

## Growing Pains of the Teenage Werewolf: YA literature and the metaphorical wolf

Kaja Franck

University of Hertfordshire

As a hybrid monster, werewolves have stimulated questions regarding the relationship between humans and animals. Their duality has also been used as a metaphor for the presentation of adolescence from 'Little Red Riding Hood' to *Teen Wolf*. Both Maggie Stiefvater's *Shiver* trilogy and Annette Curtis Klause's *Blood and Chocolate* are YA texts which centre on the love story between a human and a werewolf. They use the figure of the werewolf to contrast the boundary between child/ adult with that between animal/ human. Their representations centre on the relationship between self-control versus hormonally fuelled sexuality and aggression, and the idea of evolving from being a child to an adult. *Blood and Chocolate* shows embracing being a werewolf as part of growing up whereas *Shiver* presents being a werewolf as a traumatic loss of self from which to escape.

Yet both novels end with the acceptance that werewolves and humans cannot inhabit the same space. Klause's lycanthropic protagonist, Vivian is unable to inform Aidan, her human partner, that she means him no harm. Aidan's liberal attitudes are shown to be superficial leaving Vivian to return to her pack and accept her role as alpha female. In *Shiver*, Sam and Grace are separated by the wolf's lack of voice. Their only hope is to find a cure for the disease of lycanthropy so that they can remain human. The werewolf's lack of language when transformed is pivotal in presenting adolescence and the state of being a werewolf as untenable in the long term. By comparing the representation of lycanthropy and adolescence, this paper argues that the use of this metaphor denies the possibility of communication between human and wolf, and reaffirms the boundary between humans and animals.

**Kaja Franck** is a PhD student at the University of Hertfordshire as part of the 'Open Graves, Open Minds' research project. Her thesis title is 'The Development of the Literary Werewolf: Language, Subjectivity and Animal/Human Boundaries'. She is particularly interested in ecoGothic and how this affects our understanding of the wilderness and animal/human hybrids.