CANNIBALISM
IN LITERATURE AND FILM

JENNIFER BROWN

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*For my Grandpa, Eric Brown, who always asked me
if I was reading anything good*

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Foreword

Hannibal Lecter is an odd figure, both animal and aesthete. He is a cannibal who eats human flesh but his appetite is not born out of base hunger. He makes human flesh the centre of elaborate gastronomic feasts; and, in the process, his consumption of other human beings celebrates his superiority, and control, over them. He particularly enjoys eating the flesh of authority figures: 'A census taker once tried to test me. I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice chianti.' Those, like Mason Verger, whom he considers to be beneath his culinary standards, are consigned to a more horrifying fate: Lecter does not consume Verger's flesh but persuades his victim to cut his face off and feed the flesh to dogs.

Lecter may have been a cultural icon in the 1990s, following the success of the film version of Thomas Harris's novel *The Silence of the Lambs*, but he is hardly the first cannibal and, as Jennifer Brown demonstrates, he is heir to a long tradition that dates to the beginnings of modernity and beyond. The ways in which the figure of the cannibal transgresses taboos about what is good to eat, and what is not, not only tells us about monsters, or about food consumption, but about the modern world more generally.

For Brown, the history of the cannibal, or at least mediated representations of it, can be divided into three phases, phases that are not only temporally but also spatially organized. In the first, Brown considers the ways in which the cannibal is mobilized in the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized, and the common association between savagery and cannibalism. In the second, she moves on to explore the ways in which this spatial opposition shifts to figure anxieties about the relationship between the urban and the rural. In a range of narratives, the cannibal is a decadent rural hillbilly, not simply a figure of pre-modernity but of *under*development. For example, the cannibals in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* turn to cannibalism as the factories that employed them are closed down and as their provincial backwater becomes excluded from the networks of modernity – in the USA, vast tracts of the country have become known as flyover states! Finally, if the second stage shifts the encounter from colonizer to colonized closer to home and refigures it as an encounter between the urban

and the rural, the third phase brings the cannibal home to the centre of the modern world – the urban itself. As Brown puts it: 'If real-life serial killer and cannibal Ed Gein helped fuel the cult of the hillbilly cannibal in the mid twentieth century, then Jeffrey Dahmer is the late twentieth century's cannibal: white, middle class, male.'

In these ways, Brown demonstrates the way in which the cannibal operates as a 'mutable' monster, a figure that changes and develops through the centuries and can be put to different uses by different groups. If the cannibal 'reappears in various guises', the question is one of masks. Leatherface, from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, is named after his mask of human flesh; and Lecter himself escapes imprisonment by wearing the face of a guard, the flesh having been cut from his victim's head. But is the cannibal a constant that takes on different 'guises'; or is the cannibal itself a guise that is used to make sense of different fears – is the cannibal a metaphor for other things? Of course, it may be that both options are possible: the cannibal is a metaphor that is used to talk about different fears; but the metaphor demonstrates continuities in our cultural understandings of these fears.

Mark Jancovich

Acknowledgements

This all started some years ago with an idea I had to examine the uses of food in literature – at that stage I was thinking along the lines of chocolate and wine! Following encouragement and gentle persuasion from my colleagues and supervisors at Trinity College Dublin, the idea slowly transformed into a focused study on cannibalism. So, I thank them for their encouragement. It has, I believe, paid off. In particular, I want to thank Dr Jarlath Killeen who patiently read countless drafts and offered insightful suggestions. I also want to thank Dr Darryl Jones for inspiring an early love in gore and Gothic in me and for his ebullient enthusiasm in supporting this project, and Professor Mark Jancovich for his kind participation and support.

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Introduction

As Willy Wonka, played by Johnny Depp, welcomes the children into the wonderful world of his chocolate factory in Tim Burton's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, he offers some witty advice to the goggle-eyed young hopefuls: 'Everything in this room is eatable. Even I am eatable, but that my dear children is called cannibalism, and is frowned upon in most societies' (Burton *Charlie* 2005). His comment goes some way to highlighting how cannibalism manages to worm its way into all kinds of places, expected and unexpected. The popular culture of Europe and America in the last 30 years in music, film, literature, and television has made numerous references to cannibalism. Just a few examples will have to suffice to demonstrate this. In 1983 The Rolling Stones released 'Too Much Blood' which focused on the story of real-life Japanese cannibal Issei Sagawa who killed and ate his classmate. The Stones used the case to comment on violence in culture, claiming there is too much blood and that truth is stranger than fiction. The lyrics describe how the killer cut off his victim's head, put her body in the freezer and after eating her, took her bones to the Bois de Boulogne. *The Simpsons* (Groening) never misses out on sending up popular opinion and 'Treehouse of Horror V: Nightmare Cafeteria' (1994) sees school Principal Skinner and Lunchlady Doris solve the problem of an overcrowded detention hall by putting the children in a blender and eating them. They serve up sloppy jimbos made with Jimbo Jones and Uterbraten from German student Uter! Of course, whatever *The Simpsons* can do, South Park (Parker & Stone) can do in a more shocking, outrageous manner. In 2001, the episode 'Scott Tenorman Must Die' aired, in which the nefarious Cartman exacts awful revenge on Scott by inviting him to a chilli cookoff where the unwitting Scott relishes a bowl of 'Mr

and Mrs Tenorman Chilli' made with the hacked-up bodies of his parents. In 2004 German heavy metal band Rammstein released 'Mein Teil' about Armin Meiwes, a German man who successfully advertised online for a young man willing to be eaten and killed. Meiwes was convicted of manslaughter but at a retrial in 2006 he was sentenced to life for murder. Rammstein, in typical dramatics, perform the song with no small element of macabre glee and the lyrics detail the seasoning and flambéing of human meat, porcelain dishes, candlelight, and wine before concluding tongue-in-cheek that 'you are what you eat'.

These references show how cannibalism in our culture is not simply indicative of our obsession with it, but also highlights the sheer pleasure we take in it, hearing about it, contemplating it, fantasizing about it. Of course, popular culture often focuses upon blood and gore at the expense of serious reflection on the meaning of this material. However, high culture has not been immune from the siren call of the cannibals. In fiction, Cormac McCarthy's post-apocalyptic survival tale *The Road* (2006) won the Pulitzer Prize and was made into a successful film starring Viggo Mortensen (Dir. Hillcoat 2009). It deals with a father and son struggling to survive and resist succumbing to cannibalism. Its huge popularity echoes Piers Paul Read's *Alive: The Story of the Andes Survivors* (1974), the story of the Uruguayan rugby team stranded in the Andes who resorted to consuming the bodies of their dead team mates and friends. Both tales have sparked the debate: 'Would you eat human flesh in order to survive?' These examples of cannibalism in popular culture display both its pervasiveness and the fascination with it.

In order to understand this contemporary fascination with cannibalism we need first to look at the importance of eating in modern society because cannibalism is, first and foremost, about eating. Food theorist Sarah Sceats argues that we currently live in a state of uncertainty about how much the Self is influenced or changed by what is taken in of the world, be it through nourishment or poison. Current concerns about genetically modified foods, diet pills, energy drinks, multivitamins, five-a-day portions of fruit or vegetables, swine flu, and calorie counts suggest food is not merely nourishing but at times poisoning, appearance altering, mood enhancing, or prescribed as healthy. Dr Kelly D. Brownell coined the term 'toxic food' to describe the exposure to junk food in America that is leading to obesity and death. It seems we consume as much to alter ourselves as we do to nourish our bodies. Furthermore, as a liminal substance, as something outside the body that we desire, food evokes ambivalent emotions. It both threatens contamination in its possible impurity and is often the source of great pleasure, while of course being necessary for survival.

The conservative philosopher Leon Kass has argued that understanding human eating throws light on the relation between the non-rational and the rational in humankind, and between the strictly natural and the cultural or ethical (Kass 12). Food is, after oxygen, the most basic human need, and eating is, after breathing, the most common vital activity. Yet eating it has acquired much more highly complex cultural 'meanings' than breathing. Food and eating are more than biological necessities, rather they are imbued with a symbolic and, at times, mythical force. Roland Barthes describes food as a system of communication. It is a body of images with a protocol of usages in various situations. Mary Douglas believes that if we treat food as a code, then we can see the messages it encodes in the different degrees of 'inclusion and exclusion', and in transactions across boundaries. Like sex, she argues, the 'taking of food has a social component as well as a biological one' (Douglas in Counihan 36). Food manners dictate inclusion in or exclusion from familial, social, religious, and national groups. One must follow food and eating norms if one is to be accepted. Transgressing food boundaries can mean absolute ostracism, such as exclusion from religious ceremonies or family celebrations. Crucially, the division between normal and the abnormal, the Self and the Other, is often defined by what is eaten and what is forbidden to eat. As a highly symbolic aspect of social mores involving a system of dietary codes and taboos, food constructs a significant part of our cultural identity.

In *Purity and Danger* (1966) Mary Douglas explores the dietary codes of Leviticus. In this apparently confusing Biblical text, foods banned to the wandering Israelites include animals that chew the cud but do not have a separate hoof, such as camels; animals that have a separate hoof but do not chew the cud, such as pigs; and anything in the water that does not have fins and scales. Douglas' seminal look at this code argues that food which does not comfortably fit into a category becomes taboo because ambiguity is threatening. For example, animals that are forbidden in the code include shellfish and pigs. Douglas argues that this is because some shellfish, such as crabs and lobsters, walk on legs whereas other creatures of the water have no legs. Pigs are taboo, according to Douglas' theory, because they do not fit into a clear category: they have cloven hooves but do not chew the cud as other ungulates do. Thus, she concludes, taboos are not about health regulations or tests of faith but rather involve a system of maintaining symbolic boundaries: 'For I believe that ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience' (Douglas 4). In this

way eating becomes a means of differentiating between people and cultures.

Cannibalism, within this system of codes, is generally deemed unnatural and monstrous because it disregards widely accepted norms of eating practices. The human body is considered the pinnacle of the food chain. Cannibalism creates ambiguity because it both reduces the body to mere meat and elevates it to a highly desirable, symbolic entity; it is both disgusting, and the most rarefied of gastronomic tastes. Cannibalism is a forceful reminder of how the human appetite is a life-driving force, and is the ultimate transgression of cultural mores. Furthermore, fear of the Other is often expressed through images of being literally and metaphorically consumed by that Other. Cannibalism has a long history of being used to 'other' particular groups. The configuration of colonial subjects, working classes, women, homosexuals, Christians and non-Christians, as cannibalistic is suggestive of the fear and repulsion these groups evoked at various times. Yet the cannibal figure does not only invoke repulsion because he is also a source of great fascination. He is an omnivore but on the other hand, he is the embodiment of indulgent consumption – gratifying his appetite despite cultural restraints and taboos.

Cannibalism has long been the epitome of the transgression of boundaries. It has been posited as a basic truth of historical anthropology that cannibalism was widely practised in prehistoric times, and lingered as a norm in many tribes and cultures 'untouched' by the civilizing process. Anthropologist Marvin Harris argued the Aztecs were cannibals for economic reasons as human flesh was a cheaper source of protein than farmed animals (Harris 121). Brian Marriner believes that cannibalism has never ceased to be a custom in some parts of the world (Marriner 11). However, in his contentious 1979 work, *The Man Eating Myth,* William Arens argues that cannibalism, as a widely practised cultural phenomenon in the non-Western communities of the world, probably never existed and is, in fact, a racist myth. He examines the Western fascination with cannibalism, which he sees as an over-used classification of 'primitive' societies. He looks at Aztec, African, and New Guinean cultures which were labelled as cannibalistic in the past and he systematically refutes the accounts of cannibalism in these parts of the world as based on prejudice rather than first-hand witnessing. In researching the history of cannibalism, Arens can only find one anthropological account of first-hand witnessing of the act; all the other accounts, he claims, 'qualify, hedge, or are couched in the past tense until it eventually becomes clear that the anthropologist did not actually

see the events being described' (Arens 35). After reviewing evidence from various fields and surveying the folktales and myths surrounding cannibalism, he states that there is no proof of cannibalism as a universal custom and concludes that cannibalism functions as a mythical device to separate 'civilized' Western man from his barbaric foreign cousins. Cannibalism incites innate disgust and is therefore a potent means to designate the accused as subhuman. In many cultures, Arens argues, the body is the most sacred symbol so the act of eating human flesh becomes the most profane act imaginable (140). Indeed, this act is seen as so profane that it is often considered bestial. As Arens points out, in literary and folk traditions the wolf and bat are often the symbols of such evil, hence the horror tradition which sees the use of such creatures throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century in such horror texts as *Dracula* (Stoker 1897), *The Wolf Man* (Dir. Waggner 1941), and Stephen King's *The Stand* (1978).

Arens's book met with some controversy because it challenged the historical existence of cannibalism. Marina Warner (in *No Go the Bogeyman* (1998)) is highly suspicious of his argument which she sees as a liberal myth in its own turn, a product of the extreme cultural determinism prevalent in academic discourse in the 1970s and '80s. Arens's response to this accusation was to argue that his contentions allowed for the fact of cannibalism existing in certain situations (such as in extreme starvation when cannibalism seems to be the only means of survival), but he insisted that the notion of *ritual* cannibalism and cannibal cultures was exaggerated and falsified. He also argued that cannibalism in the West existed as a crime to be punished but was never viewed as a custom in the way anthropologists saw it as ritual in other parts of the world. Arens may be utopian in his views and he certainly underestimates the cruelty of human nature. Nonetheless, personally, I find his claims convincing, especially when understood as an overall questioning of the extent of cannibalism rather than a full refutation of it. Furthermore, as a historical argument, Arens' may be controversial but as an approach to a set of cultural texts it has, I believe, genuine strategic and interpretive value. This exaggeration of cannibalism in cultural texts needs further investigation.

Cannibalism has been categorized according to its motives and type of eating. In her study of *Divine Hunger*, Peggy Reeves Sanday classifies the various kinds of cannibalism according to their different motivations. The 'psychogenic hypothesis' views cannibalism as a vehicle for satisfying various psychosexual needs such as oral fixation, return-to-the womb fantasies, and a means of fully owning another body. Many

serial killers who indulge in cannibalism fall into this category. Ed Gein consumed the dead in a bizarre communication with his departed mother; Jeffrey Dahmer ate his victims in order to feel companionship. In contrast the 'materialist hypothesis' sees cannibalism as a largely survivalist response to famine or starvation. Examples of this type of cannibalism are found in times of war and hardship, such as under Mao's dictatorship in China, during the Siege of Leningrad, on board stranded ships, or during the first explorations of the Poles. At the opposite end of the spectrum lies the 'culturalist hypothesis' which contemplates cannibalism from a notably more spiritual and cultural standpoint, introducing wider considerations such as life, death, and reproduction. The eating of a slain enemy or a dead relative for reasons of respect and love and the belief in the cycle of life are examples of cultural cannibalism. Sanday argues that cannibalism is never just about eating but is primarily a medium for non-gustatory messages. She posits these messages are related to the 'maintenance, regeneration, and, in some cases, the foundation of the cultural order' (Sanday 3). It therefore becomes a means of constructing boundaries between 'us' and 'them': 'The cannibal monster may be a creature who must be conquered before social life is possible or a creature whose existence in the realm of the wild provides the screen against which social humanity is defined in contrastive images' (102).

Cannibalism has long been used to justify attacks on those seen as different from, and thus threatening to, the body politic. Maggie Kilgour delineates the construction of binaries of civilized and barbaric, and points out how cannibalism can be used to construct these binaries, resulting in certain groups being seen as less human and deserving to be, as Kilgour explains, 'if not literally subsumed, at least incorporated through assimilation' ('Function' 239). This ultimately becomes very problematic since, by assimilation, the dominant group becomes implicated in, and polluted by, the cannibal practices of its enemy. Kilgour has argued that society's fascination with the cannibal stems from an innate yearning for our savage past at a time when all traces of this are disappearing from society. In contemporary society there is an obsession with hygiene, in particular food hygiene. There are strict codes of behaviour, often stemming from political correctness. Day-to-day activities have become less personal and more isolated with shopping, banking, trading, chatting, and playing all becoming automated, computer-based solitary habits. In the midst of this, the cannibal figure transgresses the ultimate food taboo, ignores social mores, and achieves the ultimate connection with another human. His appetite is

an emphatic disregard of an overly technological and overly civilized world. However, Kilgour concludes that the prevalence of the cannibal in literature is less an idealization of the cannibal himself than an attack on our own rapacious egos, that he is not the anti-hero of a frustrated modern age but a dark warning regarding the extensive appetite of man, thus 'the man-eating myth is still with us but as a story about ourselves' (*Communion* 10). This suggests a change in how the notion of cannibalism has functioned: that is, it once warned us about others, it now warns us about ourselves. According to Kilgour, the Western ego is founded on the ideas of progress, production, and autonomy. The cannibal inversely represents regress, consumption, and the annihilation of the individual body. Popular representations of the cannibal remind us of the voracity of human hunger and the potentially limitless nature of appetite. Marx imagined capitalism as cannibalism to emphasize the irrationality of a system that devours itself. The cannibal figure represents the fear that our appetite for consumption knows no end, and indeed reminds us of our own potential inhumanity. Traditionally the idea of the human body is that it is sacred and, therefore, above and beyond the category of edible or inedible. This notion is overturned through cannibalism; the consumption of human flesh by human flesh upsets the most fundamental boundary between the 'self and else'. Thus the cannibal is seen as a threat to human identity, threatening to literally, and metaphorically, swallow it.

Due to its extraordinary metaphorical power, cannibalism has been a potent act used in literature and film to explore issues of colonialism, human appetite, overpopulation, consumerism, madness, sexuality, and power relations. Marina Warner has suggested that cannibalism is a modern myth invoked to define the 'forbidden and the alluring, the sacred and the profane', and used to define who we are and what we want by 'speaking the unspeakable' (*Six Myths* 68). Put simply, as a monstrous figure the cannibal illuminates concerns regarding our materialistic selves, and as an object of fascination it questions man's inhumanity and what we may be becoming (Probyn 81). Moreover, as I will argue in this book, the cannibal figure reflects and embodies fears of specific times and spaces. That is, his function and, more importantly, his location change throughout the twentieth century as popular fears change. By examining a range of genres and texts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, I show how the cannibal figure is mutable and how, rather than declining, he reappears in various guises at times when popular culture needs to express real fears and anxieties. The taxonomy of the cannibal is thus a taxonomy of twentieth-century

fears and paranoias. The history of the term and its uses support this argument.

While anthropologists named flesh eating 'anthrpophagy' from the Greek *anthropos* (man) and *phagein* (to eat), the word 'cannibal' is a corruption of the word Carib, a West Indian tribe believed, by Christopher Columbus and his crew, to have practised eating human flesh. Columbus put some men ashore on Guadeloupe and, returning the next day, found some local women who indicated the people of the island ate men and were keeping his men captive. Despite the unreliability of sign language, Columbus apparently had no trouble understanding the women and he resolved to leave the dangerous islands inhabited by these supposed man-eaters (Tannahill 107). The legend of the man-eating Caribs grew and their reputation became that of connoisseurs; a Frenchman reported the Caribs avowed the flesh of English to be the most delicate, far superior to that of the Spaniards or French, but one of his compatriots, M. de Rochefort, claimed the Caribs thought the French were delicious, the English so-so, the Dutch tasteless, and the Spaniards so tough as to be virtually inedible (108–109)!

Such tales of cannibalism have been part of culture for as long as there have been records. The idea that other people at some geographical distance eat human flesh has a long and well-documented history and shows little sign of diminishing. I will now give a selection of examples that show the prevalent use of the cannibal in the figuring of the Other. Arens comments that as long ago as Herodotus in the fifth century BC, the idea of the cannibal Other has been recorded and commented on through myth and literature. Claude Rawson notes the trend of suggesting the tyrannical oppressor is as savage as savages in Book I of *The Iliad,* in Aristotle's *Politics*, and in Plato's *Republic* (*God* 6). However, in the midst of the tradition of designating the Other as cannibal, there were small moves that suggest another tradition also exists, one which highlights the cannibalistic Self. Significantly, Michel de Montaigne's essay 'On Cannibals' (1580) put forth the paradoxical suggestion that the supposedly civilized Frenchmen were in fact as savage and cannibalistic as the warrior tribesmen of Brazil. In the Reformed imagination, the Catholic Mass was turned into a bloodthirsty rite as the Reformers defined themselves as consuming God spiritually in opposition to those who ate God literally. Cannibalism was attributed to Christians by Romans, to Jews by Christians, and, of course, to 'savages' by Europeans. Throughout history these accusations of cannibalism include both the actual belief in the Other as man-eating, and cannibalism as a metaphorical defiling such as Edmund Burke's opinion of the French

revolutionaries whom he labelled unnatural monsters who 'make no scruple to rake their bloody hands in the bowels of those who come from their own' (Burke 298). In his *First Letter on a Regicide Peace* (1796) he defined the French mob as cannibal: 'By cannibalism, I mean their devouring, as a nutriment of their ferocity, some parts of the bodies of those they may have murdered; their drinking the blood of their victims' (246). Burke was responding in part to Thomas Paine who claimed in *The Rights of Man* (1791) that the aristocracy were cannibals and primogeniture a cannibalistic system: 'Aristocracy has never been more than one child. The rest are begotten to be devoured. They are thrown to the cannibal for prey, and the natural parent prepares the unnatural repast' (34). Certainly by the nineteenth century the term 'cannibalism' was so well known that it occurs frequently in the fiction of the time, such as H. Rider Haggard's romantic quest novel *She* (1887) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). H.L. Malchow notes three significant areas of 'white' or 'domestic cannibal' representations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: the savage mob, the criminal or sailor, and the hysterical woman (Malchow 61). During the German siege of Leningrad from 1941 to 1943, the starving population turned to cannibalism. At the same time nightmare rumours circulated in the city of 'cannibal fraternities' assembling for special feasts of freshly killed human flesh (Beaver 672). Likewise, in the tribal genocides in Burundi and Rwanda in 1972 and 1994 reports of forced cannibalism of family members circulated with Hutu and Tsutsi spokesmen accusing each other of the same atrocities. These reports display the use of cannibalism as a signifier of evil, outsider, enemy, promoted by tribal discourses of ethnic identity (681). Much more recently in 2001 the Mayor of Toronto bemoaned an upcoming visit to Kenya stating he saw himself in a pot of boiling water with natives dancing around him (673)!

Through eating we delineate ourselves from others, and place ourselves in opposition to others. What is interesting is the reason this myth of others as cannibals has persisted. Why are we so keen to believe the existence of cannibalism in far-off places? Marina Warner argues that it stems from the continuing need for 'The centre ... to draw outlines to give itself definition. The city has the need of the barbarians to know what it is. The self needs the other to establish a sense of integral identity. If my enemies are like me, how can I go on feeling enmity against them?' (*Six Myths* 74). Yet, while the cannibal enforces the boundaries between us and them, it is also paradoxically a symbol of the permeability of those boundaries. Indeed, as Kirsten Guest points out, the idea of cannibalism prompts such a visceral reaction because it activates our

horror of consuming others like ourselves. It is the shared humanness of cannibals and their victims that draws our attention to the problems raised by the notion of absolute difference ('Introduction' 3).

The fascination with, and uses of the cannibalism myth, are issues that I explore by looking at the representation of the cannibal in popular literature and film from the late nineteenth century, through the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first century. While the practice of cannibalism is common to 'zombie movies', such as *Night of the Living Dead* (Dir. Romero 1968) and 'trash' horror novels, such as Mark L. Mirabello's *The Cannibal Within* (2002), I want to look at cases where cannibalism is depicted as part of 'real' society: I want to look closely at cases of humans eating humans, rather than zombies, were-wolves, or vampires feasting on flesh. The reason for this is that I believe the representation of the 'human-as-cannibal' in popular culture reflects prevailing cultural attitudes towards appetite and the human body. The human body is generally considered to be within the boundaries of the cultural norm. Conversely the living dead bodies of vampires and zombies are clearly outside the norm, in appearance and behaviour. That is, zombies or vampires are identified by their odd appearance, innate lack of morals, and they are defined by their flesh eating. They are easily recognizable as fantastic horror figures. However, with 'normal' human cannibals it is not so easy to categorize their cannibalism as fantastic or uncanny. Without this easy classification the need to ask the question 'why cannibalize?' arises. Furthermore, they are not immediately recognizable as flesh eaters. Many of them can function in normal society and infiltrate every sphere of our lives. By aligning human rapacity with the fear of a vampire-like hunger the authors and directors I examine comment on the fears and appetites of the cultures and eras in which they work. Further to this, I want to examine these cases in relation to widely consumed literature and film as I believe this will allow interesting conclusions to be drawn in relation to the popular consumption of, and attitudes towards, the cannibal figure.

In examining cannibalism in the literature and film of the last 100 years it is possible to trace its movement from the far-flung jungles of Africa and colonial fiction to the concrete jungles of Western cities. By the beginning of the twentieth century the strategy of self-definition against a projected alien group was a basic element of colonial discourse and the savage cannibal was a construct used as an antithesis to the civilized man. This was, as we have seen, a strategy that had been in existence for centuries. This time, however, the savage's monstrous cannibalism was used as justification for imperialism and its

ensuing cultural cannibalism. The labelling of the 'New World' native as cannibal reaffirmed the colonizers' identity as hero, bringer of civilization and light, tropes used to varying degrees of complexity in the literature of the time by the likes of H. Rider Haggard, Joseph Conrad, and Edgar Rice Burroughs. However, I suggest a more complicated reading of the colonial cannibal by examining the imperialist ideal as cannibalistic and the supposed bringers of civilization as voracious aggressors. Thus, while the trope of the African savage is prevalent, there is a lurking doubt over the white European appetite.

As colonial literature began to decline in popularity and relevance, the colonial cannibal reappeared in anthropology and travel writing. The rise of anthropological studies of Africa, the Pacific, and Asia meant that these places were no longer mysterious and unexplored. Africa was no longer a 'dark continent' filled with savage cannibals, but rather a place of vital economic interests where imperial subjects had a crucial role to play. These colonial spaces became named, categorized and controlled, their people no longer viewed as in need of civilizing, but rather central to the reinvigoration of Europe's flagging post-war economy. In the Victorian period exploration facilitated a culture of the cannibal in fiction, whereas the growing awareness and understanding brought about by anthropological studies resulted in less fictitious and sensationalized depictions of natives. Anthropology achieved recognition as a pursuit for genuine scholars in the late nineteenth century and influenced travel writers in search of more factual adventures. Readers turned to travel writing for their tales of Africa. Graham Greene continued the use of the cannibal to inject excitement into his travel writing. Such travel accounts reassured readers of the merits of their own way of life.

In the mid-twentieth century the colonial cannibal was a common feature in Hollywood versions of nineteenth-century colonial fiction. I will conclude this first section with a look at the cannibal boom films of 1970s Italian cinema as they provide an interesting comment on where the colonial cannibal sits towards the end of the twentieth century. Throughout this section on the colonial cannibal I ask these questions: What is underlying this desperate need for the colonial cannibal? What anxieties are expressed in the continuing need to label the colonial subject cannibal? Inherent in these texts is the realization that the colonial system itself is cannibalistic, and furthermore and more damningly, that this cannibalistic process continues well into the twentieth century.

Through the twentieth century, as fears changed, so too did the popular representations of the cannibal. Still viewed as a figure of monstrosity, the cannibal was used as a label for the poor whites of America

in the mid- to late twentieth century in much the same way it had been used to dehumanize the subjects of colonialism. Indeed, I start the examination of the regional cannibal in the nineteenth century by focusing on the 'Celtic fringes' as the Celtic lands on the margins of civilized Britain were aligned with the savagery of the exotic colonies. Cultural uses of the Scottish cannibal Sawney Bean would inform later popular culture in North America where from the 1950s onwards the small town and the countryside came to be represented as suffocating and repressive in much the same way as the jungles of Africa had previously been depicted. Likewise, in the same way that the cannibal of colonial times was located in the darkness of Africa, the cannibal serial killers of mid- to late twentieth century culture are located in the regional darkness of dysfunctional families or inbred farmsteads in the countryside. This time the cannibal is within the boundaries of the nation but outside the boundaries of the civilized, modern city. Ed Gein, a Wisconsin farmer with a taste for necrophilia and cannibalism, was convicted of murder in 1957. He quickly became a reference point for hillbilly stereotypes. The representation of hillbillies as cannibals in films such as *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Dir. Hooper 1974) has contributed to the idea of redneck foreign Others which has spawned a plethora of hillbilly cannibal movies in which inbred, gap-toothed, po' white folk feast on chirpy, middle-class camping families or adventurous, smug college students. These redneck horror films have seen a resurgence in popularity with twenty-first-century remakes of the originals. I suggest that these films are a kind of backlash against the presidency of George W. Bush and the 'red state' Americans believed to be his natural constituency. The redneck is still a cannibal, but he is also, according to these texts, able to occupy the White House. Furthermore, the violent vengeance enacted by the city slickers on the bodies of their rural foes complicates further the binary between rural savage and civilized urbanite. Again, as with the figure of the colonial cannibal, these texts hint at fear and disgust inspired by the rapacity and aggression of Western capitalism by confusing the binary of savage cannibal and civilized non-cannibal.

In the city cannibal section I will trace the London cannibals of Sweeney Todd and Jack the Ripper at a time when London itself was deemed rapacious, and American city cannibals in the 1980s and 1990s when world economies thrived on consumerism and avarice. If real-life serial killer and cannibal Ed Gein helped fuel the cult of the hillbilly cannibal in the mid-twentieth century, then Jeffrey Dahmer is the late twentieth century's cannibal: white, middle class, male, and this is

reflected in fictitious cannibals Hannibal Lecter and *American Psycho*'s Patrick Bateman (1991). The desperate attempts to place the cannibal outside the bounds of decency have always betrayed an unnerving sense that there is a relation between the Self and the Other. This 'monster beneath the surface' is a common theme in serial killer fiction, a theme that features in much of the late twentieth-century cannibal culture. In real-life trials of serial killers comments are frequently made on how 'normal' the killer looks, how polite he seems, how he does not fit the idea of a monster, criminal, cannibal; he is after all a white, educated, American. The real menace in Dahmer's image is its normality. It is ourselves staring back at us and this is terrifying. The cannibal, having moved from the colonies, to the regions, has, at the end of the century, come home to roost in the centre. At the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries, our greatest fear, it seems, is ourselves. This is a similar argument to that made by Priscilla L. Walton in *Our Cannibals, Ourselves* (2004), however, there are some crucial differences that I must point out. Walton argues that in the nineteenth century cultural representations of the cannibal saw savages awaiting the tasty intrepid traveller while the twentieth-century representations change to concentrate on cannibalistic threats to the West in the form of flesh-eating diseases or attacks from outer space. She views this shift as a way to explore the way in which the Other is brought home and 'domesticized' (Walton 3). The differences in my argument are threefold. Firstly, Walton sees the twentieth-century cannibalism in the West as an attack from outside on the centre. There is cannibalism enacted within the Western domestic sphere but it is often enacted by an outsider, an alien, a germ, a cold war monster. My argument is that the cannibalism in the West is enacted from within. The attacks are by domestic cannibals on their compatriots. Secondly, Walton uses metaphoric examples of 'white cannibalism', in particular she examines flesh-eating diseases and eating disorders. By 'white cannibalism' I am referring to the idea of the Self as cannibal in opposition to the idea of the easily defined Other, that is the African savage. While Walton offers fascinating insights on the symbolism of these practices, I do not believe they are fully relevant to my study of the function of cannibalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In the same way that I am reluctant to examine zombies and vampires alongside 'real' cannibals, I do not want to examine metaphorical cannibalism. I am concerned here with honest-to-goodness flesh eating! As I will explain in section I, it was common to hint at white cannibalism in colonial literature, couching it in terms such as 'unspeakable rites' and always referred to with uncertainty,

vagueness, and witticisms. I believe looking at metaphorical examples of the Self as cannibal is a similar practice; it is tantamount to saying 'Yes, white Westerners succumb to cannibalism, but only metaphorically.' In fact, it is my argument, that beyond the hints, metaphors, and suggestions, there are very real examples of white cannibalism throughout the popular culture of the last two centuries. Thirdly and finally, Walton suggests there is a significant shift in the cannibal from savage foreigner to domestic threat, that the cannibal moves mid-century to take up a new location. It is the thesis of this book that while the representations of the cannibal moving from the colonies, to the rural domestic, to the urban centre suggest a geographical and temporal shifting, beneath all of these texts is the unsavoury truth that the white man was always cannibalistic. He did not suddenly become so in cold war popular culture or the rise of serial killer fascination. He was always so: in the colonies the colonizers' rapacity outweighs that of the locals' appetite for flesh; in the rural horror films the city folk enact horrific violence and vengeance, bringing their supposed civility into doubt, and in the city texts I examine there is a full facing up to the reality that has always being lurking: *we* are rapacious, cannibalistic aggressors.

Part I

Mr Cannibal I Presume?
The Colonial Cannibal

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1
No Petticoats Here – Early Colonial Cannibals

From Daniel Defoe to H. Rider Haggard

Colonial adventure fiction was a genre popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The stories were usually set in the colonies, typically India or Africa. These locations were sites for adventures involving treasure, rebellious slaves, wild animals, and inhospitable lands. Andrea White notes how the adventure fiction served various 'utilitarian purposes', such as 'dispensing practical historical information and...promoting an officially endorsed ideology of patriotic heroism and Christian dutifulness compatible with imperialistic aims...besides having great popular appeal, the works were also educational and inspirational' (*Joseph* 81). Indeed, adventure fiction achieved a certain authority for being inspirational and educational, and for demanding credibility. The romance writing of the mid- and late nineteenth century played an important part in British culture as a narrative depiction of theories of social change (Daly 5). The novels of Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, and H. Rider Haggard provided readers with 'knowledge' of the far-flung territories of a burgeoning empire. This was a profitable exercise as armchair adventurers proved to be avid consumers of colonial fiction. Importantly, though, these novels provided information not only about the colonies but also about England and the notion of Englishness. While being largely 'off-stage', England is the space that defines, and is defined by, the 'heterotopias' of the adventure novel for, as Daly notes, 'to sketch the primitive is also to illustrate the civilized' (58).

A crucial element of this English identity was heroism. The dark places of the earth were places where heroism was still possible. The majority of these tales display optimism and serene confidence in the glory of imperialism. The fiction worked to provide adventurous scenarios for brave men to prove their worth. There was a desire for the 'fresh air' of the

empire, removed from the commercial 'fug' of the metropole (61), and these novels provided just such an escape, replete with dashing heroics and exotic adventures, and were indicative of concerns regarding a decline in masculinity on the home front. The revival of 'romance' in the 1880s was intended to reclaim the kingdom of the English novel for male writers, male readers, and men's stories. According to Elaine Showalter, in the wake of George Eliot's feminization of the novel, male writers needed to remake the high Victorian novel in masculine terms. Consequently, in place of the heterosexual romance of courtship, manners, and marriage that had become the speciality of women writers, male critics and novelists extolled the masculine, homosocial romance of adventure and quest. As Showalter points out, the new romance 'descended from Arthurian epic…Haggard and Stevenson were hailed as the chivalrous knights who had restored the wounded and exiled King Romance to his throne' (Showalter 78–79). These adventures often took place in the colonies as they provided locations away from home, therefore away from marriage and women, and allowed for scenarios where men could be men, showing off in feats of great courage. The dangers they faced were exotic and new, far from the trials of courtship and etiquette explored in the domestic novels, and they were, in fact, a means of avoiding such domestic ordeals, leading Haggard to promise that there were 'no petticoats' in *King Solomon's Mines* (1885). Substituting a feminized exotic landscape and culture for actual English women, male adventurers could find a way to exorcise what they viewed as the increasing feminization of English society. Unusual landscapes, strange animals, harsh climates, shipwrecks, and native tribes featured strongly in the ordeals suffered by the heroes of colonial fiction. Adventure fiction offered a welcome change to the urban domestic novels, the plight of the poor, and grey industrialized cities, and it managed to 'mollify frustration at the apparent ineffectualness of reform, eliminate the confusion of an increasingly complex world, and fulfil the desires for forthright, heroic action' (White *Joseph* 63). For many writers there was the desire to revitalize not only heroism but aristocracy. In *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (1992), John Carey notes the equation of the term 'mass' with savages, women, children, bacilli, or animals in the writings of many intellectuals and literary figures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Colonial subjects came to be seen as a mass, not merely degraded and threatening but also not fully alive. A common allegation was that they lacked souls. Carey also argues that the desire to eliminate the semi-human mass was a common one: 'Dreaming of the extermination or sterilization of the mass, denying the mass

were real people, was then, an imaginative refuge for early twentieth century intellectuals' (Carey 15). He further argues that since the 'mass' is an 'imaginary construct, displacing the unknowable multiplicity of human life, it can be reshaped at will, in accordance with the wishes of the imaginer' (23). In colonial fiction the mass was often configured as the savage cannibal, threatening to consume all that was held dear to Victorian England.

Colonial fiction served an important purpose in presenting the supposed refinement of the colonizers in complete contrast to the savagery of the colonized. The English colonial novel has as its primary motivation the justification of the colonial mission of the nineteenth century and the elevation of English ethnic superiority over the cultures it encountered overseas. In *The Savage in Literature* (1975), Brian Street examines the hierarchy of races represented in English fiction from 1858 to 1920. Cannibalism, he argues, is used as a way to distinguish between the gentleman and the savage. The Englishman does not practise cannibalism because his instincts, passed down to him through his race, revolt against it (Street 75). In *Colonial Desire*, Robert Young looks at the cultural obsession with race in the late nineteenth century and the emphasis on distinction. He points out that an effective mode of differentiating was to label the Other as cannibal. This allowed the European to distance himself from these lesser races in a simple and clear way: they eat human meat, we do not; they are savage, we are not. Indeed, Claude Rawson claims it is probable that a 'geo-political history of empires could be written by charting the successive places where a dominant culture located its cannibal other' (Rawson 'Unspeakable' 9). The imperialist, adventure fiction of Victorian and *fin de siècle* England saw civilized heroes pitted against savages and cannibals in far-flung jungles, islands, and deserts. The hero could then be portrayed as brave, civilizing, and superior, morally as well as physically.

Famously, Arens has argued that since cannibalism (along with incest) is considered the ultimate evil and taboo in civilized society, the accusation of cannibalism against a people was a means by which their colonization was justified. In the scramble for profit as Africa replaced the Caribbean and South America as the source of material and labour, it also became the new site of savage cannibals in need of civilizing and enlightenment. Arens points out that 'as one group of cannibals disappeared, the European mind conveniently invented another which would have to be saved from itself by Europeans before it was too late' (Arens *Man Eating* 80). The charge of cannibalism denies the accused their humanity, lowering them to animal status and therefore

legitimizing their enslavement. Invariably it is the Other, distant in time or location, who is believed to be cannibalistic, affording the non-cannibal a sense of superiority. The strategy of self-definition against a projected alien group certainly became an element of colonial discourse. The essayists in the important collection *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* argue that the savage cannibal was a construct used as an antithesis to the civilized man, and that the savage's monstrous cannibalism was used as justification for imperialism. Frantz Fanon suggests that 'face to face with the white man, the Negro has a past to legitimate, a vengeance to exact; face to face with the Negro the contemporary white man feels the need to recall the times of cannibalism' (Fanon *Black* 225). The theme of the black savage has left a deep trace in post-imperial memory, and the trope of naming the Other as cannibal has been central to the construction of the non-European Other. The battle for progress and production was waged against a perceived inferior race of people whose supposed cannibalism represented their savagery and their need to be civilized. Ultimately their existence was antithetical to the values of European society and economy. According to Young, civilization and culture were the standards of measurement in a hierarchy of values. European culture was defined by its position at the top of a scale against which all other societies were judged: 'the principle of opposition, between civilization and barbarism and savagery, was nothing less than the ordering principle of civilization as such' (94–95).

Ironically the colonized cultures had long considered their colonial masters and the 'civilization' they represented as the true cannibals. The slave traders were seen as desiring black bodies, not for economic reasons but for culinary ones. Indeed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some of the most significant misconceptions held by Europeans and Africans concerned cannibalism and its associated barbarism. It is repeatedly recorded in accounts from European slave traders that half of the slave revolts on ships were caused by 'the Negroes' total conviction that they were being taken over the sea not to Skye but to be eaten in Barbados' (Pope-Hennessy 32). Some Africans believed the white man to be a species of sea monster since he came from over the horizon where there was no land. Homi J. Bhabha tells of a Christian missionary causing terror when teaching vegetarian Indian Hindus about Holy Communion: 'Suddenly it is the white English culture that betrays itself, and the English missionary who is turned into a cannibalistic vampire' (qtd. in Young 162). Just as black was, for most Europeans, the colour of night, darkness, and evil, for many Africans white was the colour of devils and the source of terrifying villainy. The

irony is that the African perception of the colonizer as all-engulfing was more accurate than the European's widespread racist myth of the savage man-eaters of the jungle.

This perception of the white European as cruel and greedy needed to be quashed in the popular imagination. However, colonial fiction made such efforts to mark the differences between white and black that it actually ended up articulating colonial anxiety rather than ethnic security. This anxiety was concerned with the sheer desirability of the exotic Other and also the danger of such close relations with this very Other. Ultimately it expressed the fear of pollution and degeneration. One interpretation of the threat posed by the savage cannibal was that he had the power to contaminate the pure colonizer. The fear of 'going native' and the civilized man being reduced to a barbaric state was a popular theme in novels such as H. G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), in which the indigenous inhabitants of the island are wild animals and interbreeding has gruesome results, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), in which succumbing to the contagious bite of a foreigner leads good English girls to sensuality and hunger. I will examine this theme in greater detail with particular reference to Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* (1902). The fear of being either cannibalized or converted to barbarism resulted in the reduction of imperialism to a convenient justification of 'eat or be eaten'. Moreover, this fiction displays an intense and often paranoid awareness of how dependent on the colonial Other English self-identity is, as noted by Chinua Achebe: 'For reasons which can certainly use close psychological inquiry the West seems to suffer deep anxieties about the precariousness of its civilization and to have a need for constant reassurance by comparison with Africa' (Achebe in Kimbrough 262). Young posits that the many English colonial novels betray themselves as 'driven by desire for the cultural Other', often concerned with 'cross-cultural contact and interaction, an active desire, frequently sexual, for the Other, or the state of being...an "in-between"' (3). If we consider the English novel, we find that what is portrayed as characterizing English experience is often a sense of uncertainty and a painful sense of need for Otherness. This need stems from an ambiguity of the Self and unstable identity. Perhaps the fixity of identity for which Englishness developed such a reputation was, as Young maintains, 'designed to mask its uncertainty, its sense of being estranged from itself, sick with desire for the other' (Young 2).

Cannibalism becomes an interesting trope in colonial fiction on different levels. Firstly, in the eighteenth-century fiction of Daniel Defoe, and later in Rider Haggard's and R.M. Ballantyne's nineteenth-century

novels, cannibalism is seen as a means of differentiation between civilized and savage. The cannibals in these tales are seen to be in need of education, civilization, and salvation from their barbarous ways. As the empire reached its zenith and tales of imperial atrocities, such as the Boer War and Leopold II's brutality in Congo, became common knowledge, cannibalism fulfilled a different role. In Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, cannibalism is a reflection of the West's voracity, and the question of who is civilized and who is savage is starting to be asked. Indeed, I view Conrad's work as a site of change in the colonial cannibal's position. For this reason the colonial fiction before and after *Heart of Darkness* are grouped as similar texts and given rather shorter page space. In the early decades of the twentieth century and in the fiction of Edgar Rice Burroughs and Edgar Wallace, there appears to be a policy of containment regarding the cannibals of popular fiction. The high moral standpoint of earlier fiction is replaced by practical management of colonies; the cannibals do not need to be civilized, just kept in check. As anthropology and travel writing replace colonial fiction as genres concerned with the colonies, the encounters with cannibalism change. Of course, these are supposedly factual accounts and attempts to understand the world and its people. However, Graham Greene's travel writings display a certain nostalgia for the heroic adventures and hand-to-hand battles with anthropophagous fiends. Towards the end of the century, as the empire had collapsed, colonial fiction seemed to be no longer as relevant to the reading public. Colonial cannibalism did not disappear, however, and suddenly, in a post-colonial world of turmoil and power snatching, cannibalism appeared again in a boom of Italian cannibal films. These films are effectively a culmination of most of the above factors: there are wild cannibals in the jungle in need of civilization; the natives are driven to extreme savagery by interfering Westerners; the Westerners are as savage as the native tribes; and the question of truth and representation in the media and film is central. In all of these works the colonial cannibal represents fears and desires of the West with regard to the Other – fears and desires I will now examine in detail.

Robinson Crusoe

Although outside the scope of this book, the almost mythical figure of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), who famously encountered savage cannibals during his many years as a castaway, cannot be ignored as inspiration for the later colonial romances of Haggard, Ballantyne,

Stevenson, and most other adventure writers. The plot encompasses some of the most prevalent tendencies of Defoe's time: profit is Crusoe's vocation and the whole world is his territory. James Joyce called Crusoe the embodiment of British imperialism, and the novel a prophecy of empire, stating that Defoe's hero is the 'true prototype of the British colonist, as Friday . . . is the symbol of the subject races' (qtd. in Ellis 15 and Richetti xxviii). As such, Defoe's novel sets the dichotomy of civilized versus savage cannibal that would be used by many writers throughout the next 250 years. *Robinson Crusoe* represents the imperialist desire for mastery over all that is foreign, summed up by the need to incorporate rather than be incorporated. Crusoe becomes an inspiration to economists and empire builders. Critic Ian Watt argues that Crusoe is not bound to nationality by sentimental ties but is satisfied by people who are 'good to do business with' (Watt 'Robinson' 42). Throughout his adventures, Defoe sends Crusoe to locations ripe for exploitation. Indeed, Crusoe finally amasses wealth from his plantation in Brazil. As Pat Rogers points out, the course of empire in Defoe's time was advanced by arguments from many spheres. Crusoe himself is part missionary, part conquistador, part trader, part colonial administrator (Rogers 47). In all of these roles he must keep himself busy and civilized, and he must either battle against or trade with the natives he encounters.

The location for Crusoe's battle to remain civilized is an island at the mouth of the Orinoco River. Crusoe ponders the fact that without his tools he would not have survived, or would have survived but in a primitive state: 'That if I had kill'd a goat, or a fowl, by any contrivance, I had no way to flea them, or part the flesh from the skin and the bowels, or to cut it up; but must gnaw it with my teeth, and pull it with my claws like a beast' (Defoe 104). Critic James Sutherland sees these 'homely virtues' as a celebration of Crusoe's middle-class Englishness. Although he is not bound by sentimental ties to his nationality, practically, he embodies the stereotypes of his homeland. He may be a symbol for all mankind but he is first and foremost an Englishman (Sutherland 6). The difficulties he faces (catching and cooking food, building a shelter, making clothes) are the sorts of problems that civilized man has long since forgotten and in some ways he retraces the history of the human race (27), using his nation's civilization and his class's resourcefulness to overcome these difficulties. Throughout these difficulties, Crusoe keeps his English sense of self-respect by not being naked, clothes becoming an important sign of his sanity and civilization. On the island, he struggles against the past, primitive state and

overcomes it, showing himself to be modern, educated, rational, and, therefore, civilized. His ability to keep himself occupied by building shelters, farming, and sailing is his means of maintaining sanity in extreme solitude. His ordered, structured dwelling marks his resistance to savagery; fenced, clean, dry, and warm, it is clearly separate from the wilderness of his desert island. Edwin Benjamin believes the geography of the island is conceived in moral terms. The side on which Crusoe lands is less favoured naturally than the other side, which has lots of fruit, goats, hares, and turtles. However, that is also the side where the cannibals are accustomed to land for their 'inhuman feasts'. The richness is illusory; the grapes might be bad, the goats are harder to catch because of lack of cover, and there is the large wooded valley where Crusoe gets lost in a haze for days. There are suggestions of luxury, sloth, and lassitude, all features Crusoe's religion, nationality, and class shun, and 'the thither side of the island becomes to him, like Egypt to the Israelites on the march to Canaan, a temptation to be resisted' (Benjamin 37). On his island Crusoe enjoys absolute freedom from social restrictions and civil authorities yet his personal moral measure remains. As Watt argues convincingly, 'An inner voice continually suggests to us that the human isolation that individualism has fostered is painful and tends ultimately to a life of apathetic animality and mental derangement; Defoe answers confidently that it can be made the arduous prelude to the fuller realization of every individual's potentialities' (Watt 'Robinson' 51).

Crusoe is clearly distinguishable from the natives he encounters. As Watt has made clear, Crusoe became the model for the kind of individual emerging in modernity; indeed, he is the only one of Defoe's characters to be given a full name, the others either being given no Christian name or being known by nickname. Man Friday remains servile to the protagonist and is limited in representation by being given only a Christian name ('Naming' 323). This name is given rather than requested, thus, through language and communication, Crusoe establishes order. Watt argues that it is through language that human beings may achieve something other than animal relationships with each other, yet Crusoe remains a strict utilitarian with his functional silences broken only by an occasional 'No, Friday', or an abject 'Yes, Masteer'. This simple, clear, ordered communication is what Watt calls the 'golden music of Crusoe's *ile joyeuse'* ('Robinson' 45). Language increases Crusoe's sense of 'personal autarchy' with his parrot crying out his name, Friday swearing to be his slave forever, and a visitor questioning if Crusoe is a god (49).

Not surprisingly, this emerging identity is forged in a battle against cannibals in an alien territory. Virginia Woolf commented on Crusoe's shrewdness and caution, his love of order, comfort, and respectability, as signs of his middle-class respectability. She sees this middle-class view as lacking in imagination or excitement and accuses Crusoe of being incapable of enthusiasm and of suspecting 'even Providence of exaggeration' ('Robinson' 22–23). However, she goes on, this rejection of excitability and exaggeration leads us to conclude that 'anything this sturdy middle-class man notices can be taken for a fact' (ibid.). This, we can infer, includes his accounts of the cannibal tribes. By positioning cannibalism as a heathen practice, Crusoe distances himself, as Christian and civilized, from the natives. His first reaction to the cannibals is visceral and violent, vowing to exterminate them, saying he 'could think of nothing but how I might destroy some of these monsters in their cruel bloody entertainment' (Defoe 133). Yet he stays his hand with the realization that this primitive tribe know no better, 'they do not know it to be an offence' (136). Rogers argues that Defoe sees the primitive man as a cripple denied the opportunity of growth by lack of education. He does not continually state the natural supremacy of the European races, possibly because he took it for granted (Rogers 'Robinson' 42). Crusoe feels innate superiority over the natives and his new servant Friday. This superiority is essentially established in Crusoe's disgust at cannibal feasts and Friday's lack of reaction to them. However, Friday's motives for cannibalism are important. As he only eats those slain in battle, for reasons of vengeance rather than the enjoyment of the taste, he is capable of nobility and redemption (Kitson 1). Crusoe dedicates himself to converting Friday and quelling the cannibals in his assumed role as colonial administrator and missionary. Friday is brutal and incomplete until he has been tamed by Crusoe's religion and work ethic. It is evident in the novel that, as Marx claims, 'civility and cannibalism were born together in the colonial imaginary, insofar as the former made of the latter its moral antithesis' (qtd. in Walton 14).

The huge success and popularity of *Robinson Crusoe* set an early tone for later colonial novelists who followed Defoe's recipe for success – that is, place a well-rounded Christian Englishman in a far-off place replete with resources (diamonds, ivory, slaves) and pit his physical and moral strengths against savages and cannibals. Just as cannibalism was the antithesis of civility for Defoe, so it would be for the colonial writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Defoe places the emerging modern individual against the unevolved savage in order to

show the strengths and advantages of modernity – education, religion, technology, morality. Later colonial novelists would pit English national identity and sense of empire against its savage subjects in an attempt to show the necessity and advantage of imperialism – those same advantages that Crusoe imposed on Friday.

R.M. Ballantyne and H. Rider Haggard

Marx's argument concerning civilization and cannibalism also applies to colonial fictions such as R.M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1893) and H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1887). *The Coral Island* sees three boys exploring South Pacific islands. It is a novel for children, extolling Christianity and ideas of expanding the empire in which the Christian English-man is shown to be superior to the natives. Such novels are primarily concerned with disseminating a view of the colonial mission and also educating the young men expected to enforce the empire. Typical Victorian racist attitudes, which involve equating blackness with evil, are evident throughout. Christianity is proven by heroic action. Its reverse – savage paganism – is proven by cannibalism. Cannibalism is used by Ballantyne to show that the islands have a different moral system from that of the civilized West. His novel dwells heavily upon the idea that the natives practise cannibalism, thereby satisfying a need to categorically delineate the boundaries between savage and civilized. Throughout *The Coral Island*, images of mouths and food abound. The issue of what to eat becomes significant in questioning what is morally and socially fit for consumption. Both the cannibal natives and the Christian boys consume in their quest for power, by eating either the bodies of slain enemies or the body of Christ, although the latter is obviously valued higher than the former. The chain of consumption is complete with the consumption of the island through imperialism and capitalist trade.

   Most of Ballantyne's books celebrate a cause of some kind, such as missionary efforts. His writing is didactic and often claims to be closer to fact than fiction. He images books as sources of factual information within his fiction. In *Coral Island*, Jack has a lot of useful information because he has read a lot. Critic Andrea White notes how this internal self-endorsing works well because:

   it privileges the genre from within while arguing convincingly for its reliability. And it certainly functions to silence any notions that might disturb a contemporary reader as to the presence of these British boys on an island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The

only 'unnatural' aspect of this encounter, it made clear, are the 'barbarisms' practised by the inhabitants themselves.

(White *Joseph* 48)

Ballantyne's novel fits nicely in the adventure fiction's intention of revealing strange worlds to their readers and shaping attitudes to the imperial subject. The author shapes these attitudes in children and adolescents, promoting ideas of patriotic heroism and Christian dutifulness that were compatible with imperialistic aims and would become invaluable in encouraging these young readers to fight in a savage world war a couple of decades later. Likewise, H. Rider Haggard extols the virtues of physical Christianity and English heroes fighting foreign upstarts.

Historians generally treat Haggard as 'a cause or consequence of late Victorian grabbing for colonies' (Etherington 72). He is often dismissed by literary scholars as a 'manufactured' success, tiresome, and unimaginative, with an interest only in what was marketable. C.S. Lewis described Haggard as 'insufferably shallow' and George Orwell could barely bring himself to include *She* (1887) in a 'list of "good bad books"'' (Lewis 72). Despite these criticisms, Haggard has some strong admirers: Henry Miller was fascinated by the 'duality, the hidden self' in his work. Likewise, Graham Greene aligned *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as examples of the 'central problems of duality in the human personality' and the knowledge of one's past (Etherington 73 and Greene 20). Margaret Atwood sees the same link as Greene between Haggard's and Conrad's work: 'the journey into the unknown regions of the self, the unconscious, and the confrontation with whatever dangers and splendours lurk there' (in Etherington 73). Robinson Crusoe as the emerging individual encounters cannibals in his battle for moral superiority; likewise Haggard's characters in their exploration of the inner self do battle with cannibals. In both situations, these are battles with the past, a past that must be repressed and controlled in order for civilization to thrive.

Like Ballantyne, Haggard prepared a generation of young men for war in 1914. In his fiction there is a kind of admiration for barbarism with descriptions of the Zulus' military skills and many battle scenes described as splendid. He thought that England's military was poorly manned and he argued for general conscription (White *Joseph* 87). He saw in Africa a kind of manliness that he thought was lacking in an increasingly decadent English middle class. Those who had long enjoyed the manly action of colonial fiction found much to praise in Haggard's work, championing it for its 'graphic forthrightness', and it was seen as a

'corrective to an effete decadence that bred unfitness in an age gone soft' (83). For Haggard, the colonies were a good training ground and stage for manly, military skills. There the men could 'get back to basics' without the troubling presence of women or government. There they could battle wild animals, inhospitable deserts and swamps, their desires for 'undesirable' women, and warring natives.

King Solomon's Mines (1885) and *She* (1887) were part of the fiction that 'equipped the metropolitan subject with an imaginary model of the territories that were added to the British empire' (Daly 53). The adventure quest was not only a genre for celebrating manly virtues but it was also a genre that appealed to a sense of spatial mastery, highlighted by the motif of the treasure map. Nicholas Daly describes the clumsily made treasure map as a 'composite icon of imperial power, representing the exotic territory as at once mysterious and remote yet ultimately knowable. The "blank spaces of the map", then, are precisely what the adventure novel maps' (Daly 54). Haggard peopled these 'blank spaces' with a range of native 'types'; barbarous killers, demonic witches, noble savages, tempting, docile women, cannibal queens, murderous kings, and grovelling slaves. His English characters prove their worth in battle, trade, or politics with these natives. Brian Street sees Haggard as a 'popular spokesman for poisonous doctrines of race developed by the budding science of anthropology' (Street 181–184). In his non-fiction writing, Haggard 'eulogized Cecil Rhodes, apologized for the Jameson Raid, and regarded the Matabele War as a very good thing. He scoffed at the idea that Africans could have built the impressive stone structures of Zimbabwe and doubted the ability of blacks to govern themselves' (Etherington 74). Although Haggard can be accused of racism, White argues for a more complicated reading of his portrayal of Africans at the end of the nineteenth century: 'No longer the fierce, threatening savage or doltish, backward sub-human, the native is seen for the first time in Haggard's fiction as a potential victim of colonial incursions' (White *Joseph* 93). I agree to some degree with White. However, overriding these subtler modern readings is the easy analogy that Haggard employs between the natives and barbarous acts, above all, cannibalism.

She involves a search for a lost white race in Africa. Again in the novel, racial theories are evoked, and the native tribe, the Amahagger, are cannibalistic savages. The people are of indeterminate race, local custom makes women the aggressors in sexual affairs, and the wisest old man of the cannibals is a self-confessed necrophiliac. Presiding over the 'carnival of perversions is Ayesha (She), the masterwork of Haggard's

imagination' (Etherington 80). She amuses herself with eugenics and terror, and proposes to go to England and overthrow Victoria in a kind of Dracula-like invasion in terrifying reverse imperialism by an irresistible foreign conqueror. Haggard's heroes succumb to her beauty and power with only her accidental death saving the British throne. Orientalism is a common feature throughout the novel with references to taste, smell, desire, and lust. Ayesha is both monstrous and desirable, a powerful woman whose destiny is to degenerate to a monkey. Etherington describes *She* as a 'tarted up Gagool', the witch from *King Solomon's Mines*, a 'sexually devastating Diane' who preaches materialism in philosophy and fascism in politics (80). A fable of colonialism and male dread, *She* is described by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar as a precursor of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (in Karlin xv). Part of this male dread is the fear of strong women and the desire to provide scenarios of male-only, successful societies. Showalter argues that:

> In numerous texts, male writers imagined fantastic plots involving alternative forms of male reproduction or self-replication: splitting or cloning, as in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*; reincarnation, as in Rider Haggard's *She*; transfusion or vivisection, as in *The Island of Dr Moreau*. These enterprises are celibate, yet procreative metaphors for male self-begetting. They reject natural paternity for fantastic versions of fatherhood.
>
> (Showalter 78)

Showalter's point could also apply to the depiction of cannibalism, which involves having someone inside one's body, becoming womb-like and subsequently engendering a new self: the cannibal. The landscapes in which these cannibal tales are set support this assertion. The tunnels in *She* resemble a birth canal, described by Holly as 'wondrous clefts' (Haggard 'She' 273), while the cave resembles a womb: 'the cleft goeth down to the very womb of the world' (279). The flashing lights are like contractions as Ayesha is 'born', the degenerated monkey:

> now flashes of light, forerunners of the revolving pillar of flame, were passing like arrows through the rosy air. Ayesha turned towards it, and stretched her arms to greet it . . . . I even saw her open her mouth and draw it down into her lungs . . . smaller and smaller she grew . . . no larger than a big monkey, and hideous – ah, too hideous for words. (292–294)

The heroic, masculine body is fetishized in *She* as it embodies Victorian English masculinity. This empire-man is brave in the face of cannibals who can smell the flesh of a white man and exhibit a desire to 'hot-pot' him. This is a brutal method of putting a red-hot earthenware pot on the head of a victim, prior to eating his warmed brains, clearly an attempt to consume the seat of English rationality. Holly, the hero, feels absolute horror and repulsion at the sight of his companion's near cannibalization: ' "It is hospitality turned upside down," I answered feebly. "In our country we entertain a stranger, and give him food to eat. Here ye eat him, and are entertained" ' (107). Cannibalism and colonialism are intermingled in that the cannibalism of the Amahaggers gives a licence to colonize since they have demonstrated that they are beyond the realms of civilization. Haggard's contemporaries regarded Africans as mired in a savage state of development through which Europeans had long since passed. Thus, Haggard uses the European past and the African present to provide examples of 'repressible but ineradicable human desires' (Etherington 82), including cannibalism. However, more significant than cannibalism being a justification for colonialism is the idea that it is a universal desire, buried deep in all men. Haggard presents the personality as 'layered' (as do Freud and Jung), and as his heroes move through Africa these layers are removed. Clothes, as the top layer of civilization, are the first to go, and as the layers are stripped away the European heroes become bloodthirsty maniacs, killing without restraint or succumbing to cannibal queens: under Africa's spell, 'English gentlemen regress and become Vikings; Cambridge rowers become ancient Greeks' (Etherington 84). Again and again, Haggard sends his virtuous English men into the wilderness of Africa where they discover their inner selves and reveal savage impulses. This is a theme explored in great depth in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* where beneath all the layers is a desire to consume.

2
Into the Heart of Darkness
Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Heart of Darkness belongs to the nineteenth century insofar as it is a novel of adventure, travel, and exploration, and it draws on the kind of material made popular by Rider Haggard and Rudyard Kipling, material that was certainly suitable for the heyday of imperialism. Conrad's readers would have been conditioned by previous imperial romances to expect tales of savage behaviour, in particular cannibalism. However, they may have been puzzled by Conrad's more explicitly ambivalent use of the cannibal metaphor (Rickard 1). The settings of Conrad's novels first led to the labelling of Conrad as an adventure writer like his predecessors. Yet, Douglas Hewitt argues, Conrad did not set his tales in the China Seas or Belgian Congo because they provided easy, exotic adventure, but because they allowed him to isolate his characters (Hewitt 7). *Heart of Darkness* involves a journey into darkest Africa, the Congo. Yet the novel deals with this journey in a different, darker, and vaguer way than the imperial romances of a decade earlier. While Haggard and Ballantyne, like Conrad, were personally experienced in the operation of the Empire, Conrad's anxiety distinguishes him from his predecessors and their works based on exhilaration and adventure in the colonial world. In a letter to his publisher Conrad described the writing of the novel after having experienced the realities of the Congo first-hand:

> All the bitterness of those days, all my puzzled wonder as to the meaning of all I saw – all my indignation at masquerading philanthropy – have been with me again, while I wrote...I have divested myself of everything but pity – and some scorn – while putting down the insignificant events that bring on the catastrophe.
>
> (qtd. in Kimbrough 199)

There was a great deal of imperial pessimism afloat in the 1890s. The status of the Congo was a contentious issue at the time. Ownership of the territory was decided when the Congo Free State was recognized as the personal property of King Leopold II at the Berlin Conference in 1885. Ronald Hyam has also delineated a growing pessimism in England following the Crimean episodes and crises in Egypt and Ireland. This rising gloominess was, Hyam argues, countered with increased emphasis on racial hierarchies (Hyam 72, 103). Conrad saw a diminished heroism and decaying sense of adventure in Victorian England and while he criticizes exploitation in the colonies, his fiction, as Brantlinger argues, 'more consistently bemoans the loss of heroism in the modern world' (Brantlinger 42). The search for heroism and the search for a self-validating authority are both evident in *Heart of Darkness.* Conrad sees imperialism as a missed opportunity for heroism, and wants to reinvoke heroism in an unheroic age, but also sees problems with this kind of imperial heroism. It is not the presence of Europeans in Africa that Conrad despises but the rapacious, money-hungry colonizers. It is not that the idea of imperialism is wrong but rather the way that it is imposed.

Conrad himself was a hybrid, marginal man, living in two worlds, in both of which he was a stranger. Therefore he needed to fashion an identity from a medley of competing demands and allegiances. Conrad's family were exiled from Poland to Russia and he was orphaned at 11. He was encouraged to blame his sufferings on 'the aggressive intrusion of a foreign state into a coherent community' (McClure 85). The powers of empire determined the fate of his family and homeland and his early sufferings because of this imperialism and unjust states of affairs inspired his later writings. Andrea White notes how Conrad was influenced from an early age by the legends about, and writings by, the heroic figures of the day, the explorer-adventurer. He wrote appreciatively about Captain James Cook, Sir John Franklin, Francis Leopold McClintock, and David Livingstone. Crucially, the realization he arrived at was the disparity between the aspirations and reported achievements of these great figures and the actual degenerative conditions at the outposts. It was, White states, this degeneration he was moved to record, 'cherishing the disinterested ideals associated with these early adventurers while marking the sordid realities those dreams had in fact engendered' (White *Joseph* 2), degeneration and sordid realities that are evident in *Heart of Darkness*.

Heart of Darkness was published in 1899 as a serial in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. It is a rich, vivid, layered, paradoxical, and

problematic novel, a mixture of 'oblique autobiography, traveller's yarn, adventure story, psychological odyssey, political satire, symbolic prose-poem, black comedy, spiritual melodrama, and sceptical meditation' (Watts 45). According to Robert Kimbrough, the most important criticisms of *Heart of Darkness* were the public comments made by Chinua Achebe on Conrad's racism and the film *Apocalypse Now* (Dir. Coppola 1979). The novel has been influential since publication, reaching a zenith of its critical acclaim in the period 1950–1975. *Heart of Darkness* was 'canonical' by the 1970s when critical attacks on it began to develop. It was vigorously assailed on political grounds by feminist critics and developing commentators. In 1975 Chinua Achebe declared Conrad was a 'bloody racist', reading *Heart of Darkness* as a novel which depicts Africa as a place of negations where Africans are dehumanized and degraded, seen as a grotesque mob without coherent speech. Achebe's criticisms had a powerful impact. What had until then been deemed an astute attack on imperialism was now accused of being a work which was 'pro-imperialist in its endorsement of racial prejudice' (Watts 53). While Achebe's attack was fierce, other Third World writers, such as Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, defended Conrad, arguing that while he was ambivalent on racial matters, *Heart of Darkness* was progressive in its satirical accounts of the colonialists. For some, like Achebe, Conrad remains hopelessly Anglophile and racist, while others have found in his work a subtle and complex mixture of cultural awareness and imperialist blindness. V.S. Naipaul and Edward Said admire Conrad's style, while noting the imperialist bias in it. Said argues that what separates Conrad from his peers is the 'unsettling anxiety' that emanates from his work (Said 88). Terry Eagleton claims Conrad's art is contradictory, resulting in 'ideological stalemate'. He argues that Conrad neither believed in the cultural superiority of the colonialist nations, nor rejected colonialism outright. The message in the novel, he believes, is 'that Western civilisation is at base as barbarous as African society – a viewpoint which disturbs imperialist assumptions to the precise degree that it reinforces them' (qtd. in Watts 53). Benita Parry notes, in a post-colonial reading of *Heart of Darkness*, that while the novella is an ethical critique of European imperialism, its 'racist idiom' cannot be overlooked or 'wished away' (Parry 39–40). The personal marginality felt by Conrad has led to the suggestion that in fashioning an identity, he creates a style which is equally contradictory. F.R. Leavis criticized Conrad for his 'adjectival insistence' in *Heart of Darkness*, arguing that his use of conflicting adjectives makes his writing mysterious and incomprehensible. E.M. Forster believes this use of adjectives is a way of covering up the fact that

Conrad was gesturing towards colonial criticism, yet not quite achieving anything close to a convincing criticism:

> What is so elusive about him is that he is always promising to make some general philosophical statement about the universe, and then refraining in a gruff declaimer ... there is a central obscurity, something noble, heroic, inspiring half-a-dozen great books, but obscure! Obscure! Misty in the middle as well as at the edges, the secret cask of his genius contains a vapour rather than a jewel; and that we needn't try to write him down philosophically, because there is, in this direction, nothing to write. No creed, in fact.
>
> (Forster qtd. in Griffith)

All of these criticisms and readings of the book have resulted in what Lipka terms the 'wild overgrowth of vegetation that is Conrad studies' (Lipka 26). The attempts to damn or rescue the book have filled many pages. Lipka argues for a reading of *Heart of Darkness* beyond political and colonial readings, a reading that recognizes 'the universality of the story as a message of how to live with the knowledge of evil' (27).

In the wake of this criticism on Conrad's contradictory style and the question of his stance on imperialism, cannibalism is an important factor. Cannibalism is a potent theme in *Heart of Darkness*, highlighting issues of racism, degeneration, ideological ambivalence, and orality. Foremost in the discussion of *Heart of Darkness* as a cannibal text is its depiction of Africa as a cannibal land and the natives as cannibals. Conrad follows the example set by the imperial romance by peopling the colonies with cannibalistic savages. Further to this, the land itself is described as cannibalistic, swallowing intruders into its darkness. Labelling Africa and its inhabitants cannibalistic is a familiar feature of the imperial romance. However, Conrad's ambivalent attitudes towards colonialism are evident in his other uses of the cannibal metaphor in the novel. If he portrays the colonized land as cannibalistic, he also portrays colonialism itself as a cannibalistic system, devouring territories and races, as well as the morals of its supporters. The colonizers are figurative cannibals before arriving in Africa and are in danger of becoming literal cannibals through corruption at the hands of natives. An important theme in the novel is obviously Kurtz's degeneration into cannibalism. The notion of slipping back to a primitive, savage state was a pertinent one at the time of the novel's publication. Cannibalism was, therefore, a useful trope to explore ideas of degeneration. In examining the depictions of the natives as cannibals,

the colonizers as cannibals, and Kurtz as the bridging cannibal figure, Conrad's ideological ambivalence becomes clearer. Moreover, I believe that the narrative itself is cannibalistic. Control over voice confers power and the manipulation of representation. Orality, the metaphor of the mouth, and voice, are critical issues in discussing a cannibalistic tale. This is especially the case given the nature of the narration in *Heart of Darkness*. Thus cannibalism functions in the novel as the locus for questions of control: control of appetite, desire, enemies, resources, and representation.

First I will examine the depiction of Africa as a cannibalistic zone populated by real cannibals in the novel. It is in these depictions that accusations of Conrad's racism resonate. The journey in *Heart of Darkness* is depicted as one into an underworld, physically and psychologically; going up river is, as Marlow says, 'like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and big trees were kings' (Conrad 48). The sense of going back in time to pre-civilized, pre-historical time supports the colonist's beliefs that not only were values lacking in the native, but that they never existed in the first place. The native, Fanon says, is shown to be the enemy of value and therefore an evil: 'He is the corrosive element, destroying all that comes near him; he is the deforming element, disfiguring all that has to do with beauty or morality' (Fanon *Wretched* 34). Conrad's natives are of two types: they are an indistinct black mass, or they are cannibals. On arrival at the Outer Station Marlow describes seeing 'black shapes'. He does not see the natives as individual people, they are only nebulous figures, 'nothing earthly now, nothing but black shadows' (Conrad 24). The natives are generalized and transformed into characters from a gothic horror. This indicates that they are considered sources of exotic dread; they are vampire bats or zombies, both figures that represent a threat to boundaries of accepted behaviour through their appetites for consuming human flesh. The question of whether the natives are fully human is pondered over by Marlow. While he does feel some distant affiliation with the 'wild passionate uproar' of the natives and is thrilled by the thought of their humanity – like his own (51) – this remains an ugly thought and is relegated to a suspicion rather than a conviction. He finds it easier to merge the natives with the wilderness itself, seeing them as part of the jungle, a creeping, silent mass that is not quite human, echoing the thinking of early modernists who, as John Carey has documented (Carey 1), assigned inhuman qualities to the threatening mass: 'the crowd of savages was vanishing without any perceptible movement of retreat, as if the forest that had ejected these beings so

suddenly had drawn them in again as the breath is drawn in a long aspiration' (Conrad 6).

Conrad uses the typical image of native Africans as cannibals in the crew of the *Roi des Belges*. Marlow's attitude to the cannibals reveals his condescension, fear, ignorance, and contempt. He admits they possess restraint but cannot understand why. He never grants them full human status. Marlow introduces the cannibal crew to his tale while describing the difficulties of manoeuvring the boat up river, telling his listeners that 'more than once she had to wade for a bit, with twenty cannibals splashing around and pushing' (49). The cannibals are not assigned any age, gender, nationality, or physical description, except for the fact that their teeth are filed (52) – like vampires. Their sole identity is that of the cannibal. Marlow goes on to tell his listeners that the cannibals are not entirely bad: 'fine fellows...in their place. They were men one could work with, and I am grateful to them' (49–50). In describing the particulars of their cannibalism he merely relates that they did not eat each other in front of him and confined themselves to rotting hippo meat. Marlow's gratitude to the cannibals seems to be based on the fact that they saved him the discomfort of seeing them eating each other. There is no questioning the type of, or reasons for, the cannibalism. The idea that it would be highly unusual for men of the same tribe to eat each other is not a consideration for Marlow. The men are cannibals and that is all that we need to know.

However, an important aspect of their portrayal is that the cannibals on board with Marlow show restraint in the face of great hunger. In a novel so concerned with appetites, this restraint is highly valued. One of the nameless, faceless cannibals is finally given a voice when asking Marlow to give them a captive to eat. This utterance is accompanied by a 'dignified and profoundly pensive attitude' (58). The slightly tongue-in-cheek account of the cannibals gives way to genuine regard for the restraint they show. Apart from the rotten hippo meat (soon discarded because of the stench), the cannibals eat some 'stuff like half-cooked dough' (59). It is only at the thought of the great hunger they are feeling that Marlow examines the cannibals more closely, as if appetite gives them identity. He understands the natives only at this level, the level of desire for food. This is a visceral rather than emotional or intellectual understanding. He feels some physical empathy with the natives' hunger. Hunger, it seems, is a universal sensation, it is the material which satisfies this hunger that differs. In comprehending this on some level Marlow begins to see himself a potential source for this satisfaction of hunger and he wonders why the cannibals did not attack the

pilgrims or himself and 'have a good tuck in for once' (59). He admits a perverse vanity in the hope that he does not look too unappetizing, comparing himself to the unwholesome-looking pilgrims. The realization of the cannibals' hunger and restraint leads Marlow to look at the cannibals as he would on any other human being and to ponder the idea of their hunger and restraint in comparison to his. Restraint of appetite – even cannibal appetite – confers human subjectivity. On the one hand, he denies the possibility of their restraint, claiming he would just as soon expect restraint from a hyena prowling amongst corpses in a battlefield (60). Yet, on the other hand, he recognizes that hunger overrides disgust, patience, and fear. When superstition, beliefs, and principles are compared to hunger 'they are less than a chaff in the breeze' (60). Yet, in the face of this hunger, the cannibals resist. How they do so remains a mystery to Marlow, and the cannibal's famished state and mammoth restraint are forgotten in the fear of attack, not to be mentioned again. The cannibals' hunger and their reasons for not indulging it are subsumed into Marlow's idea of what hunger is:

> Don't you know the devilry of lingering starvation, its exasperating torment, its black thoughts, its sombre and brooding ferocity? Well, I do. It takes a man all his inborn strength to fight hunger properly. It's really easier to face bereavement, dishonour, and the perdition of one's soul – than this kind of prolonged hunger. (60)

The cannibals themselves are never asked how hungry they are or why they do not submit to their gnawing appetites. Marlow's idea of hunger and the overwhelming urge to indulge it is realized paradoxically in the actions of the colonizers and Kurtz, who show little or no restraint and attract the novel's most 'ravenous and cannibalistic language' (Rickard 2). This is crucial when considering the move of the cannibal from colonial to contemporary times. Rather than a marked shift, we can see the slow unveiling of the cannibalistic West.

The wilderness, similar to the cannibals, is a malevolent force looking for a target. It is a cannibal looking for a feast, an empty maw looking to be filled. There is a sense that the land has the power to consume, it is a metaphorical cannibal, consuming bodies into its jungles and morals into its swamps. Marlow attributes more human characteristics to the jungle than to the natives. It appears to be almost like a mother figure to the natives, embracing them and according them hiding places: 'The wilderness without a sound took him into his bosom again' (Conrad 34). However, if the land is a mother figure to the natives, to the invaders it

is a cannibalistic monster, with fiendish, cannibalistic offspring. Marlow describes the jungle as looking at you with a 'vengeful aspect' (48–49). As with the natives, the country itself is a place he cannot understand or fully penetrate. The woods are closed to him, 'like the closed door of a prison' (81). While Africa was a continent to go to and prove your heroism, it remained full of mystery and threatening Otherness. The battle against the clinging, voracious plant-life, which hampers progress up river, comes to symbolize the battle to resist 'the darkness' and the 'black and incomprehensible frenzy' (51). The wilderness is a vacuum that swallows and spits out people, it is silent and threatening, yet also alluring. In its greatness Marlow sees mystery and concealed life. He feels himself bewitched and describes how he is swallowed by Africa: 'cut off for ever from everything you had known once – somewhere – far away– in another existence perhaps . . . . And this stillness of life did not in the least resemble peace. It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention' (48).

As it is impenetrable and incomprehensible to Marlow, he reduces it, as he did the cannibals, to something he and his listeners can understand; the desire to consume. The land becomes a sign of the appetite, the desire to swallow everything, and it is described as a charming snake (12), a catacomb (20), vengeful and implacable, watching and waiting (48), and as an ivory ball that embraces and gets into one's veins and consumes one's flesh (69). Marlow's journey is one back through time to primeval, nightmarish wilderness. Conrad depicts African culture as mad, lustful, cannibalistic, and violent. His natives are indistinct, inhuman and bestial, jabbering and incomprehensible. Darkness in *Heart of Darkness* represents savagery, amorality, and degradation. Africa becomes a kind of mirror. The propagandist images of heroism, and the guilty, shameful images of regression are the two sides of the mirror. Conrad portrays this shameful reality of European behaviour but his idea of what is evil and hell remains African. The darkness that Kurtz falls into is African.

Africa, as a cannibalistic space, has a profoundly decentring effect on the white colonizers who visit. Kurtz is most obviously transformed through his travels into the heart of cannibal darkness. If Kurtz succumbs, it is because he is tempted to do so by the continent and its inhabitants, his contamination is through contact with Africa. Morally, as well as bodily, the jungle has claimed Kurtz. Garret Stewart uses metaphors of consumption to describe the contamination of Kurtz. Again Africa is described as a cannibalistic space, this time consuming Kurtz: 'Something he encounters there meets no resistance,

immunological or spiritual; it first inflames, then gradually emaciates him, eating him up from within' (365). Kurtz submitted to, rather than suppressed the natives' savagery, with its hints of cannibalism and sexual licence. This feeling of the European slipping into savagery is, of course, central to the novel. Kurtz is an important character, not least because at the time of publication, racial boundaries were among the most important lines of demarcation for English society. Fears, not only of colonial rebellion, but of racial mingling, cross-breeding, and intermarriage, fuelled scientific and political interest in establishing clear lines of demarcation between black and white, East and West. Typical *fin de siècle* fears involve notions of degeneration. Elaine Showalter argues that fears of degeneration resulted in a need for rigid definitions of race:

> In periods of cultural insecurity, when there are fears of regression and degeneration, the longing for strict border controls around the definition of gender, as well as race, class, and nationality, becomes especially intense.
>
> (Showalter 4)

Max Nordau in his study *Degeneration* (1892), claimed that civilization was being corrupted by the influence of people who were morally degenerate and Cedric Watts points out that Nordau's account of the 'highly gifted degenerate', the charismatic yet depraved genius, may have influenced Conrad's depiction of Kurtz (Watts 46). Kurtz is, as Albert Guerard suggests, 'The hollow man, whose evil is the evil of *vacancy*' (Guerard 243–244).

Marlow, who sees Africa as demoralizing, regards the Outer Station manager's obsession with his appearance, collars, and cuffs, as 'backbone'. It is, in fact, an attempt to maintain the tenuous veneer of civilization, to differentiate himself from the abject filth of the natives' situation. It is a means of erecting boundaries where there may not be any clear differences. John Griffith sees this image as Conrad's means of showing civilization to be a 'threadbare garment', in danger of disintegrating and leaving the Europeans in 'primitive nakedness' (Griffith 140).

In *Purity and Danger,* Mary Douglas examines the results of transgressing boundaries. She contends that the danger which is risked by boundary transgression is power (Douglas 161). The dread of defilement is traced to beliefs in horrible disasters, which overtake those who inadvertently cross some formidable line or develop some impure condition.

This is certainly true of Kurtz who transgresses boundaries and becomes impure. Douglas argues that the process of ingestion is symbolic of political absorption, that is, sometimes bodily orifices seem to represent points of entry or exit to social units, or bodily perfection can symbolize an ideal theocracy. Whenever a strict pattern of purity is imposed on our lives it is either highly uncomfortable or it leads to contradiction if closely followed. It can also lead to hypocrisy. She goes on to say that by negating something we do not remove it: 'The rest of life, which does not tidily fit the accepted categories, is still there and demands attention' (163). In *Heart of Darkness* the need for strict control over points of entry and exit is due to the fact that in the colonies those sites were open to contamination and temptation. In the novel, civilization is shown as a veneer, which slips when its wearer, Kurtz, is removed from the watching eyes of society. In *Heart of Darkness* the ultimate atrocity is not the abuse of natives, but rather Kurtz's regression. Kurtz is a representative of Europe and imperialism, supposedly bringing civilization to savagery. Yet in the heart of the Dark Continent Kurtz exists, emanating darkness. The fear of becoming dark, of regressing morally and socially is realized in Kurtz.

   Many novels are concerned with meeting and incorporating the culture of the Other, whether of class, ethnicity, or sexuality; they often fantasize about crossing into it. The basis of Robert Young's polemic on colonial desire is that the lure of crossing boundaries is implicated in imperialism: 'Transmigration is the form taken by colonial desire, whose attractions and fantasies were no doubt complicit with colonialism itself' (Young 3). Kurtz embodies the culmination of these colonial desires and his indulgence in them results in his becoming an ambivalent figure. Homi J. Bhabha looks at Said's Orientalism as consisting of two conflicting levels: 'the conscious body of "scientific" knowledge about the Orient, and a "latent" Orientalism, an unconscious positivity of fantasmatic desire' (qtd. in Young 161). The two levels are fused and inseparable. Ambivalence is the fluctuation between wanting one thing and at the same time wanting that which is contradictory to it. It is also the simultaneous attraction towards, and repulsion from an object, person, or action. At the heart of the heart of darkness is Kurtz, the degenerative colonizer, epitomizing these ambivalent desires. Through ingestion of customs and humans Kurtz negates accepted categories, the wilderness has awakened 'forgotten and brutal instincts' in him and he has gratified 'monstrous passions' (Conrad 94–95). His ambivalence arises from the fact that he is both the disembodied ideal of imperialist expansion while also being the embodiment of the very

savagery imperialism purports to suppress. Rhetoric and tales of glory are all that we know of Kurtz for much of the novel. However, he is shown to have 'something wanting in him – some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence' (83). Placing Kurtz in the heart of darkness allows Conrad to hint at the darkness in the ideals of imperialism and in its enforcers. Kurtz embodies ambivalence by being the cannibalistic colonizer; he is the civilized turned savage. The ideal imperialist with an appetite for success, ivory, and profit, his appetite overpowers him and becomes an appetite for Africa itself.

The uncertainty as to what Kurtz's crimes actually are has led to vague hints of cannibalism. However, this is never directly stated in the novel. The reader is not explicitly told what the 'unspeakable rites' in which he has partaken actually involve. However, the phrase 'unspeakable rites' was commonly used in Victorian adventure stories to refer subtly to cannibalism. Claude Rawson argues that in order to contemplate cannibalism, writers used metaphorical or alluding references to it: ' "unspeakable rites", a phrase common in Victorian adventure stories, which referred darkly, with a nudge and a wink, to what the natives got up to round a fire, itself a fictional stereotype going back at least as far as *Robinson Crusoe* and ultimately deriving from travel books' ('Unspeakable'). 'Unspeakable rites' is, then, a phrase which teasingly encourages the reader to think Kurtz literally consumes human flesh. In the novel Conrad attaches subtle significance to cannibalism and it takes on thematic importance. Restraint is given great human value, as evidenced by Marlow's opinion of the cannibal crew and Conrad goes to some lengths to portray Kurtz as a more terrifying cannibal who, unlike the native cannibals, displays an inexhaustible desire to eat everything. He claims ownership over everything, sighing ' "My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my" – everything belonged to him' (Conrad 70). While Kurtz's people are never classified as cannibals, there is a suggestion of sacrificial cannibalism, a suggestion that Kurtz is encouraging human sacrifices to be offered up to him. Again, as Rawson argues, this code of suggestion was a means of talking about the possibility of the degeneration of the colonist in the colonies: 'circumvention, ambiguity, hinted denials, melodramatic horror or the nervous joke, invariably take over' when it comes to 'us' being cannibals ('Unspeakable'). He makes reference to Montaigne's Frenchmen who are purported to be worse than the actual cannibals in their vengeful burning of men at the stake, Swift's 'Modest Proposal', Kurtz, and the novels of William Golding. In these texts, the writers align the 'civilized' man with cannibalism but

only through metaphor, black humour, or veiled suggestions. There is a reluctance to fully face the savagery underlying the civilized.

The ghastly image of the black dried human heads that decorate Kurtz's fence is a notorious image and leads Marlow to conclude that their significance was to show that Kurtz lacked self-control in the gratification of his 'various lusts' (Conrad 83). All but one of the heads on the stakes are facing Kurtz's house, as if one is keeping watch while the others gaze on their master. The one face Marlow can see is described in gruesome detail as black, shrunken, seemingly asleep at the top of the pole. The mouth and teeth are given special mention: 'the shrunken dry lips showing a narrow white line of teeth, was smiling, too, smiling continuously at some endless and jocose dream of that eternal slumber' (82–83). The ornamental nature of the 'fence' is contrasted with the disturbing notion of the heads being both food for thought, and food for the vultures and ants. Again the underlying horror is that of the body being consumed, by man or by Africa. Jeffrey Meyers suggests the fence shows the power of the whites becoming absolute as the torments inflicted upon the Africans become more extreme, until they 'foreshadow the great horrors of the twentieth century' (Meyers 61).

Marlow is unable to comprehend, tolerate, or speak of the details of what Kurtz has done. Told that Kurtz's ascendancy is extraordinary and that the chiefs of the tribes crawl to him, Marlow shouts that he does not want to know anything of the ceremonies used by Kurtz. This furthers the argument that cannibalism as practised by Europeans was literally unspeakable. Conrad's readers, like Marlow, are unwilling to hear the truth spoken explicitly. Marlow refuses to become enlightened about the significance of these customs, he remains transfixed by the surface horror they generate for the European. The creeping awareness of what Kurtz has become transports Marlow into some 'lightless region of subtle horrors, where pure, uncomplicated savagery was a positive relief, being something that had a right to exist – obviously – in the sunshine' (Conrad 83–84), he is transported to the realm of Gothic horror. Instead of humanizing, educating, or improving, Kurtz has aggravated the worst aspects of primitive worship. The essence of his debasement is the sacrificing and consuming of human beings. While Kurtz represents the cannibal colonizer, he has many facets in the representation by both Conrad and Marlow, diabolic in the concentration of his deviant will, pursuing forbidden experience, contemptuous of others and of himself, without outer convention or inner core. Kurtz is subverting in that he overthrows all the seeming values of the world around him, much like Wells' Dr Moreau. Kurtz brings colonial desire to its terrifying culmination by literally consuming the natives. He is described

throughout the novel as a mouth. Marlow describes him as having a 'weirdly voracious aspect', opening his mouth wide 'as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him' (85–86). Kurtz's mouth symbolizes his power over the natives. This mouth points to the idea of a reverse cannibalism in the novel. The fear of being swallowed by the darkness and wilderness of the African jungle is countered with Kurtz's fantasy of swallowing the world. Marlow describes Kurtz's gift of expression as both illuminating and contemptible, it is 'a pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness' (68). In comparison to the cannibal crew whose cannibal mouths are incomprehensible and without reason, Kurtz's cannibal mouth is given certain power and is entirely compelling. The complexities of the colonial relationship are embodied, literally, in Kurtz's stomach. Kurtz, in his ambivalent state, is both master and slave, he is both civilized and savage, consumer and consumed. Kurtz's fall is due to the fact that avarice and domination are legitimated and encouraged by European society and, as such, is 'a paradigm of colonial disintegration' (McClure 136). Ultimately Kurtz is the ambivalent bridging figure of the novel, both alluring and repulsive.

However, the novel's ideological ambivalence resides in the intellectual reversals that take place in that the colonizers are already cannibals before they arrive on the African continent – Conrad uses metaphors of cannibalism to describe Western attitudes to the colonies and implicates the white imperialist in an opaque but also more damaging version of cannibalistic activity. McClure argues that the fall in Conrad's fiction is not to the level of the colonized but the fall is the product of the colonizer's desires and 'the license he gains by being white, owning weapons, and living beyond the borders of his own community' (92). This, again, is a marked difference to Walton's argument of the simpler shift of the cannibal from Other to Self. Here we see the Self as cannibal alongside the Other at the beginning of the twentieth century. *Heart of Darkness* exposes the disturbing possibility that the drive for colonial expansion is a project without any inherent rationale. Insatiable desire is a structural feature of the institution of colonialism and the energies generated in this process reproduce individual instability. Robert Young has described the colonialist machine as:

> a machine of war, of bureaucracy and administration, and above all, of power . . . it was also a machine of fantasy, and of desire – desire that was constituted socially, collectively . . . . This desiring machine, with its unlimited appetite . . . continuously forced disparate territories, histories and people to be thrust together like foreign bodies in the

night. In that sense it was itself the instrument that produced its own darkest fantasy – the unlimited and ungovernable fertility of "unnatural" unions'.

<div align="right">(Young 98)</div>

Young's metaphor of colonialism as a 'desiring machine' is particularly apt in relation to *Heart of Darkness.* The ultimate symbol of consumption is the literal and figurative consumption of people, realized in Kurtz, the master of colonialism. The economics of colonialism are represented through the ivory trade in the novel; the lust for ivory becomes a kind of madness. The hunger for resources shows itself in a desire to subsume Africa itself; it is the ultimate controlling of a blank space. Death and trade go hand-in-hand in a 'merry dance' in an atmosphere as of an 'overheated catacomb' (Conrad 20) and natives are nothing more than 'raw matter' in chains (23), an image also featured in *The Coral Island.* The desire to consume Africa's resources, in the form of ivory, bewitches the colonizers until the word 'ivory' rings in the air, whispered, sighed, and prayed to. Marlow notes that the taint of 'imbecile rapacity blew through it all, like a whiff from some corpse' (33). This portrayal of the ivory traders echoes with irony the terms of abuse used against the cannibalistic natives. The white imperial consciousness that wants to engorge the world and transform it into itself is embodied in the colonizers.

The true nature of European paternalism is shown in the novella. Colonialism as cannibalistic is evidenced in the disease and starvation of the 'shadows' at the Outer Station, described as the results of European greed. The relationship between colonizer and colonized is an uncomfortable one. Jean Paul Sartre describes colonial administrators in general as having 'uneasy consciences...caught up in their own contradictions' (preface to Fanon *Wretched* 8). He goes on to argue that the victims of colonialism have 'scars and chains' as their irrefutable evidence of the evils of colonialism and this evidence shows up the West as equally savage: 'It is enough that they show us what we have made of them for us to realise what we have made of ourselves' (12). The colonizers in *Heart of Darkness* are described as 'flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly', while the natives' ribs are visible and the 'joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope' (Conrad 22–23). The colonizers grow fat on the meat of the natives' muscles reducing their subjects to shadows of disease and starvation, nearly as thin as air (24). As the colonizers get fat while the natives get thin, the clear implication is that the colonizers are 'eating them up'. Marlow, still clinging to rationale and

'civilization', sees what colonialism has made of the colonizers and feels great shame. This shame leads him to continue to spread the falsity of the heroic ideals of colonialism by lying to Kurtz's Intended. He cannot admit the reality, for to admit it would be to include himself in the cycle of consumption.

   While colonialism is cannibalizing in its desires, it also cannibalizes the colonizers themselves in its dark ideals. Colonial desire, constituted by a dialectic of attraction and repulsion, soon brings with it the threat of the colonial desiring machine, whereby a culture in its colonial operation becomes hybridized, alienated and potentially threatening to its European original through the production of perverse people who are, in Bhabha's phrase, 'white but not quite' (qtd. in Young 175). The feeling of guilt and implication in imperialist rhetoric results for Marlow in a feeling of being enveloped in and swallowed by darkness. He fears that he will be the target of its revenge: 'it seemed to me as if I also were buried in a vast grave of unspeakable horrors . . . the presence of victorious corruption, the darkness of an impenetrable night' (Conrad 89). The superiority of weapons meant that colonizers could kill from afar, resulting in their being invisible killers, unreachable opponents. They were also invisible in the sense that they were far from the eyes of 'home'. They also become blank spaces to be filled, with the light of heroism, or with the darkness of degeneration. Colonial ideals of taking control of a land, its people, and its resources overwhelmed the colonizers, subsuming perspective, ideals, or notions of grandeur. As a cannibalistic system, it not only cannibalizes colonies but also its own cannibalistic administrators. Marlow represents the cannibalized colonizer. He is in constant battle against being consumed by the land, the natives, the mindless and overwhelming greed, and finally by Kurtz's raving declamation. The figurative cannibal to Kurtz's probable one, Marlow tacitly condones the economic, moral, and actual cannibalization of the Congo and its people. Marlow observes that the natives resist cannibalism yet they are labelled 'cannibal', and Kurtz, who we know has indulged in unspeakable rites, cannot be labelled cannibal outright. The white man as cannibal is an all but unspeakable idea beyond metaphorical terms. However, subtle hints of white anthropophagy persist in the novel.

   Even the narrative itself, taking place on the Thames, the place from which colonial ships set off for their adventures, takes on cannibalistic qualities. The story is told from the West because for Marlow and Conrad history and learning come from Europe. Everything, 'the dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires' (7), is described as flowing from the river, from London. In *Last Essays* Joseph Conrad

describes his desire to write *Heart of Darkness*: 'Regions unknown! My imagination could depict to itself there worthy, adventurous and devoted men, nibbling at the edges, attacking from north and south and east and west, conquering a bit of truth here and a bit of truth there, and sometimes swallowed up by the mystery their hearts were so persistently set on unveiling' (qtd. in Kimbrough 145). Interestingly Conrad uses metaphors of nibbling and swallowing to describe colonialism, the search for truth, and the unveiling of mysteries. Conrad's tale itself becomes part of the metaphor of cannibalism, subsuming Africa in its control of voice and representation. Orality and cannibalism are linked through the mouth. Orality is a central theme given the narrative style of the novel and the importance of voice and representation. Only Marlow's voice is given authorial credence, his voice is the voice of the colonizers. His story leads and controls the readers, including and omitting what it sees fit and discouraging interruption or questioning.

Both Walter J. Ong and Penny Fielding look at notions of how orality is considered close to the primitive. Ong explains how the written word encourages a sense of closure, 'a sense that what is found in a text has been finalized, has reached a state of completion' (Ong 129). He aligns the term 'illiterate' with savage and inferior, as weighted terms which identify an earlier state of affairs negatively, by noting lack or deficiency. He sees the term 'oral' as less invidious and more positive (171). However the term 'orality' is associated with irrationality, temporality, and the marginal when held in contrast to print. The oral is always other: of writing it is speech, of culture it is the voice of nature, and of the modern it is a pre-modern past. Fielding points out the significance of this phenomenon in the nineteenth century when orality was placed in contrast to modernity: 'some traditional foes of orality – urbanization, manufacturing technology, science – dominated that century's sense of its own value systems. In order that orality can be contained and managed, it is usually located elsewhere than in the temporal centre' (Fielding 4). Fielding argues that politicizing the oral has become a means of re-reading literary and textual histories. Opposed to orality is, of course, the book or text. It is used as a weapon against all that orality represents. Where orality is irrational, the text is rational. The opposition, in psychoanalytic terms, associates writing, the visual, phallic sign, with the creation of the conscious while the oral is repressed into the unconscious (17).

In their studies on orality, Ong and Fielding do not consider the cannibalistic link to the oral through the mouth. However, these themes of orality are evident in *Heart of Darkness*, making this cannibalistic

link in a number of ways. The idea of orality as elsewhere, as contrary to modernity and progress is evident in the portrayal of the natives' language and voice. Their story is easy to refute or suppress as it is oral. Marlow is entirely in control of representation. This re-enacts the idea of nineteenth-century imperialists inscribing a blank space with preconceived ideas. It is Marlow's images and memories of Africa that the listeners on *The Nelly*, and indeed the readers of the novel, take as reality. The 'otherness' of the colonies is spoken of in riddles, Marlow obliterates proper place names and tribal or cultural realities. Secondly, the fact that the natives are only twice accorded a voice raises the question of the value system applied to modes of communication: Is their mode of communication less valid because Marlow cannot understand their language? As they are not given a chance to record their own history and experiences we must take Marlow's English, and Conrad's print, as fact in the story. Fielding's arguments concerning the privileging of text over the oral are evident here in the casual dismissing of the native's orality in favour of the more progressive print, and, as Ong would argue, this story is beyond questioning, beyond refutation. For Ong, the author of a book is unreachable and beyond questioning. He compares the book to an oracle or prophet in that it relays an utterance from a source. However, as the source is the author, and the author cannot be reached, there is no way to directly refute a book so that, 'after absolutely total and devastating refutation, it says exactly the same thing as before. This is one reason why "the book says" is popularly tantamount to "it is true"' (Ong 78). While Marlow fulfils part of the function of orality in that he *tells* his story, it does remain *his* story. His use of the language of the empire furthers his power by allowing him to be understood and respected by his peers. Cannibalism is, above all else, an oral crime. Primitive in its biting, pre-civilized in its ignorance or rejection of accepted morals, and savage in its cruelty, it powerfully aligns the mouth and the oral to the primitive. Without the means to record their own history, the African cannibals are reduced to a mouth and thus inherently demoted to unimportant, irrelevant, and incomprehensible. Finally, Kurtz as a voice raises questions about the image of the cannibalistic mouth as an ambivalent instrument. The power of his rhetoric affords him a short-lived power. Ultimately, however, he too is reduced to the level of orality. His cannibalistic crimes and his spoken demands go unrecorded. Marlow assumes control of Kurtz's mouth by condemning his oral crimes as deranged savagery and by refusing to truthfully relay his final words to his Intended.

Marlow's narrative allows Africa to become historicized and its 'strangeness' is placed in contrast with Europe, thus it is part of European control even if it is in opposition to it. Marlow's voice accords him the ability to represent others and truth as he wishes. The narrative voice is in itself a form of control. It furthers the feeling of European significance. Marlow's control of the story is as voracious as Kurtz's open mouth. Both Marlow and Kurtz are described as being no more than mouths, Kurtz fulfilling one role of the mouth, to consume, and Marlow fulfilling the role of articulation. While Kurtz's mouth symbolizes physical power over the natives, Marlow's enacts the control of representation. Both cannibalize Africa and its inhabitants in their hunger for domination. The novel re-enacts an imperial gesture by showing only a Western perspective and assigning Western values to a non-Western space. Marlow 'swallows' everything in his narrative. There is no room for alternative views.

The native voice, or lack of it, is, of course, essential in this European hegemony. Without a voice the accusations of cannibalism and savagery cannot be denied or explained. This unquestioning belief in the reports from colonizers and missionaries is examined in detail by William Arens who argues that 'cannibalism is so good to think about that the intellectual appetite is not easily satisfied' (Arens *Man Eating* 8). Rather than question the labels, it is easier to believe them and therefore use the 'knowledge' as justification for the treatment of these supposed monsters. Frantz Fanon explains how language is power: 'a man who has a language . . . possesses the world expressed and implied by that language . . . mastery of language affords remarkable power' (qtd. in Brantlinger 196). In *Heart of Darkness* the native voice is only heard twice. It is not part of Conrad's purpose to confer language on Africans. The first time the natives are given a voice is, ironically, to confirm their cannibalistic tendencies: ' "Give 'im to us." "To you, eh?" I asked; "what would you do with them?" "Eat 'im!" he said, curtly' (Conrad 58). The second is to announce the death of Kurtz, the cannibalizing colonizer: 'Suddenly the manager's boy put his insolent black head in the doorway, and said in a tone of scathing contempt – "Mistah Kurtz – he dead" ' (100). When Kurtz dies it is announced by a native, as if only this important event requires speaking coherently. As Edward Said points out, once Kurtz's death is announced the natives no longer need to be articulate and Africa recedes in integral meaning. It is as if with Kurtz's death Africa again becomes blank and incomprehensible (Said 200). Chinua Achebe criticizes this lack of voice accorded to the natives as a means of ensuring that they are perceived as savages. Giving them a voice to express their

penchant for human meat makes the natives complicit in their own denigration. The incomprehensible grunts which had sufficed before proved inadequate for Conrad's purpose of showing the horrific craving of the cannibals to his European readers. Achebe argues that Conrad chooses this technique for a sensational and convincing damning of the natives: 'Weighing the necessity for consistency in the portrayal of the dumb brutes against the sensational advantages of securing their conviction by clear, unambiguous evidence issuing out of their own mouth Conrad chose the latter' (Achebe 255–256). Generally, throughout the novel African speech is incomprehensible and barely a language. To Marlow it is merely a 'violent babble of uncouth sounds' (Conrad 27). The sounds resemble no human language that he knows of and therefore are demonic. The incomprehensible jabber of voices means there is no sense in the wilderness. Marlow cannot understand anything and as he is the sole reporter of the events there, Africa becomes more incomprehensible, since without a voice it has no principles, values, or rights. The silence becomes a nod of acquiescence to the colonizer. Africans are known to Marlow and his audience only through the language of the colonizer. The natives are not, and can not be, fully realized in the language of their oppressors, but only glimpsed fleetingly. They are subsumed and swallowed by the cannibalistic text.

While the voice of the natives is derided and all but absent, Kurtz's voice is a hypnotizing power emanating from the heart of the Congo. Marlow seeks Kurtz's voice and words as they represent the ideals of imperialism. As Bhabha argues, Kurtz's voice is the voice of early modernist colonial literature (Bhabha 123–124). However, rather than a voice articulating comforting and confirming dictums about the benefits of imperialism, Marlow finds a voracious mouth which engulfs rather than generates truth. Kurtz's mouth is the riddle of the colonial paradox; it is powerful, controlling, and articulate, its followers pay great heed to it, and it becomes the stuff of legend. Yet it also articulates the desire for the Other, the loss of civilization, and the true greed of imperialism to consume everything. Kurtz, as the representative colonizer and European man, is reduced to a voice from the darkness with nothing to say. His final words expressing the horror are subsumed by Marlow and never reported to his Intended. Marlow swallows Kurtz's words and replaces them with his own, more palatable version of the truth. This lie moves the cannibalistic metaphor from the heart of darkness to the West. Bhabha argues that in this lie Conrad reveals that language itself is always duplicitous; *Heart of Darkness* subverts realism's faith in the ability of narrative to express truth: 'We read in that palimpsest neither one

nor the other, something of the awkward, ambivalent, unwelcome truth of empire's lie' (138).

The ambivalence of the cannibalistic mouth – as both African and English, both inarticulate and articulate, both horrifying and compelling – results in the meaning of the text slipping and sliding. At one moment the narrative exposes the naked greed of colonialist exploitation, at another it reflects the nervousness of using language to communicate truth. The cannibal mouth is the site of this ambivalence. Christopher Craft, writing on *Dracula,* sees the vampire mouth as an ambivalent instrument. It is the primary site of desire and is both masculine and feminine. At first it is luring, with a promise of red softness, but then it delivers a piercing, penetrating bone. Craft argues that the vampire mouth fuses the gender-based categories of the receptive and the penetrating: 'As the primary site of erotic experience in *Dracula*, this mouth equivocates, giving lie to the easy separation of the masculine or feminine . . . . With its soft flesh barred by hard bone, its red crossed by white, this mouth compels opposites and contrasts into a frightening unity' (Craft 109). In *Heart of Darkness*, while the focus is not on gender categories, the cannibal mouth works in much the same way as Craft's vampire mouth in merging differences. It is both the mouth of the colonizer and colonized. There is an uneasiness with imperialism realized in the cannibalistic methods of the colonizers, yet a reluctance to fully refute this imperialism, evidenced in the cannibalistic desires of the natives. The cannibal mouth is the metaphor for the colonial contradiction of bringing civilization by savage means. The use of conflicting adjectives, criticized by Leavis, portrays the ambivalence, the discordant feelings of desire and repulsion that are at the centre of colonial mentality. Under the onslaught of experiences in Africa, Marlow's categorizing begins to break down and there are simply no words to describe the reality he encounters. The most telling example of this breakdown of language is his simple statement that 'the earth seemed unearthly' (Conrad 97). For Bhabha this ambivalence results in a collapsing of the boundaries between master and slave:

> From the impossibility of keeping true time in two longitudes and the inner incompatibility of empire and nation in the anomalous discourse of cultural progressivism, emerges an ambivalence that is neither the contestation of contradictories nor the antagonism of dialectical opposition. In these instances of social and discursive

alienation there is no recognition of master and slave, there is only
the matter of the enslaved master, the unmastered slave.

<div style="text-align: right">(Bhabha 131)</div>

The 'fogginess' of Conrad's work depicts these dislocations of the
colonial experience. There is a limitation in language to convey this
dislocation.

Crucially in *Heart of Darkness* the cannibal mouth is both the mouth
of the masculine, aggressive master, and the feminine, passive slave.
They are mutually threatening in their power to penetrate or engulf.
There is a sense in the novel that the possibility of darkness spreading
is quite real; that the roles could be reversed and the master become
slave, the civilized could become savage. In the blank spaces of Africa,
civilized surfaces become just that, surfaces. Beneath the surface are sav-
age impulses and the distasteful truth is that darkness is triumphant
(Conrad 109). Conrad begins and ends his novel with subtle references
to cannibalism in the West. The mention of Sir John Franklin's Arc-
tic expedition (7), with its allegations of cannibalism, suggests that
cannibalism was a human, rather than merely a primitive, possibil-
ity. Franklin's expedition was lost in 1845 and the subsequent searches
for survivors turned up evidence of cannibalism. The inclusion of the
Franklin expedition functions in the same way as Kurtz's story does
to 'undermine reassuring European binaries of boundaries' between
civilized and savage, cannibal and non-cannibal (Rickard 5).

The novel closes in the drawing room of Kurtz's Intended. Conrad
shows that it too is not free from the threat of European appetite; here
Marlow is haunted by the memory of Kurtz's wide-open mouth about
to 'devour all the earth with all its mankind' (Conrad 105). As Marlow
enters the house he is compelled to lie to the Intended in the darkening
room. In the corner of the drawing room is a grand piano, 'like a sombre
and polished sarcophagus' (106). The word sarcophagus literally means
flesh-eater, deriving from Greek *sarx* (flesh) and *phagein* (to eat), referring
to a limestone coffin thought to decompose the flesh of a corpse placed
in it. The piano, made from the ivory that was the impetus behind
Kurtz's rapacity, reminds the reader of the circle of consumption. This
is a point made too by Rickard who comments on the incorporation
of ivory torn out of the heart of darkness, 'Conrad's carnivorous piano
serves as a perfect symbol for the frightening state of affairs that Marlow
attempts to contain by his lie' (Rickard 12–13). Rickard highlights the
effect of the word sarcophagus in hinting at the dark, carnal appetites

present in a restrained, European world supposedly free of such desires: 'These intimations of immorality on the "edges" of the text, then, subvert and invert the reader's expectations, locating the savage within the civilized' (12). The cannibal mouth in *Heart of Darkness* shows that the savage is not Other, but Self, that beneath apparent difference lies a disturbing sameness. As Freud claims, the uncanny always comes home (Freud 1).

Freud's emphasis on the divided self, on the striving, lustful id seeking gratification despite the countervailing pressure of the ego or super-ego was anticipated in the depiction of Kurtz and his ferocious fulfilments. *Heart of Darkness* destabilizes the familiar structures of knowledge and the Self, and releases the Freudian discontents of a hidden reality, the Kurtzian world of primeval power-seeking and gratification, into the 'civilization' of our everyday consciousness. Freud explains that on becoming a mass, man throws off the repression of his unconscious instincts. John Carey also argues that the individual within the mass becomes a barbarian, ferocious, and violent. These desires expressed by the mob are deemed evil and justify political suppression by the elite who have already suppressed the promptings of the mass-unconscious with their own psyches (Carey 28–29). *Heart of Darkness* suggests that a naked exposure of the human ego, unshielded by civilization to a world of savagery involves baring the soul to primary, rooted human impulses. To examine the native is to come up against the innate. The ultimate cannibalism in the novel is that of the Self, the subsuming of notions of morality and civilization by innate desires and appetites. The truth of *Heart of Darkness* is surely the existence of a heart of darkness in all. McClure compares Marlow's experiences with those of Marx and Freud. Freud worked with the mentally ill who were unable to keep their masks in place; Marx ventured beyond the internal frontiers of class to see how bourgeois civilization looked from below; Marlow's journey carries him into a realm where the rapacious impulses and brutal power of civilization can be exercised without civilized restraint. The Congo, then, is far more than a setting for Marlow's experiences or a symbol of European corruption; 'It is the standpoint from which Marlow – and perhaps Conrad – first catches sight of the horror behind the mask' (McClure 146–147). *Heart of Darkness* raises the question of the dark appetites of the West through the trope of the colonial cannibal and the West's relation to him. *Heart of Darkness* has been termed a text of unusual 'millennial and apocalyptic authority' (Kaplan et al. xix). At the end of the twentieth century and in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the themes of 'global contact, dislocation, homelessness,

cultural clash, lost causes, irreconcilable antagonisms, and personal and political failures of vision' so central to Conrad's work have become our news headlines (xiv). Lipka, too, argues that *Heart of Darkness* is not important as a historical document about what colonialism was or was not, rather it is important as a Gothic novel, inspiring fear in readers of the evil that is present in man (Lipka 34–35).

3
Off the Beaten Track? The Post-Conradian Cannibal
From Graham Greene to Hollywood and the Italian Cannibal Boom

Heart of Darkness marked a significant degree of pessimism in British imperial culture. Other authors and genres would, however, take up the challenge of creating new colonial encounters. Edgar Wallace's Sanders is a very British hero, whose adventures are closer to Haggard's and Kipling's tales of boyish adventure in exotic locations than Conrad's dark ponderings of the imperial reality and identity. Wild animals, damsels in distress, inhospitable jungles continue to pop up, but in the travel writing of Graham Greene and the Italian cannibal films they are a backdrop for post-colonial fears and politics.

Sanders of the River series

From 1911, throughout the years of the First World War and on through to the 1920s Edgar Wallace published his *Sanders of the River* stories, and each of his 11 collections became best-sellers. Sanders is in charge of a British protectorate of 'some quarter of a million cannibal folk, who ten years before had regarded white men as we regard the unicorn' (Wallace 1). Each story starts with a state of uneasy peace being broken by black mischief or white interference from traders or ivory hunters. The stories were made into films and Sanders replaced Allan Quartermain as the new image of the colonial administrator. In the 1960s up to 36 film versions were made of Wallace's stories in the UK, Italy, and Germany. Film theorist Wheeler Dixon states that although the films were hugely successful commercially, 'the shabby violence, unconvincing sets, indifferent acting, and relentlessly *grand guignol* structures of these films' permanently damaged Wallace's reputation as a writer, relegating him to 'second-rung cult obscurity' (Dixon 83).

Wallace is, Nicholas Daly notes, Haggard's successor in many respects but he is also the inventor of a new version of the African adventure (Daly 150). The difference is that Sanders' credo 'to keep peace among the cannibal folk' is far removed from any heroic notions of saving the savages from themselves. The measure of the imperial task in the 1920s is this managing rather than civilizing. Critic Robert MacDonald describes *Sanders of the River* (1911) as a one-dimensional narrative that 'asked no questions and took itself for granted' as an appealing adventure story (MacDonald 222). The stories are reflective of a naïve attitude to imperialism and appealed to a mass audience. They are stories of the familiar fantasy of male power and reproduce many of the tropes of the tales of Englishman versus African Other. Indeed, MacDonald describes Sanders as a 'fascist in his kingdom' disguised as an English 'type' (228).

Sanders arrests and punishes any troublemakers and peace is always restored in his kingdom by the end of the narrative. The dominant theme is containment and the overriding sense is that an African empire is a troublesome place, always ready to revert to its anarchic past, and only a 'superior kind of Englishman' can keep savagery at bay (MacDonald 224). Sanders keeps this savagery at bay with his own level of ferocity. He manages to keep peace through the threat of his superior weaponry. Against witchcraft he uses his own 'particular deity – an automatic pistol in each hand' (Wallace 27). At times the narrator informs the reader than Sanders acted 'not unlike a barbarian' (157) and turned swiftly 'like a dog . . . his lips uncurled in a snarl, his white regular teeth showing' (28). Of course, his teeth are the white and regular teeth of an Englishman, not the yellow, pointed teeth of an African cannibal; snarling or not, Sanders is English. Furthermore, there is a real sense that his English ferocity is made necessary by Africa. As MacDonald states, there is nothing ambiguous about the representation of English law: 'Sanders is an imperial policeman' who knows how to keep order in a land in which civilized rules do not apply (225). Sanders' heavy-handed punishments are excused by the narrator as a necessity 300 miles beyond the fringes of civilization: 'hesitation to act, delay in awarding punishment, either of these two things would have been mistaken for weakness amongst a people who had neither power to reason, nor will to excuse, nor any large charity' (Wallace 2). Indeed, Sanders dismisses the missionaries in the tale, seeing Christianity and imperialism as a dangerous mix because the teaching of the brotherhood of man is a subversive idea, incongruent with imperialism's hierarchies. However, Sanders is not entirely beyond the eyes of civilization. A correspondent comes to investigate the treatment of natives at the hands of English commissioners

and he hears stories which if true 'must of necessity sound the death knell of British integrity in our native possessions'. He is captured and on the point of being sacrificed when Sanders charges into town and kills the chief, rescuing the correspondent, who rather ungratefully threatens to make England ring with Sanders' infamy as the condition of his district 'is a blot on civilisation' (ibid. 65). Sanders subsequently wins libel damages. While the conclusion of this is that the Africans are like unruly children not far from a bestial state and must be kept in line by a firm hand, and that those 'at home' have little idea of the reality of colonial life, underlying it is the fact that not only are the Africans under surveillance but their rulers too. It seems that there is now an awareness of the possibility of atrocities committed by the imperialists.

In 1907 Wallace wrote: 'I do not regard the native as my brother or my sister, nor even as my first cousin: nor as a poor relation. I do not love the native – nor do I hate him. To me he is just a part of the scenery, a picturesque object with uses' (qtd. in Dixon 84). It seems in the *Sanders* series the native is used as a standard cannibal, to provide an anthropophagous backdrop to England's last standing 'heroes'. Sanders looms tall and virile in opposition to 'the pot which everlastingly boils' (Wallace 22). The cannibals are the brunt of his sarcastic quips and ready weaponry, thus providing both a sense of mocking humour at the expense of Africans, and a sense of power over a slightly unruly colony. On discovering the remains of a cannibal feast, Sanders threatens to hang the man-eaters he compares to hyenas, crocodiles, and fish:

> Cannibals I do not like and they are hated by the King's government. Therefore when it comes to my ears ... that you chop man I will come quickly and I will flog sorely, and if it should again happen I will bring with me a rope, and I will find me a tree, and there will be broken huts in this land. (131–132)

Cannibalism is still the ultimate savagery and the excuse for a controlling presence in the colonies.

Wallace's boyish tale with sound effects of popping guns, chugging boats, and cutting retorts and slurs fulfils many of the colonial adventure novel's motifs and themes. However, it also signals a different era in the British Empire and the decline of the colonial cannibal in fiction. Unlike its predecessors, the *Sanders* series show knowledge of the colonies. No longer a dark space of unnavigable rivers and engulfing jungles, the Africa of Wallace's stories is named, mapped, sectioned, and

manageable. The names and languages of tribes are known and are used to manage the colonial subjects. The river is not the nightmarish snake leading to the heart of darkness but a route used for trade and surveillance. The presence of English men in Africa is based now on financial motives. There is only mockery of the missionaries and those with noble ideas of saving the savages. The cannibal here is a mere trope, a part of the setting, and he needs to be kept in check rather than civilized. As the empire loses its strength, so to does the colonial adventure story. *Sanders of the River* held none of the novelty of earlier adventure novels, none of the dark questions of *Heart of Darkness*, and less fun than *Tarzan*. It was a little stale and childish. For the adult reader still interested in the colonies something new was needed, something with more facts but with the same spirit of exploration and danger. Travel writing offered something more realistic and interesting and in this genre the colonial cannibal would become a figure of nostalgic mystery.

Journey Without Maps

In early 1935 Graham Greene, accompanied by his cousin Barbara and funded by a publisher's advance, trekked across Liberia in order to write a book. The narrative he published the following year, *Journey Without Maps*, has become what Susan Blake terms 'the modern paradigm of the journey into Africa as the journey into self' (Blake 191). This is a familiar journey because it rests on the example of Haggard and Conrad and the authority of Freud, and it carries on the long tradition in Western culture of seeing Africa as the unknowable (193). As Valentine Cunningham points out on the subject of 1930s travel writing:

> The experience of any actual journey could be made, and was made, to provide lively emblems of the mental and spiritual, political, and psychological positions that authors and their characters had reached or were traversing. Nowhere are the inner and outer bolted more firmly and extendedly together than in Graham Greene's *Journey Without Maps*.
>
> (qtd. in Airey 2)

Jeffrey Meyers, writing on the colonial experience in literature, notes that no other part of Africa cast so deep a spell on Greene as the swamps of the West African coast where he found inspiration of a sort (Meyers 97). In his 70s Greene wrote to his cousin Barbara on the anniversary of their trip: 'to me that trip has been very important – it started a love of

Africa which has never quite left me ... Altogether a trip which altered life' (qtd. in Theroux xx).

Journey Without Maps has been almost continuously in print since its original publication. It was and is a very popular piece of travel literature typical of the 1930s and inter-war writing. In spite of mediocre sales and the threat of a libel action, the story of his Liberian trip secured Greene's reputation and became part of what Paul Theroux called his 'personal myth', fixing his 'melancholy and evasive soul' in readers' imaginations as a stoical traveller (Theroux xi). Despite this, critics have found Greene's dealing with Africa to be superficial and his representations of Africans to be frustrating: 'nearly everything [...] a reader would be interested in is only obliquely referred to' (Schneider *The New Republic*); 'Graham Greene has forgotten the African' (Canby *The Saturday Review*); Peter Fleming wrote in the *Spectator* that he 'recommended the book to every class of reader except those of Liberian nationality' (all qtd. in Blake, *Travel* 196–197).

Certainly Greene appears to be fascinated by disease, war crimes, and abject poverty without showing compassion or interest in African humanity. Very few Africans are delineated in his narrative and Africa features as a kind of backdrop or imagined landscape in Greene's personal adventure. There is no relationship between Self and Other in *Journey* as the narrative is almost entirely without dialogue and the carriers are insignificant. The rare pieces of dialogue serve to further the sense of distance between Greene and the Africans, as here there is misunderstanding and frustration. Blake describes the dialogue as 'exhibition' as the narrator plays the 'straight man to the comic African' (193). Blake sees the silence, simplicity, and superficiality of Africa in Greene's narrative as being antithetical to the 'verbal sophistication, cultural complexity, and psychological depth' of the narrator and the narrative. Greene's journey takes him back, not only to childhood, but to 'European cultural bases'; it reaffirms a self defined by Freud and the English public school, an 'Africa described by Victorian travellers, and a concept of culture congruent with European literary and intellectual circles' (201).

Yet the reader is invited to consume *Journey* as travel writing, that is, non-fiction. Theroux points out that there were many amateurish travellers and travel writers in the 1930s and that it was easy to get a travel book written, published, talked about, and even praised (Theroux vii). He mentions the likes of Evelyn Waugh, Robert Byron, and Peter Fleming who found success and popularity at a time when the public's appetite for 'realistic' accounts of the crumbling empire was strong.

Blake sees travel writing as problematic because it partakes of both 'auto-biography and ethnography', it offers both 'information and invention' (Blake 200). Andrea White sees the function of travel writing as a means to inform an 'increasingly interested readership' and to develop trade (White *Joseph* 9). Although the genre represented itself as non-fiction, it was shaped in large part by the prevailing ideologies and official thought, and in turn shaped the 'attitudes of readers towards the English presence in the outposts of the empire' (11).

Greene's use of the travel genre allows him to include shocking facts alongside childish squeamishness and apparent offhandedness. I believe this is a means to express his cynicism regarding the mess of imperialist Africa. His synopsis of Liberian history and massacres and the status of diseases (yellow fever, elephantitis, leprosy, malaria, dysentery, smallpox) is quoted from the British government's 'Blue Book' and borders on the ironic. He notes how the 'agony was piled on' and how the little injustices in Kenya became shoddy beside those in Liberia, perhaps mocking the English middle class who read of the atrocities in Africa from their living rooms in England, unaware of, or unwilling to accept, the atrocities as a legacy of British imperialism. At the time of his trip, Liberia was somewhat under investigation. In 1931, the League of Nations accused Firestone and the Liberian government of unfair labour practices and exploitation, forced labour, and slavery – the precise abuses, Theroux notes, that Conrad had denounced in Leopold's Congo in 1890. Greene qualifies his blasé statements about child killings with a mocking critique of the settlers:

> 'The love of liberty brought us here', but one could hardly blame these first half-caste settlers when they found that love of their own liberty was not consistent with the liberty of the native tribes. The history of the Republic was very little different from the history of neighbouring white colonies: it included the same broken contracts, the same resort to arms, the same gradual encroachment, even the same heroism among early settlers, the peculiarly Protestant characteristic of combining martyrdom with absurdity.
>
> (Greene 5–6)

Greene's journey reads like a nightmare. The terror of contagion and disfiguring diseases is evident throughout the narrative. Illness magnifies the isolation and disorientation of Greene's persona (Blake 200). Not only does he risk being consumed by disease but the narrative is replete with nightmarish accounts of scavenging, nibbling, sucking,

biting, scratching hosts of vermin and insects which threaten to liter-
ally eat the travellers and their belongings: 'wake in the dead of night,
in black darkness, to find two or three large cockroaches clinging to his
lips...what I would chiefly remember about Africa: cockroaches eating
our clothes, rats on the floor, dust in the throat, jiggers under the nails,
ants fastening on the flesh' (Greene 132). These night-time battles with
the ravenous creepy-crawlies of the jungle are described with relish and
disgust, almost like Richard Marsh's Victorian horror *The Beetle* (1897).
Not only is Greene consumed by Africa, but he bites back: 'The thought
of disease began to weigh on my mind; I seemed to swallow it in the
dust which soon inflamed my throat; I couldn't forget where the dung
had come from, from the dung and the bitches and the sores on the feet'
(Greene 116–117). In this cycle of swallowing Greene imagines himself
more 'at one' with Africa, although it is only the dust and disease he is
really at one with, he rarely moves beyond this.

  Yet, he is fascinated by 'the dirt and disease' and finds it difficult
to analyse this fascination which he deems more than a personal
need. He aligns his current trip with early and modern imperialism:
'Different continents have made their call to different ages, and peo-
ple at every period have tried to rationalize in terms of imperialism,
gold or conquest their feeling for an untouched land' (122). He then
quotes, but does not reference, Sir Walter Raleigh's description of Guiana
(now Guyana), a country that 'hath yet her maidenhead, never sacked,
turned, nor wrought...the graves have not been opened for gold, the
mines not broken with sledges, nor their images pulled down out of
their temples' (122).

  Greene's desire in Africa, then, is to find a pure, untouched land.
Raleigh's quote seems aptly nostalgic in a post Great War Europe fac-
ing its next sacking and tearing of the earth. The difference between
Greene and the colonial novels he cites as inspiration is that he is
writing at a very different time in the empire's history. He describes
any desire the white population have to intervene in Liberian poli-
tics as being driven by boredom rather than imperialism (225), and
accepts that the lot of the natives is worse than before 'civilization'
with new diseases, weakened resistance, and polluted water (49). Writ-
ing between the World Wars, Greene's British Empire is far from the
burgeoning heroics of Haggard's imperialists, rather it is struggling for
survival. Meyers notes how the wars gave impetus to nationalism in
India and Africa and that serious defeats in Malaya and Burma during
the Second World War demolished the argument that imperial powers
protected their colonies (Meyers 97–98). Greene's narrative is not the

brash celebration of imperialism of Ballantyne and Haggard. Nor is it the dark ponderings of the risk of going too deep as we find in Conrad. Greene's African narrative accepts that imperialism had its flaws, was corrupt, and left corrupt powers in its wake. Yet still, Africa must be peopled by inarticulate man-eaters. Why?

Greene aligns exploring the primitive interior of Africa with exploring the primitive parts of the human mind:

> Freud has made us conscious as we have never been before of those ancestral threads which still exist in our unconscious minds to lead us back . . . Mungo Park, Livingstone, Stanley, Rimbaud, Conrad represented only another method to Freud's, a more costly, less easy method, calling for physical as well as mental strength.
>
> (Greene 236)

Indeed Greene's narrative has often been aligned with Conrad's. Theroux describes *Journey* as 'portentous in its Conradian shadings' and Africa as providing epic subjects and 'jungly ambiguities' for both writers (Theroux v). Greene himself reflected on his love of Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* and his fascination with Gagool as driving his desire to explore Africa. Liberia, it seems, was his 'Haggardian' African paradise, peopled with noble natives, witches, and cannibals, living in ignorance in mud huts in the jungle. At times it feels that Greene's fantasy overrides the reality in front of him. Rather than dispute his childhood fancy, he focuses on his fears and imagines greater mysticism and danger than actually exists. Meyers sees this indulging in childhood associations and terror as a welcome distraction from the emptiness of modern life for Greene (Meyers 112). Theroux calls these 'endearing self deceptions of a man inventing a landscape he first imagined as a child in England' (Theroux xiv). Greene feels only disappointment with 'what man had made out of the primitive, what he had made out of childhood'. He sees no advantage in revealing the witch to be a masked shopkeeper or supernatural evil to be small human viciousness (Greene 213). No longer the site of missionaries and heroics, Africa, it seems, must still fulfil a role in the fantasies of the West. Still peopled by savages, there now appears to be nostalgia for a time when the Africans were even more savage. Rather than explore the morals of 'saving' the brutes, Greene longs for the brutes to remain as a pictorial backdrop to his mundane modernity. In 'imperialist nostalgia', a term used by Renato Rosaldo, there is a yearning for the very culture that the colonialists have altered or destroyed. It is this traditional culture that tourists

come to see and if it no longer exists, then it must be reconstructed (Bruner 439).

Of course, central to this fantasy of the wilderness of Africa is the presence of cannibals. Greene maintains that on his maps certain areas are designated 'Cannibals', no-go zones such as the blank spaces in Conrad's fantasy. Greene's fears and fantasies combine in an effort to present to the reader an African landscape that is trackless, jungles peopled by devil-dancers and cannibalistic tribes. What begins as a rumour of a tribe 'supposed to practise cannibalism on strangers' (Greene 137) becomes more certain as he states 'ritual cannibalism practised on strangers has never been entirely stamped out' (152) until 'everyone' avows to the existence of cannibalism and one of the carriers gets a rare opportunity to speak in the narrative: 'Everyone one in Ganta knew they were there, with their ritual need of the heart . . . "These people bad, they chop men" ' (162). The rising certainty of horror deep in the jungle and the use of an African to affirm Western stereotypes of African cannibalism again echoes *Heart of Darkness*. Theroux attributes Greene's emphatic assertions that there are anthropophagous tribes just over the next hill to his fear and again aligns him with Conrad who made cannibalism one of 'the insistently whispered motifs' in his own ambiguous tale of African penetration (Theroux xii). It was a motif perpetuated in the Hollywood remakes of the old colonial tales.

Colonial cannibals in Hollywood

After Greene's travel literature in the 1930s and Wallace's *Sanders* series from the 1920s to the 1940s there is a noticeable gap in the colonial cannibal's presence in popular culture – apart, that is, from film versions of earlier colonial fiction – until the Italian cannibal films of the 1970s. I will examine these film versions of the colonial cannibal shortly, but first I will explore some of the other reasons for the absence of the colonial cannibal in literature. The reasons for this gap are historical as much as cultural. The first reason is the decline of the colonial novel. From the beginning of the century and the bloody Boer War, a disillusioned liberal England began to find the imperial idea distasteful. Jeffrey Meyers traces the rise and fall of the colonial genre which he argues:

. . . is virtually invented by and introduced into English literature by Kipling in the 1880s, at the apogee of the scramble for Africa, is improved upon by Conrad, reaches its peak in *A Passage to India*, and is continued by Cary and Greene, who are influenced by Forster and Conrad. After the Second World War, when the British empire begins

to disintegrate, English colonial novels can no longer be a truly vital form and begin to decline.

<div align="right">(Meyers vii)</div>

Thus, with the colonies themselves ceasing to exist, the colonial experience lost its significance, except as nostalgia for past greatness. As the modernist aesthetic gained ascendancy, popular masculine romances went the same way as the feminine romance to what Nicholas Daly terms 'dusty critical death' (Daly 119–120). Furthermore the 'dark places' of the earth that had been threatening regions outside of modernity in the fiction of, for example, Haggard and Conan Doyle, are imagined differently in modernism: they are imagined as a sanctuary from modernity and, Daly notes, a source of cultural energy. He mentions Pablo Picasso, Josephine Baker, and Nancy Cunard as examples of a growing awareness of ethnic culture. Further to this, Daly notes how different Hemingway's Africa is to Haggard's: 'the blank spaces of the map have been filled in and the continent has been opened up to rich tourists' (140–141).

Of course, many of these blank spaces were filled by both travel and anthropological writings. I have already examined the travel writing genre with Graham Greene and will take a moment now to look at anthropology. Bruner traces the kind of European visitor to the non-Western world:

> Explorers, traders, missionaries, and colonialists come first, to discover, exploit, covert, and colonize, and are followed by ethnographers and tourists who come to study or observe the Other . . . Much as we may try to deny or evade it, colonialism, ethnography, and tourism have much in common, as they were born together and are relatives.

<div align="right">(Bruner 438–439)</div>

The rise in anthropological studies in Africa, the Pacific, and Asia meant that these places were no longer so mysterious and unexplored. There was no longer a dark continent filled with savage cannibals, but rather a space of vital economic interests where imperial subjects had a crucial role to play. They became named, categorized and controlled peoples, no longer viewed as in need of civilizing, but rather central to the reinvigoration of Europe's flagging post-war economy.

In the Victorian period, exploration facilitated a culture of the cannibal in fiction, whereas the growing awareness and understanding

brought about by anthropological studies resulted in less fictitious and sensationalized depictions of natives. Anthropology was, almost by definition, a disorientating journey to distant lands. John W. Griffith comments on these journeys, which, he argues, were viewed as 'temporal wanderings', back to the ways of life of older, primitive societies (Griffith 4–5). The history of anthropology involved a mirroring back, a journey outwards in order to extend the knowledge of one's own culture. Comparisons between the African savages and the criminals or insane in Europe began and the cannibal motif was used in reference to Europeans as well as Africans. Griffith makes reference to Havelock Ellis' and Cesare Lombroso's theories regarding the unrestrained appetite of man. Lombroso argued that criminals represented 'veritable savages' in the midst of European civilization. He used images of criminals drinking their victims' blood, suggesting a regression to cannibalism. Griffith links Kurtz with the Lombrosan degenerate as Lombroso repeatedly uses the image of the enlarged jaw and mouth 'common to carnivores and savages who tear and devour raw flesh' (qtd. in Griffith 164–165). Thus studies of the primitive were reflected back on studies of the degenerate at home and slowly the cannibal moved from Africa to Europe. Anthropology achieved recognition as a pursuit for genuine scholars in the late nineteenth century but had a somewhat narrow audience up to the 1930s. J.G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890–1915) demonstrated that anthropology could hold the popular imagination and it sold extraordinarily well. In 1946 the Association of Social Anthropologists was founded and marked the beginning of the era of professional British anthropology (Kuklick 10). Thus, with the rise in anthropological studies and anthropology as a respected subject, the gap between civilized and primitive cultures was narrowed and the chance of 'reversion' was believed to be quite high.

Pre-First World War readers did not turn to scholars for ethnographic entertainment but to traveller's accounts of thrilling adventures and heroism in the wilds of the Empire. These accounts were a kind of 'pornography' describing behaviour forbidden in Western society (13). After the First World War, anthropologists became more insistent that race did not determine culture. In the hands of the anthropologist, the cannibal moved and spread to all parts of the world. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the global geopolitical climate was violently unstable, resulting in an explosion of media coverage and more pertinently a growing public consumption of uncensored and often bloody imagery. I suggest that this change directly impacted upon the reading public's appetite for fictitious horror, and by extension,

tales of cannibalism. True stories of actual cannibalism in prisoner of war camps and the trenches were reported, including at the Siege of Leningrad which saw around 3 million people trapped for 900 days during the Second World War (Constantine 98–99). As a result of these real-life horror stories, it may have been deemed insensitive to create tales of flesh-eating monsters.

Anyway, the film industry satisfied any lingering demand for myths of empire. The adaptation of adventure novels satisfied the demand for the colonial cannibal and he was not so needed in the literary world. This is crucial as America, primarily through Hollywood, began to appropriate the English adventure narratives and make them representative of American power throughout the twentieth century. As Britain's imperial zeal began to wane, America's began to wax. Niall Ferguson describes the British Empire as America's 'precursor as the global hegemon' and explains how America replaced Britain as the world's superpower based on military technology and multinational based economic superiority (Ferguson 9). Thus the cannibal slips from its central place in British literature, only reappearing in anthropological and travel writings, relocating to the culture of the new imperialist force, America.

Film versions of Haggard's work continued to be made until the 1980s starring such Hollywood beauties as Ursula Andress and Sharon Stone. In 1937 the first on-screen adaptation of *King Solomon's Mines* (Dir. Stevenson) was released. In a change to Haggard's original tale, Quartermain is encouraged to set off on his adventure by an Irish girl looking for her father. Paul Robeson, who plays Umbopa, is given 'top billing over his white co-stars' and his character is 'a more charismatic and less stereotypical character' than his role as Bosambo in *Sanders of the River* directed by Korda in 1935. The other African characters, though, are portrayed as 'little more than exotic primitives' (S. Bourne). Robeson's son described the film in a biography of his father: 'A straight adventure film with no political overtones and minimal stereotypes [...] a bit like *Sanders of the River* without the pro-imperialist slant and fewer loincloths' (in Bourne). In 1950, Deborah Kerr and Stewart Granger starred in an Oscar-nominated adaptation of *King Solomon's Mines* (Dir. Bennett and Martin). Replete with the wild animals, cannibals, and other adventurous elements of Haggard's original, it focuses on simple adventure and romance rather than exploring anything deeper such as race relations or colonial uncertainties. Its Oscar-winning cinematography makes much of the African landscape and wildlife and the film was shot on location in Kenya and Uganda. Reviewer John Puccio praises this version for its 'straight' telling of the

story as opposed to the 'campy' accounts in newer versions. However, the romance between Quartermain (Granger) and Elizabeth Curtis (Kerr) seems 'contrived and added on' (Puccio). Furthermore, the portrayal of the African characters is careless and trite. Reviewer Erick Harper compares Haggard's handling of the natives with that of the movie:

> Haggard was a man of the 1800s to be certain . . . He was hardly enlightened in his depiction of them [Africans] . . . On the other hand he depicted them as people . . . In the film version they become disposable extras, far more 'other' than Haggard could possibly have made them . . . to reduce these people to mere plot devices at best, and set dressing at worst . . . . They become one more exotic sight filmed in the course of MGM's safari.
>
> (Harper)

Things are not much better in 1985 when yet another adaptation was released. Directed by J. Lee Thompson and starring Sharon Stone and Richard Chamberlain, it rode on the immense success of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Dir. Spielberg 1981) and added villainous German soldiers to the mix along with the always present cannibal tribe. This adaptation has been accused of 'taking pot shots' at minorities with its cultural stereotypes of Africans, screeching women, cheap gay humour, and implicit racism (Scheib). Adaptations of Haggard's other big success *She* also perpetuate the image of savage cannibal tribes in the far-flung corners of the world. In the 1935 adaptation (Dir. Holden and Pichel) it is in the Arctic that we find natives like 'untamed animals who do the bidding of the all-powerful white woman' (Bacchus). This version was the 'seventh of nine adaptations . . . and the first sound version' (Scheib). Scheib goes on to comment on how the majority of adaptations of adventure novels occurred in the early decades of the twentieth century before the Poles and Africa became less mysterious and adventure was moved to outer space. However, Hammer Films remade *She* again in 1965 (Dir. Day), prompted, Scheib suggests, by the success of historic films such as *Ben Hur* (1959) towards a trend in exotica. This time the adventure is set in Palestine after the First World War and Ursula Andress shimmers as Ayesha. These films seem determined to provide mindless adventure in exotic locations and, as recently as the mid 1980s, central to this adventure is the challenge of escaping from a large cooking pot surrounded by dancing cannibals. Underlying these films is a sort of jovial nostalgia for colonial times. There are, it seems, still savages in need of control. However, America, not Britain, is the great neo-colonial power of the twentieth century.

Film versions of Tarzan are central to this crucial move in the figure of the colonial cannibal to Hollywood. *Tarzan* sequels, film versions, comic strips, model dolls, and Disney productions are testimony to the figure's massive popularity and relevance, as Vernon notes:

> Hurtling from tree to tree, page to screen, crying his unspellable cry, Tarzan enthralled us for a century. He arrived in our world in October 1912...matured into full bookhood in 1914. In 1918 we apothesized him, the silent film the perfect medium for his brand of brawn. By 1926, Tarzan books were already being sold in at least twenty-one foreign countries; by 1953, they had been translated into fifty-six languages.
>
> (Vernon 1)

Tarzan's creator may have been bemused by this longevity of popularity given that he saw his work as 'mindless entertainment' and condemned those who saw it as something more than that (Burroughs in Vernon 6). He saw himself as a hack who had some lucky success and as a kind of circus entertainer 'in the same class with the aerial artist, the tap dancer, and the clown' (in Vernon 9). In 1963, Gore Vidal revisited the figure of Tarzan to examine his continuing popularity. He describes Burroughs as a 'fascinating figure to contemplate, an archetype American dreamer' and praises him for describing action vividly and creating a daydream figure that can continue to inspire young readers (Vidal 1). For Vidal, the reason for the Tarzan stories' continued popularity among male readers is that they provide a 'legitimate release' from the real, dull, everyday world. In a confining and frustrating world, he argues, the individual daydreams of dominating his environment. The increasing popularity of these fictitious, 'dream-selves' is, for Vidal, 'a most significant (and unbearably sad) phenomenon' (3). In June 2009, the Musee de Quai Branly in Paris had an exhibition looking at Tarzan's popularity and influence almost a century after the character was first created. The head of the museum Stephane Martin argued that Tarzan is well worth studying as a version of how pop-culture creates a vision of non-Western culture and as a typical vision of Africa in the early twentieth century (in Dowd King).

Tarzan somewhat encapsulates colonial desires – he is the savage come good at the West's request; civilization on demand. Critic Eric Cheyfitz argues that Tarzan's conversion articulates the deepest desires of US foreign policy towards the 'Third World' in the twentieth century, that is, the savage in 'loving submission to our will, willingly speaking proper English, the language of "civilization"...of capitalist democracy'

(Cheyfitz 3). *Tarzan of the Apes* appeared at a time when the great sec-
ond wave of immigration to America was at its peak. The first wave,
in the seventeenth century, had been predominantly white and Protes-
tant. The second wave was what Cheyfitz describes as a 'babel of tongues
and array of complexions' that threatened the vision of a homogeneous
America and provoked the resurgence of the Anglo-Saxon myth of race
to demonstrate mastery (4). The new American superhero is a British
nobleman lost in the savage wilderness but with his biological hon-
our intact – the epitome of the Anglo-Saxon race. Nor is it surprising,
Cheyfitz notes, that in an age when the USA was beginning to seek
new frontiers in expansionist adventures abroad that the scene of action
for this Anglo-Saxon hero would be an American wilderness displaced
to a 'fantasized European colonial Africa'. In this way Americans could
'savour, in the act of denying, their own imperial ventures' (4).

Like Kurtz, Tarzan is an ambivalent figure caught between savagery
and civility. Tarzan's knowledge about the morality of cannibalism
comes to him via found books. His seeming inability to communicate
like other whites, allies him with the cannibal tribe. This makes sense,
since as Maggie Kilgour points out, 'the image of cannibalism is fre-
quently connected with the failure of words as a medium, suggesting
that people who cannot talk to each other bite each other' (Kilgour
Communion 16). Furthermore, the Africans are a level even further below
spoken orality: if they speak at all, it is not noted by the narrator, and
consequently they are effectively without words. Their orality is below
spoken language, it is mere appetite. Burroughs' editor, Thomas Metcalf,
was happy with the descriptions of the Mbongan tribe as cannibals but
questioned Burroughs' suggestion that the Europeans on the boat would
eventually have to resort to cannibalism: 'Really, now, that is going a lit-
tle bit too far' (in Berglund *Cannibal* 56). It was acceptable for Burroughs
to describe the cannibalistic ritual of the tribe in detail but he should not
extend it to the horizon of Jane's white femininity. But what of Tarzan's
white masculinity?

Tarzan's appetite is a feature of his vitality and strength. It also dif-
ferentiates him from the apes: 'Tarzan, more than the apes, craved
and needed flesh. Descended from a race of meat eaters, never in
his life, he thought, had he once satisfied his appetite for animal
food' (Burroughs 90). He figuratively practises cannibalism and becomes
accustomed to the cultural rituals of revenge cannibalism. However,
when he has had some book learning he begins to question the ritu-
als. When Tarzan lynches Kulonga, the African man who killed his ape
mother, he is about the eat 'the meat of the kill which jungle ethics

permitted him to eat'. Tarzan had been acculturated to eat the flesh of the enemy but not of his own kind and a doubt stays his hand – had not his books taught him he was a man and so was Kulonga? Tarzan ponders:

> Did men eat men? Alas, he did not know. Why, then, this hesitancy? Once more he essayed the effort, but of a sudden a qualm of nausea overwhelmed him. He did not understand. All he knew was that he could not eat the flesh of this black man, and thus hereditary instinct, ages old, usurped the functions of his untaught mind and saved him from transgressing a worldwide law of whose very existence he was ignorant. (80)

His Anglo-Saxon stock encodes a moral superiority in him that overrides his 20 years of jungle living. He is at this point heroic, manly, civilized in sharp contrast to the apes and the Mbongans who indulge in cannibalism. Burroughs indulges in describing 'the most terrifying experience which man can encounter upon Earth – the reception of a white prisoner into a village of African cannibals' (197). The villagers are animal-like with claw-like hands, bestial faces, huge mouths, yellow teeth, rolling demon eyes, and naked bodies (198). Cannibalism here is used as the most terrifying trope, an easily recognizable horror against which our hero can prove his valour. At the beginning of America's rise to world power, Tarzan sits as the example of heroics against dark-skinned foreign enemies: when the Other threatens to eat one of your own, kill him and his tribe; you are more important because you are more civilized and do not practise cannibalism; you are not tempted to practise cannibalism because genetically you are disgusted by such a base practice. Tarzan, rather worryingly, sounds much like his predecessor of 150 years, Robinson Crusoe, and his successors in American politics at the end of the twentieth century.

Jason Haslam comments on the plethora of Tarzan movies:

> Estimates vary, but it is safe to say that there are over fifty Tarzan movies, spanning every decade of the twentieth century since the novel's publication. Indeed, between the late 1920s and the 1960s, Tarzan was on the silver screen almost every year . . . it would not be an exaggeration to suggest the history of US popular culture and the history of Tarzan are inseparable.
>
> (Haslam vii)

Vernon too notes the impact of the *Tarzan* movies: in 1958, Sol Lesser's production company estimated that Tarzan films had 'been seen by more than two billion people'; Lesser boasted: 'There is always a Tarzan picture playing within a radius of 50 miles of any given spot in the world' (qtd. in Vernon 1). This continuing fascination says something about masculine ideals, American race relations, and foreign policy. The kind of dream masculine Self that Vidal spoke about in his reading of *Tarzan* is evident in the masculinity portrayed in the adaptations.

Tarzan frequently returns to the jungle in an attempt to reduce the 'anaesthetizing effect' of modern life on the male individual (Haslam viii). In America, at the time of *Tarzan*'s original release, urban lifestyle was replacing rural lifestyles and there was a yearning for 'the good old days' and a romanticizing of the wilderness while emancipation increased white racial anxiety and hostility resulting in lynchings (Vernon 4). In *Tarzan, My Father*, Johnny Weissmuller Jr. explains how in the Great Depression era Tarzan provided an escape for those struggling economically. Tarzan was a sign of hope and masculinity, and he had control over his environment (Weissmuller 13). Thus, in much the same way as the colonial adventure novels of the nineteenth century provided an alternative to female romance and an easy masculinity away from the complications at home, the Tarzan movies from the 1920s to 1960s provided an alternative reality to rising feminism and civil rights. In these adventures the gender and race roles were clearly defined and the white male was clearly king of the jungle.

Cheyfitz notes that America's race policy is not an unprecedented phenomenon but an 'apotheosis of its Western European past, its projection or shadow' (Cheyfitz 5). *Tarzan* 'literalizes racial and class hierarchies which are needed to rationalize the policy of dispossession'. Aligning the romance of *Tarzan* with US foreign policy in Central America or the Middle East, Cheyfitz notes that the cultural function of *Tarzan* is radically to reduce or homogenize domestic political complexities by displacing them onto a foreign scene and diverting attention to a 'radically decontexualized figure of the terrorist and/or cannibal' (5). This continues to present day American adventure films and suggests a lingering demand for the ease with which the Other can be labelled cannibal and thus savage and in need of the 'helping' hand of America. Nicholas Daly too notes this lingering demand for myths of empire and heroics in the 1980s with Stephen Spielberg's Indiana Jones films. Spielberg was inspired after reading *King Solomon's Mines* and the films show a 'nostalgia for the time before decolonization when the rest of the world provided a colourful backdrop for the adventures of Europeans

and Americans'. Daly notes that in this nostalgic world there are still 'blank spaces on the map, lost treasures with auratic powers, and plenty of expendable natives. The colonized know their place ... There would appear to be good reason to believe that the romance of empire has taken quite happily to life in a postcolonial world' (Daly 164). So, while the colonial adventure novel declined, the colonial cannibal continued to appear in popular culture. He has changed medium and location but continues to provide an easy target as the ever present brute in need of extermination at the hands of virile white men.

The Italian cannibal film boom

One other film genre – Italian cannibal movies – purports to look at the colonial cannibal in the post-colonial world. In the political turmoil of the 1960s to 1980s, the Vietnam War lingered on, Pol Pot came to power in Cambodia, Nixon became the first US President to resign, terrorism reigned in the Middle East, and civil war reigned in Africa. In the post-colonial era there was a question of the merits of decolonization as dictators, famines, and wars seemed to suggest the previous colonies really were as savage as had been imagined in the cannibal fictions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I will now give some brief examples of the turmoil and violence in post-colonial spaces during the years leading up to the 'cannibal boom'. Violence, I believe, inspired the continuation of the colonial cannibal figure in popular culture.

  In 1973, Chilean armed forces led by General Pinochet overthrew the democratically elected Allende government in a violent coup. Western journalists 'carelessly' labelled Allende a communist and supported the coup (Burrows 373). Most South American countries were under the rule of right-wing military dictatorships, backed by the USA as a bulwark against a Marxist revolution. US military establishments and business interests were worried that Chile's democracy might open the door to a Communist takeover so they covertly destabilized Allende's regime while the Chilean military were encouraged by the CIA to 'save' the country. The coup was followed by a reign of terror during which thousands were killed, tortured, and imprisoned in concentration camps as political prisoners. Pinochet was hailed by some conservatives in the USA and UK as a saviour of liberty as he made free market reforms and reversed nationalization (Burrows 373). Pinochet facilitated massive economic changes by 'shocking' the nation into unquestioning acceptance. According to Naomi Klein, Pinochet's treatments were performed in the regime's 'torture cells, inflicted on the writhing bodies of those deemed most likely to stand in the way of the capitalist transformation'

(Klein 7). The shock of the coup, economic changes, and the torture chamber left Chileans too stunned to object to anything (71). By 1976, when Argentina too was ruled by a junta, the majority of the Southern Cone was run by US-backed military governments.

Things were not much better in Africa. Famine in Biafra in 1969 provided images of starving children on televisions around the world, provoking indignation and food aid which was blocked by British-backed Nigeria. Thousands of Biafrans died every week. Civil war, mass starvation, and political cynicism were to become familiar themes in Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia in the following years (Burrows 342). In 1971 Idi Amin came to power in Uganda in a military coup. He ruled for eight years in infamous brutality and corruption. His crimes ranged from tribal massacres and torture to the expulsion of Asians from Uganda. Rumours of his bizarre fetishes and cannibalism echo back to the African tribal kings of Haggard or Ballantyne. When asked about the rumours of his cannibalism, instead of denying it Amin said ' "I don't like human flesh, it's too salty for me" ' (qtd. in Orzio).

Amidst this litany of atrocities arose the feeling that without the civilizing arm of British colonial law the world had descended into chaos. Yet, crucially, it was interference from the twentieth century's colonial powerhouse, the USA, that led to the coups in South America. Free market economics and capitalist greed created hierarchies and put profit above all else. The US establishment of puppet governments in South America echoed the actions of the British in nineteenth-century Africa and this resulted in culture echoing that of Conrad, asking the same questions – Who is really savage? Where is the line between civilized and barbarous? What does colonial cannibalism really entail? It is in this climate that the colonial cannibal resurfaces in the Italian cannibal films, which implicitly suggest that America's foreign policy is tantamount to Britain's imperialism in much the same way that the Tarzan movies did. Furthermore, these movies push the argument that there lingers a demand in the West for the cannibal Other.

Cannibal films are a sub-genre of exploitation film made mostly by Italian film-makers through the 1970s and '80s. The most notorious of these cannibal films are *Cannibal Ferox*, directed by Umberto Lenzi in 1981 and *Cannibal Holocaust*, directed by Ruggero Deodato, released in 1980. Others include *Deep River Savages* (Dir. Lenzi 1972), *Mountain of the Cannibal God* (Dir. Martino 1978), and *Eaten Alive!* (Dir. Lenzi 1980). In *Eaten Alive!* Jay Slater examines the phenomenon of Italian cannibal and zombie movies, marking the horror film *Blood Feast* (Dir. Gordon Lewis 1963) as one of the first zombie/cannibal movies to be

released since the 1910s and '20s. Slater argues that this is due to relaxation of censorship. This sub-genre of Italian-made films is essentially a collection of graphically violent and bloody movies that usually depict cannibalism by primitive natives in Asian or South American rainforests. While cannibalism is the uniting feature of these films, the general emphasis focuses on various forms of shocking, realistic, and graphic violence and a vicious kind of erotica. The peak of the genre's popularity was from 1977 to 1981, a period that has come to be known as the 'cannibal boom'. It is fair to say that Italian cinema provides, perhaps, the most complete vision of man as meat. An extreme body of work, it offers a 'relentlessly repellent vision of the human body and human culture' (Jones 45–46). The themes are often similar: the Western, educated, intellectual protagonists encounter nature and natives in a primitive, 'Stone Age' culture, notably less 'evolved' than Western civilization and attempt to exploit these cultures only to come out the worse for wear. Why were these films made? Why did these films become so popular in these particular years? Why did the colonial cannibal rear his head after the demise of colonial fiction in a post-colonial world?

The director of *Cannibal Holocaust*, Ruggero Deodato, said that he was inspired to make the film after experiencing the media's coverage of the Red Brigades' activities in Italy in the 1970s and the news media's constant search for a scoop and the subsequent 'rape' of the spectators' senses (in Jauregui). Political terrorism was a prominent feature of Italian life in the 1970s. Between 1969 and 1980 there were more than 10,000 recorded terrorist incidents in the country with over 200 people dying from these acts (Burrows 406). The most prominent terrorist band was the Red Brigades – a Marxist movement which grew out of the failed student revolts of the 1960s. In 1978 they kidnapped Aldo Moro, the president of the ruling Christian Democratic Party and five times prime minister of Italy. The Red Brigade decided Moro should be sentenced to death. After the Democrats refused to meet the terrorists' demands, Moro wrote letters to them accusing them of easy indifference. He was shot dead and the results were a new anti-terrorist crackdown and the Red Brigades went into decline after losing much of their support. The hype and media circus around these activities led Deodato to question the portrayal of truth and the relationship between the truth and audience demands. However, the cannibal boom films are *not* set in Italy but in South America or Asia, and feature American cosmopolitans rather than Italians (though mostly played by Italian actors). Furthermore, it was not only Italian politics that were in disarray in the 1970s. As I have outlined above, these films were made in an era of post-colonial turmoil.

Deep River Savages, Italy's first graphic cannibal movie, is a 'gruesome racist fantasy' (Slater 44). It features the real animal violence and hard-core gore that would come to dominate later films of the genre. An English photographer is captured by a tribe while working in Thailand and Burma. He eventually becomes the divine white leader of the tribe helping them against their cannibalistic enemies. Throughout the film the tribesmen speak in their own language, leaving the audience lost and heightening the sense of fear and paranoia of the protagonist. The roots of the film lie in the tradition of pulp horror and adventure stories. The gore and carnage are shocking, the more so because they must have been unexpected. Like many of the films in this genre, the slaughter of animals is shocking, indeed offensive to many viewers. Slater argues that if it were not for Lenzi's shock tactics and the sheer amount of female nudity, the film could pass for a tourist film with its holiday footage of romantic sunsets and exotic wildlife: 'With Riccardo Pallottini's rather bland cinematography, Lenzi's movie possesses the visual sense of a Colour Climax porn loop or an extremely bloody National Geographic video' (46).

Lenzi tried again in 1980 with *Eaten Alive* set in New Guinea and featuring purification cults, poisoned darts, and, of course, cannibal hordes. Again, Lenzi's film has met harsh criticism as mere shock exploitation. Film critic Mike Bracken accuses Lenzi of the 'heinous' crime of stealing footage from other cannibal films and editing them into *Eaten Alive*. This kind of cannibalization of the genre is quite typical with the Italian cannibal movies. Cliff Pounder claims the film descends into an 'atmosphere of banality by alternating between munching cannibals and ranting nutcases' (Pounder 114). The special effects are amateurish and I am inclined to agree with Pounder that any real fear comes not from the cheap gore but the sense of the characters' lack of control over their fate (116). Like the other cannibal boom films, the practices attributed to the New Guinea tribes are inaccurate and any attempt at questioning racism or exploitation is lost in an ultimately racist and exploitative film. Overall though, Lenzi's earlier films are trial runs for his more successful and slightly more complex *Cannibal Ferox*.

Cannibal Ferox, also known as *Make Them Die Slowly* in America, is the story of an American research student, Gloria, who travels, with her brother and friend, to Colombia in order to gather evidence for her thesis, in which she intends, Arens-like, to debunk the myth of cannibalism. There they meet an American drug dealer, Mike, who exploits a native tribe in order to gather emeralds. The embodiment of the immoral, avaricious West, Mike enslaves, castrates, and kills

natives while drinking whiskey and snorting cocaine. Mike blames the tortured and mutilated bodies on the natives, labelling them cannibalistic, murderous brutes. Eventually the tribe begin to exact revenge and they become the cannibalistic savages of Mike's set-up. They gobble the entrails of Mike's companion with their hands, the blood showing up garishly against the white dusty setting. Lenzi certainly indulges in the standard violence of the cannibal genre. There are scenes of castration, eye-gouging, scalping, brain eating, and a woman is hung by meat hooks through her breasts. As Mike's castrated penis is eaten by the natives, Gloria's earlier statement that 'Cannibalism doesn't exist, it never existed' is echoed over Mike's screams of anguish. Gloria is the sole survivor and is returned to New York where she accepts adulation for her thesis 'Cannibalism: End of the Myth'. Her thesis is seen as intellectually radical although this is laughable as Lenzi is surely aware of Arens's work on the same subject, representing Gloria as a female version of Arens.

Slater has criticized *Cannibal Ferox* as being an excuse for 'outrageous gore' with 'pedestrian direction', 'inane characterisation', and a 'truly abysmal script' (Slater 159), he describes it as 'an adult comic book adventure made in an era where the graphic ripping of flesh was popular, but . . . completely without subtext' (108). I tend to agree with Slater. I do think the film attempts to ask interesting questions about who the real savages are and to tackle issues of cultural defilement and racial issues. The natives become cannibals after being so labelled by the Westerners. They are driven to savagery by the savage greed of the West. However, the film attempts and fails to send a message regarding the racist and exploitative premise of Western attitudes to tribal cultures. Coming from the controversy of Arens's work, it never fully understands his arguments. The crucial point of *The Man Eating Myth*, the reasons for cannibalism, and the widespread belief in it existing in the jungles, is lost in *Cannibal Ferox*. Rather than examine the reasons for the extensive belief in cannibalism tales, the film becomes one of those very tales, it becomes interested only in the gore and horror of eating flesh without fully investigating motives, facts, or circumstances. Lenzi's thirst for shocking the audience, with bloody body parts and screaming naked women, overrides any deeper meaning. Indeed, Slater accuses Lenzi of using throwaway excuses for outrageous gore and an attempt to disguise the film's own 'exploitative, racist premise' (159). Cannibalism has become here an excuse to become part of a popular genre and is used for its sheer gore factor. Yet, the fundamental point is that in 1981, the cannibals are *still* the natives of the jungles, with incomprehensible

languages, naked, and exploitable, and whether driven to it by Western greed or not, they will eat you alive.

Cannibal Holocaust is more successful than *Cannibal Ferox* in examining the trope of the colonial cannibal. Filmed in the Amazon, *Cannibal Holocaust* tells the story of four American documentary makers who travel to 'The Green Inferno' to film native cannibal tribes. When they go missing an anthropologist, Professor Monroe (played by pornography star Robert Bolla!) is sent to rescue them or their missing footage. On finding the remains of the four and their reels he returns to America to view the footage. The second half of the film consists of the documentary makers' footage. This film-within-a-film approach lends an aura of cinema-verité, a technique made familiar in the horror film *The Blair Witch Project* (Dir. Myrick and Sanchez 1999). It is also typical of horror and Gothic literature and film which often functions around the trope of the 'found document'. On the release of *Cannibal Holocaust*, the Italian courts and censorship board were outraged and later confiscated the film, although the initial audience reaction was positive. The original controversy surrounding the film's release was generated by the belief that *Cannibal Holocaust* was an actual snuff film, which was later disproved in a court case involving bringing the actors believed to have been killed into the courtroom, proving without doubt that the killings were fictitious. It has been said that Deodato will 'never live down the legacy of this stunning film' (Fenton 7). Critics certainly remain split on the merits and demerits of *Cannibal Holocaust*. Supporters of the film such as Harvey Fenton cite it as a visionary work, a serious and well-made social commentary on the modern world. Mark Savage calls it a 'unique marriage of beauty and brutality' (106). Lloyd Kaufman describes *Cannibal Holocaust* as the 'most prescient film ever made' and praises Deodato for taking horror back down to its most 'primal level' (104).

Detractors, however, counter with criticisms of the genuine animal slayings and excessive brutality, and accuse the film of racism, accusations which find *Cannibal Holocaust* in the midst of controversy to this day; in 2006, *Entertainment Weekly* magazine named *Cannibal Holocaust* the twentieth most controversial film of all-time. Critics of *Cannibal Holocaust* have deemed it a disgusting, scandalous, abhorrent film. Mikita Brottman claims that contact with such contagious films can lead to confusion or disregard for the distinction between reality and representation (Brottman 150). At the same time, the theme of cannibalism itself contributes to the vitriolic criticism, especially since cannibalism is about breaking such distinctions. Other critics view Deodato's film

as overtly racist and misogynous. Carolina Jauregui believes these critics are perhaps limited by their own unconscious projections regarding colonial guilt that the film reflects back at them:

> The critics' reaction to the film has to do with the violent tension between the 'developed' West and an 'undeveloped' non-West .... The non-Western societies the imperialist West had encountered were often tribal, deemed as 'primitive', 'savage', and certainly exotic. Structuralist anthropology implies that these 'primitive' societies are signs of a past, the past of all humanity. In this film's case, if the anthropophagy recalls our distant past, the violence recalls a not-so-distant past that post-colonial guilt is all-too ready to erase.
>
> (Jauregui par. 6)

I believe Jauregui is accurate in her analysis of the film but not in the critics' reactions to it. The film does raise questions of post-colonial guilt. A critique of the methods of portraying this guilt does not, however, erase or deny it.

Much has also been made of the technical accomplishments of the film. *Cannibal Holocaust* is a hybrid, trans-genre film which inserts itself into the mockumentary tradition. It is also traditional horror and satire. The role of the mockumentary and the position of *Cannibal Holocaust* within this tradition are important issues to consider when examining the film and reaction to it. *Cannibal Holocaust* is intended to confuse the audience's perception of fiction and reality through the insertion of a film within a film. Mockumentaries use the codes and conventions of a documentary. They then subvert these conventions by presenting a fictional subject and critiquing it. A mockumentary imitates a documentary in order to destabilize the truth. A film on cannibalism, *Cannibal Holocaust* utilizes the audience's assumptions about documentary and truth to undermine both, but also to critique and satirize our attitudes towards exploitative anthropological documentaries, thus confusing the audience's reception of the film, and ultimately perpetrating a hoax. The texture of the film and the shaky quality of the picture contribute to this. Obviously aware of the tradition he is working within, Deodato is referring to William Arens's *Man Eating Myth* and the long history of representing others as cannibals. By using the genre of mockumentary he highlights the ease with which the West believes itself superior to the barbarous cannibals, and then subverts this belief by questioning reality and truth. Boundaries between fact and fiction, civilized and savage, and cannibal and non-cannibal are blurred until the viewers no longer

know where they stand. The viewer is initially lured into identifying with the Westerners and believing their story. As the film unfolds this initial truth is overturned and identification is unsettled. The result of the initial unquestioning belief is a deep and disconcerting uneasiness. Deodato's inspiration is evident in this technique; the suggestion that the news is staged and uncensored in its portrayal of 'real life' atrocities that influence global opinion is as shocking today as it was at the time of the film.

The film opens with aerial shots of the Amazon. The camera then spans the concrete jungle of New York skyscrapers as a reporter comments on the missing crew in the 'inhospitable jungle', drawing obvious parallels between the 'West and rest', and raising the theme of the clash of cultures between developed and developing countries. From the opening the film constantly and explicitly juxtaposes images of American modernity with Amazonian savagery. Jones points out the Darwinian principle at work in the film where we move from images of animal eating animal, animal eating man, human eating animal, man eating man (natives), and finally to man eating man (Westerners). By using techniques such as 'shaky hand-held camera work, deliberately scratched and fogged frames, crash zooms and incorrectly-exposed sequences', Deodato achieves maximum visceral effect and exploits audience notions of 'realism' (Fenton 77). The most vivid colour on screen comes from the viscous red of blood and meat. Images of eating are savage, animal-like, and violent. Riz Ortolani's orchestral soundtrack is a crucial part of the impact of the film, haunting and affective it contrasts jarringly with the violence of the images on the screen making them paradoxically beautiful in their goriness.

Jones argues that the 'beauty' of the violence and the parallels between the jungles of New York and the Amazon mendaciously argue for a relativistic view of human barbarism (Jones 46). *Cannibal Holocaust* can certainly be viewed as a social commentary on various aspects of modern civilization. A common interpretation of *Cannibal Holocaust* is that the film was made to critique modern society, comparing 'civilized' Western society to that of the cannibals'. It is the corruption and brutality of the West that causes the chain of horrific events in the jungle. The crew is initially presented as a group of daring young individuals willing to do anything in order to film a documentary about the Green Inferno. Their material is viewed by the broadcasters and Monroe, and, at the same time, the audience watches. What we are shown is a 'rough cut of that footage consisting of grainy reels interrupted by numbers and scratches (for enhanced "verisimilitude")' (Jauregui par.13). At one

point, after watching the unethical footage, the broadcasting executive tells the professor that, 'the more we rape their [the audience's] senses, the happier they are' (Deodato). Deodato is suggesting that the audience wants to be shocked, frightened, and subjected to sensory assault, and this is what he is doing with his movie. The desire for sensationalism is seriously flawed in Deodato's view. The audience's own barbaric sense of taste is what spurs the crew to 'create' sensational footage. The audience continues to swallow the film and its fiction, no longer knowing what is genuine and what is fake. This 'rape of the senses' is part of what the film satirizes. Deodato avers Arens's claim that we all too easily believe what we are told/shown when it is shocking, especially in relation to cannibalism. Missionaries and anthropologists are branded together in the film as being made of 'special stuff' and willing to invent 'hellholes like this' if they did not exist. And in a way they do invent them. The hellhole only exists after their interference.

The film shows Westerners as untrustworthy capitalists, portraying 'reality' as they see fit and their careless behaviour leads to anthro-pophagous revenge. After burning a village to make good footage, the crew rape a native girl, knowing that she will be killed for being defiled. Ultimately the film asks who the real savages are. As the anthropologist Professor Monroe asks in the film's final sequence: Is the cannibal the viewer who has just ingested the film? Is it the documentary film-makers of the 'Green Inferno'? Is it the director himself who has just made us watch it? These very questions destabilize our notions of fact and fiction. The audience devours the idea of cannibalism and through the act of watching the *Cannibal Holocaust* unfold, the audience in turn become cannibals of the visual sort. In Jacques Lacan's 'Mirror Stage', the child looks into the mirror and sees not itself but another, this other who alienates it from itself. In a similar way, the film screen makes the audience define itself either as animal slaughtering rapists who burn villages for fame (the Westerners), or as man-eating, vengeful, primitives (the Amazonians). Perhaps they identify themselves simply as spectators who become uncomfortably aware of a voyeuristic and visually canni-balistic condition. Freud explains that things that are shunned frighten us because they manifest, in a terrifying or unfamiliar form, those parts of ourselves we are afraid to acknowledge: our repressed appetites, libid-inal instincts, a fascination with flesh and death (Freud 14). Not merely focused on the taboo of flesh eating, the greater theme of the film is the supposed lack of difference between the civilized and the uncivilized. Slater praises the film for waving an angry fist at the 'arbiters of moral-ity and censorship' (Slater 108). The film succeeds in depicting modern

'civilized' society as inherently savage and as brutal as undeveloped tribal cultures.

While *Cannibal Holocaust* seeks to critique an industry that sells images of pain for consumer interest and the voracious appetite in the media for evermore shocking stories, it becomes itself part of the cycle of consumption. While the film questions the relationship between 'ethics, aesthetics, and profit' (Jones 46), it is also guilty of some of the excesses it condemns. Rather than refute cannibalism as a racist myth, the film uses real tribe names to create a story which depicts these tribes as warring, murderous, and cannibalistic. By referring to this story as partly true, and making financial gain from it, *Cannibal Holocaust* achieves what its protagonists set out to do; make a film about cannibal savages and sell it to a gullible, insatiable Western audience. In the film Monroe states the footage is offensive, dishonest, and above all inhuman, offering an inadvertently powerful critique of *Cannibal Holocaust.* Deodato himself counters, saying 'we should have left no doubt in the minds of the spectators about the moral stance of this film. They make me laugh, some of the critiques against me, when they speak of the "gratuitous pleasure" of certain scenes' (qtd. in Jones 47). Deodato's response echoes that of the producers in his film; the audience enjoy the rape of their senses offered by such grisly material. The aesthetic of the film dwells on images of violence in a kind of horror-porn. As for the moral stance of the film, it is not unlike *Heart of Darkness*. *Cannibal Holocaust* attempts to hold a mirror up to colonial, expansionist ideas. In Deodato's day it is through control of the media and through the eye that we consume the Other. As Conrad's narrative takes the power of the voice from the native, Western representations of the native cannibal persist in anthropological writings of the mid-century, maintaining the silence of all but the Western voice. Yet, also like *Heart of Darkness* it seems *Cannibal Holocaust* falls into some of its own traps in its critique and capitulation.

By 1980 the cannibal films were slowly being pushed aside by zombie films inspired by George Romero's success with *Night of the Living Dead* and *Dawn of the Dead*. The market reached saturation point when, with the video revolution of the 1980s, cheap horror movies were ideal for a young audience. Indeed, as Bracken points out, 'after *Cannibal Ferox* what's left to say?'. In mainstream cinema cannibalism is often dealt with metaphorically. Cliff Pounder notes how in Frank Marshall's *Alive* (1992), cannibalism is the symbolic eating of the flesh of Christ; in *Delicatessen* (1991) it is emblematic of social breakdown; in *Parents* (1989) it represents distrust of parental authority (Pounder 113). These films, and the genre of survival cannibalism in particular, move the

cannibal from the colonies to (damaged) home. I will examine this notion more fully later. For now, it suffices to say that despite their criticism, the Italian cannibal films mark a crucial change in the figuring of the cannibal in popular culture. By asking who the real savages are, these films began to reflect cannibalism back onto the West. In times of postcolonial turmoil, questions about the West's colonial guilt, appetite for the world's resources, and tendency to exploit others began to be asked. With these questions being asked the cannibal began to move.

The decline of the colonial genre I have already discussed along with these questions resulted in a new trend: what was once the label of the African savage became a figure haunting Western society. The cannibal figure has shifted to the savage in our midst. Politically, with globalization and varying national and ethnic conflicts, the Other shifts location, race, and religion. The continuing obsession with the idea of difference, the socially accepted norm pitted against the outsider, results in a continuing need to categorize, label, and construct binaries of opposition. In *Purity and Danger* Mary Douglas discusses this need to differentiate in order to maintain a sense of control and order: 'Ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and purifying transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created' (Douglas 4). Just as with the colonial paranoia of the Other, the easiest and most basic way of doing this is through differentiating eating habits, through stating the accepted norms of edible in opposition to the inedible, monstrous, or repulsive. However, as the colonial cannibal was no longer a viable target a new domestic target needed to be found.

Not only was the colonial cannibal not a viable target, he was not a politically correct one. With growing sensitivity to racism in the West at this time the colonial cannibal was too sensitive and too dangerous a figure to address. One example of what happens when the colonial cannibal is invoked is Australian right-wing politician Pauline Hanson. She claimed Aboriginal women ate their babies and their culture was savage. She has since been labelled 'Australia's Hitler'. In the foreword to *Dinner with a Cannibal* (Travis-Henikoff 2008), Professor Christy Turner bemoans the politically correct avoidance of the label cannibal: 'the topic of cannibalism remains among the last to shed its taboo imprisonment'. He believes this taboo increased in the wake of Arens' arguments in *The Man Eating Myth* when it was deemed politically incorrect and anthropologically ignorant to label one group cannibal. He aligns this

avoidance with the 'word excommunication' of certain racial and ethnic slurs. While my study is not specifically concerned with anthropological terminology or archaeological findings, this cannibalism-racial sensitivity is revealed in how the cannibal is figured in popular culture.

After the demise of the popularity of colonial fiction we have seen how the colonial cannibal featured in travel writings in the middle of the century. Then he was revitalized in the film world when Hollywood revisited the old tales of adventure. In the politically fragile post-colonial world he rose again in the Italian cannibal films, inciting criticism and disgust. However, while no longer politically relevant or correct as a colonial Other, the cannibal still wields power and fascination and has been reworked into popular culture in other genres. Importantly the move through the texts and films I will now examine shows the shift of the cannibal from *there* to *here*. The fear of the Other remains, but the Other has become something inside the Self or within the body politic. Former boundaries between the familiar and strange, the home and the exotic, have become flexible and porous. Thus divisions between 'us' and 'them' become flawed and indistinct as the Other/cannibal holds no firm place, or rather, holds all places. As Walton argues, 'If the Other is us, then we are becoming increasingly savage in our civility, to the point where our civility is actually beginning to consume us. As a result, when cannibalism returns to haunt the site of its discovery, it begins to illuminate the very culture it so historically intrigued' (Walton 34). Again, it is important to keep in mind I am not suggesting a sudden move from the foreign to domestic sphere, but rather a slow unveiling of the domestic cannibal. What was hinted at in Conrad's work and made more explicit in Deodato's film, finds firmer footing in the figure of the rural cannibal: the white man has teeth.

Part II
Yeehaw! The Regional Cannibal

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4
Borders and Bean – The British Regional Cannibal
The Regional Gothic and Sawney Bean

The rural occupies an ambivalent position in popular culture and imagination. On the one hand it is the place of escape from the every-day, humdrum existence of the city, a place of nature, fresh air, and bucolic tranquillity. Peter Bailey explains how space was at a premium in the burgeoning industrial cities of nineteenth-century England. Parks and gardens gave way to factories and it became necessary for the urban population to escape to the space and fresh air of the countryside on day trips for race meetings or country fairs (Bailey 27). Compared with the 'Babylon' of the city, the countryside is often configured as an Eden. On the other hand the countryside is also seen to be a place of backwardness, an unfamiliar territory where one is isolated and in danger of getting lost, or falling victim to wild animals or equally wild locals. According to Cloke and Little, there is certainly a sense in which the familiar, so often associated with the home and rurality, has lurk-ing within it positionings which are unfamiliar, strange, and literally uncanny (Cloke & Little 7). Since the nineteenth century the develop-ment of identity has been seen largely as a historical process in which the significance of geography has been underestimated (Peach 12). However, recent social geography has examined the idea of space and identity and how location affects one's sense of self. Furthermore, loca-tions come with a set of stereotypes and these stereotypes affect the public's perception of one's identity.

In *Outsiders in Urban Societies* (1981) David Sibley argues that there are two conceptions of the outsider. The first is an imperialist notion which describes outsiders and their territories in exotic terms and emphasizes aspects of physical or cultural differentiation, which has the effect of dehumanizing the outsiders. The danger of this characterization, he continues, is that while 'exotic' at a distance, these outsiders become

'deviant' when enmeshed in the social mainstream because of the 'hegemony of the dominant value system' (Sibley 5). The second conception is a Marxist one which represents the processes of domination and integration in advanced capitalist societies as 'irresistible forces'. Outsiders are seen as existing in a transitional space between cultural autonomy and full incorporation into the class system. This position is difficult to maintain, and if these liminal figures are to become fully 'integrated' a kind of 'cultural annihilation' has to happen, that is they must leave behind certain traditions in order to fit comfortably into the reigning economic system (6). Therefore, rural migrants to the city are part of the system in that they are workers or cogs in the capitalist wheel, yet they are also outsiders because of their accents or traditions. Often these differences are gradually worn away or left behind as anachronistic oddities. The fact that the city is usually perceived as the place of normality in opposition to the exotic or economically backward countryside results in a process of geographical marginalization or exclusion in what Cloke and Little term 'forms of internal colonialization not unlike those described by [Edward] Said' (7). This division results in various horror novels and films coding the victim as urban and both the setting and villain as rural.

Robert Mighall focuses on the geographical factors which have played an important part in making Gothic representations credible at any given time (Mighall xiv). He notes that the importance of anachronism in the Gothic is a central element in the mode throughout its development and points out that the past has often been referred to as a foreign country, but in this genre certain places become the past (18). Mighall notes that it is this conflict between the modern and the archaic that provides the terrifying pleasure gained by participants in the genre (9). Darryl Jones terms these texts 'regional Gothic'. They dramatize 'bruising encounters between modern, urban types and deranged backwoods (and backwards) folk', with Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) serving as the original template for this trend (Jones 44). The Yorkshire moors, the location of *Wuthering Heights* was certainly described by Elizabeth Gaskell in terms typical of the stereotypes of the rural: 'On the moors we met no one. Here and there in the gloom of the distant hollows she pointed out a grey dark dwelling – with Scotch firs growing near them often, – and told me such wild tales of the ungovernable families who lived or had lived therein that Wuthering Heights even seemed tame comparatively. Such dare-devil people, – men especially, – and women so stony and cruel in some of their feelings and so passionately fond in others. They are a queer people up there'

(Gaskell). Matthew Beaumont argues that Gaskell's comment shows how attitudes to rural dwellers equate them with nature and conversely the unnatural, so that their culture becomes alien. In Gaskell's phrasing, the moors are the anthropological equivalent to colonial territories (Beaumont 14). Michael Hechter uses the term 'internal colonialism' to describe the differences between the core and peripheral regions. He argues that in this system the periphery is never fully integrated into the core, culturally, economically, or politically. The periphery here refers to regions supposedly part of the 'mother country', rather than 'foreign' spaces in a simple way (Hechter 10). Similar to colonialism, this internal process results in peripheral dependence on the core economy and is reinforced by juridical, military, and political measures, yet there is also national discrimination of language, religion, and other cultural practices (33). Thus, many of the 'salient features of the colonial situation' existed within the borders of the 'developing metropolitan state' (80). The Celts are a group, he claims, that have never been fully 'swallowed up' by British identity and continue to be denigrated to this day (342). He aligns the Scottish, Irish, and Welsh to the Amerindians in Latin America, the black population of the United States, and previous colonial subjects in India and Africa. Thus, I believe, similar codes of othering are used in overseas colonialism and internal colonialism, both the colonial subject and the regional dweller are configured as inferior and in need of control, both are labelled cannibal with a regularity that suggests the core's need to vilify them. In Britain and America this process of geographical marginalization has occurred in slightly different ways. I will deal firstly with the case in England.

The British regional other

Generally the countryside in English culture is seen as picturesque, ordered agricultural land. Murray Pittock, in his *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (1999), comments on the 'ruaral/organicist' envisioning of British identity, an envisioning, he argues, that 'steeped in agrarian nostalgia, implicitly accuses the city of bringing the criminal and uncouth, unsteady and immoral, into a life of rich, peaceful and cyclical order: this is the role of London in Wordsworth or Jane Austen' (8). However, this idealized rural England refers to the South Counties, not to the Celtic fringes (11). England had dissolved the true peasantry early on and replaced it with 'rent-and-wage formulations of capitalist agriculture' (Williams *Country* 268–269). Raymond Williams explains how parliamentary orders for enclosure in which 'more than six million acres

of land were appropriated, mainly by the politically dominant landown-ers' (96). This transformation left socially distinguishable areas on its edges. Therefore, in Ireland, parts of Scotland, and parts of Wales, ways of life were present that were practically non-existent in England after the eighteenth century (269). The places of marginalization in England, then, are the Celtic frontiers, where disorder creeps in and anarchy threatens. Just as the colonies in Africa were reported as populated by cannibals, the Celtic fringes, wild moors, and immigrant slums of Britain were too. H.L. Malchow explores the thesis that the nineteenth-century image of the racial cannibal was built upon and interwoven with domestic discourses which saw the cannibal as the madman or the mob, the sailor or the criminal. Stories of Celtic cannibalism had an ancient history and nineteenth-century associations had a 'locus in famine cannibalism' so that the image of the Irish savage 'melted into a general representation of the Gothicised poor', investing the outsider, particularly the Celtic outsider, with a 'demonic, primitive, and dan-gerous' and cannibalistic aspect (Malchow 70–71). Mighall notes how the anthropological focus of late-Victorian Gothic saw a double move-ment: outwards to the margins of empire, and inwards to focus on the domesticated savages which resided in the civilized world: 'if the mod-ern could encounter the primeval merely by journeying to one of the few blank spaces left on the map, then the "primitive" could reverse the process and crop up in the very centre of the civilized world' (137). Psychiatry and criminology sought to explain the 'misfits of society' by adopting anthropological perspectives and relying on 'epistemological models and modes of temporal distancing' (138).

The Celtic fringes of Wales, Ireland, and Scotland were the location for rural literature which recorded settlement of what Williams terms 'old England or the natural economy: the product of centuries of suc-cessive penetration and domination' (285). An example of this rural Gothic literature is Arthur Machen's work set in wildest Wales. Wales is an appropriate setting, Mighall notes, for 'morphological reversions and atavistic returns': 'with Machen the geographical and the somatic are associatively linked, mirroring each other on a number of levels' (Mighall 154). The Welsh were often portrayed as humorously stupid, poor, and illiterate but not very threatening. They were treated with contempt rather than fear in chapbooks (Pittock 29). The eighteenth-century nursery rhyme *Taffy Was a Welshman* is an example of this mocking of Welsh people as foolish thieves. However, Victor Sage notes how Le Fanu transported the setting of his stories and the social con-ditions of his characters from Ireland to Wales (Sage 'Irish' 90). This

suggests that on some level these fringes were interchangeable in that they were all Other and beyond the centre.

The oddness of Ireland was enforced by a religious difference. Social geographer M.A. Busteed argues that part of the reason for this location of rural horror is that in the case of popular English and British nationalism the traditional other was Roman Catholicism (Busteed 58). Mighall describes the Gothic traveller's encounters with Catholicism as seeing the 'great work of the Reformation undone' and 'anachronistic vestiges' of Catholicism was a powerful rhetorical tool (Mighall 18). Tracing the anti-Celtic sentiment in the Victorian city, Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley argue that Catholicism was regarded by Victorians as 'foreign, exotic, dangerous, the religion of England's traditional enemies, France and Spain, the ally of reactionary governments and the creed of superstitious peasants everywhere' (Swift and Gilley *City* 8). Irish immigrants, most of whom were, of course, Roman Catholic, arrived in Britain and inherited the role of target for this traditional prejudice (Busteed 58). Irish immigrants to the new industrial cities were cast as scapegoats for much of the moral and physical condition of the new urban working class. They stood out from the host population by their 'poverty, nationality, race and religion' (Swift and Gilley *City* 1). Furthermore, their political aims were regarded as close to treason, since they struck at national unity in the core of the empire. With the advent of social Darwinism, the Irish as Celts came to be described as 'halfway between the Anglo-Saxons', who possessed all the 'desirable qualities', and the lesser groups, most of whom were non-white (Busteed 60). Swift and Gilley note how this racial hierarchy was in evidence in *Punch* cartoons which depicted the Celt as a gorilla, as if he stood on 'a lower rung on the evolutionary ladder' (Swift and Gilley *City* 5). The huge influx of immigrants after the famine resulted in 'unintegrated ghettoes', isolated from the surrounding population (2).

Tensions between Scotland and England were based on politics and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were many popular preconceptions of the Scots lacking civilized standards. Pittock notes how disloyal Scots were depicted as 'lice-ridden cannibals with insatiable and disordered sexual appetites' (Pittock 27). The two key contextualizing moments in Scotland's history were the Union of the Crowns in 1603 and the Union of Parliaments in 1707 (Riach 9). The year 1603 marked the beginning of the 'diminishment' of Scotland's political authority. From then, Scotland's 'political autonomy, linguistic registers and social structures could no longer be assumed' (10–11). Alan Riach states that to recognize this is to understand the stress in a 'national

cultural dynamic' that remains to this day somewhat 'unresolved'. In Scotland, he argues, the 'feudal, clan, and capitalist economics evolve and co-exist in strained, intermingling structures' (Riach 10–11). Following the Union of Parliament there was widespread civil unrest, riots, and protests, and a significant number of Jacobite uprisings. The most important of these uprisings were in 1715 and 1745. The infamous Battle of Culloden in 1746 saw Jacobite highlanders take on the British army and was a decisive defeat for the Jacobites. Riach points out that it is worth remembering that during the Jacobite march on London the value of the British pound fell to sixpence and that the Jacobites were considered a serious threat to the British economy. He concludes that the caricatures of the Otherness of the Highlanders are more understandable in the light of this threat (19). Scottish historian Smout describes the media's handling of Scottish immigration to England, arguing that for the 'London press, xenophobic then as now', the biggest effect of the Union was to unleash upon England a 'horde of uncouth and unwelcome immigrants . . . Although the stock character of the cartoons was the itchy, smelly, Highland "Sauny" it was in fact the culturally and economically ambitious who migrated' (Smout 3). Smout also looks at the historians' analyses of Scotland at the time and mentions David Hume and William Robertson, two influential Enlightenment historians, who viewed Scottish history as a moral and political lesson. For them, most of what happened in Scotland before their century was 'nasty and barbarous, the fruit of tyranny, ignorance and religious superstition' from which the country had been rescued by the Union of 1707 (5).

However, the transformation of Scotland from an essentially rural to a predominantly urban and industrial society by the end of the nineteenth century had been horrific in its effects on the population in terms of slum conditions and human misery. By the 1830s the geography of urban Scotland was for many 'a geography of distress' as rapid urbanization was not accompanied by housing controls or proper sanitation management (Withers 17). Scotland lost nearly 1.5 million people through net emigration between 1861 and 1939, nearly 44% of the country's natural increase in population (19). In the comprehensive study, *Scottish Literature* (2002), the editors describe Scotland as trapped between 'narrow religiosity and industrial materialism' (321). Furthermore, there were factors which helped erode the indigenous Lowlands and Highland cultures: 'the ongoing clearances of the native Gaelic population, the co-operation of Scotland in British militarism, and the increasing Anglicization of education in schools and universities, with

its hostility (which lasted till after the Second World War) to Scots and Gaelic' (321–322). All of these factors affected Scottish culture and the public perception of Scottish identity. The founding inspiration for much of the material I am going to look at is the Scottish cannibal Sawney Bean, a figure who, on many levels, embodies the regional Scottish Other, as Pittock notes, his 'horrific hunger' was a suitable metaphor for 'the rapacity attributed to his fellow-country men, whom mid-eighteenth-century cartoons showed rising from vermin to vainglory at English expense' (Pittock 31).

Sawney Bean

The most infamous regional cannibal in British culture is the legendary Sawney Bean, the Scottish cannibal. Bean lived in a cave on the west coast of Scotland and, with the help of his wife and their incestuous brood, robbed and ate travellers who were unfortunate enough to take the coast road. The legend is that the Bean clan profited in this way for twenty-five years before being captured and executed. The legend was first put into print in 1700 in a broadsheet and has never been out of print since (Holmes 7). Although the origins of the Sawney Bean myth pre-date the scope of this work, the aftermath does not. Bean has influenced and inspired books and films well into the latter decades of the twentieth century. Indeed, as late as 1964 Bean's echo was still heard in discussions of Scottish identity when Alistair Reid, writing in *The New Yorker* stated: 'Scots are characterised as a mixture of the legendary Sawney Bean, the grotesque Galloway rogue who consumed human corpses and lived in a cave, and David Livingstone … who darned his own frock coat neatly in the African jungle' (qtd. in Dunn 13). Sir Walter Scott himself described Scottish identity in terms of oral ferocity: 'I was born a Scotsman and a bare one. Therefore I was born to fight my way in the world, with my left hand, if my right hand failed me, and with my teeth if both were cut off' (2). Scotland, particularly the coastal fringes or highlands, fulfilled all the requirements of a location for the regional Other: remote, politically and religiously resistant, and culturally or linguistically distant from the centre. Indeed, in Walter Scott's writing there is, Riach notes, a 'generalised analogy between Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans', Afghani tribesmen or oriental mountaineers, symbolizing a 'romantic barbarism as opposed to the civilised Hanoverian world'. Riach describes how, to Dr Johnson visiting the Highlands in 1773, the inhabitants seemed as remote as people in Borneo or Sumatra (Riach 82–83).

In order to understand how the Sawney Bean legend applies to the notion of regional cannibalism, it is first necessary to understand how it fits in Scottish literature. In the absence of a self-determined nation and due to the political turmoil outlined above, there were changes in the Scottish literary tradition. There were transitions and overlaps between the oral and written tradition and divisions between three main literary traditions: the 'Lowland Scots tradition came to fruition in [Robert] Burns', the 'Gaelic tradition represented a different Scotland of the Highlands' with such writers as James MacPherson, and the Edinburgh literati representing an 'Anglocentric style'. Generally these traditions did not cross-fertilize (70). Burns' songs, satires, and poems were popular among farm labourers and illiterate people until they became popular with the literati in Edinburgh where he was 'lionised, caricatured and almost smothered' by the establishment (xvi). Scott's novels enjoyed international readership and showed a Scotland at the axis of historical change. The literati attempted to push the Gaelic world towards the realm of 'antiquarian curiosity' and James McPherson represented the only 'acceptable' face of Gaeldom (70). From the mid-eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century the icons of Highland dress, tartan, bagpipes, the Gaelic language had become symbols. The Highlander was seen as Scotland's 'noble savage', the region was the 'nation's past in its present' (Withers 15).

Beyond the historical fiction of Scott and James Hogg was a long tradition of romance known as the Kailyard tradition. Popular in the nineteenth century, it celebrated humble Scottish village life and is where Sawney Bean rears his ugly head. The Kailyard romances often deal with a 'decent young protagonist out of his depth in religious and political intrigue'. Critics note how this fiction often exploits the patterning of Scott and Stevenson in which 'respectability and social order are set against outlawry and social disorder as well as their device of remembering wild adventure from the vantage point of the elderly so that a romantic Scottish past symbolically gives way to an inevitable new and settled Scotland' in novels such as *Rob Roy* (Scott 1817) and *Kidnapped* (Stevenson 1886) (Gifford et al. 483). The narrator is usually a native whose function is to explain the eccentricities of the locals to the sophisticated reader. He is necessary as an interpreter and modifier of Scots language and customs (485). The two most successful Kailyard writers were S.R. Crockett and Ian McClaren, both of whom had an extraordinary cultural impact. Both were ministers of the Free Church and both set their work in regions of Scotland, with Crockett setting his fiction in Galloway. Appealing to a contemporary vogue for

Highland adventure their books, such as McClaren's *Beside The Bonnie Briar Bush* (1894) and Crockett's *The Raiders* (1894), sold in hundreds of thousands and were very successful in America. Both writers acquired celebrity status. They preached sermons and gave readings from their books, had samples of their fan mail published, gave interviews, and had photographs of their homes printed in periodicals (Nash 318).

I will look more closely at Crockett shortly but for now I will trace the importance of the Kailyard tradition with regard to regional identity. Kailyard texts focus on significant and often violent periods of Scottish history. This offered an escape from Scotland's nineteenth-century problems, some of which I have outlined above. Some critics believe that by pandering to the taste of a British and colonial market, Kailyard fiction offered a nostalgic reassurance that an older, ideal Scotland survived. In this fiction we are offered an imagined 'dear green place' which bore no relation to real towns of nineteenth-century Scotland (Gifford et al. 481–482). Criticisms of the tradition were directed at the 'predominance of rural settings, the parochial outlook, the nostalgic tone, the exaggerated pathos, the excessive emphasis on religion, the cosmetic use of dialect, and the obvious concession to audience demand' (Nash 319). The most significant criticism though was the charge that Kailyard writers betrayed Scotland by presenting their country in a way that was idealized, distorting, and unrepresentative of the pressing contemporary realities. Whether intended or not, these romances were taken as documentary accounts of Scottish life by American readers. Even though they were set in the past they were 'devoured' as representative of Scottish life by an international audience (319). Eventually, 'Kailyard' became a word to sum up the imaginative failure of writers to respond to the industrial life of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, Nash notes, Kailyard became a term used to describe a 'lack of nationalist fervour' and was often used with tartantry to indicate false historical and cultural consciousness that 'blighted the nation and impeded meaningful self-definition' (322). In this way, intellectuals saw it as 'politically damaging to the maintenance of a credible Scottish identity' and Kailyard became part of the political argument about the relationship between Scottish and British culture (321). There was also a significant political factor in the Kailyard tradition:

> The depictions of Celtic culture which saw the plight of the western Celts as unavoidable, the result of racial decline and tragic flaws of character . . . was acceptable to Establishment Britain to have the actualities of social change and urbanisation disguised . . . just as it suited

> governments not unfriendly to forced emigration to have peripheral
> Gaels represented by writers of the Celtic fringe as anachronisms,
> fated to decline unless relocated in a brave new world. (324)

The *Legend of Sawney Bean* portrays a Scottish mass murderer and can-
nibal who was eventually executed around the year 1600. Undoubtedly
the fascination with the story stems from the grisly cannibalism which,
as Sawney Bean historian Ronald Holmes points out, puts it on a par
with folk tales of vampires and werewolves (Holmes 7). In 1843 John
Nicholson printed the legend in a collection titled *Historical and Tradi-
tional Tales Connected with the South of Scotland*. That version became the
standard version of the tale. Nicholson introduces the tale as follows:
'The following account, though as well attested as any historical fact
can be, is almost incredible, for the monstrous and unparalleled barbar-
ities that it relates; there being nothing that we ever heard of, with the
same degree of certainty, that may be compared with it, or that shows
how far a brutal temper, untamed by education, and knowledge of the
world, may carry a man in such glaring and horrible colours' (Nicholson
Historical 72). The important points to note in Nicholson's dramatic
introduction are the emphasis on unparalleled barbarity and Bean's lack
of education. He gives detail to both throughout the story. Sawney Bean
was born in East Lothian, eight miles east of Edinburgh in the reign of
King James I of Scotland. His father was a hedger and ditcher. Sawney,
being a particularly lazy lad, ran away from his home and job with a
girl. They took up residence in a cave on the Galloway coast and lived
there for over 25 years. Bean and his wife had 14 children and 32 grand-
children 'all begotten in incest' and brought up 'without any notions of
humanity or civil society' (73). The family lived by robbing and murder-
ing passers-by and after robbing their victims they 'used to carry off the
carcase to the den, where cutting it into quarters, they would pickle the
mangled limbs, and afterwards eat it...they commonly had superfluity
of this their abdominal food' (73–74). The family lived successfully in
this way for two decades before King James VI of Scotland sent hun-
dreds of soldiers and bloodhounds to the coast to find these fiendish
criminals. Eventually finding the cave these soldiers were shocked by
what they saw: 'Legs, arms, thighs, hands and feet of men, women and
children, were hung up in rows, like dried beef; a great many limbs laid
in pickle, and a great mass of money both gold and silver' (79). The
punishment for these heinous crimes was swift and awful. Nicholson
relishes the details:

> They were executed without process, it being thought needless to try creatures who were even professed enemies of mankind. The men were dismembered, their hands and legs were severed from their bodies, by which amputation they bled to death in a few hours. The wife, daughters and grandchildren having been made spectators of this just punishment inflicted on the men, were afterwards burnt to death in three several fires. They all in general died without the least signs of repentance, but continued cursing and vending the most dreadful imprecations to the very last gasp of life. (80)

The punishment, shocking in its violence, is also quite telling in relation to the religious and political undertones to the story. Cannibalism was considered heresy rather than criminal murder as the cannibal was considered insane. For this reason the punishment was burning, the same punishment handed out to witches.

The Bean story appears to be of English origin in its initial publication, readership, and authorship. In fact the legend was only published in England for the first 100 years of its existence in print (Holmes 129). Many of the details focus on Scottish savagery. Indeed the name Sawney is a dialect form of Alexander, but more significantly it was a derogatory term in England for a Scotsman (Hobbs and Cornwell 50). Holmes explains there is no audible differentiation in the Galwegian dialect (spoken in Galloway) in the pronunciation of *Bean* and *Bane* and the 'present-day dictionary definition of *bane* is "ruin, destruction, poison or death"…The old Scottish *Bane* and *Baine* meant murder or murderer. The Old English *Bana* and the Old Norse *Bani* both meant death or slayer' (Holmes 70). So in effect the legend was titled 'Savage Scottish Slayer'. Hobbs and Cornwell argue that a commercially motivated horror story such as *Sawney Bean* could have gained plausibility and popularity if it was given a setting which fitted popular preconceptions. Many English readers of the time doubted the Scots level of civilization and the eighteenth century was a time of many tensions between England and Scotland as I have outlined above. The Galloway region in particular was a site of contention, firstly for religious reasons dating back hundreds of years and secondly for the political uprisings. Galloway remained a pagan, Celtic stronghold rejecting Christianity after the rest of Scotland had accepted it. It eventually became Presbyterian, fiercely independent, its people rejecting the rules of both kings and bishops. The rebellions by the Highlanders detailed above, which in the mid-eighteenth century crossed into England via Galloway, lead to a belief among the English

public, afraid of Scottish invasion, that the Highlanders ate children (Holmes 107). Galwegians were perceived as savage and independent, with an inclination to pursue border warfare with the English. The popularity of *Sawney Bean* is understood when viewed in relation to this history. It combined horror with the degradation of a traditional enemy and the traditional elements of folk tales.

Well into the nineteenth century there were plays and rewrites of the story (Hobbs and Cornwell), with Thomas Preskett Prest of *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* and part writer of *Varney the Vampire* fame, writing *Sawney Bean; the Man-Eater of Midlothian* in 1844, without adding much to the legend that had been published a year before, although he did popularize the character to the extent that Sawney Bean would become a familiar name throughout the century. In 1896 S.R. Crockett, a Scottish writer well versed in the traditions and folklore of his region resurrected the Bean legend in his Kailyard novel *The Grey Man*. Crockett's fiction deals with 'robust history' and 'sentimental pastoralism' or rural romanticism, and the effects of religious oppression (Gifford et al. 485). Holmes praises Crockett's detailed account of Sawney Bean: 'details which caused his book to ring with authority . . . it was his detailed knowledge of the history of the region, or his access to a fund of local oral tradition, which made Sawney Bean . . . into a three dimensional figure' (Holmes 21). Other critics have also praised the novel, lauding it as Crockett's best work, a novel that combines 'fast-paced adventure with period background' and claiming its 'terse, economical' presentation of atrocities is arguably as good as any of Scott's (Gifford et al. 482).

Crockett set his novel in 1580 in the reign of James VI of Scotland. Sawney Bean is a secondary character in the novel and is not mentioned until after about 100 pages where he is introduced as 'the savage carl that was called of the common people "The Earl of Hell" ' (Crockett 107). However, the entire novel is peppered with images of teeth, mouths, savagery, and the fear of being consumed. Crockett is writing within the tradition of Scottish folklore, re-writing the myths of child-gobbling ogres as a historical novel of massacring soldiers aided by child-gobbling Bean. Malchow explains that the figuring of the Celtic outsider as ogre did not only have its roots in 'social-evolutionist ideas' or colonial expansion but in long-standing domestic prejudice and folkmyth (Malchow 70). Launcelot, the narrator, is a knight in the House of Kennedy, and describes his lord's enemies as 'wild beasts . . . gnashing on me with their teeth' (Crockett 66) and threatens them with being eaten: 'Why, my master could eat you up saltless, without turning out

more than half a parish of his fighting men' (114), paralleling the supposedly noble battles with the savagery of Bean's cave. Indeed, Bean is only in the story because he is used by John Mure, the Grey Man of the title, as a weapon in the tribal battles of revenge and greed in Galloway. Thus Crockett, as a Scottish Kailyard writer, uses a legend that originated in England as an example of simple Scottish savagery to help in the recounting of regional history and comment on the savagery of politics and war.

Having said that, Crockett does not shy away from describing the cannibal in his full savage glory. Claude Rawson notes how there was a strong tendency to think of the Irish as subhuman or bestial in English writing and how there are significant parallels between English descriptions of the Irish and European descriptions of Africans and Amerindians (Rawson 80). Of course, as I have outlined above, it is not only the Irish, but also the Scots and Welsh who are termed in this way. Crockett, surely aware of this tradition, and in light of the criticism of Kailyard writers, succumbs to the trend of portraying the Highlanders as an anachronistic race. The parallels between Celts and Africans that Rawson mentions are evident in Crockett's novel, including the nakedness, inarticulacy, dirt, body paint, and violence of the 'savages'. Not only are Bean and his family cannibals, they are also physically abhorrent and described as animals, 'hounds in a kennel' (Crockett 243) or 'hell hounds...young wolves' (245). Particular attention is paid to their naked feet and footprints:

> For all about the spot where these things were found, was the trampling of naked feet. And some of these were small and some were great. But all were naked...Each footprint had the toes of the bare feet wide and distinct. Every toe was a pointed claw, as though the steads were those of birds. And the fearsome beast-prints went down to the sea edge, and the blood marks follow them.' (226)

Bean is barely human; with 'his cloven feet that made steads on the ground like those of a beast, his huge, hairy arms, clawed at the finger ends like the toes of a bear' (242) he is 'a black hulk, in shape like a grizzly beast' (249) and 'ruffian kemper, low-browed, buck-toothed, and inhuman' (285). Crockett includes the Bean women and children in these animal descriptions and focuses on the fact that the women, too are naked: 'they were of both sexes and all ages, mostly running naked...The very tottering children were striking at one another, or biting like young wolves' (245). Interestingly, in my research the occasions

of women or children performing cannibalism only occur in incestuous family or tribe situations, and they never, unlike male cannibals, act individually. I will examine this in greater detail when I look at the Sawney Bean inspired novel *Off Season* (Ketchum 1980) but for now I want to point out that part of the horror of *The Grey Man* is that by having young children and women as cannibals, Crockett suggests that cannibalism breeds cannibalism, savagery begets savagery. The description of humans as animal or sub-human, and of cannibalism as a sign of this bestiality, has a long tradition (with canines featuring strongly) in both folklore and colonial discourse. Crockett's novel works within both of these, adopting familiar images from Scottish legends and working them into a tale of regional otherness. This is common technique in regional Gothic by which the writers incorporate folkloric elements into their texts as a kind of legitimation exercise.

Crockett also uses the trope of the savage without comprehensible language. Penny Fielding's study of orality in Scottish literature suggests the oral is always Other, particularly in the nineteenth century when urbanization and technology, traditional foes of orality, dominated the sense of value. In order that orality be contained and managed, she argues, it is usually located elsewhere than in the 'temporal centre' (Fielding 4). In *Heart of Darkness* this theory was applied to the African colonial subject who was reduced to inarticulate savage. Again, with the criticisms of the Kailyard tradition in mind, Fielding's argument applies here to Crockett's depiction of the significantly oral Sawney Bean, certainly beyond the fringes of the civilized centre, and acting as a foe of urbanization. The Bean clan cry and bay in threatening voices, like the 'insensate howling of dogs or shut-up hungry hounds in a kennel' (Crockett 243). Not only are their words muffled and their language reduced to babble, but their individual voices are undifferentiated until the entire family is one gibbering voice or ominous silence: 'Then there was empty silence through which the noise came in gusts, like the sudden deadly anger of the mob . . . and the sound of this inhuman carnival, approaching, filled the cave with shuddering' (243). The comparison to the mob is a significant one. As I have argued the mob and the colonial other occupy similar positions in popular discourse. John Carey describes the 'mass' as an imaginary construct used to eliminate the human status of the majority of people (Carey 23). In *The Grey Man* the descriptions of the Bean clan echo the descriptions of the mob, particularly when the mob gathers for the execution. Again animal terms are used, and individual voices are blurred into the roar of the crowd: 'the flocks flocked in from leagues away to see and execrate

them' (Crockett 294). The mob and the Bean family are put on a lower level than the individuals in the castles and churches. However, rather than being a critique of the masses, I believe Crockett is in fact criticizing the hypocrisy of the religious and royal leaders. After all, it is these leaders who cause the bloody battles, use Sawney Bean as a weapon, and fail to protect the general public from the whims of those in power.

The clearest example of this parallel between the savage and the noble is in the relationship between Sawney Bean and John Mure, the Grey Man. Mure, like Bean, is not named until late in the novel. Rather, both men are alluded to by their legendary status and their attire. One, Mure, supposedly heroic and dashing in his grey cloak, the other, Bean, savage and horrid in his naked filth. However, both men are part of the same team, they are almost the two sides of one coin. Crockett does not pretend to be writing the first tale of Sawney Bean but uses the legendary status of the cannibal to heighten the surprise at this seemingly unlikely pairing. He refers to the infamy of the neighbourhood of Benane as a 'dangerous and ill-famed place' (Crockett 210) and the people of the area are well-versed in the threat posed by Bean: 'Ye wad mak' braw pickin' for the teeth o' Sawney Bean's bairns. They wad roast your ribs fresh and fres till they were done. Syne they would pickle your quarters for the winter. The like o' you wad be as guid as a Christmas mart to them' (214). Part of the information that the narrator Launcelot has about Sawney is that he is protected by a power stronger than himself and warned by an intelligence higher than his own (242). This higher intelligence is John Mure, 'a chief devil among a company of gibbering lubber fiends' (285). Rather than his feet, the narrator concentrates on Mure's eyes and rather than dirty and naked he is clothed in civility: 'He looked, save for the eyes of him in which the fires of hell burned, a civil, respectable, well-put-on man of means and substance' (285). The Beans' footprints, while reducing them to animal status, ascertains they are of this world. Likewise they do not hide their true identity but parade their savagery gleefully. Mure, on the other hand, is identified by his burning eyes, and disguises himself in the cloths of respectability, thus he is aligned more with the underworld and devil than Sawney. He threatens Launcelot with particular cruelty, swearing to take off his face and feed him to the Bean clan: 'But as the blood drains to the white from the stricken calf, so shall your life drip from you drop by drop . . . Thus shall the she-tribe dismember your body . . . here is toothsome eating, Sawney Bean, thou chief lover of dainty vivers' (286). This comparison of the victim of cannibalism with animals suggests that

as much as Sawney is a savage beast, the victims too are reduced to animal products. They are consumed by both the cannibal clan who literally live on their meat, and by the forces of power that drive the continuous battles; forces of power who metaphorically use fear and death of people to further their cycle of vengeance and the search for power.

As with much of the literature on the topic of cannibalism *The Grey Man* contains scenes of gruesome aftermath or prelude to cannibalism but fails to describe actual scenes of man eating man. Launcelot witnesses preparations for cannibalism in the cave in the form of a wooden vat, strange narrow hams hanging from the roof, tubs of salted human meat, and a baby's hand swinging by a rope. He smells burning fat and roasting victual, 'the origin of which [he] dared not let [his] mind dwell' (249). So while referring to the Bean clan as man-eaters, Launcelot never witnesses any actual cannibalism. Crockett may have been working within the tradition of anthropological or colonial fictional accounts of cannibalism which hint at 'the unspeakable' and leave the details of the feast to the reader's imagination. Cannibalism was literally unspeakable in popular culture until the late twentieth century.

A final point I want to examine in relation to *The Grey Man* is that of landscape and location. Obviously these are important points in a discussion of regional otherness, and particularly so in this novel. On the one hand, Crockett paints a very Scottish picture for the reader, his characters use Scottish colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions, the Scottish land is described lovingly with attention given to colours and smells of nature, and the names of both heroes and villains are part of Scotland's real history, typical techniques in the Kailyard tradition. On the other hand, Crockett uses the Bean cave to align Scotland with both the colonies of Africa and the underworld. Much of the imagery of Bean's cave features strongly throughout the century in other accounts of regional cannibalism so it is worth examining here briefly. The cave at Bennane is the Cimmerian den of darkness. Mounds, cairns, and barrows were associated with spirits and ogres in Celtic folklore and along the coast of Scotland caves fulfilled a similar role, featuring strongly in Scottish folklore (Holmes 38). Holmes finds particular evidence in Galloway of primitive people living in caves and a body of traditions that associates caves with the Underworld and ogres (38). Sawney's cave certainly fits in with this association. Indeed the legend states that he remained at large because nobody could conceive of humans living in such a 'lonesome' place of 'perpetual horror and darkness' (Nicholson

Historical 76). The reader is provided with a detailed description of Bean's cave:

> the limbs of human beings, shrunk and blackened, which hung in rows on either side of the cave....the reek drifted hither and thither, and made the rheum flow from them [his eyes] with its bitterness...these poor relics, which hung in rows from the roof of the cave like hams and black puddings set to dry in the smoke, were indeed no other than the parched arms and legs of men and women who had once walked the upper earth...fallen into the power of this hideous, inconceivable gang of monstrous man-eaters.
>
> (Crockett 245–246)

This trope of the regional cannibal's lair being underground, dark, dank, and solitary became a common feature in the twentieth century's horror texts. Basements, mine shafts, and abandoned houses provide claustrophobic and gloomy settings for horror texts. Victor Sage notes how the horror tradition draws strongly upon the metaphor of the isolated house. He explores how Christian iconography commonly represents the body metaphorically as the house of the soul and examines how anxieties about imprisonment and suffocation suggest fear of imprisonment in the dark body, that is the lair or isolated house in the horror tradition represents the dungeon of a sinful and guilty body (Sage *Horror* 3–6). The fact that Bean's home is a cave has two significant points. Firstly, it is a cave by the sea, which makes it difficult to access, affording the clan secrecy, but it also places it on the literal border of Scotland. The Galloway coast was a popular point for migration to and from Ireland. Thus, not only is this regional in the sense that it is Scotland rather than England, it is also Galloway rather than Edinburgh, and the coast rather than the central farmlands or small towns. It is quite literally on the edge. Secondly, the cave is a traditional image of the underworld, particularly in Celtic mythology. MacKillop explains that the cave in Celtic mythology is often the realm of the fairy or the route to the Otherworld and is inhabited by mischievous creatures (MacKillop 82). He cites the *ciuthach* or *ciudach*, a cave-dwelling spirit in Scottish and Irish folklore which is more monstrous in later stories (89) and *buggane*, a mischievous shape-shifter in Manx folklore with a mane of black hair that chases and frightens people (63), as creatures that live in caves. Crockett uses this tradition to great effect, creating some of his most memorable scenes of horror by describing the dank hole by the sea. The sense of evil in the cave is often portrayed as a smell or aura,

nothing tangible but entirely undeniable: 'Yet there was something –
we knew not what – about the inner cavern which took us all by the
throat . . . we had hardly been in this place longer than a few moments
when a strangely persistent and pervading smell began to impress us
with the deadliest loathing' (Crockett 239). Reminiscent of the colo-
nial encounters with the jungle (*Heart of Darkness*) or the desert (*King
Solomon's Mines*), or underground mazes (*She*), or of consuming terror
such as the black hole in Bram Stoker's *Lair of the White Worm* (1911)
in which the hole is also a connection to the past, Bean's cave geo-
graphically and psychologically challenges those who enter. It is an
'abode of death . . . darkness and black un-Christian deeds . . . silent and
eerie beyond telling' (242–243). In the cave Crockett has the Bean clan
become much more like the trope of colonial savages, it is here their
language is muffled to incoherence by the damp walls, here they hang
hanks of human meat, and paint and stain themselves like demons, leap
and dance through fire (284–285), and breed their degeneracy. Sawney's
cave will resurface in similar guises in the horror films of 1960s America,
geographically a long way off from the Galloway coast, and yet many
of the inhabitants are of Scottish immigrant background and these films
are thematically close to the legend of the Scottish cannibal.

In the early versions of the legend, Bean figures as a regional threat
and a primitive evil. In Nicholson's account Bean is the nightmare Scot
for English readers. Politically, religiously, and culturally other he is an
easy target for vilification and met a demand in the market for tales
of Scottish barbarity. In Crockett's Kailyard prose, a story of adventure
and intrigue in the Highlands is sold to a market eager for tales of the
oddities of Scottish life. His use of the cannibal figure highlights an
anachronistic and declining Celtic community in Scotland, doomed to
destruction if it does not adapt to modern, urban Scotland. In the late
nineteenth and early twentieth century writers such as realist poet John
Davidson and James Thomson, who wrote the pessimistic *City of Dread-
ful Night* (1874), addressed Scotland's darker aspects more seriously and
realistically. They worked to redress the easy clichés of the Kailyard tradi-
tion (Riach xxi). Sawney Bean did not feature in new material until the
latter part of the twentieth century when he resurfaced in the theatre
and in popular horror.

The Sawney Bean legend was revived in 1969 in a play titled *Sawney
Bean* which was performed in Edinburgh. Written by English writers
Robert Nye and Bill Watson the play was published in 1970. It attempts
to give Sawney emotion and thought processes previously not a part of
the legend. Still a cannibal, still the leader of an incestuous family, and
still living in a cave beside the sea, Bean has been updated from a raw

brute to a brute with a heart. In Act 2 Scene 1 Bean scolds his family for not realizing the importance of what they are eating. He, as the killer, is the last thing his victims see and therefore seems to ingest more than just meat, he ingests their final words and fears:

> You don't know what you're eating, but I know. I knew his flesh when its tongue still spoke. Its ears heard me speak. Its eyes saw me come. Its nose smelt its own fear. You just eat flesh, Solomon, all of you just eat flesh, but Sawney eats more than that.
>
> <div align="right">(Nye & Watson 45)</div>

The play imbues cannibalism with more mystery than savagery. Bean's son Solomon wonders about eating his father, escaping with his mother as his lover, and questions the consequences of ingesting such strength:

> It will be a long meal, so I will put him down in salt, the biggest bits. First I shall have the heart and then the liver. What will they taste of? Will they taste different? Where will the questions be? He thinks they are in his blood, I think they are in the bone, juicy in the marrow, questions to suck and pry out with my tongue. And then what will it be like with him in me . . . taking my Lila with me with his hunger and mine. (83)

The sense of being strong and giant-like after eating his father has obvious Freudian elements. Nye and Watson take the Oedipus complex and push it through to cannibalism. Ultimately, Solomon does not eat his father but he does reject him and his authority. His urge to leave the cave of his childhood is symbolic, perhaps, of the rejection of traditions and family in an embrace of modernity and global relations. The threat of Solomon and Sawney moving to where 'we' live is an extension of this. Not content on the coast, the Beans want to move across the land, the savagery of the regional caves on Scottish coasts is on the move in the decades years after Crockett's novel.

The Bloody Man

Mick Lewis, an English horror writer, who has turned his hand to Dr Who stories (*Dr Who: Rags*, 2001, and *Dr. Who: Combat Rock*, 2002), has a taste for gore and bloody violence. Interestingly, reader reviews of the latter Dr Who story compare it to Italian cannibal films as Lewis sets his adventure in a jungle peopled by mummies and cannibals (amazon.co.uk). Lewis's *Bloody Man* (1999) proves the Sawney Bean legend will not be put to bed. Lewis places his end of the

twentieth-century Bean tale in Bristol and Birmingham, but staying true to his source, includes a bus tour to the Scottish coast. The premise of the book is that a young runaway finds Sawney's skull in a cave in Scotland and the skull speaks to him and persuades him to commit acts of murderous horror. The possibility of this boy being the descendant of Sawney is hinted at. This boy grows up to become a nightclub owner and serial killer named Bane, as a rather poor anagram and imitation of his ancestor. Bane makes it his mission to torment his brother Jack to such terror in the hope that Jack will accept his monstrous heritage and start a new cannibal clan in the cave with Bane and his demonic girlfriend. The novel tries to suggest that evil such as Sawney Bean's does not die away but lives on through generations, hidden in more everyday crimes such as child abuse and bullying before surfacing in full-blown murder, torture, and cannibalism.

Replete with horror clichés and gaining much of its force from the already famous legend, *The Bloody Man* falls short of offering any new insights to the theme of the regional cannibal. Obviously aware of the genre and history of cannibal culture Lewis name drops some cannibal big hitters: 'Jack spotted *Cannibal Holocaust* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* flickering in a couple of dark crannies and marvelled at Bane's audacity. Many of the pub's customers were marvelling too. Hardly believing their eyes as they followed the onscreen carnage and obscenity' (Lewis *Bloody* 23–24). Lewis tries to differentiate between the fictional carnage of these films and the real carnage of Sawney Bean and Jack the Ripper in an attempt to align his novel with the latter, a real tale of atrocity. By including the history of Bean in his novel, Lewis questions how much horror is real or true. His narrator claims the Sawney Bean myth is true, yet this is far from a certainty. The demand for horror, slasher, and snuff movies is compared with the demand for details of real-life crimes and how these real crimes become the work of fiction:

> The strangest thing of all is that the deeds of Sawney have been all but forgotten by modern man, relegated to the status of an atavistic, fireside myth ... the atrocities committed by more contemporary icons such as Jack the Ripper pale into insignificance in comparison. Perhaps the mind of civilised man is capable only of assimilating horror in moderation .... The exploits of Red Jack are shuddered at gleefully today ... the Whitechapel murderer elevated more to the position of anti-hero than psychopath as the years go by. But Sawney Bean? Perhaps we'd rather forget'. (165–166)

Lewis is determined we will not forget. He rewrites part of the Sawney tale within his own novel, adding gory details to suit the mood of his work. He pays particular attention to Black Agnes, Sawney's wife, who squats and drools over a feast of human flesh (166) and spit roasts a young boy's head: 'the skin popped and blistered…fat spat on the fire…the hag watched the head cook until the eyes burst like grapes' (168–169). By adding these details Lewis re-fictionalizes the Bean legend and his work is more akin to *The Grey Man*, in that it explores general themes by using the Scottish cannibal as foundation character spewing evil from his cave for hundreds of years.

Set for the most part in Bristol, the novel alludes to social themes such as isolation in the city, economically depressed neighbourhoods, and juvenile delinquency. All of these themes feed the need for excitement, often found in horror. Most of the characters become involved with Bane via their own boredom and desire for something deeper than mundane jobs and loneliness. However, within this city tale is the lurking shadows of the Scottish cave. It colours the entire novel and is the location for the, supposedly climactic, closing scene. It is in this cave that Bean's skull lies emanating horror and it is in this cave that Jack becomes the killer his bloodline tells him he is. Thus, a hundred years after *The Grey Man* and some three or four hundred years after the original legend, the Scottish coast is still a source of pain and darkness.

Despite Lewis's attempt to revitalize the Bean legend, and persuade the reader of the darkness emanating from Scottish wilderness, *The Bloody Man* is somewhat irrelevant and repetitive. As with nineteenth-century colonial fiction, regional Gothic fiction has changed location and relevancy. The function of colonial adventure fiction was the bolstering of national pride and claiming evolutionary superiority. As I explained in Part I, when this was no longer necessary or appropriate, the colonial cannibal disappeared from popular literature. Likewise, it is no longer relevant or politically correct to figure the Celtic fringes as wild hideouts for barbarous cannibals. With economic migration from these fringes to the cities, the focus on British savagery turned to the slums of expanding cities and the regional cannibal became a somewhat redundant figure in British fiction. In America, however, there was a new culture of regional othering. Starting in Scotland, Bean's crimes migrated with the Ulster Scots to America where they would be reapplied to a new underclass: the hillbillies. Apart from Lewis's novel, the Bean play, and reprints of Nicholson's and Crockett's versions, no new versions of the Sawney Bean tale were forthcoming until the middle of the twentieth century when the savage Scotsman was given a new lease of life across the waters

in America when an all-too-real killer was arrested for macabre crimes; America's infamous man-eater from the sticks is convicted serial killer Ed Gein. The Bean legend was bolstered and revitalized as American popular culture used the grisly Scottish legend to explore the regional hillbillies of the twentieth century, descendants of Scottish immigrants. Both cannibals living at the edges of 'civilized' society, these two men figured in popular culture throughout the century. First I will explain why the Bean legend found such a fertile reception in America before moving to the specifics of the Gein case.

5
Hillbilly Highway – The American Regional Cannibal

From *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* to *The Hills Have Eyes*, Originals and Remakes

In Britain, as I have argued, the regional Other was a political threat as well as supposedly economically and culturally backward. In American culture the encounter with the rural featured as the overcoming of the wilderness and the native American, the constant pushing back of the frontier so that visions of the frontier have been, and continue to be, central to notions of the Self. As the editors of *Frontier Gothic* argue, the frontier setting continues to inspire both 'visionary aspirations for change' linked to kinship with the 'Spirit of the Land', as well as the 'terrifying emotional excesses of the Gothic'. The source of this terror at the frontier is, they believe, a symbol of the desolation wrought by progress, the psychological deprivation of alienation, and the 'threatening but revolutionary possibilities that appear when civilized conventions are left behind' (Mogan et al. 22–23). Allan Lloyd Smith too looks at the frontier as a crucial element in the American Gothic. The labyrinthine wilderness of, for example, Brockden Brown's landscape in *Edgar Huntley* (1799), replaces the winding passageways and dungeons of the European Gothic, the cave replacing the castle (Lloyd Smith 79). Therefore, instead of the closed, walled spaces peopled by ghosts and memories in the old world, the locus of fear in the new world was the land itself in its vastness and emptiness. Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) and Poe's *Arthur Gordyn Pym* (1838) continue this notion of battling with the frontier by portraying the adventure of pushing beyond the boundaries of the earth. Adventures at sea and to the edges of the world push the reader over the edge of the frontier. In this culture there is a fear and a fascination with the land, haunted by native Americans yet also promising wealth. Lloyd Smith terms it a 'terror of the land itself, its emptiness, its implacability; simply a sense of its vast, lonely, and possibly hostile space' (Smith 93).

Many contemporary writers and film-makers use Gothic images of the haunted house transformed into abandoned farmhouses, and the forest journey transformed into the road trip beyond the city limits. The point is that rural America, like the forests of Europe, is a place where the 'rules of civilization' do not apply, hence it is like a foreign space. People from the city are 'people like us', people from the country, the rural Other, are 'not like us' (Clover 124). They are shown as beyond the reaches of social law and hygiene. What is threatening about the 'little incivilities' is the larger incivility of which they are 'surface symptoms'. In horror, Clover points out, 'the man who does not take care of his teeth is obviously a man who can . . . plunder, rape, murder . . . and/or eat human flesh' (126).

   Because of these fears, frontier settings are the site of much denigration in American culture and this denigration has provided one of the most pervasive images in American iconography: the hillbilly or redneck. In America the hillbilly embodies economic and racial fears, as well as political hangovers from the civil war. The economic othering is one of the strongest elements of the imaging of the American regional Other: 'What white middle America loathes these days are poor and poorish people, especially the kind who look and sound like they just might live in a house trailer . . . the new terms of discrimination are all economic' (Bageant 103). Anthony Harkins explores the cultural history of the hillbilly:

> Consistently used by middle class economic interests to deni-
> grate working class southern whites . . . and to define the benefits of
> advanced civilization through negative counter-example, the term
> and idea have also been used to challenge the generally unquestioned
> acceptance and legitimacy of 'modernity' and 'progress' . . . Uniquely
> positioned as white 'other', a construction both within and beyond
> the confines of American 'whiteness' the hillbilly has also been at the
> heart of struggles over American racial identity and hierarchy.
>
> (Harkins *Hillbilly* 4)

The stereotypes of the hillbilly position him as socially and economically backward, drunken, promiscuous, dirty, and inbred. Geographically, he lives in the backwoods or the trailer parks, he occupies the 'rough edges of the landscape and economy' (5). Thus he is both ideologically and geographically other. Inundated with clichéd depictions of the hillbilly, many Americans see the Appalachian mountains as the symbolic divide between Northern 'civilized' Americans and their poor cousins living in perceived squalor and primitiveness in locations

such as Texas, Virginia, and Mississippi. In the mid-twentieth century, English historian Arnold Toynbee described the modern Appalachian as having 'gone downhill in a most disconcerting fashion. In fact, the Appalachian "mountain people" of today are no better than barbarians. They have relapsed into illiteracy and witchcraft' (Toynbee 149). The hillbilly, rather than evoke positive conceptions of rural life, evokes images of the rural as violent and carnal, and, quite often, cannibalistic. In American popular culture the motif of the domestic but regional cannibal is increasingly commonplace in genres from horror movies such as *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Dir. Hooper 1974) to popular fiction like Fannie Flagg's *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1987). The frontier that was once to be found in far-flung Caribbean islands, South America, or Africa has moved to the Appalachians. In the same way that the cannibal of colonial times was located in the darkness of Africa, the cannibal serial killers of contemporary culture are located in the darkness of dysfunctional families or inbred farmsteads.

It is possible to trace the history of the hillbilly in America's history and popular media and culture. Joe Bageant, writing in *Deer Hunting with Jesus* (2007), traces the hillbillies back to the migration of Scots and Ulster Scots seeking wealth in the eighteenth century. He describes these migrants as fanatically religious and war loving. They brought cultural values that govern the political emotions of millions of Americans to this day. Bageant argues that King James I has led to 'Jerry Falwell, Ian Paisley, George W. Bush, the Oklahoma bombings, *and* the red state – blue state electoral map' (Bageant 202). While perhaps far reaching and slightly exaggerated, Bageant's argument does highlight the similarities between the image of the eighteenth-century Scots, who had an abundance of guns and whiskey, used Indians for target practice, and hated the government, and the contemporary redneck. The homeland of these original Borderers was a bleak land of famine with the only constant being warfare with England along the shifting border. From being on the border of England these men found themselves on the borders of Western civilization 'along the frontiers of Pennsylvania' (212). In the frontier stories of the early nineteenth century there was still a sense of excitement and adventure and these tough men who forged passes in the mountains were not vilified. Jack E. Weller, in his book *Yesterday's People* (1965), notes how initially the mountaineers were romanticized for their quaintness, and the mountaineer emerges from short stories or magazine articles a 'shoddily clad knight', a 'backward nobleman' (Weller xiv). Tales of Daniel Boone, rugged adventurer, were typical of this time and he was the inspiration to move the frontier further west. Accounts of his adventures led to him becoming

an American icon, the archetypal American frontiersman (Evans et al. 'Intro') in such adventures as *The Last of the Mohicans* (James Fenimore Cooper 1826) based on an account of Boone's rescue of his kidnapped daughter.

The civil war saw the Appalachian people torn between staying loyal to the Union and fighting on the side of their Southern brothers. It could be said that the civil war started in Appalachia, with John Brown's raid in 1859 on the US Armoury and Arsenal at Harpers Ferry in West Virginia. In all, dozens of battles and countless skirmishes were fought in Appalachia during the War. Both the Union and Confederate forces drew more than one hundred thousand Appalachian soldiers to the conflict, with the South holding a considerable edge in recruits (Evans et al "Intro"). Bageant describes the Appalachians as dying to protect slavery on behalf of elite plantation owners. This legacy of the Appalachians as racist carried through from the civil war to the civil rights movement. During the Jim Crow era, a period of over 60 years when laws aimed at keeping black Americans separate from white Americans were imposed, the Virginia Borderers were indispensable in 'keeping the niggers down' (Bageant 214). The accusation of racism is one that has lingered on through the twentieth century and I will look at it more closely shortly.

After the civil war industrialists coming to the region blamed backward culture for the lack of development. Family feuds such as the notorious Hatfield and McCoy feud in the 1870s and '80s sent images of 'violent, backward mountain men roaring across newspaper headlines' (Geller 21). Before the 1880s these people were country bumpkins but romantic. After the 1880s they were obstructionist, violent, and backward, according to industrialists and investors. In *Yesterday's People* Weller records that for trifling sums large tracts of land and immense stores of gas, petroleum, and coal passed into the hands of capitalists from New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. To the speculators the mountain people were 'geese to be plucked' (xv). In his *Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area* (1963), Harry M. Caudill aligns the rape of the Appalachian resources with colonialism: 'For all practical purposes the plateau has long constituted a colonial appendage of the industrial East and Middle West, rather than an integral part of the nation generally' (Caudill 325). Jerry Wayne Williamson points out that the hillbilly does not only live in the hills but in the economic rough edges, a renegade of capitalism, a left-behind remnant (Williamson ix). The first printing of the word 'hillbilly' is found in 1900 in the *New York Journal*: 'A Hill-billy is a free and untramelled white

citizen of Alabama, who lives in the hills, has no means to speak of, dresses as he can, talks as he pleases, drinks whiskey when he gets it, and fires off his revolver as his fancy takes him' (qtd. in Williamson 37). Williamson notes the emphasis on the hillbilly as a white citizen and the twin vices of whiskey and revolvers which were traditionally associated with Indians and blacks (37). He traces the use of the word hillbilly over the next few years and finds it always refers to people on the poor rural economic fringes who refuse to take part in a modern twentieth century (37). In 1915 the word hillbilly made its first appearance in the movies in *Billie – the Hill-billy* (Dir. MacMacken), in which a city man comes across a mountaineer's cabin, is mistaken for a long lost son, falls in love with the mountaineer's daughter, and 'rescues' her from the tyranny and squalor of her father's home. The father is inhuman and uncivilized and, Williamson notes, the breach of hospitality – carrying off the daughter – is applauded because the father is so awful (38).

Already economically backward and refusing to develop the land according to investors' wishes, the economic hardships of the Depression and World Wars would see the hillbillies become migrants and misfits in the cities. In the Great Depression and after the Second World War the Appalachians and the South became the places to leave as opportunities dried up. The 'hillbilly highway' was a term used to describe the mass migration on Route 23 north to Columbus and Detroit (Geller 22). The stereotype of the rural poor abounded at this time. John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) explored the desperation of 'Okies' (farming people from the Dust Bowl of the South) as they migrated from farmsteads destroyed by drought in search of work on the West Coast. Steinbeck's criticism of the treatment of the migrants at the hands of western farm managers highlighted the prejudice which created hierarchies between those from the south and those from the West Coast. Economic migration from the south led to ghettoes of white poor people in the cities of the mid-West, both unassimilable and unwanted by the middle-class white population. Lewis Killian in his book *White Southerners* (1985) cites a survey conducted by Wayne University in 1951 in which Detroit residents were asked about undesirables in their city. The results were: criminals 26%, poor southern whites 21%, transients/drifters 18%, negroes 13%, and foreigners 6% (Killian *White* 98). Unemployment and petty crime led to headlines such as 'A Disgrace to Their Race?' in *Harper's Magazine* in 1958 (Votaw 67) and articles such as 'Down from the Hills and into the Slums' by James Maxwell in *The Reporter* in 1956 in which he claimed the moral standards of hillbillies would 'shame an alley cat' (in Killian 99). The *Chicago Sunday Tribune*

likened the migration of southerners to a plague of locusts (in Harkins 177). This lack of moral standards led to accusations of incest, knife fighting, alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and general filth. These articles suggested that the greatest concern about these migrants was not their poverty or social customs but that they were impoverished *whites.* Poverty, laziness, drunkenness, and violence had long been associated with black people, and northern whites, as Harkins argues, now found such racial demarcations threatened by what they saw as similar habits among 'Protestant Anglo-Saxons living in (in a racially freighted label) "hillbilly jungles" ' (Harkins 177).

In the early 1960s there was a rise in the awareness of poverty in the USA. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson attempted a 'War on Poverty'. Kennedy's proposals were carried out by Johnson. The Appalachian region was considered rich in natural resources but lacking in industrial or agricultural opportunities, and these economic failings were believed to be the reason for the poverty of the mountain people (Herzog 205). In Johnson's 'Great Society' initiatives the government funded schools, college loans, medical care, and 'cut poverty in half' (Bageant 30–31). However, in many ways this programme perpetuated the image of raggedy children and underdeveloped communities. Caudill describes the Appalachians at this time as both economically and emotionally depressed, a listless, hopeless region (Caudill 325). Williamson argues that, as 'the idiot of capitalism', the hillbilly serves as a warning 'enjoining us to avoid the rocky rural edges outside the grasp of urban economy' (Williamson 27). David Bell traces the changes in the depiction of small town America in popular culture alongside economic changes:

> From the 1950s on small towns were represented as suffocating and repressive. Upheavals in the 1960s led to small towns and the countryside being portrayed as sites of contestation and decay. Finally the narrative of small-town movies … collapses into nostalgia, paranoia, and revenge. These societies are malignant, at a dead end, and viewed in the grip of their own death throes.
>
> (Bell 106)

The media imaged the Appalachian people as figures ranging from the barbaric to apathetic people living in squalor with no hope for the future (Herzog 208). Caudill criticizes the mining industry in the Appalachians for not putting the profits back into the region. He sees the area stripped of resources, the people left in poverty, and the backers of the mines

becoming rich in the north east and mid west of the country. He sees the hunger, poverty, and illiteracy of the Appalachian people as deplorable and damnable: 'A million Americans in the southern Appalachians live today [1960s] in conditions of squalor, ignorance, and ill health . . . 19% of the population of the Southern mountain region can neither read nor write' (Caudill xi).

The media hillbilly thrived between the 1930s and 1960s during these times of economic and social collapse. Examples include comic strip regulars Snuffy Smith and Lil' Abner in the 1930s. Ma and Pa Kettle, who first appeared in Betty MacDonald's book *The Egg and I* (1945), featured in a Hollywood production in 1947 and were popular enough to inspire a series of movies. Popular television shows such as *The Real McCoys* (ABC 1957–1962), *The Andy Griffith Show* (CBS 1960–1968), and *The Beverly Hillbillies* (CBS, 1962–1971) reflected a national media fascination with this 'white other'. *The Real McCoys* offered a rosier version of Steinbeck's tale of migration. It was hugely successful and inspired television networks to make more rural-folk serials (Harkins 181). The Clampett family in *The Beverly Hillbillies* were a typical rural family who found oil, struck it rich, and moved to Beverly Hills where they reside in a mansion but continue to wear overalls and dungarees. The show was hugely popular, remaining in the top ten rated shows in its nine-year showing. While, on the one hand, the show makes all the usual easy jokes about the hillbillies' backwardness and stupidity, on the other hand, it gently pokes fun at the life of leisure in Beverly Hills and celebrates the Southern family's strong sense of kinship and tradition. Granny's tenaciousness and Jed's loyalty and honesty are in stark contrast to those outside the family who are, in Harkins' terms 'money-grubbers, snobs, con artists, and sycophants' (195).

Harkins argues that these comedies served as a 'palliative' for the disturbing images of underfed dirty children and 'struggling shack dwellers' in the news media. These upbeat folk lessened the sense of deep failure in the American economic system (186). Furthermore, they suggested that the poverty experienced by the southerners was inevitable as they were caught in a cycle of degeneracy. The rediscovery of the Appalachians alongside the War on Poverty made these programmes resonate with the American public. By presenting poverty as a self-imposed lifestyle rather than the direct result of 'economic exploitation or political corruption, these shows minimized the plight of many southern mountain folk . . . and weakened public sentiment for emergency federal intervention and assistance' (186). By extension, Paul Cullum argues, the show became in certain quarters something

of a public embarrassment as well, 'emblematic of the nation's having slipped another notch into pandering anti-intellectualism – a pervasive "bubbling crude" which stained all in its wake'. Yet these comic depictions displayed a reluctance by the media to deal realistically with rising class and race issues. By the 1970s it seemed the comic hillbilly had run its course. The War on Poverty was billed as a disastrous waste of money and the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement called for either more serious reflection on race issues or much stronger escapism in the form of fantasies (Harkins 202).

The racial element of the culture of the hillbilly is an interesting one. Bageant notes how at the end of the twentieth century, rednecks are ready to fight anyone who is different: 'Sent to Iraq or Afghanistan, most of us, given the nod and enough stress, seem capable of torturing "the other" as mindlessly as a cat plays with a mouse' (Bageant 218–219). Indeed while other similar stereotypes of racial or ethnic groups have become unacceptable, the degenerate redneck continues to feature on the American cultural stage. This is an issue close to writer Jim Goad's heart. In *The Redneck Manifesto* (1998) he vociferously condemns the pervasiveness of the depictions of 'hicks and hayseeds and hillbillies and crackers and trailer scum' (Goad 16). While coming across as slightly paranoid, Goad does raise some interesting points. He describes the trailer park as the media's cultural toilet, 'the only acceptable place to dump one's racist inclinations' (16), and the redneck as mainstream's cultural weirdo, the watched rather than the watcher (76), hence shows like *Jerry Springer* (Dir. Klazura, 1991 to present). More than just weird, however, the second half of the twentieth century has seen the redneck become a violent threatening figure, a 'swamp animal who bite[s] you if you come to close' (98). Since the mid-1950s the portrayal of the south has changed from a comic, patronizing one to a sinister, terrifying one.

The likes of Ma and Pa Kettle were left behind for films such as *Deliverance* (Dir. Boorman 1972) as rural areas became 'hearts of darkness' and the site of evil. *Deliverance*, Harkins claims, is the single most influential film of the modern era in shaping attitudes to the American rural figure. Its portrayal of degenerate, imbecilic, sexually voracious predators bred fear into generations of Americans (Harkins 206). The book on which the film is based (*Deliverance* James Dickey 1970) included much praise for the knowledge, kinship, and traditions of the mountain men and questioned middle-class urban values and the thoughtless exploitation of the land. Boorman's movie includes a brief voice-over at the opening credits to this effect but the rest of the movie emphasizes the social devolution of the rural people and their

utter separation from civilization (Harkins 208). I will shortly examine a number of American horror movies that join *Deliverance* in imaging the hillbilly as violent, dangerous, and cannibalistic. Goad argues that the change from comic to sinister hillbillies occurred at a time, the 60s and 70s, when it was politically incorrect to make fun of black people and so 'America poured all of its hate and evil down the redneck's red throat' (Goad 97). In 2002, Allison Graham in *Framing the South: Hollywood, Television, and Race During the Civil Rights Struggle* (2001 13) notes how Hollywood alluded to racial tensions by using the redneck as a southern criminal who would ultimately bend to civilized law or meet severe punishment in films such as *In the Heat of the Night* (Dir. Norman Jewison, 1967) and *Mississippi Burning* (Dir. Parker, 1988) (Graham *Framing* 13). No longer the noble agrarian, the white southerner was used as a figurative, noose-wielding racist, a whipping boy to display American inclusiveness: 'The question of the southern male's ability and willingness to be reeducated informed political, social, and artistic discourse throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, with the hillbilly figure exploited as an object lesson in regional and class limitations' (14–16). In 1955, two Mississippi white men, J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant, went on trial for the murder of a 14-year-old black boy. It was the first southern race story to be covered by national television, and *Jet* magazine published a photograph of the child's mutilated and decomposed body. Milam and Bryant were acquitted by an all-white jury and ensured global condemnation of Mississippi racism. As a result, congressmen from New York and Michigan criticized Mississippi and called for a boycott of its products (118). There was growing public discomfort with the intractable white, racist southerner, and these southerners were often depicted as repellent figures with real-life crimes influencing popular culture.

A final interesting point in relation to this discussion on the redneck in American culture is the uncomfortable sense of the Other/Self, the home/foreign reflecting each other. As Goad puts it in his typically graphic terms, 'in giving fangs to rednecks, Americans have defanged all the white-barbarian tendencies they fear within themselves' (Goad 100). Indeed, many of the fundamentalists, popular in the southern states, figure liberals as criminals and cannibals. In their figuring, Bageant notes: 'The secretary general of the United Nations is an Antichrist and the "Clinton crime family" deals in cocaine and is linked to the Gambino family. In these [mind] movies abortion doctors are microwaving and eating foetuses' (Bageant 184). Hillbilly culture typically reverses the images found in the mainstream so in the *Left Behind*

series (LaHaye & Jenkins, 1995–2007) it is white, liberal, cosmopolitans who turn out to be harbouring the Antichrist, while in the writings of neo-Nazi hill men, the East and West coast intellectuals are on a mission of cultural genocide. The regions mirror back the Gothic imagery of the centre. It is a form of writing back, yet, not all forms of writing back are to be celebrated. Williamson too sees the hillbilly as a mirror to the American man:

> Like most mirrors he can flatter, frighten, and humiliate. As a rough-and-ready frontiersman, he can be made to compliment American men. He can also terrify. Put him in the same woods, but make him repulsively savage, a monster of nature, and he now mirrors the undeniable possibility in American manhood. In other words, we want to be him and we want to flee him.
>
> (Williamson 2)

Our secret dread is that the dark, drunken hillbilly is no Other, but us (6). This a theme which I believe becomes stronger in the latter decades of the twentieth century. In earlier redneck horror movies such as the original *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* or *The Hills Have Eyes* (Dir. Craven 1977) the action ends abruptly with the escape of the last man or girl standing. However, in later films such as the remake of *The Hills Have Eyes* (Dir. Aja 2006) the action continues to include the violent killings of the rednecks, both as a means of escape/self-defence and as acts of revenge. The gory violence of the later films is undertaken as much by the 'good' visitors as it is by the 'villainous' locals, raising questions about who the real savages are. This is a major issue in Wes Craven's entire oeuvre and is encoded in the original movies and made more explicit in the remakes. This a crucial point in understanding the idea of unveiling the white cannibal. Although we see the othering of the hillbilly cannibal, the real horror of these texts is the creeping anxiety of similarity. I will examine this in more detail shortly but for now I will examine the figure of Ed Gein, the inspiration for much of the hillbilly horror in the second half of the twentieth century.

   A Wisconsin farmer, Ed Gein was convicted of two murders in 1957. Gein was arrested when the decapitated body of a local businesswoman was found in his home strung up by the heels and laid out like a slaughtered deer. Gein had furnished and decorated his home with various parts of the dead bodies he had exhumed from a nearby graveyard. Bell and Bardsely, writing on Gein, describe his farmhouse as a 'study in chaos' with 'junk and rotting garbage' everywhere and an overwhelming

stench of decay (Bell and Bardsely 1). The police discovered a 'death farm' (1) with a collection of body parts that included a belt decorated with nipples, a box of nine vaginas, several face masks 'replete with hair', chair seats composed of human flesh, some bowls made from skulls, a torso 'vest' with a cord either for hanging as a 'decoration or donning as apparel', a box of noses, and Bernice Worden's entrails 'wrapped in a suit jacket and her heart in a bag on the floor' (Sullivan Footnote 44). Social psychologists sought for ways to explain Gein's atrocities, labelling him a sexual psychopath (7). The consensus was that he sought a permanent replacement for his dead mother with whom he had had an abnormally close relationship (Bell and Bardsely 3). He peeled the skin from female bodies in an attempt to experience being in a powerful female body (4).

Gein's crimes led to worldwide fascination and he became the inspiration for Norman Bates in Robert Bloch's book *Psycho* (1959), the film of the same name (Dir. Hitchcock 1960), *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), and he is also used as a model for Jame Gumb in *Silence of the Lambs* (Harris 1988 and Dir. Demme 1991). Sullivan, exploring the figure of the transgendered serial killer, also credits Gein with inspiring *No Way to Treat a Lady* (Dir. Smight 1968)*, Three on a Meathook* (Girdler 1973), *Deranged* (Gillen and Ormsby 1974), and *Relentless* (Lemmo 1993). The morbid curiosity surrounding Gein is evident in such events as his car being sold for display at a country fair and his house becoming a tourist site (Bell and Bardsely 8). Within just a few days of Gein's arrest the national press descended on Plainfield, Wisconsin, and newspaper and magazine accounts of Gein, his crimes, and the possible motivations for his deviancy, abounded. Robert Bloch, living nearby, quickly wrote his story, *Psycho,* in which Gein becomes a deranged hotel keeper, Norman Bates. Bloch took a number of liberties with the Gein case, and many other reports were wildly inaccurate. *Life* magazine ran an eight-page pictorial with the headline 'House of Horror Stuns the Nation' two weeks after Gein's arrest and declared 'Gein wishes he were a woman' (qtd. in Sullivan). The fascination with Gein's sexual deviancy came at a time when transsexuality and gender change were being discussed in the psychiatric and legal spheres. The media reportage and fictitious accounts exaggerate Gein's fetishes beyond the facts and manage to construct him as monstrous. Sullivan argues that Gein and Norman Bates function as larger cultural symbols which reflect contemporary concerns about masculinity, motherhood, and sexual deviance (Sullivan), and therefore have captured the imagination of film-makers and novelists. In 2000 the movie *Ed Gein* or *In the Light of the Moon* (Dir. Parello 2000) also

used the angle of the strange mother–son relationship to explain Gein's crimes but attempts to tackle the Gein crimes in reality rather than as reimagined fiction. However, Picart and Frank argue that the film aims to explore the 'monster-behind-the-monster' of Hitchcock's *Psycho* and so uses 'stock representations of the abusive mother' at fault for her abused son (Picart and Frank 30). It is hard to disentangle the real Ed Gein from the fictitious works inspired by him. Picart and Frank point out that this movie about the real killer bears such resemblance to Hitchcock's *Psycho* that the figures collapse into one (31). The result is that the 'purportedly real portrait is obscured by prior renditions, resulting in the "real" Ed emerging as a caricature', and the original cannibalistic necrophile pales in comparison (32). Gein as an historic figure does not offer one stable interpretation but remains 'multiply interpretable' as cannibal, transvestite, fetishist, necrophile, mama's boy, and transsexual (Sullivan).

New studies of repression in middle America appeared with Michael Lesy's *Wisconsin Death Trip* (1973), a study of depression and poverty in Wisconsin, published in a time of renewed interest in the 'pathological element of American culture' (Sharrett 260). Lesy's conclusion about crimes such as Gein's is that they are generated by the frustration of a disenfranchised people who are alienated from economic power bases such as the East and West coast cities. This fragmented America leads to a vengeful social class. Gein easily became a reference point for hillbilly stereotypes and the presentation of cannibals as hillbillies in films such as *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* reinforcing an idea of redneck foreign Others. Images of his ramshackle farmhouse abounded as frequently as his smiling face. The dirty kitchen, grimy stove top, and eviscerated bodies visually fulfilled a stereotype of the unhygienic hillbilly who cannot keep house and who butchers meat within the home. In 1978 the comic book *Weird Trips 2* featured Gein on its cover in all his redneck cannibal glory. It has since become a collector's item.

The success of the redneck in the capacity of rural Other suggests that anxieties which are 'no longer expressible in ethnic or racial terms' have become projected onto what Clover terms a 'safe target': 'safe not only because it is (nominally) white, but because it is infinitely displaceable onto someone from the deeper South or the higher mountains or the further desert' (Clover 135). In horror, this rural Other is the violent cannibal beyond the edges of our cities. The films and texts I will now examine use both Sawney Bean and Ed Gein as their founding inspiration and explore the horror of the American regional Other.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre

With the continuous display of carnage in the media our responses have become atrophied, and it seems to me that film-makers feel there is a need to shock on a deeper level, combining visceral and intellectual terror. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* has few peers in its unrelenting exploitation of the modern suburbanite's fear of the rural space and backwoods people. The fear is explored here with panache and sheer intensity. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* is a seminal work which changed the face of horror cinema in a way comparable with the impact of *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* (Dir. Wiene 1920), Browning's *Dracula* (Dir. Browning 1931), Whale's *Frankenstein* (Dir. Whale 1931), *Psycho* (Dir. Hitchcock 1960)*, Night of the Living Dead* (Dir. Romero 1968), and *Halloween* (Carpenter 1978). It set the trend for a genre of slash horror films which continued the theme of fear of what is hidden beneath the familiar. Susan Hayward places horror movies into three categories: the unnatural (which includes vampires, ghosts, witchcraft); psychological horror (for example, *Psycho*); and massacre movies, in which she includes *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Hayward 184). The last two categories are a distinctly post-Second World War phenomenon. By the 1950s, mutilation, destruction, or disintegration of the human body was at the core of horror movies, conscious of the effect of real science on the body after witnessing the effects of atom bombs. In the 1960s there was a large degree of violence disseminated in the media. Phillips notes that American television became 'bloodier and more graphic than ever before', with images of napalm, war dead, political assassinations, and violent protests. These images, he feels, promoted a view that America was itself on the edge of 'a violent cultural civil war' (Phillips 89). By the late 1960s, exploitation movies were competing with escalating levels of sex and violence in mainstream features such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (Dir. Penn 1967) and *Midnight Cowboy* (Dir. Schlesinger 1969). In the midst of immense social shifts exploitation producers unleashed what Rick Worland terms, 'outrageous scenes of gore, sadism, and sexual violence' in often coldly ironic films that seemed to 'feed off the energy and fears of the times' as horror films of the 1970s seemed to be both a 'reaction to, and an assimilation of, the social traumas of the Vietnam era' (Worland 94).

During the 1980s and '90s this type of film has continued to express anxiety of the body as a diseased space. It is possible to read into these films a preoccupation with the politics of health and the fear of invasion

of the body. This kind of body horror is particularly associated with the films of David Cronenberg and David Lynch. Hayward believes the popularity and critical respectability of the horror movie rose with the impact of psychoanalysis on film theory. She argues that to have taken the genre seriously before the 1970s would have meant dealing with the suppression of the id, and the repression of unspeakable sexual and psychological desires. Until the psychological thriller of the 1960s the fear was external, the violence came from a monster or alien outside of the Self. With the rise of these psychological horror films came the suggestion that the monster is repressed within the Self and not external (Hayward 177). While Hayward may be exaggerating the divide between pre- and post-1970s horror, there is sense in her argument that beyond the thrill of being frightened by the violence is the attraction to the ambivalent location of abnormalities and the desire to see the interiority of the body. By the 1970s there was a sense that the hopes of the American dream had ended. Critic Kendall R. Phillips sees the tension in *Texas Chainsaw* as expressive of this sense that the American dream had not only failed but 'fallen apart' (Phillips 120).

Released in 1974, *Texas Chainsaw* tells the story of five young people driving to rural Texas to check the graveyard of their grandfather. En route they pick up a hitchhiker who slices his hand open and smears blood on their van. They stop at a road-side shop and gas station and are warned to be careful. They cannot fill up on gas because the pumps are empty but they have some barbecue for lunch. On arrival at the old family home two of the group, Pam and Kirk, go for a walk and hear the hum of a generator. On investigation they find an old house and enter only to be brutally murdered by a chainsaw-wielding masked giant known as Leatherface. Two more of the five meet a similar grisly end, leaving only Sally to fight against a family of cannibalistic butchers. She eventually, after much torture, escapes, leaving a furious Leatherface wielding his chainsaw in frustration, leading Carol Clover to comment that *Texas Chainsaw* is like *Little Red Riding Hood* without the woodsman, in which the girl saves herself (Clover in Simon *American Nightmare*), which is exactly what the girl does in the oldest version of the fairy story.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre engendered a new spate of variations and imitations. The film became famous for its totemic character Leatherface, so called because of his mask made from human skin. The style of film-making involved almost continuous screaming, which replaced any meaningful dialogue, massacre in sunshine-filled scenes, and shots of butchered human bodies. It was, and is, a cult classic, loved

by fans. 'Visually sophisticated' and 'harrowing', it attracted appreciative fans and vast profits (Worland 99). In *Horror*, Darryl Jones claims it is the best horror movie ever made. Critic Robin Wood said it was one of the few horror movies to invoke the 'authentic quality' of nightmare (Wood 93), and Worland calls it a 'disturbing work of cinematic virtuosity' (Worland 208). Elsewhere there were issues with the release, and the film was banned from a cinema release in Britain until 1999, though it was released on video. The film was considered too shocking, as much for what it suggested as for what it actually depicted, and for suggesting it all in the bright Texan sunshine. It was denounced by a chorus of feminists and cultural conservatives as 'vile and misogynistic pornography' (208). The film is not groundbreaking in the theme of murder and chase scenes but the real horror stems from the scenes of meat hooks, butcher-aprons, and ice-chests, the tools of the slaughter-house, used to kill humans. (The cannibalistic family are unemployed slaughterhouse workers, laid off because of an economic down turn.) The director, Tobe Hooper, experimented with shooting scenes in the bright Texas sun, rather than the dark gloom usually associated with horror movies. This heightens the fear of the normal being subverted. The holiday feeling is evoked by the bright sunshine and the Texas location, but is quickly lost and the apparently welcoming local worker and family home show their true faces as cannibalistic monsters. There is a tone of degradation throughout the film and Phillips notes how the narrative structure of the movie itself disintegrates into an 'increasingly psychotic series of grizzly tableaus' as editing becomes 'nonlinear with repetitive tightly focused shots of Sally's eyeballs and her mouth, which interrupt the narrative development' (Phillips 115). Worland too praises the narrative intensity which 'epitomised trends for chaotic violence' and offers little respite for victims or viewers (Worland 208).

Using the technique of the 'false document' *Texas Chainsaw* purports to be based on actual events, heightening the terror the viewer feels, much as *Cannibal Holocaust* and *Blair Witch Project* (Dir. Myrick & Sanchez 1999). Indeed, according to Hooper and scriptwriter Kim Henkel, the film was meant to comment on the 'moral schizophrenia of the Watergate era' (Sharrett 256) and the uncertainty as to who the 'good guys' were anymore. With the failed war in Vietnam and the shock of the Watergate scandal a 'legacy of paranoia' from the Nixon administration pervaded American culture with the knowledge that there was 'corruption at the heart of the establishment' (Phillips 108–109). The film was shot with 16 mm hand-held cameras which impart a cinema verité style and draw the audience into the 'reality' (121). The opening

of the film establishes it as a 'true' account by using the documentary-style voice and newspaper print telling of the desecration of graves, and, indeed, it is inspired by the true horrors of the Gein story. The doubling of the omniscient narrator as both spoken and textual increases the viewer's sense that they are watching horror bound to real history. The element of truth also applies because Gein *did* butcher human bodies and he *did* use body parts to furnish his home. Hooper was told about Ed Gein by a family member and the details of human skin as lampshades scared the 'hell out of' him and he was determined to 'work it out somehow' in his film (Hooper on Simon). The figure of Ed Gein haunts the movie, most clearly in the character Old Man. In the scene in which Old Man drives with Sally in his van, the glinting light and shadows moving across his face and low-angle shots impart, in Worland's term, 'a queasy menace' (Worland 216). A large part of *Texas Chainsaw*'s impact comes from the sense that these events could actually happen in this place, an effect sustained by 'documentary realism in settings and location overlaid with careful stylization' (213). Hooper claims Godzilla did not scare him, and that it is real people who scare him (Hooper on Simon). The everyday violence is terrifying and the underlying message of Hooper's film is, I believe, that economic frailties and realization of the American dream as false release horrific savage reactions where a home becomes a slaughterhouse.

Another element of the horror in *Texas Chainsaw* is the banality of it all. Ordinary, everyday themes such as family dinner, unemployment, housework, running out of petrol, are given sinister overtones. The film upsets the wholesome idea of the American family and plays gruesomely with the concept of the family meal. The Leatherface family act out a macabre parody of family life. Horror films since *Psycho,* Phillips argues, had continuously focused on the family as a cause of 'insanity and monstrousness'. In *Texas Chainsaw* all the members of the family have 'degraded into monsters' (Phillips 119). As I have outlined, in Gein's case much attention was paid to his mother as the cause of his insanity. The home values that had been admired in rural folk were now figured as overbearing and damaging. In *Texas Chainsaw* it is the absence of a morally stabilizing mother that sees the family devolve into what Phillips terms, 'the most animalistic and primitive version of patriarchal society: cannibals' (119). In *Texas Chainsaw* the homeliness and self-satisfaction of post-war America is replaced by gore and horror. As Halberstam argues: 'Monsters within postmodernism are already inside – the house, the body, the skin, the nation – and they work their way out. Accordingly, it is the human, the façade, of the normal, that

tends to be the place of terror within postmodern Gothic' (Halberstam 162). Home renovations, deciding what's for dinner, taking care of age-ing relatives are everyday activities transformed into sinister, violent, and disturbed practices.

The film also offers a prosaic materialistic rationale for its events: it is economic disenfranchisement that causes horror. In *Texas Chainsaw* cannibalism exemplifies the practices associated with the capitalist family – people have the right to live off other people. Cannibalism is a reaction to the ravages of capitalism; the Sawyer family are unemployed slaughterhouse workers and their reaction to being out of work is to use everything that comes their way and transform the banal into the 'grotesquely beautiful' (149). In 'Blood for Oil' Chuck Jackson examines the film in relation to the real economic crisis when the Texan oil fields dried up. In 1901 an oil well was discovered in Texas and incorporated by Gulf Oil in 1907. Gulf Oil became an industry giant over the next 70 years but the depletion of oil reserves in Texas in the early 1970s gen-erated a sense of national crisis as Americans became more dependent on Middle Eastern and South American oil. The energy crisis sparked by the Arab oil embargo of 1973 was a result of US support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War of 1973 (Phillips 110). Hooper's film, Jackson argues, makes visible how local economies and terrors participate in and are made possible by global capital. The national energy crisis haunts the film with eerie signs of oil or lack of it everywhere. For Jackson the most memorable example of oil-fuelled madness in the film is Leatherface's chainsaw:

> The loud rattle and hum of the generator matches with the buzz and splutter of the chainsaw, creating a Gothic soundtrack that drones on as the viewer witnesses the violence done to bodies . . . At the end of the movie, it is not so much the spectacle of blood that terrifies the viewer as Sally runs for her life . . . as much as it is the relent-less sound of the generator and the chainsaw, occasionally pierced by Sally's horrific screams.

The kids cannot find anyone to sell them petrol for their car. There-fore, the global oil market keeps them trapped in this hell; petrol is their escape and yet they cannot buy it. There is, though, unfortunately for the kids, enough fuel for the chainsaw. For Wood this chainsaw is the representation of misplaced energy: 'Ultimately, the most terrify-ing thing about the film is its total negativity; the repressed energies – represented most unforgettably by Leatherface and his continuously

whirring phallic chainsaw – are presented as irredeemably debased and distorted' (91).

The killers in *Texas Chainsaw* are inside the nation yet they are also outsiders. Unlike Norman Bates of *Psycho* or Patrick Bateman of *American Psycho* they have no normal side. We cannot see their faces very clearly, and they are viewed in glimpses or are masked: 'They may be recognisably human, but they are only marginally so, just as they are marginally visible – to their victims and to us, the spectators' (Clover 30). Identity is lost or taken in the movie, symbolically evidenced by Leatherface's mask of human skin.

Leatherface's mask is a prominent part of the film's iconography. Georges Bataille has pointed out that the mask can be a symbol of chaos and the breakdown of social order, and a denial of the ' "open face of human exchange" ' (qtd. in Sharrett 'Apocalypse' 271). Leatherface's mask emphasizes the transferability of skin and the ways in which identities are sewn into one another and evinces the idea of monstrosity and humanity residing in one place at the same time while reminding the viewer of the degradation of the flesh.

Leatherface's mask is one that heightens his savagery and hides any humanity beneath in a Fanon-esque *Black Skin, White Masks* manner. Fanon explains that beneath the mask of the black man is a 'zone of non-being, an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an utterly naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born' (Fanon *Black* 10). Leatherface wears a mask of horror but beneath it he is just another unemployed man without prospects or power. Even his rage and frustration are masked by the flapping dead skin. In his introduction to *Black Skin, White Masks,* Bhabha's comments on how Fanon's writing leads to a meditation on the dispossessed and dislocated and 'the condition of the marginalized, the alienated' (Bhabha xxiv). The *Texas Chainsaw* killers are invisible because they do not fit into society, we do not want to view them fully because to do so would be to grant them humanity and to look fully into the face of the alienated. Often the rural savages of popular horror are only marginally human and are often nameless or known by nicknames such as Leatherface and Hitchhiker/Chop Top in *The Texas Chainsaw* films, in much the same way as the natives of the colonial fiction discussed in Part I and Fanon's black man who is not a man (Fanon *Black* 10).

The slasher film demonstrates a fascination with flesh. Serial cannibal killing, as we find in *Texas Chainsaw*, is part of a fascination with mutilation and the destruction of the human form. When the hitchhiker in *Texas Chainsaw* slits open his hand Franklin seems intrigued by the

realization that all that lies between the 'visible, knowable outside of the body and its secret inside is one thin membrane' (Clover 32). Perhaps the fact that he himself is physically disabled is important here; he is fascinated by the workings of the human body and how easily those workings are broken. Clover points out that this 'thin membrane' is 'protected only by a collective taboo against its violation' and argues that it is no surprise that the rise of the slasher film is 'concomitant with the development of special effects and lessening of censorship to let us see with our own eyes the "opened" body' (32). Leatherface and his family, the Sawyers, invade the body through consuming it. The chainsaw, as a phallic weapon, invades the flesh and 'meatifies' it, until the body is no longer recognizable as body. A human tooth found on the Sawyer's property is the 'last fragment' of the presence of a human body, it represents 'identity and the loss of anything like identity' (Halberstam 150). It is a tiny fragment of the human body and its isolation suggests the utter destruction of the rest of the body. The skin is no longer a firm divide or boundary.

In fact, with the shots of wide open landscape there is a sense that boundaries have been obliterated in the film, apart, that is, from the doors in the Sawyer's home, particularly the screen door at the front of the house and the heavy door that leads into the cellar. The teenagers, who are about to be brutally murdered, each approach the porch and peer into the darkness behind the screen door. Halberstam notes how the camera 'plays insistently with the shot/reverse shot to emphasize both the presence of something/someone within the house and also the function of the door as "screen" and as a thin dividing line between inside and outside, innocence and violence' (150). The screen door is like the skin that is to be perforated. Once the teenagers pass through the screen door, they enter a world that, Halberstam notes, 'resembles nothing so much as the backside of a mirror' where 'values and bodies are inverted and turned inside out, as the Sawyer enterprise consumes them whole' (150). The door is like a cannibalistic mouth in the hillbilly house that consumes the teenagers. Once inside they become part of the house as its decorations and utensils; it is as if they are consumed by the house as they are literally eaten by its inhabitants. The Sawyer home, obviously inspired by Ed Gein's story, is decorated with bones and skins. Art director Robert Burns offers a vivid rendering of the shocking images of Gein's grimy home that had been in the media. The house is suffused with Gothic menace. It is both family home and slaughterhouse, showing how the line between work, leisure, violence, and domesticity has blurred. When Kirk enters the house, blood-red lighting and the sound

of pig squeals and grunts equate him with livestock. Worland describes the menace of the scene as chilling as Hooper largely shoots the killing in 'shadowy long shot', though a 'quick montage depicts Leatherface, in butcher's apron, emerging and raising a mallet to fell Kirk...as a fatalist chord resounds, Leatherface yanks Kirk inside the hallway and slams the metal sliding door that merges the industrial slaughterhouse with the domestic space' (Worland 219–220). When Pam enters the house the viewer is 'assaulted with the subjective shots from her point of view of the uncanny mise-en-scene of the house's décor' (Cherry 91). The décor of bones, fur, feather, skin all symbolize death. Pam falls over in this decay and vomits inciting reciprocal horror from the viewer. The family home as slaughterhouse is resonant of the attacks and critiques on the family that were taking place in the wider culture when the film first aired. The cellar also echoes the cave of Sawney Bean, underground, gloomy, and filled with gore and butcher's tools, it is the horrific extension of the redneck's dirty shack. The interior of the house shows how an edifice seems intact from a distance but is shown to be flawed when viewed up close. Thus beneath the surface of a family of butchers lies cannibalism. Hooper's film gives cannibalism a political dimension and a metaphoric value by using it as the extreme example of the inversion of values and cultural norms.

Finally, the setting. Texas in the American imagination is the rural south with 'its tragic dimensions of race and class' (Worland 211). Worland argues that Texas also 'symbolised the West itself, with all the accumulated cultural mythology from cattle drives and Indian fighting, to the Alamo' (211). He goes on to note that throughout the Vietnam era, many westerns inverted the genre's prior assumptions with the 'frontier disappearing under the advance of modernity, and violent struggle often only bringing fruitless carnage rather than a promise of individual or social renewal' (211). This is evident in John Ford's *The Searchers,* a seminal western in that it confronts the genre's racist legacy and offers a powerful interrogation of the entire mythology. The horror movie continues these revisions with even bleaker irony and violence. *Texas Chainsaw* invokes the beautiful, iconic landscape of westerns only to portray its 'menace and frightening decay' (211). The establishing shot of the film is of a dead armadillo. This shot heightens the sense of how hapless and doomed the young travellers are in that the shot emphasizes the tininess of the animal in the vast space and the vulnerability of living things in such a harsh landscape. It is, of course, also a particularly Texan image. Hitchhiker's introduction also makes a visual allusion to the western in a John Ford-esque composition: an extreme

long shot shows the vehicle standing on what Worland terms a 'ribbon of land' at the bottom of the frame. The rest of the frame is vast blue skies and puffy clouds. Brigid Cherry also comments on this shot in the open, flat landscape, where much of the vegetation is dry and brown. She notes that rural Texas in its vast openness is sublime. The characters are dwarfed by the sense of space as much as they are 'prefigured to be overwhelmed by death' in the near future (Cherry 90). However, as Worland argues, where such wide vistas in the western usually connote 'beauty of the landscape and its limitless possibilities', here it only furthers the sense of 'isolation and threat' (Worland 214).

Wood points out that it is no accident that the four most intense horror films of the 1970s, *Texas Chainsaw, Night of the Living Dead, Raw Meat* (Dir. Sherman, 1972), and *The Hills Have Eyes,* are all centred on cannibalism and on the specific notion of the present and future (the younger generation) being devoured by the past. The implication, he argues, is that ' "liberation" and "permissiveness" as defined within our culture are at once inadequate and too late – too feeble, too unaware, and too undirected to withstand the legacy of long repression' (Wood 91). However, as Worland points out, for a movie whose icons are 'a screaming woman impaled on a meat hook and a saw-waving maniac wearing a mask of human skin', the references to cannibalism are 'somewhat oblique' (Worland 217). When Sally runs to the supposed safety of the gas station, point of view shots of fat sizzling sausages roasting on a fire seem like 'veritable glimpses of Hell' and indirect confirmation of our 'darkest suspicions' (217). The fact that the unemployed slaughterhouse workers have literally substituted people for cattle registers slowly amid the fast pace and shrieking aggression. Cherry notes that the film does not always show explicitly detailed acts of bodily dismemberment, though the aesthetic of the film merely has to suggest the gruesome events for the viewer to feel the horror. The graphic scenes in the film, she comments, involve fast cutting, close-ups, and tight angles, when the screen is largely dark and the action takes place in pools of light (Cherry 91). In one memorable scene, an emaciated Grandpa is wheeled to the dinner table so that he can suck the blood from all-American Sally's finger as the others dine on human meat and taunt the traumatized girl, a primal image that for Worland connotes 'rape, oral sex, a baby suckling, and vampirism' (Worland 222). It also, I believe, connotes a Gothic notion of the past refusing to die and attempting to evacuate the present of power and agency. The Gothic is characterized by the lingering presence of the past, Leatherface and his family are atavistic threats. Grandpa is a literally decaying vestige of the past. Alternating

between long shots of the hellish dining room and Sally's entrapment within it and close ups of her slobbering tormentors from odd angles the scene is almost surreal and subjective. As Sally's panic rises Hooper often shoots the cannibals looking directly into the camera, increasing the sense of 'mutual threat' to Sally and the audience (222–223).

Phillips comments that the cannibal in *Texas Chainsaw* is a 'twisted example of humanity deformed by its own depravity. In this way, the bogeyman standing at the edge of civilized boundaries serves not only as a boundary marker but also as a mirror, warning us what we might become if we stray too far' (Phillips 133). As Williamson noted above, the hillbilly is a mirror of what the American male could become. After the real-life traumas of Vietnam and Watergate the sense was that behind Leatherface's mask could be anyone. Hooper's film does not quite go so far as to suggest this. At this stage, the cannibal remains rural Other. However, it is an idea that would become much more forceful in later decades when the cannibal moves again, from the rural fringes to the city, and his mask is less obvious.

The Hills Have Eyes

Wes Craven said he was inspired to make *Hills* by the Sawney Bean legend. He loved the idea of a feral family, killing people, and eating them. Ultimately, however, he wanted to explore the fact that, if you looked closely at the feral people, they were performing acts no worse than supposedly civilized people. He argues that 'the most civilised can be the most savage and the most savage can be the most civilised' (*Hills Interview*). He decided to make a film shot in the Mojave Desert exploring this idea and in 1977 made *The Hills Have Eyes*. Craven praised Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* as unmatched for sheer 'intensity and nihilism' (qtd. in Bowen) and *Hills* has a lot in common with Hooper's masterpiece. The plot concerns a holidaying family who develop a problem with their campervan and become stranded in an isolated rural setting, this time the desert rather than small-town Texas. They become prey to a family of inbred cannibals. All very familiar. However, as film reviewer Bowen argues, Craven's film is by no means a pale imitation and it 'confidently stands apart from its predecessor' (Bowen). Critic Rodowick, however, feels it only takes small steps in asking questions about bourgeois savagery and is not entirely a progressive text (Rodowick 355).

Set in the Nevada Desert, *Hills* sees a family from Cleveland driving across state to relocate after the father retires from the police force. The

family consist of Big Bob Carter, his wife Ethel, their teenage daughter and son, their married daughter, and her nerdy husband. In tow are an infant granddaughter and two German Shepherds. After the always necessary stop at the ironically named 'Fred's Oasis' roadside store, the family take an ill-advised detour to look at an abandoned silver mine that the retired parents have inherited. However, beneath the old mine is a disused nuclear testing site. The axle of their vehicle is broken and the family prepare to camp for the night in the desert while Dad goes to get help. Unbeknownst to the family they are being watched by another family who radio each other to comment on the 'Easy Pickins' (*Hills*). By the next morning three of the family are dead and the baby has been abducted, leaving the remaining members of the family to 'meet savagery with savagery' (*Hills*).

Craven marks the Vietnam War as the event that made him realize Americans could be evil. Interested in exploring that realization Craven was also fascinated by 'odd' families and the sense that when the American dream is proved to be false it is replaced by 'monumental rage' (Craven on Simon *American Nightmare*). Both elements are evident in *Hills* with family values and savage cannibalism side by side, and indeed, Craven's original title for the film was 'Blood Relations'! This is the key point about the film: the suburbanites are as capable of savagery as the hillbillies so that, in one sense at least, there is an attempt to undermine the hillbilly mythology and demonstrate that the negative qualities associated with the American underclass is to be found in the suburbs as well. This is different to the message to be found in Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw* and is a feature of Craven's work in general, for example, *Last House on the Left* (1972). In *Texas Chainsaw* the victims only aspire to escape their tormentors. They do not try to fight back. In *Hills* however, the all-American, wholesome family are capable of great violence. It is a kind of Conradian *Heart of Darkness* set in the American margins and, as with *Texas Chainsaw*, supports Williamson's earlier argument that the hillbilly is a kind of mirror reflecting the horrors of American manhood. It questions middle-class complacency and normative values.

The location for this exploration is the desert. Craven chose the Mojave desert for its hauntingly beautiful vast spaces. The size and emptiness of the desert appealed to Craven who sees his film as one of a body of work about getting off the main road: 'getting off the beaten track, and in essence leaving civilisation. It makes you feel small, makes you feel you're suddenly thrust back to a time when human beings were very small figures on a vast plain' (*Hills Interview*). Craven uses the desert to great effect in the film. He describes the landscape as 'primordial,

beginning of timeish' (*Hills Interview*), making the link between temporal and spatial/geographical atavism and backwardness I examined above. Craven captures this sense of 'land-before-time' with shots of tumbleweeds, dusty roads stretching as far as the eye can see, and eerie vast expanses of rock, sand, and scrub. By placing the decrepit gas station and rusty pick-up truck in the middle of this dust bowl, Craven draws attention to a sense of human decay and the absence of any economic progress. There is a sense that the wilderness is claiming back any pockets of attempted development or progress. Glaringly similar to the rundown gas station in *Texas,* the dependence of the American economy on oil is again hinted at. The notion of draining resources from a remote area also echoes the Italian cannibal movies I examined in Part I. These films, by placing middle-class Americans in cannibalistic landscapes peppered with references to overconsumption, are linked in their critique of thoughtless consumption of oil, wood, and other natural resources. When Dad asks the gas station attendant if there is a place to dump litter the reply is: 'Oh hell, just use the whole damn desert' (*Hills*). The next shot is of the sun scorched land, almost postapocalyptic looking in its emptiness and the attendant's voice saying "Nothin" lives back there but animals' (*Hills*). Rodowick notes that the violence in the movie is not a purely external threat; it is 'omnipresent in the textual landscape, even if it is unrecognised as such by the Carters or the viewer'. The desert reveals the irony of the Carter's family consumer fantasy. They project onto the desert 'the mirage of the silver mine' beneath which is concealed the horrific reality of the nuclear testing site and the horror they must face. In this manner, Rodowick argues, the Carters' fictional journey takes place as 'two simultaneous movements'. The first movement is a 'vision of the future' in which the capitalist, bourgeois dream is shattered, and the veneer of civility is stripped away to reveal a wasteland of exploitation and violence. The second movement that Rodowick notes is a regressive one in which the Carters, as middle-class 'everymen', are returned to an archaic and violent past. Harsh and primeval, the desert is literally a 'testing range' that incorporates and entraps the self-enclosed family (Rodowick 349).

The 'animals' that live in the desert are the descendants of the gas station attendant. The story of their origins is relevant to the analysis of family values in the film. The gas station attendant's wife gave birth to a monster son, hairy and weighing 20 pounds. As a child the son burnt the house and killed his baby sister. His father left him in the desert hoping he would die. According to his father, the boy did not die but grew up, captured a 'whore nobody'd miss' and raised a family

of monster kids (*Hills*). The cannibal family are named after planets: Papa Jupiter, the primal father, Pluto, the least known and strangely shaped, Mars, the god of war, and Ruby, the gem of the family (Craven *Hills Interviews*). In fact Goya's painting of Saturn devouring his son inspired Craven to create the character of Papa Jupiter, and it seems Craven is trying to relocate a primal myth here. Reinhard Kuhn traces the history of parental anthropophagy: In ancient mythology, Cronos, father of Zeus, having being warned that one of his children might usurp his power, devours them all, and Saturn, his Roman counterpart, does the same. Saint Jerome in his letter on the death of Marcella depicts in lurid terms the extremes to which adults were driven by the famine that preceded Alaric's sack of Rome. Cannibalism was not uncommon and, and famished parents, in order to survive, ate their own offspring:

> '[…] the mother did not spare the infant suckling at her breast, but devouring it, took back into her stomach flesh and blood which her womb had just brought forth'. Dante in *The Inferno,* tells of the imprisoned sons of Ugolino who slowly starve to death; according to one interpretation, their father consumed their wasted corpses in order to put off the inevitable moment of himself succumbing to the same fate. These are but a few of the many reenactments of the Saturian repast. (173–174)

Craven's film echoes the Sawney Bean legend of a rejected son who survives against the odds to create his own version of domestic bliss in the wilderness of a Galloway cave or a hovel in the Nevada Desert and spawns a brood of cannibalistic offspring. Rather than write of an evil born from science, these monsters are conceived naturally and are an abominable result of the nuclear family. They are the nuclear family stripped of suburban comforts in a Hobbesian rather than Rousseauian reality. This is different to kinds of domestic cannibalism explored by Walton where science and space are threats to human integrity. Here, it is humanity itself that self cannibalizes.

   The crimes of the 'bad family' are typical: black teeth, bad hygiene, incest, low intellect, and of course cannibalism. They live in a cave-like dwelling decorated with bones, echoing Sawney Bean's and Ed Gein's dwellings and wear skins as clothes. Rob Byrne's set design kit from *Texas Chainsaw* was used to decorate the cave with skulls and netting, linking Leatherface's home with Papa Jupiter's. In 1985 Wes Craven made a rather poor sequel to *Hills*, in which the dog is given a flashback.

While there is not much to say about this piece of film-making, it is worth noting that the inbred rednecks have moved from a cave to a derelict house with an underground cellar, maintaining the sense of being underground and away from civilization and safety. Jarring, high-pitched music along with shadowy shots of hanging meat and red lighting attempt to heighten the horror but to little avail. All of these regional cannibal men are treated in the same way in popular culture, they are the rural white trash preying on invading city-dwellers. The cave in *Hills* is contrasted with the campervan. Both spaces are constricted yet are made 'homely' by the two mothers and both spaces are violated by the invasion of the opposing family. The cannibals enter the campervan in search of food, sniffing and snarling, they bite off a budgie's head and drink its blood, rape Brenda, the teenage daughter, shoot the mother and her elder daughter, and kidnap the baby who is 'very juicy' before making off with Dad's barbecued body. Mars' teeth are filed to resemble the cannibals of colonial tales, and he bares them to the camera as he comments on the 'tenderloin baby' whose brains he is going to eat (*Hills*).

The two families in *Hills* are the dark and light side of one coin. Craven likes to toss the coin and change assumptions of light and dark. Rodowick comments on this battle between the two families:

> [It] is neither precisely the struggle for survival between two apparently mutually exclusive cultures nor a structured opposition between a positive and a negative set of values whose outcome is pre-determined. Instead a structural correspondence is drawn between the two families . . . the violent 'monster' family could be characterized as the latent image underlying the depiction of the [Carters].
>
> (Rodowick 349)

Mother's body is used to lure the cannibals before they are blown up in the caravan to jubilant whoops of the teenagers. Doug, the father of the kidnapped baby, uses his white-collar identity without its civilized veneer to its ruthless full and becomes a gun and knife toting maniac on the look out for his baby and revenge. The film ends with Doug killing Mars, and the screen fills with red from the blood of Mars' stab wounds. Bowen compares *Hills* to *Straw Dogs* (Sam Peckinpah 1971) as films echoing the vivid memories of the Vietnam War and the Mississippi murders of civil rights activists a decade previously (Bowen 'Hills Review'). Certainly the sense in *The Hills Have Eyes* is that this not your territory and to get out of it you need to fight. Rodowick describes the final shot, the

freeze frame that suspends the film, as 'the signifier of an ideological stalemate which marks not the triumph and reaffirmation of culture, but its internal disintegration' (Rodowick 355).

Off Season

Jack Ketchum's *Off Season* (1980) is a visceral horror novel that tells the tale of the unfortunate encounter between a group of young people from the New York holidaying in a cabin and a cannibal clan living in a cave on the coast of Maine. According to his website, Ketchum is a pseudonym for a 'former actor, singer, teacher, literary agent, lumber salesman, and soda jerk – a former flower child and baby boomer who figures that in 1956 Elvis, dinosaurs and horror probably saved his life' and he has been called the scariest man in America by Stephen King (jackketchum.net). Like *The Hills Have Eyes*, *Off Season* is obviously derived from the legend of Sawney Bean. *Off Season* moves the savage cannibal to the twentieth century, and the American countryside. Ketchum updates the Bean story with details of violence but maintains the basic parameters, that is, savagery is to be found outside the city. Published in 1980, it met with criticism and Ketchum was accused of writing violent pornography (Ketchum *Interview*). It has become his most famous work and he compares its treatment to that received by *American Psycho*, claiming *Off Season* built his reputation and showcased his dearest issues, namely cruelty in any form (Ketchum *Interview*). The novel is extremely violent and shocking. Unlike many other texts on cannibalism it does not shy away from describing the actual eating of human flesh in great detail. Most shocking is the fact that a lot of this cannibalism is done by children. The interesting question the novel poses is what level of savagery lies beneath civilization. As with the other material in this part, including the original legend of Sawney Bean, Ketchum examines the parameters of barbarity and normality.

As in the other regional cannibal texts and films I have discussed, *Off Season* is preoccupied with landscape. Its opening page has descriptions of trees, moss, and lichen, and the smell of 'evergreen and rot' (Ketchum *Off* 3). This combination of nature as both verdant and decaying suggests the typical paradox of rural space as a refuge from the city, and space as threatening isolation. This is realized most fully in the cannibals' cave. The air is damp and fetid, yellow skins of various sizes hang on the walls, ornaments and cups are made from bones, and human skulls mounted on poles gleam in the half-light (192). Ketchum accords some sinister quality to the cave, as if it is the cause of the ensuing

violence in the novel: 'The awful place she had been brought...where there was no love or tenderness but only gruesome death and an appetite that never sated itself, which fed upon itself and drew all who came upon it into the same dark circle of self-destruction' (226). Reminiscent of Sawney Bean's lair, Ed Gein's furnishings, and Kurtz's station with its fence of human skulls, the cave in *Off Season* has a long cultural history in horror. It is the ultimate extension of the geographical theories of exclusion and identity discussed in Chapter 4 and echoed in the long shots of the road in *Texas Chainsaw,* and wide shots of the desert in *Hills*. In *The Contested Castle* Ellis comments on the importance of space and the notion of the failed home in the Gothic (Ellis ix). She notes that Gothic outsiders finding themselves beyond the pale of domestic order perform their own 'harrowing of hell' (132). This is evident in *Off Season* where the rural landscape is given a hellish personality, almost like Conrad's jungle in *Heart of Darkness*, as an impenetrable force which aids the natives or locals in trapping the invading visitors.

In the terrifying opening scene of the novel a young woman tries to escape the clutches of savage children and runs through the forest: 'Long branches tugged at her hair and poked cruelly at her eyes...old brittle branches stabbed through the thin cotton dress as if she were naked, raking new troughs of blood along her legs and stomach' (Ketchum *Off* 4). There is something phallic in the long, poking branches and the scoring of her bare flesh is akin to a sexual assault. It is as if, in a perverse contradiction of city slickers raping the land in pursuit of resources and building space, the land is raping back. This is heightened by the fact that the children use long birch switches in their attack on the woman. The trees are an extension of the children and vice versa in an ironic evocation of Rousseau's view that children are closer to nature. The sexual nature of the attack only increases at the hands of the cannibal children:

> Then she saw their bodies crouch and tense, the birch switches poise and rise again, the eyes narrow and the lips press tight together. She closed her eyes against them. And then an instant later they were upon her. The foul claws tearing her clothing...She felt their drooling mouths press against her, and her flesh began to crawl with the feel of blood and saliva. (8)

Jacqueline Rose, writing on the child in fiction, sees a common conception of the child's innocence in a close, 'mutually dependant relation' with a primary state of language and culture (Rose 9). Rousseau saw purity and immediacy' in the spoken word in comparison with the

'aridity and obtrusiveness of written culture'. Rose believes Rousseau takes the early speech of the child as his model for this 'primordial, sensuous language' and that childhood is seen as the place where an older form of culture survives (49–50). Ketchum uses the primal orality of the child in a less positive way by aligning it with cannibalism. The snarling, drooling, children have teeth and can bite. Reinhard Kuhn also explores the child in literature in *Corruption in Paradise* (1982). He argues that the intrusion of evil into the seemingly innocent universe of childhood is indicative of the 'vitality of a benign nature ... sapped by civilisation' (Kuhn 132). Furthermore, the destruction of a child is most commonly viewed as a punishment of its parents as representative of the social order who have abused their privileges (180), and the child occasionally takes revenge upon the adult world with a violence that contains the potential for universal destruction (104). Steven Bruhm sees a startling prevalence of children who kill in contemporary horror (Bruhm). In our Freudian world, he argues, sexuality and violence comes from the child itself rather than a corrupt adult world, for example, *Lolita* (1955). Post-world war children were seen as sites of healing, innocence, and beauty. They were, however, subject to invasion by communism in the 1950s, homosexuality and feminism in the 1960s and '70s, resulting in a fearsome construction, the Gothic child (Bruhm). Even more terrifying for Bruhm is the idea of the inherently evil child such as Ben in Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* (1988). The reason we fear the Gothic child, Bruhm argues, is that they 'not only shatter our identities as adults (and this is frightening enough) but they threaten the collapse of the social order we bred them to maintain'. The children in *Off Season* upset the accepted balance of power in which the wealthy, educated adults of the cities hold political and economic power. Here, the primitive, savage, and young rule and prove their strength in tearing the flesh of city visitors. Perhaps Ketchum's cannibal children are the soiled paradise of rural America, much like the economically bereft hillbillies of *Deliverance, Hills Have Eyes,* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* they seek revenge on the bodies of those who have stripped the land and grown fat on its resources.

   An iconic part of the landscape theme is the road. In the horror movies such as *Texas Chainsaw* and *The Hills Have Eyes* there are many shots of long, empty, dusty roads. In writing, Ketchum describes the same sense of distance in terms of negation and emptiness. Long passages describing the road trip, the irritation and claustrophobia of driving for many hours, emphasize the notion of moving beyond one's comfort zones to another place. Yet, equally strong, is the sense that

these places are reachable by car, they are not *that* far away. The gas station is, as usual, the first encounter between city folk and locals. Laura Rice, examining the cultural history of the car in American texts, notes that the car was once a symbol of 'urban dynamism' and 'technological meliorism' but has come to stand for 'alienated and automised living' (Rice *Trafficking* 222). With the image of the road the car gives some sense of power over the empty highway but the possibility of running out of gas leaves this power fragile (226). After empty roads lined by forests the characters in the car need to stop in order to reassure themselves of their superiority to this wilderness and what better way to do this than to buy something and mock the locals in a sort of *Deliverance* redux? It is at this first meeting point that the locals are equated with the wilderness of the landscape. Up to the gas station stop there is a sense of adventure and the quiet beauty of the land. After the gas station the ideal is shattered. This is not a bucolic escape, rather it is a visit to a place inhabited by inbred freaks. On encountering two lecherous redneck brothers at the gas station Laura, one of our feisty city folk, slips into the comfort of stereotypes and clichés as she reduces them to part of the scrubland:

> She didn't even like the close-set eyes, the lean, unshaven cheeks, the wind-burned, sunburned high foreheads . . . They had the same brutal, inbred faces. Like the houses, like the trees, the people out here looked stunted, almost stillborn, as if centuries of social immobility had thinned their seed, bled them dry . . . To her eyes, used to diversity, there was a troubling uniformity about them all, something that spoke of isolation, and a dull thoughtless cruelty.
>
> (Ketchum *Off* 66–67)

Again, as with the other regional cannibal tales, the local people are described as inferior, bestial, and threatening. While, on the one hand, Ketchum confirms the city's view of the rural as threatening, on the other hand, the city folk are punished for underestimating the craftiness of the rural people and are shown to be inferior in many ways. Laura's disgust and fear comes from the fact that she thinks the brothers are interested in her sexually. The use of language associated with procreation and birth in the description echoes racial slurs of the insatiable sexual appetite of the Africans in the colonies and of African Americans in the nation. As with the opening scene quoted above, there is a preoccupation with the threat of rape. This reduces the rural people to purely

physical entities without reason or intellect, but with brute strength and limitless appetites.

The logical extension of this, the novel suggests, is a clan of incestuous cannibals. The descriptions of the clan are entirely focused on the physical, particularly the hands and teeth. In keeping with the tropes of the hillbilly, Ketchum's regional others are dirty, scantily clad, with limited language and intellect. Animal comparisons abound as the cannibal family are compared to 'maggots' (85), possess a 'bovine stupidity' (89), are 'carrion-eaters' (62), 'a bunch of rats' (146), 'vultures' (194), 'jellyfish' (201), 'some kind of huge leech' (241). As with the *Grey Man* some of these descriptions are shocking because they refer to children. Indeed, much of the horror is the sense of the children as more dangerous than the adults because they attack in a pack and show no fear or restraint: 'She had the feeling that the children would fight in packs, in a swarm, and she could imagine all too vividly how they would surround her and pull her down, smothering her under their sheer weight of numbers' (137). The fact that the children are in a pack, mob-like, suggests a fear of individuality being suppressed or overwhelmed by the majority. The novel suggests that in Maine, rather than being the minority, savages are the ruling majority. The nameless and faceless of the 'backward' communities of America will reduce everyone to the same. Everyone is meat.

Ketchum gives a background story to the cannibal clan which supports this idea of economic evolution. A girl named Agnes lives on an island with her family. They get cut off from the mainland by storms and are starving. Agnes runs away before her parents die. Some years later a new family arrive to the island and their son goes missing. This boy and Agnes are the ancestors of the cannibal clan. The male remembers how they lived off the sea before moving to the mainland to eat frogs and insects, finally evolving to eat human meat. This kind of mini-evolution upsets the typical association of cannibalism with degeneration. This family do not eat human flesh out of desperation or depraved ritual, but because they like it, it is readily available, and it is strengthening. They have evolved to take the best nourishment available from the land:

> They had hunted every animal but there was no flesh like man's, she thought. It was sweet and more subtle than game. Delicate streaks of fat ran through even the leanest meat. If you placed a piece of venison or bear in a pot to boil, it would lie at the bottom like a stone. But man's flesh had life. It would bounce and swirl inside the pot. The

other was just meat, just a meal. Her toothless gums worked rapidly
from side to side and her fat stomach rumbled in anticipation. (190)

Furthermore, the treatment of the human flesh suggests these people,
while savage by the New Yorkers' standards, are perverse gourmets.
Ketchum gleefully describes cannibalism in an almost recipe-like way
with long passages about the technique and care required to make
sausages and stews of human meat. The gruesome details of preparing
human meat as food certainly add to the horror and give Ketchum a
place to include buckets of blood and minced brains, but they also echo
the revered family meal, the domestic hearth, and subtly suggest that
much as the New Yorkers treat them as animals, these cannibals are all
too human. The one time in the novel that the cannibals eat uncooked
meat is in an act of revenge intended to terrify the city folk who have
attacked their family in their desperate attempts to survive:

> With his knife he slit the man open from vent to sternum and, bend-
> ing over, buried his face in his liver. He looked up, his face smeared
> with blood, and saw that the others had also begun to eat. When the
> liver was half finished he pulled out the slippery pile of intestine and
> with one hand worked its contents down and away from him, while
> with the other he fed the long grey tube into his mouth and chewed.
> He smiled when he heard them screaming inside, and knew that they
> had seen him feeding like a wolf on their friend . . . Only the sound of
> someone sobbing reached his ears through the thick haze of pleasure
> and the good salty taste of blood.
>
> (158–159)

In an odd parody of Claude Levi-Strauss' theory of the raw and the
cooked, the cannibal clan of *Off Season* show an understanding of
the distinction between cooked = civilized, raw = savage. To them,
cannibalism, as with any other king of eating, fits into this dichotomy.

  Indeed, while much of the ambient horror of the novel is created by
the knowledge that these country folk will eat you when they catch
you, much of the visceral violence is in the revenge attacks by the city
folk. This places *Off Season* in the same category as *The Hills Have Eyes*
and other popular culture texts that question the savagery of every-
day people. As the cannibals attack vampire-like with teeth, the New
Yorkers attack back with guns. The level of violence increases rapidly
and Ketchum leaves little to the imagination, emphasizing his argu-
ment of how quickly the human becomes animal-like in its quest for

survival. This places him with Craven as they share the ideas about the basic carnality of human nature. Ketchum states clearly that Nick, one of his New York heroes, is 'not as surprised as he thought he should have been to find the thought of murder so very appealing' (134). Ketchum never names the cannibals but his use of 'little girl' adds a shocking level to the violence of the child cannibals' deaths: '[Nick] pointed the gun directly into the face of the little girl . . . the gun exploded in his hands and the girl's head was suddenly gone and Nick was bathed in flecks of blood and bone' (154). The same Nick chops a little boy's head off with a scythe and intends to 'blow hell out of every last' child (179). Later, while being attacked by a pregnant woman and yet another little cannibal girl, he slams the gun barrel into the woman's face and smashes the girl's skull before lashing out blindly at a boy's head until it is a 'muculent pool of blood and slime' (232). Nick is not the only trigger happy city slicker in the novel. Marjie, sexy, articulate, ambitious, and feisty is the flip-side of the deformed, smelly, cave-dwelling cannibal woman. Yet Marjie shows the savage side of herself when tested. She abandons her friend Laura to the cannibals in order to escape. When captured by the cannibal family she is forced to perform oral sex on one of the men. She bites his penis off in a direct reference to Craven's *Last House on the Left*. He, understandably, is not happy; Marjie is: 'He howled like a mutilated animal. She loved the sound. She loved the cooling gore across her thighs' (226). The sexual eating of the man turns to cannibalistic violent eating and she is pleased by it. Not finished yet, Marjie finds 'preternatural power' and tosses a child against the cave wall with great violence, hearing its skull 'pop and split open like a melon' and herself 'wail with all the mad joy of a warrior delighting in his fallen enemies' (227). Like the cannibal women, Marjie uses her teeth and hands as weapons, and aligns blood and broken bodies with pleasure and food.

For fear that we could excuse the violence of the New Yorkers as vengeance for their friends' deaths or shock reactions to what they had experienced, Ketchum leaves us with a final damning blow. The police, sent to investigate the noise, join in the massacre of men, women, and children. One policeman is unable to shake off a determined little girl who has torn open his throat with her teeth. Peters, the captain, shoots her in the face leaving only her jaw intact. After 240 pages of violence Ketchum climaxes with a police-led massacre:

> Some furious kind of panic seized them, because there was no reason
> to kill all the others . . . but something wild and treacherous passed
> between them and suddenly it was a different ball game altogether,

suddenly there were no sane heads left among them ... Sorenson broke her [pregnant eleven year old girl] back with the butt end of his shotgun and the broke it again for good measure when she was face down in the sand ... *loathsome* ... it was more an execution than a police action.

(241–242)

In overcoming the cannibals, brutality and lawlessness is embraced. Ketchum starts by distancing the rural and city people by focusing on the landscape, the road trip, the physical descriptions of locals as dirty, inbred, and lecherous. He finishes by reducing that distance into one cave of bloody savagery and sameness. There are two possible conclusions to be drawn. One is that the countryside is backward and treacherous but more than this its barbarity is insidious and contagious; spend too long here and it will get you. Above all it suggests that versions of geographical distance are fantasies disguising the true reality that we are all cannibal savages within. This is in keeping with the colonial fears of going native. This time cannibalism is not a foreign ritual of evolutionary backward jungle dwellers but a domestic practice of economically backward rural dwellers. The prejudices and fears are similar. The other conclusion is that those who scorn poverty, who abuse resources, who abandon tradition and morals in search of wealth are the real monsters and that within them is a violence more terrible than any hillbilly's. This is the question raised by Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*, *Cannibal Holocaust*, and to a great extent in *American Psycho*, which I will examine in Part III. As with Wes Craven and *The Hills Have Eyes*, Ketchum is keen to point out that 'civilized' Americans can be evil too.

Twenty-first-century regional cannibals

We have now seen how Sawney Bean functions as a founding myth for the regional cannibal and how Ed Gein proves the regional cannibal refuses to go away. These rural savages continue to inspire film-makers at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the early years of the noughties a plethora of hillbilly-as-cannibal horror remakes appeared on screens. Why did film-makers return to this issue? And why did viewers flock to these in their millions? I believe that these movies use, or cannibalize, the genre in order to make new and contemporary arguments. In the twenty-first century, at the height of reality television, the hillbilly surfaced as a form of entertainment again with shows such as *New Beverly Hillbillies* (CBS), *High Life* (NBC), and *The Simple Life* (Fox) (Herzog 206). *The Simple Life* starred millionaire playgirls Paris

Hilton and Nicole Richie tiptoeing through the mud of rural folks' lives, although the joke was as much about celebrity culture as rural identity. Herzog reports that these shows set off a range of protests from rural people who felt they were being mocked. The West Virginia senator Robert Byrd and Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee argued it was time to stop stereotyping rural Americans, and that no other gendered, socio-economic, ethnic, or racial group would be subjected to such overt and 'politically incorrect' media bias in the twenty-first century (Herzog 206). The election of George W. Bush may have been a powerful reason why liberals began to invest so heavily in a monstering of the South again – if they can keep electing this fool to run the entire country, we can get our revenge culturally through monstrous versions of Bush and those who elect him in our films – especially given that many of these films are considered oblique or obvious commentaries on the invasion of Iraq. Bumiller reported in 2003 in *The New York Times* that white, southern evangelicals accounted for 40% of the votes George W. Bush's received in the 2000 elections (Bumiller). Bageant comments on the contemporary standards of the redneck and his association with George Bush. He argues that the contemporary stereotypes of the redneck include lack of education, poverty, health problems; with alcohol, overeating, and Jesus as the preferred avenues of escape. The lack of education, Bageant feels, is crucial as until there is affordable education for all, 'the mutt people here in the heartland will keep on electing dangerous dimwits in cowboy boots' (Bageant 33), and that getting a 'lousy education' and spending a lifetime struggling in the 'gladitorial theatre of the free market economy' does not make for optimism, open-mindedness, or liberalism (71). Bageant divides America along clear geographical, class, and political lines with 'the hairy fundamentalist Christian hordes' and 'redneck blue-collar legions' startling the blue strongholds of New York, San Francisco, and Seattle by voting for Bush. He quotes a New York city editor: 'It's as if your people were some sort of exotic, as if you were from Yemen or something' (1). This twenty-first-century othering of the southern American comes, I believe, from the guilt associated with unpopular, highly criticized wars in the Middle East, shame associated with Abu Ghraib, and the embarrassment of having a globally mocked president, and has led to popular culture displaying a kind of liberal fascist revenge acted out upon on the 'stupid hicks' who voted for Bush. This shows that the political and economic Other continues to be located at the edges of civilization and continues to be vilified, long after the Celts of the highlands were figured as cannibalistic. The motives for the original movies – Vietnam, Watergate, Civil

Rights movement, the conception of the rural American as racist, backward, vengeful – are no longer relevant. By using the premises of the original movies, these new films make many of the same arguments but this time they are aimed at the White House and those who elected the hillbilly president. The rise in conservatism, evangelical religion, aggression in the Middle East, and gun crime has reduced America to the mocked big brother, replete with clichés and 'Bushisms'. The movie industry, it seems, feels a need to reduce the south to hillbilly-land and its residents to toothless hicks without education or vision. The divide between America along political, economic, and regional lines sees the coasts and midwest being appalled by the political leanings of those in the South and South-east resulting in a twenty-first-century othering of the southern American.

Wrong Turn

Following the formula set down by *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *The Hills Have Eyes,* Rob Schmidt directs a film of predictable horror warning of the dangers of getting off the beaten track. In *Wrong Turn* (2003) a medical student takes a detour, crashes into five campers with a flat tyre, and the six of them fall prey to hideous inbred cannibalistic mountain men. Set in West Virginia, the film's landscape echoes the forests and mountains of the seminal redneck film *Deliverance*. The camera work, spanning the vast forest from above the tree tops is not dissimilar to Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust.* As with all of these works, *Wrong Turn* uses wide shots of vast landscape to explore the themes of man being vulnerable in nature, the idea that identity is not impervious, and the engulfing power of the wilderness. The typical gas station attendant and tourist exchange is formulaic. Gap-toothed, dirty, and drooling in oil-smeared overalls the attendant fails to see the funny side of the question 'What isn't long distance from here?' by replying in typical country drawl: 'You cuttin' wise with me son?' (*Wrong Turn*). Equally typical are the young, clean, visitors who laugh at the country bumpkins, showing their perfectly cared for teeth and superiority. They refer to the locals as 'redneck assholes' and remind each other of the horrors of *Deliverance* unaware that much worse awaits them. This awareness of the genre and the movies that have gone before is crucial. Schmidt is using the well-established tropes of the hillbilly to poke fun at the current climate. By quoting *Deliverance* he emphasizes the history of hillbilly culture and suggests it is still relevant. The characters' attempts at escape are entirely

centred on finding a road and a town, equating both with civilization and safety. The woods are, as in fairy tales, the place of the bogeyman.

The bogeymen in *Wrong Turn* live in a dirty shack in the middle of the woods. The shack, not underground like the caves of Sawney or in *The Hills Have Eyes,* is all but buried by trees and the camera zooms out from it to show the river and trees for miles around it. Tracking shots of the landscape and eccentric camera angles from beneath cars, over grimy fridges, and through greasy window panes suggest the isolation of the shack, as well as the sense of being watched by the wilderness, and the Gein-like filth of the home. Inside the shack are jars of teeth, blood smeared containers in the fridge, pieces of meat and a human hand in the bathroom and grime, gore, and buzzing flies everywhere. The cannibals drive a battered pick-up truck and use rusty manual tools to chop up bodies in keeping with their rural, backward identity. They do not speak coherently at any point in the film but grunt, groan, and mumble. They brandish torches and axes and bow-and-arrows in orc-like fashion and appear barely human. The victims are chased to a watchtower and the cannibals burn them out of it in a truly medieval style battle.

The plot does not include any cause of or motive for the cannibals' behaviour besides incest and geography. There is no bigger conspiracy, no scientific disaster, no desperate survival against the odds. They are plain and simple redneck cannibals who will kill and eat you if you take a wrong turn. This is, in some ways, more sinister than the earlier texts and films I have looked at. There is criticism of the middle class looking for pastoral bliss and abusing nature, but there is no question over who is the more savage. Schmidt is more directly saying the hillbillies are bad and they can take control. Perhaps this comes with a sense of resignation: look at who we allowed to govern our country.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, The Beginning

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, The Beginning (Dir. Liebesman 2006) was made due to demands from fans who wanted to know more about Leatherface and his kin. The producer of this 2006 film was the director who started it all with the original *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, Tobe Hooper. It is worthwhile to note however, that this film purports to be the prequel to the 2003 remake of *Texas* directed by Marcus Nispel, not the prequel to Hooper's original. The fascination with the story has lead to a plethora of remakes, sequels, prequels, and interpretations, in a veritable cannibalization of the genre. The 2003 remake and the

2006 prequel name the inbred cannibal family Hewitt rather than the Sawyers of the original. Leatherface maintains his name and mask as the iconic central figure. The film starts in 1939 when a woman dies in childbirth in a slaughterhouse and the baby is thrown into a dumpster. The deformed baby is picked up by a wandering beggar and taken home to be reared by the Hewitts. Named Thomas, he is hideously ugly and covers his face with cloth. Moving forward by 30 years, Thomas now works in a slaughterhouse until he hears of its closure and is infuriated enough to savagely kill his boss. The film then follows four young people, two brothers and their girlfriends, on a road trip before the two brothers go to fight in the Vietnam War. Crossing Texas the four run into car trouble and stop to ask a sheriff for help. Unfortunately for them, he is not really a sheriff but Thomas'/Leatherface's maniacal adoptive father who has killed the sheriff investigating the slaughterhouse manager's murder and taken his car and uniform. He takes three of the four to his house for some torture and cannibalism. One girl, Chrissie, is left to try to rescue her friends with the help of a passing biker. However, the film moves the horror outside the house and onto the road. In a genre where the road and the car are fundamental elements of both entering and escaping the countryside, *Texas, The Beginning* offers little chance of hope. The closing scenes of the film are of Chrissie getting into a car to escape but the camera shows Leatherface in the back seat behind her. It closes with Leatherface walking up a long, straight road away from the camera carrying his chainsaw. There is no 'final girl' or rescue scene. There is only the road and who you might meet on it, a disgusting and nihilistic ending.

   The film is replete with images and phrases that reduce humans to animals. Starting with Leatherface's birth amongst dirt and cattle, his mother is like a cow giving birth and he is unceremoniously dumped like an unwanted puppy. Leatherface is referred to as a creature and he treats others as animals by using meat hooks and metal snares to catch and kill them. Charlie Hewitt a.k.a Sheriff Hoyt hoses his victims as he needs to keep his 'livestock' clean, and swears never to go hungry again. Likewise, the Hewitts are referred to as degenerate animals by the visitors. Leatherface skins Eric like a prized deer in order to create a mask for himself. Again Gein's crimes and fetishes echo through here. Leatherface uses almost delicate movements among the gore as he peels off his victim's face. He shows reverence for the covering, for the beauty of the surface and slowly brings it to his face. The camera angle is over his shoulder so with the point of view shot we see what Leatherface sees as the mask comes closer and closer before meeting the original,

deformed face and includes the viewer in the covering of horror with horror. It is the central scene in the film as it is the transformation of Thomas into the totemic Leatherface. The film returns to the slaughterhouse at the end of the film with Chrissie hiding in a vat of blood to escape Leatherface's chainsaw. The constant references to humans as meat in a film set around the Vietnam War makes obvious allusions to soldiers as canon fodder, in a time when increased numbers were sent to fight in the Middle East in increasingly unpopular wars. Producer Hooper, by echoing his own original, seems to be commenting on how little has changed in 40 years in American politics and foreign policy.

By placing the horror, again, in the domestic sphere, Liebesman inherently criticizes familial structures, structures that are supposedly upheld by conservative politicians: shared meals, responsible working parents, the home as the place of education and warmth. Like the original *Texas Chainsaw* film, however, he does not go as far as to suggest the civilized urbanites are savages underneath. He remains less radical than Craven in this respect. The infamous house of Texan horror is a concrete block in the middle of a dust bowl. The majority of the film is shot in glaring, distorting sunshine, highlighting the dusty emptiness of the area. The house, in stark comparison, is shadowy. Dimly lit, it contrasts with the oppressive light of outside. Hidden beneath ground level is the slaughter room. Here the darkness increases and any glimmer of light causes pools of blood to shimmer and shadows to dance. Sheriff Hoyt, Leatherface's father figure, is protective of his home claiming he will 'never abandon the place of our birth' or let it be taken over by bikers or hippies. When Chrissie is about to escape the house she turns back to save her friend. The camera zooms out to a panoramic shot of the house with Chrissie in the doorframe. This twisted version of the housewife standing proudly on her doorstep reflects the film's view of rural domesticity as a place of horror. This same doorstep is the place where Dean smashes Sheriff Hoyt's face on the porch repeating his tormentor's taunt, 'my guess is you're not goin' anywhere'. Chrissie and Dean locate the horror within the house and feel that beyond the threshold they can escape. In a house where the garage is storehouse for human meat, the cellar is a slaughter room, and the kitchen is a cannibal's cookhouse, they may be right. This house of horrors is the Hewitt's home and the film plays with contrasting scenes of 'normal' domesticity and horrific violence. Cooking and eating are given comic, everyday overtones such as 'ma, it needs more garlic' with cannibalistic undertones; 'I wonder whose tongue this is.' The dinner scene, when the real sheriff is on the menu as stew, plays

with manners such as saying grace and being grateful for the Lord's bounty. Like the original, the film makes economic comments based on the death of industry in small towns, the poverty and hunger of large numbers of Americans, and the corruption of traditional family values.

The Hills Have Eyes

Alexandre Aja's 2006 remake of Craven's original film raises some interesting points at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and Craven obviously agreed as he produced the film. Ostensibly the same story as the original, *Hills* 2006 tells the story of the Carter family who have an accident in the desert and fall prey to a family of murderous cannibals. However, this time the cannibals are the descendants of miners in the area, mutated by severe radioactive poisoning. The American government carried out nuclear tests in the desert from the 1940s to 1960s and warned all people to leave the area. A group of miners decided to stay and their children were exposed to severe radiation. Deformed, these descendants kill and rob tourists in order to survive in the desert. They also feed on their flesh. Rather than a freak birth as in Craven's original, these country cannibals have been directly created by the American government. This figuring of the American government as the cause of hillbilly cannibals is an interesting one. Bageant comments on the lack of funding for proper education in rural areas, on the continuing poverty of millions of people in the regions, and the lack of affordable health care for the majority. Aja too seems to hold the government responsible for creating the hunger and depravity of her southern residents. Like the other movies in this section, Aja may be inadvertently criticizing Bush and the people who voted for him, but on another level she is criticizing the entire system that leaves people struggling to survive.

As with Craven's film, *Hills* 2006 is shot in the desert, this time the New Mexico Desert and the landscape is used to eerie force. The beautiful shots of the expanses of sand and rock are juxtaposed with the soundtrack of jarring music. Conversely in shots of the land as otherworldly, lunar-like with shadows and craters, the soundtrack is American country music. This is used to great effect in the opening scene which shows the extent to which there is radioactive poison in the countryside. Flashing images of scientists being attacked with pickaxes, mushroom clouds, deformed babies in bell jars, misshapen limbs, bulging eyes, and mangled teeth, assault the viewer while oddly cheery, all-American country and western music reminds us that this is America; it is just

the deformed America beneath the pretty surface. Country music is historically associated with hillbilly culture and the soundtrack and violent images align deformity and violence with the rural. These flashing images are sourced from original footage of nuclear tests carried out in the New Mexico Desert by the American government (imdb.com).

The Carter family pull in to the gas station and are obviously bothered by the heat, dust, and lack of amenities, complaining that the phone company has 97% coverage and they find themselves in the '3% with nothing' (*Hills* 2006). They are clearly out of their comfort zone and decide to pray in a circle to ask for protection from rattlesnakes, scorpions, and coyotes. The isolation is enhanced by the camera swiftly and suddenly zooming out and showing how small and insignificant the family are. This also gives the sense that the family are being watched. The viewer is included in this watching of the family and associated with the cannibals through the camera angle. Coded warnings of the impending danger in the form of cawing vultures and bloody hand prints heighten the sense of violence in the desert. The camera is held at different angles and levels, giving the sense that there are eyes everywhere, that the hills do, in fact, have eyes. In a neat circularity, the film ends with a similar rapid zoom out, this time showing the reduced family after the massacre. Still tiny and vulnerable in the vast arid landscape, and still being watched, these are the survivors.

As with the other texts and films discussed here, the other aspect of the geographical horror in *Hills* 2006 is the cannibals' dwelling place. Not quite a cave, it is still underground, this time in the form of an abandoned mine shaft. From the glaring light of the burning desert the camera zooms quickly down the mouth of the tunnel, into complete blackness. The viewer is swallowed by the gaping darkness, as the Carters are swallowed by the cannibals. In a Lewis Carroll-esque journey down the rabbit hole, we eventually follow Doug (father of the kidnapped baby) down the tunnel. Blood drips and shadows dart across the screen as we make it to the end to find a wonderland of rust, dust, decay, mutation, and cannibalism. Here, Aja goes where Craven did not. Not only to the cannibals have access to the mine shaft, they also have an entire abandoned village with homes, televisions, and cars. It is the American dream with a twist. The camera angle is now behind Doug as we view the town through his eyes. This is an important shift in the film. Up to now the scenes have been shot in the desert and generally the viewer's gaze is aligned with that of the cannibals' watching their prey. In the town, as the Carters strike back, we are aligned with the appraising gaze of Doug. In the wilderness of the desert the cannibals

are in control but in the town Doug can use barriers such as windows and doors to his advantage, or so he thinks. The camera moves to the front, back, and side of Doug suggesting danger on all sides and he is hit on the head by a bald beast woman. The remaining scenes in the cannibal town are reminiscent of *Texas Chainsaw* with flashing images of flesh and meat, walls smeared with blood, and a freezer chest of body parts. Among this gore a woman watches 'Divorce Court' on television and a man in a wheelchair, ironically named Big Brain, has an American flag wrapped around his deformed head, as he grins with delight whispering, 'It's breakfast time' when he thinks Doug is about to die (*Hills* 2006). Including this extra set allows Aja to be more obviously political than Craven. These are two American families who want the same things as all Americans but one family come from the wrong area so they are annihilated by the wider desires of a country that demands more protection, more progress, more power.

In case the viewer misses this point, the cannibal Big Brain makes it quite clear to Doug: 'I never leave this place. Your people asked our families to leave the town, and you destroyed our homes. We went into the mines, you set off your bombs, and turned everything to ashes. You made us what we've become. Boom! Boom! Boom!' (*Hills* 2006).

Rather than leave it there, Aja pushes home the point that these others are no worse than our selves. Ruby, the 'pretty mutant' is depicted as a young girl hungry for love more than human flesh. As the least deformed and wearing the Carter son's sweatshirt she is more easily believable as a heroine. She looks like us. By finishing the film with Ruby's honourable death and Doug's violent axe-wielding killing spree, Aja makes his stance clear. Covered in blood, his own and his targets', Doug ensures he has his glasses on as he stabs, guts, and shoots his way out of small town cannibalism. A rather odd hero, Doug the democrat who does not agree with guns and is a phone salesman, becomes incredibly good at dodging weapons and fighting freaks. Akin to Michael Douglas in *Falling Down* (Schumacher 1993) or Dustin Hoffman in *Straw Dogs* (Peckinpah 1971), or indeed Christian Bale in *American Psycho*, the character of Doug is the office guy pushed to his limits, the embodiment of the violence lurking in the everyday, linking him to Craven's original and the original Sawney Bean tale. The violence of revenge outweighs the original crimes.

It is possible to trace certain trends in the depiction of regional cannibalism throughout the last 100 years. In fact, spanning geographies and decades, the patterns are surprisingly similar. The story

starts out by strongly differentiating between the regional cannibal and the visitor. This is usually done by focusing on physical differences such as teeth, hair, feet, or surface differences such as clothes (or lack of) and cleanliness. Language, accent or slang, is also used as a mark of difference. The landscape is a central feature of this genre. Extremes of barrenness such as the desert or of vegetation such as the forest are equally wild and unwelcoming. In order to reach these locations, long roads must be traversed with all the texts discussed including either lengthy details of journeys or shots of long empty roads viewed through dusty windscreens. Within this feature of the landscape is the cannibal's dwelling. This is usually underground or hidden or includes passages or rooms which are underground, heightening the analogy between cannibals and animals, both living in lairs beyond the eyes of everyday society. The regional cannibal story depicts the visitors as feeling superior to their regional counterparts but often finishes by twisting this supposed superiority on its head, showing the city folk to be as savage as the country. In order to overcome the regional cannibal, the visitor must stoop to such levels of violence that he is no longer recognizable as civilized; he becomes as filthy and aggressive as his tormentor.

The motivation for these tales has changed somewhat with era and place, though throughout they are economic or political. That is, the writers or directors are making comments on the perceptions of the regional and on the economic or political situation that reduces some people to animal-like behaviour. Sawney Bean started off all those years ago as a racist legend of a savage Scotsman. It evolved to become a tale of Scottish history with noblemen and religious leaders succumbing to the barbarity of the cannibal. Much later it inspired novels on both sides of the Atlantic (*Off Season* and *Bloody Man*) that updated the legend to stories of contemporary avarice and violence. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* began a trend in American cinema that was responding to very real fears and prejudices stemming from an unpopular war, economic crises, and changing race relations. It seems that from Hooper's 1974 film to the twenty-first-century remakes, American cinema has maintained a fascination in this figure of the regional cannibal. The wars are different but equally unpopular and the crises are frequent.

Ultimately all of these texts and films question geographical identity. Either the isolation that some regions feel, politically, socially, and economically, or the perceived superiority of some regions over others. Not unlike the colonial texts of Part I, these texts ask: who is the real savage? No longer able to pretend that all savagery lies in African jungles the

gaze has turned homeward but still not at the Self. The regional canni-bal is still very much other, but frighteningly more and more like the Self, and, furthermore, he drives the Self to become Other. Eventually the cannibal cannot be contained with the Scottish highlands, the Irish slums, or the Texan desert. It cannot continue to veil itself in popular scapegoats. It will, in fact has, revealed itself in the centre, in the city.

Part III

Cannibals in Our Midst: The City Cannibal

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City Slashers and Rippers – London Cannibals
From Jack the Ripper to Sweeney Todd

We have seen how the cannibal figure has been unveiled as he moved through the colonial peripheries to the rural regions and now we come to the cosmopolitan city. Geographical locations have popped up in each era with a general trend of the colonial cannibal at the turn of the century, the regional cannibal in the mid-twentieth century, and there has been a preponderant move towards the city at the end of the twentieth century. These moves act as a kind of analogy with historical shifts: the colonial savage, the redneck degenerate, and, finally, the yuppie consumer. At the end of the twentieth century the city is the ultimate space of the modern and the post-modern and is rarely associated with the atavistic (chronologically), thus it is the paradoxical setting for cannibalism, an extremely atavistic act. Of course, the city itself is not a stable or easily definable entity. However, Louis Wirth has argued that cities are the consumers rather than the producers of men (Wirth 20). Critic Laura Rice traces the changes in the city, arguing that as we move from realism through modernism to post-modernism the city moves from commercial through industrial to corporate trade. This trade is in turn powered by steam, then electricity, then nuclear energy. Urbanites move from having a product, then money, then credit; that is from being, to having, to appearing (Rice 'Trafficking' 222). In this shift, power, which was once visible and identifiable, has become disembodied and decentralized, and, as Rice argues, 'continually displaced through computerized information networks – corporate headquarters are nowhere and everywhere at the same time' (225). Images of particular cities may be seen as representative of particular phases of economics, culture, and civilization. As an economic space, nineteenth-century London became the image of industrial capitalism and colonial expansion, while late twentieth-century New York has become the image of

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corporate individualism and venture capitalism. Julian Wolfreys, in his study *Writing London* (1998), explains how nineteenth-century London was distinct from other English cities in that it was the centre of money and power but was not a manufacturing city; it was a new type of city of 'constant transformation and reinvention' (Wolfreys 17). In his introduction to *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987), Tom Wolfe explains his desire to 'write' New York: 'As I saw it, such a book should be a *novel of the city*, in the sense that Balzac and Zola had written novels *of Paris* and Dickens and Thackeray had written novels *of London*, with the city always in the foreground, exerting its relentless pressure on the souls of its inhabitants' (Wolfe viii). He compares London in the nineteenth century as the first great era of the metropolis and 1960s New York as the second one. The economic boom from the Second World War to the 1960s created a 'sense of immunity, and . . . rut-boar abandon' (xxi) with the high and low end of New York located on Wall Street and in the Bronx (xxiii). In tracing American urban history, Dwight Hoover makes reference to A.M. Schlesinger, an urban historian in the 1930s. For Schlesinger, the city was 'a frontier where new ideas, revolutionary in impact, were originated, and where social practices, under pressure by problems generated by people living in close proximity, changed to fit new experiences. Innovation, hence change, in both social and intellectual spheres was a product of city life' (qtd. in Hoover 297). As the modern centre then, the city has been celebrated in literature as the supreme expression of energy, progress, wealth, and cosmopolitanism.

The city has conversely been derided as the place of anonymity, egotism, anxiety, and exclusion. According to Hoover, there are two stages in the critique of the city. The first is the romantic critique which finds the city overcivilized and a distortion of nature. Since nature was 'the repository of virtue', then the city was evil (Hoover 309). More recently there is a critique of the city as *under*civilized, that is, it fails to develop, or allow to develop, sufficient relationships for human emotional and/or intellectual development (309). Robert Mighall sees the city as the location for much atavistic decay and makes reference to the works of Charles Dickens and G.W.M. Reynolds from around the mid-nineteenth century in which, he notes, an 'Urban Gothic' landscape was mapped out, locating terrors and mysteries in 'criminalized districts in the heart of the modern metropolis' (Mighall xxii).

An extension of this is the image of the city as monster, ogre, jungle, ocean, or engulfing human body. Urban features are often engulfing places where one can hide, become lost, drown, or die, such as rivers, slums, vaults, labyrinthine alleyways, tenements, sewers. Often the

outsider or individual is pitted against the threatening anonymity of the city and the suffocation of encroaching suburbs. The threat of being eaten up by the ever-sprawling urban monster is an extremity of urban angst based on appetitive dangers. Images of devouring, swallowing, drowning, and engulfing result in a sense of a cannibalistic city inhabited either by cannibals or the cannibalized. Social geographer David Sibley notes how within the city feelings of insecurity about 'territory, status, and power' encourage the erection of boundaries. The 'imagery of defilement' or contamination locates certain people, such as prostitutes, drug dealers, the homeless, racial minorities, on the margins or in 'residual spaces' (Sibley *Geographies* 69). These residual spaces are often characterized by labyrinthine overtones and suggest entrapment within the city boundaries or walls. Wolfreys comments on the 'unknowability' of the city in the first half of the nineteenth century: 'The writing of London in the first 60 years of the last century offers a map of unknowability . . . we can also comprehend how a degree of unknowability is put in place already by the difficulties of the writers in question in finding an adequate language for their subject' (Wolfreys 15). This confusion resulted in writers struggling to deal with paradoxes of margins and centres, rich and poor, and heritage and reinvention (17).

Karl Marx and Max Weber emphasized the anxiety that modern man felt in the city, an anxiety based on the threat of being superfluous and anonymous. The sociologist Louis Wirth, in his study of the urban personality, *Urbanism as a Way of Life* (1938), notes the lack of personal relationships in the city. Because of the large numbers of inhabitants, it is impossible to know everyone so bonds of kinship and neighbourliness are absent or weak. Under these circumstances, he explains, 'competition and formal control mechanisms furnish the substitutes for the bonds of solidarity that are relied upon to hold a folk society together' (Wirth 11). The interaction with multiple people in the city is superficial and 'real' meetings of personalities is virtually impossible so there is 'segmentalization of human relationships' which sometimes results in urbanites developing a ' "schizoid" character' (12). Richard Lehan, in his study of the city in literature, sees this same anxiety in a sense of fragmentation in the works of Baudelaire and T.S. Eliot who believed disconnection was a by-product of profit and loss systems: 'Both [Baudelaire and Eliot] rejected material progress because it led to a cycle of desire, doomed to endless escalation. The city was nature inverted, transformed by capitalism . . . the commercial city became the modern equivalent of Dante's Inferno' (Lehan 76).

A need to feel at home in the city is replaced by the sense of unhomeliness, often embodied by the outsider, the 'mysterious stranger, or the lonely man in the crowd' (xv). This unhomeliness suggests that the city may have taken over the space once held by wilderness but what was 'wild in nature was never fully repressed by the city' (xv). In *Topophilia* (1974), Yi-Fu Tuan insists that:

> When urbanism is traced back to its primary centres and into the distant past, we find not the marketplace or the fortress but the idea of the supernatural creation of a world. The agent is a god, a priest-king or a hero; the locus of creation is the centre of the world.
>
> (Tuan 151)

The city is thus originally a symbol of the cosmos itself. The result of the loss of nature is an urban wasteland and loneliness in the crowd as traditional structures of community and family are fragmented. The physicality of the city prevents escape or choice; one-way streets and cul-de-sacs are part of the system of control. Thus the city is viewed as an oppressor of individuality and city dwellers become automatons moved by forces beyond their control. As a result, the modern urbanite is faced with the inaccessible or incomprehensible and is, to some extent, an outsider; he is both trapped *and* denied full entry. Wirth sees the stereotypes of the urban personality, such as reserve, indifference, and blasé outlook, as devices for 'immunizing' oneself against claims or expectations of others who one has contact with on an 'impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental' level (Wirth 12). Thus, due to the city's boundless appetite that engulfs all around it, and the creation of boundaries that heighten isolation, we encounter the urban loner, most fully embodied by the serial killer and cannibal – both isolated and a consumer – the urban epitome.

I am first going to look at London and two London serial killers, Jack the Ripper and Sweeney Todd. These form the basis for the cult of the serial killer which I will then examine in relation to American cities and popular serial killer fiction. As with the colonial and regional chapters, a marked shift is evident in the location and popularity of city cannibal figures. At the end of the nineteenth century when London was the metropolitan centre of a world empire, anxiety over borders and racial superiority were realized in contemporary popular horror. As the British Empire declined and America became the world power, the tales of city cannibals moved to the USA. The American serial killers I will examine are the epitome of the urban personality and express concerns

about isolation and overconsumption. These texts question society at large and the workings of capitalism in the urban centre. New York and New Orleans hide their monsters in their monstrous folds while London herself is a character of gross appetite.

London

Between 1830 and the First World War, London was transformed into a huge urban and industrial centre, becoming a prototype for future metropolitan centres (Sheppard 263). From 1850, London tended to be seen as the symbol of the grandeur of the British Empire and by the time of the Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, it was the 'capital city of the Empire on which the sun never set . . . the nodal point of the world economy and of the nascent world system of production' (263). Yet some observers, such as Salvation Army founder William Booth, stressed the juxtaposition of London's East and West Ends and saw in the disparity between the city's rich and poor the disparity between rich England and its exploited colonies. The East End became a kind of *terra incognita* as more and more middle-class people moved to the sub-urbs and had very little contact with city centre dwellers. In 1891, 90% of the adult population of East London was working class (298). The poor of London were seen as a source of pollution and moral danger, an internal colonial other and, as Sibley notes, social and spatial dis-tancing contributed to the labelling of areas of poverty as deviant and threatening (*Geographies* 55). The East End was viewed with both disgust and fascination. Seth Koven, in *Slumming* (2004), examines the fascina-tion the slums of the East End held for the literati and middle class who saw it as an 'aboriginal space' (Koven 252). 'Slumming', in which middle-class folk crossed into the working-class squalor of East London, was popular and fashionable in the 1850s and '60s. Under the guise of charity, prurient curiosity gave way to exaggerations and misconcep-tions about the savagery of the poor (6–7). After the cholera epidemic in 1866, commentators increasingly identified the East End with dirt and, Koven states, 'every form of literal and figurative impurity: con-taminated water and fallen women; insect-and incest-riddled one-room tenements; rag-pickers and rag wearers' (185).

   With a certain relish, commentators vied with one another to evoke the repulsiveness and stench of the squalor (184). Booth described it as an 'open-mouthed abyss' peopled by a 'wretched mass' sinking in a cesspool of degradation and he asks, 'As there is a darkest Africa is there not also a darkest England? . . . May we not find a parallel at our

own doors, and discover within a stone's throw of our cathedrals and palaces similar horrors to those which Stanley has found existing in the great Equatorial forest?' (Booth 12). Booth goes on to compare the malarial African swamp with the foul and fetid breath of the slums of London and the inhabitants of those slums with the savages of the colonies (14–15). Peter Ackroyd in his biography of London also describes the treatment of the East End in literary and social writings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and comments on how the East End became a 'nether world' out of which sprang reports of evil and immorality (Ackroyd 678). With the influx of immigration, particularly Jewish, the East End came to be associated with the larger 'east' – beyond Christendom and was viewed as a threat to normality and decency (679). This imagery suggests the colonies coming home and, thus, allows for the figuring of the cannibal in the city.

The growth of the city in general, and the slums of the East End in particular, was so rapid and reached such a magnitude that the city was rendered uncontainable, and therefore threatening. Henry James described London as a 'strangely mingled monster...an ogress who devours human flesh to keep herself alive to do her tremendous work' (qtd. in Walkowitz *City* 15). The city was as typified by its criminal underworld as it was by its virile ambitions, by its squalor and poverty as much as its status as an industrial powerhouse and centre of an expanding empire. By the time of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in 1902, the ironic associations of the supposedly civilized world of the great city with the barbaric practices of the primitive tribes of the colonies had become more commonplace. So, while Conrad hints at the horrors within London but locates the actualities of his horrors in Africa, other writers stayed within the metropolis and located cannibalism and serial murder in the heart of London. However, many of these London crimes are perpetuated by those who come from other places, by people who bring strange and barbaric customs such as in Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four* (1890) in which the chief villain is an Andaman islander. As middle-class Victorians developed the means of containing the threat of the poor, they reproduced the colonizing mission on the home front so that, as Kristen Guest posits, 'the lower classes were viewed as "savages" in relation to the civilizing norm of bourgeois existence, however, the colonizing model adopted by the middle classes also evoked the uncomfortable parallel between cannibalism and consumerism' (Guest 111). Crucially, London contained a great deal of both colonial and regional detritus, the cannibals of my previous chapters, immigrants from Africa, and the Indies and the Celtic fringes of

Scotland and Ireland. For this reason, London could appropriate the cannibal narratives associated with these spaces and not risk the concomitant association between cosmopolitan modernity and civilization. In the second half of the twentieth century this has been threatened as these colonial and regional cannibals became less culturally relevant, but in the first 50 years, London contained cannibalistic narratives while succeeding in distancing its modernity from atavistic degenerates. The overriding sense of the dangers inherent in London is that of the consuming energy of the city and the appetite of its citizens that maintains that energy, ideas most fully realized and explored in the figures of serial killers Jack the Ripper and Sweeney Todd. I am now going to use these two serial killers, one real and one fictional (though believed to be based on fact), to examine London as a site of cannibalism. Of course, the difference here is that while Jack the Ripper may have been partial to the flesh of his victims – he is the cannibal – in the Sweeney Todd story, it is the London public who are the consumers of human flesh, suggesting they are cannibalistic in their consuming practices.

Jack the Ripper and the cult of the serial killer

The Whitechapel murders of 1888 and their identification with a mysterious figure called 'Jack the Ripper' effectively heralded the rise of the modern serial killer. Over the past 100 years, the Ripper murders have achieved the status of modern myth and been the inspiration for dozens of fictional treatments. In the 'Autumn of Terror' 1888, five prostitutes were brutally murdered within a ten-week period in the neighbourhoods of Spitalfields and Whitechapel in the East End of London. The fascination with the Ripper murders stems from the mystery of the Ripper's identity, the failure of the police to catch him, the question of motive (or lack of) for the killings, and the location of the crimes.

   Theories about the identity of Jack the Ripper abound. Philip Sugden, writing on the history of the first infamous serial killer, suggests that the question of his identity is a 'yawning pit' into which any 'Ripperologist', film-maker, or novelist can 'toss an idea' (Sugden xxvii). The press commentary at the time of the murders likened the Ripper to a Gothic sex beast, an ogre, and a vampire (Walkowitz *City* 197). The skill involved in carving the victims led to suggestions that the murderer was a butcher or a doctor (indicative of fears of new science and autopsies, and the image of the poor as beasts of burden or labour). Anti-Semitism was also rife at the time due to an influx of immigrants fleeing the pogroms in Eastern Europe, and Jews became targets of both police and popular suspicion

with graffiti fingering Jews becoming prominent. Jack the Ripper was presumed at various times to be a 'Russian Jewish anarchist, a policeman, a local denizen of Whitechapel, an erotic maniac of the "upper classes" of society, a religious fanatic, a mad doctor, a scientific sociologist, and a woman' (Walkowitz 'Jack' 551). Jack the Ripper embodied the fears that I have outlined in this book: he could have been an oddity from the colonies, a member of a marginalized group like the Jews, a country bumpkin, or – perhaps most horrifyingly – a sophisticated and cosmopolitan London doctor. The fact that Jack the Ripper was both anonymous and assumed many forms in the public's imagination, and was never caught, deepened the sense that he was a feature of London itself, particularly the cannibalistic East End which became a microcosm of London's dark life.

The murders certainly reinforced prevailing attitudes regarding the East End as a strange territory of savages. The London Press responded to the Ripper murders with descriptions of the grotesque social abyss, inferno or hell-like area of Whitechapel – a nether region of illicit sex and crime. Whitechapel was part of London's 'declining inner industrial rim' and was the dwelling place for foreign immigrants and transient poor. The press depicted it as a vile wasteland where 'drunken, homeless whores met fates all the more hideous for being seemingly inevitable' (Freeman 38). Indeed, Ackroyd notes, the newspaper accounts of the murders were directly responsible for parliamentary inquiries into the poverty of these neighbourhoods (Ackroyd 273). The scale of the violence marked the area as one of brutality. Mighall describes these slums or rookeries as 'contextual anomalies, out of place in modern, mercantile, industrial, and clock-time regulated London' (Mighall 142) and notes how parts of the city are Gothicized with the urban slum analogous with the 'monster's lair', confined and stinking (68). Spatially or topographically, with their labyrinthine darkness they are impenetrable, much like the jungle of colonial fiction. Temporally, they are the site of atavistic people and practices in the same way the desert, moors, and highlands of regional fiction are. The Ripper murders occurred in these malodorous alleyways and the fact that Jack was never caught confirmed the impression that the bloodshed was created by the foul streets themselves, that 'the East End was the true Ripper' (Ackroyd 678).

The late nineteenth century saw a significant redeployment of the racial Gothic in Britain and Western Europe focused by panic over sexual, racial, and social identities. H.L. Malchow notes that the vampire and cannibal, Jew, homosexual, and racial half-breed take 'prominent place as creatures of the void, without authenticity, trapped between two

worlds' (Malchow 125–126). The anti-Semitic side of the Ripper hysteria led to the interrogation and persecution of Jews. Carol Davison aligns Jack the Ripper and Dracula as figures embodying the terrors of *fin de siècle* London. Both are figured as Jewish, 'an especially loaded and negative designation' which constituted a crucial component of *fin de siècle* fears. Davison explains how Jewishness functioned as a signifier 'under whose aegis the fear of syphilis, alien invasion, sexual perversion, political subversion stood united' (Davison 152). The stereotypes of the Jew in Gothic fiction included ritual slaughter, circumcision, vampiric rites, host desecration, and cannibalism (153). The cannibalistic side caused equal panic.

There was a suggestion of cannibalism in the Ripper's selective removal of organs from his victims. Committed with some apparent knowledge of the female body, the objective of the murders seems to have been the evisceration of the body as it was done after the victim had been killed. The victims were described in the press as slaughtered animals or dissected cadavers aligning the killer with cannibalism all the more (Walkowitz *City* 199). In a letter sent to George Lusk of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee, a writer purporting to be the Ripper claimed to have eaten part of a victim's kidney and enclosed the remains of the kidney for inspection:

> From Hell
>
> Mr. Lusk
>
> Sir
>
> I send you half the kidne I took from one woman prasarved it for you tother piece I fried and ate it was very nise I may send you the bloody knife that took it out if you only wate a whil longer
>
> Catch me when you can Mishter Lusk.
>
> (In Sugden *Complete* 263–264)

Questions over the authenticity of the claims were asked. Was the letter writer the real Ripper? Was the kidney human? Were his claims truthful? Conclusions at the time were that the author of the letter was semiliterate and the kidney was indeed human but could have been extracted from a recent autopsy. The identity of the author and his claims to cannibalism could never be proven. The inability to definitively label the Ripper Other led to anxieties of the divided Self. As he was never caught and identified he could never be satisfactorily dismissed as a

colonial or regional brute. His mysterious identity was suggestive of the dark violence that lurked beneath the metropolitan centre, and beneath the cosmopolitan urbanites. The continuing popularity of the Ripper story is evidence, Walkowitz notes, of its ability to play out contemporary anxieties of male violence, the spread of infectious diseases, and economic decline (Walkowitz *City* 4). Jack the Ripper has left his bloody indelible mark on London's history. As has Sweeney Todd.

Sweeney Todd

Although, like Sawney Bean, the original story of Sweeney Todd pre-dates the scope of this book, the character and story have maintained popularity throughout the twentieth century, with the most recent interpretation, Tim Burton's *Sweeney Todd* (2007) bringing the demon barber into the twenty-first century. From his first appearance in 1846, each successive generation has used the metaphorical and gruesome horror of the tale in its own way leading author Anna Pavord to state that 'Sweeney Todd will never die. We all need bogeymen and he was bogier than most' (*Observer* 29 January 1979 qtd. in Haining). In *The Wonderful and Surprising History of Sweeney Todd* (2007), Robert Mack notes that one reason for this continued use and popularity of Sweeney Todd is that the themes of avarice, ambition, love, desire, appetite, vanity, atonement, retribution, justice, and cannibalism mirror the concerns of both individuals and members of society at large. Sweeney Todd yields considerable insight into these themes, what Mack terms the 'most compelling mythical and metaphorical elements inherent in modern city life' (xvii).

On the 21 November 1846 Edward Lloyd's *The People's Periodical* published the first serial of *The Sting of Pearls* by an anonymous writer, later identified as Thomas Peckett Prest, a hack writer of penny dreadfuls. The story tells of Sweeney Todd who, in 1758, established a barber shop next to St Dunstan's church in Fleet Street and struck up a friendship with Mrs Lovett who owned a popular pie shop in Bell Yard. A sailor, Lieutenant Thornhill, goes missing soon after, last seen going in to Todd's barber shop. Thornhill had been carrying a string of pearls to give to a young lady, Johanna, whose lover, Mark Ingestrie, is presumed lost at sea. Eventually suspicions turn towards Todd after a peculiar stench emanates from St Dunstan's vaults beneath his shop. The Bow Street Runners investigate and discover the dismembered remains of many bodies and a pile of the dead people's possessions. A bloody trail through the underground passageways leads to the pie shop where it is

announced to the horror of the customers that the filling in the pies is human flesh. Todd and Lovett are arrested; Ingestrie and Johanna are married.

This original version of the story inspired many later versions which ensured Todd's immortality and by the end of the nineteenth century Sweeney Todd was firmly established as a favourite in print and on stage. George Didbin Pitt adapted the penny dreadful into a melodrama played at the Brittania Theatre. Mack notes the early cross-fertilization that began at this stage with the dramatist Didbin Pitt and the publisher Lloyd incorporating elements of each other's versions, something which became a recurrent motif in Todd's history: 'his very story is rapacious and appetitive, forever consuming whatever material it might happen to deem suitable to its own purpose' (Mack 107). Todd made his screen début in 1926 in a silent movie directed by George Dewhurst and in 1936 Ambassador Pictures released *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* directed by George King and starring the aptly named Tod Slaughter. The film made much of the razor slashing and throat cutting elements of the story and, Mack claims, contained a potential criticism of the hypocrisy of colonialism by including information on the sailor's exploits in the colonies and by suggesting that colonialism teaches it is fine to kill in order to make a profit but not to do so on your own doorstep. This is also true of the original story in which the search for treasure in Indian colonies leads to stolen wealth. No new film versions were forthcoming for many years though there were television, radio, stage, and ballet productions. The stage versions of the 1950s were met with some audience uncertainty due to the fact, Mack argues, that in the aftermath of the Second World War, mass murder was too familiar to be dismissed as melodrama and treating terror with comic awareness led to accusations of callousness or tastelessness (259).

In 1973 Christopher Bond's play *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* was set in nineteenth-century London and was the first version to have Todd as an 'ordinary' man whose initial motive is revenge for the wrongs committed against his family (he is wrongly imprisoned in a penal colony and his wife is raped by Judge Turpin), rather than pure greed. In this version Todd unwittingly kills his wife and then throws Mrs Lovett into the pie oven for lying to him about his wife's identity. The story closes with a young apprentice boy slashing Todd's throat as he cradles his dead wife in his arms. This version of the story is the one adopted by both Stephen Sondheim and Tim Burton. Stephen Sondheim's urban opera of 1979 was a Broadway production set in nineteenth-century London, and the stage set was an

oversized industrial landscape of pipes, iron beams, and corrugated tin. The theatrical backdrop suggested the Industrial Revolution dwarfing and dehumanizing everything in contact with it, leading Irving Wardle to write in *The Times*: 'London is presented as a vision of hell peopled with ragged madwomen, asylum directors, corrupt officials, and a populace gorging themselves on the tasty dishes that Sweeney Todd and Mrs Lovett make' (qtd. in Haining 147). The music used was also indicative of wider themes and Alfred Mollin, who examines the music of the production, finds Todd's murderous desire to be rooted not only in a particularized desire for revenge but resting on a moral judgement of the deserved lot of mankind. Sondheim uses the music of 'Dies Irae' from the Requiem Mass which describes the final judgement of the wicked and the good. Sondheim employs this music every time the chorus sings of Todd swinging his razor, suggesting Todd imitates the role of the deity at the Last Judgement (Mollin 406–407). Mrs Lovett, in contrast to these far-reaching motives, acts out of self-interest and profit. She is a pure capitalist. Todd's song about London as a place of damnation suggests this theme of capitalist greed and selfishness: 'There's a hole in the world like a great black pit and the vermin of the world inhabit it . . . At the top of the hole sit the privileged few making mock of the vermin in the lonely zoo' (Sondheim lyrics). The reviews of the Broadway production were extremely favourable and the show won eight Tony Awards and two Grammy Awards, running for 558 performances (Mack and Haining) and inspired Tim Burton with its cinematic qualities so much so that he made a film of Sondheim's version and the latest *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* was released in 2007. It too received favourable reviews and won a clutch of awards, with most critics agreeing that Burton's sense of the macabre sat well with Sondheim's theatrics, and Johnny Depp as a singing Todd brought an eerie and brittle quality to the role.

The opening credits set the tone for the rest of Burton's film with scarlet blood and rain dripping on a grey, industrial London. The viewer is carried through a grill-window as the camera moves from long shot to zoom into a shabby, bare room with a barber's chair in the middle of the floor. A splash of blood across the screen is treacle-like and garish in its redness. The sound of grinding wheels combines with the view of an industrial mincer and oven suggesting the processes of production. A tracking shot lures the viewer into following a trail of sticky blood down the sewers and into the river until it is eventually diluted by water and we are again given a long shot of the grey doom of industrial

London. The entire sequence captures the themes of dehumanized production, and the violence inherent in mass consumerism.

Johnny Depp as Sweeney Todd is vampire-like with pale skin, purple-shadowed eyes, and a strange, pallid beauty. The camera plays on his face with alternating close-ups and long shots conveying both his barely suppressed rage and his imposing physicality. Helena Bonham Carter as Mrs Lovett is far from a grotesque fish wife and a number of point-of-view shots somewhat align the viewer with her, in particular when she surveys the grabbing hordes of the London streets. The jarring, fast-moving camera moves through the streets of London to a fast-paced frenetic soundtrack, stopping abruptly at her shop. The image of her chopping meat while humming a tune appears ordinary and homely until we get an over-the-shoulder shot of the cockroaches scurrying across the table and the violence of her cutting gestures. This is no sanctuary of domesticity or nurturing but a place of filth, cost-cutting profiteering, and violence. Likewise Todd's barber shop is far from welcoming. Sparse and gloomy with a hidden trap door leading to grisly death, it is indicative of Todd's personality. Indeed, Todd's razor blades are the first thing of beauty or light in the film, glinting gleefully as Todd promises them, 'you shall drink rubies' (Burton). Yet quickly the blades too are associated with aggression as the sound effects of a shrill whistling kettle accompany a close up of Todd's furious face and the subsequent long shot shows blood oozing brightly across Todd's grey floor after his first murder. Light and shadow are used skilfully as the viewer's gaze is drawn firstly to the shiny blades and secondly to the glistening blood. The red of the blood is picked up in Todd's eyes, suggestive of his infernal rage and satanic qualities. The spray of crimson with every murder is oddly welcomed amidst the pale palette of the washed out, gloomy set of dull browns, greys, and blacks. Alternating shots of butcher shops and Todd slicing throats, pigs sold at market, and customer's entering the barber's shop make the clear connection between the animal and human meat with the conveyor belt of meat for wider consumption.

The conjunction of cannibalism with consumerism runs deep in the story of Sweeney Todd with Todd and Lovett becoming personifications of the urban appetite and speaking to contemporary preoccupations with appetite and consumerism. In Kristen Guest's analysis of *The String of Pearls* she notes the uncomfortable overlap between the apparently opposing traits of good and evil in that both villainous Todd and heroic Ingestrie are composite consumers. They are united by their consumerism and both are economic individualists able to turn circumstances to their advantage, often at the expense of others (Guest 17), and

Mack notes the play on names in the story which aligns all characters, good and bad, to a scale of consumerism: Todd can mean crafty or fox in Middle English, Sweeney means pride, the Reverend Lupin is a wolf, Mrs Lovett is sexually rapacious, and Mark Ingestrie is an 'ingester' (Mack 95). Todd and Lovett are thus mere extreme examples of a norm. They are savvy business partners and entrepreneurial predators in the urban jungle.

Importantly, of course, although Todd and Lovett use the human corpses as pie fillings, it is the general public who are the unwitting cannibals. The fear that mass-produced food contains unsavoury elements has a long history and is mentioned in the likes of *The Pickwick Papers* (1837). It suggests a nostalgia for home-cooked meals and a suspicion of the city itself. The practice of having the general public eat human meat aligns the familiar – the Self – with the Other – the cannibal – and explores the collapse of the familiar into the alien by appealing to a notion of a common humanity. This common humanity is emphasized in both the pie filling and the pie consumers. In Burton's film Todd sings 'the sound of crunching is the sound of man eating man' and handling the pies he sings 'it's a priest, they don't commit sins of the flesh so it's pretty fresh…if you're British and loyal you might enjoy a Royal marine…for those above will serve those down below' (Burton). With wry humour Todd and Lovett refer to the various pie fillings as greasy politician, overdone actor, and mealy clergyman. A cross-section of society is literally and metaphorically minced and fed to the hungry customers of the pie shop. These customers are equally a cross-section of society – lawyers, clerks, shopkeepers, labourers, religious men, law enforcing men, and working men. Typical constructs of white cannibalism are sailors, madmen, or the poor. Here there is no clear cannibalistic Other, rather the everyman is a cannibal. Furthermore, the binary reister that uses the usual terms of savage and civilized are reversed by making the cannibal an innocent victim of reckless consumerism. In this case it is not the cannibal who is a direct threat to civilization but rather the treacherous shopkeeper who, as Guest puts it, 'values human life at so much per pound'. The cannibals here are not hungry savages but victims of capitalist greed (Guest 118). However, in the original version of the Sweeney Todd story, the pie-eaters are depicted as raving, greedy savages who jostle each other to reach the counter in a crazy hunger. They find the human flesh delicious and the implication is that they are metaphorically eating each other every day in the busy London streets and now they are doing so literally. This figuring of the consumer as cannibal demonstrates the impact

economic individualism has on humanity, both morally and physically, until the profit-driven society that caters to base human appetites ends up consuming itself.

Both *The String of Pearls* and Burton's *Sweeney Todd* use language and metaphorical images of cannibalism before the central action of the story takes place. Images of gaping mouths, wide open holes (sewers, vaults, pipes) all hint at the threat of being swallowed whole. The metaphorical language of cannibalism is most notable in Todd's catchphrase 'I'll polish 'im off', suggestive of both murder and gleeful finishing of a tasty meal. Yet, despite this suggestive language, neither text nor film indulge in actual descriptions or shots of meatifying human flesh and filling the pies. *The String of Pearls* uses narrative shifts so that after Todd has rid himself of another body through his oubliette of a barber chair, the story moves to another place or character. Likewise, Burton's film version, ironically given an 'R' rating for its graphic bloody violence, focuses its gory moments on the time of the murder, spraying crimson blood about the set but leaving to the viewer's imagination what happens to the bodies in the time between Todd's revolving chair and the steaming hot pies being gobbled by Mrs Lovett's customers. These 'gaps' leave the reader and viewer complicitous in imagining the horrors of cannibalism and 'the very horrors they find repulsive, constituting their own fear' (Mack 192–193).

All of this pie eating takes place, of course, in bustling, industrial London and the city plays an important role in the story; it provides anonymity and hiding places in its labyrinthine alleyways and vaults, it provides a constant stream of vain customers for Todd's chair and, by extension, a stream of meat for Lovett's oven, and it provides a bustling market demand for the grisly produce. Literary, theatrical, and filmic versions of the story have all made reference to the setting of London as both an aid to the criminals and as a cause of such overt, twisted consumerism. Both Todd and Lovett live in compartmentalized dwellings suggestive of the lonely fragmented urban existence. The underground passageways of St Dunstan's are reminiscent of the caves or underground hovels of the regional cannibals such as Sawney Bean. Here, in the centre of London, there are crypts and vaults and tunnels which hide unknowable secrets. So not only are the versions of Sweeney Todd's story concerned with London as an urban environment but also with the narrowness of physical space. Mighall argues that Victorian Gothic fiction is concerned with finding vestiges of the past from which 'the present is relieved to have distanced itself', suggesting that these narrow spaces are not intrinsic to the modern city but

a kind of medieval hangover that needs to be cured. These threatening reminders are found, he states, in prisons, asylums, slums, or even in the 'bodies, minds or psyches of criminals, deviants' (Mighall 26). However, I do not see these as atavistic hangovers, rather, they are horrors produced by the modern city – and modernity – itself. These narrow spaces create a sense of claustrophobia and confinement, achieved in *The String of Pearls* by an almost obsessive listing of street names, landmarks, and business signs, in Sondheim's stage version by the oversized, looming backdrop of industrial London that dwarfs the actors, and in Burton's film through the use of shadows and camera angles from corners or ground level, making Todd seem too big for the small rooms and narrow streets. Oversized, patterned wallpaper and small windows make both Lovett's and Todd's dwellings seem smaller still and any outdoor scenes are peopled with so many extras representing the mob that there is no sense of space or freedom of movement. This concern with space also strengthens the sense of anonymity particular to the city killer and cannibal. The rapidly expanding city affords increasing isolation and anonymity giving both motive and freedom to the serial killer/cannibal. Todd avoids capture for some time because of his anonymity as just another business man. He is, therefore, implicative of the dehumanizing nature of expansive cities.

Many of Todd's victims are sailors returning home from the colonies supposedly peopled by man-eating savages and yet it is in the heart of London that they meet with an anthropophagist mob. This raises the point that whatever dangers there are in the far-flung reaches of the empire, they are equally present in the appetitive energies of the city where middle-class urbanites are the unwitting cannibals. The story of Sweeney Todd became popular at the height of London's power as the centre of the British Empire. It served then as a cautionary tale about the dehumanizing effects of industrial environments and the dangers inherent in rapacious economic appetites. Its popularity soared again in the latter decades of the twentieth century with Sondheim's stage production and moved into the twenty-first century with Burton's film, suggesting that, as a cautionary tale of our times, it is still relevant. The price of progress, it seems, is still the debasement of humanity.

Both of these latter productions originate in America and are directed, produced, and acted (mostly) by Americans. They were marketed to an American audience. I believe that these 'revivals' of the Todd story, rather than an attempt to comment on contemporary London or British urban dangers, are rather better seen as comments on the state of American cities and related appetites using nineteenth-century

industrial London as a metaphorical backdrop for the technological twentieth-century American cities – both suffering the sense of desolation amidst rapacity. As London was the centre of an empire and encountered fears of immigration and the threat of defilement at the hands of immigrant Others, working-class hordes, and syphilitic degenerates, in the mid- to late twentieth-century American cities become the site for fears of terrorist attacks, ghettoes of immigrant populations, the spread of AIDS, and an uncaring, appetitive middle class. Thus, Jack the Ripper and Sweeney Todd have laid the foundations for the figuring of the city cannibal: threatening in his anonymity, reflective of urban appetites, the embodiment of fears of what we may be becoming. I will now examine American cities and the cult of the serial killer in *American Psycho*, *Exquisite Corpse*, and the Hannibal Lecter series.

7
American Psychos
From Patrick Bateman to Hannibal Lecter

While the European city had to define itself 'against its medieval origins and the transformations from feudalism', the American city defined itself against the 'wilderness and frontier experience' (Lehan 167). The growth of the American cities was rapid and heightened significantly by developments in communication and transport. The development of the Erie Canal in 1825 opened up eastern markets to farm products from the Great Lakes region; this fostered immigration to the old Northwest and urbanized the Midwest. New York became the principal East Coast city in both population and financial growth. A network of large cities on the major waterways of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers facilitated trade and transportation from the East Coast to the Mississippi Valley. After the Civil War, the cities of the Great Lakes became industrial centres: Buffalo (iron), Cleveland (oil), Detroit (cars), Chicago (steel and oil). In 1866 the extension of the telegraph with the laying of the Atlantic cable made the East Coast link between the Midwest and Europe. The steam engine revolutionized industry and as factories moved so too did rural populations. By 1920 there had been a dramatic population shift with more than half of the population living in urban areas. As Lehan notes, masses of people reared in rural areas had to adapt to the new hectic pace of city life, 'the streets, the competitiveness, the intensity, the lack of community, the hostility, the anonymity' (182–183).

The rapid urbanization from the 1880s on met with increasing alarm and the city became a place of class conflict, political corruption, alienation of the individual, and the loss of traditional supports and values. Resulting ambivalence towards the city has, Graham Clarke points out, led to a sense of 'continuing crisis which, especially in the post-war years, has invoked images of an urban world on the point of apocalypse and breakdown' (Clarke 'Introduction' 7–8). In literature, American

cities are ambivalently seen as both places of despair and corruption, and vitality and possibility. As I mentioned in Chapter 6, in a seminal examination, the sociologist Louis Wirth examined the urban personality and argued that the segmentalization of human relationships in the city caused the 'schizoid' urban character. He argues that the heterogeneity of character available in cities, the multiplicity of personal lives, cultural affiliations, and ideological choices that confront citizens, results in a strange homogenizing phenomenon. It causes this multiplicity to behave in similar patterns. Urbanites tend to reduce person to function, character to role, man to maker, *Homo sapiens* to *Homo laborens*. This reduction and consequent impersonalization, corresponding to the increasing possible categorizations of people in an over-populated area, allows the urbanite to be more dismissive of others than his rural counterpart. As Wirth cogently argues:

> The premium put upon utility and efficiency suggests the adaptability of the corporate device for the organisation of enterprises in which individuals can engage only in groups . . . the possibility it affords in centralising the resources of thousands of individuals . . . limited liability and the perpetual succession . . . the corporation has no soul.
>
> (Wirth 192)

Wirth is talking here primarily of business corporations, centralized industries where the workers are concentrated in one particular factory, capital is focused on the further intensification of concentration, the workers are viewed as the lumpen proletariat. Such an activity dehumanizes the masses and devolves their differences into the concept of the 'crowd'. As the American city is built in opposition to the wilderness, cities have been represented as 'antithetical to a well-rounded, natural human existence' (Clontz 1). In his study of American urban novels, Clontz notes that for Brockden Brown's *Arthur Merwyn* (1799) and Melville's *Pierre* (1852) the city is a place of 'evil and plague in contrast to more bucolic, pastoral rural settings', and that for Edgar Allan Poe the city contained a force that caused dissolution (1).

As with the East End of London, particular parts of cities, or particular cities in America became a 'dumping ground' for threats to the normal majority. In this way San Francisco has served as a convenient depository for notions and images of homosexuality. The Bronx in New York, Baltimore in Washington, the French Quarter in New Orleans have become places peopled by racial minorities, prostitutes, the poor, the

unemployed, and the diseased (drug addicts and HIV sufferers). This spatial distancing results in the labelling of certain areas as deviant. By extension, popular culture often deals with the obsessive need to purify these defiled spaces. Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) shows Travis Bickle's need to cleanse the city populated by sexual deviants. More recently still, hit US show *The Wire* (produced and created by Simon 2002–2008) deals with the Baltimore police's drive to 'clean up' the projects – high-rise ghettos inhabited by African American heroin dealers. In series five, the cops invent a serial killer of homeless men who bites his victims. Indeed, real-life serial killers Robert Picktin in Vancouver in 2004 and Arthur Shawcross in New York in 1972 both killed prostitutes in a twisted effort to 'clean up' their cities. Just as Jack the Ripper focused his violence on prostitutes, and Sweeney Todd's crimes led to the damnation of the entire city as cannibals, contemporary serial killers often target vulnerable or marginal figures of society while raising criticisms of a society that creates such violent appetites.

In popular culture the figure who most epitomizes the cultural contradictions and excesses of the burgeoning American city is the serial killer. As a lone killer satisfying his inner desires with no concern for the lives of others, the serial killer 'embodied many of the cultural patterns of the 1980s' (Phillips *Projected* 152). These killers typify a combination of ruthless capitalism and anti-feminist misogyny that are often seen to be undercurrents in the development of the city and the rise of the New Right. If real-life serial killer and cannibal Ed Gein generated the cult of the American hillbilly cannibal in the mid-twentieth century, then Jeffrey Dahmer is the late twentieth century's archetypal cannibal: urban, white, middle-class male and this is reflected in fictitious cannibals Hannibal Lecter and Patrick Bateman. However, while these serial killers are often white men, fulfilling normative economic and gender roles to the extreme, they are frequently described as monsters, beasts, and savages. Tithecott argues that the construction of the serial killer as monster is the latest sign of our current desire to seek a 'language of condemnation', which clearly separates our 'selves' from our 'others' in a lasting way (Tithecott 21). Furthermore, knowledge of the Self invariably results in transferring our own unspeakability and our own secrets onto others or other worlds (63). The hunt for the serial killer is frequently described in Gothic terms, and especially as a Gothic quest for knowledge of the 'beast'. Contemporary tales of murder, Halttunen posits, often promise readers and viewers a 'mental *journey* into darkness' (Halttunen 244–245). This implies that evil is not native to the reader's country, it is foreign, elsewhere, Other. This

was formerly achieved by geographical distancing in the colonies and the regions. However, in the city such geographical distancing is not so easy. The shift from the colonies and the regions to the metropolitan centres is indicative that the cannibal is now fully revealed as ourselves rather than the Other. Previously, the threat, while capable of corrupting the fragile social fabric, arises primarily from outside the culture, rather than from within its most precious policies and ideologies (Simpson 173). In the latter decades of the twentieth century, though, American stories of serial killers and cannibals are located in the city. Thus the desperate attempts to place the serial killer outside the bounds of decency – by labelling his crimes 'inconceivable' and ensuring the reader's moral safety – betray an unnerving sense that there is a relation between the Self and the Other. Prawer argues that in the post-Watergate era popular culture suggested if we want 'to look for demons, monsters, and devil-worshippers, we shall be most likely to find them in the offices of those to whom the destinies of nations have been entrusted' (Prawer 16).

This 'monster beneath the surface' is a common theme in serial killer fiction, a theme that features in much of the late twentieth-century cannibal culture and is central to the figuring of the city cannibal. In real-life trials of serial killers comments are frequently made on how 'normal' the killer looks, how polite he seems, how he does not fit the idea of a monster, criminal, cannibal; he is after all a white, educated, American. I am thinking here especially of Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer. The real menace in Dahmer's image is its normality. It is ourselves staring back at us: 'Dahmer is the Sadian 'monster within': the perverse within the mundane, the unnatural within the natural, the animal within the social, the antiheroic within the heroic. He is the archetypal figure of impurity, the representative of a world which needs cleansing' (Tithecott 17–18). Indeed this fascination with violence is not new to American popular culture. Constructed with reference to various familiar genres such as the Western and the Gothic, the serial killer is a continuation of the symbolic figure of the lone male on a quest. John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956) is an example of such a western and is self-aware that the isolated and questing 'hero' is very close to the Native American 'monsters' he wants to kill, while Michael Winner's *Death Wish* (1974) moved the action to New York as a lone vigilante guns down various hoodlums in an uncontrolled revenge, and Neil Jordan's *The Brave One* (2007) sees Jodie Foster play the vigilante killer who uses guns and crow bars to exact her violent revenge and sense of justice. Seltzer also compares the serial killer genre to the Western and concludes the former has replaced the latter

as the most popular genre-fiction of the body and of bodily violence in our culture (Seltzer 1). I would include the cannibal in this fascination with bodily violence, and indeed the serial killer is often depicted as indulging in flesh-eating to some degree. These serial killers, and popular culture concerning serial killers, have become extreme examples of the urban personality as outlined by Wirth: schizoid, fragmented, superficial, and isolated. The anonymity and transitory character of urban relations that Wirth outlines is reworked in neo-Gothic serial killer fictions in which, as Simpson points out, 'individual identities reveal their fragile constitutions. Selves blur, conflate, and shift with aggravating fluidity' (Simpson 20). Many serial killers of popular fiction are portrayed as modernized Gothic villains who simultaneously live on the margins of society and within it: 'the neo-Gothic serial killer narrative displays an astounding degree of indeterminacy, largely because the killer is such a polysemous entity. These serial killers defy easy reading as they impose their own reading upon an environment all too adaptable to their will' (203). In his apparent ability to sustain two lives the serial killer is representative of a society which seems prone to conceal secrets behind respectability.

American Psycho

Consumerism has lead to insatiable desires and searches for new pleasures, the aspiration to be seen consuming newer, stranger, or more difficult to obtain food types. As Leon Kass has claimed, 'In times in which deeper sources of meaning are thought to be lacking, some people maintain that our growing gastromania is in fact evidence that we live in such spiritually troubled times' (Kass *Hungry* xiii) and that 'Appetite or desire, not DNA is the deepest principle of life (48). I want to examine Kass's arguments and the stereotypes of Ronald Reagan's America in relation to Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* and Mary Hannon's film adaptation of the novel released in 2000 and starring Christian Bale as a chilling Bateman. In these texts the obsession with food, consumption and elitism culminate in serial rape, murder, and cannibalism.

The novel has been the subject of much controversy. Assailed as nauseating and misogynistic by insiders who had read the manuscript, the book became a corporate hot potato. Julian Murphet describes it as a 'scandalous novel', in the mould of *Ulysses*, *The Satanic Verses*, and *Lolita* (Murphet 65). Simpson says of *American Psycho* that it is difficult to decide if Ellis has written the most:

conscientious, demystifying, demythologizing novel about serial murder possible, and thus one of the best, or the most pretentious, nauseating, nihilistic, and generally despicable one yet. Ellis possesses undeniable stylistic skill, but to see it used on a project such as *American Psycho* is quite troubling. Again, however, reader frustration may be the point. Seldom has individual violence been presented in as deglamorizing and demystifying a light as in this novel.

(Simpson 155)

The press attention paid to the controversy was enough to enable Vintage to publish the book without having to advertise it. *The Times* concluded *American Psycho* 'contains the same amount of senseless sado-masochistic violence' as Stephen King, but pointed out that the lunatics in King's world 'smear their bloodstained hands on duds from Sears, not Saks' (qtd. in Skal 371).

As well as the controversy rising from presenting a wealthy New Yorker as a serial killer, Ellis's depiction of women in the novel has been cause for anger and criticism. He has been vilified by feminist critics such as Naomi Woolf for writing a novel of graphic violence and indulgent misogynistic excess, which encourages and celebrates a white, middle-class male utopia, achieved through murder. Woolf criticized the novel saying it held about as much fascination as 'watching a maladjusted eleven year old draw on his table' (qtd. in Brien) suggesting she sees the novel as destructive and immature. Much of the publication scandal surrounding *American Psycho* was informed by, as Naomi Mandel puts it: 'the assumption that the novel itself is capable of perpetrating, or facilitating the perpetuation of, violence and denouncing it' (Durand & Mandel 10). The National Organization for Women in Los Angeles called for the public to boycott the book, which they deemed nothing more than 'a how-to novel on the torture and dismemberment of women' (qtd. in Murphet 68). The criticism of the graphic violence was given certain credence when a Canadian murderer, Paul Barnardo, was found to own a copy of the infamous novel and to have been reading it before he committed serial rape and murder. However, despite the vehement criticism, Norman Mailer defended the novel in an article in *Vanity Fair* describing it as taking on deep, Dostoyevskian themes and praising Ellis for 'showing older authors where the hands have come to on the clock ... He has forced us to look at the intolerable material, and so few novelists try for that anymore' (Mailer in *Vanity* par. 2).

This 'intolerable' material seems to be the madness and violence lying beneath 1980s Manhattan. Ellis's characters are the well-dressed,

well-educated elite of a booming economy centred on the consumption of designer brands. The protagonist, Patrick Bateman, a poster boy for Wall Street, is a suave solipsist and executive who reveals another side of himself at night through torture and murder. Ellis contrasts the psychosis of the murderer with the supposed civility of the Manhattan elite; Bateman uses a rusty butter-knife with Dean and Deluca seasoning salt to torture his girls. This juxtaposition of a flawed, dirty utensil with chic food products highlights the jarring paradox of the savage violence enacted by the handsome businessman. Ellis portrays his killer in terms that are subversive of mainstream values, which regard the serial killer and cannibal as outcasts, like those in the redneck cannibal movies and colonial adventure fiction. Instead of society's evil outcast Bateman is its most logical product: rather than reject consumerism or the superiority of the white middle-class man, he accepts wholeheartedly his role as top feeder, and follows it to its natural, horrific extreme. The novel's satire equates materialism, narcissism, misogyny, and classism with serial killing. The modern human condition, as described by Anthony Giddens, is 'to a greater or lesser extent . . . translated into the possession of desired goods and the pursuit of artificially framed styles of life' (Giddens 198).

In the light of this theory, there certainly appears to be a deeper level to Ellis's novel than his critics would allow. Indeed, what some find horrific in the novel – the superficiality and emotionless savagery – others find to be its very point. Ellis writes about an amoral world inhabited by shallow, superficial characters where designer clothes have more value than human bodies, and anything deeper than consumption, such as human connection, communication, or relationships, is sought through torture, drills, saws, and cannibalism. The novel portrays an extreme cultural and moral breakdown in which Patrick Bateman is the twentieth century's most desirable bachelor and its ultimate monster. There is a strong possibility that the entire story is an elaborate fantasy and that Bateman only imagines killing, raping, and eating human flesh. Murphet describes the violent acts as 'cinematically projected fantasization of a general class violence towards everything that is not white, male and upper-middle class' (Murphet 43). We are left with an entirely unreliable narrator who has perhaps done nothing more than 'write, speak, construct himself in a variety of language games, none of which is any more 'real' than the others' (49). When asked if the killings are a mere fantasy on Bateman's part, Ellis replies, 'Could be . . . but I'd never commit myself on that. I think it important that fiction is left to the reader' (qtd. in Murphet 49). I will now examine the novel and the

theme of cannibalism, a theme which encompasses ideas of woman as meat, the ideals of the masculine body, related ideas of homoeroticism in conflict with homophobia, the notion of masks of civility, and the desire to break through surfaces and discover the darkness which lies beneath. I begin with an analysis of the concept of modern isolation in the novel and the desire for wholeness manifested through the mouth, for, as Georges Bataille argues, 'human life is still bestially concentrated in the mouth' (Bataille 59).

Linking the prevalence of cannibalism, a primal assimilation, to a time when social contracts are in jeopardy, Skal asks: 'Is it any wonder that the cannibal and the vampire assert themselves as dysfunctional images of human connectedness?' (Skal 372). *American Psycho* explores these analogies between the assimilation involved in consumerism and cannibalism and the compulsive, at times mindless, repetition of consumerism and serial killing. The monstrous appetite of Bret Easton Ellis's notorious protagonist is a horrific projection of his inner emptiness and the fantasy of omnipotence. Underlying all his crimes is Bateman's yearning for an elusive state of wholeness and connection with his environment. This longing is hardly unique to Bateman; rather it is typical of consumers and producers in post-modern culture. According to Sarah Sceats, the modern world manifests an 'overwhelming yearning for wholeness', a complete union of the Self with another, and this yearning is apparent in oral appetites. For Sceats this desire for oneness symbolized by appetite is often expressed through 'sexual desire, religious fervour, physical hunger, "back to the womb" impulses and death wishes' (Sceats 5); in such a culture, hunger becomes more than a need for food, it becomes an expression of deep-seated desires for connections and of uneasiness with the modern condition. Simone de Beauvoir argues a similar point to Sceats, in somewhat more graphic terms: 'To drink blood, to swallow sperm and excrement, and to eat children means appeasing desire through destruction of its object. Pleasure requires neither exchange, giving, reciprocity, nor gratuitous generosity. Its tyranny is that of avarice, which chooses to destroy that which it cannot assimilate' (qtd. in Tithecott 85). Both theorists privilege the mouth as a means of satisfying deep hungers of the spirit. This is particularly evident in city narratives where isolation and anonymity lead to a sense of a fragmented existence and a deep need to create a sense of wholeness.

A society which reflects this 'dog-eat-dog' condition is the 1980s New York of *American Psycho*. The opening chapter of the novel shows New York as the ultimate embodiment of the maxim 'eat or be eaten'.

Visually, Graham Clarke argues, New York is both the skyscrapers of Manhattan and the chaos at street level. The skyscraper suggests exuberance, extravagance, phallic triumph while creating dark canyons below. As Manhattan, New York remains an image 'at once familiar and inviting', but as New York City it is part of a realistic 'urban process', and denied its 'mythic energy' it is a place of people and history rather than mythic promise. Here, at street level, 'social, political and economic questions are prominent' (Clarke 39). To move the eye downward from the skyscrapers and 'mythic' level to the street and the 'historical' level is, Clarke argues, to confront an '*atrocious* New York ... in which the city is a dense and dark amalgam of human deprivation' (41). This leads writers such as Norman Mailer, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs to see a city of 'fragments and detritus' (51). I would add Bret Easton Ellis to this list as *American Psycho* deals with the anonymity and fragmentation of New York life with shocking power. New York in the novel is both the mythic skyscrapers and squalid reality of the streets that Graham Clarke describes. Julian Murphet describes the Manhattan of *American Psycho* as a 'kaleidoscopic blur' and an abstract space of indistinction, 'the architectural equivalent of Bateman's unmodulated voice' (Murphet 61). Bateman inhabits both aspects of the city. From the comfort of a taxi, Bateman and his friend Price count the homeless people, later mocking a beggar with the question, 'Do you take Am Ex?' (Ellis 2). They comment on the fight between a woman and pigeons for a hot dog and speak about the fear of contamination, especially by the HIV virus. These fears and paranoias are continued throughout the novel, as food and eating become central motifs, literal and metaphorical, for the expression of these fears. In this urban environment, ruthless acquisition at the expense of others' literal survival is not only tolerated but rewarded, leading Ellis to parallel the consumption of resources in the city with the consumption of people. Simpson concludes it is 'axiomatic that violence will accompany avarice' in the novel, arguing Ellis sets out to prove this axiom *ad nauseum* (149).

The superficiality, of the city, of food, and of characters, is, of course, a major theme of the novel. Appearances are deceptive and Ellis plays with the ease with which we accept what we see, and more than that, are lured by the appearance of wealth and luxury and the equation of them with gastronomic and moral goodness. The blurring of the real, unreal, and the hyperreal is a central aspect of postmodernity as defined by Jean Baudrillard who claims:

> [the] real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models – and with these it can be

reproduced an indefinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational. In fact, since it is no longer enveloped by an imaginary, it is no longer real at all.

(Baudrillard par.3)

Bateman himself is fully aware of the veneer of civility and comments on his use of guises and masks: 'my nightly bloodlust overflowed into my days and I had to leave the city. My mask of sanity was a victim of impending slippage' (Ellis 268). Bateman is obsessed with surfaces, with his own aesthetic appearance. He removes a gelatinous skin-cleansing mask from his face while discussing his non-existence: 'I'm simply not there.' In the film version, Murphet sees this scene as a 'necessary shattering of the apparent plenitude of Christian Bale's perfect body as a refuge for our eyes. This, along with the increasing amount of sweat, hysteria and panic imprinted on his face, is the film's principal means for denoting an absence within a luminous presence' (Murphet 78). This is the mask which resembles, but is not, the killers' own face. The use of the word 'mask' is crucial here. Often the guise of civilization is explored through the use of masks. Mark Jancovich, writing on serial killers in culture, comments on how these killers lack consciousness as well as all forms of personality. This lack is often emphasized by their use of masks. The killer rarely has a human face (Jancovich *American* 30) with famous masked killers including Leatherface in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the *Scream* killers (Craven 1996, 1997), Michael Myers in *Halloween* (Carpenter 1978), Jason Voorhees in *Friday the 13th Part III* (Miner 1982). Under the guise of civilization Bateman literally gets away with murder and numerous other atrocities. Kurtz's mask of sanity slips in the heart of darkness in the Congo of Conrad's imperialist vision, and in the heart of the darkness that is rapacity and overconsumption of resources, land, and people. Likewise Bateman is in a jungle of rapacity, he hallucinates 'the buildings into mountains, into volcanoes, the streets become jungles. The sky freezes into a backdrop' (Ellis 83). New York becomes a stage-like jungle for Bateman/Ellis to act out the savagery of the avarice of 1980s America. In an echoing of *Cannibal Holocaust*'s message, *American Psycho* insists New York is the wilderness where predators lurk.

The complete yielding to non-personality is one of the serial killer's signatures. Bateman's name itself is an amalgam of others' names, in an attempt to construct an identity: he is part Norman Bates, the murderer of women, part *Bat*man, the masked alter-ego of an everyday American, and part *Bait Man*, a figure who lures victims by his seemingly

appealing appearance and strikes with piercing violence. In this state of non-personality objects and ownership come to signify status and class. The serial killer Ted Bundy said that 'personalized stationery is one of the small but truly necessary luxuries of life' (in Seltzer 12), a comment eerily echoed in Bateman's panic attack in relation to business cards:

> I'm looking at Van Patten's card and then at mine and cannot believe that Price actually likes Van Patten's better. Dizzy, I sip my drink…Suddenly the restaurant seems far away, hushed, the noise distant, a meaningless hum compared to this card…I pick up Montgomery's card and actually finger it, for the sensation the card gives off to my fingers…I'm finding it hard to swallow.
>
> (Ellis 43)

There is no longer any place for personal taste, only the desire for what is 'in'. Ellis is commenting, through Bateman, on the concern that personality, variety, and identity are being cancelled out by the dictates of advertising. Serial killers hold fascination because their lack of conscious motivation and their apparently relentless and compulsive types of behaviour are somewhat familiar to consumerist society. Jancovich describes serial killers as lacking subjectivity and seeming to act like 'programmed automatons'. The fears associated with these serial killers are 'similar to those…fears that human identity is being erased by forms of rationalized behaviour' (Jancovich *American* 30). Bateman is the extreme extension of this 'system', overwhelmed by the constant impulse to consume. Bateman hides his savagery beneath his façade of knowledge of all things chic. He goes unpunished because he appears to be the epitome of success and the pinnacle of a capitalist society. By positioning Bateman, a cannibal serial rapist and killer, as the celebrated expert on fashion trends and food fads, Ellis mocks the superficiality and complete irrelevance of these modes of categorizing a person as 'good' or 'bad', 'same' or 'Other'. Of course the ultimate superficiality of the novel is the veneer of civility, as with post-colonial write backs concerning civilization – the cannibal hides behind the connoisseur. Crucially, in colonial fiction there have always been queries – sometimes more implicit than clear – about colonialism's metaphoric cannibalism; in regional texts the suburbanites lashed out in revenge against the redneck cannibals, becoming a mirror of savagery; in *American Psycho* we have come another step: this is not metaphoric cannibalism or 'justified' vengeance. This is the culmination of a century of hinting and gesturing regarding white middle-class cannibalism. Monstrosity is no longer in a single, identifiable

body; it is no longer the Other. It is replaced with a banality that makes resistance almost impossible because the Other becomes harder to label or locate and looks more like the Self.

I have commented on the 'normal' appearance of the likes of Dahmer. Seltzer notes this also in his analysis of serial killer culture and comments on how often it is remarked of the serial killer that 'the absence of a sense of self allows the criminal to fade back into society as a common individual'. However, a pertinent question for Seltzer is: 'what sort of violence is incipient in the very notion of "the common individual" in a culture that mandates at the same time that one must "Be Your Self" and "Obey Your Thirst"?' (Seltzer 7). Bateman obeys his thirst, for Stoli and for blood, and is 'himself': a corporate trader and serial killer. Simpson comments on this paralleling of serial killing and materialism and how the late 1980s serial killer as 'wilder' achieved iconic status. The reason for this status, he argues, is that the serial killer's extreme egocentrism is a similar characteristic to that possessed by money-grubbing, megalomaniacal types such as Donald Trump who 'made a killing' out of the free market economics of the 1980s:

> Because the serial killer conceives of and carries out actions in a manner not dissimilar to the violent methodology of the larger social structure, the killer stands a good chance of remaining unremarkable, indeed largely undetectable or invisible. Hence, the serial killer is nearly unstoppable amid the generalized tapestry of institutional violence . . . The killers escape personal accountability in such a way as to spread the blame for murder among the society that helps create 'monstrous' serial killers.
>
> (Simpson 136)

In 1980, Ronald Reagan ascended to the White House pledging to restore a glorious American past. However, the hangover of the Vietnam War and politically divisive civil rights clashes could not be dispelled quite so easily. For 12 years the Republican Party held sway over American politics and economics. Milton Friedman's free market theory was adopted by the Reagan administration with the belief that the market would regulate itself and concentrate all power in the hands of the corporations rather than the government. Friedman's view of the state's function is that it exists to 'protect our freedom both from the enemies outside our gates and from our fellow citizens: to preserve law and order, to enforce private contracts, to foster competitive markets' (qtd. in Klein 5). Reagan's doctrine consisted of three main goals: increased spending

on defence, lowered taxes, and reduced federal involvement in regulating the economy. The economic policy was founded on the notion that the affluent drive the economy, but the underlying principle was greed. This led to greater profits for the rich and the poor becoming poorer. As Klein expounds:

> In every country where Chicago School policies have been applied over the past three decades, what has emerged is a powerful ruling alliance between a few very large corporations and a class of mostly wealthy politicians…its main characteristics are huge transfers of public wealth to private hands, often accompanied by exploding debt, an ever-widening chasm between the dazzling rich and the disposable poor and an aggressive nationalism that justifies bottomless spending on security.
>
> (Klein 15)

The epitome of the Reagan era was the yuppie who combined the egocentric behaviour of the 1970s with the newly conservative politics and more ruthless attitude to career and success, famously captured in Oliver Stone's *Wall Street* (1987). As Kendall Phillips notes, traditional values of modesty, altruism, and community were replaced by overwhelming desire for personal gain, and this gave sanction to an age of narcissism, and 'not only were the utopian, leftist dreams dead and buried, but former flower children were working as cut-throat venture capitalists. The era of peace and love had been largely replaced by a decade of power and greed' (Phillips *Projected* 149–150). Ellis spent time with Wall Street traders in 1987 before writing *American Psycho* and felt their lives were superficial: 'It was all about status, about surface. So I thought about juxtaposing this absurd triviality with extreme violence' (Ellis qtd. in Simpson 149). The overriding theme of *American Psycho* is the self-cannibalizing aspects of 1980s capitalism. The superficially slick but hollow characters are too self-absorbed to listen to each other's words. Their narcissism provides the climate of social indifference in which the homeless or helpless can be victimized with impunity by Bateman. Bateman and his peers are 'mechanical inorganic, clockwork yuppies'. He is the spokesman for the stock traders who try to touch meaning through 'purchased sensation' (Simpson 151). Of course, this condemnation of 1980s materialism and the rapacity of Wall Street is somewhat banal and Ellis's criticisms of a Reagan's America is a little shallow. He reduces an entire cultural period to consumerism and bad pop music. However, towards the end of the novel Ellis bases his critique on more

specific politics. Price is discussing Reagan's lies about the Iran-Contra affair and comments on how normal and undangerous Reagan looks, despite selling arms to Iran. This scene leads Murphet to label Reagan the 'psycho' of the novel's title along with Bateman, both men containing hidden horrors beneath their normal façade (Murphet 54). Ultimately, I believe, Ellis is critical of a general trend in the Western world towards insular, fragmented existences and comfort consuming.

Kass has described humans as possessed of indeterminate and potentially unlimited appetites, willing to appropriate anything for their own satisfaction, so that 'man stands in the world not only as its most appreciative beholder but also as its potential tyrant' (Kass 98). Bateman, in a society which encourages overconsumption based on free market economics, is the ultimate tyrant. His urge to kill is at times replaced by an urge to buy, and vice versa. His desire to gut his colleague McDermot with a knife hidden in his Valentino jacket is replaced by the craving to have a good time, to 'drink some champagne, flirt with a hardbody, find some blow, maybe even dance to some oldies or that new Janet Jackson song I like' (Ellis 50–51). Eventually his desire to consume and his desire to kill overlap and merge. Both desires involve mindless pleasure; drink, drugs, music, women, and victims are all consumable products, there to provide Bateman pleasure. Ellis critiques status based on the consumption of commodities, on competition to consume the most, to display one's super-ability to consume, in the most shocking of ways. Paralleling the capitalist world of Wall Street with Bateman's rapacious, egotistical murders and cannibalism, Ellis refuses us a consoling fantasy but returns us to the violence of a history based on control of commodities.

The monstrous appetite of *American Psycho*'s notorious protagonist is a horrific projection of his inner emptiness and the fantasy of omnipotence. He constantly refers to himself as empty or shell-like. And while there are frequent scenes in restaurants, Bateman often has difficulty swallowing or eating, despite his seemingly aching hunger. Food, for Bateman and his cronies, takes on the role of status symbol. In his study of food in *Dracula*, Mervyn Nicholson argues that the novel posits food as a locus of power. Food is sexual and reproduction takes place through eating not sex. Interestingly there is a dependence of predator on prey. Eventually food no longer satisfies Dracula and he is changed into a pure metaphor for ambition, in this case world-ruling domination (Nicholson 'Magic' 55). He no longer feeds to nourish himself but to create an army of vampires who worship him and do his work, slowly spreading their 'disease' across Europe. This reading of the most infamous of vampires can also be applied to Bateman. He is certainly

rendered vampire-like, hunting initially at night, baring his fangs, commenting: 'I'm running down Broadway, then up Broadway, then down again, screaming like a banshee, my coat open, flying out behind me like some kind of cape' (Ellis 160). He begins to manically ingest everything in sight, including handfuls of pink meat from a can, jellyfish, and sand, and food, and the ability to consume it becomes the locus of power. Like Dracula, Bateman initially starts out by investing food with enormous power and believes that by consuming it he will increase his own potency. However, what he finds is that, firstly he cannot eat the fine food he so desires, and secondly that even when he does, it does not satisfy his rapacious hunger since this hunger speaks of a spiritual rather than a purely material craving. Like his obsessive listing of the designer clothes they wear, Bateman catalogues what everyone orders at restaurants, before sarcastically concluding that: 'You don't come here for the food anyway' (46). The need to get seated in the trendy restaurant of choice becomes a focus, a need for control and prestige and is an emotional focus that has no other outlet. The relief Bateman feels at getting a table at one restaurant is 'almost tidal' and washes over him in an awesome wave (37). And when he fails to get a reservation at the salubrious Dorsia restaurant he is left 'stunned, feverish, feeling empty' (72–73). Any taste or desire is dictated by a capitalist, consumerist society with New York being the central model for Reaganite politics and the trendsetter for free market successes. There is a sort of chic Darwinism at play here with levels of sophistication determining status in society and opinions are influenced by people such as Donald Trump, victors because of the new federal laxity and corporate power. However, the whole scenario of dining in chic New York restaurants is shown to be farcical, superficial, and ultimately so lacking in any meaning that meaning must be found somewhere else. It seems that certain versions of food/dining have become fetishized but (ironically) leave their consumers as physically and spiritually empty as ever. Appetite is out of control in contemporary America in an economic environment where 'greed is good'. To a mouth everything looks good, but to a soul not everything will provide fulfilment.

Bateman feeds his girlfriend Evelyn a chocolate-dipped urinal cake, which she believes to be a luxurious desert, causing the reader to recoil in disgust as Evelyn bites into the 'dessert'. Theorist Julia Kristeva argues that which we find abject is that which tricks us or does not fit neatly into categories (Kristeva *Powers* 4). The scene is suggestive of this argument as the repulsion the reader feels is really based on the deception and the possibility of being fooled so easily into eating such a gross

non-food. Bateman is excited by the idea of Evelyn eating what he and others have urinated on, wanting to sully her as he has been sullied, wanting to reduce her to the money-hungry, status-whore he sees her as. In *Purity and Danger* Mary Douglas posits that bodily orifices represent points of entry and exit to social units and that ingestion portrays political absorption (Douglas *Purity* 4). Echoing Douglas's argument, Bateman sees Evelyn's mouth as an entry point over which he can gain control and thereby place her in a fitting social unit. However, food, as an oral object, signifies the boundary between the Self's clean and proper body and the possibly abject Other. For Kristeva food becomes abject when it is a border between two distinct entities or territories; a boundary between nature and culture, between the human and the non-human (Kristeva *Powers* 75). Bateman furthers this association of food with the abject by seeing 'normal' food, such as pizza, as repulsive and human flesh as 'appetizing'. When Bateman compares food with violent images it is quite disturbing because we know about his night-time activities. He describes his dinner as looking like a gunshot and, after wiping his hand on Evelyn's knee, he decides he cannot eat this meal: 'I study the plate hard for a minute or two, whimper to myself before sighing and putting the fork down' (Ellis 119). Ellis here is mocking the pretension surrounding restaurant dining. Yet more subtle than this is the association between food and violence, meat and human flesh. By making the dinner look like a gunshot Ellis is pushing associations beyond the norm, but as Bateman has transgressed other boundaries of normality, food too becomes bizarre, violent, and terrifying. Food is imaged as death, meat is murder. In Harron's film adaptation the ominous blood-like red drops of the opening credits turn out to be raspberry sauce. In the novel Bateman excuses his blood-stained sheets in the dry cleaners by claiming they are stained with cranberry juice or chocolate syrup (81). Blood is constantly linked to food and the distinction between fact and fiction, and the world and how it is represented is called into question. In Baudrillard's terms, Bateman reproduces the real until it is no longer rational. It is a reality that serves his fantasy of control. He is a clear evocation of Baudrillard's theory of simulacra as it applies to an individual's construction of his or her social identity. Bateman usually cannot feel. Hence, he can only watch his 'increasing alienation from humanity' (Simpson 152). Ellis cleverly parallels the ideas of trendy food with Bateman's increasing frustration and violence. In the same breath Bateman impresses his peers with his knowledge of haute cuisine and aggressively derides those same peers: 'I've heard of post-California cuisine . . . And by the way, did anyone ever tell you that

you look exactly like Garfield but run over and skinned and then some-one threw an ugly Ferragamo sweater over you before they rushed you to the vet? Fusilli? Olive oil on Brie?' (Ellis 91). Bateman sees food as a means of setting up relationships, and ultimately his food of choice is the female body. The fussy, overworked food of the restaurants repulses him, while the raw flesh of a woman excites him. If the mouth and cannibalism are, as Simpson and Kilgour suggest, a yearning for a pre-technological era then Bateman's food choices, caused by a post-modern appetite, demonstrate that the cosmopolitan and the barbaric/primitive are one and the same, except one has a better profile and wears a suit.

For Bateman, connectivity is ultimately achieved through the mouth. The gaping mouth is the primary symbol of the grotesque body: the cannibal, werewolf, and vampire. For Simpson the mouth functions as the 'portal of consumption that ingests the life force as it rends it' (Simpson 5). Sex, and indeed murder, is, for Bateman, extremely oral-centric. Bateman echoes Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* and his wide-open mouth wanting to swallow the world and everything in it. Bateman is obsessed with orality and the mouth is the locus of power. Oral cruelty is, Simpson argues, 'inextricably linked to a pre-modern consciousness, which our modern culture seemingly longs for the more technologically advanced we become' (5). Further to this, the serial killer, so often asso-ciated with biting and eating, is both the cannibal seeking wholeness in a fragmented urban existence, and the consumer seeking success in a free market economy. The ability to consume excessively is power itself. Bateman bites off nipples, guts girls like fish, and pulls out intestines with his teeth. He seems concerned with orifices and access. Bateman seeks new areas and ways of entry into another person. The extremely explicit torture scene involving a rat being baited up into a woman's body again displays fixation on orifices, feeding, and consumption. The rat, I believe, symbolizes what Bateman has become or wants to become. It has, through consumption, literally entered another body, and this is a union for which Bateman longs. Rats are a particularly relevant sym-bol for the analysis of city cannibalism. They are associated with food waste and with spaces on the margins of civilization, particularly sub-terranean spaces such as sewers. Sometimes they transgress boundaries by emerging from sewers and entering people's homes. They are all the more abject in their ability to spread disease through their bite (Sibley *Geographies* 28). Likewise, the serial killer and cannibal lives within the city limits but is hidden. He too transgresses boundaries, moral ones. And, through His crimes, threatens the health and integrity of the human body.

Bateman's alternative to being fully inside another's body is to have theirs inside his, so he bakes his victim's femur and jawbone in the oven. The disturbing nature of cannibalism is that it unsettles categories, it is where desire and dread, love and aggression meet and furthermore it is where the body is made both symbolic and reduced to mere matter. What is sacred becomes mundane material. In fact, as Kilgour states, 'cannibalism involves both the *establishing* of absolute differences, the opposite of eater and eaten, and the *dissolution* of that difference, through the act of incorporation which identifies them and makes the two one' (Kilgour 'Function' 240). This dissolution of two bodies is a desire for the most intimate possible identification with another and the utmost control over that other. Eating and sex have often had parallels drawn between them and both involve wanting the other, and wanting to consume the other. A confusion of appetites, of desire and hatred, of loving and eating, result in images of erotic-cannibalism. Biting, licking, and tasting are considered 'normal' aspects of sexual activity. Diana Fuss also discusses cannibalism and sexuality arguing all aggression in sexuality is 'a relic of cannibalistic desires'. It is a physical act of differentiating oneself from the object at the same time as strongly desiring the same object; it is an expression of the subject's 'primal urge to avenge itself on the object by sinking its teeth into it and devouring it. Violence, mutilation, and disfigurement are structurally internal to the physical act of identification' (Fuss 188). The desire to connect, to be at one with another can become so strong that it over-spills into cannibalism. Criminal psychologists have suggested that the 'act of modern cannibalism often arises out of a sense of self-inadequacy and an accompanying fear of total isolation and abandonment . . . The only way to save one's self is to consume, quite literally to ingest those who would otherwise leave one apart and alone' (Mack 66).

Studies of real-life serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer echo here in this need to make connections through cannibalism. Maggie Kilgour looks at Dahmer's story and suggests how 'cannibalism both signifies the destruction of community through alienation of modern life and a desire to recreate it' (Kilgour 'Function' 257). The media frenzy surrounding the Dahmer case cannot be overemphasized and highlights the fascination with the cult of the cannibal and serial killer. There are over 372 articles in American newspapers from July 1991 to October 1996 focusing on Dahmer, including headlines such as 'Human Body Parts Found in Milwaukee Apartment' (*Boston Globe*, 24 July 1991), 'Dahmer Wore Mask of Normalcy' (*Depot News and Record*, 12 August 1991), to 'Dahmer Slain in Prison – Families of His Victims Feel Relief'

(*USA Today*, 29 November 1994). Images of Dahmer's face turned up in magazines, newspapers, and on television shows, providing viewers with their worst nightmare gazing hypnotically and menacingly at them. In the frenzy the terms used to describe Dahmer veered from the factual to the sensational, supernatural, and Gothic: 'He was spiritually dead, but had become a vampire, a kind of walking dead who existed only to prey on his next victim. He was the closest thing to a Nosferatu' (Joel Norris qtd. in Fuss 196). Both James Kincaid and Diana Fuss comment on the attention paid to Dahmer's cannibalism and the words used to describe his crimes. For Kincaid, Dahmer feeds a need for cannibals in a culture where demand exceeds supply (Kincaid xi). Examining the cover story 'Secrets of a Serial Killer' in *Newsweek* (3 February 1992), Fuss argues that Dahmer fulfils a displaced Western fantasy of cannibalism. The details of an illustration in the article are intended to code the killer's atrocities as a secret and deadly form of African Voodoo (Fuss 199). Fuss's arguments are interesting in the light of Arens's claims that cannibalism as a cultural system is a Western myth and anthropological exaggeration. It seems the fiction of African cannibalism persists in the West as the prevailing indicator of human savagery. Dahmer was labelled the Milwaukee Anthropophagite, yet this focus on his cannibalism is more telling about prevailing fascination with cannibalism than about Dahmer's state of mind or motivation (199). Other factors of Dahmer's crimes, which were the focus of frenzied attention, were the race and sexuality of his victims. Dahmer was a white man whose victims were black, Asian, and Hispanic gay men. Fuss purports that Dahmer's sexual identifications work 'precisely on modes of racial imperialism', that is, 'his professed hatred of effeminate black men masked a deeper desire to appropriate the sexual threat they embodied . . . the cannibal killings also mark specifically an aggressive identification based on a will to dominate and humiliate sexually the object secretly coveted' (199). In other words, he literalized the metaphoric cannibalism inherent in colonialism since the beginning. We see, then, in Dahmer's killings and cannibalism a continuation of the normalizing of heterosexuality and the othering of homosexuality. Dahmer and Bateman are both product and response to modern consumer society in which the isolated ego is alienated from others and where an insatiable appetite is all but celebrated. Dahmer killed apparently to satisfy this insatiable appetite, and his celebrity status depends in part on his victim tally. The question of serial killing, such as that of Dahmer's and Bateman's, cannot be separated from the general forms of collection and counting conspicuous in consumer society. Bateman surrounds himself with objects he can count or list and

fills himself, literally, with girls he can collect and tally. Of course, Oscar Wilde anticipated all this in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) when Dorian collects a vast array of beautiful objects in order to avoid confronting the existential gap in his life. Bateman's emptiness is filled with inventories of either designer products or murder victims; they all fulfil the same function of satisfying an appetite for *more*.

Bateman's victims are, like Dahmer's, part of what he sees as the underclass, including women, homosexuals, and homeless people. Bateman's attempt to construct a masculine identity and his fear of subjugation are expressed through violence. What he sees as Other is linked to the position of the normative masculine ego in post-modern society. The majority of serial killers, real and fictional, are white males and the majority of their victims are women. The motivation of serial killers is frequently explained in terms of the need to expel the feminine, leading Caputi to state that 'femicide' is the extreme expression of patriarchal forces (Caputi 204–205). The idea that serial killers kill repeatedly in order to demonstrate their manhood is expressed in the negative; that is, they are represented as attempting to destroy 'manhood's "opposites(s)" ' (Tithecott 57). The serial killer becomes someone who attempts to overcome his insecurities about his gender by killing what he perceives to be a threat to his manhood. It is an act we find easy to condemn, but what escapes condemnation, or at least critique, are the meanings we give to the term masculinity: 'It remains the untouchable, the unkillable, the eternal, the natural. It is never the "hated" part, the part to be killed' (58). In the representation of the serial killer, the presence of the 'powerful' and the absence of the 'weak' reproduces what British serial killer Dennis Nilsen believes to be the aim of the serial killer: 'the creation of a fully present self defined as such by the violent erasure of the other' (107). In patriarchal society that other is woman or homosexual. Furthermore, the height of both fictional and real-life serial killers was the 1980s and '90s, a time when there was a severe backlash against the rise of feminism in the 1970s. Thus, overt, powerful masculinity was a symbol of the violent politics and economics of the Reagan era. While Walkowitz notes the gendered aspect to the Ripper murders in London, there is a suggestion in the late twentieth-century American serial killings that femicide has become both part of entertainment and an extension of normative masculine identity. Bateman views the rise of the marginalized as threatening to the central position of hegemonic male and so seeks to eliminate/consume the threat.

Normative masculinity's fear of and objectification of women's bodies is often expressed by turning them into meat. This 'meatifying' of the

threat is an expression of the primal condition of 'eat or be eaten'. The taboo surrounding cannibalism is based to some extent on the morality of self-restraint and the idea of the superiority of the human body. In Bateman's world, however, a world where self-restraint is mocked and indulgence is celebrated, the taboo is weakened. In the novel the human body is rendered a mere commodity through representing the Manhattan traders as replaceable robots and the female characters as flat, interchangeable mistresses or as literal commodities through prostitution. Thus, for Bateman, the taboo against eating them becomes less relevant, the edible-inedible binary becomes redundant. Bateman is turned on by a prostitute named Christie standing under a red neon sign flashing M.E.A.T. This awakens something in him, a desire to consume her; she is produce, just like meat, available for him to consume as he sees fit. Christie is for Bateman a throwaway, dehumanized and disposable woman. This meatifying of women is a central theme in both the novel and in any analysis of 1980s Reaganite America. 'Pleasurable consumption of consumable beings and objects is the dominant perspective of contemporary culture' and the drive behind Reagan's free market success (Adams 13). Carol Adams, in her study of the meatifying of women in pornography, sees consumption as what subjects do to objects, and the crucial question for her is 'How does *someone* become *something*?' How does a person become a consumable product? 'How does someone become a piece of meat?' (13). In pornography, she posits, women are shown as meat and treated as meat. Fragmented body parts are fractured or butchered in order to provide pleasure to the consumer (25). Furthermore, women are often called terms reminiscent of an abattoir or butcher's shop: bird, bitch, heifer, sow, lamb, cow, chick. This conveys the message that women are powerless and are available as targets of aggression, they are animal-like (68). Thus, she concludes, prostitution provides the male customer with a class of product he needs – anonymous, throwaway, dehumanized women, whose disappearance is unnoticed. Sexual murder, committed by the likes of Jack the Ripper and Patrick Bateman, writes upon the female corpse through dismemberment, knife penetrations, or slashing of breasts or genitals, it treats the corpse like a carcass (122). Writing on this topic Carol Clover points out that pornography and slasher films do their best to make the female body speak its experience out of an interest in female interiority, and the female body as 'a site of horror … curiosity and desire' (Clover 110). Feminists argue that the likes of Ted Bundy are intimately connected to their society, are in fact society's 'product and henchmen' (Caputi 203). I find the use of the word 'henchmen' problematic as it suggests serial

killers are acting on society's behalf. I think this is a sweeping and exaggerated suggestion. However, the first part of Caputi's argument, that serial killers are pathological symptoms of social disorder and bring to the (il)logical extreme some basic patterns of the societies in which they live, *is* convincing and Ellis seems to uphold the argument somewhat in having a model yuppie butcher women.

The murder of an old college friend turned successful business woman named Bethany is the first time Bateman chronicles eating flesh: 'The fingers I haven't nailed I try to bite off, almost succeeding on her left thumb which I manage to chew all the flesh off of, leaving the thumb exposed, and then I mace her, needlessly, once more' (Ellis 236). The torture of Bethany is relentlessly orally fixated: he cuts out her tongue and 'fucks her in the mouth', allowing her to 'eat' him (237). He replaces her voice, her confidence, and her ability to earn as much as he does with his violence, his masculinity. He fills her source of power, her vocal, public expression of her success – her mouth, with his source of power – his penis, semen, and aggression. When we next see Bethany's body her lips have been bitten off, the flesh of an arm has been gnawed off, Bateman thinks her head is in the freezer and finally he smashes her face in with her own sawn-off arm. She is literally butchered, cut into meat and her corpse is treated like a carcass. Eventually the features that make Bethany recognizable as human and female are subsumed and consumed into Bateman's murderous and cannibalistic fantasy. Bateman's murders of women from Bethany's murder onwards are more graphic and even more orally fixated.

In the chapter titled 'Tries to Cook and Eat a Girl' Bateman wakes up to the smell of blood cooking and the sight of breasts on a plate (reminiscent of some of the luxury food he previously turned down in chic restaurants). Bateman, like the rat from the earlier scene, then burrows inside his victim's body. He buries his head in her stomach and eats her intestines, which feel 'moist' in his mouth. He wants to 'drink this girl's blood as if it were champagne' and tries to make meatloaf and sausage with her flesh while chewing on raw strips of skin, and her head rests in the microwave. Bateman summarizes this process most succinctly: 'This girl, this meat, is nothing, is shit' (Bateman 330–333). Kristeva argues that refuse or waste and corpses are what is thrust aside in order to live, they are the 'defilement that life withstands' (Kristeva *Powers* 3). Shoene comments on how Bateman moves beyond positioning others as mere objects to himself and subjects them to a 'process of utterly annihilative abjection' (Shoene 391), reducing them to pulp or nothingness, a process that Calvin Thomas terms the 'excrementalization of alterity'

in which 'others become shit' (Thomas 64–65). This scene has become Bateman's reality and he concludes it by sobbing that he just wants to be loved. Bateman longs for connections and women are his apparent objects of desire. Yet he literalizes this spiritual hunger as a desire for their bodily parts, their component parts rather than the complete package. His orgiastic torturing of his victims is a kind of foreplay and his killing and eating of them is his climax. Sex and love, along with everything else, have become commodities available for consumption, literal as well as figurative.

Ultimately Bateman is trying to consume the city itself and all that it represents. He tries to live as he is expected to, shopping for luxury gastronomic products like balsamic vinegar, but all the while is longing for what he terms, 'something deeper, something undefined' (Ellis 157). Bateman comes to see himself as part of this manicured society and his consumption of everything else must eventually become a consumption of himself. He tastes his sweat on his lips and is 'suddenly ravenous'. He wants to eat himself to become one with himself. He licks greedily at himself and moves along Broadway to the beat of Madonna's lyrics (144). He is eating his own image; his manicured self is literally melting in the centre of New York as the irony of the thumping pop lyrics suggest continuing consumerism and a spreading feeling of isolation in popular culture. This sense of alienation is one expressed by real-life serial killers. Seltzer explains how for British serial killer Dennis Nilsen the killer often yields identity to identification, which proceeds:

> by way of utter absorption in *technologies of reflection, reduplication, and simulation.* For Nilsen, it involved . . . a fixation on mirror images of his own made-up body and on the mirroring and photographing and filming of the made-up, taken apart and artifactualized bodies of his victims. Nilsen, self-described as a 'central camera', was addicted to the lifeless model body, his own and others: to the body made up as corpse.
>
> (Seltzer 20)

Bateman too becomes, like his victims, a made-up body, so much so that he often refers to himself as 'empty, hardly here at all' (Ellis 288) and 'stunned, feverish, feeling empty' (73). He relieves tension by exercising and using expensive cosmetics. His beauty treatments are given attention similar to that given to his murders and his body is fetishized in the same way his victims' are. He is most at ease fulfilling his beauty rituals and admiring parts of his body. At the beauty parlour he wants

to show off his buffed abdominals and flexes his muscles for the bene-
fit of the beautician, who pretends 'to ignore the undulations beneath
the tan, clean skin' (111). While Bateman tells her how he would like to
switch a girl's and a dog's blood and feels his chest expecting to find
a thumping heart but finding nothing, not even a beat, the beauti-
cian coaxes him to relax, which he does as she compliments him on
his complexion and he lets his mind wander to 'the mashed turnips
at Union Square Café . . . beautiful oiled hardbodies eating each other's
pussies and assholes under harsh video lights, truckloads of arugula and
cilantro, my tan line, the way the muscles in my back look when the
lights in my bathroom fall on them at the right angle' (112). He is
turned on and made hungry by himself, and his perfect body. His own
perfection excites him. He desires, and is obsessed by, the surface of
the male body. His thoughts associate luxury food, violent sex, and his
physicality; all things he can afford to purchase and therefore control.
Bateman's obsession with his own body is an extension of his obses-
sion with the interiority of the female body; both are possessions to
be explored, tested, and remodelled to suit demands and appetites. His
meticulous preening of his surface 'mask' accords him the same sense of
control over a body as does his torture of his victims' bodies.

   Ambition in career and social circles transmutes to dominion over his
body, over women, and indeed over society's impositions and accepted
norms. Ultimately the veneer of civility is so fragile that Bateman sees
himself as a shell:

> There wasn't a clear, identifiable emotion within me, except greed
> and possibly total disgust. I had all the characteristics of a human
> being – flesh, blood, skin, hair – but my depersonalization was so
> intense, had gone so deep, that the normal ability to feel compassion
> had been eradicated, the victim of a slow purposeful erasure. I was
> simply imitating reality, with only a dim corner of my mind func-
> tioning. Something horrible was happening and yet I couldn't figure
> out why. (271)

This desperate building up of civility, leaving only greed and disgust,
again echoes *Heart of Darkness*. Bateman sees himself as less than
human, merely acting human, and not in control of his crumbling
sanity, morals, and 'learned' emotions. All that society and civilization
dictate as ethical, mannerly, and just are erased to show the true canni-
bal beneath. Bateman's disgust at himself stems from the knowledge
that he is not whole, he transgresses boundaries of the law and the

body. His mania continues as he literally ingests and vomits the city, indeed, ingests and vomits popular culture as a whole (hotdogs, pop music, homeless people, yuppies), and the life of inequality and injustice that it represents. Towards the end of the novel Bateman informs the reader that things are not going well, he has started drinking his own urine and flossing until his mouth tastes of blood. Instead of his girlfriend drinking his urine, now he has become the consumer of the abject. In telling his account he has not been cured, there is no resolution, no convenient exit point. There is no catharsis, only consumption, culminating in the reader's consumption of the novel.

In Bateman's world there is no individuality or goodness, only apathy and disgust at what the world has become and what the world has made you become. He feels utter detachment and so he seeks closeness through consumption, ultimately finding the only closeness he achieves is closeness to his own ego and the ability to consume everything, including himself. In a cyclical revenge, the world that preached consume is itself consumed by the very products it creates; its colonizers and world traders, its heroes and role models of masculinity. *American Psycho* undermines the stability of the systems of media, commerce, and pornography as *Heart of Darkness* undermines the systems of slavery, trade, and imperialism. Cannibalism is the logical extreme in these systems of excessive consumption.

Another negative connotation of the city is that it is a diseased, amoral place. In the coverage of Jack the Ripper murders, syphilis was closely intertwined in the accounts of squalor, licentiousness and death. Overcrowding in the city leads to fears of contamination from contagious diseases. This fear was most recently expressed in the hype surrounding the avian and swine flu viruses which caused widespread panic. Furthermore the city is seen to hide diseased bodies. Just as the consumer serial killer achieves anonymity in his apparent normality as urbanite, the person sneezing next to us on the underground may have swine flu, the last person to touch the hand rail may not have washed their hands after going to the bathroom. Bacteria, we are told, are everywhere, an invisible menace. The fears of contamination from so much contact with so many strangers is evidenced in the plethora of advertising for ever more powerful bleach, all-purpose cleaners, hand sanitizers, deep pore cleansers, ice-cool mouth washes, and so on, that promise to eradicate, eliminate, flush out, and generally squash all the nasty unseen dirt that apparently threatens our very existence. In *Exquisite Corpse*, Poppy Z. Brite combines HIV, serial killing, homosexuality, and cannibalism in a violent account of the diseased city space.

Exquisite Corpse

Poppy Z. Brite's *Exquisite Corpse* (1996) is the gruesome, violent tale of two serial killers: Andrew, based on British serial killer Dennis Nilsen, who fakes his own death in order to escape from prison in London, and Jay, based on Jeffrey Dahmer, who introduces Andrew to the delights of necrophilia and cannibalism in New Orleans. Both men prefer young men as their victims and the story covers the gay scene in both Soho and the French Quarter, figuring these neighbourhoods as diseased spaces. Throughout the novel there is the fear of AIDS and the associated stigma from the 'straight' community. Brite's first-person narrative of a serial killer was criticized by a Penguin editor for making her killers too 'admirable and almost vampiric' (oddly implying that it is somehow all right to be a vampire but not a serial killer and cannibal). The extremity of the body horror represented throughout the novel made it difficult for Brite to find a publisher with both her usual publishers, Dell in America and Penguin in the UK, refusing it (Poppy Z. Brite homepage). *Time Out* magazine described the book as: 'Often gross, always fascinating, Brite's romantic vision of serial killers in love, using the male body like a communion wafer, is certain to disturb' (*Time Out*, blurb of *Exquisite Corpse*). When asked about the darkness of the novel in an interview, Brite explained: 'I didn't consider it more graphic, shocking or extreme until everyone started saying it was.' She goes on to argue that because there are no supernatural elements to the story it is more terrifying; it cannot be dismissed as not possible or real (Larson Interview). Rather than vampires these are cannibals; rather than fantasy this is realism. The fact that Brite drew her characters from very real real-life serial killers Nilsen and Dahmer heightens this justified abhorrence and fear. Nilsen himself believes that some of the blame for his murders should be placed at the door of the society he lived in, and his biographer Brian Masters points out that 'perhaps nothing of the nightmare would have occurred he implied, if we lived in a social ambience where people cared about their neighbours, where society as a whole did not permit homelessness and despair in the young … he was not killing individuals, but society itself' (Masters 187). While the violence in Brite's novel is shocking, I believe it is important in exploring the attack on society made by Nilsen, the idea of the city as a diseased space, and the fascination with what Seltzer terms 'wound culture' at the end of the twentieth century (Seltzer 109). As an urban cannibal novel, *Exquisite Corpse* is imbued with current real fears of AIDS and urban fears of isolation and anonymity, factors which lead to an enthralment with the abject. These are the same

fears the Ripper murders explored: syphilis, the underclass, the dark corners of the city, the question of who is monstrous. I will now look at Brite's urban characters firstly as serial killers, secondly as homosexuals, and thirdly as cannibals.

Brite explores the figure of the serial killer by imbuing her fiction with facts from the real stories. In the prologue of the novel she quotes the *Milwaukee Journal* from March 1995: 'Records of the 1994 autopsy of serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer reveal that officials kept Dahmer's body shackled at the feet during the entire procedure, such was the fear of the man' (Brite no page number). Setting up the serial killer as a figure of terror of almost supernatural power Brite then moves on to her semi-fictitious characters. Andrew's autopsy echoes Dahmer's in that he rises from the autopsy table after faking his own death and begins a murderous rampage. Andrew compares himself to Jack the Ripper in his anonymity: 'Murderers are blessed with adaptive faces. We often appear bland and dull; no one ever passed the Ripper in the street and thought, *that chap looks as if he ate a girl's kidney last night*' (Brite 23). Mocking the cult of the serial killer and profiler Andrew dismisses the claim that murderers must 'harbour some veiled trauma in their past: some pathetic concatenation of abuse, rape, soul corrosion', and claims he was born with no morals and has not learned any since. He describes himself as isolated, a species of one, similar to a monster or Nietzschean superman (159). Brite, here, is subtly commenting on the thrill of popular culture in portraying these killers as purely evil monsters who might live next door. Yet, even more subtly, she explores the deep isolation and powerlessness that leads to such crime. Andrew's view of himself as a species of one is telling of his deep isolation and psychotic need for power and human contact. Nilsen, the basis for Andrew's character, said of Hannibal Lecter: 'He is shown as a potent figure, which is pure myth. It is his power and manipulation which pleases the public. But it's not at all like that. My offences arose from a feeling of inadequacy, not potency. I never had any power in my life' (in Tithecott 6). Brite does not offer us a mythical figure of potency but a desperate violence arising from extreme isolation.

She uses the figure of the serial killer to explore both the fragmented body and psyche of late twentieth-century urban culture. Throughout *Exquisite Corpse* the traumatized bodies of the victims are constantly on display and Horsley notes that twentieth-century crime fiction is 'littered with semiotic bodies', fragmented, grotesque, gruesome, turned inside out, arguing that this 'physical violation images the fragility of all our boundaries, and this breaking down of borders' (Horsley 6). Yet,

the traumatized psyche of the killers is also on display. In fact, Horsley convincingly argues that the two are connected: the wounded psyche of the killer is expressed in the wounds he inflicts on others. He makes the body of his victim speak the 'language of his own psychosis' (6). Nilsen sat with his victims in his home for days and weeks after killing them, propping them into lifelike positions, watching television, lying in bed, patting a dog. He wanted to enjoy their company before disposing of the rotting corpse. Dahmer too ensured his victims never left him by consuming them and making them part of his own body. Both Andrew and Jay express these sentiments in the novel with the language of gothic violence overlapping with sensual romantic language as the murders are described as 'rebirth' (Brite 71), 'like coming home' (240), 'sacred union' (232). I will look at the role of cannibalism in the novel later, but for now it suffices to say that Brite suggests the motive for such horror is loneliness and her characters' handling of the corpses demonstrates a desperate need to be close to another human body. The broken body of serial killer fiction is a gory metaphor for the broken urban identity.

Brite's novel is very much an urban one, although, in comparison to Ellis's novel, she chooses the fringes of the city rather than the centre. This is, I believe, because she is commenting on the homosexual communities isolated from the heteronormative city centre. Benshoff examines the figure of the homosexual in Hollywood and notes how the multiple social meanings of the words 'monster' and 'homosexual' are seen to overlap to varying but often high degrees. Certain sectors of the population still relate homosexuality to 'bestiality, incest, necrophilia and sadomasochism etc. – the very stuff of classical Hollywood movies. The concepts of "monster" and "homosexual" share many of the same semantic charges and arouse many of the same fears about sex and death' (Benshoff 92). Furthermore, both the monster and the homosexual are permanent residences of shadowy spaces such as caves, castles, and closets, and at best occupy a marginalized and oppressed position within the cultural hegemony (98). Thus, within the city the homosexual is located in the margins. Furthermore, the association of homosexuality with AIDS results in a figuring of these margins as diseased spaces. Sibley comments on the idea of disease as a racial or sexual signifier which is seen to spread from a 'deviant' minority to threaten the 'normal' majority with infection. This fear has a 'particular power' and is apparent in current anxieties about AIDS, which 'reinforce homophobic or racist attitudes – AIDS as the gay disease, AIDS as the black African disease . . . It is important to have somewhere (else) to locate

these threats. It is a necessary part of distanciation' (Sibley *Geographies* 25–26).

The novel is based in London and New Orleans, or rather in Soho and the French Quarter. In his biography of London, Ackroyd pays special attention to Soho as a distinct district within the city. Soho was largely inhabited by French Huguenots immigrating in the seventeenth century. The presence of the French immigrants in a place where the arrival of an Englishman was not very common, created an air of the exotic, in certain respects, he argues, 'it was *not English*'. Further to this, its reputation for heterogenity was associated with sexual liberties, and by the end of the eighteenth century it was notorious for courtesans and female and male prostitutes. Despite the external alterations governed by time and fashion, Ackroyd notes the essential 'atmosphere and purpose' of Soho have remained the same. At the beginning of a new century, he states, Soho remains the centre for sex and 'the narrow thoroughfares of Soho are always crowded now, with people in search of sex, spectacle or excitement; it has retained its "queer adventurous" spirit and seems a world away from the clubs of Pall Mall or the shops of Oxford Street which lie respectively to its south and north' (Ackroyd 535). Likewise, New Orleans, and in particular the French Quarter have a reputation as a melting pot of races and cultures, swampy landscape, musical traditions that distance it from the popular norms further north, elements of voodoo, and cuisine decidedly 'foreign' in nature. Brite herself noticed that in her novels she portrays her hometown as stereotypically other and dangerous and in an interview with Liz Miller expresses dissatisfaction with the way she had written about the city inhabited with 'angst-ridden minorities' in a 'decadent fantastical manner'.

The city in Brite's novel is a place of isolation, seediness, crime, and disease. Rather than the mythic skyscrapers of New York, here we are given the public toilets, bus stations, seedy bars, and back alleys of Soho. New Orleans is otherworldly with swamps, fetid factories, greasy orange flames against weird purple skies (Brite 140). In the colonial novels the jungle or desert figured as the site of horror. In the regional texts it was the journey off the beaten track that revealed rural terror. In *Exquisite Corpse* Soho and the French Quarter hide the cannibalistic monsters of the late twentieth century. The city itself, as with the Ripper coverage, seems to be cannibalistic. Andrew's arrival in the city is akin to being swallowed and digested:

> I stood staring at the filthy brown surface of the Mississippi River. The water had a slick look, iridescent with a thin film of crude oil.

> It humped and heaved and rolled as if in peristalsis, a long brown
> string of viscera endlessly churning. I was near its sphincter, which
> accounted for the smell. (138)

Reminiscent of Marlow's journey up river to the heart of darkness,
Andrew seems to be entering a nightmarish world of excessive corpo-
reality.

   Brite uses these locations as the setting for her pervasive discourse
about AIDS, homosexuality, and, what Cook terms, 'heteronormative
panic' (Cook 130). Brite's novel, in situating her serial killers at the
fringes of major cities and associating them with homosexuality, sug-
gests an uncomfortable causal relationship between drugs, deviance,
homosexuality, disease, pathological serial killer, cannibal. Cook argues
the novel suggests such a causal chain, however, only to undermine
it. AIDS:

> [the] novel's subtext that refuses to remain beneath the surface, is
> both a link between the serial killers and other homosexual char-
> acters (everyone is either infected or fears that they might be), as
> well as a contagion that produces panic beyond the homosexual
> community . . . and stimulating the novel's own political critique of
> heteronormativity's homophobia. (132)

Susan Sontag examines illness and AIDS as metaphor and explains how
illness is described in terms of invasion and infiltration (Sontag 105).
AIDS in particular in the early 1990s was seen as part of stigmatiza-
tion of a 'community of pariahs' and of behaviour that is judged to be
delinquent, illegal, or deviant (110–111). Furthermore, in America AIDS
has become increasingly a disease of the urban poor and a sign of dis-
abled family life, the 'gay plague', or unstoppable migration from the
DevelopingWorld. Just as there was fear of contamination or going sav-
age in the colonies and resentment of the 'invasion' of rural bumpkins
to the cities in the 1950s, AIDS is, at the end of the century, consid-
ered an invasion from the dark continent into the hearts of Western
cities, resulting in subliminal connections between a primitive past, ani-
mality, and sexual licence (137–138). Interestingly Sontag also argues
that AIDS figures in the capitalism of the late twentieth century: the
message of capitalism is to consume and sexuality has become a con-
sumer option. AIDS suggests a '*necessity* of limitation, of constraint for
the body', a desire for limits to appetite (163–164), in much the same
way that the other serial killer narratives suggest an over-consumptive

society. *Exquisite Corpse* links the homosexual killer narrative and AIDS narrative as part of a wider critique of society and disrupts the notion of a boundary between Other and self in the same way that Sweeney's pies and Bateman's duplicity do. The media's headlines (such as 'AIDS: Are your kids safe?') are held up for mockery in the novel and are suggestive of the paranoia that results from an implicit acknowledgement of the instability of the borders separating all identities, bodily, or otherwise. As with cannibalism in the early twentieth century, AIDS is always some place else, part of a less sophisticated minority in a less glamorous part of the city. Yet, as with cannibalism, the reality is much more insidious and widespread. By situating itself as a novel about margins that centralizes those margins, *Exquisite Corpse* ruptures the 'division between the marginal and the central' (Cook 132).

Exquisite Corpse works in much the same was as *American Psycho* does in that it suggests the pervasion of cultural cannibalism by aligning 'normal' food with violence, and cannibalism with gastronomy. The novel is drenched in oral metaphors, tongues, teeth, lips, guts, entrails, orifices of all sorts, and constant consumption. Blood is described at various stages as 'rich metallic' (Brite 20), semen and blood as 'faintly caustic…the coppery trace of Guinness' (63), 'rich, steaming…essence of life' (112), 'fuel' (175), and 'like nothing else' (240). Brite upsets boundaries by describing cannibalism in gastronomic terms (in fact she has since turned her attention to writing books about food and restaurants, such as *Liqour* 2004). Human features are aligned with food: a smile is as 'succulent as meat' (28), a head hitting a wall 'like a ripe melon landing on marble' (62), intestines are 'soft boudin sausages' (102), a testicle is 'a salty raw oyster' (241), a young boy's mouth is 'a perfect bonbon he could rip into as he pleased' (117), flesh is 'firm pudding' (144), a heroin user has a 'faint gingery taste' (186), and a cancerous body is 'a steaming delicacy…that the cook has laced…with weed killer' (189). Conversely food is suggestive of the underlying sadomasochistic violence: beer is 'liquid silk, slow-brewed joy' (56), oysters are an 'undifferentiated mass of tissue' (71), 'pompano en papillote, a dollop of daube glace, or a succulent morsel of cedar-plank drum' are forgotten in preference to succulent boy's flesh (175–176). Typical New Orleans dishes are contaminated with the suggestion of cannibalism as Jay plans to make cherry liqueur with pickled hands, and jambalaya with human meat from the fridge. He describes his culinary prowess with pleasure:

I cut them into manageable pieces and flay the meat off the bones…I save some of the organs – the liver if I haven't torn it up

too badly, and the heart, which is quite tough but has a bitter, intense flavour. I tried to make soup stock out of some of the bones once, but it tasted awful. Human fat is just too rancid to eat. Usually I tenderize the meat and roast it or fry it with very little seasoning. Each part of the body has a distinct flavour, and each body tastes subtly different. (179)

Oppositions and differences blur in the novel. The delicious food is used to describe the final taboo, and human flesh is no more than another tasty delicacy to be consumed. Likewise, the language of lovers and the language of serial killers mirror each other, most resonantly in their fear of being left alone. Through Andrew, the novel explores cannibalism as a means of avoiding isolation and the desire to keep the other. Cook also argues this point stating that when Andrew and Jay eat their victims, they attempt to dissolve the separation between their own bodies and the bodies of the others. They quite literally incorporate the bodies they have 'sadistically tortured, masochistically (if symbolically) taking that pain they have inflicted into themselves. Their consumption obliterates the social limit between self and other, as well as the limit separating sadist and masochist' (Cook 123). The novel finishes with Andrew eating a 'Jay sandwich' on the train: 'my . . . intestines milled Jay down to his essence . . . I wanted to keep Jay's meat in me as long as I could, to process and assimilate as much of him as possible. When I awoke, he would be with me always . . . This time I was not corpse, but larva' (Brite 242). The sense of becoming, or being reborn is again typical of these city cannibal texts. It is as if there is a deep need to break out of a confined identity and be reborn as something stronger. The profusion of orifices and entryways in *Exquisite Corpse* and the complete absence of female characters is suggestive to me of a male pregnancy and rebirth through consumption.

  In both *American Psycho* and *Exquisite Corpse* the city itself plays a central role in the characterization of the cannibalistic serial killers, as it did in the Jack the Ripper accounts and Sweeney Todd stories. London, New York, and New Orleans become characters themselves, as filthy and corrupt as the killers they spawn. The consumer city of Sweeney Todd and *American Psycho* suggests the ignorant consumers are somewhat complicit in a metaphorical cannibalization of each other in the amoral frenzy to consume. In Jack the Ripper accounts and *Exquisite Corpse* the city as a diseased space results in the perception of the killers and their victims as sexually deviant, infectious, and dangerous Others. While the city is not explicitly *blamed* in these texts, it is a strong 'character'

that is powerfully aligned with the crimes. It is cannibalistic in itself, a place devoid of morals, intimacy, or accountability. In the character I am now going to examine, Hannibal Lecter, we have a character who does not belong to one particular city. He transcends particular locales and becomes the 'everywhere urban cannibal'. There is no easy alignment with general flaws in urban living, Lecter is a more terrifyingly inexplicable monster. Not diseased, not an arrogant over-consumer, not Other in any sense, he is the culmination of the twentieth-century cannibal-as-self.

Hannibal Lecter

Hannibal Lecter, the cannibalistic psychotherapist, first appeared in Thomas Harris's *Red Dragon* published in 1981. Its film adaptation was released in 1986 under the title *Manhunter* (Dir. Mann) and its remake (2002) under the original title of *Red Dragon* (Dir. Ratner). Lecter's habits are further explored in novels and films *Silence of the Lambs* (1988 and Dir. Demme, 1991) and *Hannibal* (1999 and Dir. Scott, 2001), and his childhood is fully explored in *Hannibal Rising* (2006 and Dir. Webber, 2007). While Harris' novels *Red Dragon* and *Silence of the Lambs* were critically and commercially successful, it was not until the film adaptation of the latter was released in 1991 that Lecter, as played by Anthony Hopkins, became a cultural icon. By late 1991, Lecter was arguably the most publicized and recognized personality in America. Twelve million copies of *Silence of the Lambs* were sold worldwide and the film took $100 million in its first year. It also won five Oscars in 1992 when presenter Billy Crystal was wheeled onto the stage in the then infamous Lecter mask and straight jacket. Its Best Picture Oscar was the first major award for a horror film since Rouben Mamoulian's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) won Best Actor in 1932. Lecter has since been called the 'most powerful character in modern melodrama' (Sexton 12) and has been named the most memorable villain in film history by The American Film Institute.

Many reviews of *Silence,* since its popularity and success, present it as a horror movie, with plenty of gory pleasure and terror, and, simultaneously, try to distance it from the horror genre. This distinction is achieved by analysis of the film's aesthetic qualities and its politics, usually defined in feminist terms. Worland marks the film as the Hollywood début of gory, Italian-style detective drama – American *giallo* (an Italian film genre in the 1970s involving crime, thriller, erotica, and mystery). The influence of Hitchcock's *Psycho* is clear in the film's 'adroit audience manipulation' and its second killer, Buffalo Bill (Worland 112–113). Much has already been written on the film's aesthetics and on the

gender questions raised by feisty FBI agent Clarice Starling and trans-
gendered serial killer and skinner Jame Gumb with Starling repeatedly
granted point-of-view shots in the movie that empower her, while
Gumb is reduced to a familiar 'homophobic stereotype of an effemi-
nate psychopath' (Lewis 190–194). My focus, however, is on Lecter, the
ultrasophisticated cannibal and serial killer as he is the culmination of
the cannibal figure; having moved through the unveilings of the canni-
bal from being an African savage, a highland brute, a redneck monster,
a London serial killer, an urban homosexual, a Wall Street overcon-
sumer, we arrive at the charming doctor who is a cannibalistic anti-hero.
No longer Other, no longer completely vilified, Hannibal the Cannibal
fascinates as well as terrorizes. As I am examining the character of Lecter
rather than the individual texts he appears in, I will refer to both the
novels and the films without much differentiation. Lecter has somewhat
transcended the individual texts and become an entity to be analysed in
himself.

The fascination with Lecter is evident in the attention given to him
over other, more prominent characters in the novels and films. In *Red
Dragon* the reader meets Lecter late in the novel. However, Harris has
already set him up as a legendary figure by teasing the reader with hints
of his crimes through conversations between Crawford and Graham:
'Dr. Hannibal Lecter did that with a linoleum knife . . . known in the
tabloids as "Hannibal the Cannibal" ' (Harris *Red* 10), and 'He did it
because he liked it. Still does' (61). We are not given explicit details of
his crimes, rather hints at the level of gruesomeness that makes even
steely Crawford and Graham wince. Lecter's past remains hidden until
Hannibal Rising. This opacity makes Lecter a truly monstrous enigma,
unsettlingly and attractively unquantifiable. He cannot be understood
in terms of his past, a crucial difference between Lecter and the likes of
Norman Bates whose overbearing mother was considered ample expla-
nation for his madness, if a somewhat easy parody of psychoanalysis.
Hannibal Rising, the Lecter 'origin' novel, has not been very well received
and is not a very successful book. It seems Harris made a mistake giv-
ing Lecter a childhood which explains his nature as it makes him less
remarkable. The disappointment of many readers shows how much
of Lecter's charm rested in the idea of him as inexplicably, mysteri-
ously evil. This was also the case with the remake of *Halloween* (2007,
Dir. Rob Zombie) in which the abusive, white trash past of the serial
killer Michael Myers is offered as explanation for his crimes. Ironically
in *Red Dragon* Harris predicts this response through Chilton's analysis
of Lecter's refusal to be 'understood': 'I think he's afraid that if we solve

him, nobody will be interested in him any more and he'll be stuck in a back ward somewhere for the rest of his life' (Harris *Red* 66). The mystery of Lecter is lurking in the background of much of the material. It assumes a psychologically central role in the structure of the stories much as Kurtz does in *Heart of Darkness*.

Like a myth, Lecter has become larger than the story which produced him. Lecter is a striking amalgam of the classic monsters: like Dracula he has a pronounced taste for human blood, like Frankenstein he is a brilliant but mad scientist, like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde he has two personalities, civilized and savage, and like a side-show freak he is held and exhibited in zoo-like enclosures (Skal 382). Likewise, Lecter is a compound of evil figures from myth; he is Satan, Vampire, Beast to Clarice's Beauty, and Serpent. He therefore fulfils the psychological role that these figures have filled in culture, that is, the tempter, the threatening Other, the invader, the monster beneath the surface, and the sadist. James Twitchell notes how the 'vampire, the hulk-with-no-name, and the transformation monster have all slithered up from the myth pool to become staple images on the dry land of popular culture because we want, and need, them around' (Twitchell 258) and they cause horror because they block our attempts to classify or control them (24). *Silence* brings its monster into to the real world, drawing him from real freaks who terrorized real citizens. Twitchell notes that the most terrifying figure in popular horror is the 'transformation monster whose transformation is incomplete' (259). Lecter, and indeed Bateman, fit into this 'truly terrible' category in that they are most definitely human, functioning, and respected members of Western, urban society while simultaneously being sadistic killers and cannibals.

Even though Lecter is a fictional character, he has been referenced in real life by authors, film-makers, and even the FBI. Because of his disturbingly realistic personality, many real-life serial killers, such as Andrei Chikatilo and Jeffrey Dahmer have been compared to him. Certainly Thomas Harris played on, and in some ways encouraged, the cultural fascination with serial killers and those who pursue them. Tithecott believes Harris's novel and Demme's movie were of crucial significance to the way Jeffrey Dahmer was represented, owing to their concurrence with the breaking of Dahmer's story. Harris is famously interview-shy and has been reluctant to say exactly where the inspiration for Hannibal came from. However, Albert Fish, Ed Gein, Andrei Chikatilo, and Ted Bundy have all been named as possible influences. Harris studied these cases in detail, amassing information on these cannibal serial killers. Fish was a child molester, killer and cannibal in the early twentieth

century in New York, Gein a Wisconsin murderer and necrophiliac in the 1950s, Chikatilo a Russian serial killer in the 1980s whose victims were mostly women and children, and Bundy an infamous serial killer in the 1970s in Washington, Utah, and Colorado. Harris spent time with Robert Ressler and John Douglas of the Behavioural Science Unit, Quantico, where the FBI training academy is located, and used his findings to detail the thought processes of 'monsters'.

In every Lecter novel characters are asked 'what is he?' The answer is always the same: 'There are no words for him, for now we call him a monster.' The term monster is so often applied to Lecter, and to other cannibal serial killers, that I believe it needs some analysis. Noel Carroll notes how in horror the monster is 'an extraordinary character in an ordinary world', while in fairytales the monster is 'an ordinary creature in an extraordinary world' (Carroll 16). The responses of characters in horror to these monsters cue the emotional responses of the audiences and readers. This response is often one of disgust and a conviction that contact with the monster can be lethal. This disgust stems from a view of the monster as 'unnatural', as not fitting into the scheme of the norm, thus, as Carroll states: 'Monsters are not only physically threatening; they are cognitively threatening. They are threats to common knowledge . . . monsters are in a certain sense challenges to the foundations of a culture's way of thinking' (34). Contrary to this, however, Carroll notes how many of these monstrous figures 'literalise a philosophical view of the person as divided between good and evil, between reason and appetite . . . Thus these creatures do not subvert culture's conceptions of personhood, but rather articulate them' (178). However, Carroll has received a great deal of criticism because some argue that his description simply does not apply to the serial killer. Jancovich, Prawer, Worland, and Phillips all note the relationship between normality and the monster in horror film. Jancovich, making reference to Robin Wood, explains how 'it is not "abnormal" or foreign elements which are the problem, but American definitions of normality' (Jancovich *American* 16). Prawer sees the monster behind the masked face of politicians (Prawer 16), Worland sees monstrosity located squarely within the nuclear family (Worland 87), while Phillips sees horror in the late twentieth century as part of the real world and the horrors of politics (Phillips *Projected* 147). Robin Wood looks at the idea of the doppelgänger or alter ego where normality and the monster are two aspects of the same person (Wood 'American' 31). With a postmodern collapse of boundaries the monstrous threat is not simply external but erupts from within and so 'challenges the distinction between self and other' (Jancovich *Horror*

5–6). The serial killer is, therefore, not a monster that can be easily located in another realm, location, or psyche. He more often stems from the contemporary reality, the city, and displays everyday characteristics. Rather than a monster, it seems, the serial killer is a monstrous display of the horror within the norm.

This is, I believe the first aspect of Lecter's appeal; he is real, like us; and that is something we are terrified of – recognizing the monster as ourselves. Our attraction to the Lecter novels is an expression of the desire to look into the face of our monstrous self, to enter the heart of darkness and explore beneath the surface of ourselves, for as Nietzsche warned: 'He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes into you' (qtd. in Tithecott 109). The monster changes as society's fears change and Lecter's monstrosity reflects the post-Watergate era where monsters are as likely to be those in positions of responsibility and power as those on the margins of society. More so, Lecter enjoyed his popularity at the tail end of Reagan's administration and, as with his Manhattan counterpart Bateman, reflects the anxieties of surviving in an economy built on overconsumption. In Lecter progress and regress merge; he is a man of cultured, aesthetic tastes and crude, savage impulses. This is an exaggeration of the aim of free market economics of the 1980s – consume luxury products at all costs. Saltzman argues that as Lecter's 'misanthropic delectation mixes elegant reserve with vile savour', neither 'raving nor wrath' marks the monster so definitively as the 'studied remove from which Lecter operates...urbanity seems first to conceal his nature, then to convey it' (Saltzman 236). Thus his monstrosity is, paradoxically, a reflection of normality. He is the ultimate expression of the affinity between barbarism and civilization and the savagery of the modern city where a cut-throat appetite is celebrated.

Further to this, Lecter's appeal lies in his ability to work within this urban hell on his own terms and he uses its systems to his own advantage. In this ways he embodies traditional heroic, cowboy-like qualities that express a wider desire to live beyond the confines of society. Indeed, Harris describes Lecter as a wicked, dark man whose attractiveness/repulsiveness lies in the fact that he is both malevolent and brutally honest. More importantly, 'he says things that I suppose we would all like to say. It's his contention that the asylum is the only place in the world where free speech is practised. He may be right' (Harris qtd. in Sexton 98–99). Speaking about Shakespeare's Richard III as an example of the attractive villain, Robin Wood notes how we are both horrified by his evil and delighted with his intellect, his art, his

audacity: 'while our moral sense is appalled by his outrages, another part of us gleefully identifies with him' (Wood 'American' 32). Likewise it is Lecter's wit, intelligence, and audacity that 'endear' him to us. Lecter's cannibalism, a taboo-shattering behaviour, exiles him from society. However, Simpson notes, unwilling to completely dissociate himself from civilization, Lecter still delights in mocking social conventions beneath 'exquisite courtesy' and manners (Simpson 108–109). Lecter mocks the conventions of courtesy while adopting them, simply because his methodology of existence, like Patrick Bateman's, depends on the very cruelty that courtesy masks. He is outside the bounds of society and rather than be categorized, labelled and contained by the system he swallows it, subverts it, and mocks it with his higher intelligence, taste, and cunning, symbolically attacking a census taker who dares to attempt to categorize him according to facts and figures. The darkly humorous artistry of his crimes is hard to resist. For example, the murder of Italian policeman Pazzi is precisely crafted: Lecter hangs him, in the image of his ancestor, in the centre of Florence after tracing the linkage in art between avarice and hanging. Lecter's crimes are elaborate and gruesome, above and beyond senseless butchery. In this rejection of easy categorization and sense of knowing more than those in authority, Lecter appeals to an audience failed by their political leaders and tired of battling for status in an economic and political time that privileged the wealthy and largely ignored the poor.

   Simpson suggests: 'It is little exaggeration to say that Thomas Harris, for all practical purposes, created the current formula for mainstream serial killer fiction back in 1981 with the publication of *Red Dragon*' (70). Indeed, Lecter's popularity as a serial killer is not an isolated phenomenon. Convicted murderer and cannibal Issei Sagawa has made a career in his native Japan from selling his experiences as a cannibal, producing a work titled *In The Fog* (1983), becoming a restaurant critic and newspaper columnist. Sagawa became infatuated with a classmate while studying in France in the early 1980s. His infatuation boiled over into cannibalism and he was arrested carrying parts of his victim's body in suitcases. His case caught the public's attention. Sagawa commented that the public had made him the godfather of cannibalism and that made him happy. This is also true in Thomas Harris' novels where the focus is on the serial killers and, ultimately, on Hannibal Lecter, rather than the, sometimes unnamed, victims of their crimes. Lecter's stories and those of real-life serial killers provide for us, Tithecott argues, perhaps more than any other contemporary texts, the opportunity to 'drool over and get turned on by repeat murders' (Tithecott 9). Harris may be

commenting on the celebrity status given to serial killers in the media and the desire to diagnose or 'other' them. While the papers call Lecter an insane fiend and the most savage killer in captivity, guilty of unspeakable practices, he is given attention, he is infamous. There is a tone of scorn for the media's and the public's fascination with Lecter in the novels. Doctor Chilton suggests some researchers think it is chic to correspond with him, publishing his works for the 'freak value of his byline' (Harris *Silence* 12) and the media are accused of loving him more than Prince Andrew, offering him money for some recipes. Harris seems to be commenting on the fascination with, and in some cases glorification of, actual serial killers in the media. Yet, ironically, he is heightening this interest and making a consumer product from this frenzy of interest in the abnormal, the abhorrent underbelly of society and the psyche. He contributes to the fascination by making his serial killer so attractive. Harris is disgusted by the celebrity aura surrounding some killers due to the attention given to them by the media, but he is using this to his advantage in creating someone like Lecter, a figure he can cash in on and return to repeatedly in order to sell more copies. Moreover, Harris aims his criticism of the media at the *National Enquirer* for the kind of publicity they provide for serial killers, and he does not question the exploitative journalism of 'big' broadsheet newspapers such as *The New York Times*. Janet Malcolm in *The Journalist and the Murderer* (2004) convincingly argues that the journalist and the subject get what they want out of the relationship: 'Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible. He is a kind of confidence man, preying on people's vanity, ignorance, or loneliness, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse' (Malcolm 3). Harris too gestures towards this opinion in the way the media mould Lecter's personality to suit themselves, yet Harris himself moulds a character to feed market demands.

Of course, part of the fascination with serial killers is their ability to blend into 'normal society'. As I have mentioned with reference to Bateman, masks are often an important trope in serial killer fiction, not least in the Lecter stories. Lecter is caged like an animal with a kind of hockey mask in the asylum, a mask, which seems to reference Jason Voorhees, and which draws attention to his mouth, giving him the appearance of a fanged monster. He later creates a mask from a policeman's face in order to escape in *Silence of the Lambs*. Even here, Tasker notes, the Bach underlines the Doctor's class, or at least his taste. He can adopt the mask of civility and order to hide the savage impulses

beneath. Like Leatherface's mask of human skin and Patrick Bateman's mask of sanity in the guise of a cosmetic face-mask, Lecter too disguises his real self with an image of civilization. He literally wears the face of the prison officer. Dracula too dresses in Jonathan Harker's clothes when he kidnaps babies in the local village. By the sequel *Hannibal*, Lecter's 'metonymic muzzle-mask' has become a prized item in its own right (Jones 115). Harris' use of these masks raises the question about the kinds of mask we everyday. The use of masks heightens the sense that the boundaries between binaries are flimsy and penetrable. As a result, the boundaries between hero and villain are unclear. Furthermore, masks hide emotions and limit identification, symbolic of the anonymity of the city dweller. The process of changing identities, of forming a coherent, 'beautiful' self is of great pertinence to a readership floundering without the traditional guidelines for identity and without a set appearance in the age of cosmetic surgery. Anyone can change his appearance, and there is a certain appeal in the idea of a removable mask. The popularity of the Lecter stories suggests that the fear of loss of identity prevalent in the earlier half of the century has been replaced or supplemented by a desire to change identity, to reinvent oneself. As Anthony Giddens posits: 'We become responsible for the design of our own bodies, and in a certain sense…are forced to do so the more post-traditional the social contexts in which we move' (Giddens 102). Jame Gumb (Buffalo Bill) changes identity by wearing the skin of his victims, and Lecter's identity merges with those of his victims' when he consumes them. Perversely, even Lecter's cannibalism seems almost refined when set against Buffalo Bill's skinning of women – a 'gourmet seeking out the culinary exotic, he incorporates others rather than attempting to get inside them' (Tasker 83). That is, he is a consumer rather than user. Lecter and Buffalo Bill incorporate others and break down the opposition between self and other, inside and outside, but where Lecter takes others inside himself, Bill puts himself inside others (Kilgour 'Function' 252). The fantasy of transformation and images of renewal and rebirth abound in the novels, offering a secular understanding of change and rebirth, replacing religious concepts of resurrection and redemption. Post-modern identity seems caught up in its own transmutability. While on the one hand this offers freedom to change, on the other it suggests that any identity is a mask that can be removed. This is a notion that is both liberating and terrifying and Lecter, as the cannibal-psychiatrist, is the embodiment of it.

Much of Lecter's power lies in the fact that he is a brilliant psychiatrist. As a psychiatrist and cannibal, Lecter is both explorer and explored.

Through creating Lecter as a cannibalistic psychiatrist, Harris points to the fear of the mind being controlled and the complete loss of self. Psychology is no longer an explanation for horror, it generates horror. As Halberstam points out:

> Psychoanalysis uncovers and prohibits and in its prohibition lies the seeds of a desire . . . The making visible of bodies, sex, power, and desire provokes a new monstrosity and dares the body to continue the striptease down to the bone. Hannibal elicits Starling's flashbacks only to demonstrate that stripping the mind is no less a violation than stripping the body and that mind and body are no longer split . . . and the raw nerve of Starling's memory is as exposed as the corpse that she dissected.
>
> (Halberstam 174)

Lecter 'feeds' on emotions, tasting Clarice's fear and Senator Martin's anguish. Tithecott likens Lecter's probing into the mind of Clarice as a search for images to get turned on by, words to fashion into pornography (Tithecott 102). Again this raises the question of how monstrous Lecter really is, for in a culture of reality television and confessional talk shows, there is a pleasure gained from hearing about other's pain and the cult of the serial killer stems in part from a desire to hear about atrocities. Freud saw the psychoanalyst as the explorer of a dark continent. The id, the unconscious, and the repressed were dark territories which threaten the ego with annihilation. Much of the language used in psychoanalysis echoes that of colonialism, with women's sexuality termed a dark continent: 'The map was yet to be drawn, or at least a sketchy map needed to be filled in. Not quite absent, it was present only in concealment and mysteriousness' (Khanna ix). The analyst's goal, therefore, is to colonize the territory of the id in an internal imperialism. As in *Heart of Darkness* where the impulse to cannibalize the resources of Africa becomes the real cannibalization of Africans, so Lecter becomes the symbolic cannibal of the mind and the actual cannibal of flesh. Kilgour furthers this point by stating that: 'While analysis could be seen as the most benevolent and civilised form of imperialism, as it conquers the mind rather than the body, in Harris's work the pretence of refinement masks a secret and increased appetite for flesh' (Kilgour 'Function' 249). Analysis is shown to be a kind of aggression and invasion which leads to physical consumption. As a cannibal Lecter threatens one's sense of integrity. Cannibalism erases difference between the familiar and unfamiliar through the collapse of boundaries.

Starling is the most prominent of Lecter's 'patients'. *The Silence of the Lambs'* jail cell *mise-en-scene* simulates an analytic session, with Starling learning from the Doctor how to think and recognizing the need to think like her evil mentor if she is to 'catch her quarry' (Fuss 191). Sexton describes the transaction between Starling and Lecter as 'somewhere between a parody of psychoanalysis and the bargain struck between Faust and Mephistopheles. He sucks out her inner life' (Sexton 106). Entering the asylum is akin to entering the heart of darkness, it is described in the novel as 'within', it is tunnel-like, entering the darkness of the psyche rather than the jungle. Starling's descent to Lecter is something she desires: she 'wanted to go inside. She wanted to go in, wanting it as we want to jump from balconies, as the glint of the rail tempts when we hear the approaching train' (Harris *Hannibal* 822). In the film version red lighting is used while Chilton describes Lecter's attack on the nurse and with the clang of gates Starling is in the high security ward. The row of cells finishes with Lecter's, his is the ultimate destination and behind a glass screen he stands calm and clean. When the camera spans around his cell, Lecter is poised and in a white t-shirt, he is the locus and the light. With only the glass separating them Starling seems no more free than Lecter, both are incarcerated – Starling by her lack of and need for information, Lecter by his knowledge of too much information. A close up of Lecter's face allows the audience to feel there is no barrier between him and Starling, and indeed the viewer and Lecter. A full-length shot of Lecter and Starling face-to-face, almost body-to-body suggests closeness and intimacy. When talking about the investigation of the crime the director uses a long view, showing the divide between Starling and Lecter; when they talk about Starling's personal memories a close-up of their faces is used, Lecter blinking slowly as he 'tastes' her pain. Fuss argues that the 'relentless shot/reverse shot movement of these intimate face-offs and the sustained back-and-forth rhythm of the camera's head-on, level gaze, creates a structure of symbolic exchange resulting in the two heads eventually become interchangeable' (Fuss 190–191).

Beneath Lecter's civilized veneer lies a sadistic and savage hunger that thrives on consuming both the flesh and psyches of those around him. His psychiatry is a mask of civilized appetite hiding barbaric ravenousness beneath. Reviewers have made repeated puns on taste and food when critiquing the film: 'Horrors Supp'd With Gentleman's Relish' and 'Nice to Eat You' in the *Independent on Sunday*, 2 June 1991, and *The Guardian*, 30 May 1991, respectively, almost, as Tasker notes, as if Lecter's cannibalism is a source of fascination rather than repulsion (Tasker 87). *The Silence of the Lambs* is a text obsessed with orality – with mouths,

lips, teeth, tongues, and, of course, 'gumbs'. Warned in *Hannibal* to be careful of Lecter's mouth Starling does not know whether she should be more careful of Lecter's teeth or his words. While under physical restraint, Lecter's oral-sadistic impulses seem to find temporary outlet in the psychiatrist's biting tongue. Lecter has the power to enact murder through walls and cages, through use of words and the control of minds. He drains minds before he feeds on the bodies. Demme uses the technique of cinematic close-up regularly to figure the identification between Lecter and Starling. In effect this 'decapitates the subject', reducing it to the face – the surface upon which, Fuss notes, 'subjectivity is figured'. It is, of course, also the zone of the mouth and its associated hunger (Fuss 190–191). Lecter has the rhetorical power to induce Miggs to swallow his own tongue, resulting in death. It is as if these killers are reduced to mouths; Gumb by his name, Miggs by literally swallowing himself, and Lecter is defined by his oral crimes. Lecter's ferocious orality and perverse appetite make him the 'very incarnation of the fairy tale ogre, although erudite and cultured, he acts out the most 'instinctual and primitive of libidinal impulses' (195). Described as a snake looking in a bird's nest there is a sense of Lecter seeking memories and emotions and feasting on them, his mouth is the locus of his power in both its sharp gnashing teeth and its articulation of verbal trickery and persuasion. This preoccupation with orality is suggestive of the underlying warning in these urban cannibal tales – rapacity is monstrous.

Lecter, the ultimate expression of self-obsession, is an all-consuming force utterly unbounded by the conventions of society, he is an 'entity of pure consuming desire, a ravenous id, unleashed from the bonds of morality or obligation' (Phillips *Projected* 158). Hannibal the cannibal, he whose powers of consumption are limitless, is one of our latest heroes of consumer culture. Lecter and the likes of Bateman, Sagawa, and Dahmer manage to confuse the consumption of food, sex, and human flesh in a manner we find powerfully intoxicating. Lecter's cannibalism, in comparison to Bateman's is more 'refined'. He still consumes human flesh but he accompanies it with fine wines, fava beans, garlic, and candlelight. Indeed, the gastronomic delight Lecter takes in the preparation of his cannibalistic feasts suggests a higher form of consumerism. As he sautés Starling's FBI rival Krendler's (Ray Liotta) brain, the scalped victim comments on how delicious it smells. Not the frantic generalized consumption of Bateman, this is refined and selective, suggestive of Lecter's ultrasophistication, it is unsettlingly alluring and implies the 'soft power' of Americanization and free market capitalism. Niall Ferguson suggests soft power is the velvet glove of

cultural exports covering the iron hand of self-serving, profit-making trade (Ferguson 24). Lecter packages his nastiness beautifully. He is magnetic and powerful; luring victims, Starling, and the reader/viewer into his lair in a suggestive metaphor of the lure of an appetitive consumer society.

Logically a peripheral character in *Red Dragon* and *Silence of the Lambs*, Lecter assumes a central position in *Hannibal*, moving from the margins to the centre, just as explorers of the dark continent feared the cannibal would do. While the cannibals in the colonies are recognized by race, and the killers in *Texas Chainsaw* are easily categorized as redneck savages, Lecter is a more slippery entity. Harris has created the ultimate anti-hero in Hannibal Lecter, the ultimate ambivalent location of alien and familiar, savage and civilized. The final image of *Silence of the Lambs* is Lecter as a white cannibal among black natives in a Caribbean island; a sort of Kurtz-like figure, walking with impunity and bringing his anthropophagy to a place traditionally associated with savagery and voodoo. The cannibalistic monster of the 1980s and '90s is a white doctor. Lecter is the white man who represents the powers of civilization *and* of the appropriated powers of the savage (Tithecott 85). He embodies a new kind of cannibal in popular fantasy: articulate, philosophical, and strangely alluring while at the same time terrifying. *The Silence of the Lambs* brought cannibalism into the mainstream and firmly ensconced the cannibalistic psychiatrist, Hannibal Lecter, into popular demonology (Simpson 70).

Importantly the move through the texts and films I examine shows the shift of the cannibal from *there* to *here.* Furthermore, I have explored how this shift is really a slow unveiling of the Self as cannibal. The geographic movements belie the real move towards the realization of our own rapacity. The fear of the Other remains, but the Other has become something inside the Self or within the body politic. In the last century the fictive cannibal has migrated from the colonies to the domestic sphere. The heart of darkness is no longer on the other, unexplored side of the world, but is within the disturbed psyche of modern Western man. Former boundaries between the familiar and strange, the home and the exotic, have become flexible and porous. Thus divisions between 'us' and 'them' have become flawed and indistinct as the Other/cannibal holds no firm place, or rather, holds all places. In imperialist times the figure of the cannibal was the antithesis to progress and the reason to reinforce capitalism, his savagery was a reason to colonize and increase trade. Today the cannibal figure appears to denounce progress and capitalism, 'no longer the enemy of progress, the

cannibal is now seen as its creation, the product of the European mind' (Kilgour 'Function' 247). The cannibal has become the reviled image of overindulgence, overspending, and overexploitation of resources. Thus the man eating myth has revealed itself to be about 'us' rather than 'them', it has returned to haunt Western society, from the heart of darkness in the jungles of Africa to the heart of darkness in the metropolitan centres of supposed civilization. Crucially, through the examination of degenerative freaks, vengeful aggressors, psychotic killers, and deviant perverts as cannibals we find a lurking presence at every stage. We face the uncomfortable truth that alongside the savages, hillbillies and serial killers has always been the cannibalistic Self, gnashing and starving, and finally unveiled.

Conclusion

The figuring of the cannibal in the popular culture I have examined gives an insight into the taxonomy of Western fears in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ultimately, the cannibal is portrayed as Other and the labelling of one group or person as cannibal suggests fear or loathing of that person. The colonial adventure fiction from *Robinson Crusoe* to *Tarzan* thrived on gleeful descriptions of savage cannibals and the dashing heroics of the English men pitted against them. Driven by a need to justify imperialism and to glorify Englishness, these books built on a long tradition of labelling the enemy or Other as cannibal. By reducing the natives to animal status, the colonialists could rape the land with impunity and label themselves civilizers. However, beneath all of these heroics was a creeping anxiety. Joseph Conrad questioned the rapacity of the colonial system itself and shed a glimmering light on the not-so-attractive appetites of the supposedly civilized imperialists. In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad suggested that the binary between savage and civilized, cannibal and non-cannibal was not such an easy or clear-cut one. Kurtz haunts future attempts at easy jocularity regarding the colonial cannibal and his descent into participation in unspeakable rites sparked much needed discussion on Eurocentrism, racism, truth in history, and contemporary perceptions of Africa well into the latter decades of the twentieth century. As travel writing and anthropological texts, despite displaying nostalgia for adventure in the colonies, provided more factual accounts of these spaces, the colonial adventure novel began to decline. Up stepped Hollywood film-makers to provide the public with a plethora of nostalgic filmic adaptations of Rider Haggard's novels and *Tarzan*. In a post-colonial world these texts came to be somewhat irrelevant and politically incorrect. The Italian cannibal films in the 1970s and '80s asked the same questions as had Conrad:

who are the real cannibalistic savages? With a damning portrayal of the media, the public's appetite for sensation, and the destruction of natural resources, these films left it clear that there was no longer an easy distinction between the savage and the civilized. Refusing to offer any respite from the violence, directors such as Deodato left us reeling in the knowledge the cannibal was no longer confined to the jungle.

However, while no longer situated in the far-flung colonies, the cannibal was still commonly depicted as Other. In a process of 'internal colonization' the regional fringes of both Britain and America were seen as wild zones peopled by Celts or rednecks, cannibals both. In Britain the political tensions between Scotland and England in the eighteenth century saw the popular figuring in the English media of the Scots as uncouth, appetitive, brutes. Sawney Bean, a legendary Scottish cannibal, inspired a host of regional cannibal tales in which the Highlands were the hideout for anthropophagous beasts. As with the colonial cannibal, the Scottish cannibal figure declined in relevancy in the early twentieth century and the regional cannibal migrated to North America. The tale of Sawney Bean came with the Ulster Scots migrants and was eventually revitalized in the popular imagination by the actions of the serial killer Ed Gein. The regional in America is caught up in notions of the land itself as a paradoxically promising and threatening wilderness. Promising wealth and freedom it is threatening in its inhospitable terrain and climate, the actions of Native Americans in defence of their land, and sheer isolation. As a result of these fears, the regional fringes are the site of denigration in American popular culture and this denigration has produced the figure of the hillbilly. Seen as economically backward, uneducated, and unhygienic, the hillbilly stereotype proliferated in both comical and sinister versions. A number of American horror movies, from *Deliverance* to *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* figure the hillbilly as violent and cannibalistic. In these films, city folk travel to the country in search of respite, investment, or sport only to find themselves victims of horrendous crimes and they often end up on the barbecue. Crucially, and particularly in the later regional cannibal texts, the city folk enact a revenge or defence that outweighs the violence of the regional cannibals. No longer recognizable as civilized, these city folk become truly abhorrent. The regional cannibal reflects different fears as he changes location and moves through the century. The violence of the American hillbilly movies reflects the violence of unpopular American wars, economic crises, and unstable political leaders. In the twenty-first century, hillbilly film remakes reflected frustration with an inept president – a

president perceived to have been voted for by hillbillies. More unpopular wars and economic crises were translated into more violence on the cinema screen as the hillbilly cannibal continued to reflect the contemporary economic and political fears of the public. Still figured as Other, the regional cannibal began to look like the Self and, crucially, cause the Self to enact such violence that the line becomes blurred. Again we are left with the question: who is the true savage?

Finally, we arrive at the city cannibals. The city as a place of anonymity, isolation, and anxiety is home to the serial killer. Jack the Ripper and Sweeney Todd inspire a host of serial killer fiction in Britain and America. The East End of London was seen, in the nineteenth century, as an almost foreign space peopled by the poor, diseased, uncouth, and savage. Jack the Ripper embodied the sense of London as an appetitive space of dark secrets. His crimes saw the rise of the cult of the serial killer as the public's fascination was fuelled by the media's sensationalist accounts of the squalor of the crime scenes, the questionable character of the victims, the mystery surrounding the killer's identity, and the failure of the police to catch him. This fascination with Jack the Ripper has persisted throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Likewise, the tale of Sweeney Todd continues to be reinterpreted for contemporary audiences. Importantly in the Todd tale, the cannibals are the public. The ravenous general public munch on human meat pies, blissfully unaware that their appetites have led them to eat each other. The labyrinthine vaults beneath London's streets provide perfect hiding places for Todd's dastardly deeds. By figuring the London consumer as cannibalistic, the Sweeney Todd story comments on the consequences of profit-driven society. Tim Burton's 2007 production saw the metaphorical backdrop of nineteenth-century London used as a parallel to the consumerist centres of twentieth- and twenty-first-century America. The serial killer and cannibal in American culture moves the cannibal squarely within our midst. He looks like us and functions in our society. He is not immediately identifiable as cannibalistic killer. Jeffrey Dahmer, Patrick Bateman, Hannibal Lecter, and the *Exquisite Corpse* killers avoid detection for so long because they appear 'normal'. The extreme violence of *American Psycho* and *Exquisite Corpse* is suggestive of the violence within our capitalist societies. The 'meatifying' of the human body in these texts speaks volumes about the role of the individual in hyper-technological, overspending, appetitive Western societies. These serial killer texts reflect the fears of overconsumption and isolation in the city at the end of the twentieth century. Ultimately,

the cannibal is no longer Other, in fact he never has been exclusively Other. He has removed his veil and revealed himself. He is everyman.

So far all the examples of cannibalism in literature and film I have examined have involved abhorrent, antisocial, or criminal activity. I believe these cases say particular things about the times and climates in which they were written. The use of the cannibal label to other an abhorrent group or individual, and the use of cannibalism to reflect the abhorrent sides to Western society, indicate the fears of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. The texts and films I have chosen to look at offer a possible taxonomy of the cannibal and of contemporary concerns. As the dark underbelly of society, these criminal cannibals push us to ask questions regarding notions of the Self and Other, about the structure of our society, and about the role of the human body in modernity. Also, as the dark underbelly, they hold a strong attraction and fascination. From Kurtz to Bateman, these cannibals appal and intrigue us in equal measure. Just as the armchair colonial adventurers of the nineteenth-century London drawing room relished tales of missionaries in the cooking pot, contemporary audiences lap up details of real and fictitious crimes. The cannibal continues to grab our attention and force us to look at the dark side of ourselves. There are, of course, other types of cannibalism that do not fit in this taxonomy of fear and crime. In particular, survival cannibalism and cannibalism in children's literature offer interesting variations on the theme. I have not examined these genres in the main body of this book for reasons of space, and because I feel they function in different ways to the criminal cannibal texts I have dealt with. I will take a moment to do so now.

Fee fie fo fum: cannibalism in children's literature

Cannibalism in children's literature has a long and colourful history. Marina Warner traces the fear of the bogeyman in *Monsters of Our Own Making* (2007) and notes the 'sigh of satisfaction' when adults and children read the grim and succinct ending of Charles Perrault's version of *Little Red Riding Hood* when the wolf 'simply succeeds in gobbling up the heroine' (Warner 4) and how in the pleasure of fear 'there is nothing quite like a flesh-eating giant coming for his prey to make a child thrill and giggle, while the adult recounting the episode feels delight in taking the child to the edge' (6–7). These tales of terror are more than sheer delight though. The cannibalistic monsters and ogres in children's literature variously represent 'abominations against society, civilization and family, yet are vehicles for expressing ideas of proper

behaviour and due order' (11). The question of who eats and who gets eaten is constantly asked in children's literature. Warner argues that in recent times this question can encompass ideas of child appetite, independence, separate identity, the cost of child rearing, and threats to childhood innocence. Furthermore, the sexual innuendo of the gobbling bogeyman has become more persistent in recent times. Angela Carter in *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), a modern fairytale collection, warns against the smooth-pelted wolves who pay too much attention to pretty young girls. From Hansel and Gretel's trials in the gingerbread house, to the murder of Piggy and Simon in *The Lord of the Flies* (1954), to Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), Roald Dahl's cannibalistic giants in *The BFG* (1982), and heroic bear Iorek Byrnison in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials Trilogy* (1995–2000), cannibalism plays an important and interesting role in literature written for children. In her study of *Voracious Children* (2006), Carolyn Daniel explores the functions of monsters with 'indomitable appetites': 'They may reflect a desire for familial and social integrity; they may reveal cultural unease about social hierarchies; they may warn of material dangers and therapeutically rehearse the fears invoked by such threats, wearing them out through repetition; they may explore issues regarding intergenerational and familial rivalries, confirming the individual's place in society; they may reveal society's concerns about the need to discipline the appetites and behaviour of children; and they may reflect social anxieties about enemy others, the identity of whom changes over time' (Daniel 141–142).

In the wonderful and popular *Where the Wild Things Are*, Max is sent to his room without supper after threatening to eat his scolding mother. He is dressed as a wolf and has been chasing his dog with a fork. A mini-predator, Max's rage is oral and cannibalistic. In his bedroom a forest grows and he sails to a land peopled by wild things and monsters who threaten to devour Max. He charms them and becomes their king as he too is a wild thing. He leaves the wild things slumbering after they promise to eat him up because they love him so. He returns to his home to find his supper still hot and ready to be eaten. Warner concludes that 'Sendak's pared-down narrative pulses beside or under his excessive, hyperbolic, crowded and gargantuan cartoon creations to create a dream-world of gratification, power and, ultimately, consolation and safety' (Warner *Monsters* 150). Spike Jonze's 2009 film adaptation of the book was well received and complimented for exploring childhood through the eyes of a child. This tale explores imagination but also children's anger and frustration at the adult world. Indeed, writer Francis

Spufford complimented Sendak's story as 'one of the very few picture books to make an entirely deliberate, and beautiful, use of the psycho-analytic story of anger' (60). The success of both the book and the film 40 years later suggest the recognition of cannibalistic urges in a child's anger. These urges were also explored in *The Lord of the Flies*.

William Golding was inspired to write *Lord of the Flies* after reading *The Coral Island*. Ballantyne's island adventure saw the young Christian boys overcome the cannibal savages and maintain their morals in trying circumstances; Golding's tale offers something a little darker. Rebecca Weaver-Hightower explains: 'Instead of enacting what imperial ideology would say was the "natural" discipline of their race and behaving as perfect gentlemen adventurers, Golding's boys discover savages in themselves' (Weaver-Hightower 122). In studying the child in western literature, Reinhard Kuhn sees Golding's book as a 'rigorous demolition of the Rousseauistic vision of childhood' (Kuhn 156). As with much children's literature, *Lord of the Flies* offers a world without grown-ups. This absence of rules and order can lead to fun and adventure in the likes of boarding school midnight feasts in Enid Blyton's stories, chances for displays of bravery and honour in C.S. Lewis' Narnia series, or world-saving heroics in Phillip Pullman's Dark Materials Trilogy, and the Harry Potter books. In *Lord of the Flies*, however, the lack of rules leads to destruction, death, and the dismantlement of a society. The island paradise of adventures is soon appropriated and polluted by the boys in *Lord of the Flies*. The glee at the freedom to frolic on the beach soon turns dark when the sun, salt water, and lack of food take their toll on the group of young castaways. Kuhn notes that the *sense* of paradise is corroded as surely as the physicality of the island is polluted: 'Paradise is corroded first by fear . . . their thoughtless happiness is undermined as well by a sentiment not unrelated to their fear, namely the feeling of discomfiture that accompanies the awakening of an awareness of potential evil' (158). Again, as in the majority of children's literature, food plays a central role in the power structure. The boys kill a sow with delighted violence and this awakens a bloodlust in them and results in wild dancing in the moonlight and the murder and consumption of their companion. The destruction of both the paradise and the idea of innocent childhood offers a dark, pessimistic view of an adult world 'being torn asunder by a murderous conflict' during the Second World War (160). Marianne Wiggins' *John Dollar* (1989) offers a similar tale of child savagery. This time a group of young girls indulge in flesh eating and Wiggins 'explores the collapse of acculturated normativity' and uses the tradition of survival cannibalism 'to interrogate the terms of patriarchy, imperialism,

and resistance to such ideologies' (Berglund 15). Doris Lessings' chilling *The Fifth Child* (1988), although not written for children, tells of Ben, a strange child who brings pain and horror to the family with his cannibalistic and aggressive tendencies, while Lionel Shriver's *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (2003) is sure to make some question the plunge into motherhood! These stories of the corruption of childhood offer damning indictments of a society that imbues such levels of self-serving savagery in the young. Furthermore, the world in which the children enact these horrors teaches levels of consumption that result, in their most extreme, in cannibalism.

Alive and kicking: survival cannibalism

Unlike the colonial, regional, or city cannibalism, survival cannibalism is not about othering, it is usually not political, and those who consume human flesh are not denounced as savage. Indeed, according to Marriner: 'There is no *natural* aversion to eating human flesh. It is an acquired cultural taboo which disappears surprisingly quickly in the face of famine or acute hunger' (Marriner 85). Survival cannibals differ from the other cannibals in this book in that they do not fit into a particular era, location, or genre and they do not represent any particular fears, apart, that is, from starvation. I will now trace some examples of survival cannibalism before looking at the future of cannibalism.

Tales of shipwreck victims resorting to cannibalism were relatively common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, resulting in 'The Custom of the Sea'. This was a maritime custom which said that survivors of a shipwreck would draw lots to see who would be killed and eaten to allow the others to survive (Constantine 18). Robert Mack explains that by the eighteenth-century cannibalism among sailors in survival times had come to be regarded as 'regrettable but practically unavoidable' and was addressed in a 'darkly comedic manner' in broadsheets and penny ballads (Mack 37). One such event, the sinking of the Essex by a whale in 1820 was used by Herman Melville in *Moby Dick* (1851). Generally public opinion sided with the survivors of these shipwrecks, arguing that in such desperate times the men were acting outside the norms of society and that the death of one could save the lives of many. However, according to Malchow, the sailor was always a figure associated with antisocial traditions and stood outside 'conventional morality' as he drank a lot, was prone to violence, and worked in a community of men without women (Malchow 96–97). Sailors were a kind of separate race, beyond the normal boundaries of land and

nation, a 'marginal, floating, polyglot society' (100). Many of these cases of shipwreck influenced cannibalism, while falling into the category of survival cannibalism, also continue to raise questions of race and abuse of power. Often it was the slaves who were first to die and the drawing of lots was often rigged to target the weak, poor, or black. In an ironic reversal of colonial cannibalism tropes, it was the savage who was eaten by the Englishman. Indeed, Malchow points out, 'there can be little doubt that tales of maritime cannibalism, which often portrayed the cabin boy as most at risk, involved a confusion of desire and appetite that had strong sexual overtones' (100). Conflicting images of the sailor existed in Victorian Britain. On the one hand he was sentimentalized as a 'white, Christian, and patriotic guardian of the British nation' but on the other hand he was 'a kind of half-breed, exotic…criminal and lower class' (104–105).

Marina Warner examines Turner's painting of the sinking of the *Medusa*, titled *The Slave Ship* (1840) and Theodore Gericault's *The Raft of the Medusa* (1819). Turner's painting, she argues, reflects the passing of the 'grandeur of spirit' in British rule, it is an elegy for a 'lost vision and perhaps an ideal too' (Warner *Six* 65). The ship sank off the northwest African coast. The captains took the available life raft and cut the other 150 survivors off on a raft. Gericault's painting shows the various images of consuming and being consumed, the bodies become spoiled goods, consumed by the sea or the merchant traders. In the 1880s the *Mignonette*, an English vessel en route to Australia, ran into difficulties and the four sailors were set adrift in a flimsy life boat. After some days with meagre rations and no water they decided to kill and eat the youngest member of their crew. The three survivors believed they were innocent of murder under the Custom of the Sea. However, on being rescued and returning to England they were arrested and put on trial for murder. The court found that under common law, necessity was not a defence for murder and furthermore the judges questioned who had the right to decide who should live and who should die. The defendants were sentenced to the death penalty with a recommendation for mercy. Manslaughter had not been an option during the trial and the Attorney General felt that would have been the fairest finding. In the end, the defendants served six months in prison. The case has continued to be studied by law students to this day and marked the end of the accepted Custom of the Sea, leading Malchow to comment that the case 'in some sense celebrated the close of a custom more appropriate to the age of the sail than to that of steam' (Malchow 102).

Survival cannibalism on land is less common as it is rare to be so completely without food while on land. However some cases remain fresh in popular culture and are often used in re-enactments and reinterpretations of the original events. Sheer necessity to save one's life is accepted by Catholic theologians as a justification for cannibalism. This came to light with the case of the Andes plane crash survivors of 1972, made famous by the book *Alive: The Story of the Andes Survivors* by Piers Paul Read in 1974, and the ensuing film, *Alive: The Miracle of the Andes* (Dir. Frank Marshall, 1993). The story holds a macabre fascination because it shows the fine line between civilized and cannibal. Read's book was published after he spent time interviewing the survivors and the victims' families. It is an account of the survival of 16 men after over 70 days stranded in the Andes. A Uruguayan rugby team and their friends and relatives were involved in a plane crash and ensuing avalanche before two of the survivors trekked for days to reach help. In the 70 days on the mountain it became a case of cannibalism or death. In order to convince others to eat human flesh, arguments of the nutritional value of the meat were strengthened by religious arguments. Devout Catholics, the survivors believed the souls of the dead to be in heaven and that the remaining body was only meat. Further to this, they believed that as Catholics they had a duty to keep themselves alive. Parallels were drawn between the body of Christ and the act of the Eucharist. For the survivors, cannibalism turned flesh into spirit, it became symbolic saviour.

The question of the body as a sacred entity still remained for some time however. The genitals, hands, feet, tongue, and brain were uneaten until the very end, these parts being the most identifiably human and signifying intelligence, articulation, reproduction, and creativity. Also interesting in relation to the idea of the symbolic body is the psychology of taste. The initial repulsion the survivors felt turned to hunger. As soon as they were rescued and ate 'normal' food that initial revulsion resurfaced, as if in the eyes of society the learned taboo reminded them of the moral crime they had committed. However, at the site of the crash the body became a product to be rationed and earned as any other food type in extreme circumstances. The notion of the body as a product can be traced through accounts of cannibalism, in fact and fiction. I have shown how in colonial fiction the native body was a device to be used to extract resources such as ivory from the land. The colonizer's fears of being eaten by the natives suggests they saw their own bodies too as consumable produce. Marlow's comic offence at not being eaten because he might not be appetising enough is an example of this.

Obviously in slave trade and colonial times the body was quite literally a product, bought and sold. Of course, the body is also a sexual product. This is particularly true of *American Psycho* in which Bateman's own body is a groomed machine, honed for maximum output, and his sexual conquests are mere 'meat' to be consumed as he sees fit. In *Alive* the dead bodies are the new currency and produce. The survivors gain respect by offering their relatives' dead bodies up for consumption and by offering themselves up in the event of their death. This kind of bartering with the human body perhaps makes it easier to eat it. It is like a piece of meat negotiated over in a butcher shop. Thus, if on the one hand cannibalism shows the symbolic spirituality of consuming human flesh, it also, on the other hand, evidences the opposite – the body becomes an economic product and all that that entails in terms of trade and consumption.

In an echoing of Robinson Crusoe's attempt to create civilization in the midst of wilderness, the survivors in *Alive* construct a micro-society. There are leaders, advisers, workers, invalids, and outsiders. The grounds for being shunned are gluttony, thieving of resources, or lack of 'community spirit'. These attempts at maintaining a veneer of civility are continued when the survivors return home. Seeking confirmation from a spiritual advisor, they feel justified that cannibalism was less of a crime than suicide. The public's initial shock was lessened in the wake of the survivors' articulate explanation of the events. The taboo of cannibalism is unthinkingly abhorred until the oratorical skills of the survivors explain them away: rhetoric overcomes instinctual horror. The book has been described as literature of survival and essential reading for an understanding of adversity. It was a success and has been widely consumed. Some of the survivors have become minor celebrities and made money from selling their story. The public have consumed their tale of consumption, the cycle of cannibalism continues in capitalist society. The Christian overtones of the Andes survivors' actions, along with its mass public appeal, demonstrate what Walton terms 'cultural hunger for cannibal stories' (Walton 108). Furthermore it offers a way to accept cannibalism in Western culture: it is not a crime in the eyes of the church, it is survival in adversity.

The story of the Donner Party is another famous case of survival cannibalism on land. A group of settlers became stranded in the Sierra Nevada in the 1840s and eventually resorted to cannibalism, and possibly murder, in order to survive. In the popular imagination it is the element of cannibalism that remains at the fore, although the true scale of the cannibalistic acts may be much exaggerated. In the 1870s, Alfred Packer was a mountain guide in Colorado. He offered his services as a

guide to gold prospectors. In the course of a long winter trek in the Rockies he ate his employers and subsequently committed similar grisly crimes. He was sentenced to 40 years hard labour and was chastised by the judge: 'There were only seven Democrats in Hinsdale County, and you ate five of them, you depraved Republican son of a bitch!' (in Mack 55).

Antonia Bird's 1999 film *Ravenous* bears similarities to the Donner Party story. The film directed by Bird and written by Ted Griffin is a darkly humorous and ironic take on the topic of survival cannibalism, mocking some of the long-held taboos and the easy gullibility of listeners to cannibal tales. Bird also asks the question posed by Deodato, Conrad, and Ellis, concerning who the real cannibals are. Opening with the America–Mexico war in 1846, the film is obviously concerned with issues of territory and race relations between Native Americans and settlers. A soldier, Ives/Colqhuoun (Robert Carlyle) is stationed in Fort Spencer in the Sierra Nevada and tells an account of survival cannibalism only to reveal that he himself is the cannibal and has become addicted to the taste and curative properties of human flesh. From the outset the images of the body are associated with meat (flashbacks between eating steak and the bloody war casualties), and the use of the human body to further one's own advantage. The images of Ives eating human flesh are almost vampire-like, with vivid blood running down his chin, he hisses, growls, and snarls while sniffing out victims. One survivor, Boyd (Guy Pearce) refuses to indulge in cannibalism despite its professed benefits. When asked why he refuses, he answers 'because it's wrong'. His morality is mocked by Ives as the last bastion of the weak and he is teased with the smell of blood. The closing scene sees Boyd and Ives pinned together in a bear trap. Like a hunter's quarry, the human body is again reduced to meat. Ives promises to eat Boyd if he dies first and expects him to do the same. Ives dies, and Boyd chooses death.

The Wendigo myth is central to the film. The Wendigo is a cannibalistic spirit which humans could transform into, appearing in Algonquian mythology. Once the Wendigo tastes human flesh, it awakens an insatiable appetite for more. In popular culture the figure of the Wendigo has been adapted to the figure of werewolf, vampire, and zombie, appearing in horror movies, computer games, and novels such as *Wendigo* (Dir. Fessenden, 2001)*, Final Fantasy* (1987)*, and *Pet Sematary* (King 1983), respectively. Clearly fears of being consumed persist in popular culture, especially in a culture funded by excess consumption. Wendigo stories emerge from 'the disastrous clash' between native and European cultures

and are a response to this clash (Goldman 167). Marlene Goldman describes the Wendigo as a 'cannibal monster' and a translation of the image of gluttony and excess (170).

As a tale of survival cannibalism *Ravenous* works on a number of levels. Taking elements of the Donner Party case it deals with the reluctant acceptance of cannibalism in times of extreme hardship. It also deals with the mythological belief in the restorative properties of human flesh and blood. The phrase 'eat or die' is used in the film on these two levels: eat to avoid starvation and eat to heal your wounds. Human meat is the ultimate food, imbuing phenomenal strength and super-human healing capabilities. However, the escalating appetite of the Wendigo is an example of generalized hunger in society when 'consumption is treated as a virtue and seen as a source of pleasure and excitement in itself' (Root 9). Thus the Wendigo offers an accurate picture of the West as 'paradoxically . . . a hungry predator and something horribly confused and ill' (Goldman 174). Therefore, the Wendigo myth not only professed against the taboo of cannibalism, it also warned of the dangers of overconsumption, greed, and avarice. The Wendigo was never satiated, always looking for more human meat to fill its voracious appetite. The lack of respect for Native American culture is enacted through the horrors of the film. The desire for power, land, and wealth drives consumption to levels of the horrific. In *Ravenous* the cannibals are represented as cunning and ambitious. Rather than the colonial use of cannibalism as tag of the savage, it is the white man who is barbaric and the Native American who is calm, intelligent, and reminds us that 'whites eat the body of Christ' (Bird).

In 1985 Stephen King's short story 'Survivor Type' appeared in a collection of stories titled *Skeleton Crew*. The story is written as the diary of a disgraced doctor, Richard Pine, who after attempting to smuggle heroin on a cruise ship is marooned on a Pacific island. There is little or no food on the island and Pine is a self-proclaimed survivor so, using the heroin as anaesthetic he begins to cut pieces off himself and eat them. He drools at the prospect of eating his leg and remembers the smell of barbecued pork: 'Judas Iscariot, the sweet smell of roasting pork' ('Survivor' 14). King is making ironic reference to the term 'long-pig' to describe human meat. Pine's diary entries become more and more disjointed, the dates less legible or structured, evidencing his rising insanity and loss of the formulae of civilization. His final entries tell the reader that he has eaten everything below the waist and ponders what to eat next, gleefully (insanely?) writing: 'They say you are what you eat and if so I HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT!' (15). The entries end when he cuts

off his hand: 'good food good meat good God let's eat. Lady fingers they taste just like lady fingers' (16).

King's story is one that explores the idea of the adaptability of man. Pine's background consists of adapting to his surroundings in order to gain success. His family are Italian immigrants in America and his desire to become a surgeon is laughed at by his father. Pine adapts, changing his name from Pinzetti to Pine and feeling glad when his father dies. He discounts any feeling of rejection or disillusionment, he just adapts and continues. He gets an athletic scholarship to medical school, despite hating football. His belief is that 'any asshole knows how to die. The thing to learn is how to survive' (2). His idea of survival is to do the minimum to get the maximum reward, morals do not enter into it, apart from his overriding moral that he should try to survive, at all costs. The only mortal sin is giving up. His first diary entries end with his promises to himself to get out of the situation he is in. He is a modern Robinson Crusoe. His remnants of civilization include disinfecting a bird bite with iodine, taking care of his surgeon's hands, and, of course, writing, a method used to allow expression, show intellect, and prove sanity. This writing becomes an account of survival self-cannibalization. He amputates an injured foot below the ankle and then hints at eating it: 'Shortly after dark I- I- Wait. Haven't I told you I'd had nothing to eat *for four days?* And that the only help I could look to in the matter of replenishing my sapped vitality was my own body? Above all, haven't I told you, over and over, that survival is a business of the mind? The superior mind?... The thought might never entered your preconditioned head. Never mind. No one has to know. My last act before leaving the island will be to destroy this book' (10). King cleverly addresses the narration directly to the reader. He is obviously aware of the history he is writing in, referencing the idea of a superior mind and preconditioned head. Taboos are simultaneously upheld and dismissed. Pine dismisses them as learned foolishness, yet acknowledges them by planning to destroy the evidence of his own partaking in cannibalism. He also clings to notions of civilization by stating he cleaned the foot before eating it. He has distanced himself from his body part, never actually saying the words, 'I ate my foot'. He refers to his foot as 'it' and treats it in the same way he did a seagull he ate four days ago. On mentioning his teeth rotting he again alludes to the superstitions surrounding eating human flesh, as if it is a punishment for breaking taboos. As his amputations continue he becomes more and more disconnected from his body, he refers to his hands as separate entities from his mind and threatens

them with amputation if they betray him. His face is unrecognizable, just a 'skin-covered skull' (15) and he describes himself as a monster, a freak, dragging his torso on the sand, like a crab, 'a *stoned* crab' (15). In an almost Descartesian reading of the body King explores the location of identity and the role of science on the body. Pine's thought process, though dulled by heroin, essentially represent his sense of being. His desire to survive overcomes self-inflicted agony. His mind is able to convince his body to do the abnormal, he can lie to his left hand with his right hand.

Pine consumes whatever it is that is available to him, and in the end that is himself. Maggie Kilgour praises King's story for cleverly illustrating the desire for 'absolute self-reliance and independence from all external influences' and how this desire would be best satisfied by self-cannibalism, in which 'one doesn't even need to rely on the world outside for food. The modern definition of the Self in terms of self-identity and self-knowledge is parodied as being not only narcissistic but self-cannibalistic' (Kilgour *Communion* 150). Pine, like Bateman in *American Psycho*, is more nauseated by the other 'normal' food substances on offer on the island such as seaweed and seagulls. The crab and spider are more tasty, more like his own meat. His skills as a surgeon mean that he is a successful self-cannibal, his Western education enables it. As he feeds himself he becomes smaller and smaller, offering a paradox – to feed himself he consumes himself, to prolong his life he reduces himself to head and thorax. He becomes the symbol of appetite, an open mouth, swallowing his surroundings, much as Kurtz and Bateman do. In King's extreme imagery the consumption is not a metaphorical consumption of the spirit or morals, as Kurtz's is, or a egotistical, masochistic consumption of other humans, as Bateman's is, it is the literal consumption of the Self. It is the ultimate cannibalism.

Haunted (2005) by Chuck Palahniuk offers a darkly comic take on survival cannibalism. It is the story of 17 people who board a bus to go to a secret writer's retreat to write the next great American novel. Each chapter is divided into an individual's background story and a story about the retreat. As the writers become more competitive and suspicious of each other they begin to try to outdo each other in their shocking activities. Each person is desperate to be the most famous and this fame is perceived to be attainable by doing the most horrific things. The writers spoil food, turn off the water and electricity, kill a cat, and the 'self-inflicted amputation ensues' (chuckpalahniuk.net). Each action is gradually more horrific until eventually the participants begin to eat

each other, as much out of hunger for fame as to satisfy their physical hunger. The culmination and pinnacle of the horror is cannibalism. With reference to reality television and celebrity status, Palahniuk is obviously poking fun at the obsession with fame and celebrity. The book was not very well received. Palahniuk offers little respite or humanity in his tales of self-serving, short-sighted, and shallow characters. Some of the individual stories have received praise and 'Guts' is notorious for causing audience members to faint at book readings. My interest in the book lies in the fact that in the twenty-first-century cannibalism is still the most shocking activity we can partake in. The question I am left to ask is: where does it go from here? What is the future for cannibalism?

Where next?

My answer is twofold: post-apocalyptic fiction and eating disorders in culture. I have argued throughout this book that the figure of the cannibal has been used to express contemporary fears be they political, economic, racial, territorial, or psychological. Our current fears are climate change, looming nuclear war, availability of resources such as food and water, and the collapse of the world economies. Water will become our most precious resource and with an ever-growing world population there may not be enough food to feed the world. With the predicted world population for the middle of the century at 9 billion, and 36 million people dying from malnutrition in 2006, the situation does not look good. According to Joel Bourne writing in the *National Geographic*, between 2005 and 2008 the price of corn and wheat tripled and the price of rice climbed fivefold. This spurred 'food riots in nearly two dozen countries and push[ed] 75 million people into poverty' (Bourne 1). The reason for this is that for the past decade the world has been consuming more than it has been producing. Climate change plays a part in this reduced production: 'Two billion people already live in the driest parts of the globe, and climate change is projected to slash yields in these regions even further' (12). *Soylent Green* (Dir. Fleischer 1973) and *The Stand* (King 1978) offered examples of cannibalism in an overpopulated or post-apocalyptic earth. Now, however, our fears are compounded by the knowledge of the very real fact of current widespread global hunger, constant threat of nuclear war, and all too frequent natural disasters. In popular culture I believe these fears will be expressed through post-apocalyptic texts and this may be where cannibalism will rear its head in the twenty-first century. One such recent example of this is *The Road*.

Cormac McCarthy's 2006 *The Road* is a stark portrayal of humanity on its last legs. It won a Pulitzer and was made into a successful film (Dir. Hillcoat 2009). The novel has been praised for its heart-rending tale of father and son love and its sparse, poetic prose, bare bones dialogue, and haunting descriptions of dark, bleak beauty. The film, with direction from Hillcoat, adaptation from Joe Penhall, stunning cinematography from Javier Aguirresarobe, and a resonant soundtrack from Nick Cave and Warren Ellis, provided an intriguing translation of the tale of survival to the screen. *The Road* is a post-apocalyptic tale of a father, known only as man, and his son, known as boy, trying to survive the cold and hunger in a desolate America. Their plan for survival is to walk south in search of the ocean, warmth, and the hope of salvation. The cause of the disaster is unknown. We are presented with the current post-disaster reality: ash falling from the sky, intermittent earthquakes, a clouded sun, no animals, no food, no light. What few people are left are marauding cannibalistic gangs or desperate, terrified refugees. Along the road, man and boy have a series of encounters that test the man's humanity and provide moments of powerful tension. The final scenes depict both the frustrating frailty of the human body and, ultimately, the determination of humanity to hope and love.

The road itself, long an icon of American popular culture, is, of course, central to the visual aesthetic of the book and the film. In the film, these shots are essential in the conveyance of loneliness. John Ford-esque wide shots of American landscape and tiny, vulnerable human figures fill the screen. However, rather than the blue skies and lush prairies of the Westerns, these shots are of a muted, grey palette, the land is devoid of life or growth. The tiny figures of man and boy standing with their backs to the camera, facing a line of burning forest – facing a veritable hell hole, or bent into the wind pulling their cart as they relentlessly move south, are stunning shots that perfectly capture the bleak beauty of McCarthy's prose. This image of the struggle to keep moving, to find safety while pulling your entire belongings behind you through horrendous desolation has obvious significance in the light of contemporary disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, the Haitian earthquake and the Japanese earthquake and tsunami, and the barrage of images of suffering refugees in the media. The desperate need to hope that at the end of the road lies some sort of salvation is exquisitely and poignantly rendered in *The Road* and is all the more powerful in the light of these all-too-real disasters.

There does seem to be an underlying ecological message in both the book and the film. The environmental argument that the earth is dying and we are killing it is given an extreme portrayal here. In case we do

not understand this point, we are told clearly by man that the earth is dying, all the animals are dead, soon all the trees in the world will be dead, and worst of all, we were warned this would happen. While the cause of the disaster is never made explicit in *The Road*, it does seem to be part of a trend of films bemoaning the destruction of the planet, be it because of a super volcano, nuclear war, or climate change. Many films, such as *Avatar* (Dir. Cameron 2009) or *The Book of Eli* (Dir. Hughes 2010), have explored this theme in recent years. Whatever the cause, the fear remains that we could very possibly see the destruction of the earth as we know it. Few post-apocalyptic texts have dealt with the theme as subtly and stirringly as *The Road* with its emphasis on the destruction of humanity.

Ultimately, though, the story is about the strength of this humanity. The typical obsession with 'good guys' and 'bad guys' is played out here where the only options left are suicide, cannibalism, or scavenging on the road. Man rejects suicide yet he teaches the boy how to shoot himself in the mouth should they be captured by cannibals in a disturbing, challenging scene. Cannibalism, we soon learn, is 'the great fear', and the great division between good and bad guys. Unlike *Alive*, survival cannibalism is not accepted here. Much of the horror and tension come from encounters with this great crime, in particular the cellar scene in which man and boy discover men and women awaiting dismemberment and slow death as they are farmed for cannibals' consumption. The horror of cannibalism is the fact that it reduces humans to animals in an abattoir. Hillcoat's cannibals are a kind of remnant of rural Gothic cannibals found in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* or *The Hills Have Eyes*. They are filthy, gap-toothed, overall-wearing savages who ride pick up trucks, speak in a deep southern drawl, and whoop as they chase their prey. *The Road* is also similar to these other cannibal movies in that the questions of revenge and who deserves to survive are central to it. Man's blind need to protect his son leads him to acts of cruelty. His constant need to demarcate the lines of savagery belies his doubts, a similar anxiety expressed in colonial adventure texts. Indeed references to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in the Kurtz-like fence of skulls and to *Robinson Crusoe* in the need to wash and shave to mark the continuance of civilization place *The Road* in a long history of cannibal versus non-cannibal culture, and the questions it poses about survival and dignity, the desperate loneliness of refugees, and the frailty of our world are well worth pondering.

The second area of culture in which I believe cannibalism will feature is in the notion of 'non-compliant' bodies. Anorexia, bulimia, and obesity are connoted as monstrous and horrific visual examples

of the human body out of control. According to Daniel in *Voracious Children*:

> Both the anorexic and the obese transgress healthy eating rules . . . both have noncompliant bodies that defy cultural paradigms of beauty and represent abject forms of being within cultural ideologies; they lack agency, are denied subjectivity and connoted as inhuman and monstrous'.
>
> (Daniel 186)

In *Bodies* (2009), Susie Orbach argues that we should look at these eating disorders by reading the body itself, rather than examining the mind in a Freudian understanding of disorder. She believes there is such a thing as 'body memory' and that the damage we do to our bodies in trying to perpetually transform them is 'remembered' by the body and can translate itself into bodily mutilation. The body has become a site of forced perfection and production in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as ideals of beauty are inescapable and extremely pressuring. Plastic surgery, photoshopping, self-harm, and eating disorders are trends that have literally exploded in recent years as Marina Warner also posits:

> Food and health panics erupt with accelerating frequency in Europe and the United States; as identity becomes even more intensely corporeal, what the body takes in, absorbs, and consumes defines destiny beyond the individual's control. Anorexia, bulimia and probably a whole attendant host of ever more finely analysed food disorders are increasing among young people, men now as well as women.
>
> (Warner *Monsters* 157)

Hilda Bruch's pioneering *Golden Cage* (1978 and 2001) examines the enigma of anorexia nervosa. Bruch explains the feelings of guilt after giving in to the 'gross and vulgar demands of the body' (Bruch 72). According to *Fat History* (2002) writer Peter Stearns, the diet industry in America in 1990 was a $33 billion operation (Stearns 108). In the late twentieth century, sedentary lifestyles, abundantly available snacks, and fast food have resulted in overweight populations with a 1995 study finding 71% of all Americans over 25 to be overweight (Stearns 133). The ideals of beauty and health are clearly not in line with the actual physical bodies of the majority of the population and so growing guilt and dismay over one's body ensues. Furthermore, obesity is associated with the undisciplined, weak, and poor: 'Body shape and discipline,

in other words, became a new class divide between the virtuous and the unworthy' (Stearns 149). At times, these eating disorders are merely related to simple weight loss or gain. More often though, they are the result of conflict with society, they reflect gender and class divides, they use the body as the site of a power struggle. The visibility of the non-compliant body makes it a powerful tool in the fight for recognition, independence, or power. This is used on a political level by hunger strikers such as the Suffragettes, Bobby Sands, and Mahatma Gandhi. However, this is not the time or place for an analysis of eating disorders in culture. The question I am asking is: where does cannibalism fit into this? Anorexia is often compared to auto-cannibalism. With the anorectic, the body literally begins to consume itself. In our current society of overconsumption, self starvation is, paradoxically, another form of consumption. I believe that these eating disorders are intertwined with broader notions of power, class, and gender. The disgust invoked by the too-thin or too-fat body is similar to the disgust invoked by the cannibal. All of these eaters or non-eaters transgress acceptable eating boundaries and in this transgression and our resulting disgust we can see crucial elements of a damaged society. The parallels between the anorectic and the cannibal are many: both are seen as sub-human, both are often described as animalistic, both fascinate and horrify in equal measure, and both say powerful things about the structure and fabric of society. Eating disorders are part of very real fears of what kind of society we have created. Therefore, as with the other fears the cannibal embodied throughout the century, I believe the anorectic may embody these fears too. The auto-cannibalism of anorexia has spread as if contagious and may be figured in vampire or zombie culture. The over-appetitive obese figure has many possibilities to feature in popular culture as predator or monster. Ultimately, the fear is that we are now consuming ourselves. Cannibalism has always had a perpetrator and a victim. It seems now that these figures can merge and become one, the self-cannibalizing hunger artist. As we use up our natural resources and pollute the land so we can no longer produce enough food to feed an ever-growing hungry world, and as we transform our bodies into desirable products we create a world of human consumption, metaphorical and literal. No longer colonial subject, regional degenerate, or serial killer madman, the cannibal of the future is simply hungry and the human body is simply another product. Centuries of labelling the Other as cannibal and projecting our fears onto the Other hid the whispered suggestion of our appetitive savagery: we are anthropophagous beasts and we are hungry for meat.

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