

**‘The Killing Moon Will Come Too Soon. Fate Up Against Your Will’?: The Myth-Ridden Figure of the Werewolf and Its Cinematic Representations of Tormented Masculinity and the Grotesque Body**

**Caroline Langhorst**

**Institute for Film, Theatre and Empirical Cultural Studies at the University of Mainz  
(Germany)**

Forcefully emphasising the dichotomy between mind and body, human and animal, the enigmatically ambivalent figure of the werewolf has been interpreted as a highly expressive manifestation of various deeply-ingrained societal and basic human fears and desires. Its inherent hybridity as a paradoxical composite entity, effectively highlighting the grotesque melding of human and animalistic appearance and therewith connoted modes of behaviour, first led to its being generally stigmatised as the mysterious intruder from the margin - and therefore menacing ‘Other’, potentially signifying a disruption of the patriarchal order - before its ultimate integration into mainstream culture. Taking a step back from contemporary representations of troubled teenage werewolves, this paper aims to scrutinise iconic cinematic portrayals (especially those by Universal and Hammer’s *The Curse of the Werewolf*, UK 1961) of the fatally doomed, melancholy and (self-)destructive werewolf which have played a pivotal role in consolidating certain aspects of the myth as well as the enduring presence of its iconography due to their specific focus on the body, its metamorphosis as a visual metaphor for tormented masculinity and the intriguing acting of the respective leading men. In order to demonstrate how several by now deemed stereotypical (e.g. the wolfish physiognomy, the curse) as well as some still transgressive elements (drawing their disruptive power from the transgressive nature of the grotesque body and its evocation of Blakean attraction and repulsion, see Edwards and Graulund 2013) are employed, a comparative glance - including the 2010 remake of *The Wolf Man* (USA 1941) - will be taken at the depiction of fragile gender constructions, the grotesque physicality, which also becomes apparent in the films as a form of Gothic monstrosity (see Halberstam 1995 and du Coudray 2006) and the corresponding generic intertextuality (e.g. the inwardly torn and brooding rendering of both Reed’s and Del Toro’s characters in a Byronic manner).

**Caroline Langhorst** recently completed her MA in Film Studies and is currently working on her PhD thesis on intermedial representations of sub- and countercultural tendencies in anglophone cultures at the Institute of Film, Theatre and Empirical Cultural Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. Her main research interests include British and American cinema, literature and culture, Gender (particularly constructions of masculinity) and Gothic Studies, youth cultures and subcultures as well as the counterculture of the 1960s.