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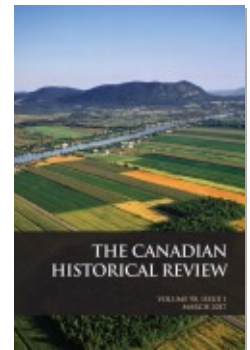
Insatiable Appetites: Imperial Encounters with Cannibals in the North Atlantic World

by Kelly L. Watson (review)

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Importantly, *Living with War* includes in its analysis the experiences of domestic minority groups as they tried to participate in war or criticize it. These experiences are often left out of national narratives along with those suspected or interned during times of war. Teigrob makes the point that recounting these experiences reveals the paradox of the “good war” as fought in defence of freedom when some of those freedoms were not exercised at home.

Comparative studies are an ambitious undertaking, and *Living with War* effectively presents two robust and contested national military narratives. However, the comparison could have benefited from a greater focus on exploring connections between Canadian and American martial pasts to further strengthen its transnational scope. In addition, further exploration of Indigenous histories in both Canada and the United States could have added possible domestic contexts to discussions about imperialism and colonial expansion.

As well, Teigrob’s comparison of Canadian and American relationships to militarism focuses, in the Canadian context, on English Canada. While French Canada is featured in his discussion, particularly in relation to ethnicity, further connection to French-Canadian historiography on memory and war could have considered how ideas of memory and history in French Canada may differ from broader Anglo-Canadian national narratives.

In reading this book, Canadians may be surprised to realize that they are more like their American neighbours than they knew. Reflecting on relationships not only between the state and militarism but also between two neighbouring countries, *Living with War* reminds readers of the connections between remembering and forgetting. It seems that forgetfulness, or a willingness to overlook the complexities of war and those who opposed it, continues to shape memories of Canada’s martial past.

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Insatiable Appetites: Imperial Encounters with Cannibals in the North Atlantic World. Kelly L. Watson. New York: New York University Press, 2015. Pp. xiii + 239, US \$40.00 cloth

Insatiable Appetites explores the ways in which Europeans deployed discourses of cannibalism – that is, the *idea* of man-eating rather than the act itself – to justify and establish imperial control in North America and the Caribbean from the fifteenth century through to the eighteenth century. With an American studies background, Kelly

Watson combines methodologies from various fields including history, anthropology, gender studies, and literary theory. The result is a work of varying interest to scholars across fields. For historians of colonial North America and European–Aboriginal relations, the work’s chief contribution lies in its comparative approach and its focus on the body as a site of colonialism.

At the centre of discourses of cannibalism lay the binary between savagery and civilization. Contending that race was less relevant in these discourses in the early modern period than later, Watson aims to “recenter gender” (2) in discussions of cannibalism, arguing that sexuality and gendered understandings of power undergirded European depictions of cannibalism among Indigenous groups. What interests the author, then, is not whether cannibalistic acts actually occurred but, rather, how the Spanish, French, and English used cannibalism as a means to assert masculine imperial power (and only later racist imperial power). Drawing on the work of Ann Laura Stoler and Anne McClintock, Watson identifies the body as a “contested space” (7), simultaneously the target of imperial power and the means to challenge it, notably through the violation of European sexual and gender norms that incorporation represented. This is a valuable framework through which to analyze early encounters in North America, as the gendered nature of colonialism has been comparatively less studied in this period and region.

On conceptual and organizational levels, the book is heavily influenced by the works of Patricia Seed. Seed’s contention that Spanish, English, and French approaches to lands and peoples led to particular configurations of imperial power forms the basis of Watson’s discussion of cannibalism in each imperial setting. For example, Spanish interest in minerals led to a preoccupation with Indigenous labour, which saw cannibalism deployed to justify the conquest of bodies. For the English, the trope of cannibalism helped to solidify English claims to land and their superiority as settlers over other groups. The book unfolds according to this scheme, with chapters on conquest (Spanish), conversion (French), and settlement (English). While Seed’s seminal work has been criticized for its reductionist nature, Watson generally avoids this pitfall by grounding her discussion of cannibalism discourses and imperial power in particular times and places.

Following an introduction that lays out these methodological and conceptual foundations, the book is divided into six chapters, consisting of the classical and medieval influences on European approaches to cannibalism in America, four case studies on the cannibalism trope in particular encounters, and a conclusion that identifies shifts in

cannibalism discourses in the nineteenth century. The first chapter, based on the writings of Herodotus, Pliny, Isidore of Seville, Marco Polo, and John Mandeville, highlights the links between cannibalism, monstrosity, women's sexual power, and life on the edges of the civilized world – the Scythians being the quintessential cannibals here – that shaped expectations of European imperial expansion in the Americas.

Chapter 2, probably the most familiar case study, uses accounts of Christopher Columbus's and Amerigo Vespucci's voyages to argue that accusations of cannibalism served to differentiate "good natives" (Arawaks) from "bad natives" (Caribs – from which the term "cannibal" derives), thereby justifying European imperial power. Images of the "paradigmatic cannibal" (77) – a woman – reveal anxieties around emasculation on the part of male adventurers. Focusing on Cortés's conquest of Mexico in 1519, Chapter 3 examines how Spanish conquest took place both "on the battlefield and on the body" (180), particularly through the incorporation of Indigenous women as sexual servants in a gendered imperial hierarchy. Chapter 4 moves to New France to consider how the Jesuits made accusations of cannibalism against the Iroquois to gain support for their missions. Bodily suffering played a key role in ideas of masculinity on both sides. For the Jesuits, their bravery in the face of torture helped ensure their salvation; for the Iroquois, the suffering of captives brought power to the tribe. By focusing on acts of torture and cannibalism, the Jesuits simultaneously highlighted the imperative of their missions and their own status as stoic Christian warriors. If cannibalism served as a catalyst for French and Spanish expansion, it was a hindrance for the English. Based on captivity narratives, Chapter five discusses fear of incorporation as a test of faith in the redemptive power of God. The superiority of English masculinity is contrasted to the savagery of Indigenous peoples and Catholic French alike. The concluding chapter charts shifts in cannibalism discourses in the nineteenth century: from the threat of female sexual power to that of cannibalistic males and the decline in cannibalism tropes in North America as imperial ambitions moved to Africa.

The main value of this work is its demonstration of the changing relations between discourses of cannibalism and configurations of imperial power in different geographical and imperial contexts. It falls short, however, of establishing a "theory of gender and empire" (6) since it does not connect discourses of cannibalism to imperial institutions and authorities, nor does it acknowledge the variety of imperial interests within each empire. The decision to include only English versions of primary accounts and the complete absence of secondary

works in other languages limits the author's engagement with relevant literature. Inconsistencies in the use of "cannibalism" and "anthropophagy," as both synonymous and distinctive, create some confusion. Finally, there is not always due attention to chronology, with several references to the English appearing later than the French (for example, 19, 152).

These caveats aside, this is a thought-provoking and generally well-researched book that points to the value of both comparative perspectives and gender in considerations of imperial power in early North America.

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The Many Deaths of Tom Thomson: Separating Fact from Fiction. Gregory Klages. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2016. Pp. 256, \$26.99 paper

On 8 July 1917, Canadian artist Tom Thomson disappeared on Canoe Lake in Algonquin Park. His body was found eight days later. While the iconic painter's death was initially deemed an accident by drowning, compelling alternative theories that Thomson was murdered or that he died by suicide have emerged over the last century, gripping the public imagination. In *The Many Deaths of Tom Thomson: Separating Fact from Fiction*, Gregory Klages presents readers with a fascinating look at primary documents, oral accounts, and historiographical works about Thomson's death. Writing a history that covers new ground about Thomson is no easy task. Myriad popular publications about the painter have been written over the last century, in addition to important scholarly works such as Sherill Grace's *Inventing Tom Thomson* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2004). Nevertheless, Klages has produced a welcome addition to this literature, arguing that accounts of Thomson's death merit critical examination. The author traces how speculation, gossip, and rumours fuelled the production of powerful myths about the artist's death that "have gradually displaced the simpler facts found in the historical evidence" and created stories that "spiralled further and further away from what documents produced at the time of Thomson's death indicate" (14). Klages is clear that his work is not intended to offer a definitive answer of how Thomson died. Rather, his goal is to re-examine the historical evidence and assess what likely happened that fateful day on Canoe Lake. In the process, Klages investigates secondary sources to uncover how myths about Thomson's death were propagated. The result is a meticulous analysis of both the documents related to the artist's death and the sources used by authors to support theories about how Thomson met his fate.