

## **'Queer-Wolves and Wolf-Boyz and Were-Bears, Oh My!': Queering the Wolf in Gaysploitation Horror.**

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The horror film's representation of the 'Other' has long been understood to be a symbolic representation of social ills, anxieties and unease. Non-normative sexuality is often chief among these concerns and the threat that queer, gay and lesbian sexualities pose to an 'assumed heterosexual' spectator. This paper builds on my current research that considers a 'Gaysploitation Horror' sub-genre with the Queer horror pantheon.

I argue that the study of monstrous homosexuality in the horror film has also revealed the celebratory pleasures offered to queer, gay and lesbian viewers' oppositional identification with the very same monsters that threaten the norm. Yet, the vast majority of such studies have to first make the leap of reading the *symbolic* homosexual potential of the films' monsters; few consider the *explicit* presentation of gay villains and victims alike. In departing from the analysis of the 'out' queer monster as a symbol of heterosexual anxiety and fear, this study moves the discussion forward to focus instead on the anxieties *within* gay subcultures. In particular the emergence of the werewolf figure reveals the stigma of the shameful feminine associations felt by the gay male subject who is considered to be eternally passive and penetrative by heteronormative demands.

This paper develops Barbara Creed's (*Phallic Panic!* 2005) re-reading of Freud's 'Wolf Man' case from *The History of an Infantile Neurosis* (1918) whereby she intimates that in 'werewolf films the male body is rendered feminine and uncanny—animal hair sprouts, flesh changes shape...'. (151–2). It does this in relation to other queer interpretations of the Wolf Man case (Leo Bersani, 1993) and recent Queer Horror film and television works that feature the gay or queer-identified werewolf. Via an analysis of such satirical horror film and television titles as: *The Curse of the Queerwolf* (Mark Pirro, 1987), *I Was A Teenage WereBear!* (Tim Sullivan, US 2011), *The Wolves of Wall Street* (David DeCoteau, 2002) and queer Gothic soap *The Lair* (Here! TV 2007–2009), this paper will argue that the existence of the werewolf in the Queer Horror sub-genre is one that allows for a paradoxical celebration of repressed homosexuality; and a ludicrous disavowal of femininity for the *queer* spectator.

**Dr Darren Elliott-Smith** is Senior Lecturer in Film and Television at the University of Hertfordshire. His research to date is focused on representations of queerness, gender and the body in Gothic and horror film and television and extends to experimental, cult and trash in the moving image. He previously set up and ran the

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