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THE CONSUMED BITE BACK: ISSUES OF CULTURAL CANNIBALISM AND  
APPROPRIATION IN ANDREA CARLSON'S *WINDIGO* AND *VORE* SERIES

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OLIVIA E. von GRIES  
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THE CONSUMED BITE BACK: ISSUES OF CULTURAL CANNIBALISM AND  
APPROPRIATION IN ANDREA CARLSON'S *WINDIGO* AND *VORE* SERIES

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Dr. Alison Fields, Chair

Dr. Robert Bailey

Dr. Erin Duncan-O'Neill



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## ABSTRACT

Since contact with Indigenous peoples, Western colonizers and settlers have formed and relied upon created differences rooted in misinformation. By labeling Indigenous groups, including Native Americans, as “cannibals,” Western oppressors produced the evidence that they felt was necessary to justify the colonization and settler colonization of Indigenous lands and bodies. Yet, during these processes of oppression, Western settlers and colonizers themselves acted cannibalistically; by appropriating and destroying Indigenous lands and lifeways, Western oppressors have engaged actively in “cultural cannibalism.” Contemporary mixed-media artist Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979) identifies and challenges this “insatiable hunger of settlers” in her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series. By consuming and incorporating museum objects, “cannibal boom” films, and themes from Western art history in her compositions, Carlson engages in anthropophagy to flip past Western accusations of Indigenous cannibalism back onto their projectors. In both series, Carlson stresses that settlers in the United States, acting as *windigos*, or monsters that consume without consequence, have and continue to cannibalize Native America without hesitation or regard for Native lifeways. An examination of how Carlson addresses and consumes past culturally cannibalistic practices in her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series leads to a better understanding of how power and cultural exchange can operate in settler colonial situations.

## INTRODUCTION

### “Mondo Cannibale: The Costs of an Insatiable Hunger!”

Since contact with the New World, settlers have leveled charges of physical cannibalism against Indigenous peoples as a way of “othering” the groups and justifying their subjugation and genocide.<sup>1</sup> This practice has permeated through the United States, where the labeling of Native Americans as “cannibals” by Euro-American settler colonialists vindicated their oppression and displacement. Yet, while enacting settler colonialist structures, Western oppressors revealed to be cannibalistic in their own right; through their destruction and assimilation of Indigenous land and lifeways, settler colonialists have engaged continuously in a form of “cultural cannibalism,” or “cultural consumption.” Carried out over several centuries, these practices emphasize the cannibalistic qualities of settler colonialism and reveal that the metaphorical division between “civilized us” and “cannibalistic other” is more blurred than originally imagined. Rather, the “insatiable hunger of settlers,” manifested in the form of cultural cannibalism, is telling of power dynamics in the United States, power structures that remain in place and affecting Native peoples to this day.<sup>2</sup>

As a way of confronting and dismantling the cannibalistic histories constructed for them by oppressors, Indigenous artists have delved into the complexities of the subject in their work. In her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, multi-media artist Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979) tackles, head on, the unending nature of settlers’ “insatiable hunger.”<sup>3</sup> By flipping historical Western accusations of Indigenous cannibalism, used as a way of justifying

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis, when applicable, I will use “Indigenous” rather than “non-Western” as a move away from centering non-Euro-American identities around the West. Additionally, each section of this thesis has titles “cannibalizing” and riffing off titles of past mondo or cannibal exploitation films. The title of this section riffs off the title of the film *Mondo Cannibale (Cannibal World)*, directed by Jesús Franco in 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020. I will be using “settlers” as a shortening of “settler colonialists” or “settler colonizers.”

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

colonialism and settler colonialism, on their heads, Carlson questions self-made boundaries and the true perpetrators of “cannibalism.” A study of the cultural consumption scrutinized in Carlson’s *Windigo* and *VORE* Series has larger implications about topics such as the intricacies and differences of artistic cannibalism among different cultural groups and issues of navigating Native identity. By examining the numerous references to literal and cultural cannibalism made throughout Carlson’s *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, and the intent behind such references, I will add to the scholarship available on cultural cannibalism in the arts, which has had the tendency to focus on literature and film and overlook the work of Native American visual artists. I argue that, through her own consumption of Western art history in her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson confronts the ongoing Euro-American cannibalization of Native America, and as a result, exposes viewers to how cultural exchange and power can operate in settler colonial situations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

While researching cultural cannibalism, a number of texts prove beneficial in understanding and detailing the concept’s history and iterations. Formative works on the subject include W. Arens’ *The Man-Eating Myth* (1972), Peggy Reeves Sanday’s *Divine Hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural System* (1986), and Maggie Kilgour’s *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (1990). Though informative texts that provide, in great detail, information about topics such as how Western groups have used cannibalistic charges to “other,” these books take little consideration of the fine arts. *The Man-Eating Myth* and *Divine Hunger*, especially, focus primarily on symbolic anthropophagy and addressing past anthropological histories of cannibalism. Although these texts are beneficial in establishing a background for

understanding the cultural consumption that Carlson engages in and calls-out, they are more generalized than those wishing to know more about cultural cannibalism and the arts might like.

Additionally, to date, the literature available that does concern cultural cannibalism and the arts often omits discussions of Native American visual artists. While texts such as Jennifer Brown's *Cannibalism in Literature and Film* (2012) and *Eating their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity* (2001), edited by Kristen Guest, use written word and films by artists from a wide range of backgrounds to illustrate the practice and effects of cultural cannibalism, Native artists' contributions are discussed infrequently, if at all. One text that does make mention of Native American artists and lifeways, Deborah Root's *Cannibal Culture: Art, Appropriation, & the Commodification of Difference* (1995) covers a variety of topics, including "The New Age," necrophilia, Surrealism, and colonial desires. Because of its wide-ranging purview, the text cannot discuss its artistic examples, none of which are from the twenty-first century, in-depth. As a result of the seeming omission of Native arts, particularly contemporary Native arts, from the canon of literature concerning cultural cannibalism, discussions about how Indigenous peoples have countered cultural consumption to challenge inherent power structures are incomplete. By examining Carlson's *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, I will build upon current understandings of cultural cannibalism to emphasize that, as a way of addressing and navigating ongoing instances of Western cultural consumption, Indigenous artists have been and continue to engage in the process themselves.

In regard to the literature available about Carlson, although there are many online articles about, interviews with, and exhibit reviews of Carlson and her work, there are few scholarly journal articles or other texts dedicated specifically to examining her life or *oeuvre*, in-depth.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See "Andrea Carlson's Ravenous Vision" by W. Jackson Rushing, III, in NMAI's *American Indian* (Fall 2008) as one of, if not the first, scholarly article dedicated to discussing Carlson and her work.

One of the main sources of information about Carlson are press releases issued by museums such as the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA) for group and solo exhibitions in which she has participated. In addition, Carlson has written about her work online and documents extensively her artistic processes for the blog associated with her website. These online sources have proven invaluable as they help “demystify” the artistic practice and reveal, in Carlson’s own words, what themes and ideas her work touches upon. Due to her prolific writing, as well as interviews with and articles about her, Carlson has a large online presence. That being said, these online sources are relatively short and often contain repetitive information about her work.

In addition, several museum catalogues provide important information about Carlson. Again, due to length restrictions and the fact that these texts also examine other artists, these catalogue entries are only as in-depth as a few pages allow. Of the museum catalogues that include Carlson, the exhibition catalogue for “Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists” is one of the most recent. The catalogue features several essays about and interviews with many Native female artists. Because of the encyclopedic nature of the text, though, Carlson receives only a short analysis in the essay, “Seven Sisters: Native Women Painters Connected through Time by Medium” by Dakota Hoska (Oglala Lakota).<sup>5</sup> In addition, the catalogue for “Before and After the Horizons: Anishinaabe Artists of the Great Lakes” provides background information about Anishinaabe artists following in the wake of George Morrison (Grand Portage Ojibwe, 1919-2000), including Carlson. In the essay, “The Anishinaabe Artistic Consciousness” by Gerald McMaster (Siksika Nation), he discusses motivations for and themes in the work of more recent

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<sup>5</sup> In the essay, Hoska details how Carlson routinely challenges institutions such as museums and their perceived authority in her work. Specifically, Hoska uses Carlson’s *Sunshine on a Cannibal* (2015) as a miniature case study. After delving into the themes and symbols included in *Sunshine*, Hoska concludes her discussion of Carlson by noting how her work confronts both the idea of the white, male genius and encyclopedic institutions’ colonialist pasts (Dakota Hoska, “Seven Sisters: Native Women Painters Connected through Time by Medium,” in *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*, ed. Jill Ahlberg Yohe and Teri Greeves [Seattle: The Minneapolis Institute of Art in association with the University of Washington Press, 2019], 296-297).

generations of Anishinaabe artists, who “have appreciated the direction [that] their predecessors established.”<sup>6</sup> In several ways, Carlson creates work that the uninformed layperson would not label as “traditional” or “authentic” Native art, and thus, fulfills McMaster’s notion that contemporary Anishinaabe artists “apply new visual languages and play in the force field called the artworld,” a possible distinction from artists of the previous generations.<sup>7</sup> Similar to the “Hearts of Our People” catalogue, however, Carlson is only discussed briefly in the text.

Likewise, in many of the academic journal articles in which she is discussed, Carlson is seldom the sole focus of the authors’ attention. For instance, Robert Silberman’s “Complexity and Contradiction in Native American Surrealism,” in the *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas*, examines the interplay between Native America and Surrealist art in several artists’ bodies of work, including Carlson’s. Early on, the article considers how the term, “Native American Surrealism” is a contradiction due to Surrealism’s European origin.<sup>8</sup> Yet, the central question of the article is not whether Native art is Surrealist, but “rather how and why it might be considered Surrealist and what the significance of such a critical interrogation might be.”<sup>9</sup> While Silberman’s article is well-researched and contains a detailed bibliography, because of the length constrictions of a journal article, he cannot devote more than a few paragraphs to each artist that he discusses.

Lastly, Carlson has once been the focus of a M.A. thesis; Hoska wrote, “Andrea Carlson: Layered Visuals Expand Global Conversations,” in 2019. Hoska’s text focuses on one of Carlson’s works, *Sunshine on a Cannibal* (Fig. 1), as a case study. The thesis, which is not yet

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<sup>6</sup> Gerald McMaster, “The Anishinaabe Artistic Consciousness,” in *Before and after the Horizon: Anishinaabe Artists of the Great Lakes*, ed. Gerald McMaster and David W. Penney (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2013), 71.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Silberman, “Complexity and Contradiction in Native American Surrealism,” *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 7, no. 1 (2013): 108.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 122.

published or available online, argues for Carlson’s acceptance into a global group of artists working to expand areas “previously monopolized by Western artistic canons.”<sup>10</sup> While Hoska’s argument is compelling, its overall impact and contribution to the field is yet to be publicly known. Overall, there is little to no scholarship that has focused specifically on examining the dual nature of cultural cannibalism in Carlson’s artwork. As a result, the literature available can make Carlson’s approach appear one-sided or disconnected from a complex lineage of Indigenous navigations of identity. By situating Carlson’s *Windigo* and *VORE* Series within larger discussions about the histories of Western cultural cannibalism, the various methods in which Native peoples continue to expose and counter the power structures of settler colonialism can be examined more fully.

## METHODOLOGIES

For my analysis of Carlson and her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, I draw from iconographic and semiotic approaches to navigate the cultural dynamics of and resistance to settler colonialism. Additionally, I utilize information gathered from an interview that I conducted with Carlson; I believe that the interview process is vital in getting both direct quotes from an artist as well as their response to potential arguments about their work.<sup>11</sup> By investigating negotiations of power across my thesis, we can see how cultural cannibalism, in its various forms, has enabled authority to be both appropriated and exchanged between cultures. Before delving further into my methodology, however, I find it necessary to flesh out, in brief, the differences between

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<sup>10</sup> University of St. Thomas Department of Art History, “Next week our Master of Arts in Art History candidates will present their Qualifying paper research at the Spring 2019 Art History Graduate Research forum...,” Facebook, May 10, 2019, <https://hi-in.facebook.com/353392108072889/posts/next-week-our-master-of-arts-in-art-history-candidates-will-present-their-qualif/2390776487667764/>. All the information that I was able to find about Hoska’s thesis is from this Facebook post published by the University of St. Thomas Department of Art History.

<sup>11</sup> See: Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

“settler colonialism” and “colonialism.” The two terms come up repeatedly in scholarship focused on the history and implications of cultural cannibalism, and such an understanding of the difference between the two structures has influenced the methods that I employ in this work.

Although it is tempting to refer to and discuss “colonialism” in the United States, the country is decidedly a “settler colonial” nation. While both colonialist and settler colonialist powers establish ascendancy in new locations after moving there, the two demand different things; whereas colonialism, broadly, demands labor in various forms by Indigenous peoples, settler colonialism demands the dislocation and/or disappearance of Indigenous peoples from their land.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, colonial historian Lorenzo Veracini asserts that, in contrast to colonialism, which has an unchanging nature, settler colonialism is characterized “by a persistent drive to ultimately supersede the conditions of its operations,” and in part, repress and manage ethnic diversity.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, as the term “settler” implies, a colonizer will, eventually, return home while a settler colonizer will stay. As Native feminist theorists Maile Arvin (Native Hawaiian), Eve Tuck (Aleut Community of St. Paul Island), and Angie Morrill (The Klamath Tribes) note, in the United States, the structure of settler colonization remains in place and continues to effect Native peoples significantly.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, I do not employ a postcolonial or colonial approach to my study, with the former being misleading, as colonialism continues in various forms to this day, and the latter not being specific enough to studies concerning the United States. Rather, I aim to actively contribute to the critique of settler colonialism in the U.S. By drawing from

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<sup>12</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, “Introducing, Settler Colonial Studies,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1-2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. As Veracini explains, while settler colonialism is defined by a recurring need to continuously disappear Indigenous peoples, colonialism’s determination to exploit relies on the colonized’s “*permanent* subordination.” Whereas colonialism consumes Indigenous bodies and labor continuously (as the structure is “something that wants itself ongoing”), settler colonialism consumes as a means to an end until Indigenous peoples have disappeared fully (as a structure that “wants itself terminated”), (2-4).

<sup>14</sup> Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill, “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy,” *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 1 (2013): 9.



iconographic and semiotic approaches to navigate the cultural dynamics of and resistance to settler colonialism, I have the appropriate “tools” that I need to facilitate my unpacking of the cultural consumption present in Carlson’s *oeuvre*.

Specifically, I explore and employ the idea of cultural or symbolic anthropophagy in relation to Carlson’s *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, which comment on various forms of cannibalism. Scholars have applied the concept of anthropophagy, or antropófago, as a metaphor both contributing to settler colonial thought in Brazil and facilitating an understanding of issues such as cultural mix.<sup>15</sup> In the field, there has been little to no discussion, however, that links the anthropophagy observed in Brazil—the deliberate Indigenous artistic appropriation of Western ideas and forms—with actions taken by Native North American artists. I believe that my examination of Carlson’s *Windigo* and *VORE* Series will, in part, rectify that gap.

While anthropophagy does include the literal consumption of outsider bodies, in discussions of the fine arts, it more commonly concerns appropriations of music, literature, and visual arts.<sup>16</sup> The metaphor also functions as “an important component of indigenous reactions to intercultural contact, providing [a] ritual mechanism by which to negotiate identity.”<sup>17</sup> The value of such a metaphor is that it “reflects the moment of encounter,” and subsequently, the “taking in and being taken by the culture of the other through the devouring of the material.”<sup>18</sup> Brazilian anthropophagy is associated primarily with the 1960’s art movement Tropicália, which emulated the writings of Oswald de Andrade (Brazilian, 1890-1954), a poet and author of the *Manifesto*

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<sup>15</sup> Gazi Islam, “Can the subaltern eat? Anthropophagic culture as a Brazilian lens on post-colonial theory,” *Organization* 19, no. 2 (2011): 159. While the standard dictionary definition of “anthropophagy” is cannibalism or “the eating of human flesh by humans,” Islam notes that Brazilian modernists used both “anthropophagy” and “cannibalism” interchangeably to refer to symbolic acts of consumption, as I will do in this thesis (175).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

*Antropófago* (1928).<sup>19</sup> Andrade's *Manifesto* stresses that, in order to "articulate a Brazilian culture that is original and authentic because it is the hybrid product of a colonial process (and not in spite of this)," Indigenous peoples must appropriate subversively the "colonialist designation of native peoples of the Americas as culture-less savages, or 'cannibals.'"<sup>20</sup> Since its conception in the 1920's, the concept of antropófago or anthropophagy has played an essential role in understanding the intercultural mixture present in Brazilian history.<sup>21</sup>

Carlson states that her work such as her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series tackles the idea of cultural consumption with imagery that focuses on Western appropriations of Indigenous bodies, ideas, lands, and forms of cultural expression.<sup>22</sup> However, after spending time with the concept of anthropophagy and learning more about her interest in the movement, I argue that the utilization of Western imagery in her work is also indicative of its anthropophagic nature. The utilization and parodying of Western objects in Carlson's compositions calls attention to settler colonial wrongs while providing an arena for her to navigate issues of Native identity—key aspects of anthropophagic art. Examples from both Carlson's *Windigo* and *VORE* Series explicitly call-out and engage in cultural cannibalism and exemplify the anthropophagic nature of her work. I will delve further into anthropophagy, its history, and its relation to Carlson's work in Chapter One, "The Wild, Wild World of Cultural Cannibalism!" The second and third chapters of my thesis, "How Tasty Was My Little Museum Artifact!" and "*VORE*: In the Raw!" examine the references and contexts of Carlson's anthropophagic *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, respectively. To comprehend the intricacies of the series' references more fully, however, a preceding chapter

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<sup>19</sup> "Anthropophagia," Tate Modern, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/anthropophagia>.

<sup>20</sup> Leslie Bary, "The Tropical Modernist as Literary Cannibal: Cultural Identity in Oswald de Andrade," *Chasquirevista de literatura latinoamericana* 20, no. 2 (1991): 13.

<sup>21</sup> Islam, "Can the subaltern eat?," 159.

<sup>22</sup> Andrea Carlson, "An artist statement on VORE works," Mikinaak.com, last modified March 27, 2017, <https://www.mikinaak.com/blog/vore-works>.

that establishes the reasonings and contradictions inherent in past Western charges of cannibalism against Indigenous peoples is necessary.

## CHAPTER ONE – “THE WILD, WILD WORLD OF CULTURAL CANNIBALISM!”

By examining, reclaiming, and flipping charges of cannibalism back onto their Western projectors in her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson is an active participant in the deconstruction of created cultural differences. In this section, I establish further the various terms and concepts guiding my study of Carlson’s *Windigo* and *VORE* Series—cultural cannibalism, cultural consumption, cultural appropriation, and anthropophagy—and relate those to Carlson’s own definitions for, thoughts on, and experiences with the concepts in order to illustrate this point. Additionally, I will examine briefly Carlson’s background as an artist before delving into a short history of Western charges of cannibalism. “Cannibalism,” when taken at face value as a term, is jarring. Frequently, it calls to mind brutal, sensationalist vignettes of humans consuming humans. What the term does not often bring to mind is the forced relocation of Native peoples, the looting of Native graves, the display of Native objects in museums, or the invalidation of Native treaties. Yet, all fall under “cultural cannibalism” as settlers and colonizers have been metaphorically consuming non-Western land, ideas, people, and objects for centuries. Throughout this chapter, I will examine how “the figure of the cannibal” was created by Western imperialists, settlers, and colonialists who projected “western imperialist appetites onto the cultures they then subsumed.”<sup>23</sup> The resulting boundaries between “civilized self” and “cannibalistic other,” however, were not as impermeable as Western oppressors might have hoped.

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<sup>23</sup> Maggie Kilgour, “Foreword,” in *Eating their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identification*, ed. Kristen Guest (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), vii.

## CHAPTER TWO – “HOW TASTY WAS MY LITTLE MUSEUM ARTIFACT!”

Throughout this chapter, I will focus on Carlson’s *Windigo* Series, including analyses of examples from the series as well as considerations of the contexts informing their creation.<sup>24</sup> In the body of work, Carlson “appropriate[s] and fictionalize[s]” objects from prominent museum collections into her “own imagined landscapes.”<sup>25</sup> Commentaries on cultural institutions’ perceived authority on “objects foreign to itself,” compositions in the *Windigo* Series such as *End of Trail* (Fig. 2) question who has the right to tell Indigenous works’ stories.<sup>26</sup> Institutions with whom Carlson has relationships, including the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA), which has Carlson’s work in its collection, are not excluded from scrutiny. In this section, I will emphasize how, with the *Windigo* Series, Carlson engages directly with one of the most demonstrable examples of cultural cannibalism, past museum acquisition policies. To understand further the inspirations and motivations for the series, I will also detail various descriptions of the Ojibwe figure of the *windigo*. To Carlson, the *windigo* is a gluttonous winter cannibal monster that misidentifies those that he consumes.<sup>27</sup> However, descriptions of the *windigo* have evolved and expanded since contact, and now the term implies and includes much more than a winter monster. In the *Windigo* Series, Carlson, again, flips the historical narrative that labeled Indigenous groups as cannibals and charges settler colonizers as acting like *windigos*, insatiable monsters who consume without consequence.

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<sup>24</sup> I have selected three works from the *Windigo* Series that I believe touch upon a wide range of subject matter but are largely representative of the series as a whole.

<sup>25</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

<sup>26</sup> Hoska, “Seven Sisters,” 296.

<sup>27</sup> “New Skins: New Paintings by Andrea Carlson and Jim Denomie,” Minneapolis Institute of Art, March 26, 2007, <https://new.artsmia.org/press/new-skins-new-paintings-by-andrea-carlson-and-jim-denomie/>; Hoska, “Seven Sisters,” 296.

### CHAPTER THREE – “VORE: IN THE RAW!”

Expanding upon the work done in her *Windigo* Series, Carlson’s *VORE* also draws objects from museum collections while referring to “seemingly disparate sources” such as cannibal boom films and Western folklore.<sup>28</sup> In this chapter, I will detail the inspirations for the series as well as how examples from the body of work reveal larger implications about cultural cannibalism, including established relationships between sexuality and consumption. Specifically, I will examine three paintings from *VORE* that deal with cannibalism in the form of museum acquisition practices, that which is the motivation for and the focus of cannibal boom films, and that which is signified through various animalistic symbols. The title for the series, the word “vore” is an “edgy term for the fetish to be consumed by another, or to consume another whole.”<sup>29</sup> To Carlson, “vore” acts as a metaphor for cultural appropriation, and a motivating force behind the series is her interest in “subverting the storytelling of museums with the storytelling of cannibal exploitation films.”<sup>30</sup> In compositions such as *Cannibal Ferox* (Fig. 3), Carlson refers back to these cannibal films of the 1970’s and 1980’s by incorporating text and imagery from the movies. The idea of cultural cannibalism is examined through these references and acts as an additional metaphor for the “assimilation and consumption of cultural identity.”<sup>31</sup> These film elements are displayed with works from museums and other objects “like holy icons, foreign and floating on the page.”<sup>32</sup> Carlson writes that they “dangle over seashores which rise up to consume, assimilate and aid in the fluidity of culture while the earth takes back and buries

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<sup>28</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

<sup>29</sup> “Andrea Carlson,” Bockley Gallery, accessed June 12, 2020, [http://www.bockleygallery.com/artist\\_carlson/index.html](http://www.bockleygallery.com/artist_carlson/index.html). “Vore” is short for the technical term for the fetish, “vorarephilia.”

<sup>30</sup> “Q & A: Andrea Carlson on ‘VORE,’” Plains Art Museum, last modified 2010, <https://plainsart.org/q-a-andrea-carlson-on-vore/>.

<sup>31</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

[its] histories.”<sup>33</sup> By referring to and utilizing both museum objects and cannibal boom films in her *VORE* Series, Carlson, again, both engages with and subverts past Western charges of Indigenous cannibalism.

## CONCLUSION

In Carlson’s *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, she reveals, examines, and challenges “the insatiable hunger of settlers.”<sup>34</sup> This “insatiable hunger,” manifested in the form of Western “cultural cannibalism,” is telling of power dynamics in the United States, power structures that remain in place and affecting Native peoples to this day. The works in her series both embrace and reverse Western charges of cannibalism against Indigenous peoples as a way of garnering power and questioning the authority of settlers. In Carlson’s compositions from her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, however, she questions “who’s consuming whom” and the driving forces behind such consumption. In doing so, the cultural cannibalism that Carlson confronts and, to an extent, participates in reveals and emphasizes the continued Western consumption of Native America. In order to analyze critically references to this consumption in Carlson’s *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, the following chapter, “The Wild, Wild World of Cultural Cannibalism!,” will establish briefly the histories of and responses to past Western charges of cannibalism against Indigenous peoples.

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<sup>33</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

<sup>34</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

## CHAPTER ONE

### “The Wild, Wild World of Cultural Cannibalism!”

#### INTRODUCTION

In Carlson’s *Cook Thief Wife Lover* (Fig. 4), from *VORE*, two sculptures exuding manly virtue and prowess, the *Belvedere Torso* and *Emperor Commodus as Hercules*, are positioned along the rocky shoreline of an inky black body of water.<sup>35</sup> Referring to the film, *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife, & Her Lover* (1989), which culminates with the antagonist eating the cooked body of the protagonist, *Cook Thief Wife Lover* is laden with subversive imagery and messages. Similar to the movie’s focus, Carlson’s *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, including *Cook Thief Wife Lover*, comment upon desire, cannibalism, and the costs of consumption. Specifically, in works from these series, Carlson delves into the cultural cannibalism perpetrated by Westerners.

To justify their seizure and destruction of Indigenous peoples and lands, Western oppressors formed and relied heavily upon created differences.<sup>36</sup> These distinctions established firm and discriminatory lines between a Western “us” and Indigenous “other.” One of the most significant created differences that oppressors relied upon was the “figure of the cannibal,” which they attributed to Indigenous groups. By labeling Indigenous peoples, including Native North Americans, as “cannibals,” Westerners created the evidence that they felt was necessary to move forward with “progressive” and “civilizing missions” on Indigenous lands. Beyond signifying individuals who eat other humans and, thus, commit heinous acts, the figure of the cannibal in Western society also represented unbridled chaos that needed to be repressed. Despite creating

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<sup>35</sup> The chapter of this section plays off the title of the mondo documentary film, *The Wild, Wild World of Jayne Mansfield* (1968), directed by Charles W. Broun, Jr., Joel Holt and Arthur Knight.

<sup>36</sup> When I use “Western oppressors,” I am referring to imperialists, colonizers, and settlers.

strong divides between “civilized” and “cannibal,” as Carlson points out, Western oppressors engaged regularly in culturally cannibalistic behaviors and, as a result, blurred these boundaries. By flipping charges of cannibalism against Indigenous peoples back onto their Western projectors in her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson participates actively in the deconstruction of such socially created cultural differences.

This chapter will define and establish the histories of concepts such as cultural cannibalism and anthropophagy, key practices that are engaged and addressed by Carlson’s *Windigo* and *VORE* Series. Specifically, I will examine how “the figure of the cannibal” was created and continues to be used by Western oppressors in their quests for Indigenous lands and lifeways. Having a familiarity with the basis and forms of rhetorical justification used by oppressors in their “progressive” campaigns enables greater understandings of works from the *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, discussed in the following two chapters, to be reached. Initially presented at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA), in 2007, Carlson’s *Windigo* Series is comprised of several mixed media works on paper.<sup>37</sup> Compositions in the *Windigo* Series vary formally to a greater extent than is seen in *VORE*, throughout which individual artworks tend to share similar compositional arrangements. Launched in 2008 with *Vaster Empire* (Fig. 5), *VORE* consists of works on paper that were created using a variety of two-dimensional media.<sup>38</sup> In both series, Carlson engages with cultural cannibalism to show that the created boundaries between Western “civilized self” and Indigenous “cannibalistic other” were not as impermeable as oppressors might have hoped.

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<sup>37</sup> Silberman, “Complexity and Contradiction,” 114. Works in the *Windigo* Series include *The Other Side* (2007), *Truthiness* (2006), *Waagidijiid* (2007), *Le Château des Pyrénées* (2007), *End of Trail* (2007), and *The Poison That Is Its Own Cure* (2006).

<sup>38</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.” Works in *VORE* include *Vaster Empire* (2008), *Cook Thief Wife Lover* (2011), *Pigsty* (2010), *Cannibal Ferox* (2008), *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* (2010), *Cut and Run* (2011), *Apocalypse Domani* (2012), and *Cannibal Holocaust* (2008).



## CARLSON'S ARTISTIC BACKGROUND

Before delving into the contexts of cultural cannibalism and Carlson's interest in the concept, establishing her artistic background and motivators for her work is necessary. Born in 1979, Carlson, who is of Ojibwe, French, and Scandinavian descent, lived and worked for most of her life in Minnesota before moving to Chicago in 2016.<sup>39</sup> While Carlson did not grow up on the Grand Portage Reservation, located in northeast Minnesota, she remained in close proximity to her land and community before moving to Chicago.<sup>40</sup> Throughout her work, including her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson, who is conversationally fluent in Ojibwe, creates imagery and storylines that draw from her tribe's cultural heritage and history.<sup>41</sup> In particular, she is influenced deeply by Ojibwe storytelling and the structure of Ojibwe language.<sup>42</sup> Though currently an Illinois resident, Carlson maintains a studio in St. Paul and asserts that the Twin Cities is her "creative base" where she has made "some of the best work" that she has ever done.<sup>43</sup>

After receiving degrees in Studio Art and American Indian Studies from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Carlson earned her MFA in Visual Studies from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) in 2005.<sup>44</sup> However, before a formal education in the arts,

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<sup>39</sup> Andrea Carlson, "About," Mikinaak.com, last modified 2020, <https://www.mikinaak.com/about>.

<sup>40</sup> When she was in the fifth or sixth grade, Carlson's family moved from International Falls, Minnesota, to Hutchinson, Minnesota, which is an hour away from the Twin Cities. Carlson explains that this close proximity allowed her to develop a relationship with the Twin Cities throughout high school, a relationship developed further by her studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and MCAD (Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020).

<sup>41</sup> In addition, other Ojibwe artists such as George Morrison have influenced Carlson's artistic practice; the consistent horizon line that Carlson utilizes in many of her works such as *Sunshine* could come from Morrison's own consistent use of the feature (Andrea Carlson, "'Native American' is not a Monolithic Term or Culture," in *Nasher Museum Podcast*, produced by the Nasher Museum, podcast, MP3 audio, 12:13, January 9, 2020, <https://nasher.duke.edu/stories/native-voices-andrea-carlson/>).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

<sup>44</sup> "Andrea Carlson," Bockley Gallery. Carlson notes that "the greatest gift" that she took from Minnesota's American Indian Studies department is the Ojibwe language (Department of American Indian Studies U. of Minnesota, Fall 2005 Newsletter - "Talk with Artist Andrea Carlson, Class of 2003").

Carlson's father, a painter working with hyperrealism and abstraction, taught her the "foundations of drawing and painting" before she could read.<sup>45</sup> Even as a young girl, the support that Carlson received from her family gave her the confidence that her artist endeavors would be understood and "her efforts would be taken seriously."<sup>46</sup> This early confidence has enabled Carlson, later in life, to explore a number of "non-traditional" subjects in her work, including graphic cannibal boom films and vorarephilia.

Though she has also created films and projections, Carlson works primarily with two-dimensional media such as color pencil, oil, acrylic, graphite, ink, and watercolor on paper.<sup>47</sup> While she acknowledges that, as a result of her formal preferences, her work sometimes looks like collage, Carlson asserts that the heavyweight paper that she uses is worked completely by hand. The process of creating each compositional element freehand enables Carlson to define her artistic role "as a filter or translator," and as a result, digest her sources fully "as a complication to the craft of appropriation."<sup>48</sup>

In her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson cites both institutional authorities of objects "based on the merit of possession and display" and entangled cultural narratives.<sup>49</sup> In fact, much of Carlson's scholarly and artistic work combats presumed authority and its accompanying privilege. Found in a multitude of places, this authority is present not only "in the acceptance of the myth of the European, male, genius artist," but also in institutions whose inner workings and foundations have been built upon Eurocentric preconceptions, goals, and assumptions.<sup>50</sup>

Carlson's interest in the objects utilized in her work such as her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series

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<sup>45</sup> W. Jackson Rushing, "Andrea Carlson's Ravenous Vision," *American Indian Magazine*, Fall 2008, 38. Carlson's use of hyperrealism in her own work may stem from her father's practice as another act of artistic appropriation.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Carlson, "An artist statement on VORE works."

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Carlson, "About."

<sup>50</sup> Hoska, "Seven Sisters," 297.

“stems from the fictions, stories and histories of objects,” and how these objects can function as “surrogates for cultural exchange.”<sup>51</sup> Although the museum objects that Carlson incorporates into her compositions might appear initially as innocuous, their inclusion acts as a pointed challenge for cultural institutions. While museums tend to create a “truthiness” that isolates and divorces objects on display completely from their contexts, including their complex roles within the structures of (settler) colonialism, Carlson’s recreation of the objects in her work forces both the viewer and the cultural institution to face this reality and recognize how the objects function beyond their aesthetic display. In her series, the entangled cultural narratives of interest to Carlson extend past museum acquisitions to include cannibal boom films, which detail the clashing of Western and Indigenous cultures.

With the *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, these fictions, stories, and histories center around cannibalism, in its multitude of forms and motivations. While vampire bats and T-Bone steaks hover in Carlson’s *Pigsty* (Fig. 6) as signifiers of physical cannibalism, a jade mountain in *The End of Trail* (Fig. 2) acts as a stand-in for museums’ cultural consumption. Because of Eurocentric ideologies and colonialist goals, created falsehoods about Native peoples and cannibalism linger throughout history. In the *Windigo* and *VORE* series, Carlson challenges these falsehoods, in part by engaging in artistic cannibalism in her own right, to question Western, man-made boundaries between “proper” self and exotic “other.”

## DEFINING CULTURALLY CANNIBALISTIC TERMS

While the distinction between the concept of “cultural cannibalism” and the literal act of bodily cannibalism exists, both have been entangled in discourses of colonial and settler colonial

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<sup>51</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

oppression. The phrase “cannibalism” can refer now not only to literal bodily consumption, but also to metaphorical acts.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, though I find it reasonable to use “cultural cannibalism,” “cultural consumption,” and “cultural appropriation,” somewhat interchangeably, cultural cannibalism, as a whole, is not synonymous with cultural appropriation. Culturally cannibalistic practices in the United States, which include appropriation, emphasize forcibly taking to destroy, assimilate, or subsume, whereas cultural appropriation frequently takes primarily to exploit for monetary or social gain. Regardless, focusing on the methods and aims of cultural cannibalism in Carlson’s work is important because the Western consumption and forced assimilation of Native America continues to this day. The ongoing conflicts between the U.S. and Native nations, including those over the Dakota Access and Keystone XL Pipelines, illustrate the lasting effects and renewed efforts of Western cultural cannibalism in the U.S.<sup>53</sup>

#### CARLSON’S EXPOSURE TO AND EXPERIENCE WITH “CULTURAL CANNIBALISM”

Carlson’s interests in and exposure to cultural cannibalism come from a variety of sources, the most significant of which stem from or begin with her college career. During her undergraduate studies, she took Ojibwe language classes and became attracted further to Ojibwe storytelling and literature. There, she learned more about one of her tribe’s cultural characters, the *windigo*, whom she describes as a “winter cannibal monster that misidentifies people that he consumes.”<sup>54</sup> After this exposure to *windigo* stories, she became “very familiar with this winter

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<sup>52</sup> Kristen Guest, “Introduction: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Identity,” in *Eating their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identification*, ed. Kristen Guest (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 2.

<sup>53</sup> In these examples, the United States is both physically and metaphorically consuming Indigenous lands and lifeways by building pipelines across Native territories. Though the government is aware of the significant environmental impact on Native nations by these pipelines, the benefits of and revenue from the oil appear, to U.S. officials, to outweigh the ecological costs. Again, here, the settler colonialist government of the United States is forwarding “progressive” missions that, in actuality, disappear further Indigenous peoples and their lifeways.

<sup>54</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

cannibal monster” through continued research.<sup>55</sup> Around 2005, she read *Evidence of Red* (2005), a book of poems by LeAnne Howe (Choctaw). In the text, Howe dedicates a section to cannibals, including, as Carlson states, “people who maybe you wouldn’t even consider cannibals” such as Davy Crockett.<sup>56</sup> While Howe delves into physical instances of cannibalism in this area, she also touches upon the metaphorical aspects of the act, including forcing the “other” to become part of the dominant body.<sup>57</sup> By coercing a suppressed group to become “one” with the oppressor’s ideals and ways of life, as experienced during settler colonialism, the suppressed group’s traditions, values, and bodies become metaphorically consumed and damaged by the oppressors. According to Carlson, Howe’s *Evidence* planted the thought in her head to make artwork that addresses consumption and cannibalism.<sup>58</sup> From these early studies of both physical and metaphorical cannibalism, Carlson has continued to expand her knowledge and familiarity of the subject, which has enabled her to make layered, complex references in works such as her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series.

## USING THE FIGURE OF THE CANNIBAL TO “OTHER”

Since its conception, the word “cannibal,” has been central in Westerners’ rhetorical justifications for their genocides of Indigenous peoples.<sup>59</sup> Historian Kelly L. Watson, in her consideration of how the term has worked for settlers and colonizers, notes:

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<sup>55</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. While Howe’s section in *Evidence* titled “Cannibalism” stretches from pages 64 to 89, Carlson is referring specifically to a stanza in the poem “The List We Make,” (LeAnne Howe, *Evidence of Red* [Cambridge: Salt Publishing, 2005], 71). See Appendix A.

<sup>57</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020. For example, several poems focus on consuming Native bodies to support the colonial system.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. Carlson later stated in the interview, “[It] was definitely LeAnne that got me on the cannibal kick.”

<sup>59</sup> Santiago Colás, “From Caliban to Cronus: A Critique of Cannibalism as a Metaphor for Cuban Revolutionary Culture,” in *Eating their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity*, ed. Kristen Guest (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 129.

To label a population cannibalistic has always been a strategy of defamation. Indeed, even asking the question presupposes that one human consuming another has significance well beyond the fulfillment of nutritional needs, for one does not ask a question whose answer is meaningless.<sup>60</sup>

As Watson implies, charges of cannibalism against Indigenous peoples, which alluded to the peoples' corrupt and unsalvageable nature, eased the minds of oppressors.<sup>61</sup> By demonizing all associations with cannibalism, regardless if those Indigenous peoples actually practiced ritual cannibalism or not, oppressors created what they felt was sufficient reasoning to annihilate groups of people. In somewhat twisted irony, though this would have stood little in the way of settlers' and colonizers' missions, *canibales* (or "cannibals"), the term Columbus thought that he heard his Indigenous guides speak in reference to the "ferocious man-eating people of the West Indies," actually was *caribes* (or "Caribs").<sup>62</sup> Thus, in the New World, the dangerous significance given to "cannibal," a term used as a loaded weapon to progress "civilizing" missions, has been based on misinformation from its very beginning.

To justify their acts of extermination, oppression, and cultural cannibalism, Western colonizers and settlers have relied on the definition of "the other as cannibal," backed by the rule "eat or be eaten."<sup>63</sup> In Western cultures, English scholar Kristen Guest notes that this perceived

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<sup>60</sup> Watson, *Insatiable Appetites*, 4. For example, Jesuit missionaries in New France recorded "damning descriptions" of Iroquois peoples, including supposed acts of cannibalism, that singled the peoples out "as consummate villains." With these records, some from as early as the seventeenth century, the Jesuits presented Iroquois peoples as greatly needing "spiritual guidance," and thus assimilation and oppression, from the Jesuits and French (7).

<sup>61</sup> For instance, while cannibalism among the Tupinambá, an Indigenous people group of Brazil, is documented, scholars note that the practice had complex physical and metaphysical significance that was not "a dietary condition, nor a form of religious sacrifice, nor strictly speaking, an act of revenge." Regardless, Portuguese colonizers, who were outcasts of the religious sort in their own right, emphasized the Tupinambá people's "brutal" and "corrupt" nature, stemming from their cannibalism, as justification for the peoples' oppression (Anne Sophie Refskou, Marcel Alvaro de Amorim, and Vinicius Mariano de Carvalho, "Introduction," in *Eating Shakespeare: Cultural Anthropology as Global Methodology*, ed. Anne Sophie Refskou, Marcel Alvaro de Amorim, and Vinicius Mariano de Carvalho [London: The Arden Shakespeare, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019], 5).

<sup>62</sup> While Columbus perpetuated in his reports that all Caribs were cannibals, he kidnapped and enslaved specifically Taíno (Arawak) peoples, whom he also charged as man-eaters (Jack D. Forbes, *Columbus and other Cannibals* [New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008], 31).

<sup>63</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 148.

distinction between “civilization and savagery” performed “significant ideological work” by both articulating the anxieties of the dominant social group and “containing marginal groups.”<sup>64</sup> Justifying further their destruction and assimilation, or metaphorical cannibalization, the dominant social group cast marginal groups as “the living metaphor” for the powers of darkness, animality, and chaos.<sup>65</sup> Due to this strong negative association, anthropologist Peggy Reeves Sanday asserts, cannibalism has been linked to “a destructive power that must be propitiated or destroyed.” Without its destruction or propitiation, Westerners believed that social survival was not possible.<sup>66</sup> She further that, in numerous reports, the occurrences linked with cannibalism refer not to quelling hunger, but rather, physically controlling chaos.<sup>67</sup> From early on in its conception, the term “cannibalism” has been and continues to be used in reference to metaphorical acts centered around destruction.

Frequently, the site for controlling the “chaos” inherent in those labeled as cannibals was the physical body. A key part of colonization was and has been the colonizers’ insistence on controlling the bodies of those that they colonized; colonization depends on the sustained labor of the colonized in order to extract as much value from the land and its resources as possible. In the United States, the body proved to be a contested space and an important site on which settler colonizers and colonized enforced and negotiated power, as well. As Watson notes, “Imperial power was enacted on the body, even while the body remained a space for resisting this power.”<sup>68</sup> It is important to remember while discussing cultural cannibalism that Indigenous peoples have had long history of resistance and survival (or “survivance”) against Western

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<sup>64</sup> Guest, “Introduction,” 2.

<sup>65</sup> Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Divine Hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6. English soldier and leader of the Jamestown colony, John Smith attributed such a description to Powhatan peoples, whom he accused indirectly of cannibalism (Watson, *Insatiable Appetites*, 158).

<sup>66</sup> Sanday, *Divine Hunger*, 6.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Watson, *Insatiable Appetites*, 7.

impositions and campaigns.<sup>69</sup> Regardless, in order for Western civilization to “flourish” in the manner that they wished, settlers and colonizers had to regulate and control the functions of the bodies of the colonized, labeled as cannibals. The label of “cannibal,” in addition to providing justification for oppression based upon what Westerners interpreted as “heinous” acts, noted the inherent chaos of Indigenous peoples.<sup>70</sup> As Watson explains, “Cannibalism represented bodies out of control—bodies that functioned outside the regulatory norms of Western Christendom.”<sup>71</sup> Thus, the label of “cannibal” gave colonizers and settlers the justification that they needed in order to physically control the colonized, whether that be through genocide or mass relocation.

#### THE PERMEABLE DIVIDE BETWEEN “CIVILIZED” SELF AND “CANNIBAL” OTHER

Although Westerners tried to erect a strict boundary between the “proper” self and cannibalistic “other,” Guest proposes that the cannibal, long used to enforce the absolute division, should be read instead as “a symbol of the permeability, or instability, of such boundaries.”<sup>72</sup> Recent studies of colonial discourse and imperialism have suggested that a society’s inclination to consume, metaphorically or physically, other culture groups can be hidden by projecting the impulse onto the other.<sup>73</sup> As Carlson notes in her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, with the same hand that pointed at Native Americans and labeled them as cannibals, Western settlers ordered the consumption and destruction of Native lands, bodies, ideas, and

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<sup>69</sup> See Gerald Vizenor’s (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, White Earth Reservation) pioneering use of the term in his 1999 book, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*.

<sup>70</sup> For instance, Chippewa author William Warren recounts sensationally instances of Lake Superior Ojibwe cannibalism on Madeline Island; he explicitly uses the terms “horrid,” “murderer,” and “ill-will” to describe the supposed practices. His account, however, is missing key information about when this supposed cannibalism reportedly took place, and Warren notes that he only knows this tale from regional stories. As a result, various scholars have called his account into question (William Warren, *History of the Ojibway People, Based upon Tradition and Oral Statements* [Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1885], 109, 112-113).

<sup>71</sup> Watson, *Insatiable Appetites*, 7.

<sup>72</sup> Guest, “Introduction,” 2.

<sup>73</sup> Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism*, 5.



objects. Regardless of the motivation behind such cannibalism, the distinctions between the cannibal and their victim becomes blurred as the cannibal and the victim literally come together, in this case, as Manifest Destiny pushed westward expansion in the States.<sup>74</sup> As a result of this dynamic, the firm line between Western oppressors and Indigenous oppressed becomes less distinct and infinitely more porous than as the oppressors might have like.

Furthermore, though colonizers and settlers fought to keep this tenuous divide intact, cannibalism had and has been linked to Western individuals for centuries, especially during development or as a way of facilitating survival. For instance, in an essay about the context of Théodore Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818-1819), art historian Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby notes:

Cannibalism may have been associated with the [Indigenous] savages...but it was also a well-known tactic of survival among Europeans in states of crisis, particularly those adrift in that liminal space of the sea...Nevertheless, during shipwrecks, a pragmatic and short-term reliance on cannibalism was both commonplace and well known, disseminated in popular collections of shipwreck narratives.<sup>75</sup>

Yet, these dabbles with cannibalism never tainted irreparably the entire European population's reputation, nor justified European-on-European assimilation and annihilation.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, neurologist and establishing forefather of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, in his "quest-romance of sexual development," applied the label of "cannibal" to all people, regardless of background. In this process of sexual development, Freud believed that the individual begins in the oral phase. During this time, the infant cannot separate itself from the world and is aware only of its mother's breast, a body part not seen as distinct from itself, but instead, available to be taken

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<sup>74</sup> Colás, "From Caliban to Cronus," 135.

<sup>75</sup> Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, "Cannibalism, Senegal: Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*, 1819," in *Extremities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 186.

<sup>76</sup> In contrast, W. Arens notes that isolated examples of Puebloan survival cannibalism from 900 to 1300 CE in New Mexico led to the "easy conclusion" by Western anthropologists that all Native groups in the Southwest were "gustatory or ritual cannibals," (W. Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology & Anthropophagy* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1979], 126).

inside itself, or cannibalized.<sup>77</sup> Thus, for Freud, cannibalism was the basis of civilization.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, while Western oppressors were subjugating and disappearing Indigenous peoples for reportedly partaking in gustatory cannibalism, the oppressors conveniently overlooked the cannibalistic history inherent in their own religion; Kilgour notes that “there is a potential for cannibalism in the sacrament of the [Christian] Eucharist.” Because Christ offered wine and bread as his body at the Last Supper, it is possible to interpret his words as granting permission to his followers to engage in an act of cannibalism and literally eat his body. Kilgour furthers that the act of communion creates a complicated web of relation in which it is “difficult to say precisely *who* is eating *whom*.”<sup>79</sup> Again, though Westerners had been engaging in acts of physical acts of cannibalism for centuries, and according to Freud, all of humanity begins as cannibalistic infants, colonizers and settlers were and have been able to conveniently overlook their cannibalistic pasts.

Challenging and subverting further broad Western accusations that Native Americans were “brute savages,” scholar and writer Jack Forbes (Powhatan-Renapé, Delaware-Lenapé) notes that, “Native American tradition points out to us that all forms of life, including humans, animals, birds, plants, and insects are children of the same parents.”<sup>80</sup> While the Great Creative Power or Great Mystery is viewed as a grandfather or grandmother-grandfather, the earth is seen as a mother.<sup>81</sup> However, Forbes concedes that, although “we are children of the same parents, it

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<sup>77</sup> Maggie Kilgour, “The function of cannibalism at the present time,” in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Maggie Iversen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 244.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism*, 81, 15. Emphasis in original.

<sup>80</sup> Forbes, *Columbus and other Cannibals*, 9. While Forbes makes generalizing points about all Native epistemologies here, I recognize that there is no singular, monolithic “Native American tradition,” and that specific worldviews can differ widely between tribes.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

is also true that the nature of life involves...all forms of life eat[ing] some other living thing and then, in turn, are eaten by someone else.”<sup>82</sup>

Although all living beings must eat other creatures to survive, there are inherent differences in the manners and mentalities taken to do so. Forbes asserts that, “Native people are not barbarians or savages who kill for ‘thrills’ or for ‘showing off,’” but rather, “Killing is a serious business and it requires spiritual preparation.”<sup>83</sup> Unlike many modern hunters, Native peoples tend to not hunt “with a high-powered gun, kill an animal, take off its head as a trophy, and throw the body in a dump.”<sup>84</sup> Moreover, instead of feeling joy or power after hunting a creature, he states that, regardless if the hunted is a deer, a weed, or a tree, one should “feel the pain and sorrow of killing a brother or sister.”<sup>85</sup> If one does not experience those emotions, then they have become “sick” or brutalized.<sup>86</sup> While high-powered guns are a more recent invention, settlers and colonizers have enjoyed “thrill of the hunt,” in various settings, from the safari to mass relocations, for centuries. Again, after learning more about Westerners’ cannibalistic practices and tendencies, the notion of who is a “brute” or “cannibal” is questioned, and the boundary between “civilized” and “savage” is blurred. By both calling out past and ongoing Western cultural consumption and participating in some artistic cannibalism of her own, Carlson emphasizes the indistinction between “self” and “other,” so painstakingly erected by settlers and colonizers, in her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series.

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<sup>82</sup> Forbes, *Columbus and other Cannibals*, 10.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* *Windigos* are an example of those who are “sick” due to their lack of pain and sorrow when killing another living being.

## UNDERSTANDING ANTHROPOPHAGY AS A METHOD OF AND RESPONSE TO CULTURAL CANNIBALISM

To help understand further the cultural cannibalism employed and deconstructed in Carlson's *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, examining the works through an anthropophagic lens is of great benefit. Specifically, delving into the background of cultural or symbolic anthropophagy in the arts helps situate the series within a larger history of Indigenous consumptions of Western cultures and the motivations behind such cannibalism. As a metaphor facilitating an understanding of issues, including cultural mix, anthropophagy has contributed significantly to postcolonial thought in Brazil.<sup>87</sup> Yet, in the art historical field, there has been little to no consideration of how the anthropophagy observed in Brazil—the deliberate Indigenous artistic appropriation of Western ideas and forms—is related to actions taken by Native North American artists such as Carlson.

Associated primarily with Brazilian Modernism and the 1960's art movement *Tropicália*, the Brazilian anthropophagic movement was guided by the poet Oswald de Andrade (Brazilian, 1890-1954) and his writings, specifically the *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928). Broadly speaking, one can describe cultural anthropophagy, as observed in Brazil, as the “cannibalistic appropriation of cultural forms” that both “serves as a root metaphor navigating cultural contradictions” while aligning with postcolonial ideas of “remix.”<sup>88</sup> In positions distinct from earlier Indigenous Brazilians, Brazilian Modernists such as Andrade, a traveled member of the São Paulo culturally elite, appropriated aspects from European culture selectively and creatively

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<sup>87</sup> Islam, “Can the subaltern eat?,” 159.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

into their own work.<sup>89</sup> This practice of creative and selective artistic cannibalism is prominent in both the *Windigo* and *VORE* Series by Carlson.

While these Brazilian artists did not literally cannibalize Europeans' bodies, they called for a "cannibalism of European cultural norms."<sup>90</sup> As Latin American studies scholar Leslie Bary asserts, Brazilian anthropophagites appropriated subversively "the colonialist designation of the native peoples of the Americas as cultureless savages, or 'cannibals.'"<sup>91</sup> The result is an articulated Brazilian culture that is authentic and original "because it is the hybrid product of a colonial process (and not in spite of this)."<sup>92</sup> Instead of viewing the act of cannibalism as destructive, as seen in their colonial past, Brazilian Modernists looked to transform the action into a willful, aggressive form of creativity, nourishment, and strength.<sup>93</sup> As a way of challenging inherent power structures, Carlson participates in this subversion and reclamation of the label "cannibal" in her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, as well.

Similar to in North America, cannibalism has been linked to Indigenous Brazilians for centuries, since contact with European missionaries, mercenaries and soldiers. Tupi peoples, one of the largest groups of peoples indigenous to Brazil prior to contact, captured Hans Staden, a German missionary, in 1552. The 1557 published account of Staden's time with the peoples dramatized his experiences with them and drew attention to their cannibalistic rituals with its sensationalizing nature.<sup>94</sup> Asserting that "Brazil's history of cannibalizing other cultures was its

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<sup>89</sup> Islam, "Can the subaltern eat?," 165.

<sup>90</sup> Colás, "From Caliban to Cronus," 130.

<sup>91</sup> Bary, "The Tropical Modernist as Literary Cannibal," 13.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Colás, "From Caliban to Cronus," 130.

<sup>94</sup> "Anthropophagia," Tate Modern, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/anthropophagia>. It should be noted that modern scholars are mostly reliant on European accounts of Indigenous cannibalism in Brazil for information. With that dependency, the accuracy of such accounts is called into question. Some scholars, including anthropologist W. Arens in his book *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology & Anthropophagy* (1979), cast doubt over the described details of these cannibalistic rituals and their supposed existence.

greatest strength,” however, Brazilian Modernists believed that anthropophagy in the arts could assert the country’s independence over “European colonial culture.”<sup>95</sup> Unlike past settler colonial appropriations of the foreign in the United States, anthropophagy in Brazil revealed openly in its appropriation of the Western “other” and its position as “an agent of cultural hybridization.”<sup>96</sup> With this self-conscious nature, which distinguishes the act from unconscious mimicry, anthropophagites can culturally consume without taking a subaltern position.<sup>97</sup>

Ideas about the functions of cultural cannibalism are not only occurring in Brazil, but rather, many non-Western groups, including Native American artists, have mediated relationships between “the ‘civilized’ core and the ‘barbarous’ periphery” for centuries.<sup>98</sup> Native individuals and artists such as Carlson have been “remixing,” i.e. borrowing or sampling from aspects of Euro-American culture to combine with their own cultures, for centuries—quite some time before Western artists in the States recognized the values in doing so. The specific application of “remix,” a term borrowed from hip-hop music culture, to describe Native artists, however, rose to prominence in the late twentieth century, exemplified by the National Museum of the American Indian’s exhibition, “Remix: New Modernities in a Post-Indian World” in 2007.<sup>99</sup> As the show and others have noted, the idea of “remix” allows, in part, for Native artists to “engage with and to revise,” in a more formal, recognized arena such as the museum or art gallery, “postmodernist art forms, mediums, and strategies on their own terms.”<sup>100</sup> As a result of this remix or “talking back,” as anthropologist Nancy Marie Mithlo (Chiricahua Apache) asserts, Native artists are able to create “engaged histories” that emphasize that, “What may seem ancient

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<sup>95</sup> “Anthropophagia,” Tate Modern.

<sup>96</sup> Islam, “Can the subaltern eat?,” 169.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>99</sup> Jessica L. Horton and Cherise Smith, “The Particulars of Postidentity,” *American Art* 28, no. 1 (2014): 5.

<sup>100</sup> Claudia Mesch, “Thinking the ‘Post-Indian’: Remix: New Modernities in a Post Indian World,” *Journal of Surrealism of the Americas* 2, no. 1 (2008): 150.

or beyond reach can easily be considered contemporary and modern when a direct engagement with the material is present and available.”<sup>101</sup> Since its conception in the 1920’s, the concept of antropófago or anthropophagy has played an essential role in understanding the intercultural mixture present in Brazilian history and should be applied to the remix by Native artists present in the United States.<sup>102</sup>

#### CARLSON’S THOUGHTS ON AND ASSOCIATIONS WITH ANTHROPOPHAGY

Carlson states that her work such as her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series tackles the idea of cultural consumption with imagery that focuses on Western appropriations of Indigenous bodies, ideas, land, and forms of cultural expression.<sup>103</sup> After spending time with the concept of anthropophagy, however, I argue that the utilization of Western imagery in her work is also indicative of its anthropophagic nature. The utilization and parodying of Western objects in Carlson’s compositions calls attention to settler and colonial wrongs while providing an arena for Carlson to navigate issues of Native identity—key aspects of anthropophagic art. Carlson herself has a scholarly interest in Brazilian modernism and antropófago and has “read quite a bit on how they [Brazilian modernists] are using it as a movement, as a political vehicle, as a disruptor, and how they’re using it to be transgressive.”<sup>104</sup>

An admirer of Andrade’s work, Carlson discusses favorably the history of Brazilian artistic anthropophagy, which she calls “a strong narrative,” and notes how the artists “consumed the best part of Europe and made it part of [their] body.”<sup>105</sup> She points out further that such consumption was part of a survival tactic and an assertion that Indigenous Brazilians have not

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<sup>101</sup> Nancy Marie Mithlo, *Knowing Native Arts* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 49.

<sup>102</sup> Islam, “Can the subaltern eat?” 159.

<sup>103</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

<sup>104</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

been static. While Carlson notes key differences between the Indigenous forms of cultural anthropophagy present in the United States and those in Brazil, she engages actively with both and states “I love holding both of those in my head. And I also like that they are the inverse of each other.”<sup>106</sup> Similar to Brazilian Modernists, in her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson consumes Western elements from Europe and the States and envelops them within her compositions. These scenes confront past and present colonial and settler colonial enterprises and mistruths founded on the idea that Indigenous peoples’ lifestyles, whether they actually practiced cannibalistic rituals or not, were sufficient justification for their annihilation, removal, and assimilation.

In part, Carlson’s association with “Native American Surrealism” lends support to the claim that anthropophagy is an appropriate idea to hold when considering her work. For example, Silberman’s journal article, “Complexity and Contradiction in Native American Surrealism,” which spends time examining Carlson’s *oeuvre*, was published in the *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas*. Focusing on several artists’ bodies of work, in addition to Carlson’s, the article examines the interplay between Surrealist art and Native America. While the text admits that the term “Native American Surrealism” is contradictory, due to Surrealism’s European origin, Silberman recognizes how it is possible to view some contemporary Native art as a re-appropriation of what non-Native Surrealists appropriated for their work, resulting in a Native American Surrealism *après la lettre*.<sup>107</sup>

Carlson’s discussion in an article centered around Native American Surrealism is significant in establishing her anthropophagic connections because of anthropophagy’s associations with Surrealism. In his *Manifesto Antropofagia* (1928), which proposes that Brazil’s cannibalization

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<sup>106</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

<sup>107</sup> Silberman, “Complexity and Contradiction,” 108.



of cultures is the country's biggest strength, Andrade echoes clearly Andre Breton's *Manifeste du Surréalisme* (1928). Full of short, subversive, and playful sentences, the *Manifesto*'s structure calls to mind Dadaism, and some argue that Andrade took not only the *Manifeste du Surréalisme* as a model, but also the *Manifeste Cannibale Dada* (1920).<sup>108</sup> Andrade's admiration for Surrealism was clearly evident as, in 1929, he stated, "let us not forget that Surrealism is one of the best pre-Anthropophagist movements...After Surrealism, only Anthropophagy."<sup>109</sup> In Surrealist texts, cannibalism was understood generally as a creative process, an idea reflected continuously in Brazilian Modernism as well as Carlson's *Windigo* and *VORE* Series.<sup>110</sup> Thus, to produce and guide a movement focused on cannibalizing European cultures, Andrade cannibalized two European artistic movements, Surrealism and Dadaism, to form the basis of Brazilian anthropophagy.

Yet, when asked about her association with Native American Surrealism in Silberman's article, Carlson noted that it "...made me think of my work in terms of Surrealism and whether or not that's an appropriate term. But, I don't know because...Surrealism has this historical context," a context she does not link inherently to her own work.<sup>111</sup> While Carlson does not align herself fully with "historical" Surrealists, she notes that she has studied their work and "was really interested in their methods and their practices...and so, I definitely have learned from them."<sup>112</sup> Specifically, Carlson finds the methods that the Surrealists employed in their work as a "really cool way to kind of break this regular way of thinking."<sup>113</sup> In addition, Carlson's *Le*

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<sup>108</sup> Virgine Pouzet-Duzer, "Dada, Surrealism, Antropofagia: The Consuming Process of the Avant-gardes," *L'Esprit Créateur* 53, no. 3 (2013): 85.

<sup>109</sup> Cunhambebinho, 'Péret,' *Diário de São Paulo*, March 17, 1929, reprinted and translated in *Review: Latin American Literature and Arts*, 51 (Fall 1995) 69.

<sup>110</sup> Pouzet-Duzer, "Dada, Surrealism, Antropofagia," 82.

<sup>111</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

*Château des Pyrénées* (Fig. 7) from the *Windigo* Series refers to Surrealist René Magritte's work of the same title. In general, just as twentieth-century anthropophagic Brazilian artists "digested" aspects of European Modernist art while "affirming Indigenous cultural sources," Carlson incorporates selectively into her works aspects of Euro-American culture in ways that harken to and elaborate upon ideas commonly attributed to Surrealists.<sup>114</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In her body of work, including her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson both addresses and takes part in culturally cannibalistic practices. Noting that she "doesn't know what appropriation-free art looks like," Carlson does not try to hide her consumption of Western art history as she "couldn't have that conversation [about Western appropriation] if I wasn't appropriating."<sup>115</sup> To comment on the commercialization of Native cultures, Western assimilative forces, and self-other boundaries, Carlson selects, modifies, and includes Western figures and objects into her artwork. This practice is at the forefront of her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, which cannibalize both museum objects as well as cannibal boom films to deconstruct the cannibalism associated with Indigenous peoples.

Since contact, Western oppressors have leveled charges of cannibalism against Indigenous individuals to establish "civilized self" versus "savage other" boundaries, which, in turn, justified the colonization, settler colonization, and resulting genocide of Indigenous peoples. As Carlson prods and subverts in her work, however, this distinction between Western people and Indigenous cannibals was not as solidified as the oppressors might have liked. Instead of firm boundaries, these self-drawn lines became increasingly permeable as the Western cannibalization

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<sup>114</sup> Islam, "Can the subaltern eat?," 160.

<sup>115</sup> "Q & A: Andrea Carlson on 'VORE.'" Plains Art Museum.

of Native American progressed. Additionally, these “civilized” Western men had participated in literal cannibalistic practices themselves in the past. Revealing and building off this former and current hypocrisy, Carlson flips the cannibalistic narrative dominated previously by colonizers and settlers to both challenge and embrace it.

For decades, Euro-American artists have appropriated Native artforms, including pictographs and petroglyphs, in their works to garner authenticity as “American” artists. Carlson, in contrast, has no interest in cannibalizing to solidify herself as an “authentically” American artist in the Western canon. Rather, she consumes to upset inherent power structures and create a sense of distinction between her and her white predecessors’ cannibalism. To do so, throughout her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson cannibalizes strategies of consumption from Western art history. In the next chapter, “How Tasty Was My Little Museum Artifact!,” I illustrate this point by examining how Carlson engages with the figure of the *windigo* and draws from significant Western museum collections to comment upon cultural cannibalism and perceived authority in her *Windigo* Series.

## CHAPTER TWO

### “How Tasty Was My Little Museum Artifact!”

#### INTRODUCTION

Nestled within a whimsical landscape of bright colors, jagged edges, and abstracted creatures, the naturalistically rendered clock in the center of Carlson’s *The Poison That Is Its Own Cure* (Fig. 8) appears out of sorts with its fantastical surroundings.<sup>116</sup> Made for King Louis XVI of France, the last ruler of the country before the monarchy’s fall during the French Revolution, the timepiece features twelve clock faces set around an ornate base, with a radiating mask of Apollo above its lyre-shaped marble case.<sup>117</sup> Surrounding the timepiece, the gentle swells of female breasts blend into curving paws ornamented with polka dots, a nod to a medicine dream of the influential artist Norval Morrisseau (Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek First Nation, 1932-2007).<sup>118</sup> Now plucked out of eighteenth-century France and transported to a landscape of Carlson’s imagination, the clock is, in actuality, currently in the Minneapolis Institute of Art’s (MIA) collection. As objects are displayed often out of context in museums, both due to and resulting in further misinterpretation of their stories, the clock’s original intent is now lost in *The Poison*; Rushing notes that, while the clock once stood for “the marriage of opulent art, advanced technology, and global time in European high culture,” in *The Poison*, “an altogether different time is embodied.”<sup>119</sup> Throughout her *Windigo* Series, including in *The Poison*, Carlson draws from significant Western museum collections such as MIA’s to comment upon culturally cannibalistic practices and the strength of perceived authority.

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<sup>116</sup> The title for this chapter riffs off the title of the 1971 Brazilian black comedy, *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, directed by Nelson Pereira dos Santos.

<sup>117</sup> “Clock, c. 1789,” Minneapolis Institute of Art, accessed March 4, 2021, <https://collections.artsmia.org/art/3764/clock-jean-antoine-lepine>.

<sup>118</sup> Rushing, “Andrea Carlson’s Ravenous Vision,” 41.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

In order to dismantle and question past cannibalistic charges against Native Americans, Carlson, in part, utilizes and parodies various museum objects. For the *Windigo* series, “named after an Anishinaabe winter cannibal that often misidentifies those it consumes,” Carlson examines both her Scandinavian and Anishinaabe ancestry while confronting past instances of Western institutions’ “collecting for posterity in anticipation of cultural assimilation.”<sup>120</sup> Throughout the *Windigo* Series, Carlson creates anthropophagic compositions that consume and represent objects on display at cultural institutions such as MIA.<sup>121</sup> She notes that Western museums and individuals collected cultural heritage frequently from non-Western groups for “posterity,” as the collectors visualized a fictitious future where these objects could no longer be produced by their makers.<sup>122</sup> Carlson asserts that, by referring to these works from museum collections, she “appropriate[s] and fictionalize[s] them” back into her “own imagined landscapes.”<sup>123</sup> This appropriation and fictionalization is in direct response to museums’ own “accreting and assimilating objects foreign to itself,” a practice still maintained by some museums’ unwillingness to return looted objects to their native lands.<sup>124</sup> Carlson’s appropriation acts as a challenge to the institutions’ perceived authority, accumulated through “a history of cultural dominance,” to “tell the stories of [these] indigenous objects.”<sup>125</sup> With her *Windigo* Series, Carlson engages directly with one of the most demonstrable examples of cultural cannibalism, past museum acquisitions.

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<sup>120</sup> “New Skins: New Paintings by Andrea Carlson and Jim Denomie,” Minneapolis Institute of Art; Hoska, “Seven Sisters,” 296.

<sup>121</sup> “New Skins: New Paintings by Andrea Carlson and Jim Denomie,” Minneapolis Institute of Art.

<sup>122</sup> In the “Hearts of Our People” catalogue, Carlson notes that “posterity” is important as a term “because colonial empires and their surrogates were buying futures in indigenous cultural scarcity and death,” (296).

<sup>123</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Hoska, “Seven Sisters,” 296.

As history professor and museum studies scholar Amy Lonetree (Ho-Chunk) notes, “museums can be very painful sites for Native peoples, as they are intimately tied to the colonization process.”<sup>126</sup> Early collecting practices for the institutions emphasized collecting goods from Native communities as a form of “salvage ethnology,” or collecting for “posterity.” The “great collections in America” that were assembled during the nineteenth century, in the “Dark Ages of Native history” when Native peoples were “supposed to vanish from the American landscape,” include those at the Smithsonian, the Peabody Essex Museum, and the American Museum of Natural History. While the museums aggressively collected “American ethnographic and archaeological material” as a way of preserving the “most authentic” forms of Native culture, the U.S. government forced assimilative efforts onto Native communities who, as Lonetree asserts, were compelled to “give up the very ways of life that produced these objects and that the objects reflect.”<sup>127</sup>

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Native cultural heritage was pursued relentlessly by museum collectors, “Native Americans were told that there was no place for them as tribal people in contemporary society.”<sup>128</sup> In part, disease facilitated museum collectors’ pursuits of Native goods. As Lonetree notes, “disease...played a role in dispossessing tribal peoples of their material culture by disrupting traditional ownership patterns.”<sup>129</sup> Native communities ravaged by diseases such as smallpox were left with an excess of objects with no apparent owners, and as a result, some families sold the artifacts as a way of garnering money

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<sup>126</sup> Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 1.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* In addition, many Native objects in museum collections were initially collected by white traders who wanted to sell Native arts and crafts to tourists. During the reservation era, Lonetree asserts that the “exploitative practices” of the traders made them “far wealthier than those whose goods they marketed,” (34-35).

during a trying time.<sup>130</sup> Museums and other collectors who engaged in opportunistic collecting practices during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries acted cannibalistically; rather than providing assistance to struggling Native peoples, the collectors were more willing to let Native Americans become a “vanishing race” while they “gobbled up” forms of Native cultural expression to incorporate into their own bodies. Enabling the peoples’ disappearance also, in part, increased the value of the objects in their collections. By pining for Native objects while watching or engaging in the disappearance of Native peoples, museums actively took on the role of cultural cannibals.

#### SHIFTING DEFINITIONS OF THE *WINDIGO* FIGURE

While Carlson was an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, she took Ojibwe language classes. During these classes, she became more familiar with one of her tribe’s cultural characters, the *windigo*. To Carlson, the *windigo* is a “winter cannibal monster that misidentifies people that he consumes.”<sup>131</sup> Mimicking the “greed of assimilation,” the *windigo*’s hunger, much like that of Western colonizers and settlers, grows the more that he consumes.<sup>132</sup> Though imbued with humanity himself, the *windigo* does not see the humanity of his victims. This characteristic, to Carlson, “metaphorically lends itself very well to the insatiable hunger of settlers;” as the hunger of capitalists and imperialists in the New World know no bounds, the

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<sup>130</sup> Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 12. However, Lonetree notes that “not all objects left Native hands under duress during this period.” A large number of Native artists created works to sell to tourists as a way of “making a living during extremely difficult economic times.” Yet, she asserts strongly that we must remember how “extreme poverty and ongoing colonial oppression permeated tribal life at the time” and drove these sales (12). Native communities who would like some of these objects sold during times of duress returned to them face an uphill battle.

<sup>131</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

<sup>132</sup> Shannon Kelly, “Artist’s Talk: Andrea Carlson on Ravenous Eye Exhibition,” The College of New Jersey Art Gallery, last modified 2017, <https://tcnjartgallery.tcnj.edu/2017/11/07/artists-talk-andrea-carlson-on-ravenous-eye-exhibition/>.

*windigo* tends to “consume, consume, consume,” regardless of consequences.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, Carlson notes that the *windigo*’s misidentification of his victims resembles closely colonial and settler structures, which function to “other” Indigenous peoples.<sup>134</sup> By dehumanizing Indigenous peoples, often with charges of cannibalism, Western oppressors misidentified their victims purposefully to pave way for their subjugation and genocide. A large part of colonization and settler colonization, this dehumanization and misidentification enabled horrific events to occur and for oppressors to metaphorically take Indigenous groups into their body.<sup>135</sup>

Though Carlson provides a concrete definition of *windigo* with tangible characteristics, Chippewa linguist Basil H. Johnston authored a seminal text in which he demonstrates the fluidity of the term. In his book *Ojibwe Heritage* (1977), Johnston focuses in particular on the word *windigo*, which he argues “nonnatives very often reduce the metaphorical aspects of...and seize on [its] literal interpretations.”<sup>136</sup> Presenting a more abstract definition of *windigo*, Johnston asserts that, although non-Natives usually translate the term as a cannibal monster, the word also functions symbolically to symbolize gluttony and “the image of excess.”<sup>137</sup> To Johnston, the term could refer to the “more abstract capacity for self-destruction,” and he notes that “turning Windigo” is a real possibility.<sup>138</sup>

Over time, the definition of *windigo* has shifted from “evil deity to flesh-eating monster.” Interrogating this shift, a number of anthropologists have speculated that, after European contact, the “attribute of cannibalism” or concept of the *windigo* “as a category or race of non-human

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<sup>133</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

<sup>134</sup> Kelly, “Artist’s Talk.”

<sup>135</sup> Carlson, “‘Native American’ is not a Monolithic Term or Culture,” in *Nasher Museum Podcast*.

<sup>136</sup> Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), 66.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Marlene Goldman, “Margaret Atwood’s *Wilderness Tips*: Apocalyptic Cannibal Fiction, in *Eating their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity*, ed. Kristen Guest (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 170.



entities” developed.<sup>139</sup> For instance, furthering Johnston’s thoughts, anthropologist Lou Marano posits that Native definitions of *windigo* “carried no semantic connotations of cannibalism, but took on this ancillary meaning for 150 years or more during crisis conditions.” These crisis conditions were brought about by contact, with Marano concluding that Europeans “played a significant role in creating the cannibal monster that they looked on with such revulsion and fascination.”<sup>140</sup> Regardless, according to Carlson, characteristics of the *windigo* today, furthering its connection to colonialism and settler colonialism, include both cannibalistic and gluttonous tendencies.

Forbes, whose work Carlson has read, examines this connection between *windigos* and Western oppressors in his writings. Instead of using the term “monster,” as Carlson does, Forbes asserts that *windigo* “refers to a cannibal or, more specifically, to an evil person or spirit who terrorizes other creatures by means of terrible acts, including cannibalism.” Furthermore, the noun *wétikowatisewin*, from the Cree term *wétiko* (*windigo*), refers to “diabolical wickedness or cannibalism.”<sup>141</sup> While Forbes maintains that the main characteristic of the *windigo* is his consumption of other human beings, he notes that the forms of and motivation for such cannibalism can vary.<sup>142</sup>

Furthermore, in his text, *Columbus and other Cannibals* (2008), Forbes delves into colonialist-imperialist systems and their relations to *windigos*.<sup>143</sup> Noting how the *windigo* is not always a monster as Westerners tend to think of monsters—as decidedly non-human, supernatural beings or creatures—Forbes asserts that “Native peoples have almost always understood that

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<sup>139</sup> Goldman, “Margaret Atwood’s *Wilderness Tips*,” 170.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> Forbes, *Columbus and other Cannibals*, 24. While Forbes also mentions the Powhatan term *wintiko* (*windigo*) here, he uses *wétiko* consistently throughout the text.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

many Europeans were *wétikos*, were insane.”<sup>144</sup> He furthers that, “It should be understood that *wétikos* do not eat humans only in a symbolic sense” since “*the wealthy and exploitative literally consume the lives of those that they exploit.*”<sup>145</sup> As the *windigo* misidentifies and ignores the humanity of his victim, colonialist and settler cannibalism for profit is often raw, brutal, and ugly. Forbes notes that “There is no respect for a person whose life is being eaten. No ceremony...Only self-serving consumption.”<sup>146</sup> Again, more cracks appear in the tenuous boundary between “civilized us” and “cannibalistic other” that Western oppressors created.

### CULTURAL CANNIBALISM IN WORKS FROM THE *WINDIGO* SERIES

Inspired by the “cultural exchange and assimilation” of her European and Anishinaabe ancestry, Carlson’s *Windigo* Series juxtaposes objects, frequently from institutions such as the Minneapolis Institute of Art, among serene, jubilant, or harsh landscapes.<sup>147</sup> In some works from the series, including *Truthiness* (Fig. 9), the objects are not alone in their fictionalized settings; sharp-teeth, geometrized creatures prowl around the edges of the compositions. Or, in the case of *Waagidijiid* (Fig. 10), peer out from behind the naturalistically rendered museum artifacts. The artworks contained in the anthropophagic compositions, usually at stylistic odds with their surroundings, are familiar. For instance, in *End of Trail* (Fig. 2), the eighteenth-century *Jade Mountain Illustrating the Gathering of Scholars at the Lanting Pavilion* (Fig. 11) looms in a vignette made, in part, by swatches of geometric, blank-and-white stripes creeping up the composition’s side. Additionally, Carlson’s *Le Château des Pyrénées* (Fig. 7) features prominently the sculptural *Traveling in Autumn Mountains* (Fig. 12). Carved from jade, both

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<sup>144</sup> Forbes, *Columbus and other Cannibals*, 49-50.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 25. Emphasis in original.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> Rushing, “Andrea Carlson’s Ravenous Vision,” 39-40.

*Jade Mountain* and *Traveling in Autumn Mountains* are on display in one of MIA's "Asia" galleries. As Carlson explains, by making such clear, obvious references to museum works, "I'm trying to make them my own, to take them out of the museum even while they are still in it."<sup>148</sup>

With the *Windigo* Series, Carlson questions museum collecting practices and their assertions of authority to tell the objects' stories. While compositions from the body of work do not make any references to overt, physical cannibalism—Hannibal Lector is not lurking behind any carved jade here—they are highlighting and challenging explicitly cultural consumption by collectors and their cultural institutions. Rushing notes that works from the *Windigo* Series give viewers a glimpse into Carlson's "ravenous vision," a vision that has produced "compelling images of violent carnality that are metaphors of (colonial) consumption (of people, identity, objects, culture.)"<sup>149</sup> Carlson's vision here is executed through large compositions, that, as she asserts, "are like a door; they want you to come in, want to consume you."<sup>150</sup> Thus, again, the true identities of the cannibals in Carlson's *Windigo* Series are simultaneously shrouded, overlapping, and yet, perfectly clear. As museums and collectors are cannibals of non-Western art, Carlson is a cannibal of Western art and styles. Furthermore, her compositions consume their viewers. Once again, Carlson reveals that the past Western boundaries between "civilized us" and "cannibal other" are increasingly more muddled than Western colonizers and settlers had imagined.

#### *THE OTHER SIDE* – GIVING VIEWERS THE "OLD RAZZLE DAZZLE"

In Carlson's *The Other Side* (Fig. 13) from the *Windigo* Series, strips of geometrically patterned bands interlock as they layer and fill the composition. Comprised of black, white, and

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<sup>148</sup> "New Skins," Minneapolis Institute of Art.

<sup>149</sup> Rushing, "Ravenous Vision," 40.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

gold, the strips create a sense of optical illusion as they cause the picture plane to shift and contract. In the center of the painting, a small window or vignette is present. This window gives a glimpse of a seascape of sorts; a calm ocean is situated underneath a pale sky filled with clouds. As the bands contract around this sea scene, this portal to an outside, unknown world appears to be shrinking. Creating a strong sense of depth, the layered bands elongate the perceived space to an unknown, ever changing length between viewer and outside world. Though viewers might yearn to reach “the other side,” it remains infuriatingly out of grasp. Along the edges of the composition, strips contain gold accents that catch the viewer’s attention and abruptly shift their gaze around the work’s perimeter.

Throughout her body of work, Carlson utilizes often different variations of the geometric, black-and-white patterns seen in *The Other Side*. Frequently, scholars such as Mithlo assert that these swatches of patterns represent or call to mind patterned blankets on which the objects cannibalized by museums are displayed.<sup>151</sup> While I believe this comparison to be apt, I propose that these patterns also bear a striking resemblance to “razzle dazzle” or “dazzle” camouflage (Fig. 14). During World War I, attacks on British ships by German U-Boats were increasing in number. Unlike the submarines that they were up against, the large ships had no way of hiding themselves along their journeys.<sup>152</sup> Typical camouflage, one that attempts to blend its wearer into their surroundings, is ineffective on ships because of three factors: the sea, sky, and horizon line. All three are affected by weather conditions, which cause the sky and sea to change in color and the horizon line to shift.<sup>153</sup> Thus, instead of focusing efforts on blending the ships into their

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<sup>151</sup> Nancy Marie Mithlo, “Venice Biennale 2009 – ‘Rendezvoused,’” NancyMarieMithlo.com, last modified 2009, [https://nancymariemithlo.com/Radical\\_Curating\\_Indigenous\\_Art\\_at\\_the\\_Venice\\_Biennale/Venice\\_Biennale\\_2009/index.html](https://nancymariemithlo.com/Radical_Curating_Indigenous_Art_at_the_Venice_Biennale/Venice_Biennale_2009/index.html).

<sup>152</sup> Allison C. Meier, “The Camouflage that Dazzled,” *JSTOR Daily*, last modified July 13, 2018, <https://daily.jstor.org/the-camouflage-that-dazzled/>.

<sup>153</sup> Claudia T. Covert, “Art at War: Dazzle Camouflage,” *Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 26, no. 2 (2007): 51.

everchanging surroundings, British naval officer and graphic designer Norman Wilkinson took the idea of camouflage in the opposite direction; Wilkinson proposed to paint a ship in such a way that “she” appeared broken up, and enemies could not tell the direction in which she was traveling (Fig. 15).<sup>154</sup>

“Literally dazzling viewers into confusion,” razzle dazzle ships’ camouflage was comprised not only of geometric black-and-white patterns, similar to those seen in Carlson’s work, but also bold curves, zig-zags, and stripes of blue, fuchsia and green.<sup>155</sup> Typically, studio artists were involved in the razzle dazzle design process, and groups of women executed the patterns and painted them onto the ships after approval.<sup>156</sup> In addition to obscuring the shape or direction of a ship through a periscope, the razzle dazzle camouflage was surprising to behold and often confused viewers “as to the purpose of the strange vessel cruising past.”<sup>157</sup> Of those countries to employ razzle dazzle camouflage, the United States applied the practice the most extensively.<sup>158</sup>

By the end of the war, the British government’s “Committee for Dazzle Painting” came to the conclusion that razzle dazzle camouflage had neither positive nor negative effects on the ships. Yet, the men on boats that used razzle dazzle camouflage often had higher confidence than their counterparts on non-camouflaged ships, and the committee recommended that the dazzle system continue. Additionally, if hit by a U-Boat, the ships that had razzle dazzle made it to port slightly more frequently than their counterparts without the razzle dazzle because they often were hit in a non-vital area. Americans found similar effects on their men and boats with the razzle dazzle camouflage.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Meier, “The Camouflage that Dazzled.” The authors of the articles that I read about razzle dazzle camouflage, including Meier, use female pronouns for ships, so I will do so in this section.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Covert, “Art at War,” 51.

<sup>157</sup> Meier, “The Camouflage that Dazzled.”

<sup>158</sup> Covert, “Art at War,” 51.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 53.

In interviews, Carlson has stated that she likes to “dazzle folks.”<sup>160</sup> The patterns used in *The Other Side*, positioned around water, a sky, and a defined horizon line, resemble closely some of the razzle dazzle camouflage patterns used during World War I, a fitting resemblance due to Carlson’s interests in misidentification. As the *windigo* misidentifies whom he consumes, the razzle dazzle patterns made it almost impossible for U-Boats to identify successfully both the direction and parts of a ship. Whereas both the British and United States navies utilized this misidentification to their advantage as protection, the *windigo*’s misidentification worked to its victim’s detriment. By surrounding their victims with “razzle dazzle,” or the label of “cannibal,” in Western colonizers and settlers’ cases, oppressors were able to facilitate Indigenous groups’ consumption without guilt.<sup>161</sup>

As mentioned, during World War I, Americans were the fondest of the misidentifying effects of razzle dazzle camouflage.<sup>162</sup> It appears, then, that groups in the United States have relied on misidentification to bolster and further their aims in a variety of arenas. War itself is a cannibalistic practice, where atrocities are committed frequently by those on the chosen “good” side. During both World Wars, but specifically World War I, Western powers faced off and challenged each other as they consumed and fought over territory and resources. In these instances, the West actively “ate” itself. The use of razzle dazzle camouflage in Carlson’s *Windigo* Series plays into and amplifies the question, who is the real cannibal? Is the “camouflage” protecting Westerners from Indigenous cannibals? Or have Indigenous groups reappropriated the cannibal label and subverted it to protect themselves? While there are no

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<sup>160</sup> Hoska, “Seven Sisters,” 297.

<sup>161</sup> For instance, Arens asserts that Western oppressors leveled sensationalist charges of gustatory cannibalism against Fijian, Hawaiian, Iroquois, Caribs, and West African peoples during their oppression (W. Arens, “Rethinking Anthropophagy,” in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iverson [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 44-45).

<sup>162</sup> Covert, “Art at War,” 51.

definite answers to such questions, it is readily apparent in *The Other Side* that the use of razzle dazzle camouflage amplifies the work's disorienting, all-consuming feel.

#### TRUTHINESS AND THE DENIAL OF SETTLER CULPABILITY

In *Truthiness* (Fig. 9), Carlson examines not only culturally cannibalistic museum practices, but also how the permeation of misidentification and mistruths extends from contact-era charges of cannibalism to the present day. Similar to other works in the *Windigo* Series, in *Truthiness*, a naturalistically rendered museum object is situated within a fantastical landscape. Specifically, a commemorative plate, depicting an eagle flying over a rocky bluff while holding nationalistic paraphernalia, is in the direct center of the composition. Situated within a colorful, chaotic landscape, the plate is surrounded by a pale nimbus, as two symmetrical beams of light shoot out from its top half and pierce the pale sky. Behind the plate, the beige silhouettes of men fight across the center of the landscape and are illuminated by the plate's nimbus. Though represented flatly, they cast long, dark shadows across the landscape. From the bottom register of the composition, two graphically rendered creatures watch the unfolding scene. Facing each other, the canine-like animals bare sharp teeth and outstretched claws that are formed by the negative space of the other. Though created abstractly, the pair have a strong sense of dimensionality.

Again, in *Truthiness*, Carlson engages in anthropophagy and cannibalizes from the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA); the institution displayed the plate seen in the composition's center, which was made in Germany in 1865, three years after the Dakota Uprising of 1862.<sup>163</sup> What the plate commemorates is the American, specifically Minnesotan, "victory" over Dakota peoples, and the structure depicted on the plate is Fort Snelling. Situated in the bluffs along the

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<sup>163</sup> Christina Schmid, "Painting Time," *ArtPulse*, last modified 2015, <http://artpulsemagazine.com/painting-time>.

confluence or *bdote*, “where two waters come together,” of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers, Fort Snelling was built in present-day St. Paul on a sacred site of creation for Dakota peoples.<sup>164</sup>

On December 26, 1862, the largest mass execution in U.S. history took place: thirty-eight Dakota men—in addition to two men included mistakenly—were hanged for “alleged crimes against white citizens during an armed conflict between the Dakota and the United States.”<sup>165</sup> Tried not before a state or federal criminal court, but before a military commission, the Dakota men executed were killed for their participation in the 1862 U.S.–Dakota War, or the Dakota Uprising. One of several ongoing incidents of warfare between Indigenous nations and the United States at the time, the Dakota War began with both the making and breaking of treaties.<sup>166</sup> As the state of Minnesota was established on Dakota and Ojibwe homelands, and settlers began encroaching on Dakota territory, tensions among the settlers and Dakota peoples rose steadily for over a decade, and Dakota displacement and colonial mistreatment intensified. The hostilities culminated on August 17, 1862, when four Dakota men on their way home from hunting murdered a settler homeowner, his family, and two other settlers at Acton township. This killing led to a Dakota organized assault on the town of New Ulm and Fort Ridgely, prompting what was known as the “Great Sioux Uprising,” or the Dakota War.<sup>167</sup> As a whole, the attacks, which

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<sup>164</sup> Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, “A Journey of Healing and Awakening,” *American Indian Quarterly* 28, no. 1/2 (Winter-Spring 2004): 279. There have been moves made to rename the Historic Ft. Snelling Site “Bdote” as recognition of the site’s importance to Dakota peoples. Naturally, there has been resistance to this move by non-Native settlers in the area who consider such a change to be “revisionist.” With this claim, settlers are, again, creating a type of “truthiness” that furthers their narrative while suppressing Native histories.

<sup>165</sup> David Martínez, “Remembering the Thirty-Eight: Abraham Lincoln, the Dakota, and the U.S. War on Barbarism,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 28, no. 2 (2013): 5. Wicaŋhpi Wastedaŋpi, who used the common name of Čaške, or “first-born son” stepped forward from the other prisoners for execution when Čaške, in reference to a different prisoner, was called. The second, Wasicuŋ, was the white adopted son of a Dakota family and was executed despite the fact that he had been acquitted.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 9, 13.

<sup>167</sup> Christopher J. Pexa, “Domination Following the 1862 U.S. – Dakota War,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 30.



can easily be seen as a response to treaty violations and a defense of homeland, resulted in 644 civilian and ninety-three soldier deaths. The subsequent military commission that was established convicted 303 Dakota men of capital crimes punishable by death and exiled Mdewakanton and Wahpekute Dakota peoples.<sup>168</sup>

As historian David Martínez (Akimel O'odham/Hia Ced O'odham/Mexican) asserts, although tensions had been rising between Dakota peoples and settlers for dozens of years before the uprising, Minnesotans described the attack as if “they were caught completely unaware that hostilities were brewing nearby.” Feigning innocence, “Minnesotans acted as if they were the first settler community in history to be on the receiving end of Indigenous wrath” and were surprised that Dakota peoples would “rise against the oppressive conditions imposed by the settlers.”<sup>169</sup> Believing that the uprising was unprovoked, white settlers’ cries for justice during the fall of 1862 were actually, as Martínez posits, cries for revenge since the Minnesotans believed that they had done nothing to warrant the attacks.<sup>170</sup> Campaigning for the lives of Dakota men after cannibalizing their land, Minnesotan settlers’ maintenance of their innocence could easily be described as their utilization of “truthiness.” This “truthiness” continues today, as English scholar Christopher J. Pexa (Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota, Spirit Lake Nation) notes that willful settler amnesia still surrounds the circumstances of the Dakota Uprising.<sup>171</sup>

As a term and the title of a work from Carlson’s *Windigo* Series, “truthiness” refers to “the quality of preferring concepts or facts one wishes to be true, rather than concepts or facts known

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<sup>168</sup> Martínez, “Remembering the Thirty-Eight,” 15. Only thirty-eight of those 303 would be hanged as President Lincoln intervened and reduced this number. This article by Martínez delves into how Lincoln’s role as a “savior” of the 265 Dakota saved is overexaggerated; he still ordered the mass hanging of thirty-eight men to appease a Minnesotan populace threatening anarchy and riots if he did not do as they wanted (6). Before their exile, Dakota peoples were held in a concentration camp at Fort Snelling.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>171</sup> Pexa, “Domination Following the 1862 U.S. – Dakota War,” 30.

to be true.”<sup>172</sup> In 2005, Stephen Colbert presented the word on the first episode of his satirical news television show, *The Colbert Report* (2005–2014). Although “truthiness” had existed informally and rarely as a variant of “truthfulness” since the nineteenth century, Colbert managed to popularize the term and solidified it in Americans’ lexicons.<sup>173</sup> Since its premier on *The Colbert Report*, “truthiness” has been included, with Colbert credited explicitly in its etymology, in several dictionaries such the New Oxford American Dictionary and the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.<sup>174</sup> Additionally, the term was selected by both the American Dialect Society (ADS) and Merriam-Webster Dictionary as their “term of the year” in 2005 and 2006, respectively.<sup>175</sup>

Expressing a kind of “ersatz truth,” “truthiness” continues to define, as Colbert points out, “those who appeal to raw feelings at the expense of facts.”<sup>176</sup> Commenting on the prevalence of “truthiness” in American society, Colbert notes, “I don’t know whether it’s a new thing, but it’s certainly a current thing, in that it doesn’t seem to matter what facts are.”<sup>177</sup> Created during “truthiness’s” rise to prominence in American’s vocabulary, Carlson’s *Truthiness* emphasizes that a disregard for factual truths was fundamental during the settler colonization of the United States and remains a critical strategy in the running of the country today.<sup>178</sup> In fact, in the composition’s foreground, the two canine-like creatures wait, as Carlson describes, for an

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<sup>172</sup> “Truthiness Voted 2005 Word of the Year,” American Dialect Society, last modified January 6, 2006, [https://www.americandialect.org/truthiness\\_voted\\_2005\\_word\\_of\\_the\\_year](https://www.americandialect.org/truthiness_voted_2005_word_of_the_year).

<sup>173</sup> Ben Zimmer, “On Language: Truthiness,” *The New York Times Magazine*, last modified October 13, 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/17/magazine/17FOB-onlanguage-t.html>.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> “Truthiness Voted 2005 Word of the Year,” American Dialect Society.

<sup>176</sup> Zimmer, “On Language: Truthiness.”

<sup>177</sup> Nathan Rabin, “Interview: Stephen Colbert,” *AV Club*, last modified January 25, 2006, <https://tv.avclub.com/stephen-colbert-1798208958>.

<sup>178</sup> Additionally, at the time of *Truthiness*’s creation, the Iraq War raged on. Former President George W. Bush’s claim that he “ended” the war, despite the fact that the conflict would continue until 2011, years after his presidency ended, is an example of the governmental “truthiness” that Colbert cites and Carlson challenges.

“unholy feast, where those who ate are taught symbols meant to shroud the truth,” symbols of “truthiness.”<sup>179</sup>

As Martínez’s discussion of how Minnesotan settlers maintained their stubborn, delusional conviction of innocence after the Dakota Uprising illustrates, settler colonialists have relied on “facts” of their own making, since contact, to justify their oppression of Native peoples. In the case of the Dakota Uprising, settlers created a false reality in which they had no culpability in the attacks in order to rationalize the largest mass execution in U.S. history. In a similar vein, colonialists and settlers falsely labeled groups of Indigenous peoples as “cannibals,” creating another type of devious “truthiness,” again, to justify their subjugation and disappearance. A time-honored characteristic of settler colonialism, the importance of generating “truthiness” to cast Indigenous individuals in a negative, harmful light has been upheld by oppressors both in the United States and abroad.<sup>180</sup>

In the past four years, a new form of “truthiness” has, again, risen to prominence in the United States, but under the guise of “alternative facts.” Throughout his administration (2017–2021), former president Donald J. Trump insisted that the American public believe whatever he and his administration asserted. By questioning the press, or “fake news,” the administration created discord across the nation, with its culmination being the U.S. Capitol riots in early January 2021. The phrase “alternative facts,” however, came into being at the beginning of Trump’s presidency in response to a petty debate, whose inauguration crowd was bigger, his or predecessor Barack Obama’s? During his first press conference as Press Secretary, Sean Spicer told the White House briefing room that Trump’s inauguration crowd was larger than Obama’s,

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<sup>179</sup> Schmid, “Painting Time.”

<sup>180</sup> See Patrick Wolfe, “Settler colonialism and the elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocidal Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387. Wolfe explores the “logic of elimination” in the text, which contends that settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not always genocidal.

despite a plethora of evidence from mass transit ridership data, television ratings, and aerial photographs proving otherwise.<sup>181</sup> When Former Counsel to the President, Kellyanne Conway, went on the television show *Meet the Press*, host Chuck Todd asked her why Spicer would lie about such a trivial matter.<sup>182</sup> In response, Conway stated that Todd was saying Spicer's claim was a "falsehood" when, in actuality, it was simply "alternative facts."<sup>183</sup> To combat the correct claims that Trump's inauguration crowd was smaller than Obama's, Conway asserted that the Trump administration felt "compelled to go out and clear the air and put alternative facts out there."<sup>184</sup> Again, another term for "truthiness," created to bolster authority and promote false narratives, has since become integrated into Americans' lexicons.

With Carlson's *Truthiness*, she questions these "alternative facts," or ersatz truths, promoted by various Western authoritative bodies. By including a commemorative Fort Snelling plate, Carlson challenges not only the authority of museums to tell an object's story, but also the "truthiness" created by Minnesotan settlers who demanded the deaths of over three hundred Dakota peoples after cannibalizing their land and mistreating them horrendously. By displaying the plate without context about the settler "truthiness" surrounding its creation, MIA acted as a complicit enabler of the nineteenth-century Minnesotan settlers' denial of culpability for their part in Dakota Uprising, which resulted in Dakota peoples being held in a concentration camp at Fort Snelling. *Truthiness*'s name, on the other hand, questions modern, governmental forms of authority who expect their constituents to follow them blindly. In addition, Carlson's *Truthiness*, as well as her *Windigo* Series as a whole, challenges the "truthiness" of Native cannibalism that

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<sup>181</sup> Eric Bradner, "Conway: Trump White House offered 'alternative facts' on crowd size," CNN Politics, last modified January 23, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/01/22/politics/kellyanne-conway-alternative-facts/index.html>.

<sup>182</sup> Marilyn Wedge, "The Historical Origin of 'Alternative Facts,'" *Psychology Today*, last modified January 23, 2017, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/suffer-the-children/201701/the-historical-origin-alternative-facts>.

<sup>183</sup> Bradner, "Conway: Trump White House offered 'alternative facts' on crowd size."

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

Western oppressors created to further their colonizing and settler colonizing missions. To do so, in part, Carlson creates imagined landscapes where she can consume history selectively to tell a story more accurately.

### SURREALIST INTENTIONS IN *LE CHÂTEAU DES PYRÉNÉES*

Another work in Carlson's *Windigo Series*, *Le Château des Pyrénées* (Fig. 7), similar to *Truthiness*, features a naturalistically rendered museum object set within an imagined landscape. In this composition, however, the fictitious setting containing the cultural relic is harsh and inhospitable. A definite horizon line divides the composition into registers, with the bottom half of the scene comprised of an inky black waterscape. Along the lower edge of the composition, patterned rocks or bluffs, calling to mind razzle dazzle camouflage, jut upwards into the water's inky blackness. Adding to the scene's ominous feel, the top half of the work is filled with jagged swaths of white and gray. From the right and left sides of this upper register, mountains rise and blend seamlessly into the heavy sky. In the top right corner, an abstracted moon or sun made of gray, white, and tan concentric circles rises or sets. Reminiscent of an eye, the celestial body peers out over the landscape as witness to all that is occurring before it.

Mirroring the mountains flanking it, the scene's museum object—a piece of pale jade carved in the round—juts upwards into the grayscale sky. Set onto an equally intricate carved pale pink base, the jade contains an idyllic scene in contrast with its harsh surroundings; on the sculpture, a man on a donkey, followed by a servant on foot, traces his way upwards through a wooded and rocky landscape. Similar to museum objects displayed, out of context, in sterile museum environments, the carved jade appears isolated and stranded within its desolate landscape, which has little relationship to it. In addition to the fact that the carved jade is the one object with depth

in an otherwise flat and rigid scene, it is also the composition's main source of color, which captures the viewer's attention immediately.

With both the title of the work, *Le Château des Pyrénées*, and its overall compositional structure, Carlson refers directly to and cannibalizes a work by Surrealist René Magritte, *Le Château des Pyrénées (Castle in the Pyrenees)* (Fig. 16). Created for Magritte's friend, the lawyer, poet, and author Harry Torczyner, *Le Château des Pyrénées* features a large bolder, crested with a miniature castle, floating over a whitecapped sea on a sunny day.<sup>185</sup> "Intimately acquainted" with Magritte, Torczyner was involved in the painting's design process, though the artist initially had complete freedom. Correspondence between the two reveals that Magritte encouraged his patron's participation, and Torczyner selected one of Magritte's drawings of a large rock topped by a small fortress as the painting's subject.

After selecting the focus of the work, Torczyner suggested the addition of a clear sky and rough sea for symbolic purposes because, as he asserted, "over the dark sea or ocean there rises the rock of hope, topped by a fortress, a castle."<sup>186</sup> While Magritte refined the composition's overall structure further, he excluded other proposed additions in order for the scene to retain the "harshness" that he had envisioned. One of Magritte's best-known artworks, *Le Château des Pyrénées* is also one of his most reproduced.<sup>187</sup> The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, which houses *Le Château*, asserts that its popularity is due, in part, to the fact that the scene embodies Magritte's "typical disturbing juxtaposition of familiar objects, combined with captivating poetry and mystery."<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> René Magritte and Harry Torczyner, *Letters Between Friends*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, 1994), 42.

<sup>186</sup> "The Castle of the Pyrenees," The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, accessed February 11, 2021, <https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/194552>.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

Throughout both the *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson, too, imagines and executes uneasy anthropophagic scenes that cannibalize well-known objects from museums, popular culture, and films. Both Carlson's and Magritte's *Le Château des Pyrénées* share similar compositional arrangements, but with markedly different moods conveyed. Instead of a large, hovering bolder crested with a castle, Carlson swaps out Magritte's fortress-topped rock for MIA's eighteenth-century *Traveling in Autumn Mountains*. A translation of the Chinese landscape painting tradition into carved jade, the work, carved in a mountain scene popular during the late Ming period, features an official and his attendant traveling upwards through the mountains.<sup>189</sup> While Carlson has painstakingly cannibalized the object from MIA—the jade is rendered with an immense attention to detail—she has also somewhat idealized it; Carlson's jade, in contrast to MIA's, has no outward signs of aging and a rosy pink instead of sooty black base. Furthermore, unlike Magritte's *Le Château*, the “rock” in Carlson's scene has no interest in acting as a monumental beacon of hope. Rather, in part, the jade functions as a reminder of the starkness of museum settings, where objects can easily be conserved and divorced from their intended contexts for eternity.

By cannibalizing Magritte's *Le Château des Pyrénées* for her own work of the same name, Carlson builds one of the most solidified connections linking her practice to that of Surrealists and, subsequently, anthropophagites.<sup>190</sup> As Surrealism cannibalized aspects from Dada, “before getting ‘bitten’ by the teeth of Anthropofagia,” Carlson consumes aspects from Surrealist art and practice selectively without aligning herself fully with the group.<sup>191</sup> With the consumption of

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<sup>189</sup> “*Traveling in Autumn Mountains*, 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century,” Minneapolis Institute of Art, accessed February 12, 2021, <https://collections.artsimia.org/search/traveling%20in%20autumn%20mountains>.

<sup>190</sup> It should be noted, however, that I consider all of Carlson's works in the *Windigo* and *VORE* Series to be anthropophagic in nature due to their cannibalization of Western objects and themes.

<sup>191</sup> Pouzet-Duzer, ““Dada, Surrealism, Antropofagia,” 85.

both Surrealism and *Traveling in Autumn Mountains* from MIA in her *Le Château des Pyrénées*, Carlson, again, engages in past Western charges of cannibalism to both embrace and question the basis of such charges. By doing so, she subverts carefully the boundary between “civilized us” and “cannibalistic other” that Western oppressors were so vigilant to create.

## CONCLUSION

By examining both the histories surrounding the term *windigo* as well as specific examples from Carlson’s *Windigo Series*, it becomes apparent that, although settlers and colonizers labeled Indigenous peoples as “savages” in order to justify their oppression, these oppressors have continued to engage in culturally cannibalistic practices since contact. In Carlson’s *The Other Side*, from the *Windigo Series*, the composition’s intricate, black and white patterned strips call to mind razzle dazzle camouflage. Confusing viewers, as the “truthiness” and misinformation perpetuated by settlers and colonialists distracted from their nefarious aims, the patterns create a disorienting, all-consuming feel. As the United States relied heavily upon razzle dazzle camouflage in World War I to deceive their opponents, *The Other Side* emphasizes how the country has continuously used misidentification to bolster and further its settler colonial aims.

As Carlson illustrates with works such as *Truthiness*, Western cannibalistic actions extend past consuming Native land and bodies to museum collecting practices, which presume the authority to tell the stories of all objects in their possession, regardless of background. In addition, to support further their authority over Native land, objects, and bodies, settler colonizers and institutions often create a “truthiness” that denies fact to bolster their claims. An example of such “truthiness” is the narrative surrounding the mass execution of Dakota men following the Dakota Uprising, which settlers claim that they had no role in provoking. Since



contact, settler colonialists have utilized “truthiness” as a means to further their own cannibalistic aims. To challenge this history, Carlson creates imagined landscapes, a form of “truthiness” in her own right, where she appropriates museum objects carefully to more accurately tell their narratives.

Lastly, by engaging with both Surrealism and museum acquisition practices in *Le Château des Pyrénées*, Carlson calls out and subverts explicitly cannibalistic museum acquisition practices that divorce objects from their contexts. With this explicit engagement with Surrealism, Carlson solidifies further her connection with anthropophagy, a movement whose manifesto cannibalized that of the Surrealists. Throughout the *Windigo* Series, Carlson consumes Western art and museum collections to question and dismantle settler and colonialist cannibalistic charges and practices. By doing so, she both dispels and dismantles Western “truthiness” to reclaim, in part, some of the suppressed authority of Indigenous peoples to tell the histories of themselves and their objects. In the following chapter, “*VORE: In the Raw!*,” I will detail the inspirations for Carlson’s *VORE* Series as well as how examples from the body of work reveal larger implications about cultural cannibalism and desire.

## CHAPTER THREE

### “VORE: In the Raw!”

#### INTRODUCTION

Sharp fangs on display, the snarling tiger posed in the bottom left corner of Carlson’s *Cut & Run* (Fig. 17) is mirrored by the alligator displaying its gaping maw in the bottom right.<sup>192</sup> Above the creatures, both seemingly in the middle of releasing ferocious sounds, a diamond and anatomically correct heart hover. While the two objects, situated between mountainous forms, float over a dark blue body of water, the two animals are backed by overlapping arcs of black-and-white geometric patterns. In the middle of the composition, a moon-like form displays the text and tagline from *Cut and Run*, a 1985 cannibal boom film focused on adventure, cannibalism, and of course, cocaine. As Carlson’s *Cut & Run* features a variety of seemingly unrelated references, the film version bizarrely blends Jonestown Massacre, drug running, and cannibalistic army plotlines. In both Carlson’s *Cut & Run* and the film, however, cannibalism is associated with animality, and the cost of Western “progress” is questioned. Throughout Carlson’s *VORE* Series, including *Cut & Run*, she subverts past Western charges of cannibalism against Indigenous peoples to emphasize the cannibalistic nature of Western oppressors.

Inspired by the role of public collections of artifacts and artwork “in our larger cultural experience,” Carlson’s *VORE* Series builds upon the initial examinations of cultural cannibalism undertaken in her *Windigo* Series.<sup>193</sup> While, at first glance, the anthropophagic works from *VORE* appear to contain text and objects from “seeming disparate sources,” including exploitation films and museum collections, the elements of each composition create a cohesive,

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<sup>192</sup> The title of this chapter plays off the title of the 1964 shockumentary, *London: In the Raw*, directed by Arnold L. Miller and Norman Cohen.

<sup>193</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

cannibalistic image.<sup>194</sup> Whereas the text in Carlson’s compositions refers to taglines and titles of “cannibal boom” films from the 1970’s and 1980’s, Carlson borrows museum objects from encyclopedic collections such as the British Museum and Minneapolis Institute of Art. Floating on the page as foreign and holy icons, these elements are suspended over shorelines, most of which are built up with black-and-white patterns. Positioned along the banks, various “gaping-mouthed predators” wait in undying optimism to take part in the cannibalism played out across the page.<sup>195</sup> Throughout *VORE*, Carlson’s compositions incorporate various cannibalistic elements that, when combined, reveal larger implications about colonialism, settler colonialism, sexuality, and consumption. In this chapter, I will detail the inspirations for *VORE* and examine three paintings from the series that each represent and challenge differing types of cannibalism. An examination of these examples emphasizes how cultural cannibalism has manifested in and driven the museum world, the production of cannibal boom films, and the evolution of Western folklore.

#### AN ALL-CONSUMING FETISH: VORAREPHILIA

The title of Carlson’s series, “vore” is a shortening of the word “vorarephilia,” which is the fetish “to be consumed by another, or to consume another whole.”<sup>196</sup> While those who are into vore have a strong presence online, there is little academic record of the fetish.<sup>197</sup> Yet, psychologist Amy D. Lykins notes that vore is a paraphilia—a psychological condition

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<sup>194</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> “Andrea Carlson,” Bockley Gallery. In this sense, “fetish” refers not to an object imbued with extraordinary powers, but rather, to an unusual and strong sexual desire or need. Individuals who have the vore fetish are sexually attracted to the thought, representation, and/or act of swallowing or being swallowed by another whole.

<sup>197</sup> Amy D. Lykins and James M. Cantor, “Vorarephilia: A Case Study in Masochism and Erotic Consumption,” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 43, no. 1 (2014): 181.

characterized by sexual desires considered atypical.<sup>198</sup> Though in a similar vein as sexual cannibalism, Lykins makes clear that vore participants “draw pretty clear lines in what they’re interested in.”<sup>199</sup> For instance, those who favor “soft vore” enjoy fantasies of getting swallowed by or swallowing another whole, where the “victim” does not necessarily die. In contrast, “hard vore” fans tend to “verge more into the cannibalistic side of things,” and fantasies can include cooking, chewing, and eating the “victim.”<sup>200</sup>

Regardless of “hard” versus “soft,” as Lykins and fellow psychologist James M. Cantor assert in their case study of vorarephilia, vore fantasies cannot be enacted successfully in real life due to physical and legal constraints. To compensate for this, vorarephilic fantasies frequently take the form of illustrations or written stories that are then “shared with other members of this subculture via the Internet.”<sup>201</sup> Across the board, however, the characters in written and drawn vore fantasies are diverse, from fictional creatures such as dragons, to enormous snakes that swallow the consumed whole, to anthropomorphized animals such as dogs. These dominating main characters are known as the “Consumers,” and are “most often described in predatory terms, experiencing an insatiable hunger.”<sup>202</sup> Throughout *VORE*, Carlson speaks to the “insatiable hunger of settlers,” who, in their desire to take in and consume Native America whole, share a considerable number of similarities with vorarephiliacs.<sup>203</sup>

Because, in a majority of cases, the Consumer in vore swallows its still-living victim whole, vore is not strictly synonymous with sexual cannibalism; as Lykins and Cantor note, several vore

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<sup>198</sup> Kate Robertson, “Katy Perry’s Cannibalistic ‘Bon Appétit’ Reveals Our Fantasy of Devouring Women,” *VICE*, last modified May 18, 2017, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/3k8dpn/katy-perrys-cannibalistic-bon-apptit-reveals-our-fantasy-of-devouring-women>.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> Lykins and Cantor, “Vorarephilia: A Case Study,” 181.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>203</sup> Andrea Carlson, interview by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

fantasies have specific bans on chewing victims.<sup>204</sup> Yet, while victims often survive this swallowing process, they tend to die during the digestive process, either by dissolving in stomach acid or suffocating in the stomach.<sup>205</sup> Throughout settler colonization, oppressors have aimed to disappear Native peoples by taking their land, objects, and bodies. In this regard, settler colonizers, getting immense pleasure in swallowing their victims whole and merging them with their own body, are eerily similar to vorarephiliacs. While vorarephiliacs' victims are often destroyed after being swallowed, Indigenous peoples' lifeways and land have similarly been harmed gravely throughout settlers' cannibalization of Native America. Furthermore, Lykins and Cantor note how a vorarephiliac's behavior was often described as a loving act, "e.g. 'I would eat my girlfriend so that she could become a part of me.'"<sup>206</sup> Wanting Native land and aspects of Native cultures that would help obtain an "authentic" American culture, settler vorarephiliacs consumed selectively aspects from Native life to further their aims. In doing so, the mouths of the oppressors remained full as they silenced the voices of others.<sup>207</sup> In this way, as Carlson asserts, vore can act as a metaphor for settler cultural appropriation in the United States.<sup>208</sup>

By subverting, abstracting, and isolating themes and objects from a variety of sources, Carlson's *VORE* Series consumes and breaks down past and present histories to comment upon cultural cannibalism. Although the anthropophagic works in *VORE* combine references and inspirations from a large cultural range, viewers take in and consume the individual compositions whole. While vorarephilia has, as previously stated, little formal scholarship published about it,

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<sup>204</sup> Lykins and Cantor, "Vorarephilia: A Case Study," 182.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> In addition to the erotic and psychological aspects of consumption, it is also necessary to note that, while one uses the mouth to consume, one also uses the mouth to speak. By constantly "eating" other cultures, including Native America, during the United States' development as a country, settlers failed to define their burgeoning national identity in its own right and *not* in contrast to or based off others'.

<sup>208</sup> "Andrea Carlson," Bockley Gallery.

popular culture has now eagerly swallowed up the fetish.<sup>209</sup> Vorarephilia is rapidly becoming mainstream, as Katy Perry's 2017 music video for her song, "Bon Appétit" illustrates. In the video, an army of male chefs prepares a scantily clad Perry, who is shown in a number of culinary situations, including being boiled in a pot of soup and kneaded into dough.<sup>210</sup> Yet, although Carlson makes clear that the *VORE* Series is named after vorarephilia, she asserts strongly that she does not align herself with the vore community.<sup>211</sup> While those interested in vore have found Carlson's *VORE* online and sent her "creepy emails" about the subject, she maintains that she studies vorarephilia from an academic standpoint only; to these emails from interested vorarephiliacs, she says, "...no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. You are not my people."<sup>212</sup>

As art historian Kate Robertson notes, the type of imagery from Perry's music video, while possibly shocking for the general public, is readily found online in the vore community. Although physically enacting a vorarephilic fantasy is difficult, finding drawings, stories, and videos fulfilling the fantasies online in forums is relatively easy.<sup>213</sup> Regardless of where one finds vorarephilic content, Robertson points out that, for most, "vore is ultimately about fantasy."<sup>214</sup> One can view this fantasy as a type of "truthiness" where talking animals and humans are able to swallow each other in the name of desire. In the New World, this fantasy was enacted centuries before the dawn of the internet, as lusty settlers energetically consumed Native

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<sup>209</sup> For the most recent example of this, American actor Armie Hammer's alleged sexual cannibalism fetish consumed the entertainment news cycle in early 2021, when it broke: <https://www.complex.com/pop-culture/armie-hammer-cannibalism-abuse-controversy/>.

<sup>210</sup> Perry's music video can be found on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPI-mRFEIH0>). If the visuals from the music video were not convincing enough of its vorarephilic intentions, lyrics from the tune include, "Looks like you've been starving," "I'm on the menu," and "Appetite for seduction," (Robertson, "Katy Perry's Cannibalistic 'Bon Appétit' Reveals Our Fantasy of Devouring Women").

<sup>211</sup> Andrea Carlson, interview by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Robertson, "Katy Perry's Cannibalistic 'Bon Appétit' Reveals Our Fantasy of Devouring Women." For instance, on the popular forum site Reddit, various members have been engaging continuously with the "r/vore" and "r/fantasycannibalism" subreddits for over a decade. In addition, one can quickly find vore on the Dark Fetish Network, "a forum where over 77,000 members share their sexual fantasies."

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

America whole. While Carlson is clear that vorarephiliacs are not “her people,” she utilizes metaphorically the name and general premise of vore in her *VORE* Series to comment upon broader themes of consumption, including the Western hunger for and desire of Indigenous bodies and land.

## SEXUALITY AND CANNIBALISM

Unlike vorarephilia, which had not been named or discussed in academic literature until the turn of the twentieth century, sexuality and cannibalism have been linked for centuries. As Kilgour points out, the Patristic Fathers, early Christian Church writers also known as the Church Fathers, “warned against the intimate relationship between gluttony and lust,” and that “countless metaphors ally eating and intercourse.”<sup>215</sup> Many such metaphors exist in the English language and include characterizing an attractive person as “juicy,” “sweet,” “tasty,” or “looking good enough to eat.”<sup>216</sup> Additionally, the French words for “to consume” and “to consummate (a marriage)” are the same: *consommer*. Kilgour furthers that, when considering the different forms that cannibalism can take, “a less totalizing but still bodily image for incorporation is that of sexual intercourse, which is often represented as a kind of eating.”<sup>217</sup> As with eating, sexual intercourse combines two bodies into one, “though in a union that is fortunately less absolute and permanent.”<sup>218</sup>

However, writer Caleb Crain notes that, while love and cannibalism can be confused, “To say that cannibalism is a relation of love is not to say that it is warm, cuddly, and nurturing.” Rather, such a comparison is based on the fact that both “cannibals and lovers pay exceptional

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<sup>215</sup> Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism*, 7.

<sup>216</sup> Lykins and Cantor, “Vorarephilia: A Case Study,” 181.

<sup>217</sup> Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism*, 7.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

attention to the body of their desired.”<sup>219</sup> This fact is important to keep in mind when considering the settler cannibalization of Native America. Instead of consuming Indigenous people and lifeways out of “love,” a type of consumption that ensures that your object of desire will never leave you, oppressors consumed because they wanted Indigenous peoples to disappear and leave open access to their resources. In Carlson’s *VORE* Series, she examines this disconnect between desire and love as Western oppressors pined for Indigenous bodies and land while, simultaneously, wanting Indigenous peoples to disappear. The difference between love and cannibalism was clear to Freud, to whom orality is considered both hostile and affectionate. To Freud, eating something was a way to keep it with you for eternity, but it also was a method of destroying it.<sup>220</sup> Grigsby furthers this idea by noting that both cannibalism and sexual intercourse act as “(transitive) exercises of power and ultimately (intransitive) forms of incorporation.”<sup>221</sup> During both processes, similar to the Western consumption of Native America as addressed by Carlson in her *VORE* Series, differences are asserted before identities are subsequently merged and confused.<sup>222</sup>

## CANNIBAL BOOM FILMS’ STRUCTURE AND MOTIVATIONS

In addition to investigating and questioning vorarephilia and museum acquisition policies, in Carlson’s *VORE* Series, she makes overt references to “cannibal boom” films of the 1970’s and 1980’s in a variety of manners. To Carlson, with her inclusion and utilization of cannibal boom imagery and text, she uses the “cannibal metaphor” more directly than in prior works, including

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<sup>219</sup> Caleb Crain, “Lovers of Human Flesh: Homosexuality and Cannibalism in Melville’s Novels,” *American Literature* 66, no. 1 (March 1994): 36.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>221</sup> Grigsby, “Cannibalism, Senegal: Géricault’s *Raft of the Medusa*, 1819,” 202.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*



the *Windigo* Series.<sup>223</sup> Yet, while she appreciated initially the entertainment value of the movies, Carlson found the exploitation films to be “too disturbing to really study” enough to incorporate into her artistic practice. A few years ago, however, she was able to “put aside prejudices and sensitivities” and reexamine the work.<sup>224</sup> Part of this final acceptance was due to the fact that the genre of exploitation films lends itself nicely to her artwork, with its interests in storytelling and metaphorical cannibalism.<sup>225</sup> While Carlson makes numerous references to cannibal boom films in her *VORE* Series as commentary on the cannibalistic nature of Western societies, she never recommends viewing the films that she references because she has “seen them all, and most of them are really disgusting.”<sup>226</sup>

Described as a “sub-genre of exploitation films made mostly by Italian film-makers through the 1970s and 1980s,” cannibal boom movies share more commonalities than simply a focus on humans consuming humans.<sup>227</sup> Rather, the films typically emphasize various forms of realistic, graphic, and shocking violence combined with “a vicious kind of erotica.” The “boom” of these cannibal movies, the peak of their popularity, was from 1977 to 1981.<sup>228</sup> In addition to these emphases, the films follow generally a similar plotline, which English literature scholar Jennifer Brown describes as:

...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.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> “Q & A: Andrea Carlson on ‘VORE,’” Plains Art Museum.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Andrea Carlson, interview by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020. The one exception to this general rule is the Brazilian *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* (1971), which is one of Carlson’s favorite movies and deals with anthropophagic themes.

<sup>227</sup> Jennifer Brown, *Cannibalism in Literature and Film* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 72.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

The “Stone Age” cultures represented in the films typically are in need of “civilization,” which the Western characters “helpfully” try to provide but, instead, drive the Indigenous peoples further to “savagery.” As the films develop, and the Western “saviors” continue on their quests, many of which concern drugs or kidnapped individuals, the Westerners are shown to be as “savage” as the “Stone Age” cultures that they are trying to change.<sup>230</sup> Throughout the movies, Brown argues, “the colonial cannibal represents fears and desires of the West with regard to the Other,” and questions of “truthiness” and representation in the media are central. These questions, as well as subverting and reflecting the charge of “cannibal” back onto Western individuals, are also central to Carlson’s *VORE* Series.

Despite the variety of movies created during and following the tropes of the cannibal boom, or rather, because of this, the films often cannibalized or stole from one another. For instance, film critics have accused Italian filmmaker Umberto Lenzi, who directed cannibal boom movies such as *Cannibal Ferox* (1981), of “the ‘heinous’ crime of stealing footage from other cannibal films” and cutting them into his boom film, *Eaten Alive!* (1980).<sup>231</sup> As Brown explains, however, this type of cannibalizing from other films in the genre was “quite typical with the Italian cannibal movies.”<sup>232</sup> This type of cannibalization—drawing from other sources that, in this case, also are dealing with the same subject matter and are posing the same questions—is seen throughout *VORE*; Carlson’s process of consuming and incorporating source material into her body of work mirrors indirectly Lenzi’s reuse of cannibalistic scenes.

Similar to cannibal films cannibalizing others, or Carlson’s work about cannibalism consuming other work on the topic, the audiences of both boom films and the *VORE* Series

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<sup>230</sup> Brown, *Cannibalism and Literature in Film*, 22.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

participate in cannibalism in their own rights. While watching cannibalistic movies, the audience “devours” the act of cannibalism and turns into “cannibals of the visual sort.” The images shown on the screen, some of which are referred to in *VORE*, cause viewers to define themselves as either “animal slaughtering rapists who burn villages for fame (the Westerners), or as man-eating, vengeful, primitives (the Amazonians).”<sup>233</sup> As the films progress, or viewers spend more time with *VORE* works, these boundaries become blurred, and audience members “become uncomfortably aware of a voyeuristic and visually cannibalistic condition.”<sup>234</sup>

The time and world context in which cannibal boom films proliferated and rose in popularity both mirrored indirectly the movies’ plotlines while setting the stage for questioning the “figure of the cannibal.” During the time that the movies became popular, the 1960’s through the 1980’s, political turmoil was underway across the world; significant, power-grabbing events during this time included terrorism in the Middle East, civil war in Africa, dictatorships in South America, the Vietnam War, and Watergate.<sup>235</sup> As these “power snatching” struggles multiplied and continued in a supposedly “post-colonial world,” citizens began to question the West’s appetite for world resources, tendency towards exploitation of others, and colonial guilt.<sup>236</sup> Such questions started to shift the figure of the cannibal off non-Western peoples, a shift furthered by cannibal boom films. In these movies, the Indigenous cannibal figure previously predominant in popular culture is challenged and reflected back onto the West.<sup>237</sup> Both cannibal boom films and the work in Carlson’s *VORE* Series referring to them question the line between “civilized” and “barbarous” to reveal what colonial and cultural cannibalism truly entail.

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<sup>233</sup> Brown, *Cannibalism and Literature in Film*, 79.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 71. Again, in several of these instances, the West was actively trying to consume itself as power struggles and battles over resources and against terroristic forces played out.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

## *VASTER EMPIRE: THE BRITISH MUSEUM AND THE COST OF “PROGRESS”*

In Carlson’s *Vaster Empire* (Fig. 5) the painting that launched *VORE*, a handful of Western museum objects are balanced symmetrically in the type of fantastical landscape also seen in her *Windigo Series*.<sup>238</sup> Comprised of equal-sized pieces of paper, the composition features two skulls, centered along the horizon line, facing each other. While the skull on the right has the sandy color and damage typical of historical specimens, the skull on the left appears translucent and catches the glow of an unseen light source. Despite its somewhat standard appearance, the right skull dons a thick, metal band around the circumference of its cranium. Situated in an imagined landscape, the two skulls float, just out of reach, of the abstracted, animalistic creatures beneath them. Behind the skulls, an inky black body of water stretches on infinitely as a hazy celestial body rises above.

Between the two skulls, a floating circle holds the quote, “WE HOLD A VASTER EMPIRE THAN HAS BEEN.” Due to the skulls’ positioning, as well as the wisps connecting their mouths to the quote, the two appear in conversation with one another. Above the crystal and “traditional” skulls are an elaborate pin and upside down “Polly Anna Club” button. The accoutrements are set within concentric circles that dip slightly below the skulls, which gives the appearance that the two don halos. Surrounded by what appear to be spoils, set in an elaborate, but desolate landscape, the two skulls discussing the triumph of their imperialism leave viewers questioning the cost of such success.

Created to exhibit at London’s October Gallery, *Vaster Empire* contains several references to the British Empire, including its British Museum.<sup>239</sup> The work’s title refers to the poem, “A Song of Empire” (1887) by British philanthropist and poet, Sir William Morris. As Carlson explains,

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<sup>238</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

the phrase “vaster Empire” is in the first line of one of the poem’s stanzas, which the Canadian government used on their first Christmas postage stamp in 1898 and a pin supporting England in the Second Boer War (1899–1902).<sup>240</sup> Marking the end of Great Britain’s long conquest of South African societies, the Second Boer War “remains the most terrible and destructive armed conflict in South Africa’s history.”<sup>241</sup> Though the war technically ended on British terms, the conflict wrecked the territories in which it was fought. The inclusion of the two skulls set within a desolate setting in Carlson’s *Vaster Empire* seems to reflect this conflicting result. While the pair appear to boast proudly of their accomplishments, the stark landscape surrounding them, as blackened as the land that was burned by the British’s scorched earth policy during the Second Boer War, questions how much of a victory theirs really is.

In addition, aware that representatives from the museum would attend the October Gallery show, Carlson included several objects from the British Museum’s collections, including the Deal Warrior Skull (Fig. 18), an inverted Polly Anna Club button (Fig. 19), the Crystal Skull (Fig. 20), and a Primrose League pin (Fig. 21), in *Vaster Empire*.<sup>242</sup> Found in Kent, England, the Deal Warrior Skull was buried with a sword. This, in combination with the headdress or crown topping the skull, however, has presented difficulties to researchers. A decorated band, the crown had impressions of human hair on its inside when discovered. Such an adornment is unusual for a warrior, as the sword included with the skull indicates that the buried might have been, and has left scholars wondering what the individual’s actual role in society was.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

<sup>241</sup> H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2007), 206. The war was fought between the British Empire and two Boer states, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic. During fighting, the British held Boer women and children in concentration camps. It is estimated that over four thousand women and twenty-two thousand children died in the camps. To end the conflict, the British enacted a harsh “scorched earth” tactic that brought the two states to terms after years of fighting.

<sup>242</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

<sup>243</sup> Melanie Giles, “Performing Pain, Performing Beauty: Dealing With Difficult Death in the Iron Age,” *Cambridge Archeological Journal* 25, no. 3 (2015): 543.

Opposite the Deal Warrior Skull in *Vaster Empire*, the Crystal Skull presents similar problems to the British Museum, though they still maintain authority in telling its story. Bought by the British Museum from Tiffany of New York in the late 1890's, the Crystal Skull passed through many hands from its point of origin until its current home in London. While the museum believes the skull to be from "pre-Hispanic" Mexico, they admit that attempts "to verify this on technical grounds have not been successful."<sup>244</sup> In addition to originating from an "unknown" location, the skull's authenticity has also been questioned as numerous crystal skulls in museum collections across the world are not as old as they are often marketed.<sup>245</sup>

Despite these questions of authenticity, crystal skulls still are "crowd-pleasers" that routinely draw in museumgoers. Part of this recent interest in the objects is due, in part, to the Indiana Jones movie, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008). In the movie, which is set at the height of the Cold War, Jones, a professor of archaeology, searches for the "legendary Crystal Skull of Akator" in Peru. Racing against time, Jones hopes to find the skull before the Soviets, who believe the object can help them "conquer the world."<sup>246</sup> Both the misidentification of crystal skulls throughout recent history as well as the "mystifying" and "othering" purposes often attributed to them in popular culture emphasize how culture can be bought and sold with little regard to telling its "real" story. The Crystal Skull from the British Museum is an example of this, and its inclusion in *VORE* challenges directly the British Museum's acquisition processes and authority to tell an object's story with minimal information known currently about it.

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<sup>244</sup> "Figure," The British Museum, accessed February 18, 2021, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E\\_Am1898-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Am1898-1). Other scholars believe the skull is from Brazil (Jane MacLaren Walsh, "Legend of the Crystal Skulls," *Archaeology* 61, no. 3 [May/June 2008]: 41).

<sup>245</sup> Walsh, "Legend of the Crystal Skulls," 36. Frequently, these skulls are marketed as pre-Columbian Mesoamerican when, in reality, they are much younger or from a different area of the world.

<sup>246</sup> "*Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*," Rotten Tomatoes, accessed February 19, 2021, [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/indiana\\_jones\\_and\\_the\\_kingdom\\_of\\_the\\_crystal\\_skull](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/indiana_jones_and_the_kingdom_of_the_crystal_skull).

In addition, the inclusion of a Pollyanna Club button in *Vaster Empire* emphasizes the unwavering, misguided optimism in the two skulls' assessment of their empire. The heroine of the classic children's book, *Pollyanna* (1913), Pollyanna is known for her unending cheerful attitude and penchant to always see the positive sides of situations. Since the character's debut in the early twentieth century, the term "Pollyanna" has taken on slightly less innocent connotations and become a "shorthand for a kind of blind optimism."<sup>247</sup> Facing each other with grotesque grins, the pair of skulls in *Vaster Empire* take on the personas of "Pollyannas" as they remain cheerful, even in the face of what their "progress" has cost. The Primrose League badge hovering above them acts as a reward for their actions. With beams of light shooting out from within, the badge, which was given to members of the Primrose League, a Conservative political group in England in the late nineteenth century, touches the crystal skull. In part, the Primrose League stirred up the "patriotic fervor" that led to British involvement in the Second Boer War. The results of the war, though in favor of the British, caused resentment against the Conservative party, and thus the Primrose League, in England.<sup>248</sup> Again, Carlson questions the blind optimism and "truthiness" created by oppressors in their paths to and successes in imperialism and colonialism in her *Vaster Empire*.

Known throughout the art and museum worlds for obtaining and keeping objects that their original cultures would very much like returned, including the "Elgin" Marbles and Benin bronzes, the British Museum has presumed immense authority to retain and tell these objects' stories. Carlson included British Museum objects, floating untethered in a landscape dominated

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<sup>247</sup> Ruth Graham, "How We All Became Pollyannas (and Why We Should Be Glad About It)," *The Atlantic*, last modified February 26, 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/02/how-we-all-became-pollyannas-and-why-we-should-be-glad-about-it/273323/>.

<sup>248</sup> "The Primrose League: *Imperium et libertas*," *The British Empire*, accessed February 18, 2021, <https://www.britishempire.co.uk/article/primroseleague.htm>.

by water, in *Vaster Empire* to comment upon and counter the museum's authority; she notes that, "Inversion of objects is how I present things skew[ed], diminished or powerless."<sup>249</sup>

Furthermore, Carlson's frequent use of seascapes as settings in her series also comments upon the intricacies of cultural exchange. Referring to the past and continuing interactions that people have had with waterways, she notes that seascapes have provided "a conduit for cultural trade, interaction, and conflict."<sup>250</sup> With her inclusion of well-known objects from the British Museum's collection in *Vaster Empire*, Carlson examines and brings attention to cultural conflict in the form of cannibalistic museum acquisition policies and the costs of colonial victories.

#### CREATED CANNIBALS AND *CANNIBAL FEROX*

Across Carlson's *Cannibal Ferox* (Fig. 3), a definite horizon line divides the composition nearly in half. In the foreground of the scene, vibrantly colored rocks whose modulations in hue give the appearance of an oil slick consume the shoreline. In stark contrast to their bright colors, they border an inky black void of water. Along the horizon line, two mountainous bodies rise from the water under a muted sky. Covering and entrapping all beneath it, swatches of black and white blanket patterns, or razzle dazzle camouflage, create a dome over the scene.

Similar to *Vaster Empire*, the anthropophagic *Cannibal Ferox* draws from museum collections to populate its fantastical landscape; in the foreground, two white marble statues perch delicately along the shoreline. Resting precariously upon craggy rocks whose colors clash and blend, the two sculptures face the viewer with their backs to the water. Both statues are of humans, though the sculpture on the right depicts an older woman with a young child at her feet, whereas the sculpture on the left represents a teenaged boy. While the older woman and teen boy

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<sup>249</sup> Carlson, "An artist statement on VORE works."

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.



both hold limbs to their mouths and have Classical features, the woman holds the lower half of a leg and tears at the calf's skin. As she rips the flesh, the cherubic babe at her feet looks out in surprise. Across from her, the boy grasps a forearm to his face, pre-bite. From the forearm's wound, a wisp of steam appears and blends with the sky's clouds. Behind both sculptures, concentric circles, acting as lenses or targets, focus viewers' attention on the cannibalism before them. In white along the rocks, "CANNIBAL FERROX" is written upside down and beneath the cannibalistic statues.

Unsurprisingly, the two statues included in *Cannibal Ferox* are not creations of Carlson's imagination. Rather, the statue of the woman and child on the composition's right is, in actuality, an ivory figurine created by the sixteenth-century German sculptor, Leonhard Kern (Fig. 22). Known as the *Menschenfresserin*, or "ogress," the figurine drew from popular imagery at the time to create its subject. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, a "grotesque, nude woman feasting on human body parts" started to appear in various formats, including inside *Kunstkammern* ("cabinets of curiosity"). The cannibalistic woman emerged frequently in these spaces that documented Western encounters with the "unfamiliar," including people from different cultural groups.<sup>251</sup> In early European accounts of cannibalism in the New World, the "grotesque old crone" emerged quickly as a stock character. As art historian Miya Tokumitsu explains, the physical characteristics associated with the old woman, "the immodest bestiality of the wild woman and the ugliness and old age associated with witches," rapidly became the "standard attributes for a type of female Amerindian cannibal."<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Miya Tokumitsu, "The Migrating Cannibal: Anthropophagy at Home and at the Edge of the World," in *The Anthropomorphic Lens: Anthropomorphism, Microcosmism and Analogy in Early Modern Thought and Visual Arts*, ed. Walter S. Melion, Bret Rothstein, and Michel Weemans (Boston: Brill, 2015), 93.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

Despite the normative appearance established for female Native American “cannibals,” unsurprisingly, this archetype of the “ogress” was based more upon European folklore than accurate descriptions of Native women. As a way of facilitating their “othering” of Native Americans, specifically Native women, European artists and collectors created the image of the “female Amerindian cannibal” themselves. Tokumitsu asserts that, although the female cannibal figure was, supposedly, “an anthropologically observed tribeswoman,” she is, upon further scrutiny, “merely a conjuring of European folk creatures, a false spectacle for Western eyes.”<sup>253</sup> Yet again, “truthiness” has dominated the Western population’s collective imagination. In addition to commenting upon created differences and “truthiness” by Western oppressors against Indigenous peoples, Carlson includes the *Menschenfresserin* to prod at collecting practices in the more modest arena of *Kunstkammern*. For a *Kunstkammer*, Kern “cooly” invoked exotic geographies and fantastical characters with the figure of the “ogress” in order to recast “the horror of cannibalism as marvel.”<sup>254</sup> As Tokumitsu posits in her case study of the *Menschenfresserin*, Kern capitalizes on “the thrill of the horrific to manufacture delightful spectacle” by representing such a “grotesque” scene in lavish ivory.<sup>255</sup> The “thrill of the horrific” is played out in the cannibal boom films that Carlson references in *VORE*, including the 1981 movie, *Cannibal Ferox*.

Additionally, the material used to create the figurine, ivory, emphasizes both the exotic and occult qualities of the cannibalizing woman. Counterbalancing the disturbing subject matter, ivory’s material preciousness also reinforces the “bestial nature” of the cannibal; created from a substance initially an animal’s tooth, the figure’s cannibalistic nature is solidified further by her

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<sup>253</sup> Tokumitsu, “The Migrating Cannibal,” 97.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

own teeth tearing into a human leg.<sup>256</sup> Furthering Carlson's own questions about and reflections on the self as cannibal, the *Menschenfresserin* shows not only one human devouring another, but also "self-devouring," as one sculptural element disappears into another.<sup>257</sup> With her inclusion of the *Menschenfresserin* figurine in *Cannibal Ferox*, Carlson examines how the label of "cannibal," applied to Indigenous peoples for centuries as a way of "othering," was used by Westerners to both justify colonization and create the "thrill of the horrific."

Opposite the *Menschenfresserin*, another "cannibal" sculpture is present in *Cannibal Ferox*. Part of the British Museum's collection, this statute is known as "the cannibal," even though what is depicted is not, actually, cannibalism (Fig. 23). Rather, the sculpture once was part of marble group of boys quarrelling over a game of "knucklebones," or jacks.<sup>258</sup> One boy has been broken off from the rest of the group, with just the forearm of his opponent in his hands serving as a link to what was supposed to be a larger sculpture. Isolated from the others and grasping a seemingly severed arm, it is not unreasonable for viewers to assume, at first glance, that the boy is feasting on flesh. After all, the forearm is posed just in front of his open mouth. Instead of cannibalizing a severed limb, however, the boy is just about to bite the arm of his knucklebones opponent. Ancient European versions of knucklebones such as that played in Classical Greece used small bones from sheep, or "knucklebones," as game pawns.<sup>259</sup> Instead of trying to cannibalize another, the boy in the British Museum's sculpture is, in actuality, simply trying to disrupt his opponent's game. Divorced from context, and in combination with the "cannibal" title that the British Museum has given the work, the "cannibal" sculpture appears to represent a

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<sup>256</sup> Tokumitsu, "The Migrating Cannibal," 112.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> "Statue," The British Museum, accessed February 23, 2021, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G\\_1805-0703-7](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1805-0703-7).

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

created “thrill of the horrific” to grip Western audiences. However, as Carlson notes throughout her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, including in *Cannibal Ferox*, the authority that museums presume to hold over their objects’ stories is often fraught and undeserved. By including the “cannibal” sculpture from the British Museum in *Cannibal Ferox*, Carlson emphasizes, again, how the label of “cannibal” has routinely been misapplied by Western institutions and governing bodies for centuries.

Lastly, *Cannibal Ferox*’s connections to the 1981 cannibal boom film of the same title enables further examination of how labels of “civilized” and “barbarous” can be twisted and reflected back upon their projectors. In the film *Cannibal Ferox*, the plot follows the story of American research student, Gloria, who journeys to Colombia in the hopes of finding evidence for her thesis, in which she aims to “debunk the myth of cannibalism.”<sup>260</sup> In true cannibal boom film fashion, Gloria and her friends soon get entangled with Mike, a drug dealer exploiting the Indigenous peoples of the area for emeralds. “The embodiment of the immoral, avaricious West,” Mike kills and mutilates the Indigenous peoples before labeling them as cannibals to cover the murders.<sup>261</sup> As revenge, the remaining tribal members embrace fully the roles of cannibalistic savages that Mike has created for them, and they murder Mike and several of his companions. Witness to and participant in all the carnage, Gloria is the sole survivor of the excursion, but she keeps the horror that she experienced to herself and returns home to present her thesis, “Cannibalism: End of the Myth.”<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Brown, *Cannibalism in Literature and Film*, 74. It is interesting to note how, although Italy had little active role in the physical settler colonization of the States (Columbus’s discovery of the land, notwithstanding), Italian cannibal boom films examined frequently American interactions with “cannibals.” Just as producers such as Lenzi often cannibalized scenes from previous films, the films’ storywriters also cannibalized settler and colonial narratives from the Americas.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-75.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 75. Gloria’s research topic is likely a reference to Aren’s *The Man-Eating Myth*, which proposes that most records of cannibalism by Indigenous peoples are rooted in Western biases and sensationalism.

Described by critics as “an excuse for ‘outrageous gore’ with ‘pedestrian direction,’” *Cannibal Ferox*, instead of considering why Western populations put so much faith into cannibalistic tales, “becomes interested only in the gore and horror of eating flesh.”<sup>263</sup> This same base-level interest in only the “thrill of the horrific,” rather than correcting past wrongs or recognizing Western consumptive behaviors, is inherent in both Kern’s *Menschenfresserin* and the “cannibal” sculpture from the British Museum. Combined in Carlson’s anthropophagic *Cannibal Ferox*, the three references emphasize the pervasiveness of the “man-eating myth” throughout Western history and popular culture. By placing the two sculptures in a fantastical landscape, with “CANNIBAL FERROX” flipped upside down beneath them, Carlson showcases how labeling Indigenous peoples as cannibals served two purposes: to stimulate and thrill the Western imagination and to justify Western cultural cannibalism.<sup>264</sup> Both purposes rely on “truthiness” and created differences to further their aims and overlook completely the cannibalistic characteristics of colonizers and settlers themselves. By selectively incorporating objects and films from Western art history in her *VORE* Series, Carlson emphasizes both the baselessness and contradictory nature of Western charges of Indigenous cannibalism.

#### *PIGSTY: VAMPIRES, WEREWOLVES, AND WINDIGOS, OH MY!*

A waterscape scene comprised of four equally sized rectangles of paper brought together, Carlson’s *Pigsty* (Fig. 6) eschews overt references to the cannibalism of museum collections. Instead, the composition references Western cannibalistic folklore. Along the craggy and colorful shoreline in the work’s foreground, Carlson depicts a wolf and a bat. Looming large on

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<sup>263</sup> Brown, *Cannibalism in Literature and Film*, 75.

<sup>264</sup> In addition to the previous examples of Western oppressors labeling Indigenous peoples as cannibals, English oppressors similarly labeled Indigenous Irish (Celtic) peoples as barbaric cannibals during their conquest of Ireland during the sixteenth century, which predated most conquests in the Americas (Watson, *Insatiable Appetites*, 154).

opposite sides of the composition, both creatures snarl and bare their fangs at the viewer, as if in reminder of the carnage of which they are capable. Framed with pale nimbuses, the wolf and bat are situated directly underneath two cuts of raw meat, which are similarly haloed. Although a fully grown wolf should dwarf a mature bat, Carlson renders the two animals, appearing to almost grow out of the surrounding rocks, as the same size.

Behind the pair, an inky body of water ripples faintly. From the water's horizon line, a mountainous body, hinting at civilization just out of reach, rises on the composition's far right side. Complementing the obsidian grays of the water, the dark sky over the scene is made of grayscale tones with pale, jagged clouds dispersed throughout. Adding to the ominous nature of the scene, the dark silhouettes of trees on either side of the composition move with the same unseen breeze that causes the water to softly wave. The presence of nocturnal creatures, in combination with the bloody slabs of meat, dark sky, and rising moon-like forms, hint back to Western folklore about the transformative powers of the moon on nighttime cannibals, including werewolves and vampires.

In *Pigsty*, the bat in the lower right corner of the composition acts as a stand-in for one of the most recognizable cannibals in Western folklore, the vampire. Specifically, the creature represented is *Desmodus rotundus*, or the "common" vampire bat.<sup>265</sup> Residing typically in South and Central America, vampire bats feed on the blood of mammals and birds by painlessly cutting

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<sup>265</sup> The three vampire bat species, *Desmodus rotundus*, *Diaemus youngi* (the "white-winged" vampire bat), and *Diphylla ecuadata* (the "hairy-legged" vampire bat) are just three of over thirteen hundred bat species in the world (John M. Tomeček and Michael J. Bodenchuk, "Vampire Bats in Texas Ecology: Signs and Managing Damage to Livestock," Texas A&M University, AgriLife Extension, accessed April 30, 2021, <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/library/wildlife-nature-environment/vampire-bats-in-texas-ecology-signs-and-managing-damage-to-livestock/>).

an exposed area of skin.<sup>266</sup> Yet, the bats seldom kill their victims.<sup>267</sup> In 1810, scientists first published literature about vampire bats, and Charles Darwin documented the creatures in 1839. It took until the 1897 release of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, however, to solidify the relationship between bats and vampires in Western culture.<sup>268</sup> Once solidified, this relationship began and continues to this day to dominate the Western population's imagination.<sup>269</sup>

Throughout history, many cultures have had their type of vampire myth. In Europe, this myth peaked in the eighteenth century, before *Dracula* was even published. During this time, numerous epidemics of disease, including cholera, ran rampant and revived people's belief in vampires. Across cultures, however, commonalities in the myth exist. Typically, vampire tales begin with the death of an evil individual or someone in evil circumstances. After a breach in their burial ritual, the individual returns in an "undead state" fueled by "the magical life-enhancing properties of human blood."<sup>270</sup>

While we tend to view vampires as mythical creatures, psychiatrists Thomas Fahy, Simon Wessely, and Anthony David assert that, "there is little doubt that vampires exist today."<sup>271</sup> Not limited to fictional characters such as Count Dracula or Count von Count from *Sesame Street*, modern day vampires are those who ingest blood for erotic satisfaction.<sup>272</sup> Frequently, psychiatric patients who commit cannibalism or vampirism cite the Bible for justification of their

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<sup>266</sup> "Vampire Bat, *Desmodus rotundus*," Lamar University College of Art and Sciences, Biology Department, last modified 2012, <https://www.lamar.edu/arts-sciences/biology/jungle-critters/jungle-critters-2/vampire-bat.html>. The bats usually feed on livestock. To keep the blood flowing, vampire bats' tongues contain an anticoagulant that prevents blood from clotting.

<sup>267</sup> William A. Wimsatt, "Attempted 'Cannibalism' among Captive Vampire Bats," *Journal of Mammalogy* 40, no. 3 (1959): 439.

<sup>268</sup> Richard Noll, *Vampires, Werewolves, and Demons: Twentieth Century Reports in the Psychiatric Literature* (New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers, 1991), 38.

<sup>269</sup> For example, see the popularity of the *Twilight* book (2005-2008) and movie (2008-2012) franchises as well as the popular television show, *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017).

<sup>270</sup> Thomas Fahy, Simon Wessely, and Anthony David, "Werewolves, Vampires, and Cannibals," *Med. Sci. Law* 28, no. 2 (1988): 146.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

actions.<sup>273</sup> Regardless of if we view vampirism as fictional or as a psychological condition, however, Fahy, Wessely, and David note that, “the cannibal, vampire, and werewolf myths are deeply and perhaps indelibly ingrained in the human psyche, and manifestations of these phenomena may continue to appear.”<sup>274</sup>

With the inclusion of a vampire bat and wolf in *Pigsty*, Carlson lays claim to archetypal signifiers of cannibalism from Western history. Another type of cannibal, werewolves have become as ingrained in the Western consciousness as vampires have. Having a long history in European folk cultures, werewolves were considered a monstrous race and appeared in published texts from as early as the eleventh century CE. Later, stories about the creatures became a primary theme in French-Canadian folklore.<sup>275</sup> Beginning in the seventeenth century, French-Canadian voyageurs began to settle in the *Pays d'en Haut*, or “the country up there,” a vast territory west of Montreal and that covered most of the Great Lakes region. Once settled, many of these men married Algonquin women in the area and began to adopt some of the customs of their wives and new families. These adopted beliefs included a fear of *windigos*.<sup>276</sup> Because of their own belief in *loups garoux*, or werewolves, the voyageurs were prepared with a framework in which they could understand the *windigo* on their own terms. As a result, in the cannibal stories that the voyageurs would tell each other, the motifs of the *loups garoux* and the *windigo* intermingled, and a general fear of wolves became widespread.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Fahy, Wessely, and David, “Werewolves, Vampires, and Cannibals, 148. For instance, during the description of the Last Supper, Jesus states, “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day,” (John 6:51-57). Those committing vampirism could use such a quote as validation for their yearnings and actions.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>275</sup> Caroline Podruchny, “Werewolves and Windigos: Narratives of Cannibal Monsters in French-Canadian Voyageur Oral Tradition,” *Ethnohistory* 51, no. 4 (2004): 681.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, 678.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 678, 682.



While, in eighteenth-century French Canada, the *loups garoux* preyed on humans after turning into a wolf under a full moon, scholars have used the term “lycanthrope,” from the early modern period, to refer to “human cum wolves as a medical condition.”<sup>278</sup> The term “lycanthropy,” then, “refers to a delusion of a metamorphosis into a wolf-like animal.”<sup>279</sup> Typically, lycanthropes move on all fours, bark, howl, visit woods and graveyards at night, yearn for raw flesh, or become preoccupied with religious symbols and themes.<sup>280</sup> While older texts documenting lycanthropy “assume that physical transformation actually occurs,” more modern reports treat the condition as “a delusion, usually secondary to a serious mental illness.”<sup>281</sup>

Understanding lycanthropy and vampirism as types of delusions strengthens further the connections between Western oppressors and *windigos*. In his descriptions of the *wétiko* or *windigo*, Forbes notes how the cannibalistic characteristics of the figure can be considered a form of mental illness. He extends this discussion to charge Columbus as “mentally ill or insane, the carrier of a terribly contagious psychological disease, the *wétiko* psychosis.”<sup>282</sup> The overriding characteristic of *wétiko* psychosis is the consumption of other human beings, though the forms of and motivations for *wétiko* cannibalism may vary.<sup>283</sup> Spreading rapidly, the *wétiko* psychosis is spread by *wétikos* themselves. Today, Forbes asserts, *wétiko* psychosis is transmitted primarily through television, history books, governments, police training programs, and many more entities.<sup>284</sup> He furthers that “Native peoples have almost always understood that many Europeans were *wétikos*, were insane.”<sup>285</sup> In *Pigsty*, Carlson renders explicitly Western symbols

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<sup>278</sup> Podruchny, “Werewolves and Windigos,” 693; Fahy, Wessely, and David, “Werewolves, Vampires, and Cannibals,” 145.

<sup>279</sup> Fahy, Wessely, and David, “Werewolves, Vampires, and Cannibals,” 145.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Forbes, *Columbus and other Cannibals*, 22.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 49-50.

of cannibalism and psychosis, the wolf and vampire bat, under full moons to deconstruct created differences while equating Western oppressors with the cannibalistic monsters from folktales.

## CONCLUSION

While referring to “seemingly disparate sources” throughout her *VORE* Series, Carlson engages in and comments on the unified theme of cultural cannibalism.<sup>286</sup> Understanding the background and histories of the objects and themes discussed throughout *VORE* is key in grasping the compositions’ nuances and larger aims. Named after shorthand for vorarephilia, *VORE* examines Western cannibalistic practices in a variety of arenas, from sexual fantasies to museum acquisition practices. By focusing on three examples from the series, one can see how cultural cannibalism manifests in and drives the museum world, cannibal boom films, and Western folklore. To Carlson, vore, an “edgy term for the fetish to be consumed by another, or to consume another whole,” functions as an appropriate metaphor for cultural appropriation and settler colonialism.<sup>287</sup> In works such as *Vaster Empire*, however, Carlson questions the costs of such consumptive desire; colonialism results frequently in damaged and destroyed resources, whether that be Indigenous peoples or their land. While commenting upon the cannibalistic acquisition practices of the British Museum, Carlson simultaneously calls out and dismantles culturally consumptive actions by the British Empire, as a whole. As a result, she questions not only the perceived authority of museums but also the costs of perceived Western “progress.”

Further utilizing museum objects in *Cannibal Ferox*, Carlson, again, details and challenges culturally cannibalistic practices at both the local and world levels. By citing the title of a cannibal boom film, *Cannibal Ferox*, Carlson subverts “the storytelling of museums with the

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<sup>286</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE works.”

<sup>287</sup> “Q & A: Andrea Carlson on ‘VORE,’” Plains Art Museum.

storytelling of cannibal exploitation films.”<sup>288</sup> Created at a time where world powers were wreaking havoc across the globe, cannibal boom films provoked viewers to question not only Westerners’ role in cannibalism, but also their own roles as cannibalistic voyeurs. The misinformation and mislabeling intricately intertwined with the cannibalistic sculptures included in the mixed-media *Cannibal Ferox* comment further upon settlers’ and colonizers’ reliance on “truthiness” and self-made “thrills of the horrific” to advance their cannibalistic aims.

Lastly, by referring explicitly to cannibalistic figures from Western folklore, Carlson dismantles the created differences between Western and Indigenous peoples. Vampires and werewolves have become solidified concretely in the Western public’s popular imagination, and these cannibalistic figures share similarities and story formatting similar to Anishinaabe stories of *windigos*. In *Pigsty*, Carlson renders Western symbols of cannibalism and psychosis, the wolf and vampire bat, explicitly under full moons and slabs of raw meat to deconstruct created differences while equating “insatiably hungry” Western oppressors with the cannibalistic monsters from their folktales. Throughout *VORE*, by consuming and incorporating objects and films from Western art history into her compositions, Carlson engages with and emphasizes the baseless and contradictory nature of Western charges of Indigenous cannibalism.

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<sup>288</sup> “Q & A: Andrea Carlson on ‘VORE,’” Plains Art Museum.

## CONCLUSION

As part of the ongoing quest of colonizers and settlers to subjugate and “disappear” Indigenous peoples, oppressors have relied upon created differences to justify their actions. One such created difference was the “figure of the cannibal,” which Western groups have attributed to Indigenous groups, including Iroquois and Tupi peoples, for centuries. By labeling Indigenous peoples, including Native Americans, as “cannibals,” Western oppressors created the evidence that they felt was necessary to validate colonizing and settler colonizing missions. These cannibalistic charges were and continue to be based in misinformation, however, and in their colonialist and settler quests, Westerners themselves acted cannibalistically. By destroying, appropriating, and forcing the assimilation of Indigenous peoples and lifeways, Western oppressors have engaged actively in “cultural cannibalism.” Emphasizing the consumptive qualities of settler colonialism, specifically in the United States, these practices have been carried out over several centuries and reveal that the created boundary between “civilized us” and “cannibalistic other” is more permeable than initially thought. This cultural cannibalism by settlers emphasizes the oppressors’ “insatiable hunger,” a desire for Indigenous peoples and their resources that continues to this day in the United States. By examining the cultural cannibalism perpetrated by settlers, one gains a better understanding of how the power dynamics in the U.S. originated and continue to perpetuate past wrongs.

By both confronting and dismantling culturally cannibalistic histories, Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979) reveals the “insatiable hunger of settlers” and flips Western accusations of Indigenous cannibalism back onto their projectors.<sup>289</sup> Throughout her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson selectively consumes and represents objects and themes, including

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<sup>289</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

museum artifacts, from Western art history. Through this engagement with cultural cannibalism, Carlson emphasizes that, with the same hand that pointed at Indigenous peoples and labeled them as cannibals, Western oppressors authorized the consumption of Native America. While past scholarship on cultural cannibalism in the arts can often focus on South American or Western literature and film, analyses of Carlson's *Windigo* and *VORE* Series underscore how Native American artists have been and continue to engage in cultural cannibalism to challenge inherent Western power structures. An examination of how Carlson addresses and consumes past culturally cannibalistic practices, in part through appropriating objects and ideas from Western art history selectively, leads to a better understanding of how cultural exchange and power operate in settler colonial situations. By recognizing and detailing Carlson's engagement in and use of cultural cannibalism as a response to settler colonization, a model is formed for future art historians to utilize when examining how other Indigenous and non-Western artists embrace or confront anthropophagic practices in their own work.

Leveraged against Indigenous peoples, the label of "cannibal" has been central in Westerners' rhetorical justifications for genocidal campaigns. Steeped in misinformation, the loaded term signifies not only a person who consumes human flesh, but also chaos, darkness, and animality. One of the contested sites where settler colonialism and other forms of oppression played out was the Indigenous body, as settlers and colonizers depended on controlling the bodies of the colonized in order to further their "progressive" efforts. Although Western oppressors erected a tenuous boundary between "proper" self and cannibalistic "other," this divide was more instable and permeable than they had anticipated. From theories of early development to survival tactics during shipwrecks, Westerners have engaged in cannibalism with little recourse. Furthermore, as scholar and writer Jack Forbes (Powhatan-Renapé, Delaware-

Lenápe) asserts, Native American tradition calls generally for a respect for life, no matter the being, for which Western traditions have no regard.<sup>290</sup>

Developed further during her undergraduate studies, Carlson's interests in cultural cannibalism come from various coursework and literary sources. After learning more about the *windigo* as an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Carlson bolstered her knowledge of cannibals by reading Choctaw poet LeAnne Howe's *Evidence of Red*. From these early studies of both physical and metaphorical cannibalism, Carlson has expanded continuously her background and familiarity of the subject, which has enabled her to make layered, complex references in her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series. Applying an anthropophagic lens while examining the series is of great benefit as it helps situate the works within a larger history of Indigenous cultural cannibalism responding to Western oppression. While anthropophagy as cultural movement originated in Brazil, its larger ideas about the function of cultural cannibalism in establishing and asserting Indigenous identities are applicable across the world. This includes the United States, where Native artists such as Carlson have been "remixing" or "talking back" to Western artforms and established histories, as Indigenous artists in Brazil have been, for centuries. Carlson's scholarly interest in anthropophagy and Surrealism, as well as the fact that her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series utilize and parody Western objects to draw attention to settler and colonial wrongs, emphasizes her work's anthropophagic nature.

Titled after "an Anishinaabe winter cannibal that often misidentifies those it consumes," Carlson's *Windigo* Series examines cultural consumption by institutions that one might not think to label as "cannibals," museums.<sup>291</sup> By confronting past cannibalistic museum acquisition

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<sup>290</sup> Forbes, *Columbus and other Cannibals*, 9.

<sup>291</sup> "New Skins: New Paintings by Andrea Carlson and Jim Denomie," Minneapolis Institute of Art; Hoska, "Seven Sisters," 296.

practices, which emphasized collecting non-Western objects for “posterity,” Carlson challenges the perceived authority of the institutions. In addition to greedy collection practices, Carlson notes that museums have often asserted their “cultural dominance” to tell the stories of Indigenous objects.<sup>292</sup> To Carlson, the “insatiable hunger of settlers,” exemplified through cannibalistic museum practices, resembles that of the *windigo*, an Ojibwe figure that tends to “consume, consume, consume” without consequence.<sup>293</sup>

In anthropophagic works from the *Windigo* Series such as *The Other Side* (Fig. 13), Carlson relates further the figure of the *windigo*, who misidentifies whom he consumes, with that of the settler colonialist, who creates a new identity for his victims to justify their oppression. In *Truthiness* (Fig. 9), Carlson calls out not only the cultural cannibalism of museums, but also how cannibalistic settlers, to advance their aims and assuage their guilts, have created and promoted “truthiness” or ersatz truths for centuries. This “calling out” is furthered in *Le Château des Pyrénées* (Fig. 7) as Carlson, again, engages with cultural cannibalism to question and subvert the boundary between “civilized us” and “cannibalistic other.” Throughout the *Windigo* Series, to reclaim some of the Indigenous authority over Indigenous histories and their objects that was suppressed by Western oppressors, Carlson spotlights and dismantles Western “truthiness.”

Containing references from sources that, at first glance, might appear disparate, Carlson’s *VORE* Series builds upon the topics that are discussed in the *Windigo* Series to examine cannibal boom films, museum collections, and sexual fetishes.<sup>294</sup> Combined, these references comment upon desire, consumption, and the costs of progress. The shortened version of “vorarephilia,” “vore” is the sexual desire “to be consumed by another, or to consume another whole.”<sup>295</sup> To

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<sup>292</sup> Hoska, “Seven Sisters,” 296.

<sup>293</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

<sup>294</sup> Carlson, “An artist statement on VORE work.”

<sup>295</sup> “Andrea Carlson,” Bockley Gallery.

Carlson, the intersection of desire and consumption that vore represents acts as an appropriate metaphor for cultural appropriation, as Western oppressors have taken great pleasure in swallowing the land and lifeways of Indigenous peoples whole.<sup>296</sup> Although vore, because of legal and physical constraints, does not literally include swallowing or being swallowed by another, connections between sexuality and cannibalism have existed for centuries. Both emphasize an exceptional attention to the body of the desired, which in the case of the settler colonization of the United States, Western oppressors cast upon Native Americans.<sup>297</sup>

Carlson's repeated references to "cannibal boom" films throughout *VORE* act as further commentary on the cannibalistic nature of both Western societies and audiences. These films, prevalent from the late 1970's through the early 1980's, follow similar plotlines and reached peak popularity because of how they mirrored the "power snatching" played out on the world's stage at the time.<sup>298</sup> Both the films as well as works in *VORE* question "the figure of the cannibal" and challenge the cost of Western "progress." Three paintings from *VORE* are representative of the series as a whole and confront cannibalistic museum acquisition practices, cannibalism in and surrounding cannibal boom films, and cannibalism signified through animalistic folklore characters. In Carlson's *Vaster Empire* (Fig. 5), the objects that she has cannibalized from the British Museum's collections question not only museum acquisition processes, but also blind optimism in the face of Western expansion. Furthermore, *Cannibal Ferox* (Fig. 3), titled after the 1981 cannibal boom film of the same name, emphasizes how Western oppressors have created and relied upon "thrills of the horrific" to justify and further their "othering" of Indigenous peoples. Lastly, Carlson's inclusion of a vampire bat and wolf,

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<sup>296</sup> "Q & A: Andrea Carlson on 'VORE,'" Plains Art Museum.

<sup>297</sup> Crain, "Lovers of Human Flesh," 36.

<sup>298</sup> Brown, *Cannibalism in Literature and Film*, 71.



under full moons and cuts of raw meat, in *Pigsty* (Fig. 6) links Western oppressors with cannibalistic figures from their folktales. Across her *VORE* Series, Carlson consumes and incorporates images from Western films and museum collections to emphasize the baselessness of past charges of cannibalism against Indigenous peoples and reverse those false claims back onto their Western projectors.

Throughout her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson spotlights and challenges the “insatiable hunger of settlers.”<sup>299</sup> Knowing the history of Western charges of cannibalism against Indigenous peoples, as a way of furthering their “progressive” missions, enables a better understanding of the motives and methods behind Carlson’s work. Furthermore, such knowledge helps develop a framework to use when examining Indigenous and non-Western artists who utilize anthropophagic practices in their work as a response to Western oppression. By engaging with cultural cannibalism, in the form of consuming and incorporating themes and images from Western art history in her work, Carlson emphasizes the permeability of the division between “civilized us” and “cannibalistic other” that Western oppressors painstakingly erected. As Carlson stresses in both the *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, settlers in the United States, acting as *windigos*, have and continue to cannibalize Indigenous land and lifeways without hesitation or regard. Throughout her *Windigo* and *VORE* Series, Carlson reveals how cultural exchange and power have and continue to operate in settler colonial situations by engaging in and confronting the ongoing Western consumption of Native America.

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<sup>299</sup> Andrea Carlson, interviewed by Olivia von Gries, October 13, 2020.

## APPENDIX A

### “The List We Make”<sup>300</sup>

#### PART 1

##### FIRST NOTE:

America is 82 percent Christian. 60 percent of the population believes the Bible is a historical fact. The President of the United States has endorsed Jesus as his favorite philosopher.

##### SECOND NOTE

From today’s perspective, cannibalism among Indians appears to have had a greater stringency than was actually the case. The inclination of history to list these incidents creates the impression that opposing groups simply ate each other as a way of ending conflict. We did not have the aim of discovering cannibalism, but discovering what was in us....<sup>1</sup>

##### THIRD NOTE:

As Catherine Albanese has shown, Anglo-American literature transformed Davy Crockett from a frontier settler and soldier into a violent superhero communing with the overwhelming spirit of the wilderness by killing and eating bears and Creek Indians.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 From an email conversation between myself and University of California, Riverside Professor Geoff Cohen, concerning his class “The Iconography of Cannibal in Early American Literature.” 2004.
- 2 From an email conversation between myself and University of California, Riverside Professor Joel Martin concerning Davy Crockett and his exploits with Indians. 2004.

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<sup>300</sup> LeAnne Howe, “The List We Make,” in *Evidence of Red* (Cambridge: Salt Publishing, 2005), 71.

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## FIGURES



Figure 1

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *Sunshine on a Cannibal*, 2015. Oil, acrylic, ink, colored pencil, and graphite on paper. 46 x 180 inches.

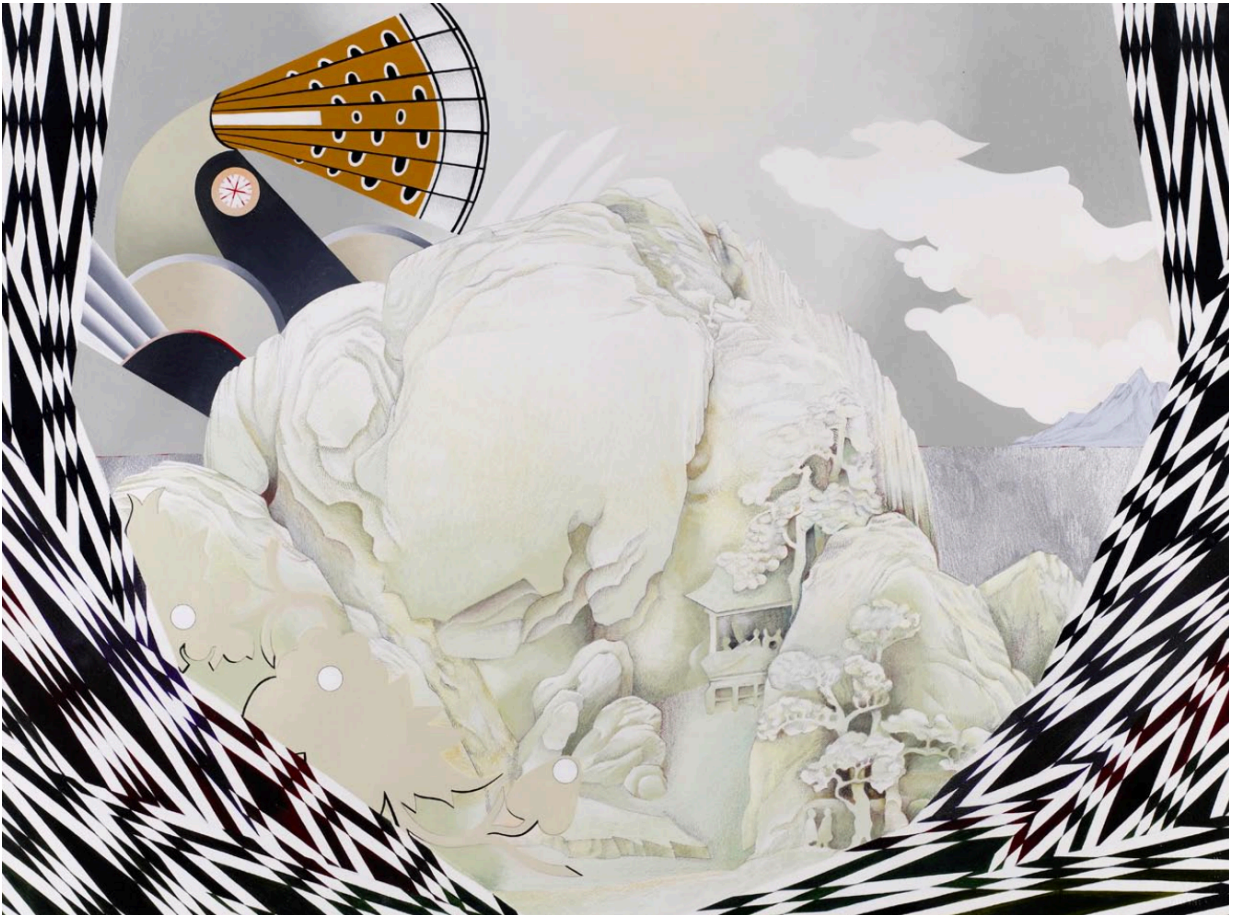


Figure 2

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *End of Trail*, 2007. Oil, acrylic, Prismacolor, and graphite on paper. 24 x 36 inches.



Figure 3

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *Cannibal Ferox*, 2009. Oil, acrylic, ink, gouache, watercolor and other media on paper. 44 x 60 inches.



Figure 4

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *Cook Thief Wife Lover*, 2011. Acrylic, ink, oil, watercolor, colored pencil, graphite, and pastel on paper. 44 x 60 inches.



Figure 5

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *Vaster Empire*, 2008. Oil, acrylic, ink, color pencil, and graphite on paper. 48 x 72 inches.



Figure 6

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *Pigsty*, 2010. Mixed media on paper. 47 x 63 inches.

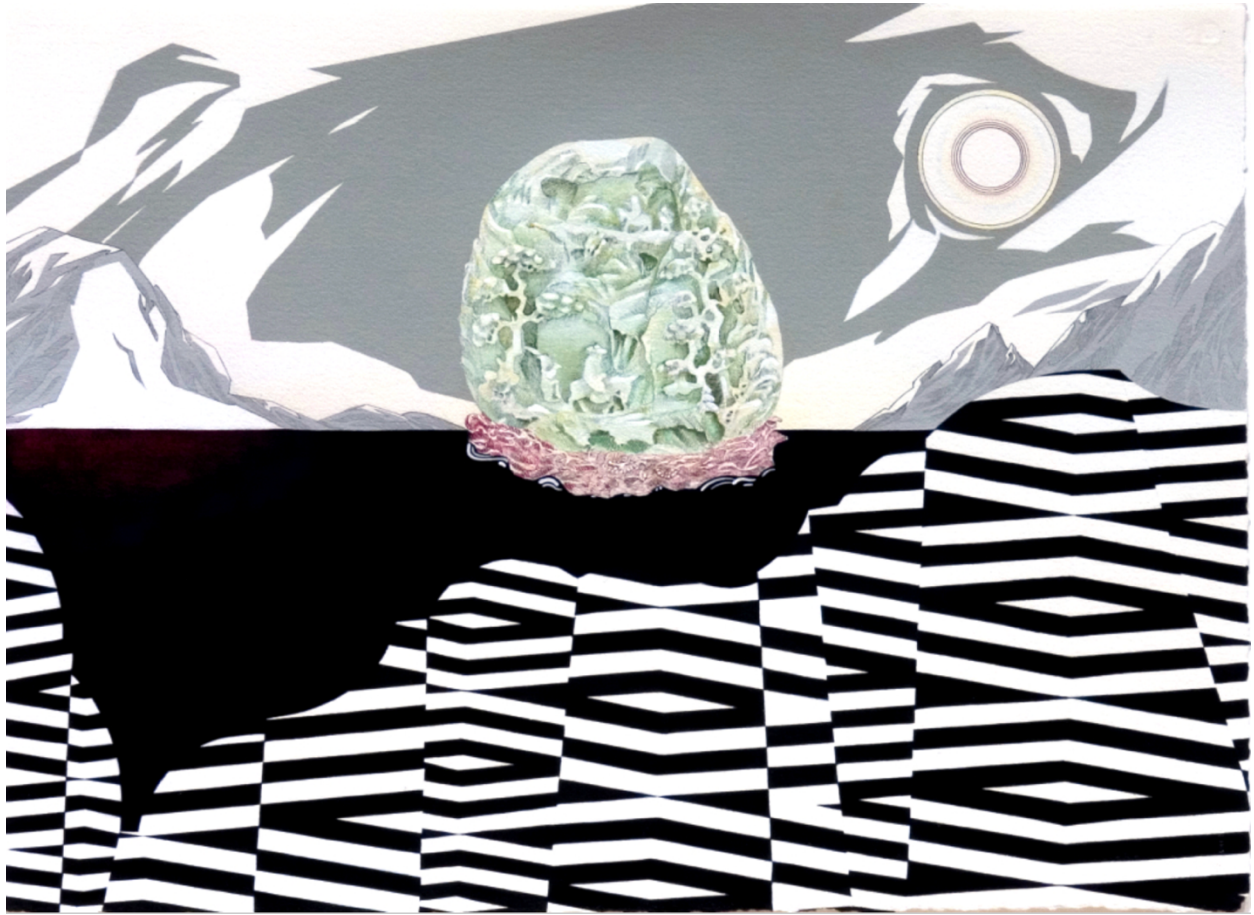


Figure 7

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *Le Château des Pyrénées*, 2007. Mixed media on paper.

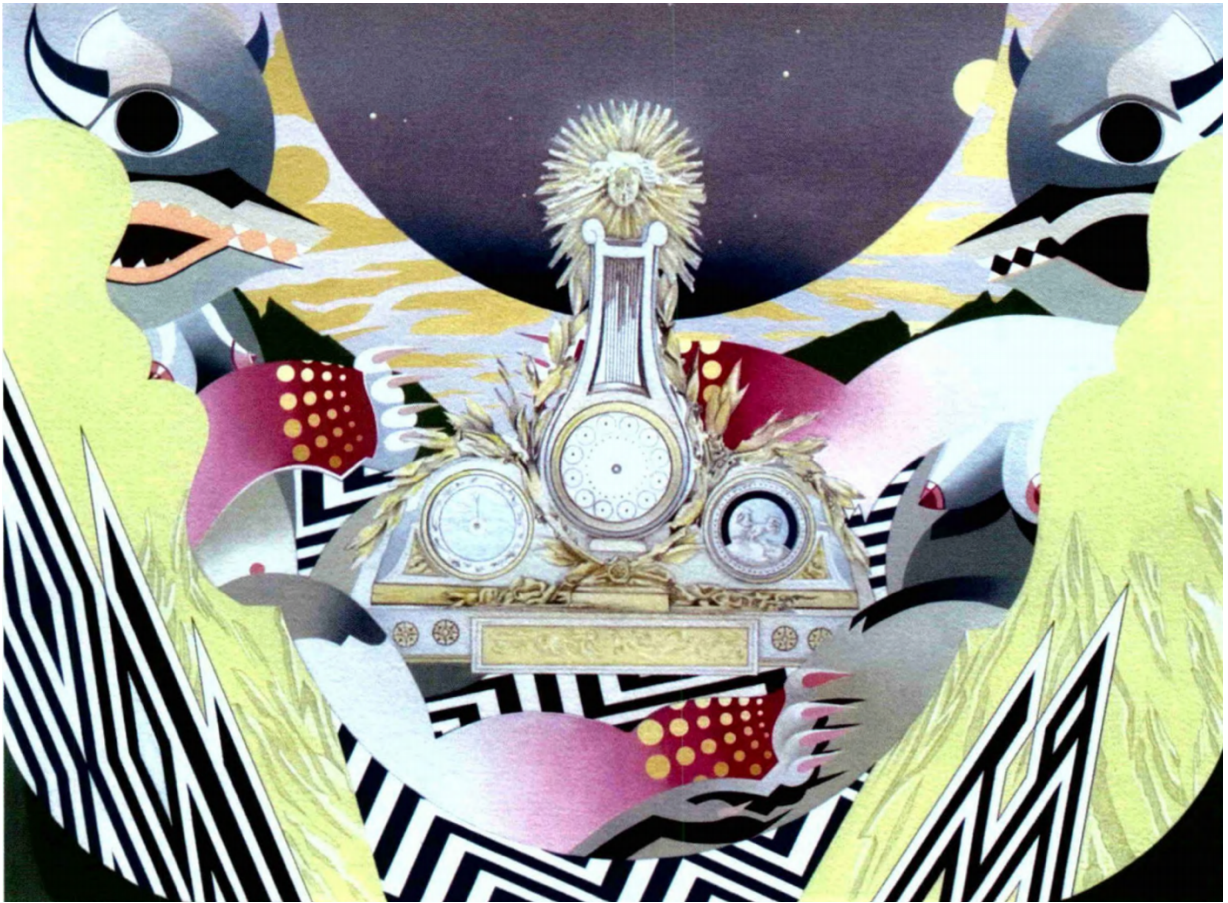


Figure 8

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *The Poison That Is Its Own Cure*, 2006.  
Mixed media on paper. 22 x 30 inches.



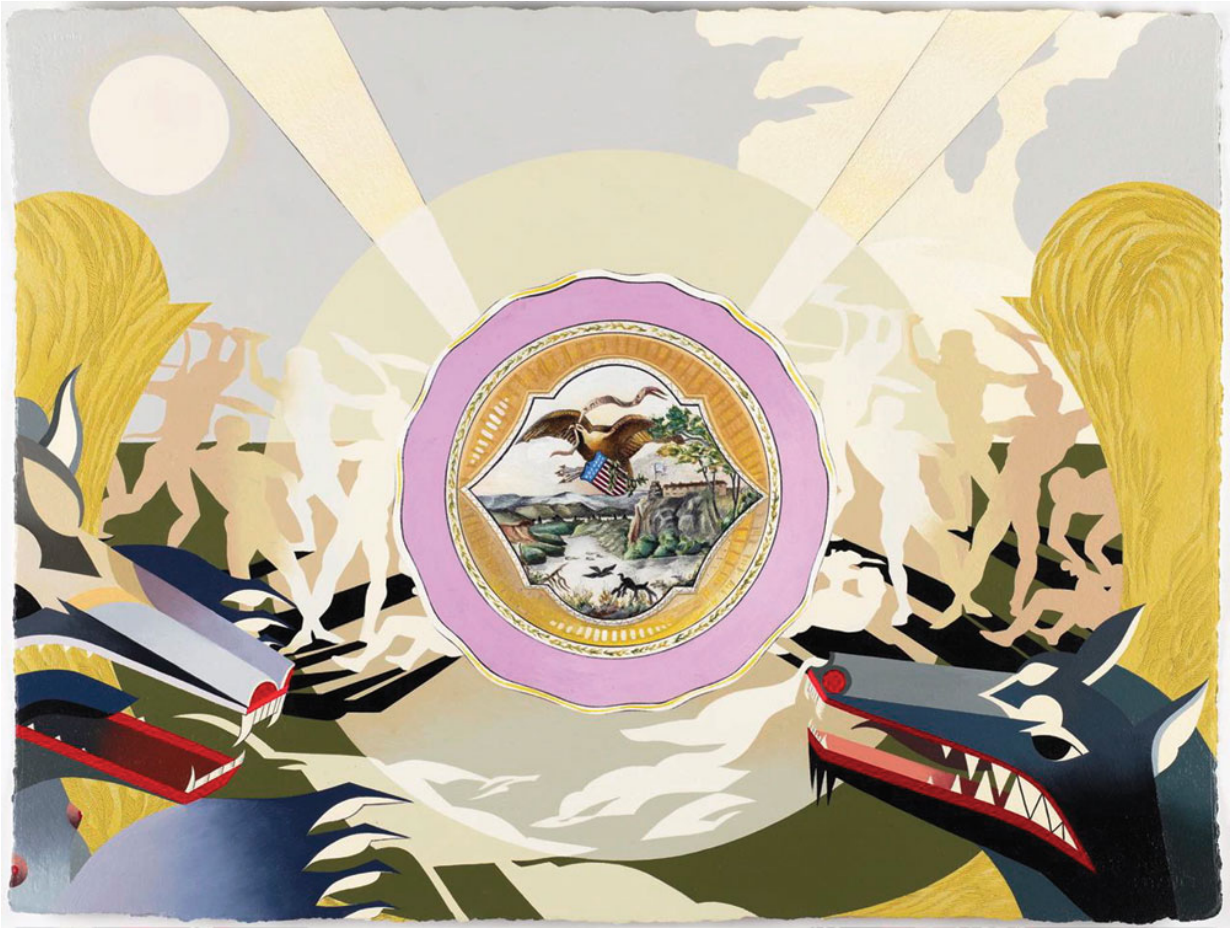


Figure 9

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *Truthiness*, 2006. Mixed media on paper. 22 x 30 inches.



Figure 10

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *Waagidijiid*, 2007. Ink, oil, acrylic, pen, and colored pencil on paper. 22 x 30 inches.



Figure 11

Unknown artist (Chinese, active during the 18th century). *Jade Mountain Illustrating the Gathering of Scholars at the Lanting Pavilion*, 1790. Jade. 22 1/2 × 38 3/8 inches, 640 lb.



Figure 12

Unknown artist (Chinese, active during the 17th–18th centuries). *Traveling in Autumn Mountains*, ca. 17th–18th century. Grayish white nephrite with brown markings. 8 ¼ inches (tall).

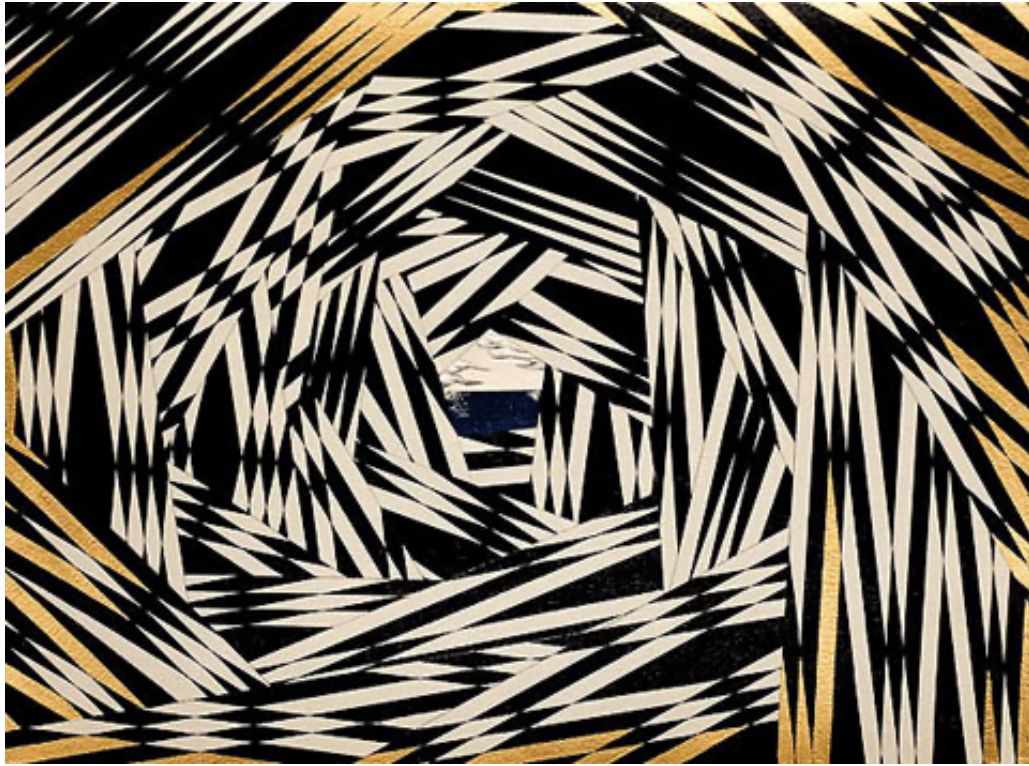


Figure 13

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *The Other Side*, 2007. Ink, oil, acrylic, graphite, and colored pencil on paper. 24 x 36 inches.

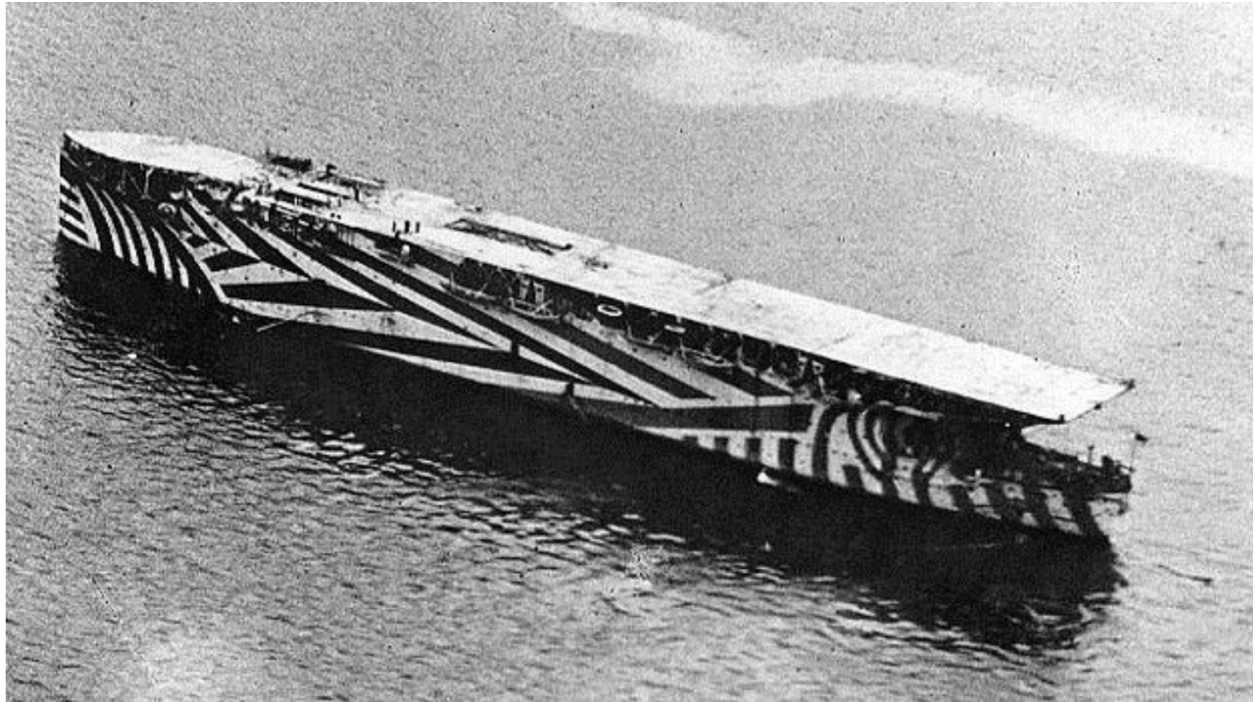


Figure 14

Unknown artist. *British Aircraft Carrier HMS Argus in harbor, 1918*. Photograph.

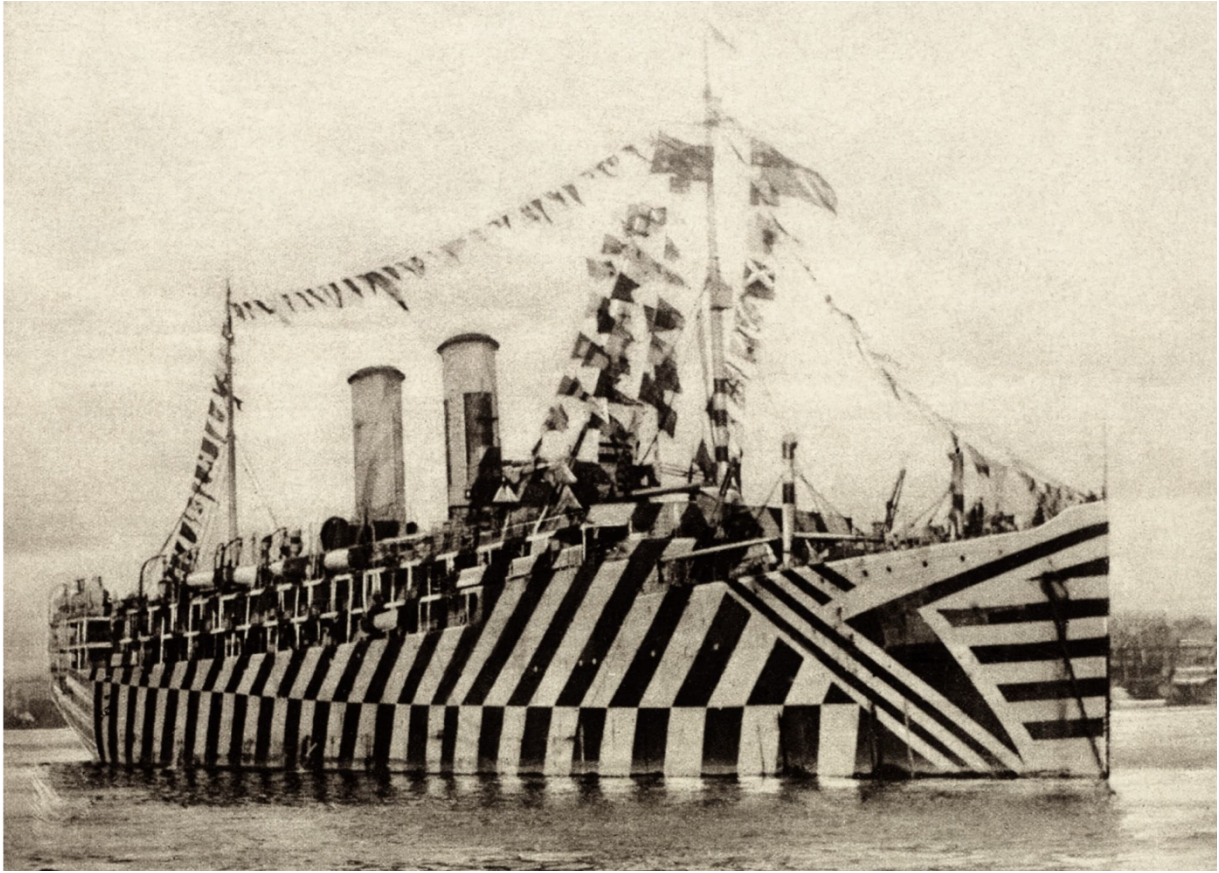


Figure 15

Unknown artist. *British Transport Ship Osterle in New York Harbor*, November 11, 1918.  
Photograph.

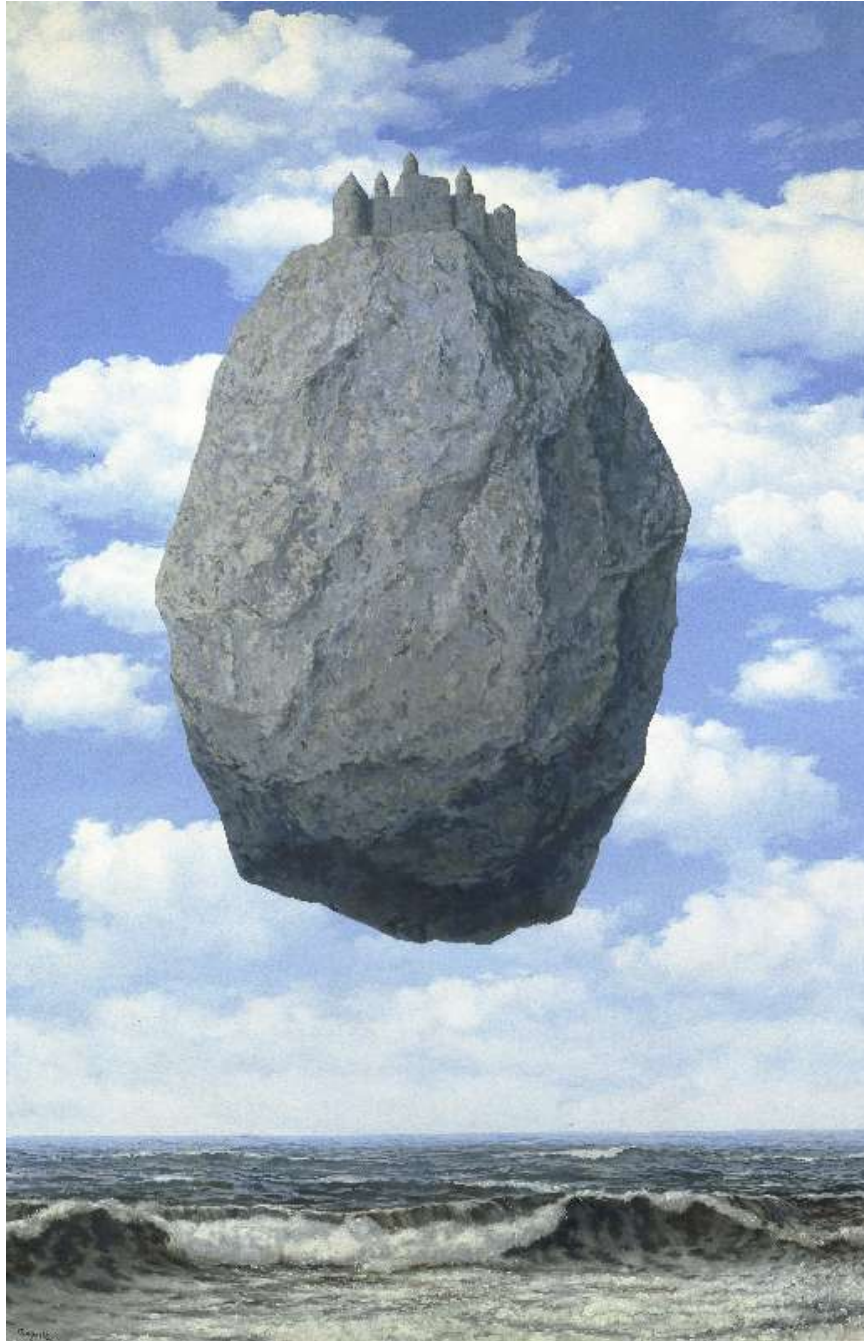


Figure 16

René Magritte (Belgian, 1898–1967). *Le Château des Pyrénées* (*Castle in the Pyrenees*), 1959.  
Oil on canvas. 78  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 57 inches.





Figure 17

Andrea Carlson (Grand Portage Ojibwe, b. 1979). *Cut & Run*, 2011. Oil, ink, acrylic, watercolor, and gouache on paper. 44 x 60 inches.



Figure 18

Unknown artist (British, active 3rd–2nd centuries BCE). *Deal Warrior Skull*, ca. 250-150 BCE.  
Bone, copper alloy. 6 1/2 (total width) x 8 (total length) x 2 2/3 inches (total height).



Figure 19

Boston Badge Company (American). *Polly Anna Club badge*, ca. 20th century. Aluminum, paper, and plastic. 7/8th inches in diameter.



Figure 20

Unknown artist (post-Hispanic Brazilian?). *Crystal Skull*, before 1881. Rock crystal. 9 4/5 inches (height).



Figure 21

W.O Lewis Badges (British, since 1832). *Great Britain, Order of the Primrose League badge, ca. 1891. Silver, enamel, and ribbon. 2 1/5 x 2/15 inches.*



Figure 22

Leonhard Kern (German, 1588-1662). *Menschenfresserin*, c. 1650. Ivory. 7 9/10 inches (height).



Figure 23

Unknown artist (Roman, active 1st century CE). *The "Cannibal,"* ca. 1st century CE. Marble. 27 1/2 (height) x 35 2/5 (width) x 22 4/5 inches (depth).