disconnect between her human identity and the grotesque monster she becomes, Nina’s human body is emphasized throughout the episode. She is shown waking up naked from her first night as a werewolf, and the camera travels across her smooth, slender body. When she is kidnapped, we see her tied up, naked again, wet, helpless, and pleading with her captors. In fact, there is an abundance of female skin in all of the texts examined: Veruca from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* wakes

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155 Grabiak, "Unleashed."
naked with Oz twice, and has a longer scene played in black underwear. *Charmed’s* Piper’s change from monster to human is emphasized in shots of her bare back, smooth legs, and the fact that she runs behind a tree, embarrassed to be suddenly human and naked. Serafine (Julie Delpy) has a topless scene in *An American Werewolf in Paris*, and both Sonja from *Skinwalkers* and Madison from *Supernatural* are featured in intense sex scenes.¹⁵⁶ It is worth noting that all of these images reinforce dominant feminine beauty ideals (slender, nonmuscular bodies), as well as the idea that the “natural” human female body is smooth and hairless. Not only do these images of “acceptable” naked women work to regulate audience beauty standards and distance the “true” female body from the monstrous body, they also serve to further delineate the false binary of “masculine” and “feminine” by shoring up ideas of the naturally-hairless female body. Incredibly, in the opening credits to *Ginger Snaps: Unleashed*, the camera focuses on a girl shaving her legs, back, and stomach with a small pink razor.¹⁵⁷ However, the audience does not see any body hair where she is shaving: it is as if the idea of removing body hair is sufficiently transgressive, but the visual would be too much.

Nina’s absolute unintegration is one of the reasons that she is acceptable as a love interest for Angel (she appears in two later episodes). Nina is never shown to be

aggressive or angry in her human form; being a werewolf does not affect her personality, and she remains a slightly-insecure beautiful blonde.\textsuperscript{158} Her status as love interest can be contrasted with Heather from \textit{The Dresden Files}, who leaves town at the end of her episode. Both she and Harry Dresden are interested in a romance, but when they kiss, Heather’s sexual desire turns to aggression and she has to pull back. As Hilary Neroni found with violent women who transgress gendered expectations, Heather cannot be romantic partner because she is too affected by her werewolf nature.

One pattern among these texts is that if a female werewolf is pure evil, hypersexual, or enjoys her power too much, she invites death. Although not all female werewolves in the texts I examine die in the end, death is a common type of narrative containment. Like Jeffrey Cohen’s scapegoated monster of prohibition, the female werewolf embodies what is labeled undesirable and is then destroyed, purging the sins of the community.\textsuperscript{159} A less frequent method of containment is a cure that banishes the beast within (this is true for Ellie in \textit{Cursed} and Piper in \textit{Charmed}), but this is reserved for virtuous girls who do not accept the power that gender hybridity offers them. (Sometimes virtuous girls, like Madison in \textit{Supernatural}, ask for death as a release if they cannot be cured.)

\textsuperscript{158} In the continuing story of \textit{Angel} in comic book form after the television series was canceled, Nina the werewolf-girl is hairier and shown in a more integrated, monster/human state. Again, there seems to be something about our visual culture that permits and even celebrates hybridity on the static page but finds it intolerable onscreen.

\textsuperscript{159} Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)," 18.
Cursed is explicit in its double standard for both good-girl and bad-girl werewolves, as well as for male and female werewolves. The movie follows Ellie and Jimmy, siblings who both become infected after being bitten by a werewolf. As seen with Oz and Veruca, there is a difference in the way that male and female werewolves are portrayed within the same text, which follows du Coudray’s literary tradition of “the ‘beast in man’ [being] expressed primarily through violence, while the ‘beast in woman’ manifests as lust.” After being infected, Ellie becomes sexually irresistible to the men around her. She has a couple of flashes of anger, but is not shown as transforming beyond her eyes, teeth, and some of her hand.

Jimmy’s werewolf experience, on the other hand, enhances his masculinity. He challenges the high school bully who has been humiliating him to a wrestling match, and uses his new strength and speed to put on an amazing athletic display in front of the girl he has a crush on. Upon realizing that he and Ellie are becoming werewolves, he tells her, “It might not be such a bad deal. I mean, think about it: increased strength, heightened senses, and unnatural sexual allure.” In the film’s end, Jimmy winds up with a girlfriend (his crush) and a new best friend (the reformed and secretly gay bully).

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The last shot of the film shows Ellie watching Jimmy and his two companions walk off together. She gestures with her head back to their ruined kitchen where the showdown with Jake, the original werewolf, took place. She says, “I’m just gonna stay here and . . . clean.” Jimmy benefits from his “curse,” while good-girl Ellie loses her boyfriend and a coworker (a potential boyfriend), and is left alone, re-inserted into the domestic space.

The main transformation scene in *Cursed* is of Joanie (Figure 8), the bad-girl werewolf who has been killing women out of jealousy (she was infected during a one-night stand with Jake). While Ellie fights hard against her changing body and rejects Jake’s suggestions that she give in to the curse, Joanie is gleeful about her new power, telling Ellie, “I’m having too much fun” eliminating her competition. In an incredible transformation scene, Joanie prepares to hunt down Ellie and Jimmy. Her long blonde hair falls out and hairy, muscular legs appear under her purple satin evening gown. She is shown from the back, bald and hypermuscular, before she sprouts ears, a snout, and thick hair all over her body: in effect, she becomes a man before she becomes a werewolf (Figure 9). Her transformation takes place in front of a mirror, and upon seeing her reflection, Joanie snarls and breaks the glass. It seems that despite Joanie’s

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161 Craven, "Cursed."


163 Photo source: Craven, "Cursed."
Figure 9. *Cursed*. Joanie halfway between female body and werewolf form.

Figure 10. Monster as disciplinary sign: Ginger in her final incarnation from *Ginger Snaps*. 

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enjoyment of her new power, the sight of her grotesque body still disturbs her. The breaking of the mirror works to remind the audience that no matter how exhilarating Joanie’s transformation, no matter how pleasurable the spectacle of her power, her monstrous body is unacceptable for a female, and even Joanie is aware of this at some level, despite her claims to be “having fun.” Joanie’s body works to reinforce regulatory ideals about acceptable/feminine/attractive bodies. Unlike Ellie, Joanie refuses to discipline her unruly body, and she is killed in the end.

Ellie, on the other hand, successfully disciplines her body and behavior; one scene in particular illustrates how culturally-unacceptable behavior in women is linked to monstrosity. It is early in the movie, and Ellie does not yet know that Joanie is also infected. She is attempting to find time alone when Joanie comes to complain about a work project; Ellie snaps, violently wrenching her arm out of Joanie’s grasp and fleeing to the bathroom. There, she inspects herself in the mirror. In addition to Joanie’s incredulous gaze, Ellie is subjected to her own gaze and to that of a coworker who enters the bathroom after her. Ellie hides in a bathroom stall, but when the coworker will not leave her alone, lashes out in anger, frightening her coworker with her bloody fingers and altered eyes. Ellie’s desire to avoid an annoying coworker is made out to be monstrous and her display of anger horrifying, to both herself and others. Similarly, personality changes in Piper from *Charmed* worry her sisters after
she has been infected: she shifts from sweet and vulnerable to impatient and snappish, and they see her short temper as a sign that something is truly wrong with her. The horror is that Piper becomes bitchier as she becomes more integrated/infected/taken over by the monster. These scenes demonstrate how little room women in this culture have to express anger and frustration: one cross word and you are a monster.

One text that breaks from the pattern of mapping a greater degree of the masculine-female-grotesque onto the bodies of those unruly women who refuse to discipline themselves is *An American Werewolf in Paris* (1997).164 The tragic Serafine (Julie Delpy) is the focus of the film’s prolonged transformation scene, rather than any of the male werewolf characters. Like Nina, Serafine is introduced as a vulnerable blonde in need of rescuing; she is unintegrated, seeing her condition as a curse throughout the film. She has been searching for a way to cure herself, and willingly locks herself in a cage at each full moon.

Serafine is shown as using her supernatural strength in some instances; in one scene she punches someone out in order to go after the hero and warn him of danger, and in another, she throws a large man into a shelf of dishes at a café. This scene temporarily reverses gender roles: the hero tries defending her and she ends up defending him. She is immediately upset at her lost temper and her display of strength, however, even more so than the hero – he is only impressed, asking “Do you work

164 Waller, "An American Werewolf in Paris."
out?” Serafine’s disproportionate strength in relation to her body size is an example of the Buffy syndrome, in which female characters are capable of inflicting great damage without being the slightest bit muscular. Like Buffy and other supernaturally strong women who stay petite and muscle-less, this is a tactic that allows these characters to remain petite, non-threatening, and sexually appealing.

Serafine’s transformation scene is impressive; her eyes glow and change color as her face contorts grotesquely. The camera travels up and down her body as she lifts her skirt to display hairy thighs before opening her shirt to reveal her breasts and the growing teats down her darkening torso. This is a strong example of the masculine-female-grotesque, and one of the clear instances in which a horror movie aims for horror specifically because of the contrast between the human and beast form, lingering on the in-between that is the most unsettling stage.\textsuperscript{165} Again, however, Julie Delpy’s naked body is highlighted in a following scene when she takes off her shirt and offers to have sex with Andy, the hero.\textsuperscript{166} The film, a muddled text in many ways, ends somewhat ambiguously (has she been cured?), but with Serafine securely contained by a traditional bridal gown and wedding. We are not left with the image of


\textsuperscript{166} This is an odd scene; the first time Delpy disrobes, Andy feels her breasts and laughs off the information that he’s now a werewolf. The camera then cuts to Delpy entering the room with breakfast; Andy has imagined the previous moment. Delpy comes to the bed, straddles him, and disrobes again. This time when she takes off her shirt, her body transforms into that of a werewolf and Andy wakes from the dream with a cry. The scene seems designed to both titillate and remind the audience of her double body.
her throwing a man into shelves, but as a non-threatening, smiling bride, in the arms of her groom. Serafine remains unintegrated.

Another conflicted text that does not follow the formula of more grotesque = more evil is the TV movie Blood Moon (2001).\textsuperscript{167} The film centers on Tara the Wolf Girl, a teen girl with hypertrichosis (a condition causing excessive body and facial hair) who lives and travels with a carnival sideshow; the events take place when the sideshow stops in a town for one week. Tara is bullied by four local youths, and romanced by another, Brian. Brian is not put off by Tara’s body hair, although she is self-conscious when they shake hands upon first meeting. The visual effect of her body hair is not shied away from at all: she is shown brushing the hair on her arms as well as on her head, and one scene shows her naked in the shower. When she and Brian finally kiss, it is not just a peck: Brian caresses her face with both hands and they spend time kissing, open-mouthed. He is not disgusted by her condition, and neither are we; Tara is shown to be sweet and sensitive.

The film is a commentary on who is considered a “freak” and the cost of trying to fit in and be “normal.” Upset at the bullies’ treatment of her, Tara injects herself with an experimental depilatory serum and begins to lose her body hair. The more hair she loses, however, the more bloodthirsty and feral she becomes. The film ends with

Tara, smooth-skinned in her new, “acceptable” feminine body, left completely alone with the instincts and mind of an animal. Her violence is shown as the violence of an outsider toward those who torment her: she attacks Beau when he throws darts at her during her performance, and finally kills him when he comes after her with a gun. She also attacks the bitchy bully Krystal, who is hunting her to revenge Beau’s murder. Krystal comes upon Tara in the woods, but does not recognize her since she has lost all her facial hair. Sitting beside the now-mute Tara, she reveals her own abnormality, telling Tara, “You’re really pretty,” and leaning in for a kiss. Tara bites her tongue out before being chased into the woods for good by Brian.

A third text that breaks the pattern of ‘unintegrated heroine = less grotesque body’ is *Dark Wolf* (2003). However, this film’s portrayal of the grotesque hybrid body is perhaps the most racialized representation of the female werewolf. The film centers on Josie, a petite blonde played by Samaire Armstrong (Figures 11 and 12) who is being hunted by Dark Wolf, a kind of uber-werewolf; she must avoid mating with him in order to remain human. The film is a fairly straightforward straight-to-DVD release: monster hunts girl, kills many of her friends, cop protects girl, good triumphs over evil. However, in the last half-hour there is a jarring scene of Josie transforming halfway into werewolf form. In the film’s mythology, Josie is destined to

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169 Photo source: Ibid.
Figures 11-14. *Dark Wolf*. The white, blonde body of Josie (Samaire Armstrong, Figures 11 and 12) is taken over by the dark, primitive body of the werewolf (Figures 13 and 14).
change into a “limbo between human and werewolf form,” and unless she is brought into the light of the full moon when this happens, she will remain in this state permanently. The film’s heroic cop/protector watches in horror as Josie’s short blonde hair and naked, pale body darkens. Her face becomes grotesque and her hair changes first to a spiky fur-like consistency and then darkens to black and grows all down her back. When the transition is finished, Josie crouches and snuffles, with claws and a grotesque snout-like face, naked with dark, hairless skin and black, coarse hair down to her knees (Figures 13 and 14). 170 She has lost the power of speech, and growls, whines, and sniffs the cop as he tries to help her without hurting her. Eventually, he grabs her and carries her, still naked, kicking and growling, to the fire escape where she writhes under the bright white light of the full moon, which transforms her back to her petite, blonde self. 171 The cop covers her with a sheet and carries her back inside.

Josie is, like all other female werewolf characters, white. Even Victoria Sanchez, the actress playing Tara the Wolf Girl, had her dark hair dyed dirty blonde for Blood Moon. As du Coudray points out, the moment of transition is when the werewolf body is at its most grotesque. 172 The contrast, the in-between hybridity of two oppositions, the becoming of the Other is what horrifies: the white male becomes more

170 Photo source: Ibid.
171 The transformations are of such elementary CGI that they are not actually grotesque, but appear like video game characters. However, the filmmakers also use prosthetics and costuming, and the majority of this scene is not CGI, but has an actress playing the grotesque Josie.
primitive and bestial, darker (for men of color, this contrast is not seen as such a huge difference). Woman-of-color-as-werewolf is almost inconceivable: if the horror of the female werewolf is the shock of female moving from sexual-object spectacle to grotesque/ambigendered spectacle, then the biggest contrast is a move from the most feminine woman (slender, blonde, white) to dark, hairy, muscular wolf. White women represent the feminine ideal in this culture, and this is what we see in *Dark Wolf*: it would be impossible for a woman of color to play Josie, since during her transformation the contrast shown would be minimal.

Although *An American Werewolf in Paris*, *Dark Wolf*, and *Blood Moon* break from a pattern that shows more integrated women to be more monstrous, they are not progressive texts. Serafine remains unintegrated throughout the film, as does Josie, whose transformation is incredibly racialized and who is cured in the end. *Blood Moon* provides an unhappy ending for both queer female characters. Similarly, although Sonja from *Skinwalkers* has a potentially progressive physicality (she is probably the fuzziest girl werewolf we see who is not completely disguised by costuming or CGI), that potential is contained by both her one-dimensional, amoral nature, and her death. Even her furred body is made less radical by the film’s dim lighting and her long hair, both of which make the light fuzz covering her face and torso difficult to see onscreen.
As well, her body is less muscular and hairy than those of her male companions, 
upholding the gender binary even in monstrosity (like Veruca’s bob).

Some of the texts that do not provide a clear gender binary for the characters’
werewolf form act as a warning against lycanthropy’s blurring of gender/sex 
categories. In *The Dresden Files*, *An American Werewolf in Paris*, and *Blood and 
Chocolate*, we see that being a werewolf erases personal identities as well as gendered 
identities, leading characters to wound or kill their love interests when they fail to 
recognize them or mistake them for a different werewolf. Andy shoots Serafine, Agent 
Raskin kills her lover, and Aiden knifes Vivian in *Blood and Chocolate*. The danger of 
the werewolf’s blurred gender boundaries (the masculine female, the hysterical male), 
then, is to be unrecognizable, outside of romantic and sexual relations.

Any potential for queer violence on the part of female werewolves is squashed 
in *Skinwalkers*. (Katherine, the “good” werewolf, only does violence after she has been 
corrupted, and then, only to her own family.) One scene seems to deliberately shut 
down the possibility of queer violence: it takes place at night inside a remote biker bar, 
where two men are harassing a girl. They throw her down on a pool table, intent on 
rape. One of the men notices another woman at the bar, and yells, “Hey sweetheart! 
You want some of this?” It is Sonja, already transformed, and the camera gives us a 
close-up of her hairy shoulder and fuzzy, grotesque face as she slowly turns to the
now-terrified men. She attacks them both, and we are glad of it. But any fantasy of queer violence in which we see a woman thwart male sexual violence is itself immediately thwarted when Sonja’s werewolf buddies stride into the bar and kill the girl who has just been saved from rape. It is moments like these that keep these films from being hopeful.

Queer violence, like the violence in the horror and action genres, does not assume that the fantasy of violence onscreen is necessarily negative. A category of violence like Halberstam’s can be satisfying and productive in its attack on existing power structures, and dichotomies of violent/not violent do not map well onto the “bad”/”good” werewolf. However, as transgressive as it is to see a woman enact violence, I am reluctant to assign the label “queer violence” to all of the acts of violence that these characters commit. Under Halberstam’s definition, it seems that queer violence specifically attacks the lines by which hierarchies are formed; it could stem from characters expressing rage at their situation as women or as outsiders, or rage at people who represent oppressive structures. In other words, all female violence is gender transgressive, perhaps it is not all queer. For example, in the Angel episode, Nina hallucinates that she attacks her niece. Although transgressive, this imagined violence does not seem necessarily queer or political. The murder of two would-be rapists, however, could be a comment on women possessing violent power in the face
Figure 15 and 16. Ellie (Christina Ricci) from *Cursed* and Brigitte (Emily Perkins) from *Ginger Snaps: Unleashed* express horror at their changing bodies.

Figures 17 and 18. Disciplining the unruly female body. Brigitte (Emily Perkins) tapes down Ginger’s tail in *Ginger Snaps* (Figure 17) and cuts off a part of her ear in *Ginger Snaps: Unleashed* (Figure 18).
of systemic sexualized violence. In the same way, Madison from Supernatural is given the potential of queer violence, but it is avoided and softened. All of her victims are men who were in a position to make her feel vulnerable as a single woman: her boss, who is shown hitting on her, her ex-boyfriend, who is stalking her, and her overly-neighborly neighbor. However, the queer potential of her violence against these men is negated by the fact that she has no memory of her actions during her transformations, and she is shown as so upset at the thought of killing anyone that she asks to be killed (and is).

For the most part, virtuous good-girl werewolves accept their containments: Madison from Supernatural asks for death, Nina and Serafine lock themselves in cells monthly, Katherine from Skinwalkers straps herself down during transformations. They reject the power, violence, and strength that come with being a werewolf (Figures 15 and 16). Bad-girl werewolves, on the other hand, either enjoy it or are willing to kill the innocent to cure themselves, and are usually killed. These texts regulate the audience, like other horror texts, by warning women to discipline themselves by not taking on too much power, and not to enjoy it too much if they do.

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The sexualization of the female body tempers its gender transgressions and upholds the gender binary (one reason why breast implants are an expected procedure for many female bodybuilders—so that their bodies remain readable as female).\textsuperscript{174} A “natural” gender binary is imposed and re-imposed through these texts onto bodies that challenge and push at gendered boundaries. Although viewers can find these new bodies attractive (or attractive/repulsive, as Noel Carroll would say), it seems that many producers of texts cannot bring themselves to show radically different female bodies without somehow reminding us of what the correct female body looks like.

The Ginger Snaps Trilogy

\textit{Ginger Snaps}, a Canadian film from 2000 that spawned a sequel and prequel in 2004, follows horror films like \textit{Carrie} and \textit{The Exorcist} which link menstruation to the grotesque, abject female body.\textsuperscript{175} As in \textit{I Was a Teenage Werewolf} and \textit{Teen Wolf}, it also connects the figure of the werewolf to the “unprecedented hair growth, rapid bodily transformations, and uncontrollable, confusing physical urges” of adolescence.\textsuperscript{176} All three of the trilogy’s films are unique in that they focus on complex

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\textsuperscript{174} Boyle, "Flexing the Tensions of Female Muscularity: How Female Bodybuilders Negotiate Normative Femininity in Competitive Bodybuilding."

\textsuperscript{175} John Fawcett, "Ginger Snaps," (Canada: 20th Century Fox, 2000).

\textsuperscript{176} Miller, ""The Hair That Wasn't There Before": Demystifying Monstrosity and Menstruation in Ginger Snaps and Ginger Snaps Unleashed," 289.
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female protagonists and position gender, identity, and cultural expectations of womanhood as central themes.\footnote{\textit{The Curse} (1999), an independent film, also ties lycanthropy to menstruation (but not adolescence, as the female protagonist, Frida, is an adult). Written and directed by a woman whose intention was to “turn the tables” on certain gendered film conventions, the film is not quite a horror film. It ends happily – Frida finds her true love, a man who has no problem with her ‘natural’ body and its cycles. Jacqueline Garry, “The Curse,” (USA: Arrow Entertainment, 1999).}

Are \textit{Ginger Snaps} and its two sequels feminist, as many critics and academics have claimed? Do the films give us hopeful werewolves? Integrated and cyclic females who have power but do not abuse it, who use appropriate but not excessive violence? Who get angry at gendered expectations for their behavior and appearance? Who benefit from an integration of their human and wolf-y natures, and who show solidarity with other women? Yes and no. The \textit{Ginger Snaps} trilogy centers on two sisters, outsider hero-victims Ginger and Brigitte Fitzgerald. \textit{Ginger Snaps} deals with lycanthropy, menstruation, and what might be called the horror of female adolescence. \textit{Ginger Snaps: Unleashed} picks up themes on the ‘right way’ to be a girl, and \textit{Ginger Snaps Back} deals with patriarchy and female loyalty.

The first film, \textit{Ginger Snaps}, introduces us to Ginger and Brigitte Fitzgerald, two devoted sisters, aged 16 and 15, who live in the suburb of Bailey Downs. It opens on a class project the two have created for a “Life in Bailey Downs” assignment; a series of grotesque and macabre photographs of the girls staging their own deaths let us
know just how they view their surroundings: “a place full of dead ends.” Both sisters are counting the days before they can leave their hometown, repeatedly referencing a pact they made when they were eight: “Out by sixteen or dead in the scene, but together forever.” Determined to distance themselves from the “normal” girlhood of their peers, they dress in dark, concealing clothing and express contempt for “cum-buckety date bait” popular girl Trina Sinclair (Figure 21). Brigitte calls high school “just a mindless little breeders’ machine. Total hormonal toilet. I’d rather wait it all out in our room,” and both are shown uncomfortable and resentful of being the objects of their male peers’ gazes during gym class.

When the film opens, neither sister has started menstruating, but after Ginger is bitten by a werewolf the same night she gets her first period, she begins pulling away from Brigitte and showing more interest in boys and dating. She enjoys her newfound sexuality, strutting down the halls of the school in revealing clothes and making a date with jock Jason McCardy. Her changing behavior concerns Brigitte, who soon realizes that Ginger has been infected by the werewolf that attacked her. Brigitte scrutinizes Ginger’s body, and her growing horror at Ginger’s bodily changes – hair growing from a scar, the start of a tail, streaks of white in her hair – mixes with her horror at Ginger’s sudden interest in boys and sex. Both girls had pledged to hold themselves outside of

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178 Fawcett, "Ginger Snaps."
179 Photo source: Ibid.
the “breeder” culture of their high school, and suddenly Brigitte is alone in her resistance to taking part in the heteronormative sexual economy of their high school.

The sisters’ bond is strained as Ginger changes. At first, she dismisses Brigitte’s concern at her changing behavior, telling Brigitte that she is jealous of Ginger “growing up” without her. (At the same time, however, Ginger expresses jealousy and possessiveness over Brigitte’s relationship with Sam, a local drug dealer whose van killed the werewolf that attacked Ginger.) Other times, Ginger is shown as scared and confused about what is happening to her, as in the scene where she tries to cut off her growing tail. When Ginger returns home from her unsatisfactory date with Jason (“all this squirming and squealing, and then he’s done”), Brigitte turns on the light to see Ginger covered in blood, vomiting into the bathroom toilet. She has killed the neighbor’s dog, saying, “I get this ache and I thought it was for sex, but it’s to tear everything into fucking pieces.” She pleads with Brigitte, “What’s wrong with me?”

Ginger’s confusion dissipates, however, the more she embraces her new nature: she kills a school counselor and a janitor, reveling in her power, saying, “It feels so good, Brigitte. It’s like touching yourself – you know every move, right on the fucking dot. And after, you see fucking fireworks, supernovas. I’m a goddam force of nature. I feel like I could do just about anything.” Brigitte searches for a cure as Ginger becomes more grotesque and less willing to fight the infection. In the end, no longer
human, having transformed into a monstrous-grotesque werewolf with sparse white fur and female breasts, Ginger kills Sam and rejects the cure that Brigitte has discovered (an injection of monkshood). When Brigitte refuses to join Ginger in giving up her humanity, Ginger attacks her, landing on the knife Brigitte holds. The film ends with Brigitte crying over the grotesque body of her dead sister.

The film is unique and exhilarating in many ways; as Linda Williams points out, horror films have addressed the anxieties of adolescence, but “seldom with such a strong interest in the point of view of the girl herself.”180 The film is hopeful in its celebration of Ginger’s transgressive behavior after being bitten. Her confidence, sexual energy, and aggressive physicality all challenge dominant cultural stereotypes of what a girl should be. Her moments of queer violence are thrilling; in one scene, Ginger sees Trina push Brigitte down in field hockey – helpless and angry when this has happened before, Ginger throws down her stick with a growl and attacks Trina, defending her sister and reveling in the physical violence. The film directly comments on cultural expectations of girls and violence. When a confrontation with Trina at their house causes her accidental death, Brigitte and Ginger decide to bury her in the backyard, and Ginger reassures Brigitte that no one will suspect them: “No one ever thinks chicks do shit like this. Trust me, a girl can only be a slut, a bitch, a tease, or the

Ginger’s queer violence also challenges gendered expectations of aggression and sexuality. On their date, as they make out in the back of his car, Ginger’s aggressive enjoyment make Jason uncomfortable (Figure 19). Telling her to slow down and relax, he asks, “Who’s the guy here?” Ginger reacts with rage, shoving him down and repeating, “Who’s the guy here? Who’s the fucking guy here?” Jason’s attempts to regulate Ginger’s sexual behavior infuriate her. As she tears open his shirt, he asks nervously, “Wait, don’t we need protection?” Ginger replies, “You’re fucking hilarious, caveboy,” before attacking him. The scene reverses gender roles by showing Ginger as the sexual aggressor and by implying date rape. However, both the film and Ginger recognize that whatever her actions in the car, the sexual double standard applies in the outside world, and she tells Brigitte later, “He got laid, I’m just a lay. He’s a hero and I’m just a lay. A freak, mutant lay.” Bianca Nielsen labels Ginger’s aggressive sexual behavior on her date as simultaneously “masculine” and “deviant.” While I agree that this scene highlights “her sexual deviancy and trangressive refusal to perform within the limits of culturally prescribed gender roles,” one of the things I attempt to argue against is the cultural labeling of aggressive behavior as inherently

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181 Photo source: Fawcett, "Ginger Snaps."
“masculine.” Ginger is aggressive; it is the culture that labels this trait unacceptable in a girl.

I find this film hopeful is its integration of Ginger’s anger with her position as a girl in the world and her monstrous violence. As Karen Walton, the screenwriter of *Ginger Snaps*, said in an interview, “The best part about Ginger for me was talking about the fact that young ladies too can have nihilistic, destructive sides. That these two girls deal with it in a literal and fantastic way is just an extension of the acknowledgment that young women have every right to be angry and to nurse desires and lash back at their world.” Unlike Nielsen, who sees the “onset of Ginger’s menses [as] simultaneously a sexual metamorphosis and a violent possession or infection . . . Ginger’s body is at once developing sexually and being invaded by an aggressive werewolf,” I find this film progressive in that it *does not* frame Ginger’s wolfishness as solely the result of an invading infection. It is that, but Ginger’s murderous rage is also the unleashing of an inner beast that already existed within her. Ginger and Brigitte have reservoirs of anger about their place in society at the start of the film, reservoirs that women are not supposed to possess – but Ginger has an inner core of rage and innate aggression from which to draw on after being bitten. Unlike the

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183 Ibid.: 67.
185 Nielsen, "'Something's Wrong, Like More Than You Being Female': Transgressive Sexuality and Discourses of Reproduction in 'Ginger Snaps'," 60.
virtuous, unintegrated victims Serafine and Nina, Ginger’s violence is an integrated rebuke at those who attempt to discipline and contain her. Like Joanie from *Cursed*, Ginger’s version of the werewolf is an expression of the interior subject breaking through the performance of girl-hood.

All of the scholarship on *Ginger Snaps* recognize that before Ginger is bitten, both Brigitte and Ginger are positioned as resisting entry into adulthood; the film sympathizes with this resistance toward adult womanhood and its rules of weakness, passivity, and acceptance, as well as their “disdain for the ritualised heterosexual exchanges of her high school.”\(^{186}\) Their art project “not only demonstrates the duo’s disgust at the banality of their suburban surroundings, it also proclaims their self-styled exclusion from the heterosexually fuelled dynamics of the teen scene.”\(^{187}\) As Linda Williams asks, “who can blame them from not wanting to join the ranks of women” when they recognize that being a woman means being objectified and sexualized?\(^{188}\) After the bite, Ginger has new desires, but is still resistant to attempts to control her. Brigitte, however, is unhappy with the male attention that Ginger attracts and enjoys “because it represents her entry into a sexualized world that they had vowed to avoid in

\(^{186}\) Ibid.: 59.


\(^{188}\) Williams, "Blood Sisters," 36.
a pact to never be ‘average.’” The film is a celebration and validation of the outsider perspective that rejects cultural expectations that girls and women take up their prescribed role in the heterosexual patriarchal order.

*Ginger Snaps* walks a space between equating menstruation and the abject female body with the monstrous, and critiquing the same equation. The film shows Brigitte and Ginger as having “internalized [the] understanding of menstruation as taboo and menstrual blood as polluting,” and this is never really challenged: they express more disgust at Ginger’s menstrual blood than the body of a dead dog. Throughout the film, the two use female-ness as a marker of weakness. In discussing suicide, Ginger says, “WRists are for girls. I’m slitting my throat.” In later scenes, Brigitte criticizes Ginger by telling her, “You’re really girling out here,” and equates being female with having something inherently amiss (“There’s something wrong with you . . . like more than you just being female”). Ginger also equates being a menstruating girl with being weak when she tells Brigitte, “If I start simpering around tampon dispensers and moaning about PMS, shoot me, ok?” She expresses a simultaneous desire to not be like other girls and to not be weak; this can be read as a condemnation of female-ness, or a condemnation of the accepted view of menstruation.

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189 Nielsen, “‘Something's Wrong, Like More Than You Being Female’: Transgressive Sexuality and Discourses of Reproduction in 'Ginger Snaps',” 56.
190 Miller, “‘The Hair That Wasn't There Before’: Demystifying Monstrosity and Menstruation in Ginger Snaps and Ginger Snaps Unleashed,” 289. (Not all characters are shown as disgusted by menstruation: Ginger and Brigitte’s mother celebrates it, the school nurse describes it with a smile, and even Jason, who has older sisters, takes it in stride.)
as a negative experience, or a condemnation of the role of “girl” and other females’ performance of same. Ginger “finds menstruation distressing because the examples set before her by other adolescent girls suggest that menstruation must be equated with weakness,” just as girls in general are equated with weakness under the cultural construction of girlhood. As Miller writes, “the Fitzgerald sisters’ disgusted response also stems from the conviction that, while menstruation serves to differentiate women from men, menarche also implies homogeneity of experience and implicates all women in the reproductive process.”

Brigitte and Ginger seek to avoid adult (objectified) sexuality and normative femininity. As Ginger says, “God. I mean, kill yourself to be different and your own body betrays you.”

Tammy Oler reads Ginger Snaps in the context of other horror films about monstrous female puberty (Carrie, The Exorcist, and Emily Rose) and rightly points out that Ginger Snaps represents a step forward from these texts. Unlike films that portray the female body as simply a portal for monstrous, chaotic forces, Ginger Snaps shows a girl becoming monstrous instead of existing solely as a hole through which power surges. Oler points out that the film does not celebrate Ginger’s murderous violence and stays focused on the the sisters’ relationship. One reason why the film

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191 Ibid.: 290.
192 Ibid.: 289-90.
193 Fawcett, "Ginger Snaps."
refuses to celebrate Ginger’s murder of the counselor and janitor is that we are positioned to identify more firmly with Brigitte; by this point, she is the film’s moral compass, its Final Girl (in Clover’s term), its virtuous heroine (in Short’s).

Despite the film’s queer violence, its acknowledgment of girlhood alienation, its radical mis-performances of “girl”-dom, and its rageful, unruly female monster/hero/victim, *Ginger Snaps* cannot be hailed as the female werewolf movie that definitively provides a hopeful monster. Even director John Fawcett says of the film, “The weirdest thing is that I don’t know if I could defend *Ginger Snaps*’ connection between menstrual blood and infection or not. I actually thought that women would be very offended by this film. I was worried that what we were saying thematically was that to go through adolescence and become a woman was like becoming a monster.”

Although I see this film as saying that if you do not become the right kind of woman, you become a monster, and although I recognize its powerful critique of cultural expectations for women, it still shows Ginger losing her humanity before being killed off.

Like other werewolf texts, *Ginger Snaps* is highly concerned with female bodily discipline. When white hairs sprout from a scar left by the werewolf, Ginger blurts out, “I can’t have a hairy chest, B. That’s fucked.” Brigitte examines the hair—

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clogged razor Ginger leaves in their bathroom trash, and Ginger is shown frustrated and bloody while trying to shave her legs. In a later scene, Brigitte helps Ginger tape down her tail in the locker room as it continues to grow (Figure 17). Small signs of an unruly body signal the coming metamorphosis into complete monstrosity, and must be controlled.

Ginger’s violence becomes more amoral as the film progresses. Although she tells Brigitte she killed the janitor because she did not like the way he “looked” at her, and accuses Sam of only being interested in Brigitte sexually, at this point in the film it is difficult to read Ginger’s violence as queer or as the protective actions of an older sister (as with her attack on Trina). She enjoys killing for the sake of killing, likening it to masturbation in the quote above. The progressive effect of her violence lessens as she becomes less virtuous and more monstrous. Sue Short reminds us that “how young women prove their virtue is a familiar subtext within horror” (virtue being the ability to feel for fellow humans, compassion, and respect for human life). Unlike Ginger, who is “chiefly distinguished by anger, violence, and an apparent absence of morality,” Brigitte does not buy that “wolfdom is a willing trade against conventional womanhood,” even as she herself rails against its strictures.

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196 Photo source: Fawcett, "Ginger Snaps."
197 Short, Misfit Sisters: Screen Horror as Female Rites of Passage, 90.
198 Ibid., 106.
199 Ibid., 105.
The more Ginger abandons virtue, the more monstrous she becomes (or is it vice versa?). Toward the end of the film, she attends a Halloween party with her newly grotesque torso of teats on display, vampy and sexual. Her final transformation into an enormous white wolf/beast takes place in the back of the dealer Sam’s van; between flashes of light, we see her body pulse and shudder; she vomits black bile. In the end, she is unrecognizable as human – although she is still recognizable as female, since she keeps her breasts (Figure 10). It is interesting (and in a political sense, unfortunate) that Ginger Snaps breaks from more traditional werewolf mythology in making the change from human to werewolf linear, not cyclical. The cyclical nature of the werewolf condition is important in fantasy genre portrayals of integrated werewolves, since it gives the subject opportunities to adjust to their double life and denies permanence to any one state of being. Ginger does not get an opportunity to fully integrate her human and animal halves, because the wolf just keeps taking over. The Ginger Snaps trilogy, films often described as “feminist,” are fairly unique in this approach. Transformation here is not a once-a-month event, but progressive and irreversible. Once you head down the wrong path, there is no going back, no chance to

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201 Du Coudray writes at length about how fantasy has worked to reclaim “cyclic imagery [with] its association with renewal and fertility.” (Du Coudray, "The Cycle of the Werewolf: Romantic Ecologies of Selfhood in Popular Fantasy," 64.) She also writes that the “werewolf’s moment of change highlights the contrast between the classical human form . . . and the grotesque Other . . . it is always at its most grotesque as it transforms.” (Du Coudray, "Upright Citizens on All Fours: Nineteenth-Century Identity and the Image of the Werewolf," 8.) The Ginger Snaps trilogy makes the girls’ linear transformations last throughout the entire first two films.
settle into a new dual identity. This, as well as its placement in the horror genre, solidifies Ginger’s position as (at least a partial) regulatory sign rather than fantasy/hopeful werewolf.

As well, Ginger’s death moves her to the category of scapegoated/regulatory monsters. For all this film’s acknowledgment of adolescent girl rage at the untenable position between acceptable and unacceptable bodies, in the end, Ginger has become too amoral, too chaotic, too powerful to survive. In spite of this, many critics and academics take a celebratory tone when discussing *Ginger Snaps*, labeling it “feminist” (without defining what makes a film feminist or not). One article seemed to imply that a feminist movie is one that “marginalize[s] male characters in favour of female characters and concerns,” but that cannot be the only criteria.  

Many critics seem to ignore the film’s conservative ending in their praise: Linda Williams labels film a “heady cocktail of high-school pubescence and feminist folklore.” Her review ends with the sentence, “Ginger is a girl who walked into the woods and came back as the wolf disguised as a teenage virgin, a wolf in girl’s clothing.” This exhilarating description ignores the last part of the film, when the girl-skin is shed and both girl and wolf are destroyed.

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Similarly, April Miller writes at the end of her essay that Ginger “learns to integrate the two halves of her nature, wolf and human, into a whole self.” This interpretation, however, does not take into account the conservative ending of the film and Ginger’s complete transformation into a monstrous body; Ginger does not integrate her two halves, but loses her human half in letting the wolf/monster take over. These elisions of the ending by critics are one sign of just how exciting Ginger Snaps is as a text. In the next chapter, I will try to explore how much of an impact the endings of these films have on audiences; however, it cannot be denied that they carry a “moral.” As Sue Short writes, “while female power is offered as a brief fantasy, it is also warned against, and invariably punished.” This is certainly true of Ginger Snaps.

If Ginger Snaps is about the articulations of female adolescent rage at gendered expectations, then its sequel, Ginger Snaps: Unleashed, focuses on the pressures and intense, disciplinary self-scrutiny that go along with being an ‘acceptable’ girl. In this film, Brigitte has discovered that monkshood is not a permanent cure for the “curse,” but only a temporary respite. She is on the run from another werewolf (presumably

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204 Miller, “”The Hair That Wasn't There Before”: Demystifying Monstrosity and Menstruation in Ginger Snaps and Ginger Snaps Unleashed,” 300.
205 Short, Misfit Sisters: Screen Horror as Female Rites of Passage, 109.
206 Brigitte shared blood with Ginger in the first film in an attempt to gain her trust and is now infected.
Jason from the first film), researching lycanthropy cures and injecting monkshood regularly. Brigitte marks cuts on her arms to time her healing process (the faster she heals, the more wolfish she is becoming). After passing out in the snow one night, she is taken to a lockdown rehab clinic, where it is assumed that she is using drugs and cutting (common self-destructive adolescent behaviors).

Brett Sullivan, director of Ginger Snaps: Unleashed, said in an interview, “We wanted to see what happened when somebody fought the change. In the original, Ginger embraced the lycanthropy . . . We wanted Brigitte to struggle with it . . . Ginger’s transformation was a graceful one that made her hot and attractive, unfortunately for Emily Perkins, we wanted Brigitte’s turn to be nasty and ugly!” Like Ginger, Brigitte slowly becomes more grotesque over the course of the film, and her transformation accelerates once the hospital staff take away her monkshood. However, unlike Ginger, Brigitte’s growing power and grotesque-ness is not tied to hypersexuality. Her body is not on display in either film as Ginger’s was in the first. As the wolf takes over, Brigitte doesn’t get vampily-wolfish, only grotesque.

As in the first film, Brigitte is shown as rejecting a place in male/female sexual relations. She refuses to flirt with an interested librarian in the film’s first scene, and she refuses to trade sexual favors for access to monkshood after the orderly Tyler

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explains the underground market of the ward to her. In this way, Brigitte is even more of a queer figure than Ginger, and can be read as non-heterosexual. Bianca Nielsen, in discussing the first film and Brigitte’s refusal to participate in high school heterosexuality, makes the point that “Brigitte’s disgust for Ginger’s developing sexuality could be read as a loathing of heterosexuality” in general, and that Brigitte’s identity is therefore queered. Brigitte expresses sexual interest in another person once toward the end of *Unleashed*, when she aggressively kisses Tyler, but this action is immediately linked to her urge to do violence toward him, and she pushes him away. There is also her use of the word “breeder” to describe high school in the first film (a queer term used to refer to heterosexuals), and a scene in *Unleashed* in which Brigitte describes her “worst-case scenario” for a group therapy session also references Brigitte’s “queer” identity. After a graphic description of the lycanthropic abject body that awaits her, the visibly disturbed therapist writes on her clipboard: “Brigitte = Lesbian?” The deviant adolescent is marked by medical authority in terms of her deviant sexuality.

Throughout the second film, “Brigitte struggles to avoid becoming like her bloodthirsty, sexually aggressive sister, refusing to exhibit any behavior that might be

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208 Nielsen, “Something's Wrong, Like More Than You Being Female”: Transgressive Sexuality and Discourses of Reproduction in 'Ginger Snaps'," 68.
construed as overtly sexual." If Ginger’s sexuality in the first film was too excessive, Brigitte rejects all sexual impulses, even pleasure in her own body. A group masturbation scene in *Ginger Snaps: Unleashed* is ambiguous in whether happens in Brigitte’s mind or not, but either way, her sexuality is linked to her violent urges, and after envisioning a kill while aroused, she runs from the room, upset. In the bathroom, she examines her hand, which has grown coarse and hairy: she is horrified by her body, her sexuality, and her violent urges all at once. Confident, aggressive, pleasurable female sexuality is non-existent in these films. Ginger appears in *Unleashed* as a kind of ghost/hallucination who taunts Brigitte for fighting the change, telling her that she cannot fight it, to give in. Ginger-as-apparition functions as a regulatory/disciplinary figure for both Brigitte and the audience, often appearing whenever Brigitte has the urge to act on her sexual or violent instincts, reminding her (and us) what fate awaits Brigitte if she lets the werewolf take over.

In a scene that parallels Ginger’s attack on Trina in the first film, Brigitte physically attacks another patient who is teasing Ghost, a younger girl staying in the hospital while her grandmother recovers from burns. After losing her temper, however, Brigitte refuses to take pleasure in her physical strength, even when Ghost admires her for it. In another scene, when Tyler is lording his power to give or withhold her

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209 Miller, ""The Hair That Wasn't There Before": Demystifying Monstrosity and Menstruation in Ginger Snaps and Ginger Snaps Unleashed," 288.
monkshead supply over her in a bathroom stall, Brigitte attempts to play coy and plead for it instead of physically forcing him to hand it over (Figure 20). Like Jason in the first film, Tyler attempts to regulate Brigitte’s performance of gender, condescendingly telling her that she should adjust to the way things work at the hospital. Brigitte’s “subservience quickly turns to anger and camera shots of the two in the stall are crosscut with images of Brigitte ripping him to shreds and eating the bloody mess.” However, this is just a fantasy; Brigitte refuses to unleash her power and rage, even in the unfair and “damaging sexual economy” in which she is placed. Her performance of docile femininity is unsuccessful, but she refuses to draw on her werewolf power to get what she wants, even though “given her situation, Brigitte’s continued determination not to become wolf lacks its former justification.” In only giving us Brigitte’s quickly-repressed fantasies of violence, the audience is deprived of its own fantasy experience of watching satisfactory queer violence onscreen.

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210 Photo source: Sullivan, "Ginger Snaps: Unleashed."
211 Miller, ""The Hair That Wasn't There Before": Demystifying Monstrosity and Menstruation in Ginger Snaps and Ginger Snaps Unleashed," 296.
212 Ibid.
213 Short, Misfit Sisters: Screen Horror as Female Rites of Passage, 101.
214 Blood Moon contains a similar disappointment when Tara is being humiliated by Beau in public. Without hesitating, she reaches up and slashes his cheek open. It is only in the next shot when we see his face unwounded that we realize this satisfying action took place only in Tara’s mind.
Figure 19. Ginger (Katherine Isabelle) prepares to enact queer violence on her date with Jason (Jesse Moss).

Figure 20. Brigitte (Emily Perkins) refrains from using queer violence to get what she wants from Tyler (Eric Johnson) in Ginger Snaps: Unleashed.
As in the scene when she rushes to look at her hand, Brigitte is often shown examining her body and her face in the mirror. For Brigitte, giving in to any urge is horrific, the first step in the road to her complete annihilation. Her watchwords might as well be “control, control, control” as we see her policing her body and her behavior for any unacceptable parts or moments. Her body is her project: she shaves, injects, cuts, times, records, and cuts off any bits, (as in one scene, an ear) that misbehave (Figure 18).215 Although it might be possible to read these scenes as a critique of how adolescent girls treat their bodies as disciplinary projects, the film is less open to that interpretation; we have seen Brigitte hold to her moral center throughout the first and second film and are positioned to find her struggle against lycanthropy worthy.

Unlike Ginger, Brigitte takes no pleasure in her sexuality, anger, or violent urges. She struggles to remain unintegrated. “Whereas Ginger eventually welcomes her monstrosity and embraces her newly gained sexual potency and violent longings, in the second film . . . Brigitte . . . always experiences her wolfish nature and her human nature as conflictual and separate.”216 She eventually sends Tyler to his death at the jaws of the werewolf stalking her, locking him outside after Ghost accuses him of

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215 Photo source: Sullivan, "Ginger Snaps: Unleashed."
216 Miller, ""The Hair That Wasn't There Before": Demystifying Monstrosity and Menstruation in Ginger Snaps and Ginger Snaps Unleashed," 296.
molesting her, but even in her rage, Brigitte resists killing him herself. Her final act of explosive violence is directed toward the werewolf chasing her: now grotesque, she beats it to death in a representation of her rejection of the wolf within herself.

The end of the second film is brutal: at Ghost’s grandmother’s house in the woods, Brigitte asks Ghost to kill her, since her human, subjective self is being taken over and she does not want to live as a werewolf. The audience learns that beneath Ghost’s exterior of cheerfulness and innocence is a monster of her own. Having falsely accused Tyler to get rid of him, she refuses to kill Brigitte, locking her in the basement instead, planning to use her as a kind of personal attack “dog.” The film ends with Brigitte, locked in the basement, howling, alone. The powerful woman is punished by the film’s conservative, reactionary ending.

_Ginger Snaps Back: The Beginning_ is a kind of prequel, unconnected plot-wise with the previous two films. It is set at a lonely Canadian fur trappers’ fort in 1815, and mixes Native American wendigo lore with the _Ginger Snaps_ werewolf mythology.  

Ginger and Brigitte appear as orphaned sisters who arrive at the fort after being lost in the woods; the fort and the few men left inside have been under siege by werewolves. Both sisters are made objects of the male gaze by the fort’s residents (all men). 

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217 Grant Harvey, "Ginger Snaps Back: The Beginning," (Canada: Lions Gate Films, 2004). This film includes Native American characters, portrayed as the mystical, mysterious, silent noble type. The two main Indian characters, the Seer and the Hunter, are not given proper names.
Patriarchy is represented by a misogynist priest and a racist military officer who does not like women “who talk out of turn.” As in the first film of the trilogy, Ginger is shown as resistant to the expectations of her gender role, cutting the priest off during grace when his sermonizing turns to the sin of lust.

Ginger becomes infected by a boy loose in the fort and begins to transform. Her transformation is not as grotesque as those in the other films: she is shown feverish and pale, and with hair growing out of her bite, and shivering in bed. Later, she grows dark claws and her eyes turn yellow and sunken, but this film seems to follow the pattern of ‘more virtuous = less grotesque.’ Ginger is more virtuous in this film: she is less powerful, less sexualized, and not as bloodthirsty. Although she believes she must kill Geoffrey, the boy, in order to break the curse on her, she cannot bring herself to do it. Staring at his grotesque face with a knife to his throat and tears in her eyes, she does not strike, even though he does not try to escape. Later, when she kills another young man, she immediately vomits, crying to Brigitte, “I couldn’t help it.” (She is shown enjoying her kill once, at the end, when she opens the neck of the soldier with her nails, but even this is less physical than her kills in the first film: she slashes him and steps away to watch him die.)

The film revolves around the prophecy of an old Indian seer, who tells the sisters, “Kill the boy, or one sister kills the other.” The Native American guide who
protects Brigitte, called the Hunter, tells her that unless she kills Ginger, the werewolf curse will go on “to plague generations to come.” As Ginger fights the change, she tells Brigitte to leave her, saying that she will end up killing her, but Brigitte refuses. They leave the fort and go to the Seer’s cave for help and guidance, but the elder tells them they are too late, that there is no cure. The Seer and the Hunter perform a ceremony to give Brigitte a prophetic dream. In it, Brigitte sees herself kill Ginger. When she wakes, Ginger is gone and the Hunter tells her that in his own trance, he saw himself give his life to save Brigitte so that she could kill Ginger. He tells her, “She dies by your hands, or you die by hers and the land suffers forever as foretold . . . you have no choice. This is your path.” They return to the fort, where Brigitte is taken to be burned as a witch.

In the film’s climatic scene, Ginger returns to the fort for Brigitte, letting in the remaining werewolves. The shot of Ginger in her dark cloak, arms outstretched as werewolves stalk past her, serves to accentuate the differences in their bodies. The werewolves kill the remaining men and are killed by the Hunter. Badly wounded, he hands Brigitte the knife she saw in her dream, saying, “You know how it must end.” Brigitte looks at Ginger, whose face is now white and monstrous, says, “Together forever,” and turns to stab the Hunter. The sisters embrace. The last shot of the film is
of the two of them, alone in the snow outside the burning fort, exchanging blood from their palms in a bond that exists “above men, above God, above fate” (Figure 22).\textsuperscript{218}

As the ending might suggest, the strongest theme in this third film is loyalty and devotion between the sisters. As one review put it, “a prototype of Victorian feminism sees the pair embrace monstrosity and infection rather than sacrifice their unity to male oppression.”\textsuperscript{219} In some ways it echoes \textit{Thelma & Louise} in its middle finger to the rules of patriarchy and “the way things should be.” We are left with an image of two sisters, clinging to each other rather than sacrificing one another to “civilization” or the future. However, as in the first two films, female bonding is fraught with danger: “their desire for an isolated and exclusive relationship with one another is somewhat incestuous. By simultaneously depicting female bonds as important and fraught with difficulties, Ginger Snaps [sic] portrays the double-binds teenage girls face.”\textsuperscript{220} The third film seems to dance closer to a fantasy/horror blend than the other films, lessening the sisters’ power and grotesque physicality, and keeping them alive in the end. However, the audience is aware that the two will eventually lose their subjective selves and become entirely monstrous.

\textsuperscript{218} Photo source: Molloy, "Perpetual Flight: The Terror of Biology and Biology of Terror in the Ginger Snaps Trilogy."

\textsuperscript{219} Barker, Mathijs, and Mendik, "Menstrual Monsters: The Reception of the Ginger Snaps Cult Horror Franchise," 70.

\textsuperscript{220} Nielsen, ""Something's Wrong, Like More Than You Being Female": Transgressive Sexuality and Discourses of Reproduction in 'Ginger Snaps'," 67.
The *Ginger Snaps* trilogy is a complex and contradictory set of texts, containing both “trangressions and recuperations of dominant conceptions of the female body.” In many ways the trilogy has more in common with *Carrie* than with the other werewolf texts. Like *Carrie*, these films can be both praised for acknowledging and sympathizing with female rage, and criticized for equating such rage with horror. As an audience, we are positioned to identify with the feminist elements of texts like *Carrie* and *Ginger Snaps*, and then to reject them by the films’ ends, since the protagonists are ultimately labeled monstrous, selfish, wrong, grotesque. But the images before the rejection still haunt us, and audiences can refuse to participate in that rejection; in this way, *Ginger Snaps* is perhaps more hopeful than *Carrie*, since it has been granted two sequels, thereby saving the characters from the finality of the first film’s ending.

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Figure 21. Ginger (Katherine Isabelle) and Brigitte (Emily Perkins) stand apart from their peers during gym class in *Ginger Snaps*.

Figure 22. *Ginger Snaps Back: The Beginning*. Ginger’s grotesque hand holds Brigitte’s as their blood mingles in the final shots of the film.
Shelly Lindsay’s essay on *Carrie* shows that neither mother figure that the film provides for Carrie (Mrs. White or the gym teacher, Miss Collins) is adequate.\(^{222}\) Patriarchal religion and bodily denial on her mother’s side, and the disciplined feminine performance/masquerade from Miss Collins both fail to save her. I see something similar occurring in the *Ginger Snaps* trilogy. As in *Carrie*, although the sisters’ rage and rebellion at gendered expectations for womanhood are understandable, their ultimate refusal to accept these roles means their destruction in the first two films. As with *Carrie*, the characters are not granted a third way to be a woman. The adult female role is rejected by Ginger and Brigitte, and the monstrous ambisexed/ambigendered body is rejected by the texts, so what type of subjectivity is left for girls to inhabit? As Nielson writes, in the end of *Ginger Snaps*, Brigitte “has lost [Ginger] both to normality – menstruation and heterosexuality – and abnormality – her inhuman animality and disengagement with their sisterly bond.”\(^{223}\) Brigitte searches for a third way to be, but does not find one: conformity, monstrosity, or death are her only choices.

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\(^{223}\) Nielsen, ""Something's Wrong, Like More Than You Being Female": Transgressive Sexuality and Discourses of Reproduction in 'Ginger Snaps'," 66.
Paula Devonshire, producer of the last two Ginger Snaps films, has said, “I think it is definitely possible to make feminist horror movies and I think we have proven that with all three Ginger Snaps films... These movies are all about women helping themselves, they don’t need men to come and rescue them, these girls contain an inner strength that the male characters could never possess.” It is true that fans respond positively to this strength, as we will see in Chapter Two; however, Devonshire ignores that neither Ginger nor Brigitte succeed in rescuing one another or themselves from becoming excessively monstrous. In these films, a girl’s choice is to enjoy the power that comes with the ‘curse,’ become too monstrous, and be destroyed, or to fight her inner urges in a useless attempt to fit into societal ideas of female behavior. Neither choice is integrated: either the monster wins or the disciplined, feminine girl.

These films are unique in their combination of a sympathetic monstrous heroine and rage grounded in reality of female bodily experience. They are transgressive in that they show images of and allow possibilities and fantasies of female power, rage, and resistance. There are exciting, progressive moments in these films, but I would not label them ‘feminist.’ The trilogy is undermined because of its conservative endings (and perhaps its genre as well). There is no healthy integration of animal/human in

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225 Ibid.: 72.
these films, only a chaotic, amoral, power-hungry over-integration, or the complete rejection of alternate and transgressive ways of being through non-integration. The hope for a feminist or queer monster is snuffed out by the trilogy’s end, the last film’s final “fuck you” to patriarchal culture notwithstanding. The progressive or subversive elements (female rage at adolescence, the policing of female bodies, female bonding in the face of patriarchy) are complicated by the genre (horror unintegrated, unlike fantasy), the linear transformations (no going back), and the endings.

These films show an awareness of “the limits placed on female sexual subjectivity . . . [and] allow for radical forms of female sexual consciousness,” provided audiences choose to read them that way. Again, though, I find it hard to end on the celebratory note of April Miller’s essay: she writes that the films [leave] behind what seems likely to simply romanticize or objectify women’s connection to monstrosity, Ginger Snaps and Unleashed present powerful, albeit problematic, constructions of the monstrous female . . . In both Ginger and Brigitte Fitzgerald, an awakening of tremendously powerful notions of self, sexuality, and female power are depicted, ones that refuse to be sublimated or redefined to fit the conventional expectations for female behavior.

The films raise radical questions, leaving audiences to come up with their own “third way,” perhaps, but their conservative endings should not be ignored, especially not by cultural theory critics.

226 Miller, "'The Hair That Wasn't There Before': Demystifying Monstrosity and Menstruation in Ginger Snaps and Ginger Snaps Unleashed," 281.
227 Ibid.: 300.
Conclusion

Very few female werewolves make it out of their narratives with power or life intact. However, as with many horror movies, the potentialities that emerge before the destruction/elimination of the female werewolf hold potentially subversive power for audiences to create new categories. While labeling these women monstrous or grotesque and their power unacceptable, portrayals of female werewolves also open spaces for new images of powerful women. These portrayals can still offer pleasure and subjectivity to viewers and disrupt traditional notions of gender and the gaze in cinema. The figure of the female werewolf does disrupt the traditional relationship between monster and woman, and these texts often disrupt the male gaze by introducing diegetic subjective female gazes.

There is no doubt that images of female werewolves in horror show the abjection of the biological, the interior, the female body. The power and agency they offer women are sometimes radically cut off by conservative endings, reactionary elements, or missed opportunities. Horror as a genre is not as kind to women as fantasy can be. However, audience subjectivity can complicate and subvert reactionary

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228 Paul Wells offers Candyman as an example of a villain who is morally ambiguous because he motivated by understandable rage (in this case, he is the soul of a murdered slave). Like Carrie, Ginger, Tara, and perhaps even Joanie-as-scorned-woman, these characters’ anger at their position within dominant culture is a motivating factor in their violence. Wells, The Horror Genre: From Beelzebub to Blair Witch, 107.
elements to more progressive ends, and something is shifting: the mere existence of these characters tells us that.

There is still potential power in female werewolves’ gendered transgressions (rage, violence, and powerful physicality housed in a female body), despite the ways that this potential is contained or shut down in the texts. The fact that these characters exist at all, and that their monstrosity is dealt with in various ways within each text, is proof that this is contested and shifting terrain in terms of gender. Yet, that they exist in only one genre (horror) and that their power is always contained in some way, and in comparing them to the fantasy-integrated-ideals of contemporary male werewolves, we see that this terrain is still bounded in very specific ways.

These texts show the female body as contested territory. The tragedy of these films is that we are given the possibility of a hopeful monster – and it is never fulfilled/delivered on. Unlike female werewolves in the fantasy genre, the werewolves in these texts (horror) are not allowed to be hopefully integrated – they must be cured, contained, destroyed, written out. Their transgressions cannot be tolerated. Horror as a genre is sometimes described as a genre that asks radical questions and provides conservative answers – these films are open to subversive readings and libratory ideas about monstrosity and being female, and they open spaces of alternative, progressive ways of embodiment. Despite the reactionary elements, audience readings can
complicate and subvert the conservative endings and messages of these films to more progressive ends. That is what the next chapter will explore.
Female Power and Fan Pleasure

“The texts . . . reveal the mechanisms by which women are critically evaluated. Ultimately, although narratively approved figures are clearly placed in opposition to women who seemingly misuse their power, we know better than to take sides. The ambiguities present are recoverable spaces, providing textual openings by which to reinterpret meanings and debate possibilities – which is, after all, what the stories we circulate have always sought to achieve.”

- Susan Short

If the female werewolf has the potential, as a monster queer, to disrupt oppressive gender binarisms and to create new categories of subjectivity and new ways of being, the characters as they appear onscreen are often bound by texts that limit their power. Chapter One focused on representation; this chapter focuses on interpretation. How are the female werewolves in these texts seen by the fans who embrace them? How do audience members react to narrative endings that contain and discipline the ambigendered/ambisexed power of the female werewolf? Is the female body a focus of their viewing experiences? In exploring the viewing experiences of fans, I hope to see if fans themselves use these texts to create alternative gendered spaces or fantasies.

The interaction between text and audience is hard to pin down, constantly shifting. The work of media effects theorists John Fiske and Michel de Certeau focus on the practices (or “tactics”) that consumers undertake to resist and subvert the

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229 Short, Misfit Sisters: Screen Horror as Female Rites of Passage, 172.
dominant meanings of media texts and popular culture artifacts. The possibilities inherent in emerging digital media, especially in fandom communities, do seem to build on the optimism of Fiske by enhancing the power individuals have to use pop culture texts and artifacts for their own ends, rather than simply be used by them. It is important to remember, however, that consumers of media texts are still limited in their power to shift frameworks of discipline and regulation; small-scale acts of resistance and appropriation almost never translate into large-scale cultural change.

Audience researcher David Morley’s classification scheme is useful here: his work builds on Stuart Hall’s encoding/decoding model and led him to classify television viewers in three ways. Depending on their social position, Morley’s viewers experienced dominant, negotiated, or oppositional readings of a nightly news program. A dominant (or preferred) reading is one in which the viewer accepts the point of view of the producer, while a resistant (or oppositional) reading rejects the entire text as biased or false. A negotiated reading both accepts and rejects different elements of the text. Under this model, viewers have agency and can be active, but their own motivations and identities, and limitations inherent in the text itself, inhibit absolute freedom in reading and experiencing texts, which are structured to favor

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dominant readings. It is important to remember that resistance to dominant cultural hegemony is not a yes/no experience, but is always partial and ongoing.

Morley’s work relates to my own in that many of my texts ask radical questions through the moments of female power, anger, and bodily-grotesqueness, but pose conservative answers in narrative conclusions that work to shut down or contain such unacceptable female bodies and behavior. In this chapter, I am interested in how audience members read these texts: when does negotiation take place? Which narrative moments are accepted, which rejected? Are audience members aware of gender stereotypes and transgressions, and what do moments of audience pleasure have to do with the un/acceptable female body?

**Audience Identification and Horror Films**

Horror scholar Andrew Tudor argues that the pleasure audiences get from viewing horror films cannot be explained by a single theory because horror is not a coherent genre. He calls for accounts of pleasurable viewing that focus on specific audiences, horror texts, and settings of time and place: “the question should not be ‘why horror?’ at all. It should be, rather, why do these people like this horror in this place at this particular time?”232 Because horror films and the monsters in them are

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polysemic and shift over time and place, “the same representation of a monster might be found frightening, repulsive, ludicrous, pitiful, or laughable by audiences in different social circumstances and different times” and, Morley might add, different subject positions vis-à-vis dominant culture.  

Horror films can foster shifting audience positioning and cross-gender identifications, making queer viewers out of audience members. Leading horror theorist Carol Clover argues that male killers in horror are often shown in the throes of gender confusion (not fully masculine), while the genre’s Final Girls are boyish (not fully feminine) in certain ways. At the beginning of the film, the audience is positioned to identify with the killer/monster, but by the end identification has shifted to the Final Girl in a kind of cross-gender switch. The categories of “male” and “female” are collapsed in “irregular combinations” across bodies in which a masculine female triumphs over feminine male. Clover argues that horror’s appeal lies not only in sadism toward women, but that the Final Girl is ultimately a vehicle for the male viewer’s sadomasochism.

Clover’s work assumes that the horror audience is primarily male; in this regard, Clover shortchanges herself by not exploring how women or other “queer”

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233 Ibid., 50.
234 The “Final Girl” is Clover’s term for the sole survivor of the slasher film, the girl whose friends are killed off one by one, who is hunted by the killer, and who finally fights back, often defeating the monster. Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*, 35.
235 Ibid., 63.
236 Ibid., 53.
viewers might experience the Final Girl’s triumphant stab back at the killer. I would argue that the embodied female-as-hero (even victim-hero) offers the potential for subversive and progressive audience readings; as mentioned in the Introduction, the Final Girl/female hero cannot simply function as a male stand-in. Power in the hands of a female protagonist is still power; horror films contain a potential “female – a Medusan or intersubjective and transgendered – gaze,” and horror’s gender transgressions can make bisexual viewers of us all.237

Following Clover, other scholars have taken up the question of how a female audience might read horror films. Brigid Cherry’s study of female horror fans concentrates on ‘feminine interpretive strategies,’ and perceived affinity with the monster.238 Citing Cherry, Sue Short argues that the increasing presence of female protagonists in horror reveals a cultural shift from Clover and Barbara Creed’s assumptions that horror’s primary audience is male. Short examines how female characters in recent horror films “acquire elements of ‘monstrosity’ in breaking with convention,” thereby simultaneously gaining audience sympathy and admiration.239

Eventual punishment of the transgressive female, along with other patriarchal elements

237 Badley, Film, Horror, and the Body Fantastic, 149.
238 Brigid Cherry, "Refusing to Refuse to Look: Female Viewers of the Horror Film," in Horror, the Film Reader, ed. Mark Jancovich (London: Routledge, 2002). Linda Williams and Patrick Gonder also discuss female/monster sympathy in their work (Linda Williams, "When the Woman Looks," in The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film, ed. Barry Keith Grant, Texas Film and Media Studies Series (US: University of Texas Press, Austin, 1996); Gonder, "Race, Gender and Terror: The Primitive in 1950s Horror Films.").
239 Short, Misfit Sisters: Screen Horror as Female Rites of Passage, 3.
of the text, may be “elided” (Cherry’s term) by the audience, that is, pushed to the back of the viewing experience by audience members sympathetic to the monster. In fan responses to certain female werewolf texts, there is evidence of elided endings, as we shall see.

Feminist horror scholar Isabel Pinedo also sees horror in terms of possible shifting identifications in reception. Like Tudor, Pinedo argues that horror as a genre cannot be assumed to be read in only one way. Arguing against Clover and others who read the Final Girl as a male stand-in, the male-in-drag, Pinedo looks at the slasher film as a pleasurable encounter with violence for female spectators.240 She analyzes the tension between the genre’s antifeminist and feminist elements, writing that women are not just the objects of violence in the slasher film, but agents as well. For Pinedo, Creed does not take into account any potential pleasure at viewing the powerful monstrous-feminine. Such potential pleasure is an important part of my argument, for both male and female viewers: even the grotesque “bad girl” werewolves can be satisfying in the spectacle of their power, and this opens at least the possibility for new types of gendered bodies.

Any model of text/reader interaction based upon essentialized identities is simplistic and insufficient. However, individual experiences, identity, and social

position can make a difference in what one sees or focuses on during an interaction with a text. For example, Tiina Vares interviewed different groups of women about violence in the film *Thelma and Louise*, including martial arts practitioners, film buffs, university students, and women involved in both a peace group and a battered women’s shelter. Vares found marked differences between the groups in their definitions of violence and their gendering of violence, in which behaviors were considered too ‘masculine’ coming from a woman, and in their pleasure in certain aspects of different characters’ representations. These women used a “strategic interpretive process” to gain pleasure from their viewing, much like Morley’s negotiated readings. Vares’ work drives home the importance of not only analyzing texts but in also examining the intersection between text, viewer, and viewer’s place in the social order.

Lee Parpart’s interviews with male fans of the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* television series makes a similar point about the importance of viewers’ subject positions, and also raises questions about the progressive potential of any text to create new cultural spaces. Parpart found that many male fans of the series “seem able to enjoy the series while feeling no need to concern themselves directly with issues of

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female empowerment or the gendered implications of Buffy’s warrior role.”

The key determinant of how progressively male fans read the show in terms of gender was sexual orientation: “gay and bisexual fans of the show do seem to take particular pleasure in the spectacle of another cultural outsider or marginalized figure, in this case a young woman, wielding power over opponents.” While gendered aspects of Buffy’s hero status added to non-straight males’ pleasure in the show, straight viewers focused on non-gendered features of the show for pleasure. In fact, heterosexual men “were more inclined than gay fans to gloss over or actively to repress any sense of the show as having political content.”

It cannot be argued, therefore, that Buffy is a sign of gender politics moving in a progressive direction, since some viewers ignore any gender issues the show might raise. Parpart writes, “A gender-neutral reading creates more room for straight male fans to enjoy the show’s action and fantasy sequences without considering those few aspects of the series . . . that actually might be unsettling to patriarchal structures and values.”

This research also throws into question how much of an impact female werewolves have, even at their most grotesque, on the landscape of popular culture. Do they impact only those viewers who are already receptive to radical images because of their subject positions in society? It is troubling


243 Ibid., 89.

244 Ibid., 90.

245 Ibid., 91.
to think that audience elision could work to erase progressive elements as well as reactionary ones, but Parpart’s interviews show that it is a possibility.

It seems that one does not have to be “queer,” to see queer elements in a text, however. At least two fans came up with queer readings of Ginger Snaps Back, writing on the Internet Movie Database website that Ginger and Brigitte seemed like “lesbians rather than sisters,” and reporting enjoyment of the film as a romance rather than a horror film: “they seemed to have a love for each other, and NOT just in a sister way. It was more like romance, and . . . was BEAUTIFULLY done.” In Pam Cook’s essay on female spectator pleasure, she writes that “the implied spectator positions offered by popular Hollywood texts are not necessarily inhabited by real audience members, who may experience such films in ways that go against the ideological grain.” Audience identification does not necessarily fall along stable gender lines. Echoing Halberstam’s queering of the horror audience, Cook focuses on “the potential fluidity of gender identification among the cinema audience,” concluding that “popular cinema is more ideologically open, and processes of identification more fluid than has


previously been imagined.” Not only is identification with onscreen characters fluid, but fan poaching and play happen alongside such fluidity.

As powerful as popular culture imagery is, I hold out hope that despite audience abilities to elide unpleasant aspects of these texts, the grotesque spectacle of the female werewolf is powerful enough to shock viewers into imagining other gendered ways of being. Perhaps this is why the ambigendered/ambisexed body is so rarely seen onscreen.

Television Fans Read Madison, Nina, and Veruca

In order to collect audience reactions to the texts analyzed in Chapter One, I set up a livejournal page asking about fans’ favorite characters, favorite and least favorite scenes, and what they thought of the narrative conclusions. I sought additional responses from reviews and postings on Amazon.com, the Internet Movie Database website, and Television Without Pity.

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248 Ibid., 242, 34.
250 If I had to do my research over again, I would model my audience research on Jacqueline Bobo’s work and conduct small focus-group viewing sessions to foster discussion about the texts as viewing occurs, rather than rely on reported responses. It was frustrating to get the number of responses I did, while not being able to ask follow-up questions on an individual level. I also felt that reported responses might miss important in-viewing moments that a focus group viewing session could capture. In searching for fan responses to the texts analyzed in Chapter One, I found the most visible fan communities for television shows like Buffy and Supernatural, and around the Ginger Snaps trilogy. However, my data does not allow me to enter into an in-depth discussion of these fandoms: I culled from
As mentioned in the previous chapter, the television episodes from *Buffy*, *Angel*, *Supernatural*, *Smallville*, and *The Dresden Files* were constrained by the structure of the series: female werewolf or shapeshifter characters were at best three-episode guest players, not recurring characters. The emotional weight of individual episodes rests with the protagonists of the series, not with characters who come and go in some form or another (so, for example in *Charmed*, it is expected that the werewolf guest star will be written off, while Piper, a main character, will somehow be cured). This weighting in favor of series’ protagonists is clear in the editing of the *Supernatural* episode’s climatic death scene: the focus is on the two brothers rather than on the woman about to die. An awareness that Madison-the-werewolf will be written out of the series just as she was written in, however, does not mean that fans are not capable of critiquing the manner in which she is disposed of. Her death became a topic of much debate on the TelevisionWithoutPity *Supernatural* posting boards. Many viewers were dissatisfied with what they saw as an unrealistic martyrdom on Madison’s part. One fan wrote that Madison’s acceptance of her werewolf condition and her death happened too rapidly to be believable, that “presented with this scary new world and lots of new information from guys who are clearly figuring it out as they go along,” Madison would have been proactive in her search for all possible individual responses, and have little interaction with fan communities and fandom activities. This is fruit for further research.
solutions before giving up on life. A more realistic scenario would have had Madison thinking, “Maybe I should see about a reinforced closet and hey, by the way, guys, since we've got a whole month before the next full moon, maybe we can do a little more research? I've got a library card. We can look in, you know, actual books.” This fan, coffeeandink, also complains that Madison’s attitude was the result of the show’s producers manipulating the situation: “The entire thing is so obviously fabricated to bring about Sam's crisis.” Similarly, Arashi on TelevisionWithoutPity writes that Madison, “was quite the trooper in giving one for the...uhm wrapping of the episode. I mean she was fine in that closet for the night when Sam shut her in. I would have fought tooth and nails for my life. Especially if I hadn’t done anything to bring this on me.”

It is clear from these comments that in identifying with Madison, or striving to identify with her (“I would have fought . . .”), these fans expect more agency on the character’s part. They are reading in resistant and negotiated ways, rejecting the easy death of the show’s werewolf woman and protesting her position as a mechanism to push the story of the two male protagonists forward.

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252 Ibid.
Other fans, accepting the show’s positioning of Madison, read in more
dominant ways, invoking both the structure of the show and expectations of the genre
in labeling her death acceptable. One viewer thought that Madison’s virtuous wish to
do no further harm made her death believable: “As for her begging to be killed
immediately, I can see it. She killed someone the night before. She had to come to the
realization that the killing would continue . . . I would want it done and over with.”

Other viewers focused on the need for the show’s protagonists to move past the
episode and their relationship with guest star Madison, writing, “This show is about
Sam and Dean, and it's only (heh) an hour long . . . we'd be pretty outraged if they just
took her at her word and went on their merry way. Shooting her was quicker.”

In the

same way, knowledge of the tone and genre of the show contributed to viewers’
acceptance of Madison’s death. More than one fan expressed satisfaction that the
ending was not a happy one: “Of course the ending was supposed to be unhappy. That
was the point . . . I'm glad the writers weren't pussies about it.”

Another wrote that

she loved that the producers “went there. I love that they actually killed the nice,
pretty, sympathetic girl . . . I'm glad [they] didn't go for the cheesy happy ending that I


For some *Supernatural* fans, then, the show’s focus on the brothers and their enjoyment of the genre (horror should not have “cheesy happy endings”) helped them follow a dominant reading of the text.

Fans come to texts with expectations, not just for the characters, series, and genre, but also for the embodiment of the monster. On that score, *Supernatural*’s bare-minimum werewolf design met with fan disappointment. As one viewer asked, “Where was the wolf? It was more like ‘people with pointy teeth who aren't vampires.’” Another asked, “Is there a freeze on the special effect budget for this show?” Calling the werewolf make-up “pretty pathetic,” the fan added that even *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was “able to manage at least a mangy dog suit.” Admitting that “the furry incarnations can be very cheesy,” another viewer nonetheless wrote that the *Supernatural* version was disappointing: “I still expected a little more. I expected vicious scary creatures. Or, at least, something ‘bad-ass’ like Dean said they were. I don't know what that would have been but these werewolves didn't cut it.”

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258 There was, of course, a range of opinions: one viewer wrote, “I liked the werewolf effects - please, no furry suits or crappy CGI werewolves, thank you very much. Weird eyes and teeth do it for me just fine.” (FireySnake, "2-17: "Heart" 2007.03.22 (Recap)," TelevisionWithoutPity.com, http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3152343&st=60.)
Interestingly, these audience members are not focused on the disciplined, acceptable female body, but on unrealized expectations of the grotesque, ambigendered hybrid and non-human body. For them, Madison was not hairy enough, not grotesque enough. Part of the excitement of having “scary ass rampaging werewolves” on the show was the anticipation of a visual representation of the masculine-female grotesque, which producers did not deliver.\textsuperscript{262}

Disappointment that the werewolf design was not more “beastly” seemed connected to viewer disappointment that Madison herself was too tame a character. Fans expressed desire for a more powerful female figure, and did not seem to much care if she was hopeful or scapegoated, so long as she was powerful. One fan wrote that Madison’s “sacrifice” came across as weakness rather than bravery, and that Madison was missing “the animalistic wildness . . . the total empowerment and super-human qualities [which add] an advantage and [allow] for depth in the character” that are a part of the appeal of werewolves.\textsuperscript{263} Another fan was waiting for Madison to be revealed as evil, “aware that she was a werewolf, thought it was kind of awesome, and found humans delicious.” This fan wanted Madison to be more duplicitous, tricking

Sam and Dean into “thinking she was an innocent victim, so they’d leave her alone.”

For many viewers, Madison as a tragic love interest was inadequately pleasurable when combined with her werewolf nature; Madison as an integrated, powerful werewolf, good or evil, was preferable.

Similarly, in ways that seem specifically connected to her gender, other fans mentioned disliking that Madison was written in a way that made her confidence seem like it was the result of her being bitten by a werewolf (in the episode, she mentions that before being bit the month before, she was in a bad relationship, but that now she feels confident and independent). Like fan frustration at the wimpy werewolves, some fans reported being frustrated at a woman who could not empower herself: “I do wish she hadn't been portrayed as docile before being bitten, and it took a werewolf bite to empower her.”

Describing Madison as “a doormat on track to become yet another violent crime statistic until she got her werewolfian mojo,” Demian disliked not only that it took a werewolf to instill an independent spirit in Madison, but also that “it was only after she became a capable, confident, self-assured woman fully in charge of her own life that she had to be slaughtered.” These responses point to a desire on many

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fans’ part for a “bad-ass,” scary female monster rather than a weepy victim, and frustration at female characters who are passive and disempowered.

The same sort of reactions occurred in response to the Angel episode “Unleashed.” The character Nina Ash is bitten, turned, and kidnapped before being rescued by Angel and his crew. Like the Supernatural viewers, Angel fans complained about Nina’s willingness to die, and about her weakness and objectification in the scene where she is chained up, naked.

Wolf girl inspired no sympathy . . . The character came off as a B horror movie victim and when they strung her up and hosed her down I couldn't believe how low they had stooped . . . Sure she's the monster now and not the victim but the dull acting inspired no sense of "she's going to fight back". They should have eaten her.

This fan expresses anger at the show’s producers for putting the character in a degrading situation and for writing her without any “fight,” as well as at the actress for being “dull.” Another fan also complained about the actress, writing “I probably could have liked Nina better if they'd cast a better actress . . . But she's so...blah. I mean, c'mon, she's a frickin' werewolf for crying out loud! There should be a bit of spark to her! But no, she's just kind of a bland blonde.”

Like the online responses of the Supernatural fans, we see Angel fans’ hope that monstrosity will come with the will

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267 bellwitch, "Re: (Us/Can) General Thoughts and Ratings for Angel 5.3, "Unleashed" 

and ability to “fight back,” will imbue the female body with strength, even violence. In *bellwitch*’s comment above, “monster” stands in opposition to “victim,” showing that viewers are capable of seeing the monstrous body as synonymous with positive traits in “hopeful” ways.

Audience longing for “spark” in onscreen females, even when the character in question is a monster, shows a desire for more stretching of the gendered, disciplined boundaries of pop culture. This may be the reason why some fans enjoyed Veruca in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, despite the fact that she was cause of Oz’s departure from the show (a longtime and beloved character). Although many fans expressed dislike of both the character and actress, others expressed enjoyment of her strength and wildness, calling her “alluring.”

One fan called it “refreshing (and fascinating!) to hear from Veruca, who not only accepts, but RELISHES being a werewolf.” This fan connects her pleasure in watching Veruca to pleasure in viewing powerful female characters in general, even one-dimensional or “bad” characters, writing, “I'm big on characters, especially female characters, who accept and revel in their power or destiny . . . there's something refreshing about female characters who don't waffle about being

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*269* w0lfgirl, "Re: Buffy the Vampire Slayer: “Wild at Heart”," livejournal.com, [http://girl-werewolves.livejournal.com/1158.html](http://girl-werewolves.livejournal.com/1158.html).
strong." Like the television audiences of *Supernatural* and *Angel*, these *Buffy* fans express an appreciation and a desire for unruly, uncontained female characters.

**Fans Read the *Ginger Snaps* Trilogy**

Audience pleasure in strong female characters onscreen also plays a large role in the fandom of the *Ginger Snaps* trilogy. Fans report liking the films because they see Brigitte and Ginger as strong female characters, and this is supported by an ongoing audience study of the *Ginger Snaps* films which found that the films’ fans, like the television audiences above, appreciate strong female protagonists, whether or not they are fans of the horror genre generally.271 One fan of the first film described Ginger as “sexy, alluring, and capable of ripping you limb from limb. She is unguarded female power.”272 Another called Ginger “super sexy and a strong woman. She's different, and accepts and enjoys that about herself.”273 Ginger’s strength and her willingness to be different is appealing: a third fan of Ginger wrote that she is “so strong and not afraid to do whatever she wants and to hell with anyone who doesn’t approve or like it. [My favorite scene is when] Ginger's walking down the hallway and

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everyone is staring at her . . . I love how confident and fearless she is.”

These fans enjoy that Ginger is not a victim-werewolf like Madison and Nina, but takes pleasure in her power, strength, and ability to do as she pleases. Ginger is “different” because she resists the regulatory/disciplinary “girling” processes that Butler describes by being violent, sexual, and fearless. As Judith Halberstam reminds us, “the appeal of horrific and outlaw queer character typing” should not be underestimated: Ginger fulfills audience fantasies of acting on one’s impulses and breaking cultural rules for female behavior.

Other fans cited Brigitte’s strength and her development throughout the film as a reason for listing her as a favorite character. Nightmare_gal sees Brigitte as “the stronger sister because she is able to truly change” throughout the first film, and praises her “will to survive [which] causes her to break away from her sister’s controlling influence [and] helps her become her own person.” For some fans, then, Brigitte is the more admirable sister; for fans of both sisters, their strength and will are important influences on the admiration directed toward them.

Reports of fans’ favorite scenes in the first Ginger Snaps film mention Ginger’s power; even scenes later in the film when Ginger goes morally overboard with her

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275 Halberstam, Female Masculinity, 185.
power, causing the accidental death of Trina and killing the janitor at their school, are reported as favorites. Pleasure in onscreen depictions of violence is an accepted part of the horror genre, and many fans describe just that. Ginger’s behavior allows the audience to experience an imagined fantasy of violence and to take pleasure in acts that challenge the cultural rules that teach girls to be passive and hold back. Ginger acts on her anger and desire for violence. Her defense of her sister against the physical bullying of Trina is a fantasy of vengeance that is gender transgressive in its physicality, anger, and pleasure, and some fans picked the field hockey scene as a favorite: “I really love seeing Ginger Beat [sic] the crap out of Trina[.] I felt like doing it myself!”277 It is clear that audience members’ feelings of kinship with the sisters’ outsider status, as well as the transgressive nature of Ginger’s behavior, played into their enjoyment of this scene. One fan wrote, “that's a scene you can never see enough of in a high school where the popular *beep* talking bitch get's [sic] an ass whipping.”278 The girls’ outsider status at their school created viewer sympathy; this demonstrates that cross-gender identification does occur in audiences (as one Amazon reviewer put it: “‘Snaps' is a celebration of the weird, slightly creepy kids. Like us.”279 It also paralleled viewer sympathy for the outsider Tara in Blood Moon. As with Ginger

*Snaps, Blood Moon* viewers took pleasure in seeing the “outsider” wreak bloody revenge on those who had been cruel to her: “love the part when she rips beau's throat out leaving him w/ his pants down & reveals his short comings . . . All of his taunting Tara/Wolf girl comes to an end!” Ginger and Tara lash out at a world that treats them unfairly in moments of queer violence. Another example of such violence is Ginger’s date with Jason when she attacks him out of anger at his attempts to discipline her sexual desire and aggression. One fan noted Ginger’s anger and her taking charge as pleasurable, writing “I love the scene where Ginger turns the tables on the amorous Jason as they are about to make out in the back of his car . . . really hot stuff.” Instead of being shamed, Ginger uses physical violence to express her anger and desire, and this resonates with fans.

Fans of the trilogy show themselves capable of offering insightful analyses of the *Ginger Snaps* films, including how issues of gender are framed and how Ginger breaks from traditional expectations about women on and offscreen. This fan offers a feminist reading of Ginger’s unruly monstrosity and details the pleasure such a portrayal provides her:

Instead of entering the traditional role of the submissive and weepily emotionally female, Ginger becomes a truly powerful, sexually aggressive, and,

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280 MsBrickCity, "*Spoilers* I Like This Film, but It's Really Sad!," Internet Movie Database, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0265752/board/thread/92972610.
yes, bitchy (aka angry and forceful threat to masculine domination among other things) person . . . Females who are strong and sexually aggressive are a threat to some men and some women in our society, particularly during that age when people are just testing out sexual gender roles and this film is aware of it . . . I say: "Hooray for bitchy women who admit to having sexual hunger and go for what they want!"  

This fan is focused on Ginger, not on the film’s ending in which Ginger loses her humanity and is killed. This is an example of the elision that Cherry talks about, in which viewers focus on the progressive or pleasurable aspects of a film and ignore the reactionary elements. And of course, for the fans who reported having seen the film five times or more, the film’s ending is not final; Ginger never stays dead and her transgressive resistance to being “girled” can be enjoyed again and again. 

Other fans recognize the conservative effect of the film’s ending and express unhappiness at its relationship to the film’s themes of female sexuality, desire, and puberty. One reviewer on the Internet Movie Database labeled the film as having only “revisionist pretensions,” since its attitude toward female sexuality is “disappointingly regressive, as are the final fates to which it consigns its characters.”

Another fan from the livejournal site writes that “the core of the film [is] women dealing with the extreme changes of puberty and the shame that goes along with it,” as shown in the scene where Brigitte tapes Ginger’s tail down in the locker room. The fan reasons, “If

the movie really is a coming of age film, then Ginger's death tells us that at some point we have to cover ourselves up and act like ladies or our own sisters will turn against us. For this fan, the ending is a tragedy. Many fans participated in similar negotiated readings of the text, viewing the film’s “moral” in a resistant manner while enjoying its moments of female power and strength.

The endings of the trilogy’s three films (which I read as reactionary, with the exception of Ginger Snaps Back: The Beginning), evoked mixed feelings in fans. Ginger’s death at the end of Ginger Snaps was accepted by many fans as a fitting end for both Ginger and Brigitte; it was called “heart-breaking” and “tragic,” as well as “brilliant . . . emotional, and sad.” A Brigitte fan saw Ginger’s death as a way for Brigitte to finally “do things for herself and not surrender to Ginger's power. By killing Ginger, B is able to live.” Other viewers called the ending “conventional” or frustrating. Acceptance of the dominant reading of the ending seems to depend on whether an audience member identifies with Ginger or with Brigitte in the final scenes, but also, as the quotes above show, upon an awareness of the film’s messages about gender and acceptable female behavior. Resistance to Ginger’s death is also tied to a political stance about the disciplining of girls in this culture.

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284 sunset_winds, "Re: Ginger Snaps (2000) ".
286 sunset_winds, "Re: Ginger Snaps (2000) ".

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The ending of the second film, *Ginger Snaps 2: Unleashed* is the source of much debate on the sites I visited. Many disliked it because it is, as the film’s director put it, “the worst possible fate for Bridget,” a character that fans had followed through two films. Like the *Supernatural* fans, however, others saw the bleakness of the ending as a necessary part of the horror genre or the werewolf film.

I love the ending to this film. It was unexpected and completely kicked the audience in the face . . . It's a horror film - it should make you depressed at the end. I don't want to see a horror film that makes me feel good, that's completely contradictory to the point of them . . . The fact that Bridgette is such a great character and has such a tragic fate is what makes it such good drama.

Another fan wrote that although “[it] broke my heart to hear [Brigitte] in the basement, howling away . . . I agree, the ending is very creepy, very twisted.” All of these readings allow Brigitte’s imprisonment by Ghost to be acceptable by genre standards.

Other audience members, however, were resistant to Brigitte’s fate, calling into question the believability of the film’s ending and what it meant for the film as a whole. To some, it seemed “far-fetched that this little pre-teen could survive and keep a werewolf locked up while most adults get ripped to shreds by the werewolves in the

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288 In fact, according to an ongoing *Ginger Snaps* audience study, *Ginger Snaps: Unleashed* is the most popular film in the franchise (Ibid.: 78.).
Others rejected the ending because of their attachment to Brigitte’s character, calling it “a horrible way to end Brigette's [sic] story . . . at the last minute [it] shifts the focus of the movie, the WHOLE movie, in a direction that made everything that came before seem pointless. Where the original ends on a poignant note, this one ends with a kick in the gut.” These fans did not accept an ending that left them without a surviving character in which they were emotionally invested and provided Brigitte with the “worst possible fate.”

Another fan tied Brigitte’s fate to Ginger’s in the first film, expressing resistance to the outcome of both, as well as a desire to see the werewolf survive and remain uncontained, envisioning an ending where Brigitte would “[run] free as her new self and [wreak] havoc on the world. Call me dark if you like, but just ONCE I'd like to see someone embrace their werewolf side as Ginger did and LIVE at the end.” Here is an explicit instance of a fan expressing desire for a hopeful ending, rather than a conservative one in which the deviant, transgressive monster is punished. Another fan who imagined an alternate ending writes, “I think it should have went on for another minute or two and shown ghost about to feed her grandmother to Bridgette when suddenly she escapes, killing Ghost and her grandmother and is last seen on the loose

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still in wolf form. These two posters would prefer Brigitte lose her “virtuous” Final Girl status by “running free as her new self” rather than see her lose her power or end up under someone else’s control. Other fans also reported negotiating with the ending by imagining what would happen beyond the scripted end. One pictured Brigitte “breaking out, personaly [sic] i hope she eats Ghost.”

Another reasoned that although Brigitte is locked in the basement, “that's not going to hold for very long. The instant Ghost releases B to take on one of her ‘many enemies’, B is going to kill everyone and escape . . . Or do we honestly believe Ghost is truly B's Mistress and B is Ghost's loyal little werewolf killing machine?”

These fans are applying their knowledge of and attachment to the character of Brigitte to imagined, alternate endings that would not deprive her of power or freedom. These audience members report feelings of resistance and negotiation to the containment of Brigitte’s power and the setting of limits to her monstrosity. Even in the face of Brigitte’s own rejection of her anger, violence, sexuality, and hybrid body, the trilogy’s fans express a desire for a grotesque body and unruly woman while rejecting the provided ending.

As might be expected from the above reactions, the ending of the third film, *Ginger Snaps Back: The Beginning*, resulted in mostly positive feedback from fans.

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Although some viewers did not like that Brigitte chose to let the curse go on to affect future generations, most expressed satisfaction that neither sister died. More than one viewer called the ending “happy,” and celebrated that the sisters finally “get to be werewolves together . . . Call me weird, but I think that is such a great ending for them.” Another fan wrote that she was worried the film “was going to follow the stereotypical theme of the sacrifice of the rightous [sic] to cleanse [sic] the 'evil' and all of that,” but “was happily surprised that [Brigitte] chose to run with the pack instead, uniting with her wolf sister. I can't think of a happier ending. It was beautiful.” For these fans, a happy ending includes female monstrosity and grotesque bodies, but also female power, solidarity, and enduring life rather than self-sacrifice and martyrdom. It seems that some audience members do not need conservative answers to these films’ radical questions about gender, the body, and monstrosity.

It is evident from the above postings that fans of these films are active readers; this is supported by the findings of the ongoing Ginger Snaps audience research project: “the audiences we surveyed appeared to be very ingenious in discovering and constructing . . . subtexts . . . These included their ability to praise the trilogy for its feminist (or ‘feminist-like’) stance through an incredibly wide variety of gender

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references (ranging from family bonding to lesbian subthemes).” Although the authors of the study do not define what they consider the hallmarks of a “feminist” film (female power? female solidarity? a narrative conclusion that does not punish women?), they note that the trilogy’s “fans praised its themes of teenage transition and female self-reliance.” This is in keeping with the responses I gathered: fans desire active, aggressive females who are not shown as victims. They take pleasure in powerful, active females, whether “good” or “bad,” virtuous or not, hopeful or scapegoated.

**Conclusion**

In reading online posts written by fans of these films and television shows, I was struck by the relative lack of discussion about the female characters’ hybrid bodies. Other than general critiques of werewolf special effects or makeup choices (as seen in the *Supernatural* discussion above), the ambisexed body/masculine-female-grotesque was not a focus in reviews or discussions. There were instances where female body hair was regulated by posters (not in werewolf hybrid form, but in human

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301 This, of course, raises questions about if these desires are progressive or if they simply play into older ideas of the monstrous-feminine.
form): one reviewer on IMDb commented derogatorily on Tara the Wolf Girl’s hypertrichosis from *Blood Moon* (“The movie had a girl who needed to shave! Get some shaving cream and you will have defeated the vicious wolf girl and her stubble”), and another started a post on Julie Delpy’s armpit fuzz in *An American Werewolf in Paris* (“eeewww did anyone pay attention to julie delpy's hair armpits when she was in bed with Andy. nasty!”). Although the latter was supported by two other posters, most disagreed that it was disgusting (“It's only hair,” “I'm no fan of armpit hair but it's no big deal...it's just hair,” and “I was too busy looking at her breasts. Sorry.”). One reviewer of *Ginger Snaps* made it clear that Ginger’s transformation and grotesque body was not off-putting: “Even right before the complete transformation she was still hot!” Another respondent commented on the lack of transformations of Ellie and Jimmy in *Cursed*, saying that the showdown between Ellie, Jimmy, and Jake was “frustrating because I expected everyone to shift into full fledged wolves. No one did anything of the sort except for . . . some small body changes. It was like the filmmakers were teasing the audience by withholding a full metamorphosis.” This fan came to *Cursed* with expectations for the film’s representation of lycanthropy, and was

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disappointed in her desire for a more grotesque body, for both male and female characters. This desire to see a “shift into full fledged wolves” was stronger than any disgust at the hybrid female body. The body hair of the female werewolf in *Skinwalkers* went unremarked online, and Julie Delpy’s topless scene in *An American Werewolf in Paris* got more mentions on the movie’s IMDb board than her transformation scene. The grotesque bodies of Ginger, Brigitte, Nina, and Joanie went largely unremarked on the websites I visited. This suggests that horror fans are more accepting of the grotesque (perhaps in a way that general audiences are not).

The lack of audience revulsion at the sight of the hybrid female body, on the occasions when it is seen in these texts, could also signal that audiences of all types can handle a larger variety of images of the female body than film producers are currently providing. Many of the respondents of one *Ginger Snaps* audience study did not identify as fans of the horror genre; “female fans of the franchise are not even receiving these films as ‘traditional’ horror films at all, but rather viewing them as ‘coming-of-age dramas.’” This might explain why many fans rejected or negotiated with the endings of the first two films: without the horror genre expectation of an unhappy ending, these fans were more open to resistant readings. The non-identification of many *Ginger Snaps* fans with the horror genre also shows a wider

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appeal of powerful, even grotesque, female characters, beyond the horror fan subculture.

The online discussions did not mention several textual moments that I found interesting: the scene with Brigitte and Tyler in the bathroom stall from *Ginger Snaps: Unleashed* when the potential for queer violence is shut down, or the transformation scenes of Joanie in *Cursed* and Serafine in *An American Werewolf in Paris*. Did audiences find these scenes exhilarating? Revolting? Frustrating or pleasurable? How did the images of “naturally”-feminine female bodies impact viewers ideas about culturally un/acceptable female bodies? These are questions to explore further.

One must be cautious about celebrating fans’ pleasure in monstrous women: just because powerful women are more interesting and fun to watch than weak ones does not mean that audience pleasure automatically translates into a progressive, feminist subject orientation. However, there is significant evidence presented here that many fans, especially fans of the *Ginger Snaps* franchise, find pleasure specifically in moments that signal resistance to disciplinary messages about sex and gender, and that they resist the regulatory containment of unruly girls and women onscreen. These fans celebrate narrative moments of female anger and queer violence, and express frustration when characters do not “fight back.” As well, these fantasies of queer
violence and powerful bodies does not seem to be tempered by revulsion at female bodies that break from beauty ideals. These are all reasons to be hopeful.
"She Seemed Sulkier":
*Blood and Chocolate* Times Two, or Taming the Unruly Woman

As noted in the Introduction, the field of popular fiction is populated with dozens of female werewolves. These characters are not the monsters of horror, but are fantasy figures that portray a positive, progressive integration of human and animal/beast traits, and that allow women to be physically powerful and unruly without suffering death in the end. Often, they are the hopeful monsters that are missing from our theater and television screens. And while it is true that horror and fantasy are both niche markets, and that few novels get adapted to film, there is a large chasm between the female characters in fiction and the visual culture that produces film and television shows. So what happens when a fantasy novel does get adapted to film?

In this chapter I analyze the 1997 young adult novel *Blood and Chocolate* along with its decidedly altered 2007 film adaptation. The protagonist of both texts is Vivian, a young female werewolf. I explore how Vivian’s body portrayed in the book and in the movie, as well as her relationship to her werewolf form and abilities. In the book’s translation to the movie screen, Vivian the hopeful monster, the masculine-female-grotesque, is replaced by a Vivian who rejects unruliness and her potential status as

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306 Popular examples are Kelley Armstrong’s *Bitten* series, Patricia Briggs’ *Moon Called* books, *Nadya* by Pat Murphy, and Alice Borchardt’s *Silver Wolf* trilogy, as well as short stories like “Wolfland” by Tanith Lee and “The Company of Wolves” by Angela Carter.
monster queer. The changes made to the film version scrub the story clean of its trangressive, progressive elements, and rob the audience of a text that challenges dominant gender roles and expectations for girls and women. The ambisexed/ambigendered body is replaced by the regulatory sign of the acceptable female body. An examination of the film’s production through available interviews with the film’s screenwriter/producer and director offers insight into why certain changes were made; I will also offer examples of fan reactions to both the book and movie versions of Blood and Chocolate in an attempt to understand how power circulates between the producers of a text and its consumers/users.

The Book

Blood and Chocolate, written by Annette Curtis Klause and first published in 1997, remains a popular young adult novel. It was a 1998 ALA Quick Pick for Young Adult Reluctant Readers and was on the 1998 ALA list of Best Books for Young Adults, among other awards and nominations. The book tells the story of Vivian Gandillon, a junior in high school who is also a loup-garou, a werewolf.

In Klause’s world, becoming a werewolf is not the result of being bitten or cursed, but is something one is born to. Werewolves live in packs (a kind of extended

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family in which not all members are related by blood), keeping to rural areas where they can run and hunt without attracting the attention of humans. It is forbidden by pack law to kill a human, although not because it is seen by all pack members as morally wrong, but because murder always brings trouble and suspicion on the pack.

The first chapter shows the pack being burned out of their home in West Virginia because Axel, an older teenager, has killed a local girl. A witness saw him with the body and he was arrested. While he was in prison, however, the Five, a group of adolescents who are Vivian’s age-mates, cleared his name by killing another girl. Axel was released, but suspicious locals have set fire to the pack’s house and outbuildings. Vivian’s father, the pack leader, is killed while trying to rescue pack members from the burning house, and the pack flees to a Maryland suburb. Axel is executed by the pack for killing a human and endangering the pack, and the Five are punished, but their lives are spared.

The rest of the book takes place in Maryland, a year later. Vivian is still grieving her father, and lonely. The pack is fractured and contentious without a leader, and Vivian feels alienated from her mother and other pack members, but unsure of her relationship to the human world. A drawing of Vivian’s, published in her high school magazine, leads her to Aiden, a human whose poem, “Wolf Change,” appeared opposite her drawing. Vivian finds comfort in Aiden’s gentleness and in his circle of
friends. They begin a romance against her pack’s wishes. While with Aiden, Vivian must control her more aggressive instincts, sexual and otherwise, and downplay her speed and strength, but he makes her happy.

Meanwhile, because no consensus can be reached on who should be pack leader, an Ordeal is called, in which all willing adult males battle for the position. Gabriel, a powerful and confident 24-year-old, wins, and eligible females in the pack then compete to be his mate. Vivian does not plan to participate, but when her mother is losing to another female, she jumps in to save her life – and winds up the victor. She angrily refuses Gabriel as a mate, feeling even more isolated from her pack and their expectations for her.

Convinced of his open-mindedness and his love for her, Vivian decides to show Aiden her true self. She changes from human to wolf form in front of him – and he is terrified. He rejects her, and she runs, waking up the next morning with no memory of the night before. The next night, Vivian blacks out again, and, for the second night in a row, a mauled body turns up in town. Vivian is afraid that she is killing humans during her blackouts. Aiden sends her a note asking to meet for “the sake of what we used to have,” and Vivian knows there is no hope of a reconciliation between them.\textsuperscript{308} Distraught and believing herself to be a killer, unable to bear the shame of facing her pack or the guilt of endangering them, she decides to kill herself.

Before she can do so, however, two of the Five and Gabriel come to her with the news that the real killers are Astrid, the *loup-garou* who Vivian bested the night of the Ordeal, and Rafe, another of the Five. Vivian realizes that Aiden, waiting to meet with her, is their next victim and she runs to protect him. Aiden, believing her to be the murderer, is planning to kill her, but when Astrid and Rafe attack them both, he kills Rafe with a silver bullet while Vivian stops Astrid. Gabriel and the rest of the pack arrive, but Aiden panics and shoots at Gabriel. Vivian steps between them and is shot. Wounded, she asks for Aiden’s life and he is spared.

The last part of the book has Vivian stuck halfway between wolf and human forms, unable to transform fully one way or the other, a seeming after-effect of her injury. She stays in her room, ashamed of her appearance, until Gabriel visits through her window. He tells her of his first love, a human girl, whom he accidentally killed because of their differences in strength. He cries, vulnerable for the first time in front of Vivian, and she goes to him. Their kiss allows her to transform into wolf form and then human form. She is cured. With Gabriel and Vivian as leader and mate, the pack makes ready to leave for rural Vermont.

The novel is exciting because Vivian breaks from traditional female protagonists in several ways. She is not a victim-hero, but is a sexual, aggressive,
dynamic female character, one who revels in her identity as *loup-garou*. Vivian sees herself as superior to humans, and is capable of taking care of herself physically as she searches for her path in life. Her unruliness, her pleasure in her embodiment, her wild celebration of her identity – all of these aspects of her personality are removed from the film.

**The Film**

A script version of *Blood and Chocolate* emerged as early as 1999, moving through the hands of several different directors and writers for several years before going into production. The film did not do well at the box office or in reviews; it scored a dismal 9% onrottentomatoes.com, a website that tracks film reviews from newspaper, magazine, and online sources.

The film opens with a very young Vivian playing in the snow in Colorado. Her family house is attacked, and her parents and siblings are shot by local hunters. The film then jumps ten years later to Romania, where an older Vivian is jogging through Budapest. She lives with her aunt, Astrid, who is the ex-mate of the leader of the *loup-garoux*, Gabriel. In the film, it is pack tradition that the leader choose a new mate every

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7 years, and most members expect Gabriel to choose Vivian. Vivian does not like
Gabriel or the 7-year rule, and rebuffs him when he visits.

She meets Aiden, a human, at an abandoned church where he is sketching in
preparation for a graphic novel about loup-garoux (Figure 23). Aiden is enamored of
loup-garou mythology, and they talk, but Vivian runs out on him without giving her
name. Aiden finds her at her job and pursues her until she agrees to a date.

Instead of an Ordeal, the film features a hunt. In the forest outside the city, a
large number of loup-garoux gather. The law of the loup-garoux in the film is that no
one is to hunt alone, but there is no ban on hunting humans. In fact, a human is the
hunt’s prey: a drug dealer that Gabriel has had released from jail. The dealer is told that
if he can make it through the woods to the river, he will be spared. As the loup-garoux
begin to undress, Vivian stands apart, looking to the side. Gabriel tries to convince her
to join the hunt, telling her, “It’s who you are.” We see her eyes turn yellow, but she
does not start running with the others (Figure 24).

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311 Photo source: AllMoviePhoto.com, "Blood and Chocolate Photos," AllMoviePhoto.com,
312 Gabriel tells Rafe, his son in the film, “The day you hunt outside your pack, you’re dead to
it.” Rafe does kill a girl on his own after she teases and then rejects him at a bar, but the plot line is
quickly dropped (von Garnier, "Blood and Chocolate.").
313 Ibid.
314 Photo source: Stephanie Zacharek, "Blood and Chocolate," Salon.com,
In the film, Gabriel is a kind of human-separatist, mafia-don-type. He is always flanked by a hench-garou or two, and upon his entrance at the hunt, the other garoux kneel and pay homage to him. The many loup-garoux of Budapest are also shown.
bowing to his car as it drives through the city. At the hunt, he preaches to the dozens of loup-garoux about the menace of man, about how humans have hunted and persecuted the loup-garoux for centuries. He seems to be a kind of underground crime lord, telling the doomed drug dealer, “We are the law” in Budapest, and counseling another loup-garou, “We must rule this city from the shadows.”

As Vivian and Aiden start a romance, Aiden tells Vivian about his ex-military father from whom he is estranged. Vivian tells him that her family has expectations for her that she cannot escape; he answers “But your future is your own, isn’t it? . . . It’s your life.” After watching Vivian and Aiden together, Vivian’s cousin Rafe tells Gabriel that Vivian has feelings for Aiden (true) and that she tells him of their secrets (untrue). Gabriel gives Rafe the job of chasing Aiden out of town.

Rafe lures Aiden to meet him by sending him a forged note signed by Vivian. Rafe tells Aiden that he should leave town since Vivian is already claimed. Their confrontation turns physical and Rafe’s eyes turn yellow. Aiden recognizes him as a loup-garou, and Rafe tries to kill Aiden in order to keep his supernatural identity a secret. The self-defense training Aiden learned from his father and his silver necklace save his life; he uses the necklace to kill Rafe. He tries to leave town, but gets intercepted by Gabriel’s thugs.
At the next hunt, Aiden is the prey, and Vivian is being guarded in case she attempts to help him. As in his fight with Rafe, Aiden shows himself to be remarkably adept at defending himself against the supernaturally strong and quick *loup-garoux*. Using a silver butter knife, he kills two pursuing wolves and makes it to the river. Angry at the death of Rafe, however, wolf-Gabriel does not play by the rules and attacks Aiden after he has crossed the river.

Vivian, meanwhile, has escaped her guards and run after Aiden. She saves him from Gabriel, but he, not recognizing her in wolf-form, wounds her. She turns back into her human form, naked, crying and in pain, and pleads with him, “Please don’t kill me.” Aiden carries her out of the forest, and they find a hiding place until dark. She tells him, “I never killed anyone at the hunts. Please believe me . . . it’s not the hunts I live for. It’s the running. Being free.” Aiden quickly comes to accept her true identity, saying, “I wished that you were real. So what right do I have to wish you away now?” As they move closer, he asks, “You can control it?” Vivian replies, “I can control it,” and they share a passionate kiss (Figure 25).³¹⁵

That night, they visit a pharmacist for a silver-poisoning anti-serum for Vivian, but get attacked by pack members. Vivian ensures that Aiden gets away, but she is captured by Gabriel. The film’s showdown takes place in Gabriel’s headquarters as

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Gabriel and other *loup-garoux* prepare to kill Vivian for her disloyalty to the pack. Aiden comes to her rescue, breaking through the skylight and wielding silver bullets and silver dust. In the ensuing fight, Vivian shoots and kills Gabriel as he attacks Aiden in wolf form. Vivian and Aiden escape Budapest together in Gabriel’s car. Vivian lets Aiden drive and leaves their destination up to him. They head to Paris as the credits roll.

As is evident, the changes from book to film have to do with more than plot tweaks. Even these basic descriptions show a wide gulf between book-Vivian and film-Vivian, one that follows trends of allowing stronger and more positive, integrated female characters in fantasy fiction than those in film and television. Vivian from the
book is tamed and contained in a variety of ways by her onscreen portrayal, and it is difficult to feel hopeful about the regressive adaptation.

**Lost in Adaptation: Book and Movie**

Like the good-girl werewolves in Chapter Two, film-Vivian’s journey becomes about her ability to “control” her *loup-garou*-ness, rather than find pleasure in it. (It is only when Aiden is reassured that Vivian “can control it” that they are solidified as a romantic couple.) The film alters or omits many of the book’s most hopeful elements, particularly in terms of Vivian’s embodiment, her sexuality, her violence, and her transformations from human to wolf.

**Vivian’s Embodiment**

Vivian’s pleasure in her own embodiment is a constant theme of the book, in both human and wolf form. Unlike this culture’s regulatory/disciplinary project of continually convincing women that their bodies are inadequate, excessive, and abject, Vivian celebrates her body’s form and abilities:

She flung herself onto her bed and stretched her legs in the air to admire their sleek curves, holding her hips to brace herself aloft. She stretched as hard as she could, toes pointed, fingers reaching, muscles in sweet tension, almost as sweet as the change to fur. ‘I am strong,’ she whispered. ‘I can run with the
night and catch the dawn. I can kick a hole in the sky.’ And she struck out with a foot to prove her words.\textsuperscript{316}

. . . suddenly she craved the change . . . the moon swelled like a seven-month belly, and she wanted to change . . . She wanted to run for the joy of it.\textsuperscript{317}

Vivian cherishes her “wonderful ability to turn into a beautiful, strong, swift creature.”\textsuperscript{318} Her superior strength and speed over humans is remarked upon several times. On a date with Aiden, feeling happy and in puppy-love, Vivian breaks into a run: “‘Come on,’ she cried, and took off full of the joy of breath, her limbs as strong as if she danced on the moon.”\textsuperscript{319} At first, she holds back, waiting for Aiden, but cannot contain herself indefinitely.

The western sky blazed vermilion as if it were drenched in the blood of night, and she choked back a howl of joy. She had to run loose. She took off, driven by excitement into the arms of the dark.

The grass whipped her ankles; the dusk licked her face . . . She reached the twelve-foot chain-link fence at the back of the school and threw herself up. She swarmed over with barely a thought.

When Aiden caught up he rattled like chaos climbing the fence, and panted and scrambled and slid.\textsuperscript{320}

This scene shares some similarities to the first-date scene in the movie when Vivian and Aiden go climbing over Budapest’s rooftops, him scrambling but her graceful and sure-footed. However, in the book Vivian’s unrestrained joy in her movement and

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{316} Klause, \textit{Blood and Chocolate}, 13.
\textsuperscript{317} Ibid., 29.
\textsuperscript{318} Ibid., 193.
\textsuperscript{319} Ibid., 93.
\textsuperscript{320} Ibid., 94-95.
\end{footnotes}
strength is much more evident; instead of simply having better balance, we envision a girl who refuses to hold herself and her body back from being strong, fast, and in motion. Vivian refuses to be disciplined by the cultural messages that tell girls and women (even female athletes, as we saw in the Introduction) to restrict their physical movement, take up less space, and restrain the pleasure they might feel in being strong, fast, and skilled with their bodies. Book-Vivian resists any disciplining of the female body to reject masculinity and any markers that could be read as masculine, and in doing so, she shows her readers an alternate way of being in the world.

In the movie, although we are told that Vivian loves to run, her love of motion is not shown. She is active in several scenes: in the opening scene she jogs, in another she runs from Aiden when he attempts to find out her name, in the final hunt scene she runs to save him, and when she fights pack members at the pharmacist’s ambush, she fights as if she has had training. In all of the above scenes, it is hard to see any joy in her face, however, only sullenness, resentment, or, at best, determination. As Krause herself said of movie-Vivian, “She seemed sulkier than my character and I was sorry that she didn’t have the full-on, unrepentant, outgoing enjoyment of her body both
human and wolf that my character has . . . She was much more guarded. And the
decisions of her Vivian were not the decisions of my Vivian.”

The novel’s Vivian also takes pleasure in the power her beauty and her body
give her over the men and boys attracted to her: “The boy to Aiden’s left noticed her
first . . . Vivian couldn’t resist, she winked, and his cheeks turned pink. It was so
easy.”

She often wears revealing clothing, confident and proud that she is seen by
the pack as her mother’s equal in beauty and sex appeal. In one scene, Vivian
deliberately teases Aiden’s father during a family picnic because she disapproves of his
disloyalty to his son (he made a pass at her). She has an awareness of her body and its
effect on others, and is unashamed in the pleasure this brings her. This is transgressive
because so many girls and women are taught to regard their bodies as never good
enough, constantly in need of improvement, as Bordo describes. For Vivian, her body
is always already good enough – better than good enough, as she has confidence and
pride in it.

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321 Melissa J. Brachfeld, "Book Moves to the Silver Screen: County Librarian Watches as Her
Teen Novel Goes to Hollywood," Gazette.net,
322 Klause, Blood and Chocolate, 23.
Vivian’s Sexuality

Like her pleasure in her body, Vivian’s sexuality is toned down significantly in the transition from book to film. The *loup-garoux* are depicted in the book as sexual beings with heightened senses of smell and taste. Vivian is unashamed about her sexual desires: watching her human classmates outside during lunch in the book’s beginning, Klause writes, “Some of the boys had their shirts off, their flesh golden and slick as if they’d swallowed the sun. They were sweet to look upon. Her eyes lingered on them tenderly as she bit into her meat.” Once Vivian begins dating Aiden, she wants to be sexual with him. Klause does not explicitly tell readers if Vivian is a virgin, but the impression is that she is not. Her sexual desires are strong, and are reported without angst, nervousness, or guilt. In fact, Vivian is often frustrated that her sexual desire is not met with similar aggression on Aiden’s part:

His soft lips were on hers once more, his tongue more adventurous, but his hands still tame. *It’s a game, she thought, a game of pretend we don’t want sex so badly.* Maybe he thought wanting wasn’t polite.

His eyes were closed. He enjoyed her taste. His nostrils flared with the smell of her. That was good . . . her fingers curled in Aiden’s hair. *I will teach you to be less polite,* she thought.324 [italics in original]

His lips met hers, and his hand slid up to cup her left breast gently. She put her own hand over his and made him squeeze harder as her tongue snaked into his mouth. Why did he always have to be so damn polite?325

323 Ibid., 22.
324 Ibid., 51-52.
325 Ibid., 77.
Deviating from the cultural expectation that teenage girls should only have sex (if at all) with boys they are in love with, Vivian decides to sleep with Aiden in order to figure out if she loves him or not: “Was she Aiden’s soul mate? Vivian wondered up in her room. Wouldn’t she know if she were? Maybe if she made him the mate of her flesh first, then she would know.”  

The description of her actions on night she plans to have sex with him frame Vivian as the aggressor: “She approached his room languorously, enjoying the soft slide of cotton across her thighs. She was torturing herself as well as him, drawing out anticipation with excruciating delight . . . He didn’t have to bathe for her. She would [devour] his sweat, [lick] it from him, and [rub] herself against his fragrant body until she became his essence.”  

In the end, it is not for lack of wanting it that sex between them does not happen: she and Aiden get close two or three times, but are interrupted by outside events each time.

Vivian’s kiss with Gabriel at the end of the book, the one that jolts her out of her half-human/half-wolf state, allows Vivian to be fully sexual since she does not have to hold back for fear of hurting her partner:

This was the kiss she had craved. The kiss that Aiden couldn’t give her. Gabriel bit her lip, and she gasped and captured his mouth again with her own. He was raw and sharp and rich and throbbing with life. He was sweet blood after a long hunt. How could she have mistaken Aiden’s kisses for this? . . . She writhed against him. She wanted to bite him, she wanted to rip the flesh from his back,

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326 Ibid., 81.
327 Ibid., 165.
but most terrible of all, she didn’t want him to stop. Her back arched, her body shattered, she howled.\textsuperscript{328}

Here, Vivian’s desire, aggression, and intensity are met in equal force by Gabriel, and she can fully indulge in her sexual desire without restraint. Again, book-Vivian resists the regulation and disciplining of women’s sexual desire, resists the patriarchal paradigm that sets women up as lacking aggressive sexual energy.

Unlike the book’s bold portrait of sexual desire in a teenage girl, the movie gives us an older Vivian who is not portrayed as someone with much of a sex drive. As noted above, she does not seem to take joy in her embodiment, nor is she shown as the aggressor in the romantic relationship with Aiden. In the book, Vivian approaches Aiden. In the film, he repeatedly seeks her out and stubbornly refuses to leave her workplace until she agrees to go out with him. Their relationship montage features shots of them playing in Budapest city fountains, replacing the book’s heavy make-out sessions in the grass beside the river. For film-Vivian’s first kiss with film-Aiden, he reaches for her, while she seems reticent. Their ensuing kiss is not passionate. The book’s unique challenge to expectations about adolescent female sexuality is erased by the film’s milquetoast romance.

\textsuperscript{328} Ibid., 262.
**Aggression and Violence**

Being a *loup-garou* grants Vivian great physical power, and the book shows her using that power to defend herself several times. In one scene, she fends off Rafe’s intrusive advances by grabbing and squeezing his crotch until he cries out and backs off.\(^{329}\) In another, she is harassed by two bikers outside the bar where her mother works. She flips them off, but they get threatening: “She felt her legs knot with the first stage of the change. *Control it*, she coached herself. *Only enough to put some muscle on . . . A couple of good strong smacks would change his mind [italics in original].*”\(^{330}\) Vivian is not helpless and does not need to be protected. When one of the Five offers to beat up Aiden after their break-up, she says, “I can do my own beating up, thanks.”\(^{331}\)

In the movie, Vivian also uses violence to protect herself and Aiden from the pack’s ambush at the pharmacy, but there are no scenes in which her strength is used in an everyday way, such as defending herself from an unwanted advance. Many women have had the experience of being hit on or grabbed without their consent, but few have had to break out the kung-fu while saving their boyfriend from a mob of *loup-garoux*. The film’s removal of the pleasurable fantasy of a woman who is confident in her ability to defend herself and who uses her physical strength to turn the tables on

\(^{329}\) Ibid., 86.
\(^{330}\) Ibid., 109.
\(^{331}\) Ibid., 198.
harassers is a removal of the kind of queer violence that Halberstam envisions as the potential food of social change. The fantasy of queer violence is that it speaks to real-world oppressions and allows audiences to imagine other ways of being, outside of cultural restrictions and regulation. Film-Vivian’s blocks and punches may be pleasurable, but they leave behind the book’s greater potential for destabilizing existing gendered power relations.

The possibility that film-Vivian’s violence could be queer is further undermined by her timidity in many scenes. Unlike the confrontation with Rafe in the book, in a scene where Rafe confronts Vivian about Aiden in the film, she seems genuinely intimidated, nervously stepping back as he advances and not pulling out of his grip when he grabs her arm as she tries to leave (Figure 26). Film-Vivian seems to have a distaste for all forms of violence, in fact. It is clear that she does not like the pack’s hunting or their teasing of humans (for example, she stops Rafe and his friends from taunting the girl Rafe later kills). We get the sense that she never feels the urge to hunt anything. This is not the case in the book, where Vivian thinks fondly of hunting with her father (although she has contempt for the human-scaring games that the Five play, as well as the killing of domesticated animals: “I know who I am, she thought. How dare he say I don’t? I love being loup-garou. I adore the sweet change and the

beauty it brings me in the night. When I hunt, I hunt wild prey by the law of the
Goddess. I don’t kill pets for the fun of it [italics in original].”\(^{333}\)

Book-Vivian believes it is wrong to kill humans, not only for the trouble it
brings the pack, but because she sees humans as valuable, even if loup-garoux are
superior. She worries that her own violent instincts will emerge in her interactions with
Aiden: “If they went on a date he would want to kiss her. Would he be safe if he came
close enough to fill her nostrils with his scent?”\(^{334}\) At the same time, however, Vivian

\(^{334}\) Ibid., 28.
has an aggressive side; she is no pacifist. When she smells a human (it turns out to be Aiden) climbing up to her window, the book states, “Vivian crept to the edge of the roof, keeping low. Her eyes narrowed, her claws grew, and her smile was thin and vicious. Burglar Bill would take some stripes home.” And her reaction to Aiden’s jealous friend Kelley is: “I’ll put a few more runs in those tights, honey, if you look at me like that again, Vivian promised silently [italics in original].” Later, after their break-up, Vivian hears that Aiden and Kelley are dating, and her virtue slips in the face of her anger and jealousy: “I’d like to feel my teeth in her throat, Vivian thought. I’d like to slit her gullet . . . No, no, she thought. Bad girl. Can’t do that, can I? Then an idea brought a thin smile to her lips, and made the warmth of the liquor burn brighter. But I could scare her real good [italics in original].” She ends up trashing Kelley’s room while drunk. Again, we see the “unruly woman” who allows the reader to indulge in a pleasurable fantasy of acting upon feelings of aggression and anger.

Missing from the film, the Ordeal is where book-Vivian’s most violent moment occurs. She is initially unhappy about the event, tired of the violence the pack has experienced, and plans to sit it out: “She wasn’t about to make an exhibition of herself to win the favor of whichever muscle-bound cretin won.” As the male loup-garoux

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335 Ibid., 62.
336 Ibid., 23.
337 Ibid., 209.
338 Ibid., 136.
fight, however, she gets caught up in the adrenaline and the beauty of bodies in motion: “Vivian found she was howling, too. She choked it off in surprise.” But when one pack member kills another in a blood frenzy, Vivian is horrified: “Vivian staggered with shock as Jean’s entrails splattered the ground. But they were [just] laughing, she thought. She looked around for someone to make Bucky stop, but these were all strangers about her, with froth on their lips and lolling tongues, lost in the kill, urging Bucky on.” For Vivian, pleasure in her physical power does not automatically lead to pleasure in death, or in violence for violence’s sake. “Vivian didn’t care who won. She didn’t want to watch but couldn’t stop. Why did they have to make their beauty foul? What kind of people were they that they’d kill their friends? . . . Wasn’t the joy of the run and the sweet, sweet night enough?” Despite Vivian’s aggressive impulses, she retains a moral center and has limits to what she considers acceptable violence, demonstrating her position as virtuous female hero.

As the fight ends with Gabriel the victor, howls go up on all sides of her, but Vivian is revulsed. “The pack drew in close for the feel of fur on fur. The smell of sex was all around. Cubs would be fathered tonight. Vivian tucked her tail between her legs.” It is only when her mother is attacked by Astrid that Vivian finds pleasure in

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339 Ibid., 145.
340 Ibid., 146.
341 Ibid., 147.
342 Ibid., 148.
besting another *loup-garou*. “Vivian found her voice and yowled a complaint, searching face after face for a sign of help, but the others backed off and formed a ring. Rage surged through her.”\(^{343}\) She attacks her mother’s opponent, blindly at first. But as Vivian gains awareness of her body, she begins to enjoy the fight.

Vivian didn’t let up. She couldn’t trust Astrid. What if the bitch was faking? She bulldozed hard into the whining female, and sure enough Astrid came up all teeth and claws. Astrid’s fury did her no good. She wasn’t as strong. She wasn’t as fast. Vivian had never felt this much power before. It sang through her. She could tear the hide from the wolf in the moon, but she’d settle for Astrid’s instead . . . she could eat her inch by inch, and the growing terror in Astrid’s remaining eye urged her on . . . [Astrid] was weak, she had lost, Vivian wanted to kill her for that alone.\(^{344}\)

Like the virtuous women of Chapter One, after the fight Vivian feels ashamed of her bloodlust: “. . . the blood on her tongue tasted bitter. She was as bad as them. It was in her too – the thirst for blood, the need to kill.”\(^{345}\) Vivian’s reluctance to embrace the murderous aspect of her violent nature places her in the category of Short’s heroines: Vivian has “virtue,” that quality that separates female protagonists in horror from the category of female monstrosity. She does not enjoy scaring humans with the Five and she does not want to fight without good reason (as in the Ordeal).\(^{346}\) She is often sickened by the eagerness of other pack members to be violent and is uncomfortable with that instinct in herself. However, her willingness to use violence to

\(^{343}\) Ibid.
\(^{344}\) Ibid., 149-50.
\(^{345}\) Ibid., 151.
\(^{346}\) Ibid., 40.
defend those she loves (her mother and Aiden) and her enjoyment of her physical power and fighting skill does present an unruly, queer figure, one who resists the disciplinary/regulatory ideal of girls and women as weak or passive fighters.

Vivian’s violence is embodied differently in the movie. Film-Vivian is shown as human most of the time; she transforms into a wolf only once, although her eyes turn yellow two or three times. At the end of the book, Vivian wolfs out to take down Astrid, while in the film she remains in human form and kills Gabriel with a gun. Film-Vivian also fights off the attack at the pharmacy in human form, rather than in wolf form as at the Ordeal. This works to avoid the image of masculine-female-grotesque, keeping film-Vivian in the realm of Buffy and other violent action heroines whose slender, attractive bodies are uncompromised by their physical activity.

All of this serves to give us a film heroine who not only negates the interesting and progressive elements of her book alter ego, but who also conforms to many of the traits that female werewolves might be expected to break from: musculality, hairiness, pleasure in one’s physicality and strength, the fantasy of queer violence, and an integration of one’s human and animal natures.
The transformations from human to werewolf form are often the most eagerly anticipated moments of a werewolf movie. The werewolves in Klause’s book are described as “[creatures] much larger and stronger than any natural wolf [with] toes and legs [that are] too long . . . ears too big, and . . . eyes [that] held fire.” The film’s director, Katja Von Garnier, used actual wolves in her film, as opposed to CGI creations or actors in make-up and prosthetics. The transformations in the film received a fair amount of attention, both positive and negative, from viewers, as they are not the traditional transformations of the tragic werewolf figure in horror: there are no prolonged visuals of hair and claws sprouting from the human body. Instead of a body horror approach, we are given something closer to shapeshifters, a throwback to 1944’s *Cry of the Werewolf* and more in keeping with the fantasy genre than with horror.

In the film, the transformations take place in an aura of rainbow light. In human form, the *loup-garoux* leap high into the air, almost in a kind of swan dive, and begin to glow. Their shape becomes indistinct, and when they land, they are wolves of ordinary size and color. Vivian’s one transformation scene is more prolonged than the others, and takes place in slow motion: she seems to be almost flying as the camera circles beneath her body mid-air. We get a close-up of her face with yellow eyes and a calm, almost nonexistent expression before she lands as a white wolf. There is no joy

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347 Ibid., 30.
and no pain in her transition. As director von Garnier explains, “The idea was that the human leaps up and . . . the spirit of the wolf comes on around them, and then . . . becomes more dense . . . gains in density, and the human sort of wears off, and sort of then the wolf is complete upon landing.”

Compare von Garnier’s ethereal description to the visceral change described in the book:

Behind the rocks, amid the shoulder-high weeds, [Vivian] slowly slid off her clothes. Already her skin prickled with the sprouting pelt. A trickle of breeze curled around her buttocks, and her nipples tightened in the cool air off the river. She laughed and threw her panties down.

Her laugh turned to a moan at the first ripple in her bones. She tensed her thighs and abdomen to will the change on, and clutched the night air like a lover as her fingers lengthened and her nails sprouted. Her blood churned with heat like desire . . . The exciting smells of rabbit, damp earth, and urine drenched the air.

The flesh of her arms bubbled and her legs buckled to a new shape. She doubled over as the muscles of her abdomen went into a brief spasm, then grimaced as her teeth sharpened and her jaw extended. She felt the momentary pain of the spine’s crunch and then the sweet release.

Vivian stretched and pawed at the ground, she sniffed the glorious air. She felt as if her tail could sweep the stars from the sky.

Her change in front of Aiden is similarly corporeal: “The change came fast then. Her arms lengthened, the legs shortened, her joints reformed. She uttered a gutteral cry of pleasure as her spine extended into tail, her bone quickly wrapping itself with flesh,

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then fur. She felt the creaking, crunching as her jaw extended, and her eyes now saw the rainbows around each candle flame.\textsuperscript{350} Perhaps identification is an easier process while reading a book than when viewing a film, but the film’s ethereal transformations work to create distance from the body, while the book’s description grounds the reader within the changing, hybrid body. The regulating/disciplining of the female body that Bordo describes and the treatment of one’s body as a “project” to be continually improved upon and perfected also works to create distance between one’s idea of self and one’s body, as does the unintegrated werewolf (“this body that is not mine”). Book-Vivian has no such distance, from either her human or wolf form.

The film’s erasure of the hybrid body form goes against the many instances in the book when Vivian and other pack members are described in some kind of hybrid state. When angry at her mother, Vivian “slammed the door to her room. The inside face of the door was channeled with claw marks. She grew her nails and ripped another row.”\textsuperscript{351} Since they do not have to wait for the full moon to turn, pack members can use hybrid physicality to express themselves at any time, as when Vivian prepared to defend herself against the bikers. Although their fully transformed shape is more wolf than Wolf/Man hybrid, the book often describes them in in-between stages. For

\textsuperscript{350} Ibid., 168.
\textsuperscript{351} Ibid., 8.
example, at the Ordeal, Vivian sees another woman whose “shorts were unzipped and a
fluff of tan fur already covered her belly.”

Even in her human form, Vivian sees herself and her body as more-than-human: “All afternoon her thoughts returned to [Aiden] like a song she couldn’t get out of her head. After a while it became annoying. What am I, a pervert? She asked herself. He was human, for Moon’s sake – half a person [italics in original].” Another time she tells herself that Aiden is only “a human after all: a meat-boy scantily furred, an incomplete creature who had only one form.” In the movie, however, the visuals of Vivian and her dialogue emphasize her human form over her wolf side (at one point she asks Gabriel, “Aren’t we half human? Don’t you see that what you denounce is part of you?”). No visual of a hybrid form exists in the film, and so the potential of an ambigendered/ambisexed body that is celebrated, or at least not labeled as abject, is denied.

*Patriarchy and the Pack*

Patriarchal aspects of *loup-garou* society appear in book and movie, and Vivian chafes at these in both texts. Book-Vivian resents that females can only be the pack leader’s mate and not leaders themselves, as well as the Five’s possessiveness when
they tell her not to “give that human anything we can’t have” or “we’ll take what we want.” The film ups the controlling and patriarchal nature of loup-garou society by inserting the tradition of the pack leader taking a new mate every 7 years, and in the way that Vivian is more forcibly coerced into her expected role. Although the film gives us a Vivian who resists patriarchal expectations for her life, her only alternative is shown to be a “love-at-first-sight” romance. As well, throughout the film, Vivian is shown resisting not only her position within the pack and expectations for her future, but also the state of being a loup-garou at all (as when she refuses to hunt). By upping the villainous nature of the loup-garoux, the film makes it more difficult for Vivian to celebrate her hybrid nature. Gabriel tells Vivian at one point in the film, “You want to be ordinary. You are not ordinary. Ask the animal inside you. She will teach you.” But Vivian resists integration, and this is understandable, since in the film the only integrated wolves we see are human-killers.

The translation of book to screen, then, rejects a hybrid, potentially ambigendered/ambisexed body and jettisons the novel’s transgressive female sexuality, embodiment, and queer violence. Film-Vivian’s denial of her loup-garou identity and her romance with Aiden place her neither in the scapegoated werewolf category, nor in

355 Ibid., 68-69, 42, 41.  
356 von Garnier, "Blood and Chocolate."
the hopeful werewolf category. We see no masculine-female-grotesque, nor any new ways of being or new categories of embodiment. The film exists in a confusion of fantasy, horror, and romance, one that dismisses the unruly woman and the monster queer. Its regulatory work is therefore subtler, since we are not shown the unlivable/unacceptable body, only the livable/acceptable one.

Production: “Straight from the Book”

So why the drastic changes to characters, plot, embodiment, and ending? In several interviews, screenwriter and executive producer Ehren Kruger and director Katia von Garnier talk about their parts in shaping the elements of the film as it came to be made.357 The shimmering human-to-wolf transformations were almost entirely von Garnier’s inspiration, as she describes in numerous interviews: “I wanted to do something that we haven’t seen before. Because how many times have you seen, like, hair coming out of someone’s skin.”358 Clearly shying away from the horror genre and body horror conception of werewolves, von Garnier envisioned the transformations as

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358 Bloody-Disgusting.com, "Blood & Chocolate: Exclusive Interview with Director Katja Von Garnier."
less corporeal, less embodied, saying “I loved the concept of them having to take a leap of faith to transform as an ability and a choice and a mind set and that they have to land as a wolf and if they don’t take that leap, they break their hand.” 359 She also says that one of the draws of directing the film was the opportunity to work with real wolves in Romania, and to showcase “their grace and beauty, to give this element to the loup garoux [sic], a moment of running free before they hunt. I want people to be open to seeing that about wolves” 360 since they are still “misunderstood” animals.

Von Garnier’s language here echoes the fantasy ideal of the integrated werewolf, whose animal side is valued and seen as positive. However, this description of the werewolves does not match up with the film’s depiction, in which the most integrated werewolf characters are the villains, echoing many of the texts analyzed in Chapter One. Vivian, who rejects her loup-garou heritage, is the protagonist with whom the audience is positioned to identify. Drawing again on fantasy frameworks, von Garnier describes Vivian as “hiding from herself. She’s ashamed of her nature and she learns to respect by seeing her culture through the eyes of Aiden . . . [In] most stories . . . the act of becoming an animal is seen as a curse. I like to think of it in this story as an ability, as something they do to feel free– it’s a gift.” When her interviewer

359 Roberts, "Katja Von Garnier Interview, Director Blood and Chocolate."
points out that the wolves in the film are hunters and killers, von Garnier emphasizes Vivian’s unintegrated nature, saying that “she doesn’t kill, she just loves to run. She loves to feel free– like a wolf.” Von Garnier seems to be confused as to what “like a wolf” means, however; she wants Vivian to have the beauty of a wolf without its instinct to hunt, even though the book was able to give us a Vivian who was unconflicted about her nature and integrated in her identity, who hunted and was violent but who still had a moral center. Von Garnier tells us that Vivian learns to respect her nature, but the film’s ending has her betraying her pack, killing its leader, and running off with a human who wants to be sure she can “control it” before being with her.

In several interviews, von Garnier says that the love story between Vivian and Aiden is what drew her to the movie (she did not read the book until after an early version of the script). “I wanted this to be a werewolf version of Romeo and Juliet . . . It’s Romeo and Juliet with wolves,” and “That’s what I saw when I read it. I saw the chance to do a character-driven love story that is mystical and mythical and all that and I wanted to make an anti-genre film.” Unlike Shakespeare’s star-crossed lovers, however, von Garnier’s pair survives: “Basically what we’re saying is that love

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361 Ibid.
364 Roberts, "Katja Von Garnier Interview, Director Blood and Chocolate."
conquers all.” This emphasis on the romance between Aiden and Vivian weakens Vivian’s character by making Aiden the catharsis that causes her to break from the pack that she resents.

Unlike von Garnier’s interest in the film’s romance, screenwriter and executive producer Ehren Kruger says that what interested him about the book was “how it’s told from the point of view of a werewolf community that has been hiding for centuries.” But like von Garnier, Kruger talks about the Blood and Chocolate werewolves as going against the horror archetype:

Traditionally in werewolf movies they see it as being a curse. Some is bitten and becomes a monster. It is a fearful, savage, and disgusting thing! The book takes the point of view that it would be as much of a blessing as it is a curse to spend part of your live as an animal, to be able to transform into something that is super human. It was that angle that made it interesting.

Kruger, like von Garnier, was excited about the use of real wolves, which he sees as “going back to the real ancient crux of the werewolf myth.” He dismisses the “transformation sequences that involve guys in big suits and man-animal hybrids. What this source material really is addressing is the allure of someone's primal or savage nature . . . Annette's book is really that it's as much a blessing to be able access

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35 Bloody-Disgusting.com, "Blood & Chocolate: Exclusive Interview with Director Katja Von Garnier."
36 Russo, "Moviepulse Interview with Ehren Kruger."
a more primal and primitive side of yourself as it is a curse.” Kruger talks about the blessing of hybridity, but his script lacks this celebration. Although the *loup-garou* of *Blood and Chocolate* are not grotesque and all but Vivian are portrayed as integrated and happy with their dual identities, they are the bad guys; the two main antagonists (Rafe and Gabriel) must be destroyed for Vivian to be free. It is striking that the absence of a grotesque body could work against the film as both a horror text and a fantasy text, but it does. *Blood and Chocolate’s* *loup-garou* embodiment is not the abject monster of the horror film, but it is not the positive integrated werewolf of fantasy either. The disembodied transformation scenes work to de-emphasize the connectedness of the two body forms as well as any space the hybrid body, with its new possibilities, might occupy. Transformation scenes are anticipated and enjoyed not only because of their grotesque-ness, but also because there is something exhilarating about these hybrid bodies (as we saw with *Cursed*’s Joanie and *An American Werewolf in Paris*’ Serafine in Chapter One), and *Blood and Chocolate* fails in that regard.

Screenwriter Kruger believes that he stayed true to the book’s themes, saying that “All the core scenes and characters [from the novel] are all in there. The basic conflict of the book, focusing on the protagonist Vivian and her conflict between her animal and civilized impulses which threatens to destroy her pack, is all straight from

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368 Douglas, “Exclusive: Screenwriter Ehren Kruger.”

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Elsewhere, he added, “we were very conscious of trying to maintain all of the themes of the book, everything that the character, this young woman Vivian, was going through.” However, nowhere does Kruger mention the transgressive gendered elements that make the book so unique. Like Parpart’s study of male fans of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, which found that many men were unaware or ignored the potential new spaces that Buffy opened in terms of gender and power, Kruger seems to overlook the potentially progressive aspects of Vivian as heroine. He says in one interview that the novel’s main conflict is “this young woman coming to terms with this savage half of her nature, and this civilized half of her nature and what does she really choose? . . . the conflict for this character and for everyone in this secret society is really straight from the book.” Rather than building on the book’s framing of Vivian as an integrated, ambisexed/ambigendered figure, Kruger understands Vivian as a character who has to “choose” between the two halves of her nature. However, book-Vivian is never conflicted about her hybrid embodiment, only about who she should be with and her place in the pack. In reading the originating text from a perspective that is not

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369 Russo, "Moviepulse Interview with Ehren Kruger." Krause herself seems to disagree, saying in one interview, “They seem to have made the characters older, as well as setting the story in Eastern Europe which kind of negates the whole point of the plot--werewolves could be sitting right next to you in your high school homeroom.” (Cynthia Leitich Smith, "Author Update: Annette Curtis Klause," Cynsations, http://cynthialeitichsmith.blogspot.com/2006/01/author-update-anette-curtis-klause.html.)

370 Douglas, "Exclusive: Screenwriter Ehren Kruger."

371 Ibid. Similarly, Brett Sullivan, director of *Ginger Snaps: Unleashed*, comes across as fairly unaware of gender issues in an interview, repeatedly saying that he wasn’t thinking of how the series potentially “equates the female body with disgust, physical corruption and infection” or how it addresses “feminine issues such as self-harm.” (Mendik, "Menstrual Meanings: Brett Sullivan Discusses Werewolves, Hormonal Horror & the Ginger Snaps Audience Research Project," 80.)
invested in gender roles and stereotypes, Kruger removes all elements of Vivian as unruly woman and monster queer.

“Say what you will about the book's Vivian, at least she had a personality. In the movie, Vivian has all the personality of a goldfish”: Audience Reactions to the Film and Book372

What were some audience reactions to the film and to the changes made from the book? In order to see what was appealing about both the book and the film, I looked at customer reviews on Amazon.com and the Internet Movie Database, as well as IMDb posting boards. I also set up a livejournal page for the purpose of letting fans of the book and/or movie comment. Although solid conclusions cannot be drawn from these responses, they offer a glimpse into how individuals interact with both texts.

There is no clear consensus on the film: both people who had read the book and those who had not reported enjoying it, and both people who had read the book and those who had not reported disliking it. The 71 Amazon.com reviews (as of April 15, 2008) were fairly evenly split; each star (from 1 to 5) got between 13-16 reviews. The majority group was made up of reviewers who liked the film without having read the book (25%), while the second largest group (21%) disliked the movie and had read the book. The IMDb.com reviews were a bit more varied; the majority (30%) had read the

book and hated the movie, while a small majority (9.5%) liked the movie despite having read the book first. Of those who had not read the book, there was a pretty fair split between those who felt strongly about the film, either positively or negatively (21% liked it, 22% did not).

Genre expectations and opinions about how werewolves should look impacted the viewing pleasure of some audience members; most reviewers agreed that the film was not a horror movie, but more of a supernatural romance. Some viewers enjoyed the glowing transformation scenes, calling them beautiful and graceful, while others were disappointed, calling them silly or laughable. tjay1777 wrote, “Finally, they give us a good werewolf movie that we can enjoy!! No more people turning into hideous raging monster looking creatures with there [sic] eyes and veins popping out. We get the beautiful and mysterious natural looking wolves.” Gpeoples-2, on the other hand, preferred the body horror approach: “In the book they metamorphose in ‘Howling’ style, with crunching of spines; this is one of the things that make the heroine aware of the pain her body brings her, as well as the pleasure. In the movie the werewolves have become magical acrobats, taking great swan dives and transforming in mid-air, shimmering yellow like Tinker-Bell; it looks cool, means nothing.”

a fan makes the connection between Vivian’s embodiment, both pleasurable and painful, and her integrated, positive identity as a werewolf.

Those who disliked the film because of the changes made to the book mentioned the differences in characters’ personalities, the altered ending, and the way the loup-garoux were made the films’ antagonists: “By the time it was over I was furious . . . Gabriel was my all time favorite...and then the movie goes and turns him into a complete heartless idiot?! The movie also showed the . . . werewolves, as these vile, evil creatures were as [sic] the book shows them as just wanting to . . . keep their pack safe. They would never kill humans for the fun of it.”

Many complaints focused on Vivian’s altered attitude toward her hybrid nature. Scarecrow-88 writes that in the movie, “Vivien doesn't enjoy the fact she's a werewolf” and Woodbane77 complains, “Vivian's character became this whiny this [sic] girl with no appreciation for what she was which totally takes away from the way she is portrayed in the book . . . The fact is they turned a complex story into an average love story with a few special effects.”

Fans of the book, then, noticed the drastic difference between book-Vivian and film-Vivian, and her relationship to her body. In the same way, many reviewers of the

film mentioned the weakening of Vivian’s confident and assertive personality. In describing her romance with Aiden, Gpeoples-2 writes,

In the book . . . she's the one who initiates the contact, then steps back, re-initiates, and so on. In the movie . . . it's he who comes on to her, in a manner as unattractive as that of her wormy cousin . . . I would have thought a female director would have taken the chance the book offered to show a female protagonist in an uncompliant, proactive role; but no.377

This fan notes with disappointment the reversal of the pursuer/pursued roles specifically as they connect to gender expectations. Other viewers also expressed frustration at Vivian’s transformation from a strong and complex character into a boy-gets-girl romantic lead: “Vivian is turned from the free spirit who, after struggling between that which she desires and who she knows she is and can be, embraces her true self into a girl who is just like every cheap movie "pseudo-heroine" who does what she can just to get the guy.”378 In describing why Vivian is her favorite character from the film, dahlea writes, “She's fantastic, and feral, and tough, yet can be vulnerable as well. Although she is a bit on the wimpy side in the movie, and wasn't like that in the book.”379 Fans of the book noticed with anger and disappointment Vivian’s film incarnation.

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377 GPeoples-2, "Coulda-Been."
While audience reactions to the film are spread across a wide range of likes and dislikes, reviews of the novel are much less ambiguous. Of the 303 reviews of the book as of April 9, 2008 on Amazon.com, only 25 (around 8.2%) gave the novel a rating below 4 stars (out of 5 possible stars). Where did fans of the book report finding pleasure? Many reviewers saw Vivian as a realistic and relatable teenage girl dealing with loneliness, new love, and family problems, labeling her “a compelling character – a girl with unique problems but I could still relate. It was nice to see a story about a girl with complex desires.” The fact that Vivian had flaws “made it possible to sympathize with her.” Her strength and confidence were also noted: “I liked that the author had the courage to write a teenage girl who thought frankly and unsentimentally about sex, who knew who she was and could hold her own.” Fans of the book also appreciated Vivian’s breaking of the “good girl” stereotype and the frank portrayal of her sexuality, writing that she “is not the tired sterotypical [sic] heroine in the supernatural teen genre. The fact that Viv isn't the "good girl" makes the book more confident.”

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381 Andrea Cox "funnymom29", "Loved It!," Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/review/R3ENSWMA5QSK7G/ref=cm_cr_rdp_perm.
enjoyable to read. She's sexy, knows it, and uses it for her advantage.  

One reviewer responded to readers unhappy with the portrayal of Vivian’s sexual desires, reminding them that “Vivian never ACTUALLY makes love to anyone in this book. Anyone who wishes to ban it, therefore, wants to do so because "Blood and Chocolate" contains a woman who thinks about sex. An odd crime to condemn a book for.”  

This same reviewer noted that Vivian, unlike many girls, “isn't constantly fretting over whether or not she's pretty enough or if her boobs are too small;” it is a plus that she is too “self-assured” to let the regulatory/disciplinary culture of girlhood affect her.

Although criticisms of Vivian’s character in the book are rare, they center on her “cockiness” and her sexuality. Two reviewers on Amazon called Vivian “a slutty werewolf” and “the werewolf slut,” and another wrote,

The girl's so horny she would jump the bones of any cute guy she could get her hands (or claws) on. She sees her love interest Aiden for the first time out the window of the art room and decides to go talk to him . . . She flirts with him mercilessly and acts super seductive. It wouldn't be that bad, but she had never met or talked to the boy before! Not to mention, in later chapters, she thinks about sleeping with Aiden every time she sees him. Shame, shame Vivian!

The above reviewer finds a teenage girl approaching and flirting with a boy she finds attractive, and thinking about sex, grounds for shaming. These reviews, though in the minority, reveal that for some readers, the public and ongoing disciplining of female sexual desires remains an acceptable practice.

For most of the book’s fans, the fact that Vivian transgresses gendered expectations for girls contributed to their pleasure in reading. Interestingly, several readers complained about the novel’s gender politics, seeing it as bending to stereotypical gender roles. For these readers, Vivian is not enough of a gender transgressor. Complaints of this type often centered on the book’s ending and Vivian’s romantic pairing with Gabriel. One reviewer wrote, “I hated the ending . . . I wish I had had some idea that, in the end, the macho, bullying jerk gets the girl. If I had I never would have read it. It left me feeling sick.”

Similarly, another reader complained that although Vivian seemed to be “a strong female character that defied gender roles . . . she wasn't, she ended up acquiescing (in my eyes at least) to her given gender role and it really disappointed me.” These readers see Vivian’s pairing with the alpha Gabriel as a move that negates the novel’s previous steps in a progressive direction:

386 Blue Hue, "Re: Anyone Else Just Hate This Book?," Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/anyone-else-just-hate-book/forum/Fx1QFB644CSYQIG/TxCULCOJ7GAV7J/1/ref=cm_cd_et_md_pl?%5Fencoding=UTF8&cdMsgNo=2&cdItems=25&cdAnchor=0385734212&cdSort=oldest&cdMsgID=Mx1SF5MYU60X35G#Mx1SF5MYU60X35G.

387 G. Barnett "Sparkler", "What Was the Point?," Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/review/R1RJJBUR8Y6D0N/ref=cm_cr_rdp_perm.

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I am one of those that thought the ending completely ruined the novel . . . I'd never seen a male human/female werewolf pairing before this point, because so many authors are skittish about writing a relationship where the female is stronger in any way. Heaven forbid we have a female character who is capable of outrunning her boyfriend, and heaven forbid a woman fall in love with a man for reasons other than his overwhelming physical power and alpha-ness . . . it's acceptable for a woman to be strong, as long as her mate can still dominate her, physically and otherwise. I thought I was about to see a rare exception to the rule, but I was wrong.\footnote{Sekuiro, "Disappointed."}

These readers are aware of gendered conventions and expectations, and were eager for something that challenged those oppressive binarisms. For them, the book does not go far enough in its gender transgressions, and like Ginger Snaps, despite exciting, transgressive moments, the ending makes the whole text feel conservative and regressive.

The romantic pairings in both book and film both defy and bow to conventional gender roles. Although some readers loved Gabriel’s bad-boy character, it cannot be denied that Vivian spends much of the book resenting his arrogance and his advances, and that she is intimidated by his physical power: “She stared him in the eye, challenging him; she was out of her depth, but defiant anyway, willing her lip not to tremble . . . He reached for her. She jerked back. Then he laughed like a giant and moved aside . . . She closed the door on his arrogant face.”\footnote{Klause, Blood and Chocolate, 26.} Vivian experiences an imbalance of power with both Aiden and Gabriel, as she is more physically powerful

\footnotetext{Sekuiro, "Disappointed."}
\footnotetext{Klause, Blood and Chocolate, 26.}
than Aiden but less powerful than Gabriel. At the end of the book, Vivian realizes that her love for Aiden was mixed up with her “desire to dominate and protect,” and so was flawed. At the same time, Gabriel is still more powerful than she, although he is made vulnerable to Vivian before she accepts him as a lover. As they kiss, “‘I want to lay my kill at your feet,’ he said, more groan than words, and held her tight by her hair as he marked her neck with his teeth.” As well, unlike Aiden, he sees her body as desirable and beautiful no matter what state she is in. “Gabriel kissed her neck slowly and deliberately. She jerked away. How could he bear to kiss her when she looked the way she did? He must have guessed her thoughts. ‘Vivian, you are beautiful in anything you wear.’” Gabriel does not see Vivian’s hybrid, hairy, half-human body as grotesque.

One could argue that the film pairing of Vivian and Aiden is more egalitarian, since Aiden is made capable of handling himself physically against the loup-garoux. At the same time, the upping of film-Aiden’s action star abilities means that we are still left with a couple in which the woman is not significantly stronger than the man (which was the reviewer’s complaint above). Also, in the book Vivian pursues Aiden and is pursued by Gabriel, while in the film Vivian is only shown as the pursued (traditionally the feminine role).

390 Ibid., 225.
391 Ibid., 263.
392 Ibid., 261.
Like the polysemic nature of these romantic pairings, Vivian’s relationship with femininity is complex. In keeping with the fantasy genre, although the book portrays Vivian’s hybrid embodiment and the film does not, its imagery is not necessarily that of the masculine-female-grotesque. Vivian’s femininity (her body, her attractiveness to others) is continually remarked upon. This focus could work to erase imagery of the ambigendered/ambisexed body (she is a werewolf, but she is also hyper-feminine and sexual). It could also work toward emphasizing the confluence of culturally-masculine and feminine traits in one body (being hairy and strong does not make her less of a girl). Like the body of other monsters, Vivian can be read multiple ways.

*The Moral of the Story is . . .*

Although the message of the book could be seen as “Mate with your own kind,” it could also be, “Do not settle for someone who does not appreciate your power and beauty. Do not be with someone with whom you cannot be honest or entirely yourself.” This latter version of the book’s “moral” is echoed in numerous fan responses: one fan wrote that the book’s message is that “denying who you really are is far more dangerous than pretending to be what you are NOT,” and another that it is

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“sometimes you cannot be with someone who cannot accept all of you.”

Readers focused on the book’s twin lessons about knowing oneself and being in the right romantic relationship, writing that it “relates a positive message about loving yourself just as you are AND understanding that the person you want might not necessarily be the person you need.”

Although one reviewer said that the book’s message could be doubly read as “Love your own kind” and “You can’t deny your true self,” fans of the book focused on the positive: “love is being accepted for who you are and not for you [sic] outer skin.”

How fans see the messages of the film seems to depend on how they felt about the book. One film viewer who had not read the book wrote, “The movie seems to be about being true to your self [sic] and not being a slave to tradition.” A fan of the book, however, said that she saw the moral of “the book: to love yourself . . . Of the movie: That 'love' (I use this in quotes to suggest that the movie's perspective on Aiden & Vivian's love is the first-teenage-love sort of thing, not what I would consider true

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394 JacqLewine, "Powerful and Unearths the Primal Truth in All of Us..." Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/review/R1ALDZZOH1IHTN/ref=cm_cr_rdp_perm.
396 E. R. Bird "Ramseelbird", "What Big Eyes She Has."
love) conquers all.” It appears that in general, fans who have read the book have little patience with film-Vivian, while viewers who have not been exposed to the book are more likely to see her as a strong character.

**Conclusion**

The above responses show that both fiction and film audiences appreciate strong and complex female characters who break from narrow, passive gender stereotypes. The film is disappointing to many fans of the book because it removes these aspects from Vivian’s character. Even those readers who found the novel’s ending problematic in terms of feminism and romance expressed a desire for *more* gender transgressiveness in the female protagonist and romantic coupling. It seems clear that audiences want more than they are getting in terms of gender transgression and alternate ways of being for female characters, and that viewers are more open than might be assumed to seeing ambigendered/ambisexed and even grotesque bodies onscreen.

The film version of *Blood and Chocolate* embraces a retrograde politics in its erasure of the masculine-female-grotesque and its stagnant stance on un/acceptable female bodies. The book’s potential for fantasies of queer violence and the space to

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imagine alternate ways of being is closed down by the film’s portrayal of Vivian’s embodiment and her relationship to her hybrid nature. Donna Haraway writes that, “Cyborg monsters in feminist science fiction define quite different political possibilities and limits from those proposed by the mundane fiction of Man and Woman.”400 Female werewolves in fantasy hold the same kind of promise to re-define, or at least re-imagine, gender constructions and gendered bodies. The fantasy enjoyment of the hopeful werewolf and her unruly behavior is negated by Blood and Chocolate’s tepid film adaptation, however, and the promise of her monstrosity is left unfulfilled.

Conclusion: Looking for a Hopeful Monster

“There is something compelling about being both male and female, about having an entry into both worlds. Contrary to some psychiatric tenets, half and halves are not suffering from a confusion of sexual identity, or even from a confusion of gender. What we are suffering from is an absolute despot duality that says we are able to be only one or the other. It claims that human nature is limited and cannot evolve into something better.”

- Gloria Anzaldua

“Monsters are keepers of the boundaries between human and Other, yet by virtue of their inhabiting the ‘borderlands’ they promise liberation from the very strictures of binary definition.”

- Elaine Graham

My work throughout this project has centered on the gendering of the werewolf body, and on the cultural contradiction inherent in representing a female body exhibiting characteristics categorized as masculine/male. It should be apparent, however, that the monstrous body of the werewolf is capable of supporting myths and fears beyond the gendered ones upon which I focus. As the transformation of Josie in Dark Wolf makes clear, the body of the female werewolf, like the male, is coded with convergences of race and class. Additive and multiple anxieties about the Other are displaced onto the slender, white, smooth bodies within these texts.

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401 Gloria Anzaldua, Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987), 19.
402 Graham, Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens, and Others in Popular Culture, 60.
Further work on this topic would do well to push further into these layered meanings. For example, an examination of the discourse of blondeness in these films might be fruitful. Although not all of the female werewolves in these texts are blonde, many are (Serafine, Nina, Veruca), and among the striking visuals of these films are Joanie’s golden locks falling to the floor in *Cursed* and Josie’s pale bob becoming coarse and dark during their transformations. Folklore scholar Marina Warner, in her work on fairy tales, ties hair and fur together in analyzing descriptions of these stories’ heroines. In fairy tales, folklore, and art, writes Warner, golden hair symbolizes charm, purity, sweetness, and a woman’s worth above other women. It also symbolizes youth and innocence, since many blonde children darken as they age. (Warner 368) This meaning is layered onto the symbolism of body hair, which signals both masculinity and adulthood/maturity. In the 20th century, blondeness has also come to signal desirability, as Hollywood images of blondes have traded on sex appeal.403 What do blondeness and the feminine, invaded body in these texts say about ethnicity, class, and American identity? Does the feminine stand here for a kind of ultimate vulnerability?

Similarly, a question that I do not investigate in any depth is the troubling implications of linking animal violence and uncontrollable aggression not only to the racialized and lower-class body, but to masculinity in general. There is a violence done

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to both male- and female-bodied individuals by categorizing aggression/violence as a masculine attribute. As well, this categorization does violence to those inhabiting spaces between male and female, and masculine and feminine. Hybrid bodies and hybrid ways of being are erased by the labeling of certain traits as unacceptable, off limits. How are filmic representations of male werewolves responding to feminism’s and LGBT challenges to the patriarchal gender binary and narrow definitions of masculinity? How are notions of masculine behavior complicated by race and class?

The portrayals of lycanthropy in these texts can also be linked to other portrayals of monstrosity. Some are linked to vampirism in their framing of lycanthropy as an infection and as something that can be sexually transmitted. The hybrid and potentially progressive body of the werewolf’s integration of human and animal nature also resonates with Donna Haraway’s cyborg figure, an increasing presence in our visual culture. An investigation into what these texts say, not only about the position and power of women in our culture, but also about masculinity and men, race, ethnicity, class, foreign-ness would build on my findings here.

This project has looked the representation of female werewolves onscreen, at audience interpretations of these characters, and at the adaptation of a fantasy novel to film. Throughout, I have focused on the body and the behavior of the female werewolf;
to me, the progressive potential of the female werewolf is greater than other examples of the monstrous-feminine. As a positive figure, the female werewolf challenges “the oppressive binarisms” of this culture’s acceptable, livable girl/woman. I take it as a sign of progress, then, that there is movement to include more of these masculine-female-grotesques in visual narratives, even if their threat to the gender binary is curtailed in various ways. The fact that they exist at all demonstrates that something is shifting in the gendered landscape of popular culture. Films like Skinwalkers, although flawed as a challenge to patriarchal gender binaries, are an indication that werewolf girls are gaining acceptance onscreen: each group of warring werewolves in the film contains a token girl. Like the token black male character in each group, these portrayals are still problematic: the “bad” versions of black man and girl are shown in more physically grotesque states, the “bad girl” is heavily sexualized while the “good girl” is not (in fact, she becomes seductive once she is corrupted by evil), and both women are weaker than their male counterparts (the gender binary is upheld even in monstrosity). But their presence can be seen as the first step toward more progressive versions of the monstrous female werewolf.

Although none of the onscreen werewolves examined here can be called feminist or revolutionary, it is important to note the many comments indicating that audience members take pleasure in the showcasing of powerful females while eliding
the texts’ more conservative moments, as well as the frustration that individuals reported feeling at female werewolves who did not show sufficient independence or “fight.” These are all signs that a cultural shift is underway. Pop culture is continuously moving, in flux, reacting to other social movements and institutions, and is subject to multiple readings; this, too, holds promise for future female werewolf projects.

*Jack and Diane*, a film currently slated for a 2010 release, has been described as a metaphorical werewolf lesbian love story. Will it go the hopeful monster route, or will it use monstrosity as a metaphor for abject sexuality? *The Company of Wolves* (1984) showed that female werewolf movies can draw on feminist fantasy fiction in portraying female sexuality; one hopes that *Jack and Diane* follow up on its promise. Another project to feel hopeful about is the Salma Hayek-produced series “Howl,” recently sold to Fox. Although not yet in production, the series pilot was written by gay comics writer Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, and features a female werewolf protagonist. The ongoing format of a television series promises a sympathetic

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405 Neil Jordan, "The Company of Wolves," (USA: Hen's Tooth Video, 1984). Even with author Angela Carter’s participation in the film production of *The Company of Wolves*, the ending was changed from Little Red Riding Hood sleeping contentedly between the paws of the wolf to Rosaleen screaming at the wolf pack invading her bedroom. Carter said of the ending, “The difficulty for me is the fact that the film has been about a girl coming to terms with her libido, and yet when confronted with the pure ‘libido’ of the wolves, she screams! She could have just smiled, that would have been all right . . . She could handle the wolf.” (quoted in Wells, *The Horror Genre: From Beelzebub to Blair Witch*, 39.)

406 EW.com, "Hollywood Insider: November 9, 2007," EW.com, http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20156345,00.html. There has been one previous television series with
framing of the protagonist and ensures that she will not die before the series’ end, another reason to hope for a positive portrayal of a female werewolf in the next iteration of pop culture texts.

In her work on fairy tales, Marina Warner writes of stories where girls transform into animals or hide their beauty beneath animal skins in order to escape unwanted sexual attention. Although in these stories, transformation offers “the wronged daughter her means of escape,” the animal disguise is also a conservative symbol of her sexual contamination and penitence. These tales end with their heroines contained in happy, heterosexually-reproductive marriages; for the girls, “animal form marks a threshold she passes over, before she can take control of her own identity” (that identity being a wife and acceptable participant in the sexual economy of her time and place). We, however, can envision a female who takes on animal form not as a temporary respite but as part of her identity. Drawing these figures into the present, Warner traces the beast symbol in literature by women who have focused on the progressive potential in the girl/beast figure: “the Beast within is a

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a female werewolf protagonist: the British series She-Wolf of London (1990-1991). It is not currently available on DVD, however, so I was unable to watch it.

407 Warner, From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers 356, 58.
408 Ibid., 354.
good beast, but he isn’t only male; he can live within Beauty too.” As fiction writer Angela Carter’s work shows, re-written and reclaimed fairy tales are, and will continue to be, a part of the progressive fantasy fiction work on female werewolves. Warner’s evaluation of Carter’s work echoes Donna Haraway’s celebration of feminist science fiction and the political potential of fictional hybrid bodies to imagine new categories, new ways of being, and to challenge current cultural classifications. Rather than girl-beasts in new fairy tales, Haraway sees the cyborgs in science fiction as making “very problematic the statuses of man or woman, human, artefact, member of a race, individual entity, or body.” Like Warner and Haraway, I am excited by the libratory potential that female werewolves hold as a gendered hybrid monster. However, despite the growing population of bodies onscreen, the truly libratory female werewolf does not yet exist on television or film.

What would my hopeful werewolf look like? My ideal text would be one in which we see the female body become hairy and muscular; at the same time, the female werewolf is not conflicted about her body. My ideal text would allow the female werewolf a healthy sexuality; it would position her as sympathetic to the audience and desirable to her costars. Her transformations would be cyclical instead of linear, and she would be an integrated figure: that is, she would remember what

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happens when she transforms instead of blacking out (being taken over by the Other) and she would have control over her actions (even if she is driven by alternate instincts when in wolf form). The power of her werewolf self would bleed into her human form, affecting her strength and physical skill. This dual integration would not result in hypersexuality or amoral violence. On the contrary, my ideal female werewolf would embrace queer violence (the fantasy of violence that disrupts systems of power and oppression), and would not be afraid or ashamed of her anger and aggression. She would not die or be cured, and would not be excluded from romantic/sexual relationships. My ideal text would be able to cope with both becoming-monstrous and being-monstrous. For example, Blood and Chocolate, along with other fantasy fiction, breaks from the horror tradition in that the narrative is not focused on the process of becoming Other (a source of horror in other texts), she is already, and the plot revolves around some other set of events. (At the same time, narratives of becoming do not have to be horrific or reactionary – recent films centering around male werewolves have portrayed the process of becoming-monstrous in positive ways, and this could be done with female protagonists as well.) My ideal text would be able to cope with racial difference, and would not position the heroine as a fair-skinned blonde taken over by a darker Other. Werewolves of non-white ethnicities would be imaginable in this text, and not only as a primitive counterpoint to some white character. The female werewolf
in my ideal text would not be the only queer girl around; she would surround herself with a queer community of folks crossing gendered borders in interesting ways, busy with the processes of shedding old skins and taking up new integrated identities.

This is the hopeful monster for which I am holding out, the kind of masculine-female-grotesque that will help shift gender categories and that will open cultural spaces for subjects who are now labeled “unlivable.” Will a television show like “Howl” give us an embodied masculine-female-grotesque, rather than a shapeshifting feminine ideal? Will we see an unruly woman, an ambigendered/ambisexed gender pioneer who pushes the boundaries of acceptable female bodies? A strong, confident, pleasurable, heroic queer female? A virtuous yet hairy girl?

Here’s hoping.
Appendix I. Films Featuring Female Werewolves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female Werewolf</th>
<th>Good or evil? Integrated or unintegrated?</th>
<th>Bodily Grotesqueness</th>
<th>Fate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>An American Werewolf in Paris</em></td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Serafine Pigot</td>
<td>Good: virtuous, completely unintegrated victim of the curse</td>
<td>Prolonged transformation scene that focuses on hairy, grotesque body</td>
<td>Survives (Cured?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Curse</em></td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Frida</td>
<td>Good: blacks out during changes (unintegrated), but gains confidence and sexual appeal.</td>
<td>Very little: eyes, teeth, some hair on arms and hands</td>
<td>Survives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ginger Snaps</em></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Ginger Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Complex: increase in her sexuality and aggression; despite resistance, she eventually embraces the change</td>
<td>Slow transformation to grotesque (but not very hairy) body</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Blood Moon</em></td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Tara</td>
<td>Good, tragic: taken over by violent, feral urges</td>
<td>Reverse transformation from natural hairiness (hypertrichosis) to smooth, hairless body</td>
<td>Loss of subjective self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dog Soldiers</em></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>Good at first, she is revealed as integrated and treacherous in the end</td>
<td>Eyes and teeth change at the reveal</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dark Wolf</em></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Josie</td>
<td>Good: virtuous and vulnerable, unintegrated</td>
<td>Prolonged scene of her naked in hybrid state, with grotesque face and darkened skin but no body hair</td>
<td>Cured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ginger Snaps: Unleashed</em></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Brigitte Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Good and unintegrated: she resists her change until the end</td>
<td>Slow and extremely grotesque bodily changes</td>
<td>Loss of subjective self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ginger Snaps Back: The Beginning</em></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Ginger Fitzgerald -- Brigitte Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Good and unintegrated: however, Ginger eventually accepts the change and Brigitte joins her</td>
<td>Brigitte is not shown changing, although Ginger’s eyes, hands, and face alter</td>
<td>Loss of subjective self for both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Female Werewolf</td>
<td>Good or evil? Integrated or unintegrated?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cursed</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Joanie -- Ellie</td>
<td>Evil and integrated: she is murderous and revels in her power -- Good and unintegrated: she virtuously resists the change</td>
<td>A prolonged transformation that (re)genders her masculinely -- Does not fully transform at any point</td>
<td>Death -- Cured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skinwalkers</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Sonja -- Katherine</td>
<td>Evil and integrated: she revels in her power -- Good and unintegrated: she virtuously resists the change (until she is forced to turn evil/integrated)</td>
<td>Her furry body is shown, but dimly lit, and her face is made grotesque -- Katherine is not shown transforming</td>
<td>Death -- Death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix II: Television Episodes Featuring Female Werewolves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Show</th>
<th>Episode &amp; Year</th>
<th>Female Werewolf</th>
<th>Good or evil? Integrated or unintegrated?</th>
<th>Bodily Grotesqueness</th>
<th>Fate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charmed</td>
<td>“The Wendigo”</td>
<td>FBI Agent</td>
<td>Evil: hypersexual, she relishes violence</td>
<td>- Quick CGI morph/ transformation into monstrous form</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1999)</td>
<td>Ashley Fallon</td>
<td>-- Good and unintegrated, although her</td>
<td>- Piper’s arm darkens and grows hair</td>
<td>-- Cured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-- series regular</td>
<td>infection begins to affect her personality</td>
<td>- Both bodies are shown bursting out of clothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Piper Halliwell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</td>
<td>“Wild at Heart”</td>
<td>Veruca</td>
<td>Evil and integrated: hypersexual, takes</td>
<td>- Fully-transformed body is heavily furred</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1999)</td>
<td></td>
<td>pleasure in amoral violence</td>
<td>- Shots of hands, eyes, and hybrid form with some facial hair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>“Unleashed”</td>
<td>Nina Ash</td>
<td>Good, virtuous: completely unintegrated</td>
<td>- Brief transformation scene of hand and teeth</td>
<td>Survives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2003)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Various shots of fully-transformed body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dresden Files</td>
<td>“Hair of the Dog”</td>
<td>FBI Agent</td>
<td>Bad (integration unclear): willing to kill</td>
<td>- Actual transformations not shown onscreen</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2007)</td>
<td>Kelly Rasin</td>
<td>innocents to cure self</td>
<td>- Heather’s and Kelly’s eyes and teeth change</td>
<td>-- Survives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-- Heather Bram</td>
<td>Good: completely unintegrated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatural</td>
<td>“Heart”</td>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>Good: completely unintegrated</td>
<td>- Only the eyes, teeth, and nails change</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix III. Shapeshifter Texts, in which Characters Transform into Wolves Instead of Human/Beast Hybrid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female Werewolf</th>
<th>Level of Integration</th>
<th>Fate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Wilderness</em></td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Alice White</td>
<td>• conflicted and fearful about her dual nature</td>
<td>Permanent shift to wolf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Smallville: “Skinwalker”</em></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Kyla Willowbrook</td>
<td>• unconflicted about her dual nature • willing to kill those who oppose her</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Blood and Chocolate</em></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Vivian</td>
<td>• resistant and conflicted about her dual nature • turns back on pack members</td>
<td>Survives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix IV. Chronological List of Films and Television Shows Featuring Female Werewolves

(Smaller titles are unavailable on DVD.)

*The Werewolf* (1913)

*Cry of the Werewolf* (1944)

*La Loba* (1965)

*La Lupa Mannara* (1976)

aka *Werewolf Woman*

*The Howling* (1981)

  *The Howling II: Your Sister is a Werewolf* (1985)
  *The Howling IV: The Original Nightmare* (1988)
  *The Howling VI: The Freaks* (1991) (V)


*My Mom’s a Werewolf* (1988)

“She-Wolf of London” (1990-1991)

*Full Eclipse* (1993) (TV)

*Wolf* (1994)


*Wilderness* (1997) (TV)

*House of Frankenstein* (1997) (TV)
American Werewolf in Paris (1997)

The Curse (1999)

“Charmed” (1998-2006)
- “The Wendigo” episode aired Feb. 3, 1999

- “Wild at Heart” episode aired Nov. 9, 1999

Ginger Snaps (2000)

Blood Moon (2001) (TV)
aka Wolf Girl


Blood of the Werewolf (2001) (V)

Wolfhound (2002) (V)

Dog Soldiers (2002)

“Smallville” (2001-present)
- “Skinwalker” episode aired Nov. 26, 2002

“Angel” (1999-2004)
- “Unleashed” episode aired Oct. 15, 2003

Dark Wolf (2003) (V)


Cursed (2005)

Curse of the Wolf (2006) (V)

Werewolf in a Woman’s Prison (2006) (V)

Skinwalkers (2006)

Werewolf: The Devil’s Hound (2007) (V)

Blood and Chocolate (2007)

“The Dresden Files” (2007)
   - “Hair of the Dog” episode aired Feb. 11, 2007

“Supernatural” (2005-present)
   - “Heart” episode aired March 22, 2007
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Figure 9: screen capture from: Craven, Wes. "Cursed." 99 minutes. USA: Dimension Films, Miramax Home Entertainment, 2005.


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