

Vancouver the Cannibal: Cuisine, Encounter, and the Dilemma of Difference on the Northwest Coast, 1774–1808

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Abstract. Food is fundamental. As Felipe Fernández-Armesto has written, food “has a good claim to be considered the world’s most important subject. It is what matters most to most people for most of the time” (*Near a Thousand Tables: A History of Food* [New York, 2002], ix). We are what we eat, both materially and discursively, both in terms of the ecological networks that provide us with sustenance and the identities that define who we are as social, cultural, and historical beings. This article examines early contacts on the Northwest coast, using food as a lens on cultural and environmental encounter. Drawing on oral tradition and on accounts of explorers such as George Vancouver, this article treats the newcomers ethnographically, setting their behavior within the context of European cultural practices, and treats aboriginal societies historically, showing them as active participants in processes of change. Across tables and hearths, aboriginal people and the newcomers created a space in which static notions of race played a surprisingly small role. Instead, differences were seen as having to do with subtler concepts like generosity, cultivation, and taste. As with the belief, shared by Europeans and aboriginal people alike, that the strangers they encountered might be cannibals, these early encounters created what Gananath Obeyesekere calls a “dialogical misunderstanding” upon which would be laid the shaky foundations of empire (*Cannibal Talk: The Man-Eating Myth and Human Sacrifice in the South Seas* [Berkeley, CA, 2005]). By using food to ground the face-to-face encounters between native and newcomer and by placing indigenous understandings of encounter at the center of the story, this article seeks to describe some of the specific mechanisms, material and rhetorical, by which colonialism dispossessed.

Encountering Cuisine

On a clear summer's day in June 1792, a clutch of British sailors and officers sat down to a meal on the shore of a bay along the north coast of what would eventually be known as the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State. As they began to eat, a group of strangers approached from down the beach. The strangers were delegates from the Strong People, the Klallam, in whose territory the British had chosen to have their lunch—indeed, the bay in which the British had chosen to drop anchor was named after an ancestral Klallam nobleman who had once lived there.¹ As the Klallam approached the strangers, the British drew a line in the sand, sending a not-so-subtle message. Then one group offered the other some food: first, bread and fish; then something that caused the others to recoil in abject horror. It appeared that they were being asked to eat human flesh. Suddenly, that line in the sand seemed impermeable indeed.

Such scenes are standard in the lore of European expansion. Heathen man-eaters, skulking in the underbrush just beyond the beaches of discovery or hungrily stoking fires in their cannibal villages, are stock players in the drama of exploration and empire. In this case, however, the script was turned on its head: it was the British, not the Klallam, who were the cannibals. “Though they saw us eat it with great relish,” Captain George Vancouver wrote of the venison pasties his crew had so innocently offered,

they could not be induced to taste it. They received it from us with great disgust, and presented it round to the rest of the party, by whom it underwent a very strict examination . . . they pointed to each other, and made signs that could not be misunderstood, that it was the flesh of human beings, and threw it down in the dirt, with gestures of great aversion and displeasure.²

Finally, after much hand-signaling, miming, and the presentation of deer haunches and skins, the Klallams were convinced that the strange newcomers were not cannibals after all, just as Vancouver realized that perhaps the peoples of this coast were not man-eaters either. The two groups then went on to eat “the remainder of the pye with a good appetite.”³

Food is fundamental. As Oxford historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto has written, food “has a good claim to be considered the world’s most important subject. It is what matters most to most people for most of the time.”⁴ We are what we eat, both materially and discursively, in terms of both the ecological networks that provide us with sustenance and the identities that define who we are as social, cultural, and historical beings. This article examines the role of food, from production to distribution and con-

sumption, in encounters on the Northwest coast during the late eighteenth and very early nineteenth centuries. Emphasizing early meetings between the British (and to a lesser degree their Spanish and American competitors) and the Nuu-chah-nulth and Coast Salish peoples (and to a lesser degree their Makah, Quileute, and Kwakwaka'wakw neighbors), I focus on four categories of experience related to food—cultivation, etiquette, taste, and reason—that were very much on the minds of Europeans and Americans during this period, and put those categories into conversation with their aboriginal counterparts: terms such as *aphey*, *xwenitem*, *Dás•k'iyá*, and *wuxwuthin*, all of which are virtually unknown outside their communities of origin. The encounters among these different ideas about food, eating, identity, and community explode many of the binaries that dominate discussions of native-newcomer relations:⁵ self/other, indigenous/foreign, cultivated/wild, savage/civilized, traditional/modern, and reason/superstition. What cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha has described as the “constitutive ambivalence of colonial discourse” and the “conflictual economy of representation,” I refer to here as the dilemma of difference, in which cultural boundaries, expressed via the discursive while always grounded in the material, defy simple characterization and bear little resemblance to the kinds of encounters and identities—for example, clearly defined notions of “white” and “Indian”—that would dominate later periods of Northwest coast history.⁶

Judicious Designers and Unseen Gardens: Cultivation

Understanding first encounters in the eighteenth century requires an understanding of scurvy. An account, then, from the 1730s, by a career seaman named William Hutchinson:

The sea scurvy increased upon me, as it had done upon many others . . . and I observed that they soon took to their hammocks below, and became black in their armpits and hams, their limbs being stiff and swelled, with red specks, and soon died. . . . I thus struggled with the disease 'till it increased so that my armpits and hams grew black but did not swell, and I pined away to a weak, helpless condition, with my teeth all loose, and my upper and lower gums swelled and clotted together like a jelly, and they bled to that degree, that I was obliged to lie with my mouth hanging over the side of my hammock, to let the blood run out, and to keep it from clotting so as to [choke] me.⁷

As much as weather, lack of funds, or international conflict, scurvy limited European expansion, and the Northwest coast was one of the most

distant places from Europe by sea. Spanish expeditions in particular were plagued by illness; after Quinault warriors killed several of his crew in 1775, Bruno de Hezeta wrote that his men were too sick to retaliate and “were in no position to inflict injury but rather to receive it.”⁸ George Vancouver was perhaps the most adept at preventing and treating scurvy among his crew, dispensing malt, sauerkraut, and citrus as he had learned to do while serving under Captain James Cook. But despite these new practices, the “disease of London,” as scurvy was known among the British, still cast a pall—in the imagination if not always in reality—over the tiny wooden fragments of Europe that sailed into the region in the 1770s.⁹

These fragments carried, literally, the seeds of their homelands. Crews planted not just flags but produce, leaving peas, parsley, strawberries, and more as proof of their passing, as succor to those Europeans who would follow, and as ritualized claiming through cultivation. Often, this was among a crew’s very first tasks upon landing. American trader and explorer James Strange wrote in 1786 that after his sailors

had somewhat recovered their usual Strength, I employed them in a Work, which not only hastened their Cure, but from which I hoped, that in a future Voyage, others in their situation would reap the Advantage; They were supplied with Garden tools, & a Great Variety of Garden Seeds. These they planted in such places, as from their situations promised to give growth to them, & there is little doubt, but that some of the number will be found hereafter in a flourishing state.¹⁰

The Spanish made similar efforts, establishing gardens and stockades at Nootka Sound and Nuñez Gaona in Makah territory (today’s Neah Bay) as early as the 1780s. These included European staples such as potatoes, turnips, cabbage, cattle, hogs, goats, and chickens, and such agricultural toeholds played important physical and metaphorical roles in newcomers’ visits to the coast.¹¹

Just as they carried the seeds of home, Europeans made sense of the Northwest coast by using the vocabularies of their native landscapes. For the British, this meant that they saw the Northwest coast through the lens of cultivation. Vancouver’s physician and botanist Archibald Menzies described one place as a “rich lawn . . . abundantly croppd [*sic*] with a variety of grass clover & wild flowers, here & there adorn’d [*sic*] by aged pines with wide spreading horizontal boughs . . . the whole seeming as if it had been laid out from the premeditated plan of a judicious designer.”¹² “Judicious designer”: could there be a more British way of saying it? Later, Menzies described another place in language that recalled the gardens of stately homes: “A Traveller [*sic*] . . . is eagerly occupied every moment on

new objects & his senses rivetted [*sic*] on the enchanting variety of the surrounding scenery where the softer beauties of Landscape are harmoniously blended in majestic grandeur with the wild & romantic to form an interesting & picturesque prospect on every side.”¹³ As Brian W. Richardson has noted, such descriptions expressed the ideals of a particular kind of person, “civilized, cultivated, rational, lawful, benevolent, and powerful,” who was both creator and beneficiary of the idealized English countryside, and in particular the bucolic, symbolism-laden hills and fields of Kent and Surrey.¹⁴ Britain’s agricultural revolution of the eighteenth century, marked by enclosure, plant and animal breeding, increases in agricultural output, and the advent of landscape gardening, gave rise to new ways of seeing the environment and Englishness, both articulated through the language of “cultivation.”¹⁵ This notion of cultivation—of lands, of plants, of animals, of peoples—had a synonym in “improvement”: of the self, of the other, of the nation, of the race, of the globe.¹⁶

Not every place on the coast elicited such pastoral rhapsodies; some places struck the newcomers as nothing more than alien wastelands. This was especially true when they ventured into the labyrinth of islands and inlets of the northern end of Vancouver Island and the adjacent mainland. Such experiences left names like Desolation Sound on the Europeans’ freshly drawn maps,¹⁷ and Maria Tippett and Douglas Cole have written that “although the sensitive soul could appreciate [what would become the central British Columbia coast] as a suitable setting for the contemplation of melancholy and sublime immensity, generally the region was considered too dreary and monotonous to be beautiful.”¹⁸ For the most part, however, the Northwest coast seemed a likely candidate for the re-creation of Europe. For example, Joseph Banks of Kew Gardens fame had instructed Menzies to ascertain “whether . . . the Grains, Pulse and Fruits cultivated in Europe are likely to thrive” on the Northwest coast,¹⁹ and the Scot’s assessments were often quite optimistic: The Plough might enter at once without the least obstruction, & . . . the Soil . . . appeard [*sic*] capable of yielding . . . luxuriant Crops of the European Grains or of rearing herds of Cattle who might here wander at their ease over extensive fields of fine pasture.²⁰ Many of Menzies’s contemporaries concurred. Vancouver imagined the shores of the inland sea he named Puget’s Sound transformed into England “by the industry of man with villages, mansions, cottages . . . the inhabitants would be amply rewarded, in the bounties which nature seems ready to bestow on cultivation.”²¹ Such visions were an example of what J. B. Harley has called the “anticipatory geography of colonialism,” in which the landscape of home is read onto new places, creating settler tautologies in which “common sense,” combined with a faith in European ingenuity and fortitude, jus-

tify the taking of territory in order to pursue the “correct” use of the land. If the Indians weren’t cultivating the land, the newcomers would.²² Conversely, the region’s dreary northern reaches, in their apparent unsuitability for civilized land use, simultaneously undergirded the cultivated superiority Europeans imagined of themselves. Oak-dotted prairies or dark, timbered wilderness: both kinds of landscape were refracted through the lens of cultivation.

The great irony, however, is that the Northwest coast was already cultivated—not by Providence, but by human beings. “We saw no plantations which exhibited the least trace of knowledge in the cultivation of the earth; all seemed to remain in a pure state of nature” wrote John Rickman, one of Cook’s men, and his shipmate John Ledyard agreed, almost word for word.²³ But aboriginal peoples of the Northwest coast, far from simply being fishers, hunters, and gatherers, were in fact both extensive and intensive managers of their environments. They burned lowland prairies and alpine meadows that otherwise would have turned to forest, encouraging the rejuvenation of nutritious roots, bulbs, and berries; they built stone terraces to expand shellfish habitat and sank stones to create reefs for rockfish and octopus; they managed gardens in estuaries and above beaches. The languages of the region included words for such practices: the Northern Coast Salish called their rock-buttressed clam gardens *wuxwuthin*; the Kwakwaka’wakw used the word *t’ekilakw* (literally, “manufactured soil”) to describe coastal beds of silverweed and springbank clover; and the Nuuchah-nulth term *hahuulthi* (ancestral territory) implied both hereditary rights to lands, waters, and resources and the embodied practices of environmental stewardship from which those rights arose.²⁴ But when Europeans did see native people working in the landscape, they usually saw bestial drudgery, or even worse, intemperate environmental destruction. Vancouver described Suquamish camas harvesters “engaged like swine, rooting up this beautiful verdant meadow,”²⁵ while one of his Spanish counterparts complained that although “there were many signs of deer and bear” among the coast’s maze of islands and inlets, game was scarce because it “was so much harassed by the unseen natives.”²⁶

In the end, even obvious marks of indigenous artifice mostly just mystified the newcomers. Of Kwakwaka’wakw fish-drying racks, Vancouver wrote that “the object they were designed for . . . remained as uncertain to us as the application of the high beacons we found so frequently erected on the more southern parts of New Georgia.”²⁷ Those “beacons,” the purpose of which both Vancouver and Menzies were “at a loss to form the most distant conjecture,” were tall poles upon which vast nets, set along well-known flight paths, ensnared passing waterfowl. A technology unique to

Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca and known among the peoples there as *tqap*, they left the British scratching their heads. Of a set in Klallam territory, Vancouver penned, "They were, undoubtedly, intended to answer some particular purpose; but whether of a religious, civil, or military nature, must be left to some future investigation."²⁸ As with the landscape more generally, newcomers often did not see what they were looking at.

This inability to read Northwest coast landscape put Vancouver and his compatriots and competitors at risk. Not only did it mean they fundamentally misapprehended the nature of indigenous ecologies; it meant hunger was an everyday challenge. Even when food could be found, they often couldn't catch it. Vancouver and Menzies's journals, for example, are replete with such frustrations. Not far from where he and his crew were accused of being cannibals, he wrote, "we found the surface of the sea almost covered with aquatic birds of various kinds, but . . . our sportsmen were unable to reach them with their guns, although they made many attempts."²⁹ Sandhill cranes, meanwhile, were "too vigilant to allow our sportsmen taking them by surprise," and hunting expeditions became farces when the deer eluded the men "& as the party had spread out through the woods in different directions they ran no little danger of shooting one another among the Bushes."³⁰ Even salmon stumped them—one successful day of fishing could be followed by two days of empty seines—and two of the crew died from paralytic shellfish poisoning after eating mussels, leaving the name Poison Cove on the map.³¹ All of these foods were staples of aboriginal abundance, but the only prey the English could depend on were the spruce boughs they used to brew beer, which "greatly assisted to correct the bad tendency of our present mode of living" by providing yet another prophylaxis against the threat of scurvy.³²

Such struggles to survive often had profound effects on shipboard morale. At a place near the entrance to Puget Sound that he named Foul-weather Bluff, Vancouver described the anomie and anxiety resulting from his countrymen's inability to understand or exploit the region's natural wealth with any consistency:

Our sportsmen had been unable to assist our stock; and the prospect of obtaining any supplies from the natives was equally uncertain. The region we had lately passed seemed nearly destitute of human beings. The brute creation had also deserted the shores; the tracks of deer were no longer to be seen; nor was there an aquatic bird on the whole extent of the canal; animated nature seemed nearly exhausted; and her awful silence was only now and then interrupted by the croaking of a raven, the breathing of a seal, or the scream of an eagle. Even these solitary

sounds were so seldom heard, that the rustling of the breeze along the shore, assisted by the solemn stillness that prevailed, gave rise to ridiculous suspicions in our seamen of hearing rattlesnakes, and other hideous monsters, in the wilderness.³³

By invoking wilderness, with all its Georgian connotations of primitivism, wastefulness, and even moral turpitude, Vancouver highlighted the differences between Britain and the Northwest coast, tempering the optimism of his and Menzies's anticipatory geographies with the very real fear that the region might be too wild and alien for European settlement. This perceived wildness of the landscape, meanwhile, reflected on its inhabitants. While exploring territories farther north in what would become southeast Alaska, Vancouver's fellow explorer Jean-François de Galaup, comte de La Pérouse, had noted that the Tlingit people there "differed as widely from civilized nations as the land I have described from our cultivated plains,"³⁴ and such synonymies, emphasizing differences between peoples and places, certainly must have been at work in the minds of most Europeans in the region. Face-to-face encounters, and in particular the sharing of meals, would only serve to highlight the tensions between seeing the places and peoples of the Northwest coast as ready for cultivation and fearing that they and their lands might be irredeemable.

John Bull Meets Kinneclimmets: Etiquette

Extrapolating from his own successes treating scurvy, Vancouver had written in the preface to his published journals that "it should seem, that the reign of George the Third had been reserved, by the Great Disposer of all things, for the glorious task of establishing . . . the arts and sciences to the furthest corners of the earth, for the instruction and happiness of the most lowly children of nature."³⁵ Asserting his society's superiority in such matters as medicine, navigation, and agriculture, Vancouver elided the troubles and contingencies he and his crew had often faced on their travels. In reality, foreigners' struggles to obtain food on the Northwest coast meant that the newcomers depended on aboriginal hospitality. Strange wrote that the bream and sardines he bought from one group of Nuu-chah-nulth fishermen brought succor to "our poor invalids, who would scarcely allow them time enough to be heated through. Half a dozen small leeks which I bought at the same time, were likewise highly acceptable to them."³⁶ Spanish visitors to what became known as Esquimalt Harbor on Vancouver Island were equally thankful for large helpings of octopus provided by the local Songhees Coast Salish people, a meal facilitated in part by the Makah leader Tetacus, whom they had on board as a guest.³⁷ Vancouver and his crew had

similar encounters with aboriginal generosity, which, when offered, was done with great pomp. Of one meeting with Skagit Coast Salish people, he noted that

their behaviour was courteous and friendly in the highest degree. A middle-aged man, to all appearance a chief or principal person of the party, was foremost in shewing marks of the greatest hospitality; and perceiving our party were at breakfast, presented them with water, roasted roots, dried fish, and other articles of food. This person, in return, received some presents, and others were distributed amongst the ladies and some of the party.³⁸

These same people also “conducted themselves with the utmost propriety, shewing, by repeated invitations to their dwellings, the greatest hospitality . . . and expressed much chagrin and mortification that their offers of civility were declined.”³⁹ Newcomers did not always decline such invitations; in fact, they often entered the enormous cedar longhouses of coastal aboriginal communities, but their descriptions of the resulting meals say as much about what Europeans thought as they do about how indigenous people lived. Their accounts also draw attention to the complex and often contradictory understandings of difference that shaped, and were shaped, by the sharing of food.

Both English and Spanish records of meals in indigenous homes emphasize what their authors saw as filth, gluttony, and waste. Writers often described at length the strong smells of the longhouses—fish, smoke, grease—but it was the indigenous appetite that really got them writing. John R. Jewitt, an American who lived with the Mowachaht Nuu-chah-nulth at Nootka Sound for four years, wrote at length about Kinneclimets, a member of Chief Maquinna’s retinue:

Among those performances that gained him the greatest applause, was his talent of eating to excess . . . I have known him [to] devour at one meal, no less than seventy-five large herring, and at another time when at a great feast . . . he undertook, after drinking three pints of oil . . . to eat four dried salmon, and five quarts of spawn, [and] a gallon of train oil.⁴⁰

Jewitt later claimed that all Nuu-chah-nulth “generally indulge in eating to an excess,”⁴¹ and such accusations of excessive consumption were often twinned with accusations about the apparent waste caused by feasting. In Jewitt’s case, he found it “astonishing to see what a quantity of provision is . . . wasted on . . . an almost uninterrupted succession of feasting and gormondizing [*sic*] . . . as if the principal object . . . was to consume

their whole stock of provision.”⁴² The idea formed in these encounters, that native peoples were gluttonous and wasteful “regardless of the morrow,”⁴³ would mark difference in the centuries to come. Missionaries, government officials, and others would be particularly interested in ending feasting traditions. In British Columbia, such meals were outlawed in 1885 as an amendment to the Indian Act intended to abolish potlatching; while the primary target of such laws was the “profligate” redistribution of wealth, such redistribution was virtually unthinkable without feasting: as with blankets and kettles and sacks of flour, social status and spiritual power could be, and were, expressed in salmon and bannock and whale meat. Meanwhile, in Washington State, potlatching practices were robustly discouraged by Indian agents and missionaries and were routinely described using words like *heathen*, *intemperate*, and *irrational*.⁴⁴

Such forms of feasting and ritual eating, however, were ways for aboriginal people to enact social power. A story from the Lekwungen Coast Salish on the southeastern coast of Vancouver Island, for example, tells of a boy, reminiscent of Kinneclimmets, who at first disgraced his family by “licking off the platters and dishes like a dog,” but then earned mysterious powers and a new name thanks to his capacious appetite.⁴⁵ As for the alleged wastefulness of feasts, one Klallam elder described it this way: “White people thought that was very foolish . . . but keep up the poor, that’s what this for. Keep up the poor.”⁴⁶ In return, the feast host’s increased prestige and cultural capital would reaffirm his connections to territory and further establish social reciprocities. Feasts also took place according to elaborate protocols, including the seating arrangements of guests, the order and distribution of dishes, and the disposition of leftovers. Among the Puyallup and Nisqually Coast Salish of southern Puget Sound, for example, mats of fresh fern fronds were laid as placemats for guests, dishes were eaten one at a time in orderly fashion, and food distributed according to guests’ rank and relationship to the host became the guests’ property once served. The guests, meanwhile, never ate the food they brought to a feast.⁴⁷ Among some Coast Salish in southwestern British Columbia, hosts provided serviettes of frayed cedar bark and carved maple finger bowls, while high-class people were discouraged from unseemly displays of hunger or from opening their mouths too widely and indelicately while eating. (“Common people,” on the other hand, “were expected to be boors” at feasts, according to one early twentieth-century observer.)⁴⁸ For John Jewitt and his fellow captive John Thompson, Nuu-chah-nulth expectations regarding leftovers—that guests must take them home—chafed. “It was a most awkward thing for us at first,” he complained in his memoirs, “to have to lug home with us . . . the blubber or fish that we received at these times, but we soon became recon-

ciled to it, and were very glad of an opportunity to do it.”⁴⁹ These complex and sophisticated systems of etiquette, many of which still exist, challenge the belief held by many outsiders even today, that “primitive” peoples did not dine, but merely ate.⁵⁰ On the Northwest coast, the niceties of dining were serious business.

So what about the newcomers? How did their systems of etiquette and mealtime practices compare to those of the Nuu-chah-nulth and Coast Salish into whose homes they had been invited? Certainly, indigenous people did not have a monopoly on dirt; European and American ships were notoriously unclean, requiring fumigation with sulfur and swabbings with vinegar; still the vessels reeked of moldy canvas, stagnant bilge, and various human and animal scents.⁵¹ Eating establishments and homes back in Europe, especially those patronized and resided in by common sailors, were only marginally better.⁵² As for gluttony, we might note that England itself was personified by the corpulent John Bull, his Union Jack waistcoat stretched tight across a belly stuffed with roast beef and ale. And as in the longhouses, rank mattered, if not in ways designed to “keep up the poor”: unlike officers, sailors had to buy fresh fruit and vegetables themselves, and food obtained by hunters was distributed first to the officers, leaving lower ranks to go without if supplies ran short.⁵³

In fact, feasts in the Northwest coast’s longhouses and Europe’s banqueting halls and travelers’ inns bore just enough resemblance to each other that at some feasts, indigenous and newcomer etiquettes converged to create a hybrid space of shared ritual and protocol. On 5 September 1792, one such meal took place between the people of Maquinna’s household and the crews of George Vancouver and Spanish Captain Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra. The evening began with entertainment: Nuu-chah-nulth songs and dances expressing Maquinna’s *lahwulthi*, then British jigs and hornpipes. Archibald Menzies described the rest:

Soon after this, our dinner which was Cooking on the outside of the house was announcd [*sic*] to be ready. Maquinna orderd [*sic*] a large Plank to be brought in, which he very dexterously formd [*sic*] into a Table in the middle of the House sufficiently large for the whole party, with lesser Planks extended on each side for Seats & every thing else that could contribute to luxury & comfort was profusely provided by S^r Quadra, who had brought along with him on this occasion not only his Steward Cooks & Culinary Utensils but even his *Plate*, so that our dinner was served up in a manner that made us forget we were in such a remote corner, under the humble roof of a Nootka Chief. — Maquinna his Wives & Daughter, together with other Chiefs sat at the head of the Table, partook of the Entertainment & joind [*sic*] us in drinking a

convivial glass of wine after dinner, while the rest of the Natives entertained [*sic*] themselves at a Mess not less gratefull [*sic*] to their palate.⁵⁴

And at least as often as the newcomers feasted in indigenous homes, indigenous people were brought aboard ships, where both parties paid close attention to etiquette. A Spanish observer noted that Maquinna “used a knife and fork like the most polite European, letting the servants wait on him, and . . . contributing to the good humour of the society.”⁵⁵ Similarly, the Makah leader Tetacus dined aboard the *Mexicana*, “in everything imitating our actions, which he was always observing carefully.”⁵⁶ Most on-board meals appear to have been pleasant; Vancouver wrote that one Coast Salish guest “ate and drank of such things as were offered with the greatest confidence, and . . . bid them farewell with every mark of respect and friendship.”⁵⁷ As Yvonne Marshall has noted, etiquette at these ship-board meals—seating arrangements, toasts, and special foods—bore strong resemblances to longhouse feasts.⁵⁸

But for all the potential commonalities discovered over cedar planks and captain’s tables, native and newcomer still saw each other across what at times seemed an unbridgeable chasm. For the English and Spanish, the chasm was represented by what they saw as gluttony and filth, both emblematic of perceived savagery. For aboriginal participants in these encounters, the very words they used to describe the Europeans highlighted the newcomers’ strangeness, and in many cases, the appellations involved ideas about cultivation, etiquette, and other aspects of food production and consumption. To the Nuuchah-nulth, they were *mamulthni*, a term implying landlessness, and thus the opposite in a way of someone with the territorial prerogatives that both manifested and articulated wealth and selfhood.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, among many Coast Salish communities, hunger meant not having fresh food, and so the salt pork, portable soup, and other preserved foods of the newcomers, despite their novelty, must have also raised eyebrows regarding their owners’ status.⁶⁰ In fact, many Coast Salish language words for the newcomers are variations on a word that means “hungry people”—*xwenitem* at the mouth of the Fraser River, *slwa’-ne’htum* among the Klallam who briefly thought Vancouver was a cannibal.⁶¹ While in different parts of the region other names for the foreigners suggested that their origins lay in the sky, or emphasized the cloth or other objects they brought, food and territory could also play a key role in these new taxonomies and lexicons.

This constellation of names suggests that throughout the region, explorers and traders could appear both as powerful emissaries of imperial nation-states and as beleaguered wanderers. Indeed, such fluid perceptions may have actually helped smooth relations. According to hereditary

Ahousaht chief Umeek, being *aphey* (roughly, “kind”) in Nuu-chah-nulth society requires asking for help. Vancouver, Strange, Spanish explorer José Mariano Moziño, and the others were more than a little *aphey*, and aboriginal generosity created interdependence and enmeshed the newcomers in networks of obligation, whether the beneficiaries understood it that way or not.⁶² In fact, it seems clear that at least among the Nuu-chah-nulth, hospitality toward the English, Spanish, and American amounted to owning them: according to Nuu-chah-nulth jurisprudence, whatever drifted into a community or family’s *habuulthi* became their property, whether it was a dead whale rich with meat and oil, a cedar log with a canoe or house post waiting inside it, or a ship of starving men offering red cloth, copper, and mirrors.⁶³

What should we make, then, of the violence that all too often erupted in this period on the Northwest coast? Jewitt and Thompson, for example, were the only survivors of the crew of the *Boston*; the rest were executed by Maquinna’s men in 1803 in an episode that clearly resulted from the decline of the sea otter trade and Nuu-chah-nulth chieftains’ hunger for trade goods and the prestige they bestowed during a time of particularly intense competition among noblemen from various communities. As a proximal cause, however, the massacre seemed to have everything to do with food and etiquette. Jewitt wrote that his captain, John Salter, had invited Maquinna and other Nuu-chah-nulth leaders aboard for a meal, where the indigenous men seated themselves “(in their country fashion, upon our chairs) with their feet under them crossed like Turks.” Maquinna’s entourage contributed salmon to the meal, which “furnished a most delicious treat to men who for a long time had lived wholly on salt provisions excepting such few sea fish as we had the good fortune occasionally to take. We indeed feasted most luxuriously, and flattered ourselves that we should not want while on the coast for provisions.” After the meal, as Nuu-chah-nulth dancers entertained the diners, Salter asked Maquinna if he might dispatch a crew to catch more salmon in preparation for the next day’s departure from Nootka Sound. Maquinna acquiesced, suggesting a nearby fishing ground. An hour later, all but Johnson and Thompson were dead, their decapitated heads lined up on the beach. How strange, recalled Jewitt, that mere salmon, “this dainty food, was to prove the unfortunate lure to our destruction!”⁶⁴

So what happened? While the broader context of environmental, economic, and political change is clear, why did the small issue of salmon lead to disaster? Nuu-chah-nulth etiquette emphasizes reciprocity above all else and also places enormous value on hard work; as Umeek has written, “the opposite of generosity was equated with death . . . lazy people cannot participate in the law of reciprocity because they produce nothing.”⁶⁵

In the case of foreigners who had drifted into Maquinna's *hahualthi* and thus become his property, but whose offerings grew more and more paltry and who had driven sea otters into near extinction, their lives would have been expendable, and Salter's hubristic request to fish in proprietary waters surely only made matters worse. Such events were not uncommon on the coast during the first decades of encounter, and the newcomers were equally willing to take violent action; in particular, aboriginal "thieving" often justified corporal punishment, or worse, being meted out on local people. The rules governing etiquette, then, highlighted difference as much as they created moments of genuine communication. But if episodic violence revealed hard lines between "Indian" and "European," the choices participants in encounter made about what they would and would not eat of each other's food blurred those lines even further.

Fish Grease and *Tais Frijoles*: Taste

Given his ambition and acumen, as well as the location of his *hahualthi* in what became the first nexus of global trade in the region, it is not surprising that Maquinna is a recurring character in the story of contact on the Northwest coast. Seventeen years before his men killed most of the crew of the *Boston*, Maquinna became the host of a young ship's surgeon named Mackay who had served aboard the aptly named *Experiment* under Strange. In hopes of strengthening American relationships with Maquinna's people, Mackay would provide basic medical services, learn the Nuu-chah-nulth language, and make observations of the surrounding territories. While Maquinna assured Strange that Mackay would become "fat as a Whale" on locally caught fish, the captain also felt it necessary to provide the surgeon with a more familiar larder:

I left with him as much Beef, Biscuit, Rice, Salt, Sago, Tea, Sugar & Tobacco, as his Occasions could require, and I am in hopes that he will have the sole enjoyment of them; for it is a singular truth, that none of the Natives, could relish any one of the above articles, although I repeatedly, during my stay amongst them, endeavored to introduce the use of them. I left with him a large quantity of Garden seeds, & Grain of Various sorts, and before I sailed, a considerable spot of Ground was allotted to him for the Culture of them, & for which purpose he had every necessary implement given him. It was greatly my wish to have left with him a Male & Female of the differed Stock which we brought from India, but death interposed to prevent this desirable purpose, nothing being left alive but a male & female of the Goat tribe, these were of course given to him.⁶⁶

To Strange, it was unthinkable that Mackay would want (or be able) to survive on a diet drawn solely from Maquinna's *hahuulthi*; similarly, it seemed clear that the Nuu-chah-nulth had little or no interest in adopting Western foods. But perhaps the most troublesome component of the "dilemma of difference" in the contact zones of the Northwest coast arises from the culinary choices newcomers and indigenous people made there. In the late eighteenth century, European philosophers, physiocrats, and scientists were developing theories linking race to place via food—perhaps best expressed by French gastronome Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's well-known axiom "tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are"⁶⁷—but something far more complex was happening in encounters between Europeans and Americans and the Nuu-chah-nulth, Coast Salish, and their neighbors.

While English and Spanish visitors depended on salt pork and pilot bread, they also often openly detested these staples, especially after months at sea, and actively sought out new foods on the Northwest coast. In particular, many sailors enjoyed the oils that aboriginal people processed from various kinds of fish. John Ledyard called them "the best by far that any man among us had ever seen," and noted that they were "a very good succedaneum" to suet and butter.⁶⁸ George Dixon even described such oils, tasted while at Nootka Sound in 1787, as being "perfectly sweet."⁶⁹ The roe of salmon and herring, roasted while resting in the crevice of a piece of split wood, inspired Jewitt to comment that "this kind of food, with a little salt, would be found no contemptible eating even to a European."⁷⁰ Foods that were staples of indigenous cuisine—and in some cases, still are—but which are essentially unknown to settler society today, were regularly encountered by explorers, often to positive reviews. Jewitt, like others before him, discovered that the steamed roots of cultivated plants like springbank clover and Pacific silverweed were "very palatable" and "of an agreeable taste."⁷¹ Offered the pounded cambium of an unidentified conifer in the territory of the Heiltsuk people, Vancouver found the resulting paste "sweetish," going so far as to imagine that it was "a substitute for bread."⁷²

There were limits, however. Some Europeans in fact hated the fish oils, and almost all of them found fermented fish roe to be vile and disgusting. "Scarcely any thing can be more repugnant to a European palate," wrote Jewitt. "Such was the stench which it exhaled, on being moved, that it was almost impossible for me to abide it, even after habit, had in a great degree dulled the delicacy of my senses. When boiled it became less offensive, though it still retained much of the putrid smell and something of the taste."⁷³ Dixon and his crew avoided the broiled seal they were offered by several coastal communities. "On our refusing this dainty," he wrote, "[they] always looked at us with a mixture of astonishment and contempt."⁷⁴

As for native people, they enthusiastically accepted many European foods, most notably sugar, coffee, and tea, in contrast with Strange's claims cited above.⁷⁵ But the Nuu-chah-nulth were also particularly fond of navy beans, which they called by the créole term *tais frijoles*: *tais* a Nuu-chah-nulth word referring to nobility, *frijoles* from the Spanish. Along with lettuce and broccoli, bread was also a favorite among many local peoples, which Europeans often understood as a case of savage aspirations to civilization.⁷⁶ On the other hand, native people almost without exception rejected milk, butter, and cheese as well as olive oil, vinegar, and spices. A Spanish visitor noted that the Nuu-chah-nulth "have become so accustomed to soup, as long as it is not of vermicelli [or] noodles," that they refused cabbage and chicken, and that they were "annoyed . . . greatly" to see garlic on the Spaniards' tables.⁷⁷ The Coast Salish despised salt, a distaste shared by the Nuu-chah-nulth—so much so that Maquinna, one day coming upon Jewitt and Thompson boiling seawater to produce dry salt, took what little they had managed to produce and threw it back into the sea.⁷⁸ Clearly, indigenous noses were turned up just as often as those of the newcomers.

Seen in aggregate, the constellations of food acceptance and food refusal in these early encounters suggest that some form of boundary-making was taking place in the culinary exchanges of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (table 1). In keeping with Pierre Bourdieu's assertion that taste is a primarily negative construct—we know we have good taste because we would *never eat that*—the refusal of certain staples (such as salt, porpoise entrails, or, on both sides, fermented foods) illustrates how both indigenous people and foreigners partially defined themselves through what they did or did not eat. However, so many other staples were rapidly and happily adopted (such as fish oils or sugar) that such synonymies (food of the other = bad food) quickly break down. So do present-day essentialist ideas about "traditional" diets, whether Coast Salish or Spanish, Anglo-American or Nuu-chah-nulth, which assume static ecological contexts, static networks of exchange, and static palates. Just as essentialist theories of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe failed to explain indigenous openness to introduced foods (if you are what you eat, what to make of *tais frijoles*?), twenty-first-century ideas about what constitutes "authentic" cuisine often fail to recognize the historical contingencies of migration, trade, and cultural exchange. Even the concept of generalized preferences or dislikes, such as that represented in table 1, likely fails to accurately represent the reality of food encounters on the Northwest coast, in which individual proclivities and palates likely had as much to do with what natives and newcomers chose to eat or avoid as with structural, society-wide proscriptions. And finally, we must remember the context of these encounters, in which

Table 1. Foods generally accepted or generally rejected by aboriginal people and by newcomers (Europeans and Americans) on the Northwest coast, 1774–1808

Aboriginal people usually accepted:	Newcomers usually accepted:
Navy beans (“ <i>tais frijoles</i> ”)	Fresh fish and shellfish
Wine, brandy, beer	Dried and smoked fish and shellfish
Chocolate, sugar, molasses	Fish oils and greases
Coffee, tea	Camas, silverweed, and other cultivated roots
Lettuce, broccoli	Cambium paste
Bread and potatoes	Dog
Aboriginal people usually refused:	Newcomers usually refused:
Cheese and milk	Fermented fish roe
Olive oil and vinegar	Blubber, seal meat
Pasta	Marine mammal entrails
Cabbage	Edible grasses
Salt	Lice
Apparent human flesh	Apparent human flesh

Europeans, in their extremity, became *xwenitem* and *aphey mamulthni*: as Jewitt wrote after returning to what he knew as civilization, “hunger will break through stone walls.”⁷⁹

In Search of Cannibals: Reason

Just as British botanists and captains saw the landscapes of the Northwest coast through their own lenses of cultivation during first encounters, aboriginal people typically interpreted the newcomers within their own cultural and cosmological frameworks. Thinking Vancouver’s venison pies might be human flesh was but one example. Among the Nuu-chah-nulth, a wide range of explanations existed for the wondrous (and in many cases disturbing) arrival of new kinds of people on their shores. Some of those who welcomed Captain Cook and his crew to Nootka Sound thought the *Endeavour* was propelled by Haitetlik, the lightning snake. One female shaman with salmon-related powers, Hahatsaik, was sure the ship was a transformed salmon, and with whalebone rattles in hand and cedar bark cape over her shoulders, called out to its crew, “Hello you, you spring salmon, hello you dog salmon, hello you coho salmon.” A sailor with a hunched back was thought to be a humpback salmon; another with a hooked nose was a dog salmon.⁸⁰ Among the Squamish Coast Salish, it was believed that disaster visited the people every seven years, and Vancouver’s arrival took

place on just such a year; many thought at first that the newcomers were the dead, since their skins were pale, their red clothing looked like burial blankets, and smoke issued from their mouths.⁸¹ In such moments, indigenous people struggled to find meaning in the appearances of these strange beings.

Stories about food often play a central role in the memories of first meetings; whether the food offered by the newcomers was poisonous or good to eat—indeed, whether it was even food at all—preoccupied many indigenous participants in encounter. When Cook and his crew gave the Nuu-chah-nulth pilot bread, some thought it was poisonous while others used it as a talisman.⁸² Some Squamish people, mistaking molasses for grease, spent a long while washing the stiffening sweetener out of their hair and off their faces before emptying the barrel of useless ooze onto the ground.⁸³ When the Suquamish Coast Salish of central Puget Sound first encountered hardtack, they refused to eat it because they thought it had been eaten by worms; instead, children took it and rolled it in the sand like a hoop until it broke into pieces.⁸⁴ On the northern Northwest coast, similar ideas were held by the Tlingit, who thought that rice was maggots and sugar was sand; the Gitxaala Tsimshian, meanwhile, shared the same interpretation of rice and added that the foreigners' biscuits were almost certainly *adaeran* (a kind of shelf fungus that grew on local trees) and that molasses was “the rot of people.”⁸⁵ Such misinterpretations of new foods expressed the profound alienness of the newcomers and their cargoes.

It did not take long, however, for most aboriginal people to overcome these initial misgivings and misunderstandings and to see new foods for what they were. A particularly good example comes from the Klallam, who thought the sugar, molasses, and flour offered by Vancouver's crewmen were respectively sand, some kind of tree pitch, and something entirely new and mysterious. In response, they conducted experiments. First, they instructed slaves to taste the “sand” and “pitch,” to positive reviews. The flour, however, was more complicated: someone threw it on a fire, where it burst into flame. (“And should we eat something that burns! Best not,” goes the account.) Soon after, a Klallam leader named Xqwuy' was invited on board Vancouver's ship, where he ate hardtack, molasses, coffee, and sugar. On his return, his people feared he might die, and some asked, “For goodness sakes, our dear one, were you out of your mind to eat the food of the changer! Couldn't you be causing your death?” “Why would I be killing myself?” he responded. “These people who have come to us are the same as we are. They have hands, they have feet, they have eyes. It is only that they are white and have eyes that they are different from us. Then how could their food kill me?” The story of Xqwuy', recalled by his granddaughter in the twentieth century, describes the transformation of the newcomers

from “changers”—figures from Coast Salish religious teachings who made the world the way it is—to just another kind of human being.⁸⁶ A similar process took place at Nootka Sound, where a shaman named Nanaimas ascertained that what had at first seemed like a ship propelled by lightning snakes and crewed by salmon-people was in fact just a new kind of canoe, and James Cook “but only a man.”⁸⁷

How indigenous peoples understood the nature of Europeans and other newcomers has been among the most hotly debated topics in the history of exploration, encounter, and colonialism. For most of European colonial history, it was “common knowledge” that aboriginal peoples saw men like Cook and Vancouver as “gods.” In recent decades, however, such imperial fantasies have been tempered by reinterpretations of encounters through oral tradition and the methods of ethnohistory. While there is still significant resistance to the idea that indigenous participants in encounter saw their visitors as supernatural beings, scholars like Marshall Sahlins and John Lutz have used the methods of ethnohistory to draw upon aboriginal epistemologies, expressed in oral tradition and other emic sources, to describe the ways in which newcomers were incorporated into the spiritual lives of native communities.⁸⁸ Such investigations suggest that a sharp distinction between “superstition” and “reason” is not particularly useful in understanding the indigenous experience of encounter, and in fact replicates Enlightenment-derived dichotomies between the “sacred” and the “secular.”

While oral traditions make it clear that ideas about pilot bread talismans and ships steered by the dead were quickly abandoned in the face of empirical evidence, such discoveries did not preclude the possibility that the newcomers and the things they brought had significant spiritual powers, just as everyday aboriginal life was infused with magic. In the case of food, to understand that sugar was not sand and molasses not the “rot of people” did not mean that they were powerless; indeed, along with flour, hardtack, and other newcomer staples, they were integrated into potlatch and other ceremonies all along the Northwest coast, infusing such events with new puissance.⁸⁹ To debate whether Cook, Vancouver, or other newcomers were gods is to overshadow indigenous territories, ontologies, and realities with European ideas pitting the sacred against the profane. In a world where the numinous could appear in the meekest or most surprising of forms—a powerful doctoring spirit in the shape of a small bird, the Transformers in the shape of human people, or high ritual prestige in a bright red jacket—it is no surprise that the bringers of new foods, like those foods themselves, could be both magical *and* mundane, sacred *and* secular.

The perceived tension between superstition and reason, articulated

in particularly illuminating and complex ways through food and eating, brings our story back to where it began: cannibalism. In eighteenth-century Europe, cannibalism was the subject of innumerable theories, most having more to do with Europeans than with the peoples they “discovered.” As Daniel Cottom has argued, “The figure of the cannibal ceased to be literal almost as soon as it appeared as such,” and from the earliest encounters with “new” worlds, cannibalism was both a metaphor and a vehicle for social critique. European intellectuals such as Montaigne and Defoe deployed the image of the cannibal to talk about their own societies by ventriloquizing someone else’s.⁹⁰ And like their notions of cultivation, etiquette, and taste, Europeans carried discourses about cannibalism with them to the Northwest coast. The debate among Europeans and Americans about whether they would be eaten by the indigenous peoples of the region was among the central questions of the exploration project. Spanish captain Alessandro Malaspina, for his part, refused to believe “such an ignominious truth about our species,” while among the English, John Ledyard was convinced that cannibalism was “very extensive and pervades much the greatest part of the habitable earth,” and Vancouver’s crew speculated about “unnatural gormondizing appetites” of the region’s inhabitants.⁹¹ Such speculations were probably encouraged further when news arrived in Nootka Sound of the killing and apparent eating of Cook at Kealakekua in the Hawai’ian archipelago.⁹²

Newcomers saw what seemed like clear evidence of cannibalism among the peoples of the Northwest coast, and in particular among the Nuu-chah-nulth and their neighbors the Kwakwaka’wakw. As with the region’s “wild” landscapes, they seem to have misunderstood much of what they were looking at. John Meares saw Maquinna sucking blood from a wound in 1788, and called it cannibalism. He also saw a preserved hand, bearing a tattoo that clearly identified it as having once belonged to a now apparently deceased Mr. Miller, and assumed once again that man-eating was afoot.⁹³ Strange, meanwhile, had “the Pleasure, or more properly the dissatisfaction” of seeing a Nuu-chah-nulth man with whom he had been discussing the merits and drawbacks of cannibalism produce a human hand and proceed to strip the flesh off with his teeth before swallowing it. Once Strange regained his composure, the man explained that as a friend, he would *never* eat *Strange*.⁹⁴ Moziño had a similar experience when warriors came on board the *San Carlos* with what appeared to be the cooked limbs of executed prisoners.⁹⁵ So were the Nuu-chah-nulth in fact cannibals? Gananath Obeyesekere has argued that even if some members of some indigenous societies occasionally practiced limited forms of cannibalism in specific contexts, scenes such as those witnessed by Strange

and Moziño were more likely what Obeyesekere calls “acts of conspicuous anthropophagy,” in which aboriginal people acted out Europeans’ fears of cannibalism.⁹⁶ If that was indeed the case, then in the end the joke was on *mamulthni* like John Ledyard, who had heard that human flesh was “the most delicious” and actually tried it when offered some. (He claimed, perhaps dissembling, that he didn’t swallow.)⁹⁷

Conspicuous anthropophagy aside, was cannibalism ever a common practice on the Northwest coast, as many early explorers thought? Among the Sechelt Coast Salish, elders recounted a severe snowstorm in which the poor were forced to eat “in some instances their very children,”⁹⁸ suggesting that such acts were imaginable, but only in extremis. After a sea battle between the Tseshaht and Ahousaht Nuu-chah-nulth, in which nearly five hundred Ahousaht warriors were killed, the entire local marine environment became subject to cannibalism taboos: “The passages at Huumuwa and Tsishaa and Maaktlii became all blood,” recalled Tom Saahaachapis in 1916, “because many people had died. The people of Tsishaa could not eat because all the fish, the cod and red cod, had human flesh inside from eating [corpses]. They were unable to eat big mussels . . . [and] small clams because all the sea was with blood.”⁹⁹ The Squamish Coast Salish had a taboo against catching and eating sharks that followed a similar logic: because they ate people, they were not proper food.¹⁰⁰

Throughout the region, in fact, stories about cannibals feature prominently in the oral traditions and worldviews of aboriginal peoples. Almost always, the stories are of a cannibal woman who lives alone in the forest, from which she sallies forth to steal children, whom she then eats. She has many names: Dzonoqua (among the Kwakwaka’wakw), Aulth-maquus (the Nuu-chah-nulth), Dás•k’iyá’ (the Quileute),¹⁰¹ Ka’lkalo-itl (the Squamish Coast Salish),¹⁰² T’al (the Sechelt Coast Salish),¹⁰³ Th’owxiya (the Stó:lo Coast Salish),¹⁰⁴ Dzugwa (the Puget Sound Coast Salish),¹⁰⁵ and Kw’Etsxw or Kutsxwe (the Chehalis Coast Salish),¹⁰⁶ among others. More than just a bogeyman (or more correctly, bogeywoman), in virtually all of the stories, the Cannibal Woman also embodies a kind of primal disorder, and stories of her destruction are also stories of the world being set right. In one Chehalis Coast Salish story, for example, after killing the Cannibal Woman, the hero and changer Xwna’xun gives a speech in which he says,

Now I have taken all this kind of a monster from the world. In later days women will not be monsters who eat people in this world. . . . Young men shall bathe and they shall tell about their loves. They shall play on sand bars. . . . They shall bathe in the river and the young people shall just be happy. . . . The people shall be different.¹⁰⁷

Here, the cannibalism of Kw'etsxw is contrasted with the elements of a civilized human life: cleanliness, love, play. In fact, the Nuu-chah-nulth figure Aulth-ma-quus ("Pitch Woman") has been described as "the inverse of a *quus* (human) living in community . . . [she is] surrounded by people yet alone."¹⁰⁸ In stories such as these, as in European traditions, cannibalism is in contrast to the proper workings of a human society.¹⁰⁹

At the same time, cannibalism, like eating more generally, was an important source of power and a crucial metaphor for social engagement on the Northwest coast, particularly among the Nuu-chah-nulth, where one of the fundamental rituals of community life, the Tlukwali or Wolf Ceremony—which influenced ceremonials of a number of other peoples in the region—was centered on images of cannibalism and eating. When the terrifying Wolf Dancers entered the longhouse, daubed with red paint to look like they were covered in blood, they sang, "You will join in eating humans, you will join in having it appear out of your mouths, you too will bleed at the mouth." Other ceremonies similarly played with the language of eating, including cannibalism: feasts to honor the birth of a child were called "navel feasts" and a speech given at such an event might include the compliment, "Am I not eating navel?" One might only imagine how an Englishman, Spaniard, or American might interpret such ceremonies, given their own preoccupation with man-eating savages.¹¹⁰

Beyond specific ceremonial events, Northwest coast peoples also saw themselves more generally as the kin of many nonhuman peoples, including those that human people sometimes ate. The most well known example of this is the salmon; but similar stories exist regarding other food species.¹¹¹ Such ideas were expressed in diverse proscriptions and protocols identifying what—and who—could be eaten; among the Halkomelem Coast Salish, some people chose not to eat bear "because it is like a man," while Nuu-chah-nulth individuals abstained from eating animals with which they had a spirit-power relationship.¹¹² In this context, in which humans and nonhumans are relatives, what exactly constitutes cannibalism is not entirely clear. In fact, on the shoreline of the very bay where Vancouver offered "human flesh" to the Klallam, there was a deep hole where dying orcas went to be transformed into human people; in keeping with this, properly educated Klallams never harmed (and, presumably, never ate) the huge black-and-white dolphins.¹¹³

And so the question *Did they or didn't they?* which so fascinated and troubled the newcomers, perhaps misses the point. European understandings of cannibalism were based on an idea of self and kin that was limited to a single species, while those on the Northwest coast were informed by much more fluid boundaries between self and other, between kin and prey.

In other words, cannibalism's power as a narrative, in contrast with anthropophagy as an actual physical practice, worked in both societies, but in profoundly different ways. Cannibalism is perhaps the most profound marker of difference in these encounters, but not in the ways the participants—or most of the historians that have analyzed them ever since—think. Cottom has argued that “instead of ‘Does it [cannibalism] happen?’ the more pressing question [is] ‘What does it mean?’” and the complex cross-currents of meaning in Northwest coast encounters suggest that aboriginal peoples and newcomers were speaking two different languages of cannibalism.¹¹⁴

Imagined or not, cannibalism—or perhaps more accurately, the accusation of cannibalism—had very real consequences for aboriginal peoples once Europeans and other newcomers arrived on the Northwest coast. In short, cannibalism became a pretext for violence. One Spanish captain, for example, warned Maquinna in 1792 that “if they committed [this cruelty] they would forego all our friendship and good treatment and we would rigourously punish anyone proven guilty of such an abominable offence.”¹¹⁵ Such threats, along with actual punishments, were a standard part of imperial procedure around the world; so much so, in fact, that the British imperial critic John Atkins had written earlier in the eighteenth century that accusations of cannibalism were part of a “*Design . . . to justify Dispossession, and arm Colonies with Union and Courage against the supposed Enemies of Mankind. Conquest and Cruelty, by that means go on with pleasure on the People's side, who are persuaded they are only subduing of brutish Nature.*”¹¹⁶ Literary scholar Noel Elizabeth Currie has shown that first-person accounts of the Northwest coast—in particular, Cook's—were in fact modified by ghostwriters and editors to imply, or even outright claim, that the region's peoples ate each other, often transposing information from New Zealand and elsewhere. Such practices consolidated the moral certitude out of which imperial action—both intellectual and material—could spring. As Currie writes,

If cannibalism is predominantly a textual and discursive rather than gustatory practice, then perhaps the cannibal moment really is textual in the most basic sense, occurring in the act of reading. In other words, (European) readers are the true man-eaters, metaphorically consuming the representation of non-Europeans as literal cannibals in colonialist texts and imagining that the true substance of the lives of savage peoples in far-off lands is being incorporated into European knowledge.¹¹⁷

As any cannibal or cannibal observer knows, talking about eating—as much as eating itself—is about power. (Claims of cannibalism, it should be

noted, could also serve indigenous ends: a Clatsop leader named Coboway was known to tell his neighbors at the mouth of the Columbia River that Europeans were cannibals in order to cement his own trade monopoly.)¹¹⁸

These two narratives of cannibalism—one told by Europeans and Americans, the other by aboriginal peoples themselves—would play out very differently in the decades and centuries to come. While the Nuu-chah-nulth and Klallam initially thought that the newcomers ate tree fungus and maggots but soon realized it was just hardtack and rice, the settlers who began arriving in large numbers some four generations after contact still talked about man-eaters. In 1893, performances of Kwakwaka'wakw “cannibal dances” titillated and terrified white audiences at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and in the city of Seattle, members of an early twentieth-century booster organization dressed in Northwest coast-style “Indian clothes” and spread tongue-in-cheek rumors that their initiation rites included cannibalism.¹¹⁹ Meanwhile, ideas about the “wastefulness” of feasting traditions, combined with continued misunderstanding of aboriginal cannibalism metaphors, justified the suppression of potlatching throughout the region.¹²⁰ Considered alongside native people’s own empirical investigations of newcomers and their foods, such persistent settler beliefs about indigenous “savagery” beg the question: who here was more rational, indigenous communities or the newcomers? Even Franz Boas himself was confused about whether cannibalism actually took place among the Northwest coast societies he studied, or whether stories of man-eating were simple hearsay or leg-pulling.¹²¹ Like other elements of the “dilemma of difference” that come to the fore when we consider food—cultivation, etiquette, taste—the question of reason, perhaps expressed most powerfully in discourses on cannibalism, explodes the differences not only between colonizer and colonized, but also between fact and fiction.

Anticipatory Gastronomies and the Dilemma of Difference

Between 1778 and 1805, more than fifty European and American vessels visited Nootka Sound, and many more visited the Northwest coast more broadly. With the resulting influx of new trade goods, combined with devastating epidemics that came on the heels of first contact, the region was marked by violence, more often between aboriginal communities than between native and newcomer.¹²² By the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, contacts were also being made from a new direction: in 1808, Simon Fraser descended the river that would be named after him,

becoming the first nonindigenous person to enter Coast Salish territories by an overland route.

Fraser's visit paralleled that of many of his maritime predecessors. Like the crews of Vancouver and Hezeta, Fraser's men were starving. According to Stó:lo Coast Salish elder Frank Malloway, among his people the term *xwelitem* was coined to describe Fraser and his men: "It was first tagged on to them when Simon Fraser came down, because . . . he was looking for . . . food. And they said, 'Well, here comes the Xwelitem,' you know, 'they are always asking for food.'"¹²³ Fraser himself wrote in his journal, "At this time we depended wholly upon the natives for provisions, and they generally furnished us with the best they could procure; but that was commonly wretched if not disgusting," highlighting the importance of taste even in desperate times.¹²⁴ Fraser's arrival, like similar events elsewhere, was fraught with mystery. Ayessick, a leader of the Stó:lo Coast Salish, recalled in the early twentieth century that people feared Fraser was a returned changer—although as historian Keith Carlson has noted, the Stó:lo would soon "revise and abandon what might be thought of as their initial 'European equals Transformer' thesis." Still other elders, however, claim that their ancestors thought Fraser was Jesus Christ come to fulfill a Stó:lo prophecy.¹²⁵

As with other encounters, food—from the questions of cultivation and cannibalism through to matters of etiquette and taste—was central to these encounters, and it highlights the remarkably complex, and at times even contradictory, welter of ideas about difference held by both indigenous people and men like Fraser. These stories also highlight the contingency of Northwest coast history. How difference was understood then, and how it would be understood in the decades to come, differed sharply; few examples reflect this transformation more clearly than one last menu item: dog. During his explorations of the Pacific, Cook had written that "we all agreed, that a South-sea dog was little inferior to an English lamb" (a striking pronouncement, given the iconic, and even nationalist, status of lamb in British cuisine). Similarly, Simon Fraser and his men were more than pleased to obtain, and then consume, dogs from Coast Salish communities.¹²⁶ Such moments are in stark contrast to the post-resettlement period, when dog eating, like "waste" and "heathenism" more generally, would become yet another justification to prohibit indigenous feast traditions. In less than a century, dining on dog meat had become a profoundly transgressive and disgusting act in the minds of virtually all settlers in the region ("the most disgusting of all Indian rites" according to one Indian agent),¹²⁷ even though their predecessors—indeed, their heroes—had not

thought twice about such “gormondizing.”¹²⁸ Indeed, even though indigenous people and newcomers forged many intimate bonds in the resettlement period—through intermarriage and work, for example—most indigenous foods are completely unknown in settler society, even as “local food” movements have achieved great popularity. With the exception of smoked salmon, the region’s indigenous ways of eating remain almost as invisible as they did in Vancouver’s time.¹²⁹

Discontinuities such as the development of dog as a taboo food in settler society, or the continued invisibility of aboriginal foodways, are cautionary tales. As historians, indigenous peoples, and others consider the nature and legacies of contact, it is critically important to distinguish these early events from what came later. While first encounters certainly set in motion enormously disruptive new dynamics, we must avoid our own anticipatory geographies: the boundaries between native and newcomer, like those between pleasure and disgust, have never been fixed. As exploration and the fur trade were supplanted by homesteading and town-building, what historian David J. Weber, in his work on the Spanish empire in the Americas, has called the “insurmountable wall between savagery and civilization”¹³⁰ began to take shape in ways that contrast sharply with the period of first contact, when aboriginal peoples tended to be judged—and to judge—by behaviors rather than by the category we now call race. As Social Darwinism replaced the optimism of the early Enlightenment regarding human potentialities, ideas about Us and Them, like ideas about Our Food and Their Food, took on radically new forms that would eventually seem “natural” in their own right—at least in settlers’ minds. Indeed, one of the most power-laden and polyvalent symbols of what constitutes the “natural” in the region—salmon—is, perhaps first and foremost, something people eat.¹³¹

When we look closely at food and eating, a contingent and complicated picture emerges. Europeans imagined cultivated lands but no human cultivators, unable to see *t’ekilakw* and *tqap* for what they were, while indigenous peoples saw *xwenitem* and *mamulthni* rather than European-style gods or all-powerful harbingers of the future. Systems of etiquette interacted in ways the participants often didn’t understand; the boundaries between being *aphey* or arrogant, or between a shared glass of wine or a violent ambush, were never clear. What people did and didn’t eat resisted easy categorization; American sailors with a taste for fish grease and Nuuchah-nulth nobles with a hankering for *tais frijoles* militate against facile conflations of identity and diet. Competing cannibal visions, meanwhile, show reason where it has long been denied and superstition where it has long been ignored. Looking at food, with all of its material and discour-

sive complexity, foregrounds the dilemma of difference and perhaps gets us closer to the concrete, lived, *eaten* reality of encounter than do many other approaches. On those beaches and aboard those ships, in those long-houses and within those garden plots and burned-over prairies, difference was being constructed in ways that we have yet to truly understand but that continue to resonate in the lives of those who call the Northwest coast home.

Notes

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1. Information on Klallam geography is based on personal communication with linguist Timothy Montler.
2. George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Around the World in the Years 1790-1795*, 6 vols. (London, 1798), 1: 269-70.
3. *Ibid.*, 1: 270.
4. Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Near a Thousand Tables: A History of Food* (New York, 2002), ix.
5. I use the term “newcomer” (and for later periods, “settler”) to describe peoples of non-aboriginal heritage who began arriving in the region in the late eighteenth century.
6. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994), 72, 82.
7. William Hutchinson, *A Treatise on Naval Architecture* (Liverpool, UK, 1794), 286-89.
8. Bruno de Hezeta, *For Honor and Country: The Diary of Bruno de Hezeta*, ed. and trans. Herbert K. Beales (Portland, OR, 1985), 78.
9. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 426-27. One of Vancouver’s shipmates under Cook, Thomas Perry, composed a shanty in honor of the famed captain’s innovations:

We are hearty and well and of good constitution
And have ranged the Globe round in the brave Resolution
Brave Captain Cook he was our commander
He conducted the ship from all eminent danger
We were all hearty seamen no cold did we fear
And we have from all sickness entirely kept clear
Thanks be to the Captain he has proved so good
Amongst all the Islands to give us fresh food

Quoted in Anne Salmond, *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog: Captain Cook in the South Seas* (New York, 2003), 288-89. For an overview of British struggles with maritime scurvy, see Francis E. Cuppage, *James Cook and the Conquest of Scurvy* (Greenwood, CT, 1994).

10. James Strange, *James Strange's Journal and Narrative of the Commercial Expedition from Bombay to the North-West Coast of America* (Madras, 1928), 75–76.
11. Archibald Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage, April to October, 1792*, ed. C. F. Newcombe (Victoria, BC, 1923), 127; Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 393–94. Arguments over whether to establish larger plantations on the Northwest coast were a significant element of the Spanish debate regarding the region. Spanish explorer José Mariano Moziño wrote in 1792 that “the facility with which [the Mowachaht and Muchalaht Nuu-chah-nulth communities at Nootka Sound] grasped most of the things we wanted to explain to them should make us very sorry that the ministers of the Gospel have not taken advantage of such a fine opportunity to plant the Catholic faith among them. . . . Along with instruction in the principles of the true religion, they could have inspired the Indians with other ideas, whose execution brings well-known advantages to society. Agriculture could have been promoted not by trying to find actual farmland on the beach, or land that would be fertile without any work, but by exploring the interior of the island, clearing a large part of it, and cultivating those things that would be most appropriate to the soil.” José Mariano Moziño, *Noticias de Nutka: An Account of Nootka Sound in 1792*, ed. and trans. Iris Higbie Wilson (Toronto, 1970), 85–86.
12. Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 18.
13. *Ibid.*, 48–49.
14. Brian W. Richardson, *Longitude and Empire: How Captain Cook's Voyages Changed the World* (Vancouver, 2005), 157.
15. John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997), 624–27. The agricultural revolution of eighteenth-century Britain also involved a great deal of not-seeing, and not only in colonial contexts. As English villages were destroyed or relocated to create sweeping vistas for Georgian country estates or to enclose lands, much of the evidence of human activity on the land—the corduroy of medieval strip-farming or the humble dwellings of Tudor-era peasants, as two examples—was erased and often forgotten. The agricultural revolution inscribed “countryside,” and in some cases even “wilderness,” onto geographies of labor and ecologies of cultivation, and these new landscapes quickly achieved a kind of normative, commonsense timelessness, as if they had always existed. In many ways, then, British visitors to the Northwest coast already had a limited ability to “see” labor in the landscape; combined with contemporary ideas about “savage” life, it is no surprise that aboriginal ecological management was invisible to them. For discussion of the palimpsest of British landscape use as well as the process of forgetting, W. G. Hoskins’s classic *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1955) remains among the best works on the subject.
16. Stephen Daniels, Susanne Seymour, and Charles Watkins, “Enlightenment, Improvement, and the Geographies of Horticulture in Later Georgian England,” in *Geography and Enlightenment*, ed. David N. Livingstone and Charles W. J. Withers (Chicago, 1999), 345–71.
17. Of the place he named for its apparent “desolation,” Vancouver wrote that “our residence here was truly forlorn; an awful [*sic*] silence pervaded the gloomy forests, whilst animated nature seemed to have deserted the neighbouring country.” Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 321–22.

18. Maria Tippett and Douglas Cole, *From Desolation to Splendour: Changing Perceptions of the British Columbia Landscape* (Toronto, 1977), 27.
19. John Gascoigne, "Joseph Banks, Mapping, and the Geographies of Natural Knowledge," in *Georgian Geographies: Essays on Space, Place, and Landscape in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Miles Ogborn and Charles W. J. Withers (Manchester, UK, 2004), 168.
20. Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 23.
21. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 259.
22. J. B. Harley, "Rereading the Maps of the Columbian Encounter," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83 (1992): 522-42.
23. John Rickman, *Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, on Discovery, Performed in the Years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779* (London, 1781), 243; John Ledyard, *The Last Voyage of Captain Cook: The Collected Writings of John Ledyard*, ed. James Zug (Washington, 2005), 46.
24. For the literature on anthropogenic fire in the region, see Robert Boyd, ed., *Indians, Fire, and the Land in the Pacific Northwest* (Corvallis, OR, 1999). For indigenous plant use and cultivation, see Douglas Deur and Nancy J. Turner, eds., *Keeping It Living: Traditions of Plant Use and Cultivation on the Northwest Coast of North America* (Seattle, 2006); for the philosophical foundations of such cultivation, see Nancy J. Turner, *The Earth's Blanket: Traditional Teachings for Sustainability* (Seattle, 2005). Discussions of shellfish habitat enhancement can be found in Judith M. Williams, *Clam Gardens: Aboriginal Mariculture on Canada's West Coast* (Vancouver, 2006). Nuu-chah-nulth notions of property and responsibility are articulated by hereditary Ahousaht Nuu-chah-nulth chief E. Richard Atleo (Umeek) in *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview* (Seattle, 2005).
25. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 262.
26. John Kendrick, ed., *The Voyage of Sutil and Mexicana 1792: The Last Spanish Exploration of the Northwest Coast of America*, (Spokane, 1991), 143.
27. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 323-24.
28. Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 17, 30; Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 225.
29. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 225.
30. *Ibid.*, 251-52; Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 42.
31. Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 92-93; Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 2: 282, 285-87, 293.
32. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 261; Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 52, 89-90, 92.
33. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 239-40.
34. Jean-François de Galaup, *A Voyage Round the World, Performed in the Years 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788 by the Boussole and Astrolabe under the Command of J. F. G. de La Pérouse*, ed. Louis-Antoine Milet-Mureau (London, 1799), 396; quoted in Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (Vancouver, 2005), 139.
35. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: iv.
36. Strange, *James Strange's Journal*, 70-71.
37. Kendrick, *Voyage of Sutil and Mexicana*, 101-2.
38. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 285.

39. Ibid., 286.
40. John R. Jewitt, *A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt* (Middletown, CT, 1815), 96.
41. Ibid., 96.
42. Ibid., 126–27.
43. Ibid., 49.
44. For discussions of the potlatch and its repression, see Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand upon the People: The Law against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Seattle, 1995); and Christopher Bracken, *The Potlatch Papers: A Colonial Case History* (Chicago, 1997).
45. Ralph Maud, ed., *The Salish People: The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout*, 4 vols. (Vancouver, 1978), 4: 142–46.
46. Susie Sampson Peter, *Aunt Susie Sampson Peter: The Wisdom of a Skagit Elder*, trans. Vi Hilbert and Jay Miller (Seattle, 1995), 2.
47. Marian W. Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually* (New York, 1940), 228–29.
48. Homer G. Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* (Eugene, OR, 1955), 60.
49. Jewitt, *Narrative*, 71–72.
50. As one example of a system of etiquette that persisted, Atleo provides a detailed description of the protocols and practices of a 1944 Ahousaht Nuu-chah-nulth potlatch in *Tsawalk*, 99–116.
51. Dorothy Deneen Volo and James M. Volo, *Daily Life in the Age of Sail* (Westport, CT, 2002), 119–27.
52. For Georgian London’s food scene, see Liza Picard, *Dr. Johnson’s London: Coffee-Houses and Climbing Boys, Medicine, Toothpaste and Gin, Poverty and Press-Gangs, Freakshows and Female Education* (New York, 2002).
53. Volo and Volo, *Daily Life in the Age of Sail*, 119–27; Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 2: 422.
54. Menzies, *Menzies’ Journal of Vancouver’s Voyage*, 119–20.
55. Kendrick, *Voyage of Sutil and Mexicana*, 73.
56. Ibid., 100.
57. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 287.
58. Yvonne Marshall, “Dangerous Liaisons: Maquinna, Quadra, and Vancouver in Nootka Sound, 1790–5,” in *From Maps to Metaphors: The Pacific World of George Vancouver*, ed. Robin Fisher and Hugh Johnston (Vancouver, 2003), 165.
59. Atleo, *Tsawalk*, 133–34.
60. Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 228.
61. According to elders of the Stó:lo Nation of the Fraser River valley, *xwenitem* (or *xwelitem* in upriver dialects) initially referred to all newcomers regardless of their ethnicity—those of European, Asian, Pacific Islander, African, and other heritages were all included. As exploration and trade were replaced by the expropriation of indigenous territories and by industrial capitalism, however, the word came to denote Euro-Canadians and not other immigrants such as those of Chinese heritage, whom many aboriginal people saw as fellow victims of white scorn and exploitation. The “hunger” to which it refers, meanwhile, has come to be understood as an appetite for not just food, but also land, natural resources, political and economic power, and even souls in the case of missionaries. Stó:lo elder Clarence Pennier, however, told anthropologist Brian Thom in 1995 that “it doesn’t apply to everybody, you know. There

- are people who are against development because they see a need to preserve things for their future generations as well. So to say it applies to everybody is a mistake on our part, you know.” Keith Thor Carlson and Brian Thom, “Xwelitem” file, Stó:lō Nation Archives, Sardis, BC. For the Klallam term, see Franz Boas, “Clallam and Songish Vocabularies” (ca. 1888), American Council of Learned Societies Committee on Native American Languages (ACLS-CNAL) Collection, American Philosophical Society (APS).
62. Atleo, *Tsawalk*, 12, 133–34.
 63. R. M. Galois, “Nuu-chah-nulth Encounters: James Colnett’s Expedition of 1787–88,” in *Huupukwanum Tupaat / Nuu-chah-nulth Voices, Histories, Objects, and Journeys*, ed. Alan L. Hoover (Victoria, BC, 2000), 71–72.
 64. Jewitt, *Narrative*, 25–28.
 65. Atleo, *Tsawalk*, 129.
 66. Strange, *James Strange’s Journal*, 78–9.
 67. Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste*, trans. M. F. K. Fisher (San Francisco, 1949), 3.
 68. Ledyard, *The Last Voyage of Captain Cook*, 48.
 69. Edward Sapir, “Notes from Northwest Coast Sources and Archives, Part III,” Miscellaneous Nootka Material, fol. 67, p. 28, ACLS-CNAL Collection, APS.
 70. Jewitt, *Narrative*, 69–70.
 71. *Ibid.*, 121–22.
 72. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 2: 273, 275.
 73. Jewitt, *Narrative*, 107.
 74. George Dixon, *A Voyage around the World but More Particularly to the North West Coast of America* (London, 1789), 244–45.
 75. Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 2: 384–85.
 76. Moziño, *Noticias de Nutka*, 84; Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 269.
 77. Moziño, *Noticias de Nutka*, 21–22.
 78. Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, 231–32; Jewitt, *Narrative*, 25–26, 50.
 79. Jewitt, *Narrative*, 49.
 80. F. W. Howay and E. O. S. Scholefield, *British Columbia: From the Earliest Times to the Present* (Vancouver, 1914), 1: 81–33; quoted in Daniel Clayton, “Captain Cook and the Spaces of Contact at ‘Nootka Sound,’” in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*, ed. Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Peterborough, ON, 2003), 144–45.
 81. Louis Miranda and Philip Joe, “How the Squamish Remember George Vancouver,” in Fisher and Johnston, *From Maps to Metaphors*, 3–5; John Sutton Lutz, “First Contact as Spiritual Performance: Encounters on the North American West Coast,” in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*, ed. John Sutton Lutz (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 38.
 82. Barbara S. Efrat and W. J. Langlois, eds., “Nu.tka: Captain Cook and the Spanish Explorers on the Coast,” *Sound Heritage*, 7:1 (1978): 54–58; quoted in Clayton, “Captain Cook and the Spaces of Contact,” 146.
 83. Miranda and Joe, “How the Squamish Remember George Vancouver,” 3–5.
 84. Gram Ruth Sehome Shelton, *Gram Ruth Sehome Shelton [Siastenu]: The Wisdom of a Tulalip Elder*, recorded by Leon Metcalf, trans. Vi Hilbert and Jay Miller (Seattle, 1995), 13–14.
 85. George Thornton Emmons, “Native Account of the Meeting between La Pérouse and the Tlingit,” *American Anthropologist* 13 (1911): 296; quoted in

- Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen?*, 135. Marius Barbeau Papers, B234, file 12, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Ottawa.
86. Shelton, *Gram Ruth Sehome Shelton*, 7-11.
 87. Howay and Scholefield, *British Columbia*, 81-83; quoted in Clayton, "Captain Cook and the Spaces of Contact," 145.
 88. Marshall Sahlins, *How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook, for Example* (Chicago, 1995); Lutz, *Myth and Memory*.
 89. For example, among the Quileute people, peanuts became an important part of ritual practice soon after they were first introduced, standing in for elk droppings in hunting society initiations. This is documented in Leo J. Frachtenberg, "The Ceremonial Societies of the Quileute Indians" (n.d.), 33, ACLS-CNAL Collection, APS.
 90. Daniel Cottom, *Cannibals and Philosophers: Bodies of Enlightenment* (Baltimore, 2001), xvii-xviii.
 91. David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven, CT, 2005), 38-40; Ledyard, *The Last Voyage of Captain Cook*, 48-50; Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 21-22.
 92. Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 103.
 93. John Meares, *Voyages Made in the Years 1788 and 1789 from China to the North West Coast of America* (London, 1790), 191, 257.
 94. Strange, *James Strange's Journal*, 86-87.
 95. Moziño, *Noticias de Nutka*, 22-23.
 96. Gananath Obeyesekere, *Cannibal Talk: The Man-Eating Myth and Human Sacrifice in the South Seas* (Berkeley, CA, 2005).
 97. Ledyard, *The Last Voyage of Captain Cook*, 48-50.
 98. Maud, *The Salish People*, 4: 117-18.
 99. Edward Sapir, *Nootka Ethnographic Texts*, ed. Morris Swadesh, vol. 2, texts nos. 45-79, 314, ACLS-CNAL Collection, APS, ca. 1939-47.
 100. Dorothy I. D. Kennedy and Randy Bouchard, *Utilization of Fish, Beach Foods, and Marine Mammals by the Squamish Indian People of British Columbia* (Victoria, BC, 1976), 1.
 101. Leo J. Frachtenberg, "Quileute Ethnology" (1916), notebook 4, 103, ACLS-CNAL Collection, APS; Manuel Andrade, "Quileute Texts" (1928), 50-57, ACLS-CNAL Collection, APS.
 102. Maud, *The Salish People*, 2: 93-95; Franz Boas, "Indian Legends of the North Pacific Coast of America," original manuscript, American Philosophical Society, 93-94.
 103. Boas, "Indian Legends," 145.
 104. Susan Peters, interviewed by Rueben Ware and Albert Phillips, 3 August 1977, Stó:lo Nation Archives, Sardis, BC.
 105. Ethel Gertrude Aginsky, "Puyallup Texts" (1934), 17a-b, ACLS-CNAL Collection, APS.
 106. Franz Boas, "Chehalis Folklore," (1927), 549-68, 809, ACLS-CNAL Collection, APS. There are two peoples who call themselves the Chehalis: a Stó:lo group near Harrison Lake in British Columbia and a separate group in southwestern Washington State. They are not closely related. The one under discussion here is the latter.
 107. *Ibid.*, 827-28.
 108. Atleo, *Tsawalk*, 23-27, 34-36.

109. Cannibals could also be power spirits, but accepting such a helper brought risk; a story from the Cowichan Coast Salish of Vancouver Island tells of a young man named Tsoqelem who had cannibal power, but who eventually killed many people before being killed in return. See Maud, *The Salish People*, 4: 158–60.
110. Sapir, *Nootka Ethnographic Texts*, 2: 45–79, 69, 72–73, 81–86.
111. Maud, *The Salish People*, 3: 152.
112. Atleo, *Tsawalk*, 85.
113. Personal communication with Timothy Montler.
114. Cottom, *Cannibals and Philosophers*, 145.
115. Kendrick, *Voyage of Sutil and Mexicana*, 79.
116. John Atkins, *A Voyage to Guinea, Brasil, and the West-Indies* (London, 1735), xxiii; quoted in Cottom, *Cannibals and Philosophers*, 138.
117. Noel Elizabeth Currie, *Constructing Colonial Discourse: Captain Cook at Nootka Sound* (Montreal, 2005), 87–126; quotation on 125.
118. James P. Ronda, “Coboway’s Tale: A Story of Power and Place along the Columbia,” in *Power and Place in the North American West*, ed. Richard White and John M. Findlay (Seattle, 1999), 3–22.
119. Paige Raibmon, “Theaters of Contact: The Kwakwaka’wakw Meet Colonialism in British Columbia and at the Chicago World’s Fair,” *Canadian Historical Review* 81 (2000): 157–90; Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle, 2007), 129–36.
120. An 1897 letter to the British Columbia Superintendent of Indian Affairs from an Indian agent working among the Stó:lo Nation represents the attitudes and practices of those seeking to end potlatching: “Only two potlatches have been held in this Agency since I took charge nearly five years ago,” Frank Devlin reported. “One was given by an Indian named Bill Uslick who resides at Chilliwack. Bill claims to be a Methodist. . . . Bill Uslick gave the potlatch. It lasted one week at the expiration of which time everything he had in the world was either eaten or given away. After the potlatch was over I had Bill Uslick arrested and sentenced to two months imprisonment. There were three or four other Indians who assisted Bill with his potlatch. These were let off with a caution as Bill was the principal offender. Uslick is a Tamanawas [secret society] doctor, and the Potlatch was given by him in order to get a step up the ladder of fame as a doctor.” Frank Devlin to A. S. Vowell, 23 June 1897, copy in Notes from Northwest Coast Sources and Archives, part IX, fol. 73, Miscellaneous Nootka Material, ACLS-CNAL Collection, APS. The “evils” of potlatching were also common fodder for editorials and “exposés” in area newspapers through the late nineteenth century; for more on that discourse, see Bracken, *The Potlatch Papers*.
121. Ralph Maud, “Did Franz Boas Witness an Act of Cannibalism?” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 22 (1986): 45–48.
122. Richard Inglis and James C. Haggerty, “Cook to Jewitt: Three Decades of Change in Nootka Sound,” in Hoover, *HuuṣuKwanum Tupaat*, 92–106; Alan D. McMillan, *Since the Time of the Transformers: The Ancient Heritage of the Nuu-chah-nulth, Ditidaht, and Makah* (Vancouver, 1999), 191–212.
123. Frank Malloway, interviewed by Brian Thom, 9 March 1995, Stó:lo Nation Archives, Sardis, BC.
124. Simon Fraser, *The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser, 1806–1808*, ed. W. Kaye Lamb (Toronto, 1960), 93, 98–99.

125. The Ayessick account is in the Newcombe Family papers at the Stó:lo Nation Archives, Sardis, BC; Keith Thor Carlson, "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact," in Lutz, *Myth and Memory*, 61; Wickwire, "Stories from the Margins: Toward a More Inclusive British Columbia Historiography," in Lutz, *Myth and Memory*, 135–36.
126. Cook is quoted in Richardson, *Longitude and Empire*, 156; Fraser, *Letters and Journals*, 93. Even the legendary American Corps of Discovery made dog a regular repast. William Clark noted on 10 October 1805 that "our diet extremely bad having nothing but roots and dried fish to eate, all the Party have greatly the advantage of me, in as much as they all relish the flesh of the dogs, Several of which we purchased of the natives for to add to our Store of fish and roots &c. &c." On 3 January 1806, Meriwether Lewis wrote,

"Our party from necessity having been obliged to subsist some lenth of time on dogs have now become extremely fond of their flesh; it is worthy of remark that while we lived principally on flesh of this animal we were much more healthy strong and more fleshey than we had been since we left the Buffaloe country. for my own part I have become so perfectly reconciled to the dog that I think it an agreeable food and would prefer it vastly to lean Venison or Elk." (lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/index.html [accessed 25 August 2007])

The Americans' taste for dog meat is still remembered among the descendants of the native peoples they encountered, one of whom has written that "all this wonderful salmon everywhere, and along come Lewis and Clark to our village. Two days later, they leave again, and we're looking around, and our people are saying 'Hey, what happened to all our dogs?'" time.com/time/2002/lewis_clark/lcuisine.html (accessed 25 August 2007).

127. Letter to A. S. Vowell from R. E. L. Lering, Indian agent at Hazelton, 15 July 1897, copy in Notes from Northwest Coast Sources and Archives, part IX, fol. 73, Miscellaneous Nootka Material, ACLS-CNAL Collection, APS.
128. It is difficult to ignore the similarities between the discourse of dog eating as it was applied to aboriginal peoples on the Northwest coast and discourses that were central to stereotypes of Asian immigrants and Asian-Canadians. The "dog-eating savage" and the "dog-eating Chinaman" are likely part of a single discourse of culinary othering that took form in the late nineteenth century.
129. For social and economic connections between indigenous and settler peoples in the region, which were quite close prior to the advent of more explicitly racist legal structures that developed in the late nineteenth century, see Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871* (Toronto, 2001); John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver, 2009); Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound* (Berkeley, CA, 2000); Thrush, *Native Seattle*; and Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham, NC, 2005). For two accounts of local food movements, see Gary Paul Nabhan, ed., *Renewing Salmon Nation's Food Traditions* (Portland, OR, 2006); and Alisa Smith and J. B. Mackinnon, *The 100-Mile Diet: A Year of Local Eating* (Toronto, 2007).
130. Weber, *Bárbaros*, 277.

131. For the best recent scholarship on salmon and what constitutes “nature” in the region, see Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York, 1996); Douglas C. Harris, *Fish, Law, and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto, 2001); Douglas C. Harris, *Landing Native Fisheries: Indian Reserves and Fishing Rights in British Columbia, 1849–1925* (Vancouver, 2009); David Arnold, *The Fishermen’s Frontier: People and Salmon in Southeast Alaska* (Seattle, 2008); David Montgomery, *King of Fish: The Thousand-Year Run of Salmon* (New York, 2004); and Joseph E. Taylor III, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle, 1999).