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# Howling (and Bleeding) at the Moon: Menstruation, Monstrosity and the Double in the *Ginger Snaps* Werewolf Trilogy

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Howling (and Bleeding) at the Moon: Menstruation, Monstrosity and the Double in the  
*Ginger Snaps* Werewolf Trilogy by Erin M. Flaherty

**Abstract**

In this essay, I explore the radical reframing of the traditional werewolf narrative with respect to the figure of the double and the abject female body in the *Ginger Snaps* werewolf trilogy. Notable theorists discussed herein include Barbara Creed, Carol Clover, Julia Kristeva, April Miller and Robin Wood.

Throughout both its folkloric and cinematic history, the creature of the werewolf has been constructed almost invariably as a male monster suffering within a Jekyll and Hyde-like narrative of the double. An otherwise exemplary member of Robin Wood's society of surplus repression, the male lycanthrope is doomed to endure a monthly transformation into monstrous, murderous beast, the Other that challenges normality through its very existence. The agony of the male werewolf, therefore, is generally believed to exist only with regard to the regret he feels for the previous night's violent excesses. However, it is actually the male lycanthrope's bodily alignment with the female Other that causes his distress. Forced to confront an abject body tied to a monthly lunar cycle, the male werewolf is feminized. Not only does the sufferer's body not respect the boundary between human and animal, but the tentative boundary between male and female is also violated, and it is this transgression that accounts for the true agony of the classic male werewolf.

The *Ginger Snaps* werewolf cycle challenges this narrative by situating lycanthropy within the lives of female teenagers Ginger and Brigitte Fitzgerald. Following the subgenre's typical trajectory, Ginger is bitten by a werewolf, thus

becoming a werewolf herself, and her younger sister, Brigitte, attempts to save her. However, by transmuting the werewolf narrative from the male to the female, the implications of the doppelganger narrative must change. By virtue of her abject female body, Ginger is already marginalized and constructed as Other in the suburban world in which she lives. There is no monstrous double for Ginger, for as a menstruating female she has always been this monster. As a result, Ginger eventually embraces her lycanthropy and in doing so also embraces her identity as a woman. She becomes the “goddamn force of nature” of her teenage dreams, and unlike the male werewolf, whose monstrosity is a nightmarish shadow of his own normality, Ginger’s monstrosity is her own reflection, an unwavering look at a fantastic self otherwise unattainable to her in the world she lives.

Yet *Ginger Snaps* is still a doppelganger narrative. It is Brigitte who suffers under the agony of Ginger’s transformation, for in losing Ginger, Brigitte loses her identity as well. Brigitte longs for the reconciliation of her and her sister, but as the two have become two distinct persons in Ginger’s monstrosity, this is impossible. Coded as Carol Clover’s Final Girl figure, Brigitte destroys her sister, thereby coming to stand for the symbolic order she resists so enthusiastically at the start of the film.

However, despite their radically different engagements with monstrosity, both Ginger and Brigitte are punished. It appears that as subversive as the *Ginger Snaps* films are in respect to the werewolf narrative, they also reflect a deep cultural ambivalence about female identity. It is only together that the girls can triumph, making the *Ginger Snaps* cycle a powerful statement on the power of relationality between females in the construction and maintenance of self.

Howling (and Bleeding) at the Moon:  
Menstruation, Monstrosity and the Double in the *Ginger Snaps* Werewolf Trilogy

**I. “Looked Like a Lycanthrope to Me, Sir:” The History of the Wolf (wo)Man**

Long before Lon Chaney Jr.’s role as the cursed Larry Talbot in 1941’s *The Wolf Man*, the figure of the werewolf had prowled the annals of regional folklores dating as far back as the Roman Empire (Douglas 60). Much like the victim of the curse himself, the legend of the werewolf has undergone dramatic transformations, often reflecting the superstitions and particularities of the culture in which it appears. The werewolf of European and Native American cultures, for example, metamorphosed into the wereleopard and werehyena of Africa (Douglas 61), reflecting a fear of dominant predators similar to that of Europe, where “the wolf is one of the largest carnivorous animals” (Douglas 60). The ancient Greeks and Romans viewed the werewolf almost metaphorically as “an assessment of human morality,” while Christian scriptures use the figure to “warn of Satan’s ability to prey upon spiritual weakness” (Miller 282). It was in the sixteenth century that lycanthropy was first identified as “a disease, not a transformation,” a medical problem whereby “the patient imagined himself to be a wolf, and had the instincts and propensities of a wolf” (Miller 283), yet it is also in the sixteenth century that the Continent, particularly France, “underwent a blood bath of lycanthropy,” during which “suspected or merely disliked persons [were] dragged to their death” on charges of becoming a ravenous wolf by the light of the moon (Douglas 62). Clearly, these first attempts to situate lycanthropy within a disturbed human mind were no match for a centuries-long tradition of werewolf folklore, speaking as the creature does to basic and often irrational human fears and superstitions.

Yet despite the werewolf's dynamic transcultural history, it is mainly through film that we are acquainted with "the anguished and tragic Wolf Man torn between his human and lupine urges [that dominates] representations of the werewolf in the twentieth century" (Miller 282). Arguably beginning with 1941's *The Wolf Man*, the werewolf narrative has come to function almost exclusively as a narrative of the double, a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde-like articulation of man's deepest repressions. The victims of the curse of the werewolf are "doomed to walk as normal men by day and stalk as beasts beneath the full moon of night" (Hogan 43). They are beings forever made to suffer under recollections of their insatiable bloodlust the night before, and it is as both man and beast that the werewolf of today is known, his human nature coming to define that of the monster and vice-versa. Yet despite some modern variation on the myth, the most consistent characteristic of the werewolf of today's horror film and its superstitious past is evident in the very etymology of the word itself. He is *volkodlak* in Transylvania and the Slavic nations, *loup-garou* in France, *warwulf* for the Scots, and *werewolf* for the Germans, all of which mean the same as our "werewolf." With "were" meaning man, "werewolf" literally translates to "man-wolf" (Douglas 60). Despite the "powerful feminine archetype" of a cyclic, lunar-ruled monthly transformation, the werewolf – both historically and cinematically - is almost invariably male (Miller 284).

John Fawcett's *Ginger Snaps* werewolf cycle is a rare exception to this centuries-long tradition. By explicitly linking female pubescence with lycanthropy, the films situate the werewolf myth where it might seem to fit more naturally: within the life of a menstruating teenage girl. However, by transmuting the werewolf from the male to the female, the implications of the doppelganger narrative change. Already marginalized and

constructed as Other, the woman's confrontation with monstrosity must differ from that of the man, who is a part of the repressive symbolic order. Monstrosity then becomes not a "shadow" of normality, as Robin Wood claims, but rather a reflection of the already monstrous female (32). This image does much to explain Ginger Fitzgerald's eventual embrace of her lycanthropy, for as a woman she is already a monster - long before she grows fur and howls at the moon. Yet *Ginger Snaps* is still a narrative of the double, for it is Ginger's sister Brigitte who assumes the suffering, anguished counterpart to Ginger's unbridled werewolfism. Still, for their radically different engagements with monstrosity and the society it challenges, both girls are tragically punished, thus revealing the films as powerful statements on the necessity of female relationality in constructing and maintaining the female self.

## II. "Forget the Hollywood Rules:" The Wolf Man's Menstruation

In his essay "The American Nightmare: Horror in the 70s," Robin Wood describes a formula for the horror film in which a society's "surplus" repression ultimately results in the manifestation of the monstrous Other, that which challenges and thereby defines the normality of the society from which it was born (25). Differentiating between "basic repression," that which is essential to the development of a functional human being, Wood defines "surplus" repression as "the process whereby people are conditioned from earliest infancy to take on predetermined roles within [a] culture;" it is that which "makes us into monogamous heterosexual bourgeois patriarchal capitalists" (25). In such a world, sexual energy is repressed and sublimated, creating the "ideal" member of society, a being whose "sexuality is sufficiently fulfilled by the monogamous heterosexual union necessary for the reproduction of future ideal inhabitants" (26).

Inextricably linked to this surplus repression and the construction of normality is the concept of the Other: “Otherness represents that which bourgeois ideology cannot recognize or accept,” what is repressed in a society or the Self (27). In the horror film, this “dramatization of the dual concept of the repressed/the Other” is the Monster, and it is the “struggle for recognition of all that our civilization represses or oppresses” that is the true theme of the horror film (28). Drawing heavily on Freudian theory, Wood ultimately argues that “in a society built on monogamy and family,” the inevitable surplus repression of sexual energy will “strive to return” and be expressed in the form of the Other (32).

Wood focuses his argument of Monster as Other in what he identifies as the “privileged form” of surplus repression: the “figure of the doppelganger, alter ego, or double” (31). The “*locus classicus*” of this narrative is inarguably Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, where “normality and Monster are two aspects of the same person” (Wood 31). An upstanding doctor and citizen, Dr. Henry Jekyll struggles with his repressed nature, manifested in the deformed and violent Mr. Edward Hyde. In Rouben Mamoulian’s 1931 film adaptation of the tale, Jekyll laments the sad state of man in Victorian England: “the soul of man, Jekyll says, is composed of two selves. One of these selves ‘strives for nobility,’ while the other, the bad self, ‘seeks an expression of impulses that bind (man) to some dim animal relation’” (Hogan 31). Hyde functions as Wood’s Other, the monstrous manifestation of a society’s surplus repression. Yet it is not only through Jekyll’s normality that Hyde’s monstrosity is explored. Instead, it is through the challenge that Hyde presents to this repressive society that the very normality of that society – with Jekyll as its main representative – is

defined. As Wood notes, “the doppelganger motif reveals the Monster as normality’s shadow” (32). As a result, the very boundaries of the “monogamous heterosexual bourgeois patriarchal capitalists” are continually defined through their confrontation with the Other (25).

It is a small jump from Dr. Jekyll to the agonized figure of the male werewolf as the consummate example of the double figure. Classically, the tragedy of the werewolf is that, “save for the hours when the taint is upon him, the werewolf leads a completely normal human existence” (Douglas 63). Like Dr. Jekyll, he is a privileged member of the repressed society that Wood describes. It is in the contrast between his human and animal states that the horror of this particular monster exists. As Drake Douglass notes in his description of the classic werewolf:

The true agony lies in the fact that this previously honest citizen, once the nightly horror is over and he returns to his normal form, is fully aware of what he has done. The ferocious beast, lying in wait to rip and rend the unwary traveler, may, during the hours of daylight, be a gentle man, a loving husband and father, who would consciously harm no one (65).

The male werewolf is sentenced to a lifetime of morning-afters where he must confront the previous night’s excess. As a result, the monstrosity of the transformed moments where he feels “wonderfully free and unfettered” are largely defined by his non-monstrous self, his adherence to the social norms and constructions that define his place in society (Douglas 69). There is a distinct separation between human and monster, and it is his own violation as Other of the boundaries he truly believes to be essential to society that constitute much of the suffering of the male lycanthrope.

Yet chronic remorse does not a monster make, and it is therefore not enough to stop here in exploring the particular horror of the male werewolf. Instead, I argue that it is this figure's relationship to Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject and his subsequent bodily alignment with another ungraspable Other, the woman, that constitutes the true agony of this creature. Essential to the construct of the Other, the abject is that which "does not respect borders, positions, rules;" it is that which "disturbs identity, system, and order" (Kristeva 4). But while existing beyond the subject and the societal borders drawn to define that subject, the abject simultaneously comes from within: "it is not something of which the subject can ever feel free – it is always there, beckoning the self to take up its place, the place where meaning collapses" (Creed 70). Abjection is what Wood's society born of surplus repression turns to for meaning, for it is the continual confrontation and challenge presented by the abject that defines that world. As Barbara Creed notes in her seminal essay, "Horror and the monstrous-feminine," "Although the subject must exclude the abject, it must, nevertheless, be tolerated, for that which threatens to destroy life also helps to define life" (69). With respect to the physical body, the abject is excrement, urine, semen or menstrual blood; it is anything that was once a part of the body but now must be confronted as outside of or removed from that body. The abject is a hair – once so acceptable when attached to one's scalp - found tangled up with the food one is eating. Here, the disembodied hair is somewhat missed as no longer part of the whole body, yet this very position is also the cause of traumatic, often physical revulsion. But the abject is not limited to the body and can be extended to contain all marginalized social groups; it is women, homosexuals, prostitutes, the handicapped or any Other who exists outside the symbolic order, thereby helping to define that order. In

the horror film, it is the Monster as Other, as the manifestation of what is repressed, as an abject body of ooze, blood and excrement, that comes to challenge and subsequently define the life described by Wood.

The werewolf, whose body “signifies a collapse of the boundaries between human and animal,” seems the consummate monster with respect to the abject and the double (Creed 70). The boundary between animal and man is perhaps the most primal border in the construction of human society, and it is in relation to that boundary that the male werewolf is invariably constructed. As Kristeva writes, “The abject confronts us... with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of *animal*,” and there is no creature that dwells within that forbidden territory more totally than the Wolf Man (12). But the male werewolf’s abjection is not limited to the boundary between human and animal. Forced to confront a body that is now tied to a monthly transformation demarcated by blood, bodily excrements and temperament changes, the male werewolf also infringes on “the whole edifice of clear-cut sexual differentiation that bourgeois-capitalist ideology erects on the flimsy and dubious foundations of biological difference” (Wood 26). In short, the Wolf Man gets his period, and the boundary between male and female is crossed.

It is this bodily alignment with the female that is the true horror felt and represented by the male werewolf. As Wood explains:

In a male-dominated culture, where power, money, law, and social institutions are controlled by past, present, and future patriarchs, woman as the Other assumes particular significance... on to women men project

their own innate, repressed femininity in order to disown it as inferior (to be called “unmanly” – i.e. like a woman – is the supreme insult) (27).

The male werewolf, by virtue of his own abject body, is now “like a woman,” his transformation profoundly linked with the archetypal “female bodily cycle of transformation” (Miller 284). In complete confrontation with the classic view of the werewolf as “masculinity carried to an outrageous extreme,” the werewolf is actually aligned with femininity carried to an extreme (Hogan 43). As a woman’s menstrual cycle has come to be defined by monthly blood loss, physical changes, vicious temperaments and insatiable appetites, so is the werewolf’s transformation. Lycanthropy then becomes something of an exaggerated femininity, as both are defined by similar bodily symptoms within the same monthly timeframe.

It is therefore quite reasonable to suggest that the horror represented by the figure of the werewolf goes beyond a mere manifestation of deeply repressed desires in the form of a Jekyll and Hyde-like double. The tragedy of the male werewolf is believed to lie exclusively in the deep anguish he feels in violating the very societal boundaries he has come to live under. He is Wood’s “monogamous heterosexual bourgeois patriarchal [capitalist],” and as that ungraspable bestial Other under the full moon, he comes to define his human self and the world that has constructed it (25). It is the contrast presented by these two states of being that causes him pain, as well as his inability to reconcile his two selves, controlled as they are by deep-reaching societal pressures. Monstrosity becomes, as Wood notes, his normal self’s shadow, a shadow cast only during the full moon. But it is also the male werewolf’s alignment with the female as Other that causes him distress. Through abjection, his own body is coded as

irrepressively female: he undergoes painful physical symptoms, grows hair where hair did not exist before and bleeds uncontrollably until his transformation is complete. But it is the cyclic nature of his abject body that most clearly marks the male werewolf as feminine, for he is now a part of the monthly transformation that comes to define all women as abject and outside the society his human self is a part of: “during certain times of the month – is it ever noticed that it is during the time of the full moon? – he behaves as one living under some particular horror” (Douglas 70). It is a horror that exists beyond the male werewolf’s comprehension, yet it is the same horror that is completely knowable to those marginalized Others who are defined at least partially by their own monthly transformation.

### **III. “Wrists are for Girls; I’m Slitting My Throat:” Ginger Fitzgerald’s Monstrosity**

And so what of the male werewolf’s sisters in pain, those conspicuously absent from the vast literatures of the lycanthrope? Surely situating the werewolf in the female, whose already abject self is defined by a monthly transformation all its own, must alter the narrative and its meanings substantially. 2000’s *Ginger Snaps* takes up this story of the She-Wolf by transmuting lycanthropy from anguished male to teenage females coming to terms with normal adolescent changes.<sup>1</sup> The film follows the lives of the Fitzgerald sisters, misanthropic teenagers resisting the predetermined societal roles of their suburban Canadian home, a composite example of Wood’s world of surplus repression. To Ginger and Brigitte Fitzgerald, “Life in Bailey Downs” offers them nothing, and so they resist through an obsession with death and a sisterly bond that exists

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<sup>1</sup> To be fair, *Ginger Snaps* is not the first film to situate the werewolf myth within the lives of pubescent teenagers. 1957’s *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (Dir. Gene Fowler Jr.) and 1985’s *Teen Wolf* (Dir. Rod Daniel) also depict teenage monstrosity, but as both are concerned exclusively with the masculinity of their werewolves, both conform to the traditional confines of the Wolf Man previously detailed in this paper.

at the exclusion of all others. Yet they cannot escape their own biology, and Ginger's entrance into menses signifies her inevitable participation in a predefined sexual economy, the ultimate in "going average," to the girls. However, the addition of a werewolf attack to this standard story of "two sisters who are extremely close... growing apart" saves Ginger from her mundane fate as she becomes markedly unaverage in her bodily transformation ("*Rue Morgue...*"). Already constructed as the abject Other by the society in which she lives, Ginger eventually comes to embrace her lycanthropy and by extension, her identity as woman. She becomes the "goddamn force of nature" of her teenage dreams, and unlike the male werewolf, whose monstrosity is a nightmarish shadow of his own normality, Ginger's monstrosity is her own reflection, an unwavering look at a fantastic self otherwise unattainable to her in the world she lives.

Reading almost like a perverted real estate listing, Wood's description of the world of surplus repression from which monstrosity inevitably emerges is a portrait of suburbia. It is a place defined by normality and sameness, and it is therefore no coincidence that the suburban landscape provides the unchanging background for countless horror films.<sup>2</sup> *Ginger Snaps'* Bailey Downs is one such example. Coded as inescapably banal and limiting, the suburb functions not only as a contrast to the "Beast of Bailey Downs" but also to the Fitzgerald sisters. As April Miller notes in her essay "The Hair that Wasn't There Before: Demystifying Monstrosity and Menstruation in *Ginger Snaps* and *Ginger Snaps Unleashed*," "the opening shots of *Ginger Snaps* immediately construct the subdivision as oppressive and monotonous" (298). The film begins with three shots of identical suburban homes to the ambient noise of moving wind;

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<sup>2</sup> See *Carrie* (DePalma 1976), *Halloween* (Carpenter 1978), *Poltergeist* (Hooper 1982), *Nightmare on Elm Street* (Craven 1984), *Stephen King's It* (Wallace 1990), and *The People Under the Stairs* (Craven 1991) for further examples of suburban horror.

there are no flourishes of personality or individuality visible, not even a tree – only evenly spaced powerline towers dotting an industrial background. Both the natural and human landscapes are dreary browns and grays, visually uninspiring, sterile. A tracking shot of the desolate outskirts of town follows, focusing first on a sign identifying the suburb, with impending irony, as “A Safe and Caring Community.” The film cuts to a young boy playing in his sandbox while his mother performs the dutiful suburban task of raking leaves nearby. From the opening shots, we are to infer that this family unit is representative of the whole, that there is nothing remarkable here, that they are just one of many. The woman approaches her son to see what he is playing with (and has smeared across his face), only to discover that it is a severed dog paw. Although she knows what we also know to be true, the film still follows her as she peers around the corner to inspect the yard’s dog house. She screams while an eye-line match tracking shot moves down the mutilated body and eventual entrails of Baxter, the family dog. Yet, as Miller writes: “not even the violent actions of the “beast of Bailey Downs” can shake this sleepy neighborhood out of its rut; boys stop playing street hockey for only a moment, and neighbors continue to rake their yards, completely unaffected by the woman’s wails (299).” It appears that in the monotonous, banal community of Bailey Downs, even the deaths of family pets have become commonplace.

The suburban oppressiveness of Bailey Downs is further defined through the Fitzgerald sisters’ mother and peers. “God, I hate our gene pool,” Ginger says to Brigitte in our first introduction to their mother, whom the girls irreverently refer to as “Pamela” as a way to resist traditional parental authority. For the matriarch of the Fitzgerald family is the consummate suburban mom: she drives a minivan, has dinner on the table for her

family every night, spends her time crafting flower arrangements for the home and enthusiastically wears decorative scrunchies and headbands in her hair. She is well-meaning in her concern for her daughters, but incorrectly views them only as “restless ‘tweens’” with an abnormally close bond (Young 244). At school, life is little better. Ginger and Brigitte must continually confront the “cheerleading, obsessive fashion-showing, and compulsive heterosexing high school culture that only leaves them feeling isolated and alienated” (Young 244). For the girls, school is just a “mindless little breeder’s machine, a total hormonal toilet,” just another part of a life they just don’t want.

It is no wonder then that as the film progresses, the Fitzgerald sisters’ relationship seems to “[border] on something unhealthy, antisocial, or even psychopathic” (Miller 292) when their “only defense[s]” against this mundane existence are each other and a suicide pact (Young 244). Unable and unwilling to participate in the life expected of adolescent females in Bailey Downs, the girls turn to death as an escape: “fascinated with their own deaths, they take theatrical photographs of themselves as suicide victims; bloodily impaled on fences, poisoned, drowned, hanged, all in extreme graphic detail” for a school project entitled, appropriately enough, “Life in Bailey Downs” (Briefel 25). The stuttering disbelief of their guidance counselor indicates just how outside the comfortable confines of Bailey Downs the girls exist. As Martin Marker et. al. discuss in “Menstrual Monsters: The reception of the *Ginger Snaps* cult horror franchise:” “this montage of murder and mayhem not only demonstrates the duo’s disgust at the banality of their suburban surroundings, it also proclaims their self-stylized exclusion from the heterosexually fuelled dynamics of the teen scene” (69). No place exists for the girls, be it among their peers or family. Acutely aware of this isolation, Brigitte and Ginger can

find no better way to resist the monotonous, compulsively heterosexual life forced upon them in suburban Canada than to opt out of it entirely through at least the fantasy of suicide, “the ultimate ‘fuck-you,’” as Ginger calls it.

Yet despite the girls’ enthusiastic resistance in dreams of death and black clothing, in fact they share the traditional values of the homogenous bourgeoisie they live among, particularly in their perception of womanhood, and by extension their own selves. For the suburban world of *Ginger Snaps* is one recognizable to all women; it is a world wherein femaleness and menstruation are socially and rhetorically constructed as a contradiction: to become a woman is to enter into a predetermined sexual economy as a valued commodity, yet it is also to be rendered weak, undesirable and abject, to be sentenced to a fringe life of 28-day cycles and “feminine hygiene” products. As their mother emphatically notes, both girls are “three years late menstruating” and therefore exist outside of the “normalizing, reproductive order valued by their suburban community” (Miller 291). In contrast, their female classmates, exemplified by the pretty, popular and apparently sexually active Trina Sinclair, are valued participants of this heterosexual exchange. These girls compete for the attentions of their male classmates, bouncing up and down in cute outfits on their high school’s athletics field; they “like [their] shorts stuck up their ass” and “[seek] matching barrettes in the hair dye aisle on nothing but diet pills and laxatives.” They are the breeders of the high school world, exemplifying and adhering to what Wood identifies as, “the social norms of masculinity and femininity, the social definitions of manliness and womanliness, [and] the whole vast apparatus of oppressive male/female myths” that form “human beings for specific predetermined social roles” (26). It is an existence Ginger and Brigitte want nothing to do

with, yet due to their reproductive capacity and willingness to play, the menarche girls of Bailey Downs are valued in a way the Fitzgerald sisters cannot be.

Not only unwilling but also unable to participate in this world due to their late menses, the girls are forced to define menstruation and femaleness on their own through the conflicting messages of their community and of the other women in their lives. As Miller notes, Ginger “finds menstruation distressing because the examples set before her by other adolescent girls suggest that menstruation must be equated with weakness” (290). After receiving her first period, Ginger bemoans to her sister, “If I start simpering around tampon dispensers and moaning about PMS, shoot me, okay?” To be a woman is to be weak, subject to cramps, uncontrollable mood swings and raging hormones, an existence the ardently defiant Ginger cannot possibly conceive of having. In menstruation, Ginger sees only “the denial to women of drives culturally associated with masculinity: activeness, aggression, self-assertion, organizational power, creativity itself” (Wood 26). The girls’ mother unsuccessfully attempts to romanticize menses, ritualistically celebrating Ginger’s first period with a brightly decorated sponge cake. “Congratulations, sweetie... Our little girl’s a young woman now” she declares to the obviously uncomfortable Mr. Fitzgerald, who only days before had expressed “his revulsion at overhearing a discussion to do with female reproductive processes at his dinner table” (Barker 69). To Pamela, however, her oldest daughter’s long-awaited menstruation is a moment for celebration and female unity, as well as for relief now that Ginger has entered the sexual economy so essential to life in Bailey Downs. But even Pamela cannot contain her initial revulsion at the reality of Ginger’s bodily transformation. Pulling Ginger’s darkly stained underwear from the laundry basket,

Pamela's shock and repulsion is clearly evident on her face. It appears that despite her motherly assertion that menses is "the most natural thing in the world," her innate response to her daughter's natural change is one of horror.

Seeking reassurance that Ginger's bodily symptoms are normal, Brigitte and Ginger receive a description of the female reproductive process that utilizes the grotesque rhetoric that has come to construct menstruation and femaleness as an abject process of "embarrassment, shame, guilt, [and] desire" (Creed 73). The sisters are told to expect "a thick, syrupy voluminous discharge," which is "squeezed out like a pump;" the nurse "likens the blood to a kind of 'garbage.'" She further accentuates this by calling the 'discharge' a 'brownish [or] blackish sludge'" (Barker 69). What Pamela celebrates, the school nurse constructs with ugly, standardized medical rhetoric. The effect the nurse's words have on Ginger is evident in the increasingly disgusted look on her face, yet she is assured that it is "all perfectly normal" and should be expected "every twenty-eight days – give or take – for the next thirty years." The girls are then handed condoms with the admonishment to "play safe," thereby explicitly linking Ginger's bleeding with her new reproductive potential, and by extension her new social position. From this brief encounter with a representative expert on the rite-of-passage transformation Ginger is supposedly experiencing, the girls are taught that it is "normal" not only to bleed once a month, but also to view this process as undesirable, abject, weak and filthy, as a hygiene issue that at its core "implicates all women in the reproductive process" (Miller 290).

Ginger and Brigitte's trip to a Bailey Downs drug store to purchase tampons for the first time only reinforces this negative construction of menstruation. Here, Brigitte finds herself confronting the overwhelming aisle of feminine products, an

acknowledgement of “the tendency to see menstruation as a ‘hygiene’ [issue] – indicated by the ‘feminine hygiene’ row identifier hanging above Brigitte’s head” (Miller 295). Framed in a medium close-up shot from a high angle, Brigitte is made to look small and unsure as she studies the shelf before her. Behind her is an almost comically repetitious assortment of brightly-packaged feminine products: hair dye (each face on the box obediently facing the same way), pregnancy tests, vaginal creams, etc. A quick series of inexact shot and reverse shots follow, acting as a formal representation of Brigitte’s uncertain negotiation of the tampon boxes she is studying. In the end, all she can offer Ginger in an attempt to make sense of the endlessly repetitious products is to say, “this one comes with a free calendar.” A straight cut to a long shot frames both sisters, Brigitte holding the tampon box and Ginger bent over in increasing pain. The one-point-perspective created from the camera’s position dramatically elongates the two shelves on either side of the girls, giving the impression that they stretch onward forever (or at least the next thirty years). And this is the implication: menstruation means an endless repetition of brightly colored feminine products, all of which are the same, all of which are normal, and all of which are ultimately inescapable.

Having grown up in this world where menstruation is constructed as a filthy hygiene issue signifying weakness, homogeny and the compulsive participation of all women in an uneven reproductive economy, it is no wonder that Ginger is nearly in tears at the first sight of her own menstrual blood. After lifting her skirt to discover a bright red flow of blood, Ginger tellingly looks from side to side, as though to check if anyone has seen her in her first moment of weakness. She is filled with shame, and in a quivering voice tells her sister that she has received “the curse,” to which her sister can only reply a

disgusted “ew.” As Miller notes, “in short, menstruation symbolizes women’s paradoxical roles as life-givers and life destroyers, and menstrual blood comes to represent ‘shame, difference, castration, filth, reproductive power, disease, and death to the Other’” (289). Unfortunately, Ginger and Brigitte’s perception of menstruation and their own value as women is in line with the dominant ideology described here. Their construction of self is in “relation to taboos which construct their procreative functions as abject,” the “menstruation rites which reflect so negatively on them” (Creed 75).<sup>3</sup> Menstruation is disgusting, degrading and weak. It is a marker of sexual difference between men and women, with women always coming out the worse. But perhaps most horrifying to the sisters is its inevitability: “I mean God, kill yourself to be different and your own body betrays you” Ginger laments (Miller 290). Menstrual blood comes to stand for the “danger issuing from within identity (social or sexual)” (Creed 73). It is an inescapable marker of Woman as Other, as the abject, as a marginalized figure outside the symbolic order of the phallus. For all their talk of suicide and death, the girls will still bleed, and to them this marker of femaleness is a fate worse than death.

As peculiar outcasts, both Ginger and Brigitte refuse the predetermined roles forced upon them by world of Bailey Downs. Neither are “a slut, a bitch, a tease, or the virgin next door,” and so the girls therefore exist outside the compulsively heterosexual sociality that comes to define the lives of their peers. However, when Ginger receives her period, she is not only implicated in this world by virtue of her newly realized reproductive capacity, but also marginalized as the abject Other. She becomes “the

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<sup>3</sup> Though not specifically discussing *Ginger Snaps* in her essay “Horror and the monstrous-feminine,” Creed’s closing notes on Kristeva’s failure to address female engagement with menstrual taboos are particularly relevant to a discussion of Ginger and Brigitte’s construction of self with respect to these taboos.

monstrous-feminine, as constructed within/by a patriarchal and phallogentric ideology... related intimately to the problem of sexual difference and castration” (Creed 67). Her identity becomes “male created and male controlled,” for she is not like a man (Wood 27), and as a result she is prepared for her “subordinate, dependent role in our culture” (Wood 26). Upon getting her period, Ginger becomes in body, if not in spirit, a valued participant in the heterosexual economy that Bailey Downs functions under. She is “good to go” as Jason McCarty notes while ogling Ginger’s newly developed body. Yet her transformed body also challenges this dominant order, of which Jason and his compulsively heterosexing peers are a part of. She now bleeds once a month, her menstrual blood denoting her as abject Other with respect to Jason and the phallogentric world he represents. As a result, Ginger’s womanhood is both cherished as a necessary part of society and regarded as inferior, disgusting, a marker of sexual difference that must be contained and controlled, rendered safe and useable by privileged members of the symbolic order. In the challenge her menstruating body posits to normality, Ginger is thereby the Monster of Bailey Downs even without the taint of the werewolf. Of course, the same can be said of Ginger’s female peers. Despite Ginger’s obsessive self-construction as misanthropic outcast, her female body flattens any superficial distinction that exists between her and, say, that Bailey Downs representative of teenage procreative culture, Trina Sinclair. Ginger’s eventual embrace of her lycanthropy may be partially explained by her predisposition to black clothing and fringe living, but nonetheless, all the women of Bailey Downs are monsters by virtue of their own femaleness.

It is due to this alignment with woman as Other, as Monster, that *Ginger Snaps* constructs Ginger’s lycanthropic and pubescent transformations as coinciding and

indistinguishable. Immediately after receiving her period, Ginger is attacked by a “hideous, dog-like creature... in a gruesome and sexually violent fashion, pinning her to the ground, slashing her thighs and tearing at her abdomen” (Miller 284).<sup>4</sup> Though Ginger and to a lesser extent Brigitte remain ignorant of what has actually transpired, our own familiarity with the figure of the werewolf allows us to project into the diegetic futures of the girls: Ginger has been bitten by a lycanthrope, and her own subsequent transformation is imminent. But the importance is that both menstrual change and lycanthropic change are introduced at the same point in the narrative and are developed as parallel. Brigitte immediately draws a possible connection between the attack and Ginger’s menstrual blood; studying the wounds of a bleeding and distraught Ginger, Brigitte offers that she “saw this thing once on bears. It said that a bear’ll like, come after a girl on the rag ‘cause of the smell.” But Ginger is right that the beast “wasn’t a fucking bear.” All the same, Ginger’s accurate assessment of her situation is short lived, as she soon reframes all her markedly unaverage bodily symptoms as “‘normal’ signs of adolescent development and deviance” (Miller 293): Ginger attributes the pains that have her doubled over to menstrual cramps; she attributes her rapid and strange hair growth (“I can’t have a hairy chest, B – that’s fucked!”) to hormones; and she attributes her new insatiable interest in sex to her body’s normal reproductive impulses. As Miller notes, “Ginger avoids questioning her own sanity by maintaining her rational disbelief long after she begins to manifest very concrete, undeniable signs of beastly transformation” (285). In Ginger’s mind, her changing self is only fulfilling the predetermined role of

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<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note the rape elements of this visceral scene. It seems that as soon as Ginger enters the sexual economy she has attempted so vehemently to reject, she is exposed to the darkest side of that economy: as a commodity, she can now be violently taken at any moment without consent. It seems that in more ways than one, Ginger’s bodily transformation truly is her “fucking nightmare.”

woman that the society of Bailey Downs has constructed for her, and it is only after she grows a tail and begins to kill pet dogs that Ginger begins to view her transformation as something other than normal adolescent change.

This convolution of menstrual change and lycanthropic change speaks to the very core of the werewolf narrative. As screenwriter Karen Walton states, the choice of the werewolf story “was the best fit to facilitate the story in which you could actually be confused for a minute about whether someone was just becoming normal or becoming a monster” (“*Rue Morgue...*”). Miller expands on this idea in noting that:

...the imagery of werewolf films has often been associated with the imagery of adolescence and, in the case of female werewolf narratives, the onset of menstruation: both produce unprecedented hair growth, rapid bodily transformations, and uncontrollable, confusing physical urges” (288).

Ginger’s physical and emotional changes appear only as a “symptom of heightened adolescence” (“*Rue Morgue...*”). She has come to expect an inevitable monstrous transformation due to the “degree of disgust... [associated] with female physiological change” that she has been taught to accept as normal (Barker 69). As Ginger views her own body as abject, she can therefore easily maintain the belief that her body is only moving from girl to woman, not human to monster. Yet in her construction as the abject Other, a challenge to the symbolic order of Wood’s monogamous heterosexual bourgeois capitalists, the menstrual woman is already a monster. She is the monstrous-feminine that “the horror film brings about a confrontation with... in order, finally, to eject the abject and re-draw the boundaries between the human and the non-human” (Creed 75). Her

function in society is the same as that of the horror film monster: to threaten normality and eventually be contained and controlled, “signifying the restoration of repression” (Wood 28). Ginger is therefore becoming both woman and monster, for there is no real difference between the two. The very essence of the lycanthrope is aligned with Ginger’s human body: “like witches and vampires, werewolves are linked to menstruation through their parallel reliance on the cycles of the moon and bodily transformations that blur the boundaries between animal and human, inside and outside,” thus Ginger’s indistinguishable lycanthropic and menstrual transformations (Miller 289).

This does much to explain Ginger’s eventual embrace of her lycanthropy at the end of the film. She “learns to derive pleasure from her monstrous identity and the power and sexual satisfaction it affords” (Miller 282). In one of the final confrontations between Ginger and her sister, the implications of Ginger’s transformed self are made clear. She is part beast, part lusty teenage girl as she swaggers down her high school’s hallway to finish the struggling janitor she has just mauled. Though he has done nothing wrong, and in fact has often helped Brigitte, the janitor, a representative of the symbolic order Ginger has come to radically challenge, must be destroyed. “I don’t like the way he looks at you” she explains to Brigitte, thereby protecting her sister, in her own deranged mental process, from the hegemonic order Ginger has come to stand against. She has become both “a masculine fantasy of feminine horror and a phallic female subject” (Miller 300), one who now has access to the sexual and violent longings heretofore repressed in her inescapably “subordinate and dependent” identity (Wood 27). She takes pleasure in her killing, in the blood she licks from her hands: “it feels so good, Brigitte – it’s like touching yourself, you know every move, right on the fucking dot – and after, see fucking

fireworks, supernovas.” She has come to fulfill the destiny that she was made for, and in embracing her identity as monster, Ginger is also embracing her identity as woman.

Noticeably lacking in Ginger’s werewolfism is the anguish and torment of the male lycanthrope. Instead of shame and guilt, Ginger feels the freedom previously denied to her by virtue of her own biology. Because of this, *Ginger Snaps* seems to lack the Jekyll and Hyde double that often characterizes the werewolf narrative. By situating monstrosity within monstrosity, within the already marginalized and abject female, *Ginger Snaps* constructs lycanthropy as an extension of self for the female lycanthrope. In monstrosity, Ginger sees herself as she truly is, as the world of Bailey Downs has constructed her menarchal self. Unto the monster and unto Ginger, for they are one, this world assigns its own repressions and abjections in order to create meaning for itself. Tellingly, Ginger’s transformation does not occur monthly, as does that of the male werewolf. Her bestial transform is gradual but permanent: “for Ginger to be herself – her new self – is to be apart, separate, but the glory of the transformation is too complete: her new self is too much better for her to want it otherwise” (Young 246). This is crucial in *Ginger Snaps*’ reframing of the werewolf narrative. While the traditional male werewolf returns to his normal self, as though his lupine transformation were a hedonistic holiday for his otherwise upstanding self, there is no going back for Ginger. She was always and will always be this creature. Whether as wolf or woman, Ginger Fitzgerald is the Monster throughout.

#### **IV. “I’d Rather Die Than Be What You Are:” Ambivalence, Order and the Double in Brigitte Fitzgerald**

But *Ginger Snaps* is still a doppelganger narrative, though not in the anguished morning-after sense that characterizes most werewolf films. The double of *Ginger Snaps* is Ginger's sister, Brigitte. At the start of the film, the girls are "together forever," one unit "attached at [the] wrist" against the world. But through Ginger's "two-fold 'curse' [of] menstruation and monstrosity," the girls lose this synchronicity and become two distinct persons (Miller 281). The pre-menses Brigitte then functions as the double of Ginger's menstrual monstrosity and inevitably comes to signify the repressive order in her final confrontation with her sister, thereby revealing the film's surprising ambivalence towards the unrestrained female power so celebrated in *Ginger*.

As mentioned before, Ginger and Brigitte's sisterly bond at the start of *Ginger Snaps* is almost abnormally close. Considering the abject construction of the female, it is interesting to note that theirs is a relationship defined through blood in two ways: first, in the exchange of blood in a suicide pact made by the girls at age eight, and second, in the girls' late menstruations. "Out by sixteen or dead in the scene, but together forever," Ginger reminds her sister while reaching out a scarred hand, "the mark of their bond, in solidarity," at the start of the film (Briefel 25). They are sisters united not in life, but in fantasies of death, and it is this "emotional and philosophical intimacy [that] equips them, however precariously, to deal with the cheerleading, obsessive fashion-showing, and compulsive heterosexing high school culture that only leaves them feeling isolated and alienated (Young 244). Coded as outcasts, the girls exist outside of the prescribed social environment of Bailey Downs, so they must turn to one another for life, even if this shared life is expressed through death. But the sisters exist outside of this world biologically as well due to their late menses. They are therefore unable, to say nothing of

unwilling, to engage in the social-sexual world of their peers: they are marked as girls rather than women, and “the result is that they have grown too closely bound to each other in a feminine social that they have created and that they constitute by themselves to the exclusion of everyone” (Young 245). To their peers, parents, and to each other, the Fitzgerald sisters are one against all others.

This relationship changes when Ginger begins both her lycanthropic and menstrual transformations. The sisters “lose their synchronicity and Brigitte fails to safekeep her older sister” (Young 245). As Ginger becomes sexually active, Brigitte becomes the one who is excluded: “the interest that Ginger arouses in her male classmates disgusts her younger sister Brigitte because it represents her entry into a sexualized world that they had vowed to avoid in a pact to never be “average” (Barker 69). Yet it is not only the pain of being left behind that confronts the younger sibling, for Ginger’s change is not limited to a newly awakened sex drive. She is also becoming bloodthirsty and exhibiting physical symptoms irreconcilable with normal adolescence, so the “pre-menarchal Brigitte, who retains her “childish” acceptance of the supernatural, quickly reconciles her belief in werewolves and Ginger’s physical symptoms” (Miller 285). As a result, Brigitte becomes the keeper of knowledge and her sister’s champion, even going so far as to enlist the help of a local drug dealer – Sam, a member of that “third term’ so much privileged elsewhere” – in trying to find a cure for Ginger’s growing monstrosity (Young 245). Brigitte becomes Ginger’s double, the human side suffering under the anguish and terror of Ginger’s acts of violence. But unlike the male werewolf’s double, Brigitte yearns not for the eradication of her other half but rather the

reconciliation. As Suzie Young notes in her essay, “Snapping Up Schoolgirls: Legitimation Crisis in Recent Canadian Horror:”

When Ginger’s hunger becomes the only voice she can hear, Brigitte loses everything – the past and the future – for out of situations and lives that were broken from the beginning, the girls made a life, fashioned an art form, and made meaning all their own (249).

As her other half, Ginger represents life to her sister, and as a result Brigitte risks losing her very self, her own constructed identity, in trying to save her.

However, because Brigitte remains outside of both Ginger’s monstrosity and her womanhood, there can be no reconciliation, no salvation. The sisters have become two distinct persons, no longer the single unit they were “before Ginger became an [O]ther” (Young 248). Still, Brigitte remains “on the side of her big sister, even when she is against her to be with her,” and the pre-menarchal Brigitte comes inevitably to stand for the repressive society she once resisted so enthusiastically with her sibling (Young 248). In her final confrontation with the now fully-transformed Ginger in the basement of their home, Brigitte fulfills her own destiny as Carol Clover’s “Final Girl” figure, “the one who did not die: the survivor,” and in retrospect it appears that she was coded as that character from the start (35). As Clover describes the Final Girl:

She is the Girl Scout, the bookworm, the mechanic. Unlike her girlfriends... she is not sexually active... The Final Girl is also watchful to the point of paranoia; small signs of danger that her friends ignore, she registers. Above all she is intelligent and resourceful in a pinch. Finally,

although she is always smaller and weaker than the killer, she grapples with him energetically and convincingly” (39 – 40).

This is Brigitte, the “intellectual of the two sisters, well-read and emotionally sensitive but also psychologically shrewd” (Barker 74), and because she is boyish, particularly in relation to Ginger’s eventual hyperbolic femininity, she will survive (Clover 40). Though she is presented first as equal to both the scientific Sam and the monstrous Ginger, Brigitte eventually emerges as vastly superior in mental cunning and emotional fortitude. It is no surprise then that as Ginger kills Sam easily and without hesitation, it is only Brigitte who can successfully resist her monstrous sister. And this she does: in a telling moment of double phallic-appropriation, kitchen knife in one hand and monkshood<sup>5</sup> syringe in the other, Brigitte ends the life of her double.

But Brigitte’s assumption of Clover’s Final Girl identity is complicated by the particular monster she challenges. It is not the knife-wielding psychopath of 1970s slasher films in which Clover first identified the Final Girl, but rather Brigitte’s own sister, one who not only revels in her own power but also begs for Brigitte to join her. “It’s so us, B... we’ll be our very own pack, just like before.” Instead, in her killing of Ginger, Brigitte reestablishes the repressive symbolic order of the world described by Wood. Yet considering her position as marginalized Other within this world, it is interesting to consider why Brigitte is ultimately unwilling to join her sister in her monstrosity, though she does infect herself with the lycanthropy taint in an attempt to help Ginger. What was so appealing to Ginger in the figure of the werewolf holds no

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<sup>5</sup> In one of *Ginger Snaps*’ subtle allusions to traditional werewolf folklore, monkshood, also known as wolfsbane, is believed to be a cure for lycanthropy by drug dealer and botanist Sam. Cinematically, the lycanthropic lore of the toxic plant can be traced to the gypsy poem of 1941’s *The Wolf Man*: “Even those who are pure of heart and say their prayers at night / can become a wolf when the wolfsbane blooms and the autumn moon is bright.”

appeal to her sister, who would rather “die than be what [she] is.” But it is important to note that Brigitte is constructed as the Final *Girl*, not the Final *Woman*. For the entire *Ginger Snaps* trilogy, Brigitte’s menses is never explored; she remains a child and therefore is unable to understand the true restrictiveness of woman as Other, what leads Ginger to eventually embrace and enjoy her monstrosity. Brigitte remains outside the heterosexual economy of Bailey Downs by virtue of her own pre-menarchal body. Unlike Ginger, she never becomes a woman and therefore never explores her own innate monstrosity, thus Brigitte can see no appeal in embracing lycanthropy, even if it would mean remaining with her sister. Still, Brigitte fights for Ginger until the end. It is not for normality’s sake, nor her own, that Brigitte drives a knife into her sister’s chest, but for Ginger’s. She releases Ginger from what she assumes is the torment of both her lycanthropy and femaleness, two new facets to Ginger’s self that are ultimately unknowable to her younger sister.

Yet because the film is focalized through Brigitte – “it is to Brigitte and in Brigitte’s view that Ginger has snapped” – one cannot help but share her ambivalence towards Ginger’s monstrosity and eventual fate (Young 248). As Young writes:

Ginger is the daughter of our dreams turned to nightmare: we celebrate her and want her to win, to be all that she can be, all that our docile selves are not; but when this happens, when she becomes a power that cannot be stopped, we fear her even as we fear for her. We imagine a new Ginger but we are more comfortable with the old. As much as we want her to catch flame and burn so brightly that she consumes the wax of a thousand lives, we want her to go back to just smoldering (247).

By embracing her monstrosity, her abject self, her identity as woman, Ginger moves beyond the limiting sphere that all women must occupy in the repressive society represented by Bailey Downs. She truly becomes a “goddamn force of nature,” a female who embodies the “powerful, emancipated, and intimidating” identity unrealizable to women under the repressive symbolic order. But this cannot be. Though Ginger may be able to maintain this life, she is not even allowed to try. She is punished for her movement beyond the role society is comfortable with her having. But Brigitte, functioning as Ginger’s double and as representative for our own hesitation, is also punished. As Brett Sullivan, director of *Ginger Snaps Unleashed*, the second film chronicling Brigitte’s transformation, notes: “[Brigitte] is having a really bad year. And we do not help her out! She goes from the frying pan into the fire. And she meets a very unkind fate. We didn’t want her to have a happy ending. We were looking for the worst possible fate for Brigitte” (Mendik 82). Mistaken for a drug addict and held captive in a rehab center due to her monkshood injections, Brigitte struggles to avoid becoming like her older sister. Interestingly, unlike Ginger but like the male werewolf, Brigitte “always experiences her wolfish nature and her human nature as conflictual and separate” (Miller 296). But it is this unwillingness to accept the change within her and the power it affords that eventually dooms Brigitte: “even when her transformation is almost complete, she begs Ghost [a child who lives in the rehab center] to kill her, only to have the young girl trap her inside the basement” (Miller 298). Though Ginger and Brigitte have two radically different responses to their identity as woman and monster, both are punished in the films.

It appears that as subversive as the *Ginger Snaps* films are in respect to the werewolf narrative, they also reflect a deep cultural ambivalence about female identity. There is no option offered to Ginger or Brigitte, and due to their unwillingness to accept the roles predetermined for them in the society in which they live, they must be punished. It seems that it is only together “united against life” that the girls stand a chance, making the *Ginger Snaps* cycle a powerful statement on the power of relationality between females in the construction and maintenance of self. Whereas the male werewolf of the past and present must forever suffer, turning to beast by night and repentant human by morning, the female werewolf need not suffer at all, as long as she has others to join her in her monstrosity. Thankfully, *Ginger Snaps Back*, the third and final of the films, relents and allows the Fitzgerald sisters to be the pack they were destined to be. Here, both Ginger and Brigitte “embrace monstrosity and the infection rather than sacrifice their unity to male oppression” and fulfill their destinies to – together – resist death in uninhibited, monstrous life (Barker 70).

#### **V. “It Feels So Good... Like Touching Yourself:” A Final Word on Female**

##### **Monsters**

The *Ginger Snaps* cycle is by no means the first situation of the werewolf narrative within the female body. Historically, there do exist folk tales of the female lycanthrope, and recently Katja von Garnier’s 2007 film *Blood and Chocolate*, a loose adaptation of Annette Curtis Klause’s young adult novel of the same name, continued the tradition by telling the story of Vivian Gandillon, a teenage girl struggling with her lycanthropy not out of fear, but out of love for a ‘meat-boy’ human. Yet *Blood and Chocolate* is hardly a horror tale, and there have been few werewolf narratives that link

the female body with monstrosity so explicitly as *Ginger Snaps* seems to. This is surprising, as much study has been done on the gendering of monsters, particularly as it relates to the feminization of male monsters through abject bodies. While it is important to study the construction of monsters as female, particularly in monsters as obviously coded as such as the werewolf, if for no other reason than to expose the means by which femininity itself is constructed, perhaps it is time to study female monsters on their own terms. What may be revealed is a different take on monstrosity altogether, one without the shame, agony or senseless violence that characterizes male monsters, one that reveals itself in its own monstrosity as a celebration of a life otherwise unattainable for the Ginger and Brigitte Fitzgeralds of horror.

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